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**The Construction of Islamic Identity in Everyday Life:  
The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt**

**Khalil Mohamed Ibrahim**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**School of Government and International Affairs  
Durham University**

**2013**

## Abstract

This thesis explores the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) identity in everyday life. It accounts for unpacking the underlying processes and factors that shape the identity of the MB's members. It thus examines the MB's recruitment and mobilization mechanisms, meaning and symbolic productions, social networking, and the resilience of the MB identity.

This study attempts to answer a key question: how does the MB construct its identity in everyday life? It investigates the identification and socialization process that happens within the MB. The study reveals that *ikhwanism*, a sub-culture that encompasses and guides the MB leaders and members in everyday life, plays a pivotal role in preserving the MB's identity. *Ikhwanism* denotes the cognitive system of norms, values, standards, and symbols that informs and guides the MB's members in everyday life. Thus, to be an *ikhwani* does not only mean to *embrace* the MB's ideology and worldview but also to *act* as a committed and obedient member in everyday life. Therefore, the study investigates the tools and mechanisms that are utilized by the MB in order to forge and reshape members' perceptions and behaviour.

In addition, the thesis explores the effects of the semi-authoritarian policies on the MB's identity and coherence. It examines how the MB survived under the autocratic regime of Hosni Mubarak despite the relentless waves of repression and exclusion. The findings of the study reveal the ability of the MB to operate under regime repression and to sustain its coherence and identity. Primary data was collected through interviews with several members and leaders in the MB. The data reflects the complexity of the MB as a social organization. It demonstrates that the MB could blend the ideational and institutional factors in order to articulate and preserve its identity. Moreover, the findings of the study reveal the power struggle within the MB between the so-called conservatives and reformists. The study demonstrates that regime repression enabled the conservatives to control the MB at the expense of the reformists. It predicts that the former will likely dominate the MB for years to come.

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis results from my own work. I confirm that no portion of this study has been used in support of an application of another degree in this or any other university.

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without his prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

### **Note on Transliteration**

Throughout this thesis I have used a simplified transliteration scheme that roughly follows the logic of the Library of Congress system, except principally for the diacritics. I have generally designated the ‘ayn (for example, *shari‘a*, *da‘wa* or *jama‘a*) and medial *hamza* (Qur’an not Quran), but not terminal *hamza* (*‘ulama*, for example, not *‘ulama‘*). The spellings of individual and place names that are commonly used in English, particularly as used in reference to Egypt, are adopted here – e.g., Badie (not Badi‘), Ismailia (not Isma‘iliyya). ‘Mohamed’ is thus used for all individuals, except the Prophet Muhammad.

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## **Dedication**

*To Howaida, Mohamed, and Aly  
source of love, success, and joy*

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## **Chapter One**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. BRIEF BACKGROUND**

When Hasan al-Banna established the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun) in 1928, he sought to re-embed Islamic identity in everyday life. Disenchanted at the removal of the Ottoman Caliphate by the Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924, al-Banna sought to re-establish the Islamic state. According to al-Banna, the cornerstone of such a state is to reformulate society to adhere with the Islamic principles and values as he envisaged them. For him, this could only happen through establishing a movement that would embody these ideals and moral values in everyday life. According to him, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) was to be the vanguard that would reshape the Egyptian society to become truly Islamic in order to establish the Islamic state.

Over the course of the past century, the MB has proved to be one of the most powerful and resilient movements in Egypt and beyond. Since its foundation, the MB has played a pivotal role in shaping the Egyptian polity. During the 1930s, the movement was mainly involved in charitable and social activities. It was not until the beginning of the 1940s that al-Banna plunged the MB into formal politics. By the end of the 1940s, the MB was trapped in violence against the British occupation and the Egyptian government, which subsequently led to the assassination of al-Banna in 12 February 1949. Under the Nasser regime, the MB experienced harsh repression and attempts at exclusion during the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, the movement was outlawed in 1954 and hundreds of its members were arrested, prosecuted in military courts, and tortured. However, at the beginning of the 1970s, when Sadat took power he released many MB leaders and members. Under Mubarak, the MB once again became a powerful movement. It was heavily involved in formal and informal politics, expanded its social network, and collaborated with liberal and secular forces. However, for the Mubarak regime, the MB was perceived as is the main political threat. Hence, its leaders and members encountered different types of repression, exclusion, and elimination. It was not until the popular uprising that toppled Mubarak in February 2011 that the MB took

power and one of its devoted cadres became the new ruler of Egypt following eight decades of anguish. Furthermore, under Mubarak, the MB was able to develop its political and religious ideology. This started by renouncing violence, attuned to the rules of the game, and accepting democratic values, at least rhetorically.

Nevertheless, the question as to how the MB was able to continue for so long despite the repression has not received much attention from academic research. The vast majority of literature on the MB concentrates on its historical development (Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998), its political and social activism (Munson, 2001; Wickham, 2002), or its relationship with different regimes (Al-Awadi, 2004; El-Ghobashy, 2005).

The identity of the MB did not get much attention in the scholarly work. The vast majority of studies on the MB fall short in examining the process of identity construction in everyday life and what mechanisms, tools and strategies the MB employs in order to maintain its identity. The questions raised by this study are of great importance. How the MB constructs its identity how could it maintain members' solidarity and loyalty to the movement's ideology and leadership? What are the impact of authoritarian context on the MB and how the latter responded to regime's repression?

This study explores the ability of the MB to construct and maintain its identity. It examines the process of identity formation as it occurs within the organization. It contends that the MB's identity played a crucial role in preserving its unity and coherence under regime repression. In other words, this study attempts to unravel the internal logic behind the MB's resilience and coherence. It thus unpacks the underlying processes that forge the MB identity in everyday life. It probes the interplay between the ideational and institutional factors that shape the MB's identity. For instance, the study investigates the recruitment and selection process of MB members. It reveals the membership system of the MB and how individuals become fully-fledged members. In addition, the study reveals the identification and socialization process that happens within the movement. To be a member in the MB is not only to embrace its ideology but also to act as a committed member in everyday life. Thus, the study investigates the

tools and mechanisms that are used by the MB in order to reshape members' perceptions and worldviews.

Furthermore, the study examines the effects of repression on the MB identity. During Mubarak's rule, the MB experienced almost incessant repression and exclusion. Its leaders were a target of regime repression. They were systematically arrested and tortured. Operating within a hostile and repressive environment placed significant pressure on the MB. However, the movement was able to preserve its unity and identity. Therefore, it was not subject to any significant schism over the past two decades.

## **1.2. SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The durability of the MB has puzzled many scholars and observers; not only because of its ability to survive different types of repression under the Mubarak regime but also because it was able to maintain its political activism and preserve its unity. This study explains the extraordinary ability of the MB to construct and maintain its identity under regime repression. As an ideological movement, the MB tends to reshape individuals' perceptions and worldview in order to align with the movement's aims and objectives. The MB is not only a political movement that seeks power but also an identity maker that aims to reshape societal norms and values. Thus, it is heavily involved in construction of meanings and production of symbols that can encompass and guide members in their everyday life. Put differently, to comprehend the political and social activism of the MB, one needs to unpack its 'identity'. As a social movement, the MB tends to allocate resources, mobilize individuals, and set ideological frames that can bind members and foster their commitment and allegiance to the movement's leadership. It consistently capitalizes on social networks, kinship, close relationships, and religious circles to expand its influence.

