The Muslim Brotherhood and the Institution of Ambiguity

The Brotherhood's post-Mubarak discourse placed in its historical context

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Introduction

On April 21st, 2011, Khayrat al-Shatir, an influential leader in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, gave a lecture to a large following in Alexandria, named, "Features of Nahda: Gains of the Revolution and the Horizons for Developing".[1] Two months earlier, Egypt had witnessed the extraordinary resignation of President Hosni Mubarak from his position. In the lecture, al-Shatir elaborated on the "Mashru' al-Nahda", or "the Renaissance Project". After decades of repression from army-appointed presidents, the Muslim Brotherhood saw its chance to revive itself in public and play an important role in determining the political course of Egypt. The Nahda Project, al-Shatir stressed, was the plan to establish an Islamic government in Egypt, followed by a global Islamic state, according to the guidelines of Hassan al-Banna', the founding father of the Muslim Brotherhood.[2] Al-Shatir thus made clear that the Brotherhood's plans and commitment to an Islamic State remained completely unchanged since the Muslim Brotherhood's inception. Furthermore, for this plan to work, the "structure" set up by the Brotherhood "needs to be obeyed and committed to,"[3] emphasizing the authority of the movement's leaders over its members.

Two and a half months earlier, with protests against Mubarak on-going, another Brotherhood leader, 'Isam al-'Aryan, published an op-ed in the New York Times called "What the Muslim Brothers Want".[4] Al-'Aryan stated that the Brotherhood "is committed to joining the national effort toward reform and progress." He goes on to say that

> "We come with no special agenda of our own — our agenda is that of the Egyptian people … We aim to achieve reform and rights for all: not just for the Muslim Brotherhood, not just for Muslims, but for all Egyptians … we envision the establishment of a democratic, civil state that draws on universal measures of freedom and justice, which are central Islamic values … The Muslim Brotherhood stands firmly behind the demands of the Egyptian people as a whole.[5]

[1] Hudson Institute, "Translation: Khairat al-Shater on the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood", *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol 13 (2012), 128.
[2] Hudson Institute, "Translation: Khairat al-Shater", 130.
[3] Ibid, 131.
[4] 'Isam al-'Aryan, "What the Muslim Brothers want", *The New York Times*, February 9, 2011.
[5] al-'Aryan, "What the Muslim Brothers want"

Here, al-'Aryan presents the Brotherhood's goals to be concurrent with the Egyptian people's goals. Moreover, the Brotherhood's vision for reform is presented as simply on par with liberal, democratic values.

The differences in content between the two texts raise glaring questions about the Brotherhood's intentions for political reform in Egypt. Is an Islamic state simply compatible with a liberal democratic system? And how does the "obedience and commitment" of the Nahda speech relate to "universal measures of freedom and justice"? Al-Shatir may have said to simply want to follow al-Banna's guidelines, but al-Banna' did not envision at all the democratic state al-'Aryan presented in his op-ed. Indeed, part of the Islamist project was to break down Western secularism and the structures of state that European countries introduced in Egypt. In stark contrast, by the spring of 2012, the Muslim Brothers were running for the top position of the Egyptian government, something they had until shortly before denied they would aim for.[6] If the Muslim Brothers anno 2011 saw their ultimate goal as creating an Islamic state, what were the Brothers planning to do as rulers within the secular national framework of the Arab Republic of Egypt?

The apparent contradictions in the Brotherhood's discursive practices have led some commentators to believe that the Muslim Brothers can simply not be trusted. All their talking about democracy and freedom, they argue, is designed to hide their real desire of "building an Islamic State"[7] or even a "theocracy".[8] However, these commentators presuppose that Islamism and liberal democracy are by definition two polarized, mutually exclusive concepts. On the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood has been quick to equate their Islamist ideals with democratic values, presenting an opposite presupposition.[9]

In my opinion, such assertions gloss over the huge complexity and variety of elements that have shaped Muslim Brotherhood ideology and discourse over the decades. Therefore, I contend that in order to understand the Muslim Brotherhood's discourse in the

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[6] al-'Aryan, "What the Muslim Brothers want"

[7] Samuel Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?", *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, 14 (2013), 9

[8] Trager, Eric, "Egypt's Looming Competitive Theocracy", *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, 14 (2013), 27-28, Trager, Eric, "The Unbreakable Muslim Brotherhood: Grim Prospects for a Liberal Egypt," *Foreign Affairs,* 90 (2011), 114-126.

[9] See for example, Al-Shatir, no need to be afraid of us, Abu al-Futuh, "Democracy Supporters should not fear the MB"

post-Mubarak era, one must first dig up its historical foundations. This Master's thesis attempts to analyse the discourse employed by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, in matters concerning the nature of the state, in the post-Mubarak era (2011- 2013). Simultaneously, that discourse is placed in the historical context of the Brotherhood's ideological development over the decades, particularly during the Mubarak era (1981-2011).

Methodology

Ideology and Discourse

Thus, the main task of this research is to analyse Muslim Brotherhood discourse, while placing that discourse in its historical context. However, "discourse" is a very diffuse term invoking a plethora of possible meanings. Moreover, it is strongly connected to the equally diffuse concept of "ideology". What exactly do I attempt to research, when adopting these terms? It has been argued that ideology and discourse have come to mean the same thing, and that "their conceptual apparatus can now be used interchangeably".[10] However, for me there is an important distinction to be made, which, for the purpose of this thesis, I have summarized in a preliminary definition as follows: ideology pertains to a set of *beliefs* and *desires*, while discourse is the medium through which that ideology is both *constructed* and *transmitted*. By maintaining this distinction, I hold that ideology is in its most basic form unwritten, a way to "see" (believe) reality around us, or to "want" (desire) a certain reality to happen. At the same time, however, we start to interpret that reality, organizing it into comprehensible language to help ourselves and others understand what we see and want. Thus, discourse and ideology set in motion simultaneous, intertwined and complementing processes.

Certainly, 'seeing' and 'wanting' do not happen in a historical vacuum. Individuals are influenced by discursive traditions coming before them, meaning that, following Foucault's line of thought, "a human being turns himself into a subject"[11], even before ideological processes are set in motion. The process described by Foucault is what Althusser has called "interpellation".[12] Foucault's assertion certainly holds true for the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, who before embarking on ideological production would have seen

[10] Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt, "Discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology. . .", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 44 (1993), 475.
[11] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1982), 778.
[12] Purvis and Hunt, "Discourse, Ideology", 482

themselves as 'Muslims' or even 'Muslim reformers'[13]. However, I think that an ideological process distinguishes itself from the discursive in that it utilizes and directs discursive practices to achieve a certain *goal of reshaping social relations.* This idea is adopted from Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt, who in distinguishing ideology from discourse, put forward the concept of "directionality"[14] of ideology and the "'ideological effects'"[15] of discourse: "Thus what makes some discourses ideological is their connections with systems of domination", "the way in which the interpellation of subject positions operates systematically to reinforce and reproduce dominant social relations."[16]

Purvis and Hunt's concept of ideological directionality provides a tool for distinguishing ideological elements in discursive practices, and will be adopted in this thesis. When analysing the Muslim Brotherhood's discourse of the post-Mubarak era, can I detect directional, ideological elements that tells us what kind of state the Muslim Brothers envision in a post-Mubarak era? And if so, how are these elements weaved into the various discursive products under study? Moreover, how can these ideological and discursive elements be placed in their historical context? What historical factors contributed to the way the Brothers went about their business of constructing discourse after Mubarak's fall?

Discourse Analysis

Having clarified the relation between discourse and ideology, I will have to explain the methodology I employ when analysing the Brotherhood's discourse of the post-Mubarak era. Based on methodological literature, I have set myself a few guidelines, as well as limitations, for exercising the practice of Discourse Analysis. Discourse Analysis is a set of academic tools that helps understand how texts are constructed and the way meaning is embedded within them. As H.G. Widdowson and Teun van Dijk have stressed, discursive products must be analysed in their respective *contexts* in order to elicit the meaning embedded in them.[17] Van Dijk goes on to say that "Contexts control discourse production and comprehension"[18], since contexts enable "that language users are able to shape their discourse appropriately to the (for them) relevant properties of the communicative

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[13] The background of Muslim Brotherhood thought will be further elaborated on in the first chapter.
[14] Purvis and Hunt, "Discourse, Ideology", 478. Originally italicized.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid, p. 497.
[17] H.G. Widdowson, *Text, Context and Pretext: Critical Issues in Discourse Analysis*. Malden/Oxford/Victoria: Backwell Publishing, 2004, 36-57, Teun van Dijk, *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 1-27
[18] Van Dijk, *Discourse and Context*, 17

situation."[19] Thus, although Discourse Analysis has a long tradition of an exclusively textual approach (analysing the words, grammar, sentence structure, and build-up of the text), my approach will be mainly contextual, adopting van Dijks assertion that, to understand discursive practices, one has to study what Widdowson calls the "extralinguistic reality"[20] of the contexts involved. To this aim, I have developed a set of questions to help determine the relevant contextual properties that need to be examined, when reading discursive texts:

1. Who produced the text? Who is that person or collective, and what does he/she/it represent?
2. Where was the text published, if at all? Who or what is that publishing platform, and what does it represent?
3. When was the text published?
4. With what intention was the text produced?

The last question is of special interest, and should be expanded on a bit further. Does the writer have a certain goal in mind? Is it a reaction to a person, event or text? Does it initiate a certain trend or phenomenon? Was the text written defensively or offensively (this is also an important question for textual analysis), deliberately or reluctantly? The supposed goal or aim of a text producer with a certain text is what Widdowson calls "pretext".[21]

Frame Analysis

Focusing on the contextual does not mean, of course, that the textual aspects of discourses are not important. In fact, in order to discern the pretext behind a text, textual analysis plays an important role. Within texts, the most important concept I will look at is the use of "frames". The study of Frame Analysis focuses on how texts are inlaid with frames, through which meaning in a text is interpreted and located. The concept of frames in textual analysis was introduced in Erving Goffman's Frame Analysis, in which he defined frames as "*principles of organization* which govern events - at least social ones - and our subjective involvement in them", or "*schemata* of interpretation", with Frame Analysis helping to

[19] Ibid.
[20] Widdowson, *Text, Context and Pretext* , 8.
[21] Ibid, p. 74

understand "the organization of experience".[22] Thus, according to Snow and Benford, "Frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action."[23]

To give an example: police shootings of African-American individuals in the U.S. have been framed as manifestations of 'social injustice' and 'racial inequality'. Because of these frames, people felt compelled to organize and join marches to protest against this perceived injustice and inequality. Moreover, these frames stand in a historical context, immediately invoking the language of the civil rights movement in the 1960's, historical knowledge that is well-known throughout the country. This is why the use of frames is very important for social movements in achieving their goals, as movement leaders can construct new and adopt or recompose existing frames in order to "mobilize political adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists."[24] To translate this line of thought to the context of my research, Brotherhood leaders construct their message with the use of frames, in order to mobilize adherents, garner the support of bystanders, or demobilize antagonists. When analysing the Brotherhood's messages, what kinds of frames can be distinguished? Furthermore, how do these frames support the Brotherhood's goals (pretext)? Ultimately, how do they relate to the Brotherhood's ideology on statehood?

However, as Marc Steinberg highlights, there is a danger to see frames as readymade constructs with fixed meanings, which can simply be utilized by actors to affect their audiences as they wish. Influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin, Steinberg puts framing processes within a discursive context, while interpreting discourse as "the social production of meaning that is essentially dialectic, dynamic and riven with contradictions"[25]. Steinberg asserts that "Discourse is (…) *inter*discourse, since meaning always lies between and within the confluence of voices that compose communication."[26] Adopting Steinberg's discursive perception of "framing as an inherently collective process", [27] I contend that any frames used by Brotherhood leaders are not simply of their own production, but are a product of

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[22] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analyis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Cambridge (U.S.): Harvard University Press, 1974, 10-11, 21. My italics.
[23] Robert D. Benford, and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26 (2000), 614.
[24] Robert D. Benford, and David A. Snow, "Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization", *International Social Movement Research*, 1 (1988), 198.
[25] Marc. W Steinberg, "Tilting the frame: Considerations on collective action framing from a discursive turn", *Theory and Society* , 27 (1998), 851-852.
[26] Steinberg, "Tilting the Frame", 853. My italics on "between".
[27] Ibid, p. 862.

interaction between them and others. Thus, the question of frame in my research is enhanced by the additional analytical task of determining how the frames adopted by Brotherhood actors resonate with issues and movements in Egyptian society at large.

The methods of Discourse and Frame Analysis will be applied in the last chapter of the thesis, when analysing the Muslim Brotherhood's discursive productions of the post-Mubarak era. The main reason for this is that I am limited in the source material available to me. As my command of Modern Standard Arabic is not sufficient to read the Brotherhood's texts in their original form, I depend on English translations of their texts in order to be able to apply analysis. English translations of Brotherhood texts are scarce for the Mubarak period; in contrast, they are affluently available for the post-Mubarak era. As a result, direct analysis of Brotherhood texts in this thesis is applied only for the post-Mubarak era. The historical analysis of the Brotherhood's ideological and discursive development during the Mubarak era will be conducted with the use of academic literature on the topic.

Boundaries of the thesis

Issues under analysis

In analysing the Brotherhood's ideology and discourse, I have chosen to focus on the topic of 'the nature of the state', thus analysing the Brothers' opinion on what a state should be. However, this is a broad topic in itself, covering a wide range of different issues. Therefore, I need to be clear on what issues I specifically focus on. To this aim, I have made a selection of issues that I have found to be of central importance to the Muslim Brothers' discourse when addressing 'the nature of the state':

1. *The source of political authority*. Who has or should have the ultimate authority to rule? Where should the source of political power be ultimately vested in?
2. *The authority of God's word in state and society*. In Islam, the word of God as handed down to man in the Qur'an holds authority over the lives of humans, and is the source of Islamic law (*Shari'a*). Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood attempt to bring that authority 'back' (perceiving its absence) into the lives of Muslims and the state apparatus. But how should the Qur'an be interpreted and applied, and who should be entrusted with its interpretation? Also, what is the role of the state in ensuring the application of God's authority in society? This issue has considerable overlap with the abovementioned issue, but the two are nonetheless treated as separate issues by the Brotherhood, causing confusion and controversy for outsiders.

