



Sociology of Islam

PREVIEW



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Sociology of Islam (print ISSN 2213-140X, online ISSN 2213-1418) is published 4 times a year by BRILL, Plantijnstraat 2, 2321 JC Leiden, The Netherlands, tel +31 (0)71 535-3500, fax +31 (0)71 531-7532.

Abstracting & Indexing

Sociology of Islam is indexed in *Index Islamicus*.

Subscription rates

For institutional customers, the subscription price for the electronic-only edition of Volume 1 (2013, 4 issues) is EUR 229 / USD 308. Print only: EUR 252 / USD 339; electronic + print: EUR 275 / USD 369. Individual customers can only subscribe to the print edition at EUR 84 / USD 113. Please check our website at brill.com/soi. All prices are exclusive of VAT (not applicable outside the EU) but inclusive of shipping & handling. Subscriptions to this journal are accepted for complete volumes only and take effect with the first issue of the volume.

This booklet is a preview of the journal Sociology of Islam.

The texts in this preview might differ from the final publication.

Sociology of Islam

Edited by

Gary Wood and Tugrul Keskin



BRILL

THE POWER OF THE JAMA'A: THE ROLE OF HASAN AL-BANNA IN CONSTRUCTING THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

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Abstract

This article explores the role of Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) in creating the collective identity of the Muslim Brotherhood. It examines the enduring impact of al-Banna's thoughts and legacy on the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). The article argues that al-Banna interweaved a distinctive frame of identity for the MB which is still vibrant and operative. It also contends that the MB's identity plays a pivotal role in preserving the movement's coherence and sustaining its the political and social activism. Al-Banna, the founder and the chief ideologue of the MB, had crafted what this article calls the 'Jama'a' paradigm. It refers to the cognitive system of aims and objectives, duties and means, phases and norms, symbols and meanings that encompasses and guides the MB's members in everyday life. The Jama'a paradigm operates as a frame of reference to the MB's collective action. While other studies focused on the historical and chronological journey of al-Banna, this study unpacks al-Banna's legacy and investigates its effects on the MB's identity. Based on a field research, the article provides a fresh and nuanced account for al-Banna enduring impact on the MB identity.

Key words:

Al-Banna, Collective Identity, Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood, Religion

INTRODUCTION

For almost eight decades, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB hereafter) prolonged as one of the most potent and active Islamist movements in the Middle East and beyond. Despite the constant waves of repression and exclusion under different regimes, the MB succeeded not only to survive but also to preserve its organizational structure and sustain political activism. Furthermore, after the uprising of 25 January 2011 that toppled Hosni Mubarak after three decades in power, the MB emerged as the key player in Egypt's politics. Moreover, Mohamed Morsi, the chair of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political arm of the MB, has become Egypt's first elected president after the uprising.

Despite its importance, the question of how the MB could preserve its identity over decades did not receive much attention in the scholarly work. The vast majority of literature on the MB focuses whether on its chronological and the historical development¹, its political and social activism², or its relationship with different regimes.³ More ironically, studies on Hasan al-Banna, the founder and chief ideologue of the MB, tend to concentrate on his personal and upbringing journey rather than his impact on the MB's identity.⁴

Therefore, question of how al-Banna articulated the MB's identity was significantly overlooked.

This article seeks to provide a fresh and nuanced account for al-Banna's impact on the MB's identity. It contends that al-Banna created a collective identity for the MB which is still vibrant and affects members in everyday life. By articulating the master frames, chief objectives, and code of norms and values, al-Banna provided the MB with a coherent and distinctive identity that preserved its existence and fostered its political and social activism. The distinctiveness of the MB's collective identity originates from the Islamic notion of *Jama'a*. It refers to the cognitive system of aims and duties, phases and means, symbols and norms that encompasses and guides the MB members in everyday life. It is through this paradigm, the MB could recruit new members, generate collective action, and strengthen its internal coherence. The argument put forward of this article is that the endurance of the MB can be attributed, among other factors, to its resilient and distinctive identity that had been created and maintained by al-Banna's thoughts, worldview, and tracts.

CONTEXTUALIZING AL-BANNA...GESTURES OF IDENTITY

Understanding how al-Banna articulated the MB's collective identity requires contextualizing his ideas and thoughts. As well known, al-Banna was born one year after the death of the renowned Islamic reformer Muhamed Abduh, on 14 October 1906, in the small town of Mahmudiyya in the province of Buhayra, 90 miles north east of Cairo. Growing up in a traditional Muslim family in which his father, Shaykh Ahmed Abdelrahman al-Banna, was an Islamic scholar and the local *imam* (prayer leader) of the mosque in Mahmūdiyya, al-Banna received his basic education and religious knowledge from his father and from the rural community in which he grew up.⁵ From the early years of his life, al-Banna was an active member of his small community. In primary school, al-Banna was profoundly influenced by the moral and spiritual atmosphere brought to the school by Shaykh Mohammed Zahran, the head of *ar'rashad* school.⁶ After al-Banna finished his primary school education, the 1919 revolution erupted. He joined demonstrations against the British occupation, an incident that fostered al-Banna's nationalist sentiment against foreign powers and become a feature of the MB's identity.⁷ Ironically, despite his religious tendencies, al-Banna did not join the al-Azhar, as many of his peers, preferring instead to pursue his education in modern schools.⁸ Thus, he joined Dar al-Mua'lmin (Primary Teaching School) in Damanhur, the capital city of Buhayara, where he was exposed to the Sufi *Hassaftyya* order.⁹

However, the most significant impact on al-Banna came when he moved to Cairo in 1923 to pursue his higher education at Dar-al-Ulum (House of Sciences). Not only was al-Banna stunned by the substantial gap between his previous life in rural Mahmudiyya and the new life in Cairo where he was surrounded by all manifestations of modernity, but he was also exposed to the cultural and political ferment taking place in the wake of 1919 revolution. For al-Banna, Cairo was not just a place for obtaining an educational degree, but rather a symbolic battleground over values, morals and, most importantly, identity.

THE CONFLICT OVER EGYPT'S IDENTITY

By the turn of the twentieth century Egypt witnessed an intense and acute debate over its identity. That debate was mainly between two heterogeneous camps: the western modernists (*tahdithyyin*) and the Islamic revivalists or reformists (*islahyyin*)¹⁰. It anchored around a key question: how could Egypt achieve *nahdha* (renaissance)?¹¹ Modernists contended that *nahdha* would not be possible without emulating the west and benefiting from its social, cultural, and political production. For them, modernization was crucial to enable Egypt obtaining its independence. Therefore, they believed that national sentiment should be based on law and modern values instead of the long-standing system of Islamic conventions (Hourani 1983). However, the Islamic revivalists or reformists believed that *nahdha* and modernization should not come at the expense of indigenous Islamic values and morals. They argued that Egyptians, as well as Muslims, could benefit from western scientific and technological advancements without embracing their values and lifestyle. For them, reinforcing Islamic sentiment was a key tool to liberate Egypt, as well as the Muslim world, from foreign occupation.

Significantly, the debate over Egypt's identity was not confined to the political and intellectual realms but extended to religious circles. Advocating an Egyptian identity based on patriotism and nationalism meant for Islamic scholars, revivalists as well as traditionalists, the beginning of the secularization of Egypt. They believed that the liberal-secular camp aimed to replicate *Atatürk's national model in Egypt* and separate Islam and politics.¹² They also perceived the secularist celebration of the new Turkish Republic was a threat to the Islamic character of the Egypt.¹³ Therefore, it was not a surprise that many al-Azhar scholars, the *ulama*, sought to restore the Caliphate after been removed by *Atatürk in March 1924*. Hence, they convened a Muslim conference in May 1926 to discuss the future of the Caliphate. However, the delegates failed to elaborate a consensus on what should be done to preserve the Caliphate. Furthermore, other Islamic scholars and politicians campaigned to move the Caliphate to Egypt with King Fu'ad as the Caliph; an idea that created controversy not only in Egypt but also across the Arab and Muslim worlds.¹⁴

In addition, the debate that followed the demise of the Ottoman Empire was crucial in the articulation of al-Banna's views and perceptions. In 1926 Shaykh Aly Abdel Raziq, an *Azharite* scholar and *shari'a* judge, published his controversial book, *al-Islam wa' usul al-hukm* (Islam and the Foundations of Governance), in which he asserted that Islam does not impose a certain type of government including the *Khilafa* (Caliphate). Abdel Raziq stated that *Khilafa* is not a religious duty that Muslims need to fulfil but rather a mundane choice. Abdel Raziq's insights triggered an extraordinary political and intellectual debate over the future of the Caliphate and the shape of political systems that should prevail in the Muslim world. According to the Islamic camp, the removal of the Ottoman Caliphate was a sign of the weakness and decadence of Muslims, who should exert all efforts to restore it.¹⁵ However, for liberal and modernists, who celebrated Abdel Raziq's views, it was seen as a positive development as it paved the way for dissolving the relationship between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ However, al-Banna, was struck when he saw liberals and secularists celebrating the removal of the Islamic Caliphate. Hence he held

that reviving the Caliphate is an Islamic duty Muslims should be fulfilled.¹⁷ In other words, the notion of pan-Islamism in al-Banna's ideology was born with the demise of the Islamic Caliphate in Istanbul.

Al-Banna perceived the debate over Egypt's identity as a vital issue for his future. He believed that the only way to preserve the Islamic character of Egypt is to embody Islamic teachings and values in everyday life. For him, the only way to achieve such goal is through a movement that could reshape Muslims' perception and identity.