The title of this thesis is *'The Construction of Islamic Identity in Everyday Life: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt'*. However, the study is not simply a synopsis of findings on Islamism, rather it goes beyond the stereotypes and clichés about Islamists as rigid and immutable actors. It therefore does not treat Islamists as

monolithic or homogeneous movements but rather as socio-political agents that are involved in the production of meaning and symbols in everyday life. In other words, this study is concerned with the very nature of Islamists as social actors who have material and ideational interests in altering individuals and societies in order to align with their perceptions and worldview.

The research questions, aims and objectives are the basics of design research methodology, data collection and data analysis. In the following paragraphs, the main objectives and research question are discussed. Based on the research question, a research methodology and data collection techniques are outlined.

### **1.3. RESEARCH AIMS, OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS**

#### **1.3.1. Research Aims**

This study has three primary aims, all of which correspond to the main research question. First is to explore and unpack the MB's identity. It is important to emphasize that the research focuses on the textual and contextual factors that shape the MB's identity in everyday life. That is, it examines the interplay between the institutional and ideational factors on shaping the MB identity. The study contends that identity is a social construct that originates from the interplay between different factors and processes. Therefore, it treats identity as a social construct, or as Berger and Luckmann (1967) point out, as a social reality that reflects the interaction between individuals and society whereby both constitute each other.

The second aim is to unravel the MB's internal dynamics and probe its effects on the identity construction. As a complex organization, the MB has adopted a well-disciplined internal structure that enabled it to last for more than eight decades. For instance, it has a firm and strict system of membership, identification, and socialization processes. This study reveals the recruitment and mobilization tools and tactics within the MB. It also explores the mechanisms and strategies that allow the movement to reinforce individuals' commitment and loyalty.

The third aim is to explore and examine the impact of repression on the MB's identity and coherence. It probes the ability of the MB to operate under regime repression. Intuitively, an open and flexible environment enables the MB to recruit, allocate resources, and most importantly to influence regime policies, whereas a closed and repressive environment undermines its ability to generate collective action. However, the research highlights how the MB was able to employ repression in order to maintain unity and coherence. Hence, it reveals the interplay between repression and the internal dynamics of the MB.

### **1.3.2. Research Objectives**

- a) To grasp the process of the identity construction in social movements.
- b) To unpack the identity formation process as it happens within the MB.
- c) To understand the interplay between the MB's ideology, structure and environment.
- d) To comprehend the recruitment and mobilization mechanisms in the MB.
- e) To examine the effects of repression on the MB's identity and coherence.

### **1.3.3. Research Questions**

The main research question is: how does the MB construct its identity in everyday life? Collective identity, as defined by Alberto Melucci, is "an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups as a more complex level) concerning the orientations of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place" (1996, p.70). This definition reveals the dynamic and interactive character of collective identity. The MB, as a social movement, tends to create a sense of commitment and solidarity among members that facilitate the identity construction process. It employs different mechanisms in order to foster members' commitment and solidarity. The research question entails a number of sub-questions, including: What are tools and mechanisms the MB utilizes in constructing its identity? How does the movement employ religion in the identity

construction process? How can individuals become members in the MB? What does it mean to be an *ikhwani* (a member of the MB)? And most importantly, what are the effects of repression on the MB identity and integration?

#### **1.3.4. Hypothesis**

The main hypothesis of this study is that identity formation is an intricate process that reflects the relationship between MB's ideology, structure and environment where it operates. This study proposes a crucial and interactive link between these three factors that shape the MB identity. It contends that identity is a social construct that entails different processes and dynamics that shape individuals' worldview and affect their mind-set. This hypothesis is tested by examining the interplay between three main factors: the MB aims and objectives; its internal structure; and the environment in which it operates. It is argued that identity is a social construct that reflects the interaction between the different factors. The MB's aims and objectives constitute the guidelines that encompass and direct members in their everyday life. The study outlines these aims and objectives and investigates the role of Hasan al-Banna in articulating them. It contends that the internal system of the MB plays a crucial role in forging and maintaining its identity. It identifies the membership system, the movement's norms and standards, and the interactions between members and the leadership. In addition, the environment in which the MB operates contains opportunities and constraints that affect its role and activism. The study argues that the status of the environment, and whether it is inclusive or exclusive, affects the process of identity construction in the MB. It thus examines the response of the MB to the political opportunities and constraints that occurred under the Mubarak regime.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

After specifying the aims, objectives, questions and hypothesis, an appropriate research methodology is established. As noted by Gilbert (2001, p.15), methodology in social research refers to the techniques and epistemological pre-suppositions, which

contribute to how information is identified and analysed in relation to a research problem

This thesis adopts social constructivism as the analytical framework to examine the MB's identity. The strength of constructivism lies in its ability to uncover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived social reality. Berger and Luckmann (1967, p.194) point out that identity is formed by social processes and is maintained, modified and reshaped by social relations. Moreover, constructivism assumes that individuals tend to surround themselves with meaning constructions and symbolic relationships. Moreover, social constructivism considers how a social phenomenon develops in social contexts (Boghossian, 2001). As Burr describes, constructivism is "an artefact of a social group" (2003, p.7). According to Hakan Yavuz, social constructivism assumes that "any society is a human construction and subject to multiple interpretations and influences" (2003, p.20).

To avoid the essentialist and contextualist approaches, this thesis benefits from the privileges of social constructivism as a realistic and reflective approach. It draws upon the premises of social constructivism in order to combine ideational and institutional factors that can explain the MB's identity. Despite the fact that theoretical inquiry of this thesis is situated within the realm of social movements, it incorporates other disciplines in order to understand the MB's identity. Hence social psychology and the sociology of religion are employed in certain instances in order to explain specific aspects of the MB's identity.

#### **1.4.1. Methodology**

The thesis is primarily based on a qualitative discursive analysis. As highlighted by Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.10), the term qualitative means any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons, lives, stories, behaviour, but also about organizational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships. Therefore, in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the MB and its identity

construction process, this research incorporates both primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected through observations and interviews. The secondary data consists of existing data and documents on the MB, such as statements, textbooks, leaflets, and the writings of the MB leaders and ideologues, as well as books and articles on the MB.

In terms of methods, this study relies mainly upon semi-structured interviews, which involve direct interaction between the interviewer, who is seeking information and the interviewee, who is giving information (Allan & Skinner, 1991). The semi-structured interviews provide valuable primary data on the MB, from prominent MB figures, ordinary members, academics, and commentators.

In order to carry out the field research and collect the required data, the researcher travelled to Egypt twice. The first trip was between December 2010 and January 2011 during which interviews were conducted with a number of MB members, as well as some academics. The second was between March and April 2012 during which interviews were conducted with many MB members and leaders in Cairo, Shariqya, and Daqahliya. During the first visit to Cairo, the researcher encountered a number of difficulties in approaching some MB members because of the security issue. However, I was able to get in touch with Essam al-Eryan, a senior leader in the MB, by then a member of its Guidance Bureau, Ibrahim El-Bayoumi Ghanim, a respected academic who has extensively studied the legacy of al-Banna, and Salah Ghorab, a middle-rank member in the MB, in addition to several young members.