3. *Citizenship*. What is a 'citizen' in the Muslim Brotherhood's point of view? What are their rights and duties? Are there differences between citizens or are all citizens equal?
4. *The internal organization of the state*. How should the state be organized internally? Through what institutions should the state govern?
5. *The power relations between state institutions.* How should power de divided among the different institutions of the state? What are the rights and duties of the different institutions?

Focusing on the Mubarak and the post-Mubarak period

Why do I focus on the Mubarak and the post-Mubarak period? There are two main reasons. First, as the permissible amount of words in this Master's thesis is rather limited, a focus on these two periods will provide room for in-depth study. Second, the Mubarak era witnessed important changes regarding the development of the Muslim Brothers' discourse and ideology as well as its position vis-à-vis the secular national state. Simultaneously, the Mubarak era represented a relatively stable political paradigm in Egypt for nearly three decades. Thus, the years 1981-2011 act as a historical 'template' which can be used to understand the language and position of the Muslim Brothers during the period following Mubarak's resignation.

Buildup of thesis

The first chapter serves as a historical introduction to the Muslim Brotherhood. Here I will briefly introduce the reader with the movement's organizational and ideological foundations as envisioned by the Brotherhood's founding father, Hassan al-Banna', its historical inspirations, and further developments up to the Mubarak period. In the second chapter, I will document the Brothers' ideological and discursive developments during the Mubarak era regarding its viewpoint on the nature of the state. Also, these developments are placed in their respective historical contexts, in order to see what contextual factors influenced the course of the Brotherhood's developments. In the third chapter, a selection of the Brotherhood's most important discursive products concerning the nature of the state, released in the years after Mubarak's resignation, will be analysed in-depth. Here I will elaborate on the frames, contexts and further discursive elements that the Brotherhood adopted in their political discourse, as well as the pretext with which discourse was produced. In the conclusion, I will compare the analysis of the discourse with the Brothers'

ideological developments, and engage in an explanation regarding the relations between them.

1. Origins: from al-Banna' to al-Hudaybi

The Idea: Islamic reformism and Hassan al-Banna'

When the "Society of Muslim Brothers", or Muslim Brotherhood, was officially established in March 1928 in the Egyptian town of Isma'iliya[28], its ideals were not new to the Islamic world. Rather, the organization must the viewer in the broader context of reformist Islamic thought. The Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al-Banna', a schoolteacher hailing from the Nile Delta region, built upon some of the intellectual ideas put forward by nineteenth-century reformist thinkers. In a time when Europe was quickly gaining economic and political power in the ailing Ottoman Empire and other Muslim states, thinkers like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh started to ask why Islamic civilizations had fallen under European influence. The answer, according to these thinkers, laid in the fact that Muslim societies had, over the course of history, lost touch with the true essence of original Islam as represented in the first generations of Muslims. Internal divisions and later foreign influences had crippled Islam; thus, as 'Abduh argued, Muslim societies had to go back to when Islam was undivided and unaffected by outside influences. The *Qur'an*, God's direct word, and the *Sunna*, the collected words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad, could be, and had to be, directly read and interpreted outside of the traditional schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) who had over the centuries established themselves as authorities on interpreting Islamic Law (*Shari'a)* in their own right.[29] In this way, Muslims as a whole could be reunited and regain their inner strength. This is not to say that these Islamic reformists resisted Western technological innovation or 'modernity' as such. Rather, they envisioned Islam to be the civilizational fundament for modern life in Muslim societies.[30] These basic tenets and goals gave birth to a movement which became known as Islamism.

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[28] Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: the rise of an Islamic mass movement, 1928-1942.* Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998, 36

[29] Ali Rahnema (ed.), *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*. Kuala Lumpur/Beirut/London, New York: SIRD/WBP/Zed Books; 2005) p. 36-37.

[30] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939.* London/New York/Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1962, 138-139.

In this framework, Hasan al-Banna' developed his vision for the Muslim Brothers. For all Banna', the ultimate goal was creating an "Islamic order" (*al-Nizam al-Islami*) based fully on Islamic values, having in mind the ideal example of the first generations of Muslims and the Islamic Caliphate under "Rightly Guided Caliphs".[31] However, setting up a concrete Islamic political state was not the goal itself; rather, al-Banna' saw a unified Muslim *Umma* (meaning 'people' or 'nation') as the ultimate goal, whose lives would be guided by *shari'a*, whatever the exact structure of the state.[32] Al-Banna' describes an Islamic form of government as "a government whose officers are Muslims who perform the obligatory duties of Islam … and who work and execute their plans according to Islamic teachings."[33] The real threat to the Umma, reasoned al-Banna', was not the Western structure of state, but Western values and culture, which brought "greedy ambitions", "materialism", "dissension" and injustice[34] to Muslim countries. Consequently, Western influence had placed Muslim people out of touch with God's will. Therefore, Muslims had to be brought back to Islam, and *shari'a,* representing God's will, had to be reinstated as the authority over Muslims' lives. This spiritual revival of the Umma was the true essence of what al-Banna' called "the Islamic fatherland", which "transcended the bounds of mere geographical and ethnic patriotism to one of lofty principles, pure, veracious articles of belief, and truths which God set down as a guidance and a light for the world."[35]

Therefore, al-Banna' fought against some elements in Egyptian society while being at peace with others. Because of the centrality of the *shari'a* in his vision, a principal aim was the abolition of Western forms of law, which had been introduced in Egypt following Napoleon's invasion in 1798, and implement *shari'a* instead. However, al-Banna' was decidedly vague on how to implement *shari'a*. The Islamist ideal was that any Muslim could read and understand God's will from the sources, bypassing the traditional *fiqh*

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[31] Richard, Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. London: Oxford University Press, 1969, 234-236. The Ruightly Guided Caliphs were the first four successors of Prophet Muhammad, and were instrumental in establishing the Islamic Caliphate, which until the 13th century CE was one of the important civilizational centres of the world.

[32] Mitchell, *The Society*, 235.

[33] Hassan al-Banna', *Message for Youth*. Translated by H. Muhammad Najm. London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd., 1993, 11

[34] Charles Wendell, trans., *Five tracts of Ḥasan Al-Banna̅ (1906-1949): a selection from the Majmu̅at rasa̅il al-Imām al shahīd Ḥasan al-Banna̅*, Santa Barbara: University of California Press, 1978, 78, 95, 107

[35] Wendell, *Five Tracts,* 94

establishments. At other instances, though, he directed his followers to study the works of the *fiqh* schools.[36] Another important goal was the eradication of injustice and division in Egypt, manifested in the usurpation of power and resources by the upper class at the expense of the middle and lower classes. At that time, politics was a reserve for the well to-do, safeguarded from possible participation of the middle class. Additionally, political parties relied on British support, who maintained political control despite Egypt's parliamentary and constitutional independence in 1922. This is why al-Banna' fiercely rejected party politics (*hizbiyya)* seeing it as a tool of corruption, inequality and Western power.[37] On the other hand, al-Banna' was in favour of keeping the Constitution and parliament as a base for governance, arguing that these institutions are perfectly compatible to the Islamic ideals of equality and justice because they oversee and limit the powers of authoritative bodies.[38]

The Method: grassroots approach, structure and hierarchy

However, if the Brotherhood were to 'bring Islam back into the lives of Muslims', the Brotherhood would have to operate on a grassroots level rather than adopting a top-down approach. Indeed, al-Banna' identified a set of stages to be implemented, starting with "Reforming the self", followed by the family, society, the country, the government, all the Islamic nations, and the prominence of Islamic civilization over others worldwide.[39] The task of reforming Muslims on the individual level was called *da'wa*, meaning 'call' or 'summon', as Muslims had to be summoned anew to Islam.[40] The *da'wa* mission became and remained the methodological and organizational cornerstone of the movement. Being a schoolteacher, al-Banna' deplored the general lack of Qur'anic knowledge among the populace; to him, religious education was the key to 'reforming the self', so the Brothers spent considerable effort in providing this.[41] Additionally, the Brothers addressed social and economic needs by providing education on morality and public health, and by setting up businesses, schools and even hospital clinics,[42] becoming a full-fledged social movement and gaining widespread support for its integrated efforts.

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[36] al-Banna', *Message*, 7, Wendell, *Five Tracts,* 89
[37] Lia, *The Society*, 203.
[38] Ibid., 204, Mitchell, *The Society*, 261.
[39] al-Banna', *Message,* 10-12
[40] Lia, *The Society*, 33
[41] Ibid., 56-57
[42] Mitchell, *The Society*, 274-279, 289-291

Simultaneously, al-Banna' set up a strong organizational structure with hierarchal characteristics. Al-Banna's authoritative style initially sparked severe arguments between him and other leaders, but in the end al-Banna's authority triumphed. The central executive organ became the "Guidance Bureau", which supervised all the Brotherhood's committees and was answerable only to the "General Guide" of the movement (al-Banna' being the first).[43] Also, the Consultative "Shura" Council was set up. Based on the Islamic concept of *Shura,* meaning 'consultation',[44] the body met once a year to elect the Guidance Bureau members and provide general advice on the progress of the organization.[45] Full obedience of members to their superiors was demanded; al-Banna' made sure this was adhered to by requiring all new members to take an oath of allegiance (*bay'a)* to him personally, or to his representatives in the branch organizations throughout the country.[46] Thus, the Muslim Brotherhood developed into a grassroots social movement with a highly organized and hierarchal structure, adopting a top-down chain-of-command, with clear boundaries between those who were and were not members of the *Jama'a* ('group' or 'society'), as the Brotherhood became known.

Repression, Qutbism and its aftermath

As the Brotherhood rapidly grew in the 1930's and 1940's, its impact in society became larger and its language more defiant. Riding the momentum, its young members became impatient to effect change, especially vis-à-vis the British-controlled political establishment.[47] Ultimately, this led to violence; Prime Minister Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi was assassinated by a young Brotherhood member on 28 December 1949. However, this prompted the retaliatory murder of Hasan al-Banna' himself on 12 February 1949.[48] Hassan Isma'il al-Hudaybi, a jurist, succeeded the deceased al-Banna', but the Brotherhood was bereft of its iconic leader.

Antagonism between the government and the Brotherhood continued when a group of army officers deposed the government in July 1952 and forced the British out of Egypt, ushering in a new era of military-led governance. Jamal 'abd al-Nasir, becoming president of Egypt in 1954, escaped an alleged assassination attempt by a Muslim Brother in 1952, and the

[43] Lia, *The Society*, 296.
[44] Mitchell, *The Society*, 247
[45] Ibid., 168
[46] Lia, *The Society*, 104.
[47] Ibid., 256
[48] Ibid., pp. 67-71

Brotherhood was vigorously shut down and persecuted, with dozens of Brothers executed and thousands imprisoned.[49] Among the prisoners was Sayyid Qutb.

In the two decades of severe government repression of the Brotherhood, Qutb developed new Islamist ideas which created serious divisions within the Brotherhood and inspired a new era of violent Islamism. The essence of Qutbist thought is the adoption of two juxtaposed concepts mutually excluding each other; humankind either lived under *hakimiyyat allah* (God's sovereignty) or in *jahiliyya* (ignorance).[50] According to Qutb, "all the existing so-called 'Muslim' societies are also jahili societies … because their way of life is not based on submission to God *alone*." [51] Qutb then adopted the concept of *jihad* as a violent struggle against the *jahili* societies with the aim of imposing *hakimiyyat allah*.[52]

Qutb's writings gained considerable traction within Brotherhood ranks, but with the release of Brotherhood leaders by al-Nasir's successor Anwar al-Sadat, the Qutbist trend was separated from the Brotherhood's Jama'a.[53] In a tract called *Du'at la Qudat* (Preachers not Judges), the Brotherhood leadership negated Qutb's polarized worldview, arguing that ultimate judgment over mankind lies with God alone.[54] Moreover, *Du'at la Qudat* claimed that living in a non-Islamic system of state does not mean a Muslim cannot live by the tenets of an Islamic order: he can still live by God's law and the Islamic way of life that derives from that law.[55] In this way, Brotherhood leaders re-established their authority over the Jama'a, and, following al-Banna's example, focused on rebuilding the organization's structure.

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[49] Christina De Gregorio, "Islamism in Politics: Integration and Persecution in Egypt", *Al-Jami'ah*, 48 (2010), 349.

[50] Barbara Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology,* London: Routledge, 2009, 53-54, Giles Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt*. Translated by Jon Rothschild, London: Al-Saqi Books, 1985, 47-50.

[51] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, Beirut/Damascus: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1978, 152, my italics

[52] Qutb, *Milestones*, 93-98, John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islam*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2011, 221-223.

[53] Sayyid Qutb himself was hanged by al-Nasir in 1966.

[54] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* 149-150

[55] Ibid., 143-144

2. *The Mubarak Years*

'Umar al-Tilmisani and the move towards electoral politics

Arguably the most significant move undertaken by the Muslim Brotherhood during the Mubarak era was its decision to participate in electoral politics, in cooperation with both Islamist and non-Islamist parties.[56] Building on the idea, as presented in *Du'at la Qudat*, that a Muslim could enact Islamic ideals while accepting a secular state and its political framework, the Brotherhood's leaders began to advocate their Islamist vision as compatible with and achievable through the secular system of state in Egypt.

'Umar al-Tilmisani, who was the group's General Guide from 1972 to 1986, was a leading force in the Brotherhood's new outlook, both practically and ideologically. Al-Tilmisani wrote "Religious Government– a System Foreign to Islam" and "Islam and Religious Government"[57], to expound his views concerning Islam and governance. However, these works must be evaluated in the context of developments in Egypt and in the wider Muslim world: the rise of Islamist militant groups in Egypt, such as Jama'a al-Islamiyya and al-Jihad, who were inspired by Sayyid Qutb's ideas, and the installation of a theocratic regime in Iran raised new questions about the relation between Islam and governance, and put a certain pressure on the Brotherhood to show how it related itself to politics.[58] In the two documents, al-Tilmisani clearly distances himself from militant Islamists and theocracies by differentiating between "religious government" and "Muslim government".[59] Religious government, he argued, is a system in which the ruler, legitimizing his rule as sanctioned by God, can rule by decree, according to his personal fashion; such a system, according to al-Tilmisani, is bound for corruption and violence. Rather, al-Tilmisani envisioned a Muslim government, wherein the ruler's principle task is to implement Islamic law; if a ruler failed doing so, the 'people' should oust him. Representation of those 'people' is secured through

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[56] Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013, 46-75, al-Din Ibrahim, Sa'd, "Egypt's Islamic Activism in the 1980s", *Third World Quarterly,* 50, (April 1988), 646-647

[57] Annette Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood and its quest for hegemony in Egypt: State-Discourse and Islamist Counter-Discourse", PhD dissertation, University of Hamburg 2012, 101.