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AS AN IDENTITY- CREATED MOVEMENT

The creation of the MB can be viewed as a response to the identity predicament that wrecked Egypt during the first half of the twentieth century. For al-Banna, it was essential to create an identity-movement that could embody Islamic values and ideals in everyday life. He was not concerned with establishing an organization that would compete with other Islamic associations.¹⁸ Rather he sought to found a movement that could reformulate societal norms, values, and practices to be more Islamic; to weave a new identity for Egyptian society. He stated:

We call people to have a principle in their lives, to believe in it....Our movement has a principle; our principle is calling for Islam. Islam in our understanding encompasses every aspect in our life... our call (*du'atuna*) stems from the Qur'an and Sunna. ¹⁹

The quest for identity lies at the heart of al-Banna's ideology. al-Banna always believed that reviving Islamic identity would not only preserve Muslims from western subversion but would also provide them with an alternate system—socially, politically, economically, and culturally- that can challenge western civilization. However, the question was: how to morph this symbolic system into a reality? The answer for al-Banna was through a mass movement that could reshape individuals and society's norms from bottom to top. Thus, to legitimize the MB's cause and internalize its ideology in the public perception, al-Banna addressed the political and social problems that faced Egypt during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁰ Further, al-Banna strove to position himself and his movement as the saviour not only for Islam and Muslims but also the entire world. He succinctly stated, "Our call is a call of reviving and rescuing the humanity".²¹

However, it should be noted that al-Banna was preoccupied with producing an attractive, compelling model of identity that could encompass many of Egyptians who had been alienated and uprooted by westernization.²² al-Banna was struck by the corruption and degradation of Muslims especially the youth. More significantly, he harnessed the energy and aspirations of the middle and lower middle class who had been marginalized by economic hardships and social and class divisions that prevailed Egypt during the 1930s and 1940s.²³

Clearly, al-Banna was the first Islamic scholar to transform the Islamic rhetoric, which was elitist and curbed to intellectuals, into a populist political ideology. He sought to fill the immense vacuum left by the absence of Islamic activism in the public sphere. As one of his disciples puts it:

The main concern of the existing Islamic groups was just to fill a part of the vacuum. Their aim was only to return people to Islam, however, it's the superficial Islam; the formal Islam not the real one. However, al-Banna has sought to revive Islamic existence and provide Islam in a persuasive and new form. He sought to incite Islamic issues and defend Muslim nations through faith and thought, system and heritage, inside and outside.²⁴

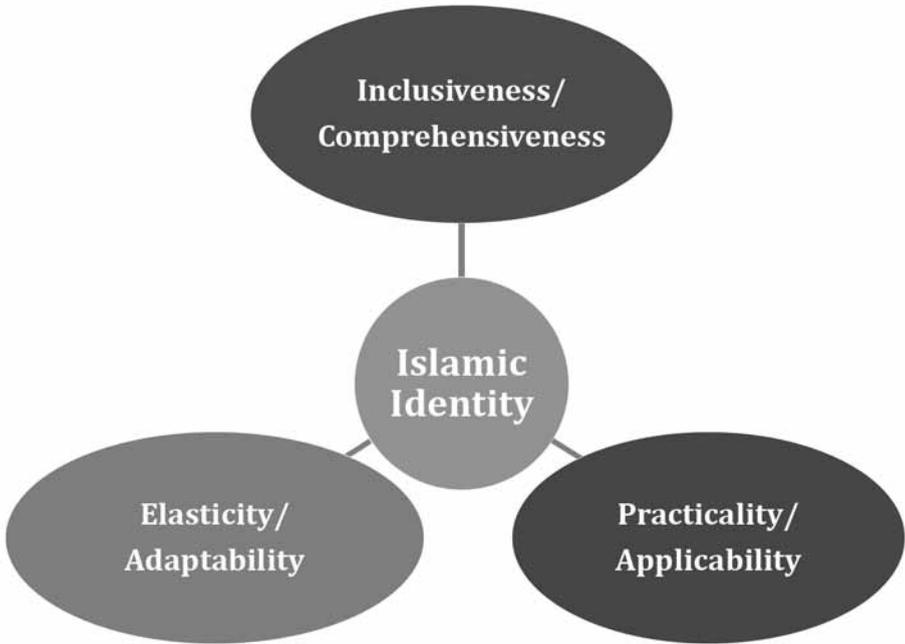
Moreover, al-Banna held that it would be significantly difficult to revive the Islamic identity without engaging the whole populace in a debate over such an important issue. Thus, in contrast to Abduh and Rida who confined the debate over Egypt's identity to the elite and intellectual circles, al-Banna sought to diffuse identity debate across the public sphere in order to legitimize his cause. In other words, while Abduh and Rida focused on reforming religious institutions and discourse respectively, al-Banna was preoccupied with reforming the entire society in a more Islamic direction. According to Ghanim, al-Banna diagnosed that the weakness of the reformists, al-Afghani, Abduh, and Rida, was that they did not elaborate a coherent ideology that could transform the idealised image of Islam into a reality. Ghanim points out that al-Banna succeeded where other Islamic scholars failed.²⁵ According to Ghanim, al-Banna brought the plight of the degradation of Islam and Muslims.²⁶ However, al-Banna persistently employed this plight to galvanize Egyptians and generate an Islamic collective action. In other words, al-Banna's main concerns were how to activate the submissive masses in order to create some sort of Islamic activism. As noted by Smith, the MB aims to "transform Islam into an operative force actively at work on modern problems"²⁷. Put differently, al-Banna sought to connect the past with the present, structure with agency, and text by context in order to weave the MB's identity.

AL-BANNA'S COMPREHENSION OF ISLAMIC IDENTITY

It was difficult for al-Banna to construct the MB's identity without carving out the concept of 'Islamic identity', which he called *al-fikra al-islamiyya*.²⁸ Al-Banna envisioned Islamic identity as an inclusive normative system of meanings, symbols, and practices that Muslims should abide by in everyday life. Indeed, al-Banna was keen to distinct himself from the prevailing Islamic discourse. Thus, the concept of *al-fikra al-islamiyya* was by then a new and attractive one which gave al-Banna a significant influence within the Islamic milieu. It was a gesture for the birth of the Islamist ideology. As noted by Pinto, the emergence of Islamist ideology should be understood as an attempt to forge a genuine and autonomous identity.²⁹ Further, al-Banna was the first Islamic leader to raise the identity issue among the ordinary public. In many of occasions he tended to provoke the audience by asking the basic yet meaningful questions, e.g. who are you? What are the aims of your life? Do you truly understand Islam? Do you follow the Islamic teachings in everyday life? etc.³⁰

Al-Banna crafted three chief dimensions of Islamic identity: comprehensiveness, adaptability and elasticity, and applicability (see Figure 1). However, before delving into explaining these dimensions, one needs to stress that al-Banna treated Islamic identity not as an abstract and fixed concept but rather a dynamic and fluid idea that can fit within different political contexts.

Figure 1: al-Banna's Framework of Islamic Identity



1. *Inclusiveness and Comprehensiveness*

Al-Banna perceived Islamic identity to be an inclusive system of norms, values, and regulations that could morph Islamic teachings and principles into everyday life practices. He believed that Islam as a comprehensive creed should encompass all aspects of human life. In one of his most stunning and enduring statements, al-Banna emphasized:

We believe that Islam is an inclusive system; it is a faith and worship, a state, nationality and religion, a spirit and deed, a holy text and a sword... the Glorious Qur'an considers these things to be the core of Islam.³¹

Obviously, al-Banna's notion of inclusiveness (*shumuliyyat al-islam*) derived from his perception of Islam as a way of life rather than a sacred text. Thus, he sought to transform this perception into a programme of daily life. Not surprisingly, the solution al-Banna proposed to Egypt's political, economic, and social was dependent on the return to Islam as a comprehensive order for human existence.³² An idea that still shapes the worldview of many MB members. According to Abdullah Essam, a mid-rank leader of the MB, Islam is all-encompassing religion that fits with any society and survives with any circumstances.³³

Building on his concept of inclusiveness of Islam, al-Banna was able connect the mundane with the sacred, not through a dogmatic and theological approach, but by articulating a practicable and solid platform for reform.³⁴ More importantly, al-Banna imparted and the notion of inclusiveness in the minds and hearts of his followers by

using expressive yet simple words. In one of his most influential statements, al-Banna described himself as the following:

I am a traveller seeking the truth, a human searching for the meaning of humanity and a citizen seeking dignity, freedom, stability and welfare under the shade of Islam. I am a free man who is aware of the purpose of his existence and who proclaims: "Truly, my prayer and my sacrifice, my living and my dying are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds; no partner has He. This I am commanded and I am of the Muslims (who submit to Him)!" [Quran, 6, pp.162-163]. This is who I am...who are you?³⁵

Clearly, al-Banna used, may be unintentionally, different 'western' concepts to outline his ideology. Words like freedom, stability, and welfare were alien to the Egyptian public in a time where independence from 'foreign' occupation, which was also western, was the main goal for all political and social movements. Ironically, al-Banna employed the notion of "Islamic inclusiveness" to de-legitimize western ideologies such as communism and capitalism. He relentlessly asserted that Islam includes all the benefits of other ideologies. It, according to al-Banna, overrides socialism, capitalism, east and the west, nationalism and universalism.³⁶

2. Elasticity and Adaptability

The second key element of Islamic identity as envisioned by al-Banna lies in its elasticity and adaptability. al-Banna held that Islam transcends time and space and that it accommodates all other ideologies and philosophies. He highlighted that Islam, the last revealed message, is compatible with all ages and nations.³⁷ To prove his argument, al-Banna affirmed that Islam is consistent with science. He pointed out that Islamic civilization contributed to great advancements and provided humanity with many original ideas in science and technology.³⁸

Further, al-Banna's belief in the elasticity of Islamic identity is highlighted in his attempts to fit it into the existing Egyptian political system.³⁹ It is widely accepted that al-Banna did not endeavour to overthrow the political regime in Egypt during the 1930s and 1940s. Moreover, he praised the constitutional type of government which, according to him, was the closest version of other political systems to Islam as it held people accountable.⁴⁰ Despite the bitter dispute between al-Banna and the Egyptian governments, he did not attempt to de-legitimize King Farouk. Conversely, he had a good relationship with the palace and acknowledged the legitimacy of Farouk despite the latter's relationship with the British.⁴¹ This flexibility, as will be shown later, was one of the underlying factors behind the MB's durability. Ironically, the MB has always been accused by its aggressive elasticity.