During the second visit, which was after the Egyptian uprising that toppled Mubarak in February 2011, the researcher was able to conduct interviews with many young and old members of the MB. I also managed to visit a number of the MB regional and local branches, where I met with low and middle rank members. I conducted semi-structured interviews with the MB leaders and members and attended some local activities in Zagazig, Shariryia. I also conducted some online interviews by using Skype during January and February 2012.

The interviews were conducted on two levels: the leadership and grassroots. As for the first level, the researcher met with some of the senior leaders of the MB in order to understand the mechanisms of structure and relationship between leadership and rank-and-file of the MB. On the grassroots level, several interviews were conducted with ordinary members in urban, suburban, and rural areas in order to understand the recruitment and socialization process in the MB. It was essential to compare between leaders and members' views on different issues, e.g. membership, recruitment, allegiance, etc.

In addition, some interviews with non-MB and former members were conducted. The researcher interviewed a couple of experts on the MB, Dr. Ibrahim El-Bayoumi Ghanim and Alaa Hamouda. I also interviewed some of young members of the MB who were disenchanted and alienated over the past few years. They provided valuable information on the recruitment and indoctrination process within the MB. I also met with

It worth to mention that all interviews were approved by Ethics and Risk Committee in the School of Government and International Affairs and abide by the ethical rules and code of Durham University.

In addition to the interviews, the researcher had access to numerous secondary data and materials, e.g. books, statements, and testimonies of the MB leaders and veteran members that enriched the thesis. While it was not easy to have access to these materials, the researcher could build good contacts with many sources within the MB who were willing to provide these materials. For instance, it was critical to understand the process of reshaping the mindset and worldview of MB members to have the textbooks that are used in socialization process within the MB. These textbooks are not available to the public. However, some interviewees were willing to provide the researcher some of these materials. Books and statements of General Guide and members of Guidance Bureau provided invaluable data and information on the internal dynamics of the MB. Building on these materials coupled with the interviews and

personal observations, the study could provide a discursive analysis to the process of identity construction as it happens within the MB.

### **1.5. CAVEATS ON THE TIME SPAN OF THE RESEARCH**

It should be noted that this thesis covers the Mubarak era mainly. More specifically, it primarily investigates the period from 1981, the year that Mubarak took power, until his downfall after popular uprising in February 2011. Hence it does not study the developments that occurred in Egypt during or following the uprising. This is not only because of the limited time since the downfall of Mubarak which could affect the findings of the study but also because of the fluid and unfolding nature of events in Egypt since the uprising which makes it hard to capture their impact on the MB. In addition, this research opens the door for subsequent research on the MB and provides new horizons for a comparison between the MB identity before and after the revolution.

### **1.6. RESEARCH STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION**

The thesis is divided into eight chapters, which evolved during the research strategy. The research content and organization is developed as follows: Chapter One provides an outline and introduction to the study. It contains the significance and importance of this study, its aims and objectives, research questions, hypothesis and the methodology.

Chapter Two provides a survey to the literature on Islamists. Using a critical analysis, the chapter examines various approaches that have tackled the subject of Islamism since the 1970s. In particular, the chapter unpacks the essentialist and contextualist narratives that have dominated the study of Islamist movements. It reveals the weaknesses of dealing with Islamism whether as a rigid and monolithic phenomenon, as essentialists argue or as a mere reaction to the modernization and urbanization crises that have wracked the Middle East during the second half of the twentieth century as the contextualists contend. The chapter also provides a critical analysis of the emerging social movement trends that have analysed Islamist movements over the past decade.

Nevertheless, despite the critique of social movement theory, the study views it as a useful tool if incorporated with other theoretical disciplines. Hence, the study interweaves social movement theory with social constructivism in order to analyse the MB's identity. The chapter also critically examines the literature on the MB in order to reveal its defects.

Chapter Three articulates the theoretical framework of the study. It draws upon social constructivism and social movement theory to build an analytical framework that can explain the process of identity construction in the MB. Moreover, it deconstructs the notion of the Islamic collectivity and how it is intertwined with the MB's identity. It reveals that the concept of Islamic identity is a social construct articulated by al-Banna and adopted by subsequent MB leaders. It is a combination of the religious notion of *jama'a* (collectivity) and social activism. It reflects the ability of the MB to produce symbolic meanings and constructions that encompass members in their everyday life.

Chapter Four explores the role of Hasan al-Banna, the founder and chief ideologue of the MB, in articulating the master framework of the MB identity. It traces the ideological and intellectual influences on al-Banna and how they shaped his vision and worldview. In addition, the chapter reveals how al-Banna was able to interweave the collective identity of the MB. He constructed what the study calls the *jama'a* paradigm, which refers to cognitive system of meanings, norms, values, and actions that guide MB members in their everyday life. It contains material, moral, and expressive aims, tools, and the strategies of the MB.

Chapter Five explores the various manifestations of the MB's identity in everyday life. It attempts to answer two key questions: how does the MB select and recruit its members or how to become an *ikhwani*? And how does the MB consolidate and strengthen the identity of its members or what does it mean to be an *ikhwani*? The aim of this chapter is to reveal the impact of the recruitment and selection processes on the construction of MB members' identity. The chapter reveals that the affiliation and membership in the MB is a complex, yet meaningful, process that plays a profound role in creating and consolidating the MB's identity.

Chapter Six examines the effects of the internal structure of the MB on identity construction. It explores the interplay between structure and norms, members and leadership, and organization and identity. In addition, the chapter explores the sub-culture of the MB which the study dubs *ikhwanism*. It refers to the cognitive code of identity that encompasses and guides the MB's members in everyday life. It highlights the values and rituals that create a unique and distinctive identity for the MB and maintain its organization and structure over time.

Chapter Seven explores the effects of repression on the MB identity and internal coherence. It investigates how the MB was able to maintain its identity and unity under regime repression. The chapter also reveals the interplay between the repressive environment and the MB's internal dynamics. It contends that the Mubarak regime's repression against the MB helped create a resilient identity. By unpacking the effects of repression on the MB, the chapter reveals the balance of power within the MB. It examines the relationship between the conservative and reformist currents within the MB.

Chapter Eight provides summary and findings of the study and proposes areas for future research.

## Chapter Two

### ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Since the early-1980s, the rise of Islamist movements has dominated the academic milieu, not only because of the political and social activism of these movements, but also because of their ability to survive and act under harsh and brutal autocratic regimes around the Muslim world. Furthermore, the unprecedented upsurge of moderate and violent Islamist groups in the aftermath of 9/11 posed many challenges to social scientists.

Much scholarly work attempts to reveal the multi-faceted nature of Islamist movements and to elaborate a coherent approach to studying them. However, many questions remain unanswered, including: How should Islamist movements be studied? Are they religious movements or social agents seeking change? What is the ultimate goal of these movements; is it applying Islamic law (*shari'a*) or establishing an Islamic state or both? Why do they succeed in mobilizing people while others fail? How do they construct their political and religious identity? Finally, and most importantly, why can Islamist movements not seize power in many Islamic countries in spite of their excessive political presence?