[58] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 99-100, al-Din Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Activism", 647

[59] Ibid., 101.

the adoption of *shura*, 'constultation'. In al-Tilmisani's view, the ruler is thus obligated to consult the people on Islamic law, and the latter can oust the ruler from his post should his rule be found in violation of *shari'a*.[60] However, while arguing that modern political institutions are capable of exercising *shura*, al-Tilmisani does not stipulate which institution specifically is to fulfil the role of *shura*.[61] Nevertheless, by further developing the Brotherhood's political thought as well as bringing its political ideals in line with existing political institutions in Egypt, al-Tilmisani broke new ground and set the Brotherhood on the path to political participation.

Al-Tilmisani's ground-breaking views reflected changes within the Brotherhood's ranks. A new influx of young and politically ambitious members started to enter the Brotherhood by the early 1980's. Described by Wickham and Shehata as the "middle generation",[62] many of those had become activists through the influential student movements in the 1970's, criticizing Sadat's economic policies and his *rapprochement* with the United States, and had come into contact with Islamism through movements such as al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and the Muslim Brotherhood, who were very active on university campuses throughout that decade.[63] Prominent members of this generation like Abu al-'Ila Madi, 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh and 'Isam al-'Aryan had gained much political experience and, importantly, had worked together with non-Islamist political actors, providing the Brotherhood with experiences and skills it had hitherto lacked.[64] While their outward outlook would set them on confrontational terms with the Brotherhood's older members, focusing on the *da'wa*-oriented mission of the movement, al-Tilmisani recognized the ambitions of the younger members and the need to reform. Thus, he acted as an

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[60] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 101-102

[61] Ibid., 102.

[62] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 59, Dina Shehata, *Islamists and non-Islamists in the Egyptian opposition: Patterns of conflict and cooperation*, PhD dissertation, Georgetown University 2007, 97. I have adopted Shehata's and Wickham's term "middle generation", as I found it to be the most nuanced.

[63] 'Abdullah al-'Aryan, *Answering the call: popular Islamic activism in Sadat's Egypt*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, 105-145, Geneive 'Abdo, *No God but God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 59

[64] 'Abdo, *No God but God,* Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 37, Ninette Fahmi, "The Performance of the Muslim Brotherhoodin the Egyptian Syndicates: An Alternative Formula for Reform?", *Middle East Journal*, 52 (1998), 554.

intermediary between the old and new generation, maintaining stability in the movement and steering the Brotherhood's growing energy and resources into a dual direction.[65]

The new outlook was (in good Brotherhood tradition) promptly met with action. In anticipation of the 1984 parliamentary elections, the Brotherhood made a remarkably bold step by allying itself to the secular-nationalist Wafd Party, in a bid to gain seats in the Assembly.[66] Although this certainly raised a number of eyebrows within Brotherhood ranks, the move is a good example of how influential the new outlook had already become. The Brotherhood gained a meagre seven to eight seats out of the 58 secured by the alliance as a whole, but it proved only to be a small first step. By the next parliamentary elections in 1987, the Brotherhood, in an "Islamic alliance" with the al-'Amal and al-Ahrar Party, gained 36 to 38 seats (out of a total of 56 secured by the alliance) and were suddenly the largest opposition bloc in parliament.[67]

Muslim Brothers into the syndicates and parliament

While the Brotherhood's attempt at parliamentary politics was a success on paper, in practice it still had limited power to influence policy. Although the Brotherhood consistently called for the implementation of *shari'a,* which, as they argued, was obligatory under the 1971 Constitution,[68] their advice went largely unheeded by Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). Thus, the Brotherhood sought to broaden their base via other platforms as well. They found such a platform in the professional syndicates; these institutions, while in principle being under Mubarak's wing through the government-appointed *naqib* (syndicate president), nevertheless elected its own members, thus lending Muslim Brothers the opportunity to contest its seats.[69] Moreover, professional syndicates provided the activist- and middle-class oriented Brotherhood with a direct possibility to implement policy regarding the professionals they represented, thus having an opportunity to show fellow

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[65] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 90, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 52.
[66] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 82-83, Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 139, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* 49. It must be noted that, because the Muslim Brotherhood did not receive legal status under Mubarak, it could only run for parliamentary seats either as independent candidates or under the wing of another party.
[67] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 47, al-Din Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Activism", 646-647, Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 115-116. The sources disagree on the exact amount of seats won by the Brotherhood.
[68] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 56. Article 2 of the Eygptian Constitution stated that the country's legislation should be based on shari'a principles.
[69] 'Abdo, *No God but God* ,72-73, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 59, 61

Egyptians what Brotherhood policies would look like. The Brotherhood's venture into the syndicates proved to be very successful: in syndicate elections from 1987 to 1992, the Brothers captured 80% of board seats in the doctors' syndicate, 75% in the lawyers' syndicate, and 88,5% in the engineers' syndicate,[70] margins that they largely held until 1995.[71]

Moreover, after their impressive victories, the Brothers gained a reputation of good governance: genuinely representing all its members, they set about eliminating corruption in syndicates, boosting its financial reserves, setting up affordable health insurance, loans and pensions for its members, pressuring the government to increase professionals' salaries, and speaking out on political matters such as unemployment, government use of torture and even foreign affairs.[72] Perhaps most conspicuously, the Brotherhood leadership genuinely upheld regular democratic processes in syndicate elections: whether they resulted in a Brotherhood victory or loss, syndicate elections overseen by Brotherhood members were credited by others for their regularity and fairness.[73] The Brothers gained such a favourable standing that even Copts voted for them.[74]

At the same time, the Brothers in parliament were increasingly framing their Islamist goals in liberal democratic discourse. To implement *shari'a* in society was not propagated anymore as an obligatory submission of the people to God's superior directives, but as the natural will of the majority Muslim population. Under the auspices of Hamid Abu al-Nasr, who had succeeded al-Tilmisani as General Guide and continued on the path set out by his predecessor, the Brothers campaigned for parliamentary seats in 1987 promising on "accomplishing the hopes and wishes of the public' by removing contradictions between people's faith and the laws that governed them".[75] Not only was implementing *shari'a* framed as a democratic task, but also as a way to defend constitutional rights. Applying *shari'a* would defend the people's economic and social rights, as the Brothers pointed out that decades of secular governance had failed to do so.[76]

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[70] 'Abdo, *No God but God,* 90, 95, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 60,
[71] Fahmi, "The Performance of the Muslim Brotherhood", 552-553
[72] 'Abdo, *No God but God,* 93, 97-98, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 61-62.
[73] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* 63
[74] 'Abdo, *No God but God* , 94-95
[75] Sumita Pahwa, "Secularizing Islamism and Islamizing Democracy: The Political and Ideational Evolution of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers 1984-2012", *Mediterranean Politics*, 18 (2013), 139
[76] Utvik, Bjorn Olav, "Filling the vacant throne of Nasser: The economic discourse of Egypt's Islamist opposition", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 17 (1995)

The Brothers' liberal democratic discourse is perhaps most interestingly exemplified in their categorization of *shari'a.* Brotherhood leaders started to differentiate between fixed *shari'a* rulings (*ahkam*), which are to be followed to the letter, and flexible rulings, which are time and place sensitive, and thus need human interpretation (*ijtihad*). While the Brothers applied *ahkam* to moral-cultural realm (for example rulings forbidding alcohol, drugs or usury), they argued that *ijtihad* should be applied to rulings in the political and economic realm,[77] thus leaving the question of state structure and the exact position of *shari'a* in state law open to debate. As a consequence, Brotherhood MP Muhammad 'Abd al-Quddus argued in parliament in 1984, *shari'a* was in need of individual freedom and freedom of speech in order to practice *ijtihad.*[78] This argument was extended to Brotherhood leaders' acceptance of political pluralism. In parliament, the argument ran, different political parties can represent different opinions regarding the application of *shari'a*, just as the traditional schools of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) represent a variety of thought.[79] However, the Brothers' embracing of political pluralism and individual freedom shows to be strongly limited, because both values were only allowed within the boundaries of *shari'a*.

The Muslim Brotherhood's framing of their Islamist visions in a liberal democratic discourse might be seen as a deceptive façade: while the Brothers used liberal democratic language to assure others their goals were in line with liberal democratic values, they made no attempt to intrinsically adopt those values. However, internal debates on liberal and democratic principles were definitely on-going. In 1994, the Muslim Brotherhood released "Treatise on the Shura Principle in Islam and Party Pluralism in the Muslim Society",[80] an official Muslim Brotherhood publication released in 1994, probably written by the younger reformist members under General Guide Hamid Abu al-Nasr.[81] In this treatise, the Brotherhood officially repeated their acceptance of liberal democratic concepts such as

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[77] Pahwa, "Secularizing Islamism", 196-197
[78] Ibid., 197
[79] Ibid., 194
[80] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 130, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 69, Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 92, Mona al-Ghobashi, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 37 (2005), 382-382. Carrie Wickham calls the document "The Musim Woman in Muslim Society and Shura and Party Pluralism", which was "issued in March 1994. (Wickam 69) This document seems to combine two issues (the second being on the 'Muslim Woman') that Ranko, Shehata and al-Ghobashi present as two separate documents.
[81] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 130

political pluralism (viewing pluralism as "a necessary institutionalization of God-given differences"[82]) and freedom of thought, and explicitly called for the establishment of a written Constitution in order to separate the powers, especially to establish judicial oversight over the executive power.[83] However, the Brotherhood's endorsement of these concepts was conditional: "…as long as the *shari'a* is the highest Constitution."[84] Like al-Tilmisani had done before, the treatise interpreted the concept of *shura* as a right that 'the people' have over the executive power, albeit in clearer and stronger wording. Absolute power is in the hands of the *Umma* and they can choose their 'ruler' as they see fit, and check or depose him if he does not rule according to the Constitution or *shari'a*.[85] Thus, it was 'the people' as the source of all temporal power, based on their will to live according to God's law. In addition, the Brotherhood released "Statement to the People", in April 1995, reiterating the Brotherhood's commitment to abovementioned democratic principles, for example popular sovereignty: "The legitimacy of government in a Muslim society should be derived from the consent and choice of the people (…) people have the right to invent different systems, formulas, and techniques that suit the conditions."[86] Also, it acknowledged full citizenship and civic rights for Copts, stating that "they have the same rights and duties as we do (…) Whoever acts or believes otherwise is forsaken by us."[87]

For all their clarity on general issues, these documents do not clarify an important part of the Islamist project, namely, who or which specific institution has the right to interpret *shari'a.* Although "Treatise on the Shura Principle in Islam and Party Pluralism in the Muslim Society" states that *shari'a* should be upheld by an "independent judiciary",[88] it does not clarify what institution exactly. Pahwa notes that the Brotherhood "called for applying shariah largely within existing legislative and constitutional arrangements" and that they "sought to use the courts, the legislature and the Azhari establishment to implement shariah."[89] Exact stipulation on who should interpret *shari'a*, therefore, remained conspicuously absent.

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[82] al-Ghobashi, "The Metamorphosis", 383
[83] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 132, al-Ghobashi, "The Metamorphosis", 383, Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 92.
[84] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 69.
[85] Ibid., 69, al-Ghobashi, "The Metamorphosis", 383
[86] al-Ghobashi, "The Metamorphosis", 385
[87] Ibid., 385.
[88] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 69.
[89] Pahwa, "Secularizing Islamism", 198.

Thus, while these documents show that the Brotherhood started to intrinsically accept liberal democratic values and the existing political framework, the conditional acceptance of these concepts within the limits of *shari'a* meant a continuing ideological ambiguity with the Brotherhood. Perhaps, they highlight a generational struggle between the older, *da'wa* oriented group and the middle generation reformists, as Carrie Wickham has suggested.[90] Whatever the case, the apparent ambiguities within these texts would be of consequence later on.

All the while, the Brotherhood's less political, *da'wa*-oriented activities continued, typically led by the Brotherhood's veteran leaders, who were steeped into the traditional way of Islamist activism initiated by founder Hasan al-Banna', and were reluctant to mingle in politics due to their experience in prison in the 1950's and 1960's.[91] Spanning a vast network, the Brothers continued to set up or affiliate themselves with organizations providing social services to the poor, hospitals and clinics and schools. In addition, the Brotherhood continued to organize education of the Qur'an and other Islamic knowledge in mosques, as they had done since the 1920's. Furthermore, *da'wa*-minded Islamic entrepreneurs set up businesses, providing jobs and much needed capital to support the Brothers' political ambitions.[92] Ironically, even the apolitical activism turned out to have considerable political value: the Brotherhood's hard work in virtually every segment of society earned them broad grassroots support, leverage that was turned into "immediate political weight"[93] when the Brotherhood organized mass rallies in 1991 to openly decry Egypt's participation in the U.S.-led Gulf War in Kuwait and Iraq. Also, when in 1992 Cairo was hit by a strong earthquake, leaving around 500 dead and thousands without homes, Islamist health teams were much quicker in reacting to the disaster, being the first to provide immediate relief to victims, thus publicly embarrassing government health services.[94] In

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[90] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 69-70.
[91] al-Din Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Activism", 640-641, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 68-69.
[92] al-Din Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Activism", 641-644.
[93] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 117
[94] 'Abdo, *No God but God* , 97, Hisham al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy : The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982- 2000.* London and New York: Tauris, 2004.

149-151, Joel Campagna, "The Andrew Wellington Cordier Essay: From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years", *Journal of International Affairs*, 50 (1996), 292-293.

addition, the engineers' syndicate began inspecting houses and donated money for repair.[95] By the mid-1990's, the Brotherhood clearly demonstrated its willingness and ability to provide a wide array of social services to Egyptians in competition with the government, thereby challenging the government's legitimacy in the socio-economic realm.