3. Applicability and Practicality

The third aspect of Islamic identity as perceived by al-Banna concerns its applicability nature. Unlike many of Islamic ideologues, al-Banna was tremendously practical. He endeavoured to turn the MB's ideology into plans and clear platform. He criticized other Islamic scholars and associations for the lack of practicality. Thus, he entitled one of his

tracts “Are We Practical People?” (*hal nahnu qawmun ‘amaliyyun*), in which he stressed the importance of having an incremental and persistent program for reform. Clearly, al-Banna was keen to present himself not as a traditional theoretician but as a mere social activist. Drawing on the notion of inclusiveness, al-Banna stressed the comprehensiveness of Islamic methodology (*shumulīyyat al-manhaj al-islami*) which implies that Islamic identity cannot prevail without being applied in a detailed program for everyday life. He stated, “if you study the Islamic teachings, you will find that Islam has set all proper rules and laws for human life; for men and women, for the family and nations”⁴². Therefore, al-Banna provided a detailed programme for reform ranging from political and social issues to health, science, and ethics of everyday life.⁴³ As will be shown later, the dimensions of Islamic identity embody the core elements of the MB’s ideology. Al-Banna was keen to pervade these elements into the foundations of the MB’s identity.

THE ‘JAMA’A’ PARADIGM

The Make Up of The Muslim Brotherhood’s Collective Identity

As a leader of a social movement, al-Banna crafted the master frames of the MB’s identity. He infused the sense of collective identity within the MB’s ideology, structure, and objectives. Al-Banna identified the movement’s aims, objectives, and system of values and norms. Whether or not he was aware, al-Banna integrated the ideational factors—Islamic idioms, rituals, and values—with the institutional aspects of the MB. As will be discussed, he attempted to line up the MB’s aims and objectives with those of Islamic identity. More importantly, al-Banna was keen to align the MB members with the movement’s aims and objectives. Thus, he set the rules, norms, and the MB’s organizational structure, which still exists in 2012. In other words, al-Banna constructed a sophisticated and coherent organization that could embody his vision and ideology and become a mouthpiece for his ideas.

However, before investigating the Jama’a paradigm, it should be noted that identity in this article is treated as a social construct that reflects the interplay between structure and agency, meaning and action, values and interests. Collective actors are required to give meaning to what they are doing. Thus, they are involved in the production of meanings, symbols and values to ensure members’ commitment and participation in collective action.⁴⁴

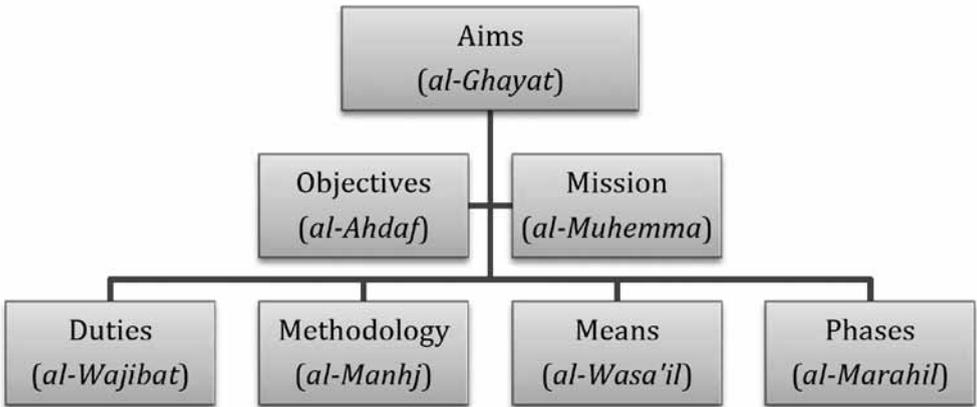
To infuse his vision and conception of Islamic identity into the MB’s ideology and structure, al-Banna created what this article calls ‘*Jama’a*’ paradigm. It refers to the cognitive system of; aims and objectives, duties and means, phases and norms, that encompasses and guides MB members in everyday life. It contains material, moral, and expressive aims, tools, and strategies of the MB. Moreover, this paradigm creates a pattern of identity for the MB based on a sense of commitment and solidarity among MB members who act not as individuals but as a collective unit; as brothers.

The *Jama’a* paradigm defines movement’s *raison d’être*, self-perception, and its worldview. It constitutes the underpinnings of social agents’ identity. Therefore, al-Banna constructed the overall frame of identity for the MB and sought to infuse it within the movement’s structure and ideology. He carved the MB’s cognitive map that is still in operation until now. However, this does not imply the MB’s paradigm is rigid or constant.

Conversely, it has worked for decades as a generator that transfers ideas into action, ideology into identity, and aims into reality. In addition, it provided MB members with a cognitive map for everyday life.

This part will sketch on the *Jama'a* paradigm that had been created by al-Banna and still plays a pivotal role in constructing the MB's identity. It is composed of seven integral and connected elements: aims (*al-ghayat*), objectives (*al-ahdaf*), mission (*al-muhima*), duties (*al-wajibat*), methodology (*al-manhj*), means (*al-was'il*), and phases (*al-marahl*).⁴⁵

Figure 2: The Jama'a Paradigm



a) Aims And Objectives

Al-Banna formulated a set of broad and vague aims for the MB. According to Melucci, the aims and objectives of collective actors are identified by a movement's leaders.⁴⁶ Further, Melucci argues that it is the leader's task to set a system of priorities that can respond to the changing conditions.⁴⁷ Thus, al-Banna articulated three broad aims (*ghayat*) for the MB: to lead humanity towards the well-being under the banner of Islam; to reinforce the Islamic identity among Muslims; and, to create a movement that can embody Islam in everyday life. He stated, "I devoted myself for one aim; to guide people to Islam by words and deeds and that is why I founded the MB to exemplify Islam in its aims and means".⁴⁸ By setting these aims, al-Banna constructed a vibrant and enduring master frame for the MB. As noted by Benford and Snow, master frames link the beliefs and ideas of a protest group to political opportunity structures which allow the social movement to spread its ideas and gain adherents.⁴⁹

To make these expressive aims viable, al-Banna introduced a cluster of instrumental objectives (*al-ahdaf*). These objectives can be divided into two groups: tentative; and permanent. The former are: a) to liberate Islamic countries from foreign occupation; b) to resist the materialistic and atheist wave that dominates Muslim nations; c) to reformulate the political, social, economic, educational, and judiciary systems to be based on Islamic principles. Meanwhile, the permanent objectives are: a) to establish an Islamic state that

implements Islamic teachings in everyday life; b) to unite all Muslim countries under the banner of Islam; and c) to disseminate the Islamic call (*al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya*) around the world and invite other nations to Islam.⁵⁰

At a glance, these aims and objectives are profoundly interconnected. They also play an important role in aligning the movement's members with its ideology and leadership. Despite the broadness and ambiguity of the MB's aims, they played a vital role in creating and legitimizing the MB's cause. Al-Banna, as well as his successors, employed these aims not only to recruit and attract individuals to the MB but more importantly to transform their identities and connect them with that of the movement. As noted by Melucci, a social movement's leader has to work hard to maintain and reinforce the identity of the group. In Melucci's words "the expressive function of the leader is her/his ability to offer symbolic objects for identification, around which the solidarity of the members and their individual identities coagulate".⁵¹

Yet several points can be made from al-Banna's setting of the generic and vague aims of the MB. First, they reflect al-Banna's shrewdness and skills in attracting new members for his nascent movement. By setting general, yet simple, Islamic aims and objectives, al-Banna was able to persuade many members to join the MB. Second, these aims and objectives enhanced the MB's symbolic competence as they resonate with many Egyptians, as well as Muslims, who believe that Islam should retain its domination and supremacy. Third, they ensured the MB's credibility within the religious milieu. As mentioned, al-Banna was keen to distinguish his movement from the prevalent Islamic societies. Thus, he created such broad and loose aims that can endorse his cause and preclude any attempt to discredit the MB in the religious market. Fourth, these broad aims help in enhancing the internal coherence of the MB. Due to their high degree of abstraction and symbolism, these aims served to underpin cohesion and solidarity among members. By aligning MB members with these aims, the possibility of disagreement and division was contained. Hence, priority was given to achieving these aims rather than focusing on any internal problems. Fifth, these aims could not, practically speaking, be evaluated by the MB's members. The aims were sufficiently broad to ensure that the movement's leaders could manipulate members who were unable to evaluate their success or failure in achieving the movement's aims. Finally, and most importantly, the aims secured the movement's survival and strategies. That is, as long as these aims were not accomplished, the movement could survive, allocate resources, and generate collective action.

b) Mission

In relation to the MB's mission (*muhima*), al-Banna posited different meanings and connotations. For instance, he stated, "our mission [*muhimmatuna*] is to stand in the face of the prevalent wave of materialism".⁵² In a more detailed statement, he stressed that the MB's mission is to reform Egypt and to enable it to lead the Muslim world.⁵³ He emphasized this can happen through: a) an efficient political system; b) a new system of international relations; c) a practical judiciary system; d) an efficient economic system that could ensure the independence of individuals, society, and the state; e) a cultural and educational system that could overcome illiteracy and darkness; f) a family system that

could re-build the private and intimate relationship between Muslims; g) a disciplined system that could reform individuals' behaviours; and h) a holistic spirit based on Islam that could encompass the ruled and the rulers.⁵⁴