Importantly, Islamist movements do not follow a single approach in order to achieve their goals. True, many of these movements have similar ideological and religious beliefs; however, they adopt different political tactics. Accordingly, the analysis of Islamist movements is not confined to their ideology or political discourse but should include a study of the different variants, and, most importantly, the relationship between the state and the movement. For instance, the inclusion of Islamist movements can, however not necessarily, lead to the adoption of a moderate and progressive ideology, such as in the cases of the Islamic Action Front Party (IAFP) in Jordan and the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) in Morocco. However, exclusion

and suppression of Islamists might lead them to use violence as happened in Egypt in the 1980s and Algeria in the 1990s.

The aim of this chapter is to survey the literature and academic studies on Islamist movements. The goal of this literature review is to elaborate a coherent and plausible framework that can explain the activism of Islamist movements. In doing so, this chapter discusses different theoretical approaches and narratives that have been applied to Islamist movements during the last three decades. It will address the defects of these approaches as a step to elaborate a different approach that could answer the questions raised by this study.

## **2.2. HOW TO STUDY ISLAMISM? THE ENDURING POLEMIC**

Theorizing religion is problematic. Social scientists tend to tackle religion as a social phenomenon with different manifestations in everyday life, whereas theologians are interested in its sacred and metaphysical character. Nevertheless, the controversy over religion does not preclude sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and political scientists from developing various theoretical approaches to comprehend the intricacy of religious phenomena. However, the variety of religious studies hampers the possibility of attaining one coherent approach that can capture the essence of religious phenomena.

Max Weber and Emile Durkheim's contributions in sociology of religion prove how complex it is to construe religious and social behaviour. While the former draws attention to the role of individuals, such as a prophet, priest, or religious leader, in constituting religious beliefs, attitudes, and values system (Weber, 1993, p.70), the latter gives society the main role in achieving such outcomes (Durkheim, 1926). Thus, many Weberians and Durkheimians study religion differently, if not contradictorily (Budd, 1973; Beckford, 2003).

Studying Islam and Muslims is not an exception. The vast majority of the scholarly work on Islamist politics raises more questions than answers. While some scholars are preoccupied by Islam as a faith and a system of beliefs, others focus on its cultural, social, and political components. Notwithstanding, the massive literature on

Islam, the Muslim world, and Islamist movements, many problems are obscuring this terrain. Significantly, social scientists, historians, and theologians who study Islam are faced with tremendous difficulties in scrutinizing its real essence. According to Richard Martin, Islamicists, those who study Islam, “have come under increasing attack in recent years for their academic provincialism and for the distorted images of Islamic peoples and cultures many say they have created” (Martin, 1985: p.3). However, the core problem in Islamic studies is not confined to the lack of knowledge about Islam as a faith or religion but rather to the confusion over studying Muslim cultures, societies, and values. Ali Shariati aptly reveals the shortcomings of the academic knowledge about Islam by stating:

There are some Islamic scholars who understand Islam and there are some Islamic scholars—many, as a matter of fact—who have only learned about Islam. On the other hand, there are some who understand Islam well but are not considered to be Islamic scholars (Shariati, 1997)

Studying Islam has usually been accompanied by questioning its political character. As noted by Fred von der Mehden, the public perception of Islam is articulated by ignorance, confusion, and misinformation (Von der Mehden, 1993). Therefore, to avoid generalization in studying Islam and Islamic politics, Piscatori raises two important questions: Whose Islam, and when? (Piscatori, 1983). To which can be added a third: where? A number of scholars consider Islam as a stagnant, homogenous, and dogmatic creed, whereas others, such as Huntington (1996), Lewis (2002), Harris (2007) portray it as an anti-modern, anti-democratic, and a fanatical religion.

Despite the belated recognition that studying Islam is a thorny and polemical phenomenon (Esposito, 1984; Halliday, 1995), reductionist approaches to Islamic studies can still be found. Patrick Bannerman points out the misunderstanding of Islam theoretically and practically is widespread and fundamental mistakes regarding Islamic history are continually repeated (Bannerman, 1988).

Therefore, the crucial question is: how should Islam be studied? This question entails various ontological and epistemological dilemmas. The manifestations of these

dilemmas are embedded in the confusion between Islam as a faith and Islam as a political ideology. Overwhelmingly, Islam has been tackled by using philological and historical approaches. However, these approaches have failed to explore the diversity of the Muslim world. Jacob Neusner highlights the limits of these approaches by stating:

Even though, through philology, we understand every word of a text, through history, we know what just happened in the event or time to which the text testifies, we still don't understand that text. A religious text serves not merely the purpose of philology or history (Martin, 1985, p.11).

Put differently, the ascendancy of a monolithic image of Islam and Muslims hinders many scholars from discerning the enormous differences amongst Muslim societies. A number of scholars, such as Bassim Tibi and Daniel Pipes, tend to deal with Islam and Muslim societies as a homogenous and static phenomenon. In addition, the legacy of Orientalism obscures the appropriate understanding of Islam. Edward Said reveals the superficial view of Islam by stating:

Generally, this has disqualified it [academic studies of Islam] to cover Islam in ways that might tell us more than we are otherwise aware of beneath the surface of Islamic societies. Then too, there are numerous methodological and intellectual problems that still need settling: Is there such a thing as Islamic behaviour? What connects Islam at the level of everyday life to Islam at the level of doctrine in the various Islamic societies? How really useful is "Islam" as a concept for understanding Morocco and Saudi Arabia and Syria and Indonesia? If we come to realize that, as many scholars have recently noted, Islamic doctrine can be seen as justifying capitalism as well as socialism, militancy as well as fatalism, ecumenism as well as exclusivism, we begin to sense the tremendous lag between academic descriptions of Islam (that are inevitably caricatured in the media) and the particular realities to be found within the Islamic world (Said, 1981, p.38).

Ironically, a substantial number of studies have persistently conflated the terms Muslims and Islamist movements. Within the latter, words such as Islamists, fundamentalists, Salafis and Jihadists have been used synonymously (Sivan, 1985; Choueiri, 1990). The ascendancy of violent and radical movements, such as Al-Qaeda in the wake of 9/11, has created difficulties in categorizing Islamist movements. For instance, scholars can fail to distinguish between radical and moderate movements,

religious and political clusters, fundamental and reformist parties, etc. The diversity of Islamist actors leads to a deep misunderstanding of Islam and Muslim politics.

Nevertheless, a number of scholars study Islam differently through using geographical, comparative, ethnographic and cross-cultural approaches. For instance, Motaz A. Fattah implies that Muslim countries have a wide divergence in terms of political values, cultural heritage, and democratic tendencies (Fattah, 2006). Furthermore, John Esposito reveals that there is no one Islam but there are many Islams (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007; Esposito 2010). He states:

While we commonly speak of “Islam,” in fact many Islams or interpretations of Islam exist. The images and realities of Islam and of Muslims are multiple and diverse: religiously, culturally, economically, and politically. Muslims are the majority in some fifty-seven countries, and they represent many nationalities, languages, ethnic and tribal groups, and customs (Esposito, 2010, p.11).

Furthermore, the legacy of 9/11 added more complexity to the field of Islamic studies. Two arguments have recurred. The first assumes that Islam has an authentic problem with politics (Milton-Edwards, 2004; Tibi, 2009). The second, and broader argument, contends that Islam, as a culture, is not compatible with modernity (Lewis, 2002). And whilst some argue that Islam has apolitical ‘exceptionalism’ as a faith and political ideology (Pipes, 1983; Tibi, 2009), others refute such a notion by stressing the role played by the early Islamic state in appropriating the religion (Ayubi, 1991). Nazih Ayubi contends that Islamic scriptures (Qur’an and Sunna) do not stipulate a specific form for the state or the government. Nevertheless, he underscores the role of ‘*ulama*<sup>1</sup>’ in politicizing religion by incorporating the state into *shar‘ia* (Ayubi, 1991).