State repression and internal division

By the beginning of the 1990's, the Egyptian government had become increasingly wary of the political growth and assertive role of the Muslim Brotherhood. Although it had boycotted the 1990 parliamentary elections, it had gained control of the most important professional syndicates in the country; these had asserted a stronger political presence by setting up a joint committee to coordinate between the syndicates, holding public conferences and issuing political statements.[96] Also, the Brothers continued to expand their strong presence in public life in general, of which Mubarak was well aware: the mass demonstrations in response to the Gulf War of 1991 and the Brothers' strong response to the 1992 earthquake were huge embarrassments for a government worried not only about its popularity at home, but also abroad. In addition, there was a strong upsurge in domestic violence after 1990 from groups such as al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, who attempted to assassin several ministers. In this context, the government moved increasingly to blur the lines between violent and non-violent Islamists.[97]

Despite some minor measures taken earlier, it was at the parliamentary elections of 1995 that the Mubarak government started to forcefully remove the Muslim Brotherhood from their positions. These parliamentary elections were marked by a level of intimidation and violence unprecedented in Mubarak's time as president. Hundreds of Brotherhood leaders and campaigning agents were rounded up and jailed, including prominent political figures such as 'Isam al-'Aryan, Muhammad Habib and Abu al-Futuh.[98] The crackdown on the Brotherhood also put an end to Brotherhood influence in the syndicates: syndicate leaders such as 'Isam al-'Aryan were detained and the syndicates were put under direct government surveillance, while confiscating the syndicates' documents and freezing their bank accounts.[99] The government now started to label the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist

[95] 'Abdo, *No God but God*, 96-97
[96] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 62
[97] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 128
[98] 'Abdo, *No God but God* 73-75, Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 143
[99] 'Abdo, *No God but God* , 79, Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 144-145

organization, in which there was no distinction between them and the militant Islamists. During the mass trials of Brotherhood members in 1995, the Brotherhood was branded as "enemies of the nation" and it was claimed that the defendants were part of and international terrorist network.[100] Due to these heavy repressive government measures, the Brothers largely retreated from public life after 1995.

The repressive reaction from the government now put pressure on the Brotherhood's internal relations. The older generation within the Brotherhood, who had experienced full-fledged state repression before and thus had advocated caution, saw their case now justified. Many of the more outspoken and visible Brotherhood members were middle generation leaders in the syndicates, and many of them had consequently been detained. This meant the older generation was now gaining leverage in the Brotherhood's leadership, both numerically and in advocating their point of view: it was futile to press political issues too far, they argued, because sooner or later the government would start to feel threatened and crack down on the Brotherhood.

Many of the remaining middle generation, though, did not buy the older members' mantra. Over the years, they had become impatient with their excessive caution, and also disagreed with some of the older members' viewpoints on Islam and society, which they found out-dated. Following a new trend of Islamic thought, called the New Islamic Discourse, the middle generation echoed the ideas of scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, which attempted to integrate Islam with Western values of individual freedoms, political pluralism, and universal human rights.[101] For instance, al-Qaradawi held that the ideal Islamic state, which he advocated for, was civil in nature, not religious.[102] The middle generation members' more inclusive approach to civil society at large helped push the abovementioned documents in 1994 and 1995. The continuing political restraint by the older generation, as well as their domination at the decision-making level in the Brotherhood, would prove no longer tolerable for some middle generation members. Led by Abu al-'Ila Madi, they set up the Wasat (meaning "middle") Party, with which they attempted to embody their more progressive ideas. There are four main differences between the Wasat Party program and official Muslim Brotherhood ideology. First, Wasat Party members state

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[100] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 146-147
[101] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 68, Pahwa, "Secularizing Islamism", 195
[102] Rubin Barry, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist Movement*, Palgrave MacMillan 2010, 27

that concerning *shari'a,* human interpretation (*ijtihad*) must always be applied, also in the moral-cultural realm, in order to correctly apply God's law in modern times.[103] Second, the Wasat Party program states that the *umma* is the absolute source of political power, without any reservations. While the Brotherhood attributes a similar power to the *umma,* they do so because they want the law of God, thus implicitly implementing a reservation on this point. Also, the Brotherhood and the Wasat Party adopt a different interpretation of the concept of *umma*: while the Brothers understand *umma* as the 'community of (Muslim) believers', the Wasat Party views the *umma* as a 'national community', including all Egyptians.[104] Third, the latter's conception of *umma* leads the Wasat Party to interpret pluralism in a much broader way, also meaning cultural and religious pluralism, albeit within "the Islamic civilizational project"[105]. By contrast, the Brothers only have room for pluralism within the boundaries of interpreting *shari'a*. Fourth, Wasat Party members grant full equality to Christians and women in Egyptian society, including the right to hold the presidential office, a position the Muslim Brothers bar women and Christians from.[106] The Wasat Party's founders also included women and Copts.[107] In all, while the Wasat Party program is not free of ambiguities (for example, the question of who should interpret *shari'a* was left unanswered[108]), they showed a willingness to unambiguously embrace liberal democratic concepts such as pluralism and popular sovereignty, thus highlighting the ambiguity of the Brothers' ideology.

While many middle generation members, either in deed or in spirit, supported the Wasat initiative, many others of their generation did not. Dubbed by Carrie Wickham as the "conservative pragmatics"[109], these middle generation Brotherhood members had embraced participation in Egyptian politics and the application of *shari'a* through the existing political system, but did not agree on the more progressive ideas of their reformist-minded counterparts. Conservative pragmatics, in contrast to the older generation, were much more open to political participation, and were active in civil and political institutions, holding

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[103] Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party", *Comparative Politics*, 36 (2004), 208, Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 99.

[104] Wickham, "The Path to Moderation", 209.

[105] Ibid., 209

[106] Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 99-100

[107] Ibid., 100.

[108] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 83

[109] Ibid., 133.

public administrative positions. They were especially well represented in the Muslim Brotherhood's parliamentary faction, spearheading their efforts with calling on the government to implement *shari'a* in Egypt and uphold the correct democratic procedures, adopting the liberal democratic discourse to achieve these ends.[110] Leaders in this group included Muhammad 'Abd al-Quddus, Sa'd al-Katatni, businessman Khairat al-Shatir, Muhmmad Habib and Muhammad Mursi.[111] Because of their public image and influence whilst maintaining good relations with the older generation, this group were to become of prime importance in the Brotherhood in the post-Mubarak era.

The Wasat Party initiative also highlighted the reformists' frustration with their inability to change the Brotherhood from within; although they certainly influenced the ideological evolution the Brotherhood had witnessed in the preceding decade, they were kept at distance from the Brotherhood's core decision-making bodies, most importantly the Guidance Bureau.[112] However, although the older generation seemed to be in control of their organization (especially after the government crackdown of 1995), their control did not lead to the revocation of the documents produced in 1994 and 1995, or an abandonment of participatory politics. Indeed, many among the older members were not against political participation per se; they mainly agitated against the reformists' boldness and pace with which they had placed the Brotherhood in the political spotlight. In addition, a succession of General Guides, realizing the need to keep the Brotherhood updated with its time, continued to act as intermediaries between conservative and progressive members. In this fashion, Mustafa Mashhur, succeeding Hamid Abu al-Nasr as General Guide in 1996, upheld the relatively progressive ideological trajectory the Brotherhood had theoretically embarked upon. Leading the Brothers through its government-imposed period of isolation, he channelled the movement's energies into the preparation of the upcoming parliamentary elections of 2000.[113]

The 2000's: the Brotherhood between assertion and restraint

The political situation in the latter half of the 1990's had put both the government and the Brotherhood in a complex position. Mubarak had kept the country in a state of political repression for a number of years, which was becoming more and more untenable seen the

[110] Ibid., 134-135.
[111] Pahwa, "Secularizing Islamism", 197, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 134
[112] Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 97.
[113] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 149-151

pressures society at large was put under. He would have to release the strains or face outright revolt. At the same time, it was clear he had not succeeded in eliminating the Muslim Brotherhood, his main opponent. The Brothers' grassroots base, largely set up and maintained by its older members, proved unbreakable for the government. Being only able to apply pressure from above, Mubarak now had to release that pressure and grant more political freedoms. As a result, the parliamentary elections of 2000 were held in a much more open atmosphere; Mubarak had handed full judicial control over the elections to the courts.[114] Also, the government released all of the Brotherhood members jailed in 1995.[115]

The Brotherhood, for their part, sought for a way of manoeuvring the new political climate. On the one hand, the newfound freedoms invited renewed political assertion, but the Brothers were very wary of a renewed crackdown from the government. In addition, the return of influential younger generation leaders from jail such as 'Isam al 'Aryan and Abu al-Futuh accentuated the generational divide within the Brotherhood. As a consequence, the Brotherhood would continue to swing "between Self-Assertion and Self-Restraint"[116] throughout the 2000's.

In 2000, though, the Brothers agreed that the best way to proceed was with utmost caution. While having prepared long for the 2000 parliamentary elections, the Brotherhood limited its participation, so as not to provoke repressive reactions from the government; it fielded a number of 75 candidates, and even changed its main slogan of "al-Islam huwa al-Hall" (Islam is the solution) to "al-Dustur huwa al-Hall" (the constitution is the solution).[117] The self-imposed caution quickly proved to be of great importance: the NDP, facing losses in the first round of voting, quickly resorted to its routine tactics of harassment and intimidation. Although the Brotherhood ultimately gained 17 seats in parliament,[118] roughly the number of all oppositional parties combined, it tried to downplay it gains, stressing that the Brotherhood "wants to participate in the system" and that "we don't want to change the Constitution".[119] The Brotherhood's tendency to show itself as a regular, non-confrontational

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[114] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 97, Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 156
[115] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 97
[116] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 96
[117] Ibid., 97. The slogan of "al-Dustur huwa al-Hall"still covered on of the Broterhood's main objectives, as Article 2 of the Egyptian constitution still heralded shari'a law as the main source of the country's legislation.
[118] International Crisis Group, "Islamism in North Africa II: Egypt's Opportunity", Cairo/Brussels 2004,12
[119] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 99

political participator provided opportunity for the middle generation reformists' progressive ideals, as Abu al-Futuh was quick to announce that "the first priority for us is the same as it is for all other groups-freedom; real democracy and real freedom for everyone."[120] Similarly, in the syndicate elections of 2001, the Brotherhood limited the number of seats it contested and opened its candidate lists to outsiders, even members of Mubarak's NDP.[121]

The Brotherhood's self-imposed restraint, however important it seemed at first, would prove unfortunate for the movement's standing in society at large over the next few years. The first half of the 2000's saw the rise of new protest movements with grassroots support, producing new generations of protest leaders who would eventually play an important part in the downfall of Mubarak in February 2011. Stirred by issues such as the second Palestinian *intifada* in the fall of 2000 and the U.S. invasion of 'Iraq in March 2003, protests broke out in Egypt's main urban areas, which slowly took a turn from criticizing foreign powers to criticizing the Egyptian government.[122] One of the most prominent movements emerging out of this trend was Kifaya. Although Kifaya (meaning "enough") originally had a small popular base, it was distinct in two ways. First, it was created on a genuine cross-partisan base. Its members, which included ex-Brother Abu al-'Ila Madi, came from all corners of the political spectrum, but were united in their clear-cut opposition to the Mubarak government.[123] Second, Kifaya adopted a confrontational discourse not dared by anyone else before.[124] To be sure, they were in an easier position to do so, since groups like the Brotherhood were under much closer security surveillance. However, their radical slogans were quickly picked up by different media and widely disseminated, thus amplifying the movement's impact. Kifaya's performance prompted a response from the Muslim Brothers, who staged large rallies in 2005, albeit with the typical caution. However, when Kifaya members tried to work together with the Brotherhood, the latter's older generation leaders were reluctant to fully cooperate with the pronounced secularists.[125] Kifaya thus went ahead searching for other allies, leaving the Brotherhood potentially side-lined for future events.

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[120] Ibid., 99
[121] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 157-159, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 99
[122] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 99-101, Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013, 233, Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 159-160
[123] Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 114
[124] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 108-110
[125] Ibid., 114-117

2005 elections and the older generation's growing influence

The 2005 parliamentary elections and its aftermath led the Muslim Brotherhood through a rollercoaster of events, and set the parameters determining the Muslim Brothers' political position and attitude towards Egyptian society on the eve of the popular uprising that toppled President Mubarak in February 2011. The Brotherhood, emboldened by the relatively open political climate of the last few years, felt confident enough to field 160 candidates for the 2005 parliamentary elections.[126] Meanwhile one year earlier, Muhammad Mahdi 'Aqif became the new General Guide succeeding Ma'moun al-Hudaybi (son of former Guide Hasan al-Hudaybi), who had died early after succeeding Mustafa Mashhur in 2002.[127] 'Aqif, following the trend set by 'Umar al-Tilmisani, was clearly of the older generation yet acted as a mediator between the different factions within the movement, realising that embracing younger generations was important for the future of the movement.[128] The Brothers' campaigning was a typical example of their juggling between assertiveness and moderation. While they revived their hard-line Islamist slogan "al-Islam huwa al-Hall", they balanced this with conciliatory slogans such as "Partnership, not Domination".[129] Most importantly, the Brotherhood used different discourses depending on the audience it targeted. Whilst they adopted a moderate tone towards the government and (secular) political groups, they used a much more assertive Islamist tone when addressing their grass-roots followers, depicting the Brotherhood as a guardian for Islam, implying that a vote for the Brotherhood "constituted a religious obligation".[130] It is important to remember that the Brotherhood, whilst holding much more complex ideological convictions at the leader level, relied on uncomplicated Islamist language in order to mobilize their enormous support base during elections, most of whom hailed from a lower- to middle-class background and to whom the latter kind of language strongly appealed.[131] The adoption of a clear-cut Islamist discourse was therefore not simply a result of the older and middle generation conservative leadership, but also a result of the democratic forces involved.

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[126] International Crisis Group, "Egypt's Muslim Brothers: Confrontation or Integration?", Cairo/Brussels 2008, 1.

[127] Barry, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* 49-50, Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 101

[128] Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 101.

[129] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 118.

[130] Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 102

[131] Shehata, "Islamists and Non-Islamists", 102.