Clearly, the MB's mission is intertwined with its aims and objectives. Thus, al-Banna abandoned broad language associated with the aims and objectives when he defined the mission. By determining and clarifying the mission, al-Banna succeeded in generating a sense of responsibility and commitment among MB members. In addition, he employed the mission to mobilize adherents and construct meaning for their action. Moreover, the mission served as a vehicle to link the aims and duties (*al-wajibat*) that the MB's members should undertake.

c) Duties

Al-Banna erected different duties (*wajibat*) that all MB members should undertake in order to achieve movement's objectives. Hence, he delineated six duties and responsibilities for the MB members: a) to be ready to make sacrifices for the sake of the mission; b) to demarcate the real boundaries of Islam; c) to help people follow and respect these boundaries; d) to strive to achieve the MB's aims and objectives; e) to adopt the MB's credo in everyday life; and f) to believe that these duties derived from the teachings of Islam.⁵⁵ Clearly, these duties exemplify a fundamental part of the members' commitment. Al-Banna was smart enough to connect these duties to personal promotion and appreciation within the MB. Hence, members who seek to move from level to another within the MB's structure have to undertake their duties and show high degree of commitment to applying them in everyday life. Each member should strive to achieve these duties which make him/her loyal and committed to the movement.

d) Method

The method of the MB (*al-manhaj*) refers to the disciplined way in which the strategy should be adopted to reach the movement's ultimate goals. al-Banna asserted that this methodology should be based on three key principals: a) faith in Islamic values and principles as the foundation for everyday life; b) faith in incremental and comprehensive reform which starts with individuals and then encompasses society; and c) faith in practicality and connecting words with good deeds.⁵⁶ Al-Banna held that the MB should adopt a comprehensive *manhaj* in order to achieve its goals. In many of his epistles, al-Banna stressed the inclusiveness of the Islamic methodology (*shmūliya al-manhaj al-islami*).⁵⁷ Clearly, this inclusiveness echoes with the broadness of the MB's goals. In addition, al-Banna in many occasions asserted that the Islamic approach for change should include all aspects of life: political, economic, social, and moral.

e) Means

In relation to the MB's means (*al-wasa'il*), al-Banna was keen to stress the peaceful and gradual nature of the MB. Thus, he infused gradualism into the MB's structure and strategy. Ironically, although al-Banna wanted to achieve radical reform in the norms and values of society, he stressed that this change should happen through gradually through

phases. further, he repudiated the use of violence by the Special Apparatus's members (*al-Jihaz al-Khas*), the military arm of the MB, during the 1940s. Al-Banna's desire to adopt a peaceful and gradual approach for change coincides with his 'bottom-up' policy. This policy treats individuals as the core element of any reform platform. Al-Banna believed that without recasting an individuals' identity, any attempt to pursue change would be superficial and ineffective.⁵⁸ He stated that "the MB does not believe in revolution, and does not rely on it in achieving its goals and if it happened, we will not adopt it... our task is to create a new generation of believers who can reformulate the Islamic *umma* in its all aspects of life".⁵⁹ Moreover, al-Banna identified three broad means for the MB: deep faith; precise organization; and uninterrupted work.⁶⁰ Specifically, al-Banna set three explicit tools for the MB to achieve its goals: first, to propagate the Islamic call (*da'wa*) among people through persuasion; second, to expand the social network of the MB; and third, to adopt a political and constitutional struggle as the legitimate form to represent the MB's aims and goals in the political arena.⁶¹

f) Phases

To put the preceding elements into action, al-Banna set a disciplined and vibrant order of phases (*marahil*). He asserted that in order to the MB to achieve its objectives, a sequence of stages should be followed. Hence, he outlined three main stages: first, to disseminate the MB's ideology and reach out to all people; second, to recruit supporters, build the movement, and mobilize the followers; and third, to implement, work, and produce actions.⁶² However, al-Banna asserted that these stages should not be segregated but should run simultaneously in order to ensure the MB's endurance and sustain its dynamism.

These stages reflect the gradualism that marked the MB's approach and echoes the bottom-up policy adopted by al-Banna. The gradualism is based on the ripple effect of making *da'wa*, the task of reformulating individuals' identities to line up with the Islamic values. This was to happen by propagating and spreading the ideas of the MB across the country, which would enable the movement to recruit new members. Meanwhile, the latter are engaged in grassroots activities through education and social welfare to recruit more members, and so on. Based on this gradualist and elastic approach, al-Banna was able to expand the social network and membership base of the MB substantially.⁶³

More significantly, the gradualist approach operated as a link between the expressive and instrumental goals of the MB. Thus, al-Banna introduced a hierarchical structure of 'mediating' steps to connect the tentative and ultimate objectives of the MB. This structure is based on seven steps: 1) educating and forming the Muslim individual; 2) the Muslim individual will coalesce into the Muslim family; 3) the Muslim family will form the Muslim society; 4) the Muslim society will form the Muslim government; 5) the Muslim government will ensure the state is ruled by Islam precepts and thus become an Islamic state; 6) the emerging Islamic state will work to reunify Muslim nations; and 7) the new Muslim unity should lead the world and retain Muslims' supremacy.⁶⁴

Regardless of the viability of these phases, they entail significant symbolic power which enabled the MB's leadership to preserve the movement's coherence and dynamism over

decades. First, they underscore the bottom-up strategy of pursuing change: re-formulating individuals' identities as a fundamental step in reshaping societal norms and values from below. Second, they serve as a roadmap for the MB's collective action. The MB members strive to meet this hierarchical order despite the long-term nature of the movement's objectives. Third, these incremental phases foster sense of commitment and obligation among members who remain keen to reach them. Fourth, they give the MB's leadership room for manoeuvre and manipulation as the temporal link between the stages is blurred. Hence, the MB's subordinates cannot gauge the success of leadership in achieving these phases. And finally, the relationship between these phases is not a clear-cut. The MB is operating at all phases and levels simultaneously.

ACTIVATING IDENTITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The *Jama'a* paradigm is functioning as the main frame of identity that binds the MB members together and shapes their worldview. The MB members do not define themselves as individuals but rather as a community of brothers, as *ikhwan*. This sense of collective identity is activated and stimulated in everyday life. Rank and file as well as leaders of the MB behave and act as a disciplined and committed organization. Many of the MB members believe that following the rules and regulations of the movement is not only an organizational obligation but also a religious duty. Members freely strive to match their behaviors and practices with the code of norms and standards of the MB. Nevertheless, one should stress that the MB's norms and rules are not static or rigid but constitute a dynamic code of conduct that reflects social interactions within the organization.

Furthermore, norms and regulations help the MB not only to run its activities but also to maintain an internal coherence and unity. Given the fact that the MB is composed of different members who belong to a variety of social and educational backgrounds, organizational norms can guarantee the movement's cohesiveness. Leaders and members alike have to follow and abide by rules and regulations of the MB.

Since the departure of al-Banna in 1949, the MB's leaders and cadres adopted the *Jama'a* architecture to maintain the movement's activities. All General Guides since al-Banna have stressed the need for the MB members to act as a collective entity or community of self-disciplined Muslims. Therefore, the socialization and identification process within the MB aims to reshape individuals' perceptions and views about themselves and the world.

Nevertheless, four crucial points should be highlighted. First is that the *Jama'a* paradigm is a social construct that has been developed over time. Not surprisingly, it took al-Banna a decade to elaborate a set of coherent aims, objectives, and strategies for the MB. It was not until the Fifth Annual Conference of the MB held in 1938 that al-Banna decided to trigger the paradigm publicly and to become heavily involved in everyday politics.⁶⁵ Second, the paradigm is amenable and elastic rather than a rigid structure. True, al-Banna sought to make this paradigm as vibrant as possible to enable the building of the organization; however, he constructed it in a general and broad sense in order to meet different contexts. It would have been difficult for the MB to survive under the degree of repression it faced without having a coherent and solid identity. Third, this paradigm is the outcome of different and intensive social interactions that took place within the MB. Fourth, the

concepts and terminologies of the *Jama'a* paradigm are broad and sometimes elusive as al-Banna was inclined to use them interchangeably. For instance, sometimes he mixed between aims and objectives, between mission and aims, and between methodology and means. Although al-Banna may have been unconscious of this vagueness, it marked the construction of the MB's ideology and identity.

In addition, the *Jama'a* paradigm provides the MB with the essential pattern of self-identification. It also enables the MB to draw boundaries with other political and social agents. However, to activate the MB's identity in everyday life, al-Banna integrated the three dimensions of Islamic identity within the MB's ideology and structure. Indeed, al-Banna regularly used the MB's ideology and Islamic identity interchangeably. Thus, he internalized the triangle of Islamic identity—comprehensiveness, adaptability, and flexibility—into the MB's aims, structures, programmes, and strategies. Accordingly, each aspect added a distinctive characteristic to the MB's identity to become: multifaceted, resilient, and pragmatic.

For instance, the emphasis of al-Banna on the comprehensiveness of Islam translated into the enduring character of the MB as a multi-faceted movement. And the mere result of this was the lasting broad and all-encompassing definition of the MB as “a Salafi call, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, an intellectual and scientific association, an economic company, and a social idea”.⁶⁶ At a glance, this multifaceted definition reveals the persistent tendency of al-Banna to portray the MB as an inclusive movement that can achieve different goals as ‘one-size-fits all’ for all purposes. He described the MB as “a comprehensive movement contains all reform meanings”.⁶⁷ This broad and inclusive definition provides MB's leaders with a profound symbolic and religious power that could be used to generate collective action and expand the organizational and social network across different strata of society. It resonates with Egyptians who seek to join the MB for different reasons. In addition, it differentiates the MB from other Islamic organizations that confine their ideology and activities to one dimension of everyday life.