Despite Ayoubi’s notion on the politicization of Islam, scholars such as (Pipes, 1983; Tibi, 2009) argue that establishing an Islamic state remains the ultimate goal for many Muslims. As Esposito (1997) argues, the interjection of western political terminologies, such as state, government, political system, and legitimacy, into the field of Islamic studies creates confusion for studying Islam and Islamist movements.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘*ulama*’ refers to religious and legal scholars in Islam who study and interpret the Islamic texts.

The Qur'an and Sunna do not force Muslims to follow a specific formula of government. However, the Islamic experiment under the Umayyad (661-750 AD) and Abbasid (75-1258) caliphates created a structure for governing based on legal and jurisprudential interpretations of the Islamic texts. Furthermore, Muslim *ulma* developed various and flexible jurisprudence doctrines (*madhahib fiqhiyya*)<sup>2</sup> that helped in developing Islamic political thought. Therefore, contextualizing political ideas throughout Islamic history remains essential in understanding the evolution of the relationship between Islam and politics.

Moreover, unlike Christianity, Islam has not experienced the separation between faith and politics. True, some Muslim countries have been enforced to adapt such separation as the case in Turkey under Kemalist's rule during the 1920s and 1930s and Tunisia under Bourguiba's epoch during the 1960s. However, the term secularism has been distorted amongst Muslims. Secularism has negative connotations regarding the relationship between religion and modernization. Therefore, Talal Asad warns against the dangers of transplanting the western religious experiment when studying Islam. He notes that "while religion is integral to modern western history, there are dangers in employing it as a normalizing concept when transplanting it to Islamic traditions" (Asad, 1993, p.7). In addition, Esposito reveals the robust manifestation of Islam and politics:

A review of the role of religion in politics and society in early Islam reveals a rich and complex history. Islam proved to be a faith in which religion was harnessed to political power. The Islamic community was both spiritual and temporal, church and state (Esposito, 1984, p.14).

The shortcoming of the argument of the confusion between Islam and politics lies in its tendency to question Islam as a faith regardless of the cultural and political nature of Muslim societies. For instance, Pipes (1983) claims that Sharia is the main obstacle that hinders the progression of Muslim countries. He states:

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<sup>2</sup> *Madhahib Fiqhiyya* refers to the jurisprudence trends and school of thoughts that emerged in Islam during the first three centuries of its existence. They are four main Sunni schools (Maliki, Hanafi, Shafii, and Hanbali).

[I]t [Sharia] entails a whole mentality and a way of life which, when fully adhered to permeates the minds, actions, and feelings of Muslims ... the Islamic mentality is characterized by dichotomies; things either conform to Islam or they oppose. Persons are believers (Muslims) or not (kafirs); territory is ruled by Muslims (Dar al-Islam) or not (Dar al-Harb); non-Muslims are under Muslim control (dhimmis) or not (harbis); warfare is righteous (Jihad) or not (fitna) ... The dualistic mentality is not aberrant, but fundamental to Islam with roots going back to the Qur'an (Pipes, 1983, p.34).

The tenor of Pipes' argument is that Islam has a dichotomy that creates an intransigent mind-set. However, it overlooks the evolution of Islamic jurisprudence over centuries and resorts to obsolete terminology. Similarly, Lewis (1986) claims that Qur'an and Sunnah contain authoritarian political language that encompasses shared memory and common heritage of Muslims everywhere. He states that:

Exponents of authoritarian principles frequently cite the Qur'anic verse (4: 59) 'Obey God, obey His Prophet and obey those in authority over you' In support of the meaning which they find in this verse, the defenders of authoritarian politics quote numerous hadiths, the general purport of which is that the subject owes unquestioning and immediate obedience to the legitimate authority-that is, to the lawful head of the umma, the Islamic religio-political community. Since the head of the umma has the right to appoint persons to act in his name, the duty of obedience also extends to those officers and officials who exercise properly delegated authority on behalf of the duly constituted sovereign (Lewis, 1986, p.43).

In addition, the thesis of inconsistency between Islam and modernity tends to be constructed on rhetoric rather than on genuine truths. Whereas some scholars claim that Islam and Muslims are innately hostile to modernity and democracy (Munson, 1988; Tibi, 1988), others refute such arguments through deconstructing modernity discourse (Hefner, 1998; Nettler, Mahmoud et al., 2000; Ramadan, 2001). For instance, Robert Hefner criticizes the notion of 'Muslim Exceptionalism' from modernity. He points out the influence of the rapid cultural and social changes that shape public religion in the modern Muslim world (Hefner, 1998). Similarly, Bobby Sayyid criticizes the Eurocentric tendency in studying Islam and Muslims. Based upon Edward Said's notion of Orientalism, Sayyid questions the modernity triumphant hypothesis and disputes

Fukuyama's notion of the *End of History* (Sayyid, 1997). Eurocentrism, according to Sayyid, is "the discourse that emerges in the context of the decentring of the West; that is, a context in which the relationship between the western enterprise and universalism is open to disarticulation and re-articulation" (Sayyid, 1997, p.128). Islamic actors, according to Sayyid, do not recognize the victory of western liberal capitalism but pose a different universal project that threatens western hegemony.

### **2.3. APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS**

Despite the burgeoning literature on Islamist movements, the agreement amongst scholars over terminologies and classifications is still elusive. Hence, Islamism has become a label that covers different, and sometimes contradictory, clusters and movements rather than explaining them. Terminologies such as fundamentalism, revivalism, radicalism, revolutionism, reformism, Salafism, and conservatism are used synonymously without clear distinction (Ismail, 2002). In addition, movements as diverse as the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), the Turkish AK Party (Justice and Development Party), Hizbullah, Hamas, and the Moroccan PJD (Party of Justice and Development) in Morocco, are, sometimes, studied identically.

The literature relating to Islamist movements shows a considerable diversity of theoretical approaches and patterns. However, before demonstrating this diversity, three important observations should be highlighted. The first is the profound impact of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 on Islamic studies over the past three decades. It influenced not only the terrain of Islamic studies but also induced many to rethink the secularization theory and the role of religion in public life. According to Bayat, Foucault described the Iranian revolution as the "first post-modern revolution of our time" while Giddens treated it as a sign for "the crisis of modernity" (Bayat, 2005, 894). The second is the impact of militant and guerrilla movements in countries such as Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Palestine, and Afghanistan on the political and social realms. The third is the polemic raised by the events of 9/11 over the scrutiny of methods and approaches that study the phenomenon of Islamism.

The discussion now focuses on the literature that examines the emergence of Islamist movements. It is divided into two parts: the first part deals with different approaches of studying Islamist movements and highlights the three main approaches; the crisis approach, cultural/essential approach, and social movements approach. The second covers literature on the Muslim Brotherhood as the focus of this study.