The Brotherhood tactic handsomely paid off with a historic win: of the 160 candidates 88 won parliamentary seats, or roughly 20% of the total seats, while the ruling NDP gained 145 seats, or 32% of the total.[132] It was the Brotherhood's largest win in their political history, and decisively showed the movement's resilience in both popular representation and organizational abilities after periods of state repression. Immediately after the elections, the Brotherhood's leadership set up a public relations campaign to reassure the world of its commitment to democracy. In an op-ed titled "No need to be afraid of us", Khairat al-Shatir wrote that "the priority is therefore to revitalise political life [in Egypt] so that citizens can join a real debate about the solutions to Egypt's chronic problems" and that "…the domination of political life by a single political party or group, whether the ruling party, the Muslim Brotherhood or any other, is not desirable."[133] But the Egyptian government needed no reassuring: immediately after the first round of voting, the government launched a long-term crackdown intended to systematically curtail the Brotherhood's newfound political influence: more than a thousand Muslim Brothers were detained within the next few years, including prominent businessmen as the government again sought to curtail the groups financing channels.[134] Khairat al-Shatir, for instance, was detained in December 2006.[135]

The government crackdown reinforced a pattern already visible after the previous 1995 crackdown: the older generations' argument of extreme caution in the political realm and a habit of working in the social realm, out of sight of government surveillance, was again justified; many middle generation leaders, both conservative and reformist, who were much more publicly exposed, ended up in jail yet again.[136] The 88 elected Brotherhood parliamentarians, however, enjoyed constitutional protection and could remain in office, representing a large foothold of Brotherhood public presence in a period of state repression.[137] With the publication of two new documents, one of which already published before the crackdown, the older generation's strengthening hand over their organization became more pronounced. In 2004, General Guide Muhammad Mahdi 'Aqif published the "Reform Initiative", a general reform plan for Egypt, followed by the "Draft Party Platform",

[132] International Crisis Group, "Egypt's Muslim Brothers", 1.
[133] Khayrat al-Shatir, "No need to be afraid of us", *the Guardian*, November 23, 2005.
[134] International Crisis Group, "Egypt's Muslim Brothers", 8-10.
[135] Ibid., 10.
[136] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 124.
[137] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 164-165.

(published by the Brotherhood collectively) in 2007.[138] 'Aqif's "Reform Initiative" was remarkable in how similar it was to previous Brotherhood public statements; in fact, the text was almost identical to the Brotherhood campaign platform of the 2000 parliamentary elections.[139] It stressed it support for democratic values, such as designating the people as the source of all authority and calling for individual freedom, also using these values to criticize the government.[140] Interestingly, it also contained a strong support for the traditional *da'wa*-oriented goals of the Brotherhood, calling for "Consolidating respect for *the fixed values of the nation* represented in faith in God and His Books and His Prophets and His Laws (…) Giving the proponents of the *da'wa* the freedom to explain the principles and characteristics of Islam (…) as a guide to all aspects of life," and to "rebuild the Egyptian person".[141] Typically, 'Aqif reinforced the Brotherhood habit of binding democratic values in an Islamic framework: "We affirm our support for a state system which is a republican, parliamentary, constitutional and democratic system *in the framework of the principles of Islam*."[142]

The Draft Party Platform, published in August 2007, was designed to show the outside world "what a [Muslim Brotherhood] party would look like",[143] in a bid to maintain and boost its status as the primal oppositional force in Egypt. It is remarkable in its longevity, being the "the most comprehensive programmatic writing in the history of the organization",[144] totalling 128 pages.[145] In its discourse, it was very similar to 'Aqif's "Reform Initiative" in reiterating conservative viewpoints, albeit more elaborated. The document envisioned a Muslim Brotherhood party as a "civil party with an Islamic frame of reference".[146] In the political realm, the Platform advocated values such as *'adala* (justice), *hurriya* (freedom), and *shura* (consultation), denoting these values as both inherently Islamic and democratic.[147] However, in the moral-cultural realm, liberal democratic values were given much less space. In line with 'Aqif's 'fixed values of the nation', the Draft Party Platform opined that family and public life be governed by the 'fixed rulings' (*ahkam*) of

[138] Ibid., 185
[139] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 105.
[140] Ibid., 105-106
[141] Ibid., 106-107.
[142] Ibid., 106. Emphasis added by Wickham.
[143] International Crisis Group, "Egypt's Muslim Brothers", 16
[144] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 185
[145] International Crisis Group, "Egypt's Muslim Brothers", 16,
Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 124.
[147] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 187-188.

shari'a.[148] This meant, for example, that women should be barred from occupying the position of president, in line with "well established principles of Sharia", as were Christians, two positions which would become major points of contention.[149] However, the Platform's position that legal oversight and interpretation of *shari'a* should be handed to a council of religious scholars was arguably its most glaring controversy. While the Brotherhood had repeatedly stressed they viewed both society and their own political party as civil in nature, the stipulation of the religious council again triggered the fears of their critics, arguing that the Brotherhood, despite their liberal democratic language, still aimed for the establishment of a religious state.[150] Criticism also came from the Brotherhood's reformists, interestingly alleging that a wholly different version of the Party Platform had been in the making earlier under general supervision of 'Isam al-'Aryan, a prominent reformist. After his incarceration in May 2007 by the government, Muhammad Mursi, a middle generation conservative, had taken his place, producing a very different result. [151]

The conservative leadership's failure to convince others of their commitment to democratic principles deepened with the Brotherhood's internal elections from 2008-2010. To be sure, the Brotherhood had considerably ameliorated its internal democratic procedures through revisions of its charter in the past decades. In the 1990's, internal processes were amended, including members of the Guidance Bureau and Shura Council, be elected by secret ballot, rather than being handpicked by influential members. Also, positions on both bodies would be limited to four-year terms.[152] This clearly reflected the reformist influence within the Brothers' ranks, but it was not limited to them only: in an unprecedented move, 'Aqif announced he would step down as General Guide at the end of his 'term', a position traditionally held for life.[153] However, the tight security surveillance on Brotherhood activity seriously impeded holding fair elections; for example, the Shura Council hadn't been able to convene since 1995.[154] The older generation now exploited this situation by pushing ahead with elections, which were done in utmost secrecy, by collecting the votes at the homes of Shura Council members.[155] This manner of conduct reflected the older generation's approach

[148] Ibid., 188-189
[149] International Crisis Group, "Egypt's Muslim Brothers", 16-17.
[150] Ibid., 17.
[151] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 125-126.
[152] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 71-72, 127.
[153] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 171
[154] International Crisis Group, "Egypt's Muslim Brothers", 18.
[155] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 129.

towards the movement in general. With the absence of any supervisory committee, the Guidance Bureau elections of 2009 resulted in a massive win for the older generation; even middle generation conservatives like Muhammad Habib complained about the irregularities surrounding the election.[156] Likewise, in January 2010, Muhammad Badi', a conservative *da'wa*-oriented veteran, was elected as the new General Guide, appointing equally conservative deputies at his side.[157] At the start of the new decade, conservative older and middle generation leaders had "a virtual monopoly over the Brotherhood's executive branch."[158]

2010 parliamentary elections: an uprising in sight

Meanwhile, the political oppositional forces that had emerged since the 2000's were again gaining steam in the latter half on the decade. Massive protests resurged following Egypt's cooperation in the 2007 Gaza blockade, and on April 6th, 2008, textile workers went on strike in Mahalla al-Kubra, resulting in the formation of the April 6th movement, which would become instrumental in the 2011 uprising.[159] Most prominent, however, was the formation of the National Association for Change (NAC), led my Nobel laureate Muhammad al-Barada'i, former head of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency. Al-Barada'i adopted a defiant oppositional discourse, telling the regime in August 2010 to "pack your bags and go."[160] Barada'i succeeded in gathering many oppositional movements and parties under his wing, uniting in a boycott of the 2010 parliamentary elections. But as the biggest oppositional force, the Brotherhood was reluctant to participate in the boycott. Still having 88 members in parliament, it had much to lose of a boycott, and thus awkwardly had a stake in the existing political situation.[161] On the other hand, it fully supported al-Barada'i's calls for reform. The debate within the Brotherhood also raged on the ideational level, with reformist leader al-'Aryan opting against the boycott, arguing that "the lesson is not to be absent (…) When we participate [in elections], the regime has to face us."[162] In the end, the Guidance Bureau decided to participate in the elections, but a number of members publicly distanced itself

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[156] Ibid., 130.
[157] Ibid., 130-131, Daniela Pioppi, "Playing with Fire. The Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian Leviathan", *The International Spectator*, 48 (2013), 55.
[158] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 131.
[159] Ranko, "The Muslim Brotherhood", 168
[160] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 148.
[161] Ibid., 148-149.
[162] Ibid., 149, Abigail Hauslohner, "Egypt's Opposition Splits over Election Boycott", *Time*, October 15, 2010.

from the decision and joined the boycott, highlighting the internal divisions within the movement.[163]

In the end, the elections proved a total sham. Security forces blocked voters from entering polling stations on numerous occasions, reportedly assaulted and arrested opposition candidates and many of their supporters, and government officials indulged in excessive rigging of the results. After the first round, Brotherhood candidates were officially predicted to win zero seats, after which the Brotherhood pulled out of the elections altogether in protest.[164] At last, the Brotherhood's leadership swung to the side of the NAC, eager to not miss the boat of the growing oppositional tide. But the elections revealed two important feats. First, the Guidance Bureau's decision to participate in politics showed that the conservatives, once firmly in control, were still committed to political participation. Second, the Brotherhood revealed itself to be strongly divided internally, changing its course, and alliances, at the last minute.

[163] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 149.
[164] Ibid., 150.

3. *The Post-Mubarak Years*

The Brotherhood's position in and after the uprising

The Brotherhood's role in the popular uprisings in Egypt in January and February 2011 proved influential yet controversial. First, the Brothers were apprehensive: while a collection of youth groups and oppositional parties were planning a march for January 25, annually celebrated as "Police Day" in Egypt,[165] the Brotherhood opted to stay out, fearing immediate government reprisals.[166] A segment of the Brotherhood's youth, however, was adamant in participating and eventually got permission to do so from the leadership. [167] When the January 25 protests turned out to be a sweeping success, the Brotherhood quickly changed its mind and joined protests on January 28, dubbed the "Friday of Rage.[168] The lost momentum was quickly made up for, and by the end of the first week of February, the Brotherhood was the dominant force on the street, demonstrated by the speaker platforms and sound towers it had set up at Tahrir Sqaure, and controlled.[169]

Over the next few weeks, the Muslim Brotherhood saw the balance of power in Egypt shift dramatically in their favour, thanks largely to the Egyptian army. Feeling increasingly side-lined by Mubarak over the decades, [170] its leadership denied Mubaraks request to use force against protestors. Instead, protestors were told the army deemed their demands "legitimate" and "would not use force against them."[171] When Mubarak at last resigned from the presidency on February 11th, 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood found itself to be the only broad-based, well organized popular movement in the country, with the army as the only serious contender for power. Thus, Brotherhood leaders reasoned it was best to keep its

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[165] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 159, Mariz Tadros, *The Muslim Brotherhood in contemporary Egypt: democracy redefined or confined?* London and New York: Routledge, 2012, 29-30

[166] Tadros, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* 30-31

[167] Ibid., 155-157, 160 Dina Shehata, "The fall of the Pharaoh, How Hosni Mubarak's Reign Came to an End", *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 90 (2011), 30.

[168] International Crisis Group, "Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious?", Cairo/Brussels 2011, 3-4, Tadros, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 33

[169] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 167, Tadros, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* 35.

[170] Pioppi, "Playing with Fire", 52 -53, International Crisis Group, "Lost in Transition: the World Accordign to Egypt's SCAF", Cairo/Brussels 2012, 11

[171] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 164.

traditional foe on the friendly side for the time being. When the army put its controversial "Constitutional Declaration" to popular referendum in March 2011, the Brotherhood mobilized its support to vote 'yes'.[172] In turn, the army released Brotherhood leaders like Khayrat al-Shatir from prison.[173]

The 18-day uprising and its stunning result triggered new stirs within Brotherhood ranks. Reformist youth segments, being the Brotherhood's first representation in the uprising, as well as middle-generation reformists, felt the time had come for the Brotherhood to internally reform. Aiming to curb the Guidance Bureau's power over the movement, reformists called for increased independence of the Shura Council, as well as publishing clear procedures for decision-making.[174] However, these calls were the last stand of the increasingly marginalized reformist wing. The conservative leadership was firmly in control of the movement's dealings down to its grassroots activities, including the recruitment of its new members.[175] Leading the movement in traditional fashion, Brotherhood leaders were not prepared to reform. Indeed, the Guidance Bureau had already single-handedly announced the formation of a Brotherhood political party called "Freedom and Justice", on February 21,[176] whilst forbidding members to join or start other political parties.[177] Ultimately, the gulf could not be bridged, and most reformist leaders either quit or were expelled from the Brotherhood, many going on to form political parties of their own.[178] Having restored order to their authority, the Brotherhood leadership went ahead planning for events to come.

The Nahda Project: Khairat al-Shatir's vision

The leadership's future plans all converged in the one word that engulfed the Brotherhood's attention after Mubarak had been brought down: "*Nahda*". The concept of *nahda*, meaning 'renaissance' or 'revival' was probably borrowed from traditional Islamist vocabulary, but in the context of recent events, *nahda* gained a whole new meaning for the Brotherhood. Now

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[172] Tadros, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 40-42 , Pioppi, "Playing with Fire", 56
[173] Ikhwanweb, "Al-Shater thanks Military Council for his release and calls for further reforms", *Ikhwanweb.com*, March 3, 2011
[174] Ashraf al-sharif, "Egypt's New Islamists: Emboldening Reform from Within" *Carnegie endowment for International Peace*, January 12, 2012, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 177, 181-182.
[175] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 183.
[176] Egypt Independent, "Muslim Brotherhood to establish 'Freedom and Justice Party'", *Egypt Independent*, February 21, 2011., Pioppi, "Playing with Fire", 56
[177] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 177, 9 Bedford Row, "The Egyptian Experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Power". London: 9 Bedford Row International, 2015, 10
[178] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 177-180, 9 Bedford Row, "The Egyptian Experience, 10, Jadaliyya "Egyptian Current Party"

that Mubarak, which had always formed a barrier for the Brotherhood's development, was gone, the way was clear for the Brotherhood to revive its own development and that of Egypt.

So what did the Nahda Project look like in practice? The Brotherhood leaders were slow to reveal the actual contents of the project. In fact, the project had still to be set up after Mubarak's downfall. To this end, Khayrat al-Shatir, who was emerging as the leading figure behind the project, opened up a page on his personal website, inviting Brotherhood members to "share their thoughts" concerning the internal development of the Brotherhood.[179] However, while touring the country in a series of lectures, named "Features of Nahda: Gains of the Revolution and the Horizons for Developing"[180], al-Shatir made it clear that the overall framework of the Nahda Project was already decided upon. The lecture he gave before a crowd of fellow Brothers in Alexandria on April 21, 2011, not only reveals this overall framework, but also offers an insight into the rationale of the conservative leadership.