More significantly, the notion of inclusiveness has been repeatedly employed by al-Banna's successors. For instance, Mohamed Badie, the current General Guide (*al-Murshid al-Amm*) of the MB, asserts that the MB views Islam as a comprehensive system encompassing all aspects of life.⁶⁸ He states, “The MB does not differentiate between religion and politics, it views Islam as an inclusive system extends to all life's spheres, it encompasses politics, economics, society, culture, etc. “We worship Allah by politics and *da'wa* together and don't separate between them”.⁶⁹ More importantly, this inclusiveness is embedded in the internal structure of the MB, which has different sections to supervise politics, social, students, *da'wa*, and welfare affairs.

The notion of al-Banna on adaptability has granted the MB a resilient and elastic identity. The gradualism of al-Banna's approach enabled the MB to adapt to different political settings and to survive in the face of severe authoritarian conditions. Since its foundation in 1928, the MB has experienced different types of exclusion and repression; however, it managed to sustain its structure and develop strategies in each era. Furthermore, this sense of adaptability enabled the MB to expand its ideology and organizational network

across different social strata and different urban and rural areas.

Regarding the applicability of the MB identity, al-Banna set out a pragmatic platform for change. This platform, which encompassed all aspects of social and political change, seeks to rebuild society and the state on the basis of Islam as perceived by the MB. More importantly, al-Banna asserted that the practicality of the *da'wa* is crucial to achieve the MB's goals. Thus, the MB established many economic and charity organizations during the 1930s and 1940s.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, the pragmatic aspect of the MB has been perceived by its adversaries as opportunistic and deceptive. Many Islamic societies and political forces in Egypt criticize the MB's ambiguous and vague character. However, this pragmatism has played a vital role in attracting many sympathizers and supporters to the MB. For instance, some MB members attribute their membership to its practical nature. As Salah Ghorab, a mid-rank member of the MB, puts it, "I joined the MB because, in addition to its Islamic character, it provides me with essential guidelines that I need in my daily life politically, socially, and morally."⁷¹

The *Jama'a* frame has granted the MB a remarkably distinctive identity that helped it to fit and operate within different political environments. More significantly, al-Banna's tracts and statements constitute the main source of socialization and indoctrination process within the MB. Each member of the MB has to behave and act according to rules set in these tracts. Those members who violate these rules and regulations become subject of criticism and punishment. Therefore, the MB has a complex yet meaningful system of membership that each member of has to go through to become a full-fledged *Ikhwan* member.

CONCLUSION

The impact of al-Banna on the MB is undeniable. As the founder and the chief ideologue of the MB, al-Banna was able to interweave the MB's ideational and organizational architecture which is still vibrant and operating after eight decades of founding the MB. By articulating the broad and strategic goals of the MB, al-Banna was able to connect the MB's next generations to his legacy. Significantly, the majority of the MB's leaders and cadres persistently recall al-Banna's thoughts and ideas to legitimize and solidify their position within the movement. The *Jama'a* paradigm that was created by al-Banna played a vital role in preserving the MB's identity over decades and maintained its political and social activism. It is through this paradigm the MB could survive attempts of exclusion and elimination. It helped the MB to entrench its position and influence in the Egyptian politics and to remain solid and coherent over decades.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to thank Roel Meijer for his helpful comments and suggestions on an early draft of this article.

Endnotes

- 1 Richard Mitchell's book (1969) is the standard scholarly work on the history of the MB and Brynjar Lia's work (1998) has replicated much of Mitchell's analysis with more historical scrutiny. For English sources on the history of the MB see, for example, Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942* (London: Ithaca Press, 1998); J. Heyworth Dunne, *Religious Trends in Modern Egypt* (privately published, 1950). For Arabic sources on the MB see, for example, Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, *The Muslim Brothers: The Greatest of Modern Islamic Movements*, (Beirut: Khaya't's College Book Cooperative, 1956); Mahmoud Abd al-Halim, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun: ahdath sana'at al-tarikh [The Muslim Brotherhood: Events Made History]* (Alexandria: Dar al-Da'wa, 1979), the autobiography of Hasan al-Banna, *Mudkarrat al-daw'a wa'l-da'iyaa* (Cairo: Dar al-Shihab, n.d); Hamada Ismail, *Hasan Al-Banna and the Society of Muslim Brothers between Religion and Politics 1928-1949* (Cairo: Dar el-Shorouq, 2010).
- 2 See, for example, Ziad Munson, *Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood*, *The Sociology Quarterly*, 42:4 (2001), 487-510; Carrie Rosefeskay Wickham: *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
- 3 See for example A. Aly and M. Wenner, *Modern Islamic Reform Movements: The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt*, *Middle East Journal*, 36 (1982), 336-361; Mona El-Ghobashy, *The Metaphors of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37 (2005), 373-395; Hesham Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak 1982-2000* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004).
- 4 See, for example, David Commins, *Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949)*, in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, ed. Ali Rahnama (London: Zed Books, 1994); Gudrun Krämer, *Hasan al-Banna* (Oxford: One World Publications, 2010). For Arabic resources see Jamal al-Banna, *Khitabat Hasan al-Banna al-Shab ila abih* [the Young Hasan al-Banna Letters to His Father] (Cairo, Dar al-Fikr al-Islami, 1990), Ibrahim El-Bayoumi Ghanim, *al-fikr assiyasi Lil'imam Hasan Al-Banna [The Political Thought of Hasan Al-Banna]* (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk, 1992).
- 5 Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 1.
- 6 Ibrahim El-Bayoumi Ghanim, *al-fikr assiyasi lil'imam Hasan Al-Banna* (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk, 1992), p.140.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p.141.
- 8 Ghanim explains this attitude of al-Banna by his tendency to avoid the strict regulations of the traditional religious educational system which exemplified in *kuttab* and his aspiration to gain modern education. Ghanim, *al-fikr assiyasi*, p.143.
- 9 Although al-Banna embraced Sufism in his early years which left a profound impact on his personality and religious construction, he criticized the Sufi groups for their apathetic approach in social and political change. See Mitchell p 5 and Hamada Ismail, *Hasan Al-Banna and the Society of Muslim Brothers between Religion and Politics 1928-1949* (Cairo: Dar el-Shorouq, 2010), p.36.
- 10 According to Hourani, modernists were those who had had a western-style education, e.g. Taha Hussien, Qasim Amin, and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, etc. and Islamic revivalists were those who received a traditional and religious education at al-Azhar Institution, e.g. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Mohamed Abduh, Rashid Rida, etc. For more see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 242.
- 11 Hourani provided a compelling analysis to the social and educational background of this debate. He asserts that it was a mere result to the social and economic transformations happened to Egypt during Mohamed Ali and his dynasty's rule. *Ibid.*, pp. 138-144.
- 12 The Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) is considered the founder of the modern Turkey. He led the Turkish national movement that ended the Ottoman rule of Turkey which prevailed more than four centuries and replaced it by a national republic. See Ghanim, *al-fikr assiyasi*, pp. 103-110.
- 13 Gershoni and Jankowski describe the reaction to the removal of the Ottoman Caliphate as a "shock at the abrupt termination of such a hallowed Muslim institution. Egyptians of a traditionalist orientation, in particular, seem to have felt a personal sense of loss and dismay over the end of the Caliphate". See Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 56.
- 14 For more on this issue, see Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of The Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).
- 15 Ghanim, *al-fikr al-siyasi*, p. 130.
- 16 Gershoni and Jankowski, p. 58.
- 17 Hasan al-Banna, *Majmuat al-rasail al-Imam al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna*, (Cairo: Shorouk Press, 2002), p. 23.

- 18 Zakariyya Bayumi highlights that Egypt witnessed a growing number of Islamic associations and societies after WWI. He estimates that number by 135 moral, social, and religious societies. However, they were mainly interested in religious and social activities without politicization. This might explain why al-Banna chose to establish the MB instead of joining one of the existing Islamic societies. For more see Zakariyya Bayumi, *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Associations in the Egyptian Political Life, 1928-1948* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1991), pp. 85-87.
- 19 al-Banna, *Majmu'at al-Rasa'il*, p. 25.
- 20 al-Banna identified in details the social and moral problems that overwhelmed the Egyptian society during the 1930s. He repeatedly stressed that the only way to recover from these problems and 'diseases' was to restore Islamic principles and values in everyday life, al-Banna, *Our Problems in the Light of the Islamic Order*, the *Majmuat al-rasail*, p. 255.
- 21 al-Banna, *Majmuat al-rasail*, p. 25.
- 22 Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942* (London: Ithaca Press, 1998), p. 58.
- 23 Ibid, p. 59.
- 24 Mohamed Abdullah al-Simman, *Hasan al-Banna: al-rajul wa-l-fikra*, (Cairo: Dar al-Nasr, 1977), p. 23.
- 25 Ghanim, *al-fikr assiyasi*, p. 112.
- 26 Ibid., p. 113.
- 27 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 126.
- 28 *al-fikra al-islamiyya* is a central concept in the MB's ideology. Al-Banna was the first Islamic scholar to produce and use this concept in the Islamic rhetoric. To internalize it within the mindset of the MB's members, al-Banna published the seven principles of *al-fikra al-islamiyya* on the cover of the MB's weekly magazine during the 1930s. For more see *Mudkarrat al-daw'a wa'l-da'iyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Shihab, n.d).
- 29 Maria Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: A Study of U.S. Policy towards Islamist Movements in the Middle East* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 199), p. 17.
- 30 According to Ghanim, since he founded the MB, al-Banna was preoccupied by the identity issue. Ghanim highlights al-Banna's tendency to stress and delineate the meaning of identity as a part of everyday life art. Ibrahim El-Bayoumi Ghanim, interview with the author, Cairo, 24 December 2010.
- 31 *Majmuat al-rasail al-Imam al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna* (The Collected Epistles of the Martyred Imam Hasan al-Banna) (Cairo: Dar Al-Da'wa, 2002), p. 171.
- 32 David Commins, "Hasan al-Banna," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, ed. Ali Rahnama (London: Zed Books, 1994), p. 134.
- 33 Interview with Abdullah Essam in Cairo, 12 March 2012.
- 34 Many scholars held that al-Banna created a distinctive discourse that enabled the MB to reach out a new and diverse audience. Despite that al-Banna was affected by the reformist discourse of Abdu and Reda, he was able to extend this discourse to new horizons. For more see Lia, *Muslim Brothers in Egypt*, p. 42, and Commins, 'Hasan al-Banna', p. 135.
- 35 *Majmu'at al-rasa'il*, p. 13.
- 36 Ibid., p. 171.
- 37 Ibid., p. 173.
- 38 Ibid., p. 174.
- 39 Commins, 'Hasan al-Banna', p. 136.
- 40 *Majmu'at al-rasa'il*, p. 25.
- 41 Lia, *Muslim Brothers in Egypt*, p. 140.
- 42 *Majmuat al-rasail*, p. 42.
- 43 al-Banna's epistles encompasses a clear and sophisticated platform for comprehensive reform. In a well-known tract called, "*Our Internal Problems in the Light of the Islamic System*", al-Banna extensively analysed the problems that faced Egypt and proposed solutions to them in petition sent to King Farouk and Egypt Prime Minister Mustafa al-Nahas. *Majmuat al-rasail*, p. 209.
- 44 This definition is derived from the burgeoning literature on New Social Movements (NSMs) theory. For more on collective identity see, for example, Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Donatella Dell Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006).