### **2.3.1. The crisis approach**

This approach emphasizes the significance of the political and socio-economic contexts in explaining the resurgence of Islamist movements. According to the proponents of this approach, the rise of Islamist movements is merely a reaction to the fundamental political and economic crises that faced many Arab states during the second half of the twentieth century. According to the advocates of this approach, authoritarian durability and socio-economic failure fuelled the Islamist resurgence (Hudson, 1977; Ayubi, 1991; Esposito, 1997). They argue that the legitimacy crisis that wrecked many Arab regimes created a prolific environment for Islamist movements to strengthen their presence (Hudson, 1977).<sup>3</sup> Ali E. Dessouki, for instance, captures the complex nature of this crisis. He points out the revival of Islamic movements is the “product of a crisis situation characterized by economic difficulties, moral and ideological confusion, and political instability” (Hilal, 1981, p.183). In particular, Laura Guazzone contends that the failure of Arab nationalism ideology in the aftermath of 1967 war between the Arabs and Israel was the seed of the Islamist rise in the Arab world (Guazzone, 1995). Guazzone and Dessouki agree on the profound impact of the Arab defeat on the secular Arab regimes. François Burgat points to the switch of many Arab intellectuals from nationalism to Islamism by the end of 1970s. He refers to figures such as Rached Al-Ghannouchi, the leader of Tunisian Islamist movement, Al-Nahda, and Tariq Al-Bishri, the renowned Egyptian intellectual, who changed their ideas and

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Hudson explains the crisis of legitimacy in the Arab world during the second half of the twentieth century. He points out “the shortage of this indispensable political resource largely accounts for the volatile nature of Arab politics and the autocratic, unstable character of all the present Arab governments” (Hudson, 1977, p.2).

discourse after the demise of the ideology of Arab nationalism (Burgat and Dowell, 1997).

However, Yvonne Haddad disagrees with this argument. She asserts that the 1967 defeat is not the sole reason for the growth of Islamist movements (Haddad, 1992). Scholars such as Lisa Anderson argue that the tremendous appeal of Islamist movements is not confined to the crisis of Arab nationalism but can be attributed to the structural deficit of the Arab state. She reveals the importance of the institutional factor in interpreting the surge of Islamist movements, arguing that the persistence of absolute monarchies and authoritarian regimes creates political grievances that are used by Islamist movements (Anderson, 1997). Gudrun Krämer expands on Anderson's idea by exploring the consequences of restricted political liberalization policies on Islamist activism. She argues that Islamist movements became the key opposition force as a result of the unavoidable political opening that occurred in the Arab world during the 1980s and 1990s (Krämer, 1995). According to Krämer, restricted political pluralism was accompanied by economic deprivation and social turmoil in many Arab societies. In addition, Guazzone, Ibrahim, and Entelis stress that the sizeable lower and middle classes faced alienation, fragmentation, and marginalization that encouraged them to join Islamist movements (Guazzone, 1995; Ibrahim, 1996; Entelis, 1997). Some countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Jordan and Morocco encountered economic hardship as a result of economic privatization and structural adjustment policies. Consequently, Islamist movements utilized the social vacuum that was created by such policies to build welfare and economic networks and increase their popularity (Entelis, 1997).

According to the proponents of this approach, Islamist movements penetrated the civil and public spheres, and rooted themselves in universities, professional associations, worker unions, and schools creating a strong network of supporters and beneficiaries (Ayubi, 1991; Ibrahim, 1996; Tessler, 1997). Islamist movements launched what Saad Eddin Ibrahim calls 'Islamic Business' to recruit members and spread their ideologies among the population (Ibrahim, 1996). In Egypt, for instance, the MB encouraged many

of its members and supporters to establish Islamic institutions, banking, schools, health centres, and enterprises. It succeeded in extending its service coverage to the poor and middle classes around the country (Ibrahim, 1996, p.60). Similarly, in Algeria, economic liberalization was crucial in muting the Islamist challenge inside the country. According to Dirk Vandewalle, the structural economic reforms had immediate impact on the poor and generated support for the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) (Vandewalle, 1997). Moreover, the pioneering role of Islamist networks in building religious and public institutions, such as mosques, clinics, and day care centres, gave advantages to Islamists in the political arena. Mark Tessler contends that Islamist movements, unlike secular parties, have the advantage of criticizing Arab regimes and delivering services at the same time (Tessler, 1997).

Nazih Ayubi has a sophisticated argument using the crisis approach. He contends that the appeal of Islamist movements is an upshot to the urbanization and modernization crises that face many Arab states. According to Ayubi, the rapid urbanization policies in countries such as Egypt and Syria left many of the poor frustrated and alienated (Ayubi, 1991). Such alienation worked in the favour of Islamists who offered a new path with which to re-engage the youth.

Despite the importance of the crisis approach in understanding the re-emergence of Islamist movements, many scholars highlight its shortcoming. Salwa Ismail, for instance, raises two main difficulties. First, the failure to securitize the micro changes that shape the environment where Islamist movements operate. According to Ismail, “The focus on the macro level comes at the expense of the micro level where the everyday-life communities wrestle with the effects of the macro changes, initiate new forms of action, and struggle for and contribute to a reconfiguring of the political scene” (Ismail, 2002, p.14). Second is the inability to examine the impact of structural transformations on cultural and symbolic aspects of everyday life. Although she disagrees with the essentialist approach that gives primacy to culture over other factors, Ismail considers the impact of the political and economic transformations on shaping the public sphere (Ismail, 2002, p.14).

In addition to Ismail's criticisms, there are other problems with the crisis approach. First, it does not answer the question: why do only Islamist movements seize the opportunity presented by the political and socio-economic crises in the Arab world to enhance their presence? Similarly, why do people prefer to join Islamist organizations rather than other ideological trends? Secondly, the crisis approach might not be relevant to studying Islamist movements. Historically, the emergence of Islamist movements came before the creation of many Arab states. For instance, the Muslim Brotherhood, the largest and oldest Islamist movement, was founded in 1928 and launched plenty of offshoots all over the Arab world during the first half of the twentieth century. Thirdly, the crisis approach overlooks the developments that occurred in the Arab world during the 1980s and 1990s as well changes inside Islamist movements, let alone the changes brought by the so-called Arab Spring.

### **2.3.2. The essentialist approach**

The main premise of this approach is that the emergence of Islamist movements reflects the tensions between Islam and modernity. The proponents of this approach argue that the ascendancy of Islamist movement is merely a response to the dilemmas that face Muslim societies caused by modernity, westernization and globalization. Moreover, they claim that Islam has a profound cultural problem with modernity (Pipes 1983; Sivan 1985; Vatikiotis 1987; Watt 1988; Huntington 1996; Tibi 1998; Berman 2004). Thus, they, tend to identify Islamic culture as a rigid cluster of idioms and symbols that shapes Muslims' vision toward the self and the other (Ismail, 2002). Put differently, The essentialist approach treats Islam as a set of fixed texts and doctrines (Yavuz, 2003). Bassam Tibi, one of the most well-known essentialists, claims that Islam is a cultural system prone to politicization. Although he distinguishes between Islam and Islamism, Tibi contends that the problem of the Muslim world does not lie in the political ideology of Islamist movements but rather in the cultural crisis of Islam (Tibi, 2001). He states, "Political Islam is the result of a crisis which has emerged from Islam's predicament with modernity ... political Islam is the Islamic response to cultural

modernity and that it is, as well, a revolt against the West” (Tibi, 2001, p.4). Tibi implies that modern Islam is characterized by what he terms ‘defensive culture’ which shapes Islamic political thought (Tibi, 1988). Based upon Jurgen Habermas’ *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Tibi assumes that Islam has historical tensions with the cultural dimension of modernity. Hence, he contends that this tension is the main source for current international conflict (Tibi, 2009).