Al-Shatir starts with the core message of his lecture: the *Jama'a* is the primary instrument for reaching the Muslim Brother's goals. He asserts that the overall mission of the Brotherhood, which is "to empower God's religion on Earth, to organize our life and the lives of people on the basis of Islam"[181], can only be achieved by a strong organization and structure.[182] That structure, al-Shatir highlights, "needs to be obeyed and committed to".[183] Al-Shatir then excessively elaborates on the work of the older generation leaders in setting up the "structure" of the Brotherhood after the crackdowns of President al-Nasir in 1954, as well as the hardships endured under Mubarak,[184] pointing out to younger members, who "didn't feel the efforts and hardships endured by the Ikhwan [Brothers] in this period"[185], that they owed the *Jama'a* to their leaders.

Furthermore, al-Shatir points out that the *Jama'a* is not and cannot be the same as a political party. This is because "the political process (…) is only one part of the greater Nahda project", encompassing "politics, economy, society, education, morals, values…",

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[179] Ikhwanweb, "Al-Shater's website calls on MB members to share their thoughts," *Ikhwanweb.com* March 30, 2011.
[180] Hudson Institute, "Translation: Khairat al-Shater", 128
[181] Ibid., 129
[182] Ibid., 130.
[183] Ibid., 131
[184] Ibid., 138-141, 145-146.
[185] Ibid., 142

adding that "The Gama'a may establish a party"[186]. According to al-Shatir, a Brotherhood political party is merely the political offshoot of the *Jama'a*, and can never supersede it, because "the Gama'a is to remain the instrument which establishes an entire life for the Ummah on the basis of Islamic reference…"[187]. Interesting is al-Shatir's use of *umma,* which straddles the overlapping meanings 'Muslim community' and 'Nation'. As such, al-Shatir envisions the *Jama'a* of the Brotherhood as the instrument through which to reform either the Muslim community or the nation, or both.

Not only does al-Shatir portray the *Jama'a* as the primary instrument, but also as a concept that has been unchanged throughout the Brotherhood's history. Al-Shatir constantly repeats his assertion that it was Hassan al-Banna' that founded the *Jama'a* as the main method of the Brotherhood, and that the Brotherhood has since held on to that method. That is why "the method of the Muslim Brotherhood (…) is not open to developing or change."[188] Interestingly, al-Shatir goes on to show that al-Banna' adopted the concept of *Jama'a* by studying the Prophet Muhammad. For this he takes his fellow Brothers through Islamic history. He describes how Islamic systems of government, law and economy were replaced by Europeans who colonized Islamic countries, and how various thinkers attempted to reform Islam.[189] What al-Banna' understood and all other Muslim reformers did not, al-Shatir argues, is that in order to build society on the basis of Islam, Muslims need to be organized in one body. Al-Banna' found the Prophet Muhammad to be in a historically analogous position, because the Prophet built up an Islamic system of organization in an unaccommodating environment.[190] In constructing this particular historical context, al-Shatir does two things. First, he depicts al-Banna' as the first person since the Prophet who realized that Muslim societies need an overarching structure in order to enforce Islamic primacy in society. Second, he links this method to the Prophet Muhammad, leading al-Shatir to the following conclusion: "Therefore, my brothers, the Muslim Brotherhood's method is that of the Prophet (…) and thus we say that the Muslim who is connected to the Gama'a… is on the *right* path and that the *must not be* on a path other than this one."[191] In sum, not only is the method of *Jama'a* not open to change, but it is the *only* right path for *any* Muslim.

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[186] Ibid., 131
[187] Ibid., 131
[188] Ibid., 133.
[189] Ibid., 133-135.
[190] Ibid., 135-136
[191] Ibid., 136, my italics.

In describing the Brotherhood's overall mission, al-Shatir also points out the stages al-Banna' introduced:[192] "Thus we've learned building [1.] the Muslim individual, [2.] the Muslim family, [3.] the Muslim society, [4.] the Islamic government, [5.] the global Islamic State and [6.] reaching the status of Ustathiya with that state."[193] Interestingly, he also points out the stage the Brotherhood has reached: "we are at the stage of society and about to be in the stage [of] government."[194] According to al-Shatir, the uprising that toppled Mubarak put the Muslim Brotherhood on the brink of reaching the fourth stage, that of attaining an Islamic government. Al-Shatir elaborates on what Islamic government means, and what it doesn't mean: "Our preparation for the stage of Islamic government does not, as the secularists call it, entail us striving to reach the seat of government ourselves."[195] In this sense, al-Shatir portrays the Brotherhood not as a political organization, but as a pressure group, content with simply establishing the foundations of Islamic government: "Our one and only concern is for there to be a government that is faithful to the method of our Lord Almighty, and a government keen on establishing the lives of people on the basis of Islamic reference,

whether it be us or someone else."[196] Thus al-Shatir highlights what he believes to be the basis of an Islamic government: a government that commits itself to the first stage of al-Banna's plan, namely to Islamize the lives of Muslim individuals; a government whose primary goal is to empower God's will in the lives of people.

Further, al-Shatir stresses that in the political realm, the practices of *shura* and *ijtihad* must be adhered to at all times: "all the decision-making mechanisms inside the Muslim society become based on Shura, and … also that the choices of officials and representatives at the various levels should be based on Shura."[197] Clearly, al-Shatir follows the line of the Brotherhood's endorsement for democracy based on the concept of *shura*. On the issue of who can execute *shura* and *ijtihad*, al-Shatir is a bit vaguer. He stresses that it is "the Ummah itself", or at least "the council (parliament) which represents it".[198] However, the practice of *shura* and *ijtihad* are traditionally reserved for scholars in Islamic law. Does this mean that

[192] See Chapter 1, p. 12
[193] Hudson Institute, "Translation: Khairat al-Shater", 130
[194] Ibid., 136
[195] Ibid., 136
[196] Ibid., 136.
[197] Ibid., 137.
[198] Ibid., 138.

parliament can only be filled with law scholars, or is any member of the *umma* eligible to interpret Islamic law in parliament? This is left unspoken by al-Shatir.

Al-Shatir's *nahda* lecture is compelling because the language and framing is so different than in most other public documents or statements produced by the Muslim Brotherhood, and it is important because of its timing. The difference of al-Shatir's lecture lies mostly in its audience. In front of Muslim Brotherhood members, al-Shatir adopts a fully religious framework, framing the efforts of the Brotherhood as executing God's will on earth. Moreover, al-Shatir frames the mission and method of the MB as unchanged since al-Banna' and connects al-Banna' with the Prophet Muhammad, thus framing the Nahda project as a continuation of the work of the Prophet himself. Additionally, al-Shatir constantly conflates the Muslim Brotherhood and its *Jama'a* with the Egyptian nation, mostly through his adoption of the word *umma* and its double meaning. While constantly reiterating that it is the "Ummah's Nahda", he also states that the *Jama'a* is the only workable method for any Muslim. Al-Shatir further on attempts to separate the two saying that "we don't mean that the Muslim Brothers are the Ummah's representatives in the developing the Nahda Project, but rather that they think, plan, spread awareness and market the idea", but these actions arguably come very close to being a representative. It shows that al-Shatir, and the conservative leadership with him, can only perceive Egypt's development through the structure of the *Jama'a*. Having built and defended this structure for decades, they cannot think outside this framework.

Most importantly, however, al-Shatir addresses a crowd of Brothers who have recently witnessed the extraordinary toppling of a well-entrenched ruler and his security apparatus, as well as the heated discussions within the Brotherhood leading to the exit of some well-known middle-generation and young reformist leaders. By highlighting the centrality of the *Jama'a* and its connections to al-Banna' and the Prophet, the lecture is designed to restate the authority of the leadership over its members. It is as though al-Shatir wants to say: 'youngsters, don't get exited now or think you know better. Follow your leaders, because they know what to do.' Framing the *Jama'a* as the cornerstone of Islamic revival and development, even as the supreme organizational unit of Islam itself, al-Shatir attempts to close the Brotherhood's ranks and keep its organization intact.

Tellingly, however, a very different message is conveyed to the outside world. Reporting on al-Shatir's lecture, *Ikhwanweb*, the Muslim Brotherhood's official English website, states that "Al-Shater explained that the group's main objective is to peacefully

establish a *civil state* based on Islamic references" and that "Al-Shater called on Muslim scholars to propose a comprehensive platform which would help establish such a civil and progressive state."[199] This is immediately followed by: "[al-Shatir] stated that the Brotherhood's vigour is drawn from its moral and organizational elements stressing the MB depends on its Shura Council in all its affairs."[200] By highlighting the 'civil' and 'progressive' nature of al-Shatir's call, words he had not used even *once* during the lecture, and by stressing the Brotherhood's commitment to *shura* (and thus democracy), the Brotherhood shows itself very anxious to frame al-Shatir's lecture in a way they deem acceptable for the outside world, which was not all what al-Shatir's lecture was about.

The FJP and its Party Program

Thanks in part to the efforts of public strongmen like al-Shatir, the Brotherhood could restore order within the Brotherhood ranks and focus on preparing for the parliamentary elections, which were held from November 2011 to January 2012. To be sure, the Brotherhood already had plans in store before Mubarak was brought down, as exemplified by the Brotherhood announcing the establishment of its Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) just days after Mubarak's resignation".[201] On April 30, 2011, the Brotherhood's Shura Council decided that Muhammad Mursi would become the party's president, 'Isam al-'Aryan vice-president and Sa'ad al-Katatni secretary general, all three members of the Guidance Bureau, posts that the three would consequently relinquish.[202] Much like in the Mubarak era, the Brotherhood played down fears that it was seeking to dominate Egyptian politics. 'Isam al-'Aryan, at the FJP's first public conference on June 10, assured that the FJP would "not seek to acquire a majority in the parliament alone, but rather to harvest 30 or 35% of the seats" and that it was "willing to form an alliance with the political forces that agree to our principles; whether they are socialists, liberals or other Islamic forces…".[203]

From the outset, the FJP portrayed itself as a party representing all Egyptians, and would thus run its affairs independent of the Brotherhood. For example, Brotherhood

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[199] Ikhwanweb, "Al-Shater: MB calls for civil state based on Islamic references", *Ikwanweb.com* , April 24, 2011, my italics
[200] Ikhwanweb, "Al-Shater: MB calls for civil state"
[201] Ikhwanweb, "MB announces establishment of political party: Freedom and Justice", *Ikwanweb.com*, February 21, 2011, Egypt Independent, "Muslim Brotherhood to establish 'Freedom and Justice Party'", *Egypt Independent,* February 21, 2011
[202] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 174-175, Pioppi, "Playing with Fire", 56-57
[203] Ikhwanweb, "El-Erian to Political Parties: Win Votes Then Discuss Power", *Ikhwanweb.com,* June 13, 2011.

leaders pointed out that the FJP was "approved by 100 Copts and has 1000 female members amongst the party's founders"[204], and Sa'ad al-Katatni stressed that the FJP would not be subservient to the Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau.[205] However, this notion runs counter to al-Shatir's point made in the Alexandria speech that the party is simply a part of the *Jama'a*. Also, reformists pointed out that it was the Guidance Bureau deciding to establish the FJP, not the Shura Council, and that the Shura Council had chosen the FJP's leaders before FJP members themselves could decide on this issue.[206] Muhammad Mursi's later statement of the issue, stating that "the group [being the Brotherhood] took the decision to set up this party, and thus the party represents the political wing of the group … the party remains independent to make its own political decisions and they don't necessarily have to be the same as those of the group"[207], inadvertently confirms the Brotherhood's strong interest and presence in the FJP.

The FJP's "Election Program", released in the run-up for the parliamentary elections, employed a language that could not differ more from al-Shatir's speech. Rather than being the political arm of the *Jama'a*, the FJP was portrayed as a result of the 'Egyptian Revolution' and being completely in the service of achieving "its goals of building a free, stable, strong, leading and advanced country", aspired to by "all Egyptians".[208] Up front it was stated that the FJP was "representing all segments of the Egyptian people" including "Egyptian women"[209], whilst staying silent on the party's origins. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood was only named once in the program, listing its merits in parliament from 2005 to 2010.[210] The FJP presented its political program as built on "four fundamental principles":

> "- Building a strong democratic political system that safeguards the citizens' rights and freedoms, applies the principle of Shura (consultation), and builds an institutional state where the rule of the law is the title of civilized modern human life.

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[204] Ahmad'Alaiba, "Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Guide praises Egypt's revolution for bringing about fair elections", *Ahramonline.org,* August 6, 2011,
[205] Adib, Munir, al-Waziri, Hani, "Al-Ikhwan: hizb al-hurriya wa al-'adala lan yakhda'a li maktab al-Irshad", *Al-Masri al-Yawm,* February 22, 2011
[206] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 175-176
[207] Ikhwanweb, "Morsi Discusses FJP Structure With Turkish Academics", *Ikwanweb.com,* July 10, 2011.
[208] Freedom and Justice Party, "Election Program, The Justice and Freedom Party", December 4, 2011, 2
[209] FJP, "Election Program", 2
[210] Ibid., 4-5.

- Achieving social justice that will preserve the citizens" dignity, safeguard their rights and provide a decent life for all, irrespective of class, status or affiliation…

- Laying the foundation for real integrated development and progress of Egypt, our beloved homeland, with all its human and economic resources, its production and construction...