- 45 To erect this paradigm, the author went through tracts and statements of Hasan al-Banna. That is, the seven components or elements of the *Jama'a* paradigm are drawn from al-Banna's thoughts and ideas about *al-fikra al-islamiyya*. Some of them were explicitly mentioned in the tracts while others deduced from al-Banna's speeches and essays that published in the MB's publications.
- 46 Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 339.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 339.
- 48 *Majmuat al-rasail*, p.168.
- 49 David Snow and Doug McAdam, "Identity Work Processes in the Context of Social Movements", in *Self, identity, and social movements*, edited by Sheldon Stryker, Timothy Owens, and Robert White (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 614.
- 50 *Majmuat al-rasail*, pp. 145-160.
- 51 Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, p. 320.
- 52 *Majmuat al-rasail*, p. 114.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 48.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. 187.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p. 188.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 336.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 178.
- 63 Munson points out the MB had over 2,000 branches throughout Egypt with an active membership of 300,000-600,000 by 1949. For more details about the spread of the MB during the 1930s and 1940s see Ziad Munson, "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood", *The Sociological Quarterly*, 42 (4), (2001): pp. 487-510.
- 64 *Majmuat al-rasail*, p. 101.
- 65 The Fifth Annual Conference of the MB was a hallmark in the movement's history for many reasons. First, it was the first large conference of the MB following four regional conferences held during the 1930s in Ismailiyya, Port Said, El-Mansoura, and Assuit. Second, the conference came after the remarkable growth of the MB as its branch offices jumped from five in 1930, 15 in 1931, to 300 in 1938. Third, the conference accentuated the transnational character of the MB as it stressed the relationship between the MB and the Palestinian cause. Fourth, it highlighted the MB's stance on many critical issues, e.g. the constitution, the shape of political system, Arab and Islamic nationalism, political parties, the Islamic associations, and the relationship with the west. More importantly, al-Banna revealed the political ambitious and aspirations of the MB and how they would be accomplished. For more see *Majmuat al-rasail*, p. 165 and Munson, "Islamic Mobilization", p. 490.
- 66 *Majmuat al-rasail*, . p. 174.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 174.
- 68 Mohamed Badie, 'Oh, Brothers: Let's Work', *the weekly statement*, available at <http://www.ikhwanonline.com/new/Article.aspx?ArtID=81660&SecID=0>
- 69 *Ibid.*, p. 174.
- 70 Zakaria Bayumi, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimon wa'l-jama'at al-Islamiyya fil-hayah al-Siyasiyya 1928-1948* (Cairo: Maktabt Wahba, 1991), pp. 75-82.
- 71 Salah Ghorab, interview with author, Cairo, 28 December 2011.

BOOK REVIEWS

Lori Peek. *Behind the Backlash: Muslim Americans after 9/11*

Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011. \$ 84.50 (cloth), \$ 27.95 (paper)

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In 2010, the phrase “Muslims go home” was spray-painted across the brick façade and windows of a Nashville mosque. Such acts of vandalism—and the hateful sentiments that fuel them—have been all too common in the United States for more than a decade. The experiences of the Americans who suffer from these attacks are the subject of Lori Peek’s first book, *Behind the Backlash*. The text details how Muslim Americans (and people of color that look like they could be Muslim Americans) have been on the receiving end of a tidal wave of hate speech and aggression that crested in the weeks and months following September 11, 2001.

The metaphor of a tidal wave is particularly useful when describing *Behind the Backlash* because Lori Peek specializes in the Sociology of Disaster. Peek draws on this specialty to provide the theoretical framework for her research, in-depth interviews and focus groups with 140 Muslim-American young adults during the two years following 9/11. The central scholarly contribution of the text is to explain how the social benefits of disasters—the uniting of a community or people through common grief—can also be exclusionary. In short, the uniting of some can come at the expense of others.

Chapter 1 serves as a primer, introducing readers to both the diverse population that are American Muslims and to their post-9/11 narratives. This introductory chapter also acquaints readers with the book’s author, who is neither Muslim nor a member of a racial or ethnic group that would lead her to be mistaken for a Muslim American. Her ‘outsider’ perspective may be why she is able to translate the experiences of Muslim Americans to other ‘outsiders’ so well. Peek is an effective guide for readers with limited knowledge about Islam or about the experiences of Muslim Americans over the last decade.

Chapter 2 begins with an account of the events of September 11, 2001, and the days and weeks that followed. This first narrative is a familiar one: shocking attacks, tragedy unfolding amidst a nation’s horror, and continuing trauma in the aftermath as survivors faced the enormity of the destruction. Peek also draws on disaster research to outline what can be seen as a social benefit of the tragedy, as the American populace came together in their grief. Yet, Peek also directs our attention in a new direction, towards those left out of the newly united America. Peek explains that in some ways Muslim Americans experienced 9/11 in the same way as their non-Muslim counterparts, feeling a combination of fear, anger and grief. But, Muslims also experienced something quite different from other Americans: an exponential increase in frequency and severity of negative experiences because of their status as Muslims. Peek documents this hostility

first through an impressive array of statistics on hate crimes and anti-Muslim incidents across time and space.

Over the next four chapters, Peek draws extensively from her qualitative interviews and focus groups to detail the experiences of the Muslim Americans in her study, some of which live in New York and others in her home state of Colorado. In Chapter 3, the focus is on the intolerance that many of Peek's respondents experienced before 9/11, reminding readers that anti-Muslim sentiments did not materialize out of thin air on that fateful day in September. Instead, many of Peek's interviewees talk about what it was like to grow up feeling like outsiders, struggling to fit in, and finding their places in their faith communities. Many of Peek's interviews are with women, who speak to their struggles coping with negative stereotypes about Muslim women as weak and oppressed.

Next, Peek returns to 9/11, explaining how many Muslims were made to feel even more like outsiders in their own country. She begins Chapter 4 by re-telling the events of September 11th through the eyes of Maya, a 17-year-old Muslim American who encounters an angry mob as she struggles to get to her home in New York City. Maya was not alone in her experience. In the days, weeks, and months following the attacks, Peek's respondents were verbally harassed and intimidated; stared at suspiciously and apprehensively; discriminated against at work, school, and in the housing market; and violently confronted. Others witnessed such acts perpetrated against their family members and friends.

Chapter 5 lays out the meat of Peek's argument, drawing heavily from and contributing to the Sociology of Disaster. She explains how Muslims were excluded from (or excluded themselves from) the collective grieving that took place across the United States after 9/11, leaving them isolated and depressed. She introduces the concept of "compounded fear" to describe the combination of fears Muslim Americans experienced, both universal (for example, fear of future attacks) and also those specific to Muslim Americans (for example, fear of hate crimes against family members). Feeling under attack, many Muslims changed their daily routines. Raids on Muslim-American homes also left Muslims feeling unsafe in their homes, the spaces that should have provided shelter from the storm. The ongoing nature of the backlash left Muslims experiencing feelings of "continuous attack" and created stress and conflict within Muslim family units.

Although the bulk of the book details the victimization of Muslim Americans in the post-9/11 era, Peek paints a different portrait of her respondents in Chapter 6. She explains how Muslims also experienced rising within-group solidarity, a strengthening of their faith, and greater closeness with family members.

Behind the Backlash does have its limits. For those already educated about anti-Muslim backlash since 9/11, the information Peek lays out is hardly surprising. For those looking to use Peek's book in the classroom, it is important to note that she makes few connections to existing literatures on race/ethnicity or religion, perhaps making the text better for undergraduate than graduate classes. Peek also admits that the bulk of her interviews are with young Muslim women, and her analysis reflects this fact. Those

particularly interested in the experiences of young Muslim-American men or Muslims from older generations will not find what they are looking for in Peek's text.

Overall, however, Lori Peek has crafted an excellent book. The prose is well-written, and Peek effectively leads readers on a journey that evokes empathy for the plight of Muslim Americans. Peek places readers squarely in the shoes of her subjects. For many of us, *Behind the Backlash* serves as a reminder that even though more than a decade has passed, many Muslim Americans still suffer repercussions from 9/11. For those too young to remember, Peek offers an important introduction.