According to Hakan Yavuz’s study, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, essentialists have exaggerated the role of Islamic doctrines on the conduct of individuals and society (Yavuz, 2003). Despite his criticism of philological and anthropological approaches in studying Islam, Tibi makes the same mistake when he suggests the need for historicizing the Quran as a precondition for reforming Islam. He points out that “If Islam is not essentialized, then it can be reformed and culturally renewed. If all kinds of essentialism are dismissed, and reference to the Quran itself is done in a historicizing manner, then it is possible to legitimate change in the direction of modernity” (Tibi, 2009, p.11).

Furthermore, Tibi asserts that fundamentalism, which according to him is an aspect of all Islamist movements, is a reaction to the problems of globalization and fragmentation that impacts on all Muslim countries. He insists that Islamic civilization has a holistic worldview that has never been able to trigger globalization of its own design (Tibi, 2009, p.12). Tibi concludes that fundamentalism is a regressive phenomenon that revolts against the essence of modernity and poses challenges to Western hegemony (Tibi, 1998).

Daniel Pipes, another essentialist, claims that Muslims have an unavoidable problem with modernity. He stresses that westernization is a prerequisite for modernization. According to Pipes, the ‘Muslim Anomie’ from modernity lies in the truth that Muslims are not able to adapt to western civilization. He states:

[U]ntil 1800, Chinese, Indian and Islamicate civilizations enjoyed roughly the same social power as Europe and possessed full civilizations-with cities, classic traditions, written languages ... and formal institutions, which could compete with Europe’s. Of these three people, the Muslims had much hardest

time coping with Europe's primacy .... Civilized peoples faced more difficulties than primitive peoples and Muslims faced more than the other civilized peoples. In short, Muslims experienced the greatest travails in coping with modernity; this was the special Muslim dilemma (Pipes, 1983, p.168).

Pipes' argument has built not only on a selective and literal understanding of Islamic texts, but also on a Eurocentric narrative that was grounded in the hegemony of the Western modernity model over other cultures. He asserts that modernization should be associated with westernization. Thus, he contends that for Muslims to be modernized, they should abandon *shari'a*, embrace secularism, and imitate the western way of life. For Pipes, *shari'a* remains an immense concern. He states:

Westernization being inimical to the observance of the *shari'a*, Muslim attitudes toward the west became embroiled in the question of fulfilling the sacred law [Shari'a]. With Westernization becoming urgent, "the crucial question is whether Islam should serve as a guide and inspiring ideal, or as a rule of life", should Muslim abandon Shari'a or keep it as always? (Pipes, 1983, p.111)

In addition, Pipes points out that western Muslims cannot be Muslims and western simultaneously. According to him, it is very difficult for a western Muslim to maintain the precepts of the *shari'a* while living in the west. Like Tibi, Pipes points out that Muslims have to reconcile *shari'a* with the cultural dimension of modernity, in other words, to be westernized (Pipes, 1983).

In line with Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis, Pipes asserts that Islam and the west are entirely incompatible. He argues that Islamic and western customs are different in so many details. Ironically, Pipes explains the surge of Islamic revival as a product of the west's declining power and prestige. However, he concludes that fundamentalists mislead people when they assume that modernization could happen without westernization (Pipes, 1983, p.197).

In addition, a new generation of essentialists has emerged over the past decade particularly after 9/11 under the rubric of "terrorism" studies (Stern 2003, Ranstorp, 2009, Hoffman 2006). This trend of scholarship tends to link Islam with terrorism.

Therefore, the notion of “Islamic terrorism” has become widespread within academic and policymaking circles over the past decade or as Jacson puts it, “A ubiquitous feature of contemporary terrorism discourse, observable in a great many political, academic and cultural texts, is the deeply problematic notion of ‘Islamic terrorism’, a term that comes laden with its own set of unacknowledged assumptions and embedded political-cultural narratives.” (Jacson, 2007, pp. 394-395). The concept of “Islamic terrorism”, as Jacson explains, took different labels and terms and discursive formation over the past decade. Notions like “extremism”, “radicalism”, “jihadists”, etc. became pervasive in the western discourse towards the Muslim world.

The critique of the essentialism paradigm is not confined to its orientalist tendency, but also concerns the invalidity of its assumptions. On one the hand, it follows the discourse that Islamism is based on unchanging textualism, while on the other hand, it overlooks the diversity of Muslim discourses and cultures and the evolution of Islamist movements. It is true that Islamist leaders, such as Hasan al-Banna, Abul-ala Mawdudi, Sayed Qutb, and Aytollah Khomeini, establish their discourses on a monolithic and conservative understanding of the Islamic teachings; nevertheless, the Islamist arena contains highly diverse currents ranging from reformist to progressive and liberal ones.

Recent studies on secularization and post-structuralism reveal the inability of essentialist narratives to explain religious, mainly Islamist, phenomena (Casanova, 1994; Berger, 1999). For instance, Peter Berger reveals the superficiality of linking modernization and secularization. Berger goes further when he stresses the crucial role of religion in the current world. As he pointed out, “The assumption that we live in a secularized world is false ... The proposition that modernity necessarily leads to a decline of religion is, in principle, ‘value free’” (Berger, 1999, pp.2-3).

Another set of critiques of essentialism comes from the realms of post-modernism and multi-culturalism (Ayubi, 1991; Ahmed, 1992; Halliday, 1995; Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996; Ismail, 2002; Roy, 2004). According to this trend, the main problem with essentialism lies in its reliance on modernity theory. James Piscatori

and Dale Eickelman explore the limitations of modernist arguments towards the Muslim world by dismissing the casual relationship between modernization and westernization. According to them, the main defect of modernization theory “lies in the sharp contrast between two artificial constructs, “modernity” and “tradition” (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996, p.23). They go further by asserting that Islamic ‘tradition’ operated, sometimes, as a vehicle for revolutionary change.

Fred Halliday expands on Eickelman and Piscatori’s thoughts when he unveils the ideological exploitation of the modernity narrative. He criticizes the notion of universalism vis-à-vis particularism. He argues that this dichotomy is misleading and disguises reality (Halliday, 1995). Halliday points out that the particularism of the Middle East, like the universalism of the capitalist modernizer, is shaped by material and ideological interests (Halliday, 1995, p.14). Unlike essentialists, Halliday asserts that the rise of Islamist movements is not a trans-historical phenomenon but rather a response to political and social problems. He states: “Where Islamist movements arise, or where particular groups identify themselves primarily as ‘Muslim’, they are responding not to a timeless influence [as essentialists presume], but to the issues their societies and communities face today” (Halliday, 1995, p.118).

Similarly, Bobby Sayyid provides a harsh critique of modernist and Eurocentric narratives. He argues that modernity creates a hegemonic discourse similar to that which Islamists espouse. He states that Islamists claim that they have an authentic construction of identity not contaminated by western influences (Sayyid 1997). Thus, he reveals that Islamism invents a counter-hegemonic movement based on Islamic particularism which threatens the universality of the western paradigm (Sayyid, 1997, p.139).