- Restoring the leadership which Egypt has long since lost under rule of the former regime on all Arab, African, Islamic, international, scientific, cultural, and media levels…"[211]

These principles are summarized in the terms "Freedom … Justice … Development … Leadership", which the FJP claims "represent the great purposes of Sharia".[212] Before addressing the principles in detail, the program stresses three "Urgent Issues". The first is reforming Egypt's security system. According to the FJP, Egypt is haunted by a "lack of security", standing "in the way of achieving the goals of revolution"[213] The second addresses the economy. Listing a number of mostly internal problems, the urgent task is to "restore confidence in the Egyptian economy".[214] The third is fighting corruption, the effort of which is headed by "Establishing an independent, strong and fair judiciary".[215]

While elaborating on the first principle of their policy, the FJP took time to explain their vision of the nature of the state. The program unambiguously stated that the "people" are the source of authority: "That is real pluralism which safeguards the people's freedom to hold executive powers to account"[216]. "This [principle]," the FJP goes on, "requires a new constitution, with enlightened principles of Sharia as its frame of reference and the source to its articles and the subsequent changes in the legal system."[217] Thus, while people are the source of "authority", the *shari'a* is the source for the Constitution and (the changes to) the legal system. Interestingly, the FJP places the task of interpreting *shari'a* (*ijtihad*) in the hands

[211] Ibid., 2-3,
[212] Ibid., 3
[213] Ibid., 6
[214] Ibid., 8
[215] Ibid., 9
[216] Ibid., 10
[217] Ibid., 10.

of "legislative councils",[218] without further elaborating on what these councils exactly are and what their relation is to other state institutions. On the topic of citizenship, the Program states that "the State is based on the principle of citizenship, where all citizens enjoy equal rights … in accordance with the principles of equality"[219], adding that "FJP representatives seek to … Guarantee non-discrimination among citizens in right and duties on the basis of religion, sex or colour."[220] This is immediately followed up by "[FJP representatives seek to] Ensure women's access to all their rights, *consistent with the values of Islamic law, maintaining the balance between their duties and rights.*"[221] Furthermore, the Program stated that "The State is Democratic, *based on* the (Shura) consultation principles", further explaining that "Shura is not merely a political principle" but rather "a moral guide for the behaviour of individuals and their social relations"[222]. Also the FJP reiterated the MB position that "The State is civil and civilian … It is not a military state … nor is it a theocracy … In fact, the rulers in the Islamic state are citizens elected according to the will of the people."

On the topic of state institutions and distribution of power, the Election Program has been more eloquent than previous Brotherhood documents, albeit not presenting anything new. The FJP states that "The State is a constitutional one based on three pillars: the legislature, the judiciary and the executive authority", calling for the "distribution of responsibilities and authority" enforced by constitutional law[223]. According to the program, such as system starts with an independent judiciary, as the FJP seeks to rid the judiciary of its Mubarak-era corruptive impulses by "separating the powers of investigation and prosecution", "Abolishing the President's power as head of the Supreme Judicial Council" and "prohibiting assignment … of judges to positions in ministries and executive branch authorities".[224] Outside the judiciary, the FJP calls for placing all "regulatory institutions and bodies" under the authority of parliament rather than "the executive branch", and for local bureaucracies to be impartial to political preference, its civil servants selected on their competencies rather than connections.[225] Perhaps most conspicuously is the FJP's call for stripping the President from its executive power, handing it to the Prime Minister. However,

[218] Ibid., 11
[219] Ibid., 11
[220] Ibid., 12
[221] Ibid., 12, my italics.
[222] Ibid., 11
[223] Ibid., 11
[224] Ibid., 13
[225] Ibid., 14

the President should retain its executive role "in this transitional period", without stipulating when that period would be over.[226]

In sum, on the topic of the nature of the state, The FJP Election Program seemed to follow the lines of earlier Muslim Brotherhood positions and all the controversies that go with them. The tension between the people and Sharia as the source of authority; the friction between the straightforward claim of equal rights for all citizens based on the principle of equality, yet placing women's rights in the framework of "the values of Islamic law"; the vagueness on the issue of who has the right to interpret *shari'a*; all of these issues seemed to be reproduced in the FJP Election Program. To be sure, as Khalil al-Anani argues, the major points of controversy surrounding the Brotherhood's 2007 Draft Party Platform were now either watered down or omitted. The notion that Christians or women could not become President was left out of the FJP Election Program; the issue of trusting *ijtihad* to a council of religious scholars, sparking strong reactions from outsiders in 2007, was now rephrased to "be entrusted to legislative councils". It seems that the FJP was keen on promoting its political program while trying to avoid too much criticism.[227]

What really stands out in the FJP Election Program, however, is the comprehensive prioritization of liberal, non-religious vocabulary over Islamic notions. Throughout the Program, there is a recurring pattern of how messages are structured. The FJP presents its fundamental principles as Freedom, Justice, Development and Leadership, with the most liberal principle up front, which is then casually followed by 'these principles represent *shari'a*'; similarly, the State "is" democratic, while being "based on" *shura*; the Program asserts that freedom, fundamental rights and equality are absolute priorities for the FJP, followed by saying these are "one of the greatest objectives of Sharia".[228] Even when elaborating on "Leadership", evoking the Islamist principle of Ustadhiya, the sequence is "First, Political Leadership", "Second, Cultural and Media Leadership", with "Religious Leadership" discussed as the last segment under Culture and Media.[229] By staging liberal, non-religious issues up front, the FJP seems eager to show itself as the champion of liberalism, democracy and development rather than the champion of Islam, appealing to the non-Islamist segment of society. By including the Islamic sources of inspiration, the FJP

[226] Ibid., 11-12
[227] Khalil al-Anani, "Egypt's Freedom & Justice Party: to Be or Not to Be Independent", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 1, 2011
[228] FJP, "Election Program", 12
[229] Ibid., 35,37,41

reassures its Islamist constituency in general, and the Brotherhood support base in particular, of its commitment to Islam, but the Islamist message clearly comes in second place. The contrast with al-Shatir's speech could not have been greater.

However, that contrast did not result in loss of votes. The FJP won parliamentary elections with 37,5% of the vote, worth around 44% of the seats in parliament.[230] Equally stunning was the runner-up's result: the Islamic Alliance, a Salafi coalition led by the al-Nur party, gained 25% of seats.[231] The performance of the Salafi parties, born out of the social movement The Salafi Call, was particularly striking because they were complete political novices, being inspired to organize only after the March 2011 referendum on the Constitutional Declaration.[232] Adopting straightforward Islamist goals as well as rhetoric, they had the potential to become an uncomfortable and embarrassing challenge to the Brotherhood's Islamist credentials.

However, the SCAF had been anticipating these results. Following the election results, the SCAF stated that only the president had the right to form a government, based on (its interpretation of) the March 2011 Constitutional Declaration.[233] If it wanted to wield executive power, the Brotherhood had to break their promise of not fielding a presidential candidate. After heated debates, the Shura Council narrowly voted to field a candidate, in the person of Khayrat al-Shatir.[234] However, al-Shatir was disqualified due to a law banning recently released convicts from entering the presidential race.[235] Swallowing the decision, the FJP fielded Muhammad Mursi instead.

The Nahda Project: a worked-out plan?

Meanwhile, the FJP Party Program had been remarkable in another aspect: it did not mention the Nahda Project at all. Indeed, the Brotherhood did not publicly mention the project of Nahda until the beginning of the presidential election campaign in April 2012. Even in the Brotherhood's reporting of al-Shatir's *nahda* lecture in April 2011, the

[230] Pioppi, "Playing with Fire", 57, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 252
[231] Pioppi, "Playing with Fire", 57, Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 252
[232] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 251, Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?", 10.
[233] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 254
[234] al-Arabiyya with Agencies, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood names Khairat al-Shater as presidential candidate", *al-Arabiyya.net*, March 31, 2012. , Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 254.
[235] 9 Bedford Row, "The Egyptian Experience", 16

Brotherhood failed to mention the Nahda Project entirely.[236] This also meant that a worked-out version of the Nahda Project would take at least another year to materialize. The newspaper al-Ahram reported in May 2012 that the Nahda Project "was finally published as a hard copy" on April 28, 2012, but that it "extends to just eleven pages."[237] Although I could not retrieve this particular document, the Brotherhood's website Ikhwanweb published a "translation of [Muhammad Mursi's] electoral program: the Nahda Project.", on April 28th, 2012,[238] thus equating Mursi's presidential program to the *nahda*.

What does Mursi's electoral program add to the Nahda project? First, Mursi takes time to outline a number of principles for the Nahda, which reflect a mixture of liberal and Islamist language. The Nahda is about

> "… empowering the people and placing their destinies in their own hands … bringing forth Egyptian individuals who feel at peace with themselves, their family, work, environment and society at large … a society that occupies its rightful ranking among the world's nations … protect[ing] their rights and dignity within and outside the country."[239]

He then states that "We are fully aware that the rejuvenation of a nation cannot be achieved by any single party, sector, group or trend … the way to the desired real renaissance is our unity of ranks and determination to achieve comprehensive revitalization".[240] Again, Mursi applies an interesting vocabulary mixture, trying to place a pluralist discourse ('the Nahda can only be realized together') in the spirit of the *Jama'a* ('the real Nahda is our "unity of ranks" and determination'). Mursi concludes the introduction with "we present to you the following features of the Egyptian Nahda Project with hope that Egyptians of all segments of society will *contribute to its evaluation, discussion, and formation*",[241] presenting the Nahda Project as not finalized, thus highlighting its pluralist nature.

Mursi's main contribution to the Nahda Project is that he determines three stages through which the *nahda* is to be implemented. The first is the "Value and Thought level",

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[236] Ikhwanweb, Al-Shater: "MB calls for civil state"
[237] Amira Howaidy, "More rhetoric than substance," *Al Ahram Weekly* May 3-9 2012,
[238] Ikhwanweb, "Dr. Morsi's Electoral Program – General Features of Nahda (Renaissance) Project", *Ikwanweb.com,* April 28, 2012.
[239] Ikhwanweb, "Dr. Morsi's Electoral Program"
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.

which "describes what Egyptians want or wish for in their daily lives, in terms of values, rights, qualities, and duties".[242] Thus, Mursi employs al-Banna's first stage of 'building the Muslim individual' in a national democratic context ('what do Egyptians want?'). The second is the "Strategy level", which "comprises seven paths aiming to achieve the desired change through complex development plans".[243] The third is "The Executive level", which "transforms these [complex development] plans into specific groups of projects, reforms, and operational policies".[244] Strikingly, the remainder of Mursi's electoral program elaborates exclusively on the seven paths of the Strategic level, saying that "Under each [path] are a number of projects and executive programs, some of which have entered the implementation phase and others are still under preparation",[245] thus implying that the phase of asking Egyptians what they want has already passed, and that some paths are ready to enter the Executive level. The paths themselves roughly reflect the spearheads of the FJP Party Program, focusing on "the political system", "a developmental economy", "Societal empowerment", "human resource development", the "security system" and "regional and international leadership", which are being elaborated on following the lines of the FJP Party Program.[246] Concerning the nature of the state, Mursi stresses the constitutionality of the state, where power is distributed among institutions upheld by the constitution, also naming its transparency and accessibility for all Egyptians.[247]

Thus, Mursi's electoral Nahda Program follows the lines of the FJP Program, while employing a similar discourse, in contrast to al-Shatir's Nahda lecture. Perhaps most interesting is Mursi's attempt to walk the line between the FJP's leadership over the Nahda Project and its pluralist character, attempting to present a stable, established project while simultaneously inviting Egyptians to evaluate, discuss and help form the project. Also, Mursi employs the same method of placing Islamist concepts in a liberal democratic context, whereby the latter leads the overall language employed.

[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Ibid.

The Battle over the Constitution

The Constitution of Egypt, which was rewritten in 2012 and presented to popular referendum on December 15th and 22nd of that year[248], was arguably the most important document that political groups wanted to participate in writing, as it would lay down the parameters for a new Egypt in the most permanent manner possible. Possibly, the document was even more important for the Brotherhood. Over the years, its leaders had repeatedly stated they aimed for an Islamic form of governance in Egypt, regardless of who would be governing the country. In this line of thought, the Constitution would be the most important link to establishing such a structure. However, the Brothers were not alone, as other sides vied for space and influence in writing the Constitution. Obviously, the 2012 Constitution cannot be simply read as a Brotherhood document, even though its influence was great. To understand the Brothers' influence on its final draft, we must first look at the forces that shaped the writing process of the 2012 Constitution.

The Constitution was to be written by a special body called the Constituent Assembly (CA), a 100-member body whose occupants were to be chosen by the new parliament.[249] Following their electoral victory, winning roughly 44% of parliamentary seats, the FJP moved to dominate leadership positions. For instance, twelve of the nineteen parliamentary committees were headed by FJP members.[250] Additionally, the Salafi al-Nur party, the second biggest party in parliament, went on to control three committees, giving Islamist parties a near 80% lead over parliamentary committees.[251] The Islamist trend was thus set before filling the Constituent Assembly's positions. Its seats would be divided 50-50 between parliamentarians on the one hand and law experts and civil groups' representatives on the other, and in the end Islamist parties occupied 66 seats.[252] This show of strength triggered heavy protests from non-Islamist parties, fearing the Constitution would become an Islamist document. By the time the CA had its first session on March 28, 2012, nearly one third of its members had boycotted the body.[253] However, the Islamist display of power soon proved to be fatal for the CA itself: after liberals handed in legal objections to the Supreme

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[248] Pioppi, "Playing with Fire", 62
[249] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 253, Pioppi, "Playing with Fire", 59, 9 Bedford Row, "The Egyptian Experience", 28
[250] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 252
[251] Ibid., 253
[252] Ibid., 253
[253] Trager, Eric, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Pursues a Political Monopoly", *The Washington Institute For Near East Policy,* April 4, 2012, Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?", 13

Constitutional Court (SCC) against the CA, the SCC ruled that the CA was indeed "insufficiently representative",[254] and dissolved the body altogether. These events instilled mutual fears that started to antagonize different sides. Liberals and other non-Islamists felt the Brotherhood was seeking to dominate Egyptian politics; the Brotherhood, for their part, felt they were being blocked by what they saw as the "deep state"[255] of the old regime, as represented in the SCC and the SCAF.

The CA's dissolution proved only the beginning of a months-long political struggle. On June 14, 2012, the SCC ordered the dissolution of parliament itself. The SCC argued that, with parliament being elected on both party and individual ballots, party members had been able to run on the individual ballot as well, thus rendering the parliamentary elections unconstitutional.[256] In reaction, the SCAF immediately enforced the SCC's ruling by closing off the parliamentary building.[257] While the SCC's move was legally sound, its timing (just two days before the last round of the presidential elections) and the SCAF's reaction fuelled Brotherhood suspicions that the *ancièn regime* was actively working against it. This fear was compounded when three days later, just before Mursi would emerge victoriously from elections, the SCAF announced another Constitutional Declaration, in which it handed itself legislative powers in the absence of parliament as well as the right to appoint a new CA should the current one fail to deliver.[258]

Indeed, after the SCC had dissolved the CA, parliament had worked hard to set up a new CA, the FJP perhaps sensing time was not on parliament's side. This time, it was agreed that the CA would be divided 50-50 among Islamists and non-Islamists.[259] However, Islamists managed to get some al-Azhar scholars and other independents elected into the CA on their side, therefore still constituting a narrow majority of 57.[260] That majority grew bigger, because some non-Islamists again boycotted the CA. SCC representatives also pulled out, but stopped short of dissolving the new CA altogether.[261] In the end, parliament voted the new CA into existence on June 12, 2012, just two days before parliament would be

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[254] Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?", 13, Nathan Brown, "Egypt: A Constitutional Court in an Unconstitutional Setting", New York University, New York 2013, 7.
[255] Brown, "Egypt: A Constitutional Court", 7.
[256] Brown, "Egypt: A Constitutional Court", 7.
[257] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 261
[258] Brown, "Egypt: A Constitutional Court", 8
[259] Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?", 13
[260] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 265.
[261] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* , 265

dissolved. Thus, when Muhammad Mursi was declared president with a narrow 51.7% of the votes on June 24, 2012, his powers greatly decreased by the SCAF declaration a week earlier, the only governmental body under FJP leadership left was the CA. Wary of SCC and SCAF intrusion and eager to imprint Brotherhood visions on the Constitution, Mursi spurred the body on to produce a first draft as soon as possible.