Mohammed el-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis.
***Islam Dot Com: Contemporary Islamic Discourse
in Cyberspace***

New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009. \$100.00 (Hardcover), \$28.00 (Paperback)

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Mohammed el-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis have joined a growing group of researchers who are interested in how new media technologies contribute to new social, religious, and political identities in general, and among Muslims in particular. Their foray into this field, *Islam Dot Com: Contemporary Islamic Discourses in Cyberspace*, is an empirically thorough account of the Arabic- and English-language discussion forums of three highly trafficked Islamic websites: www.islamonline.net, www.amrkhaled.net, and www.islamway.com.

Anchoring their analysis of Islam-themed cyberspace upon the social theory of Jürgen Habermas, el-Nawawy and Khamis focus on the importance of the modern public sphere as a space to foster “rational-critical” discourse outside the bounds of governmental control. The authors ask whether or not these discussion forums constitute an “Islamic public sphere,” a “virtual *umma*,” and if so, what kind? In so doing, the authors consider whether or not the growth of Islam-themed websites helps to create or sustain new kinds of religious authority, and whether or not it promotes resistance to hegemonic politics in the Muslim world. In addition to Habermas’ concept of the public sphere, the authors also invoke the Islamic concepts of *shura* (consultation), *ijtihad* (reasoning and interpretation), and *ijma* (consensus) as frames for analysis the discussion online. Ultimately, el-Nawawy and Khamis conclude that there is very little rational-critical discourse present on Islamic-themed discussion forums. Instead, the authors argue that those who post to online forums of Islamic websites are characterized either by their preexisting consensus, or by their entrenched polarized opposition. Neither variation, however, fosters the reflexivity or openness that lead to alternative perspectives about social, political, and economic organization.

After an introductory chapter, more than two thirds of the book is devoted to lengthy literature reviews of key topics. The first chapter traces Habermas’ original formulation of the concept of a public sphere and its subsequent critiques from a variety of fields and perspectives. The authors consider how the concept has historically “fit” (or not) with Muslim societies, especially as understandings of Muslim community and religious authority have been transformed at various historical moments. This chapter will be helpful to anyone new to the work of Habermas (or his main supporters and detractors), or to the concepts of *umma* (community) and *ulama* (religious authorities) in Islam. In it, El-Nawawy and Khamis situate the emergence of Islamic websites as sources of religious authority and contention within a broader movement away from

traditionally trained religious authorities and toward a proliferation of responsibility to lay individuals for religious decisions and interpretations within Muslim societies. They attribute the popularity of Islamic websites especially to youth, particularly middle class, highly educated, diasporic youth in Muslim-minority countries, whose primary access to Islamic communities is via the Internet.

The next chapter covers the emergence of Islamic websites and offers a careful literature review of previous work on online sociality and religion in the new “virtual public sphere” (55). The authors contrast the optimism of Internet “utopians” who predict that the speed, reach, and anonymity of the Internet will increase participation, diversity, and equality in social and political discussions, with “technological dystopians” who predict that the emergence of online communities will simply foster entrenched, niche viewpoints with little room for challenges, or will lead to misunderstandings and misinformation, alienation from “real” life, and abdication of personal responsibility due to the deterritorialized nature of communication online. The authors insist that Islamic websites must be understood as undetermined spaces in which all of these possibilities, as well as others, are equally possible.

A final background chapter holds the Islamic *umma* up to the mirror of a Habermasian public sphere, exploring the tensions between the *umma* as a universal body, and the vast diversity of experience, ideology, piety, and practice among Muslims. This chapter appears largely aimed at readers whose only exposure to Islam and Muslims has come from Western media accounts of a clash of civilizations. The authors repeat throughout the book that one of their major goals is to dispel simplistic views of a homogeneous Islam, and for the most part they are successful in doing so. If this means that some of the material will be already familiar to specialists in Islam, the discussion provides an important overview of diverse debates about pluralism, democracy, and gender in Islam that will be helpful to unfamiliar readers.

The next chapters present and analyze portions of online discussions from the three chosen websites. This material is divided into two chapters. The first is on forum discussions that represent shared, collective knowledge, a high degree of homogeneity among participants, and consensus on topics discussed. The second chapter details divergence and disagreement in online discussion forums. The authors have done a superb job of revealing “the nature, underlying tone and style of the deliberations” (209) taking place on these Islamic websites. Readers are treated to descriptions and extended quotations of postings that contain debates about the relationships between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, the wisdom or lack thereof of polygamy, other questions about marriage (including interracial and inter-religious marriage), various views on the Israel-Palestine conflict, and anxious debates about Muslim-non-Muslim relations, gender roles, and U.S. imperialism in the Middle East. At the close of each description or series of quotations from the online forums, the authors explain the reasons why the discussion in question does not meet the criteria for a Habermasian public sphere. Given the fascinating nature of the excerpted online debates, the degree to which these online conversations meet Habermas’ criteria is actually less absorbing at times than the content of the online conversations themselves. As a result, the analysis of the

posts' substance sometimes proves more illuminating than the recurring Habermasian measurements. However, the stakes of the Habermasian frame become clearer in the conclusion, where the authors express their concern that the extremes of uncritical consensus on the one hand, and of divisiveness on the other hand, prevent Internet forums from promoting truly democratic and robust intellectual debate online. A short epilogue does address the role of new media in fomenting the recent and ongoing "Arab Spring," and it should be interesting to see how analysis of the Internet's role in these revolutionary movements builds on the foundations set by El-Nawawy's and Khamis' thought-provoking research.

Ahmet Ykleyen. *Localizing Islam in Europe: Turkish Islamic Communities in Germany and the Netherlands*

Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2012. \$ 39.95 (cloth)

John R. Bowen. *Can Islam Be French? Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011. \$ 46.95 (cloth) \$ 22.95 (paper)

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As public debates about Muslims' integration into European societies increase due mostly to rising Islamophobia, academic interest toward European Muslims also advances. Scholars particularly analyze how Muslims will adapt into Europe as being both Muslim and European. Two recent great examples of such scholarship are Ahmet Ykleyen's *Localizing Islam in Europe* and John R. Bowen's *Can Islam Be French*. Ykleyen's study examines the diverse ways that the Turkish Islamic groups in the Netherlands and Germany interpret Islam in adapting themselves to the European setting. In his analysis, Ykleyen focuses on the demands of the Muslim individuals, mainstream Islamic sources, the discourse of competing Islamic communities, and the policies of the European states. Similarly, Bowen's book looks at how French Muslims experience their faith to ensure both preserving their Islamic identity and adapting to broader French society. Bowen unpacks the pragmatic adaptations of Muslims into French society in a variety of settings such as mosques, institutes, schools, and other public spaces. Taken together, these books challenge two widely held arguments about Islam's adaptation to local settings. First, they challenge the idea that Islam has immutable essence regardless of historical and political context. Second, while the authors demonstrate the influence of social context on Muslims' interpretation of Islam, they also challenge the view that the context completely determines religious interpretations. In this sense, they pay close attention to the Islamic core and examine how Muslims negotiate the fixed and flexible elements in their religion in adapting into new settings.

Building on Fredrik Barth's approach to anthropology of knowledge, *Localizing Islam in Europe* examines interactions among Muslim organizations, their representation in Europe, their corpus of assertions, and their relations with European states. Ykleyen first defines the key element of his study, the "Turkish Islamic field" (Chapter 1), which has two dimensions: "Vertically, Islamic communities and organizations operate in between the state and Muslims. Horizontally, they compete among themselves" (p. 33). Ykleyen, with an emphasis on their development in Turkey and Europe, introduces varying Islamic communities and organizations within the Turkish Islamic field: (i) official Islam, focusing on religious services for Turks and their loyalty to the Turkish state and represented by mosques administered by the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) organization; (ii) political Islam, focusing on Muslims' representation

in European public sphere and represented by Milli Görüş community; (iii) civil Islam, focusing on interfaith dialogue and building networks with broader European society and represented by the Gülen community; and (iv) mystical Islam, focusing on recitation of Quran and traditional Islamic rituals and represented by the Süleymanlı community. Later in the book, the author also discusses revolutionary Islam, focusing on establishment of an Islamic state and represented by the Kaplan community.

In Chapters 2-4, Yükleven expands the two dimensions of the Turkish Islamic field. In Chapter 2, he analyzes the vertical relations between European Muslims and Islamic organizations through the cases of Gülen and Süleymanlı communities. Yükleven specifically looks at how religious authority is produced in these two communities and its influence on their religious interpretations. Inward-oriented and highly centralized nature of the Süleymanlı community has produced stricter Islamic interpretations while outward oriented and decentralized nature of the Gülen community has led more liberal interpretations of Islam that emphasizes interreligious dialogue and education. In Chapter 3, Yükleven shifts his attention to the horizontal relations among Islamic communities and organizations. He analyzes how Milli Görüş, Gülen and Süleymanlı communities compete one another for providing the needs of their followers through social and religious activism. The author concludes that the more Islamic communities address the socio-religious needs of their followers in Europe, the more they serve their supporters and the more their religious discourse adapts to Europe. In Chapter 4, Yükleven revisits the vertical dimension of the “Turkish Islamic field,” but this time, with a focus on the relationship between state and Islamic communities and organizations. He compares Milli Görüş’s relationship with the state in Germany and the Netherlands. Yükleven argues that Dutch multicultural policies, as compared to relatively more exclusionary policies of the German state, helped “Islamic organizations to integrate and adapt their interpretation of Islam to their European settings” (p. 181).

After expanding the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the Turkish Islamic field, Yükleven employs his model to explain different levels of integration of the Turkish Islamic groups in Europe. The Gülen community and the Northern branch of the Milli Görüş in the Netherlands helped their followers’ social and economic integration and bridged them with the broader European society. Süleymanlı and Diyanet groups also helped their followers’ social integration but generally failed to encourage them to have closer relations with the larger society. The Kaplan community, which Yükleven examines in Chapter 6 in greater detail, isolated their followers from both mainstream Muslims and broader European societies. Having analyzed different interpretations of Islam within his model, Yükleven concludes that Muslims “do not adapt their religion in the name of reformism but rather, they reform their religion as they try to make it relevant for their own lives, as well as accessible to and recognized by non-Muslims” (p. 259).

In *Can Islam be French*, building on anthropology of public reasoning approach, John Bowen examines how Muslims are reinterpreting their religion as a response to the conditions in France. He specifically looks at how Muslims re-think Islam to be both French and Muslim. The key question of the book, then, is “what forms of Islamic

ideas and institutions enable those Muslims wishing to practice their religion to do so fully and freely in France?" (p. 5). Through a rich ethnography of mosques, Islamic schools, teaching and research institutes, websites, and public debates, Bowen argues that pragmatic reasoning of French Muslims and particular ways that the French state governs Islam created new combinations of Islamic interpretations that made a French Islam possible.

Bowen develops his argument in three parts. In the first part, Bowen examines "how the historical trajectories of Muslims in France have shaped their strategies of adaptation and innovation" (p. 11). Reviewing the history of Muslims' existence in France, Bowen concludes that the bitter colonial history between majority French society and Muslims who mostly came from former French colonies created anxious attitudes toward Muslims. Muslim institutions emerged in France especially in the final decades of the 20th century not only because Muslims chose to institutionalize around Islam within the new circumstances, but also the French state promoted Muslims' institutionalization to "build and control a French Islam" (p. 27).

In the second part, Bowen turns his attention to the Muslim worship and educational places. He examines "Islamic public actors, that is, men and women who engage in public activity with respect to Islamic concerns" (p. 11), namely, imams, teachers, leaders in educational institutes and prominent Muslim intellectuals. Bowen looks at a diverse array of mosques in Paris, Lyon, and Marseilles from small ones to huge Cathedral mosques. He also considers Islamic schools and institutes in which both religious and non-religious courses are offered. In his analysis, Bowen finds convergences between the French and Muslim traditions not only in production of new religious knowledge but also in creation of an Islamic environment in which secular knowledge is also transmitted. For many leaders that he studied, "... one can find all the universal values one needs for today's political concerns –gender equality, bioethics, environmental concern- in Islam." (p. 50).

In the third part, Bowen analyzes different debates around social problems that Islamic and French traditions differ such as bank loans for buying homes, marriage, and dietary restrictions. The organizing question in this part is "whether there should be distinctive Islamic norms for France" (p. 136) or whether Islamic norms are universal regardless of their local setting. Bowen brings examples of Islamic authorities that support either the former or the latter approach. Overall, Bowen argues that French Muslims, at least a significant portion of them, are developing interpretations of Islam that is compatible with the French political and cultural circumstances.

The conclusion one draws from both of these books is that Islam is not as static as we have been suggested to believe in many public and academic debates conducted in the West. Both authors offer a detailed picture of European Muslims with a reference to varying religious discourses they produce, dynamic relationships that they establish between non-Muslims and European states, changing religious interpretations that they conduct to meet the social and political challenges, and the accommodative positions between European Muslims and states. The books are must-reads for both scholars and students who are interested in Islam in Europe.

**Maaïke Voorhoeve (ed). *Family Law in Islam.
Divorce, Marriage and Women in the Muslim World***

London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2012. £59.50 (Hardcover)

Bryan S. Turner
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Maaïke Voorhoeve has collected a set of essays whose authors write from the perspective of the anthropology and sociology of law. As social scientists, they are not concerned with the normative features of law, but only with how it operates in practice in specific contexts. Throughout this valuable volume, this descriptive position raises interesting questions about Islam and the *Shari'a*. In Muslim societies, their foundational constitutions often assign a privileged position to the framework provided by the Qur'an, the *hadith* and the *Shari'a*. In Iran Ruhollah Khomeini, claiming there was no need for 'man-made laws', proposed that the Qur'an and the *Sunna* contain all the laws necessary for human happiness. In the Egyptian Constitution (Article 2), the *Shari'a* is recognized as the source of law and in Tunisia Article 1 provides that Islam is the state religion and the President must be a Muslim. Yet in these societies, the legal field is an unstable contest between religious and secular courts. Contemporary Muslim societies are characterized by legal pluralism in which there are diverse legal sources – secular law, the *Shari'a*, 'custom and habit', legal precedent, constitutions, international law, and human rights conventions. Consequently laws governing the everyday lives of Muslims are manifold, resulting legal decisions are often unreliable and inconsistent.

Legal pluralism is associated with globalization. However many Middle Eastern societies have historically functioned with different legal traditions and institutions. In Syria, Esther van Eijk shows how the Law of Personal Status is based on Islamic sources, but Druze, Jews and Christians have limited legislative autonomy and access to their own personal status courts. Lebanon is a parliamentary republic with nineteen religious communities, each of which has its own legal codes and religious courts. Within these competing legal traditions, judges have considerable scope for 'discretion'. Because a general law can never cover all particular cases, there is a wide area in which authorities have discretionary powers. Legal discretion expands as judges are confronted by social change producing more complex cases such as inter-faith marriage, the care of illegitimate children, inheritance by non-Muslims, and families in which the income of an employed wife undermines traditional marital arrangements based on maintenance and obedience. The idea of 'judicial discretion' is brilliantly analyzed by Voorhoeve on Tunisian personal status law. It is widely acknowledged that Tunisian law is progressive. It is said to have successfully adapted Islamic law to the empirical complexities of a modern state. However, there are many gaps in the Tunisian system where judges have to exercise discretion for example over establishing 'harm' (*darar*) as grounds for divorce. Various legal sources can limit judicial discretion including the *Shari'a*, legal precedent, academic journals, the Constitution and international convention. Despite these official sources, judges often make judgements that clearly contradict the legal

code. For example the law does not explicitly prescribe that a woman should cohabit with her husband. However judges will often refer to the reciprocal rights and duties within marriage (Article 23 PSC) under the idea of 'custom and habit'. This umbrella notion offers wide discretion for a judge to regard the absence of regular cohabitation as 'harmful'. Similarly there is a gap between judicial decisions based on 'custom and habit' and those based on the constitution and international conventions in recognizing paternity of children born out of wedlock or allowing marriages between Muslim and non-Muslim partners.

These essays raise one fundamental question: what is marriage? The issue is complicated by the distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' marriage contracts. In simple terms, Nadia Sonneveld observes that an informal marriage is one that has not been registered, but the empirical reality is more complex. Because marriage is the principal means by which women acquire social status, there are many strategies surrounding marital unions. So-called '*urfi*' or customary marriages are often secret, and are publically condemned in allowing for temporary passionate liaisons. However, in a polygamous situation, the second marriage can often remain 'secret' with respect to the first wife, while offering the second wife some degree of legitimacy as a married woman. Many of these secret arrangements are novel rather than customary ('*urfi*'). For example in *Misyar* marriages there is no formal registration, and husband and wife agree not to live together and the husband has no financial obligations to his wife. For widows '*urfi*' allows them to remarry and to retain the state pension of their deceased husband. Divorced women who may lose custody of their children sometimes remarry through '*urfi*' arrangements.

The political question behind these essays is simply: is the legal status of women, despite modernization and social reform, in decline? Susanne Dahlgren shows how, with the unification of the Yemen in 1990, women's rights have been eroded. After Southern independence in 1967, the government pursued a robust policy of women's emancipation in the 'Corrective Move' of 1969. Women were not only encouraged to acquire education and to join the labour force, but men were instructed to treat women equally in everyday encounters. Following unification these reforms were 'forgotten' and women were no longer involved in building society but were treated as part of the *harim*, the sacred private space. In Iran, women's rights have also had a turbulent history. In the 1979 Revolution, both religious and secular groups mobilized Iranian women as the symbolic antidote to Western values and the Veiling Act of 1983 made the *chador* a symbolic attack on the commodified women of the West. Mohammad Khatami's presidency produced a radical improvement in women's status; no longer simply wives and mothers, they were also individuals and citizens in the civil sphere. In 1998 Khatami created the Centre for Women's Participation (CWP). However the Council of Guardians finally rejected the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women because its provisions were not compatible with Islamic principles. There has been a further erosion of women's rights in favour of women's duties with the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, and these reactionary tendencies are illustrated by the change in CWP to the Centre for Women and Family Affairs. Obedient

women are treated as primarily agents of social stability not social change. Finally, these contributions to the study of family law illustrate the fact that changing women's status to enhance their social rights is never easy or complete. Traditional Muslim jurists interpret the binary *qiwamah/wilayah* as that which signifies male authority in Muslim majority societies and subsequently as fundamental to social order. Justice is slow and Christine Hegel-Cantarella describes how women seeking divorce face long and expensive delays. Reform projects to remedy the causes of delay, resulting from 'outdated administrative procedures, a shortage of well-trained clerks and judges and a backlog of cases' (p.112) are rarely successful. The demand for divorce is increasing as young couples face considerable challenges in societies undergoing rapid change where traditional assumptions about marriage no longer fit empirical circumstances. *Family Law in Islam* provides an intelligent and comprehensive account of diverse legal responses to these complex social dilemmas.

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Printed in the Netherlands

Subscription rates:

- 2013: Volume 1 (in 4 issues)
- ISSN 2213-140X / E-ISSN 2213-1418
- Institutional subscription rates
 - Electronic only: EUR 229.- / US\$ 308.-
 - Print only: EUR 252.- / US\$ 339.-
 - Electronic + Print: EUR 275.- / US\$ 369.-
- Individual subscription rates
 - Print only: EUR 84.- / US\$ 113.-

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Sociology of Islam

Sociology of Islam explores modern social, political and economic transformations in Muslim Societies through the lens of sociological analysis, social theory, industrialization, modernity, social movements, secularism and political economy. It provides a unique sociological approach in addition to a multi-disciplinary approach.

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