However, the Brotherhood would find unexpected opposition in the Salafi contingent. Being positioned between non-Islamists and the Salafis, FJP representatives hoped to steer the different sides to a Brotherhood-inspired compromise, but the Salafis pushed the Brotherhood to get their way in a number of key issues. The Salafis demanded Article 2 of the Constitution, stating the source of law in Egypt, to be the rulings (*ahkam*) of *shari'a*, or just *shari'a*, instead of the somewhat vague "principles" of *shari'a*.[262] Also, Salafis pushed for "democracy" to be simply supplanted with "Shura", "people" with "God" as the source of authority, and sought to place absolute constitutional freedoms, such as the freedom of thought and religion, "within the premises of Sharia."[263] To pressure the Brotherhood, Salafis organized massive street protests using clear-cut Islamist language, seriously jeopardizing the Brotherhood's Islamist credentials in the process.[264] Increasingly under attack, the Brotherhood sought to rectify itself, especially its stance towards *shari'a*. In an elaborate statement released on October 31, 2012, the Brotherhood elaborates:

> "Sharia a comprehensive way of life that seeks to create good individuals and patriotic citizens who love their homeland, are faithful to their fellow nationals … Sharia further aims to create a cooperative, supportive society based on equality, justice and mutual respect, and the establishment of good governance that focuses on serving the people, achieving justice between citizens … Thus Sharia awakens faith, reforms behavior, improves the general environment of the whole society, and polishes morals … this civilized society [is] created by Sharia … Sharia is … putting public interest above the individual's ... achieving balance between the rights of the individual and society … Above all, the system of Sharia totally rejects the concept of a theocracy … people are exclusively the source of the various

[262] Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?", 11
[263] Ibid., 11-12
[264] Ibid., 18-19.

> authorities; they freely choose or elect to create those authorities, according to Sharia principles, under no-one and no faction's custodianship."[265]

In the face of Salafi pressure, the Brotherhood holds on to its known mixture of Islamist and liberal democratic language, with an extra jolt of nationalism. Interesting here is the subtle critique of the individual's rights in western, "man-made" laws, stating *shari'a* puts "public interest above the individual's".[266] Whilst probably being one of the most elaborate Brotherhood statements on *shari'a* to date, the language is strongly familiar. Most importantly, this statement shows that, even when challenged by another Islamist group to adopt straightforward Islamist language in public, the Brotherhood does not.

Judging from the final draft of the 2012 Constitution, Salafi victories seem few and far in between. By far the biggest struggle was fought over Article 2. The new Constitution stated that "The principles of Islamic Sharia are the principal source of legislation",[267] virtually equating the wording of the outgoing 1971 Constitution.[268] The Salafis had not succeeded in getting their preference concerning this article. However, as compromise, they pushed for 'principles of Islamic Sharia' to be elaborated on in a separate article.[269] Article 219 stipulates that "The principles of Islamic Sharia include [1] general evidence, [2] foundational rules, [3] rules of jurisprudence, and [4] credible sources accepted in Sunni doctrines and by the larger community."[270] These four categories of *shari'a* principles derive from the scholarly tradition of Islamic law. The first represents the *ahkam;* the second relates to "overarching principles" that are "induced from a study of the scriptures", such as "justice" or "utility";[271] the third relates to the methods of distilling law from the sources installed by the *fiqh* schools, as well as issues on which *ijma'* (consensus) had been reached;[272] the fourth refers to the sources used, namely, the Qur'an, the Sunna and law commentaries

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[265] Ikwanweb, "Muslim Brotherhood Statement on Islamic Law and National Identity", *Ikhwanweb.com*, November 4, 2012.
[266] Ikwanweb, "Muslim Brotherhood Statement on Islamic Law"
[267] Constituent Assembly, "The New Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt". Translation by International IDEA. Cairo, November 30, 2012, 3
[268] C. Dahl, "Comparing Egypt's Constitutions" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, December 1, 2013, 5.
[269] Nathan Brown and Clark Lombardi, "Islam in Egypt's new Constitution" *Foreign Policy*, December 13, 2012, Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?", 14
[270] Constituent Assembly, "Constitution", 49
[271] Brown and Lombardi, "Islam in Egypt's new Constitution"
[272] Ibid.

by the *fiqh* schools. However, even the inclusion of Article 219 was hardly a Salafi victory, as the four categories mostly represented the methods of the scholarly tradition of *fiqh*, of which Salafis are very sceptical.[273] Additionally, Article 4 stated that "Al-Azhar's Council of Senior Scholars is to be consulted in matters relating to Islamic Sharia."[274] Rather than elevating this body of religious scholars to an authority on interpreting *shari'a* (as the Brotherhood's 2007 Draft Party Platform had suggested), it merely received a consulting role, whilst legislative and judicial powers were left firmly in the hands of parliament and the judiciary, respectively.[275]

Also with other crunch issues, Salafis did not get their way. On the issue of political authority, the new document directly follows the 1971 Constitution. Article 5 stated that "Sovereignty is for the people alone and they are the source of authority."[276] In defining political principles, Article 6 employs typical Brotherhood vocabulary:

> The political system is based on the principles of democracy and consultation, citizenship (under which all citizens are equal in rights and public duties), political and multi-party pluralism, the peaceful transfer of power, the separation and balance of powers, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and freedoms.[277]

Concerning constitutional freedoms, the 2012 Constitution states "The freedom of thought and opinion is guaranteed", "The freedom of belief is inviolable" and "The freedom of the press, printing, publication and mass media is guaranteed",[278] without confining these within the limits of *shari'a*. In similar vein, the Constitution "commits to ensuring safety, security and equal opportunity for all citizens without discrimination" in Article 9.[279]

To be sure, there were Islamist-inspired stipulations added to the 2012 Constitution other than Articles 4 and 219. For instance, according to Article 1, Egypt was part of the "Islamic nations"; the ban on religious political parties was removed; freedom of belief was restricted to the "divine religions", being the three Abrahamic ones; Article 44 explicitly

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[273] Ibid. Salafis are "scripturalists" who insist on following concrete rules layed out in the Qur'an and the Sunna over distilling law from the sources concerning issues the sources were silent on, using methods of reasoning as practised by the Sunni law schools.
[274] Constituent Assembly, "Constitution", 3.
[275] Ibid., 19, 37
[276] Dahl, "Comparing Egypt's Constitutions", 7
[277] Constituent Assembly, Constitution, 4
[278] Ibid., 10-11.
[279] Ibid., 4

prohibited blasphemy of prophets; Article 10, which had always stated "The family is the basis of society and is based on religion, morality and patriotism", was now amended with "The state and society oversee the commitment to the genuine character of the Egyptian family", giving organizations like the Brotherhood itself constitutional rights in this field.[280] Stunningly, however, the 1971 provision ensuring women's equality "without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence" (sounding a lot like the 2011 FJP Election Program) was simply omitted in the 2012 Constitution, having stated equal opportunities for all citizens "without discrimination" in Article 9.[281] Therefore, the 2012 Constitution sounded even less Islamist than its 1971 predecessor on the issue of women.

In all, the 2012 Constitution, whilst being criticized by Samuel Tadros for being a 'complete Salafi victory',[282] wasn't anything of the sort, nor was it even overtly Islamist. The biggest Islamist landmarks in 2012 Constitution, besides lifting the ban on religious parties, were the definition of *shari'a* in Article 219 and the consultative role for al-Azhar in *shari'a* matters in Article 4. However, these additions did not alter the balance of power in the constitutional sense, because parliament and the judiciary had retained their legislative and judiciary powers, respectively. Whether *shari'a* would become an important legal source in post-Mubarak Egypt, would be decided by the occupants of parliament and the judiciary, rather than the Constitution.

[280] Ibid., 3, Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?", 20-21, Dahl, "Comparing Egypt's Constitutions", 6, 15.
[281] Dahl, "Comparing Egypt's Constitutions", 15
[282] Tadros, "What is a Constitution Anyway?"

Conclusion

The discursive practices of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and the ideological elements weaved within them, show themselves to be created from a plethora of different forces. At the historical base of the movement, Hassan al-Banna' already leaves much space open to future interpretation when delegating issues of a political nature to the realm of *ijtihad.* In contrast, he leaves decidedly less doubt on how the *Jama'a* should be organized and run. In the 1980's, the work and vision of 'Umar al-Tilmisani are critical for the Brothers' orientation towards liberal democratic ideals and political participation in a secular national framework. Brotherhood leaders now started to vocally support liberal democratic values and concepts such as individual freedom, popular sovereignty, constitutionalism and political pluralism. Also, many Brotherhood leaders, particularly from the "middle generation", gained political and administrative skills within civil institutions, such as the parliament and the professional syndicates.

However, it is doubtful whether the Muslim Brotherhood as a whole had intrinsically adopted liberal democratic values up to this point. For sure, the adoption of a liberal democratic framework was used pragmatically by the Brotherhood to increase political gains. However, rather than this being a cynical façade, liberal democratic values were colliding with Islamist ones in earnest within Brotherhood ranks, creating two long-term effects. First, the intermingling of liberal democratic and Islamist values created many ambiguities. Exemplified by the publication of their Draft Party Platform in 2007, the Muslim Brothers remained fundamentally ambiguous concerning the nature of the state (religious or secular?), the ultimate source of authority (people or God?), the role of *shari'a* as the source of law, and citizenship. Second, a gradual rift developed between reformist and conservative strands in the middle generation. While the reformist camp generally pushed a full intrinsic adoption of liberal democratic values, the "conservative pragmatics" stopped short of this adoption, opining that divine authority as expressed in Islamic texts has ultimate authority in all aspects of life. This opinion was supported by the older generation, rooted in *da'wa*-oriented activities.

Ultimately, the conservative pragmatics would become key Brotherhood leaders from 2000 onwards and into the post-Mubarak era. Perhaps, leaders as Khayrat al-Shatir, Sa'ad al-Katatni, Muhammad al-Biltagi, Muhammad Mursi and also 'Isam al-'Aryan best reflected the Brotherhood's development up to that point. Being politically astute, pragmatically

inclined, and fully embracing the Brotherhood's discursive and ideological elements, including its ambiguities, they were in the perfect position to lead the Brotherhood to the future, whilst preserving the older generation's traditional view of the *Jama'a.* Simultaneously, the subsequent government crackdowns in 1995 and 2005 helped preserve the hierarchal and secretive character of the Brotherhood's internal dealings, impeding democratic reform from within.

Analysing the Brotherhood's discursive products from the post-Mubarak years, the main trends created in the Mubarak years are clearly visible. Al-Shatir's Nahda lecture in particular highlights the leadership of the conservative strand in the Brotherhood, and the frame of thinking it was immersed in. Faced with upheaval in Egyptian society and within Muslim Brotherhood ranks, he reinvigorated the most conservative framework possible; presenting the *Jama'a* as the unchanged building block of the Brotherhood, while linking its foundations to the Prophet Muhammad himself. The stress on the conservative and organizational elements of the movement would keep the Brotherhood together, as it had done in the past. By stark contrast, the FJP Election Program was written completely in a liberal democratic framework, with notions of freedom, equality and democracy dominating the view and Islamist notions of *shari'a* and *shura* in mere servitude of the former. The Election Program clearly stands in a tradition of the Brotherhood's liberal democratic discourse, employed when the movement had to present itself to society as a whole. A striking similarity between the two documents, however, is the hesitance to clarify who should interpret *shari'a*, which is undoubtedly the key issue in shaping an Islamic government. Thus, whether adopting a clear-cut Islamist or a decidedly liberal democratic framework, the Brothers stay clear of determining the concrete role of *shari'a* in state and society.

After winning parliamentary and presidential elections, the Brotherhood could lay their hands on a historic prize, reaching its long-term goal of writing the Constitution itself. The 2012 Constitution adopts a predominantly liberal democratic discourse despite Salafi Islamists being the biggest group in the Constituent Assembly after the FJP. The 2012 Constitution did result in some Islamist victories, but again, the crunch issue of the role of *shari'a* in shaping governance was left undecided. While the ban on religious parties was abolished and criticizing religious prophets was banned, *shari'a* remained the rather vague "principal source of legislation", with al-Azhar, a classic representative of *fiqh* tradition, placed in a mere consultative role. The status of citizenship, while presented as being simply rooted in liberal democratic principles, still remained vague by determining the family as the

basis of society and placing it under state and societal oversight. Thus, even in the 2012 Constitution, it was far from clear how the Brotherhood would go about establishing Islamic governance in Egypt. Perhaps, Brotherhood leaders decided that vagueness is a (conservative) pragmatic's best friend in uncertain times, especially with the SCAF watching its every move.

Therefore, Egypt's Muslim Brothers, intentionally or not, elevated ambiguity to institutional heights over the decades. This ambiguity makes tracing an ideological "directionality" in the Brotherhood's discourse a tough going. Definitely, the Brothers have come a long way since al-Banna' in working within the existing framework of state. However, the Brothers have not succeeded in finalizing their ideological direction, leaving *shari'a* and man-made law, civil and religious identities, and people and God live together in unspecified and uncertain relationships. Pursuing its goal of political influence in state and society, the adoption of general discursive frameworks, which could be conveniently amended when needed, were always prioritized over detailed stipulations on fundamental issues. Perhaps, pragmatism, political ambition and ideological ambiguity were the very ingredients of revolt against the Brotherhood's rule, by a people it did not understand to represent.

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Front Cover Picture: Muhammad Mursi (middle), Sa'ad al-Katatni (right) and 'Isam al-'Aryan at a Muslim Brotherhood press conference.
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