Likewise, Nazih Ayubi repudiates the notion of the authenticity of Islamism. He stresses that political Islam is a spurious phenomenon that does not have its roots in Islamic history (Ayubi, 1991). He points out that:

political Islam is a new invention—it does not represent a “going back” to any situation that existed in the past or any theory that was formulated in the past... Furthermore, political Islamists want to reverse the traditional relationship between the two spheres [religion and politics] so that politics

becomes subservient to religion, and not the other way round, as was the case historically (Ayubi, 1991, p.3).

For some scholars, essentialist contentions regarding the Muslim stance on globalization and modernization are provocative and inaccurate. Akbar Ahmed reveals the spuriousness of these arguments by stressing the global element of Islam. He criticizes the linearity of the modernist narrative in creating a causal relationship between modernization and westernization. He states:

Islamic history has had long periods in which we recognize elements from what we today call globalization: societies living within different ethnic, geographic and political boundaries, but speaking a language understood throughout, enjoying a common cultural sensibility and recognizing the same overarching ethos in the world-view (Ahmed, 2002, p.27).

Ahmed argues that Islamist revivalism is both a cause and effect of post-modernism. Despite his criticism of modernists, Ahmed stresses that Islamic movements exemplify a response to authoritarian policies and local identity conflicts (Ahmed, 1992, p.14).

Another nuanced critique of essentialism conducted by the French sociologist Oliver Roy rejects the rigid textual and cultural understanding of Islam and Islamism. According to Roy, Islamism is a modern phenomenon, not a traditional one. He reveals the dynamic nature of Islamist movements and the modern background of its audiences. Roy goes further by comparing Islamist movements with Marxist and revolutionary ones (Roy, 1994). Moreover, Roy disagrees with those scholars who espouse the Weberian reading of Islam which treats it as a culture, a civilization, and a closed system (Roy, 1994, p.7). He points out:

The [Orientalist] presupposition consists, among Western specialists or essayists, in defining a timeless "Islamic Culture," a conceptual framework that structures both political life and urban architecture, the thoughts of the ualmas and of their detractors, and whose consequence would be the nonemergence of capitalism and the absence of an autonomous space for politics and institutions (Roy, 1994, p.7).

Roy's critique of essentialism entails two significant points: first, the generalization of its judgments; and second, the confusion between Islam as a religion, and Islamic culture which encompasses people from different cultures and traditions (Roy, 2004). Unlike essentialists, Roy warns against fabricating a causal relationship between religion and culture, arguing that the former might have a relative effect on the latter.

To sum up, the battlefield of essentialists is texts, religious discourses, and traditions. Thus, the various critiques by academics from different theoretical backgrounds highlight that essentialism has failed to provide an accurate and relevant explanation for the Islamist phenomenon.

### **2.3.3. The social movements approach**

During the last decade, many contributions to Islamist studies have adopted social movement theory as an approach for examining the dynamism of Islamist movements. This new trend attempts to overcome the shortcomings of the previous approaches in studying Islamist movements. Based upon various sociological concepts such as mobilization, protest, collective action, framing, and political opportunity structures, proponents of this approach tend to re-define Islamism as a type of social activism or collective action. They contend that studying Islamist movements through the lens of mobilization and contention variables can be more accurate than relying on essentialist or contextualist approaches. Thus, instead of looking at texts, idioms, and slogans of Islamist movements, social movements scholars examine allocating resources, mobilizing tactics, network building, and framing processes which occur in social movements (Munson, 2001; Wickham, 2002; Wiktorowicz, 2003; Yavuz, 2003; Bayat, 2005). The main argument of this trend is that Islamist movements are social agents that seek to unleash political and/or social change. It treats Islamist movements as a type of social movement that reflects a combination of individuals, interests, and networks that meld together and act as a collective entity. Unlike the previous approaches, it should be noted that social constructivism approach does not explain why Islamist movements

emerge but rather it focuses on their nature and activism and how they articulate Islam in everyday life.

This approach has three different, but related, strands; the first tackles Islamist movements in their political context. The second focuses on political opportunity structures. The third addresses the cultural framing process inside Islamist movements. The next section will sketch these strands.

### **2.3.3.1 The political process strand**

This strand examines Islamist movements within their political and social contexts. It emphasises the importance of political process in shaping Islamist movements' actions and strategies. The adherents of this strand argue that the political environment determines resources, ideational frameworks, and institutional factors that affect Islamist movements (Hafez, 2003). It is concerned with the interaction between Islamism, as a social movement, and the political regime, primarily within a repressive environment. Mohammed Hafez argues that the political process approach gives primacy of process over structure in any collective action (Hafez, 2003, p.21). Despite its dynamism, this strand espouses the structural view that treats social movements as mechanical agents who react to the political environment without being able to change or alter it. Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper have captured the structural bias of political process theory (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). Despite acknowledging its vast influence in the social movements milieu, they have profoundly criticized the vagueness of its concepts. They stated, "PPT [political process theory] in its current form provides a helpful, albeit limited, set of 'sensitizing concepts' for social movement research" (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004, p.5). Moreover, this strand overlooks the dynamics and the interactions that occur inside these movements.

### **2.3.3.2. Political opportunity structures model**

This strand tackles political opportunity structures and spaces (Wiktorowicz, 2003; Yavuz, 2003). According to this strand, political opportunities play a vital role in articulating the trajectory of social movements. It helps movements to allocate resources, mobilize people, and build allies for collective action (Gamson, 1975; Tarrow, 1994;

McAdam, McCarthy et al. 1996; McAdam and Snow, 1997; Diani and McAdam, 2003). Sidney Tarrow points out that political opportunity structure has four dimensions that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action: 1) access to participation; 2) shifts in ruling alignment; 3) building strong allies; and 4) splits within the ruling elite (Tarrow, 1994, p.86). Building on Tarrow's four dimensions, Quintan Wiktorowicz argues that political opportunities and constraints shape the calculations of Islamist movements and help them in making rational decisions (Wiktorowicz, 2003).

However, some scholars noted the shortcoming of using the opportunity structure in explaining the activism of Islamist movements. For instance, Hakan Yavuz makes clear distinction between opportunity spaces and opportunities. He highlights the importance of opportunity spaces in enhancing the ability of Islamists to reshape the public sphere. He states:

The concept of "opportunity spaces" is more useful than "opportunity structure" since it brings micro and macro forces together and identifies the interactions between external and internal resources to indicate direction of change (Yavuz, 2003, p.24).

According to Yavuz, the new opportunity spaces open up new possibilities for Islamist movements to exist in the public sphere. In addition, these spaces help Islamist movements in articulating a new socio-political consciousness which can be used in achieving political change (Yavuz, 2003, p.25).

However, this strand falls short in answering the crucial question: why are religious, specifically Islamist, movements and not other groups able to allocate resources, mobilize people, and seize political opportunity space? In addition, the political opportunity thesis confuses social movement emergence with movement activism. The main assumption of this thesis is that people tend to join social movements whenever there is political opportunity for doing that. However, this does not explain whether movements work to create such opportunity through collective action or they just expand their activism when the space is opened (Goodwin and Jasper,

2004). Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper reveal the dilemma of defining the concept of political opportunity. They state:

“The more broadly one defines political opportunities, the more trivial ... the political opportunity thesis becomes; conversely, the more narrowly one defines political opportunities, the more inadequate or implausible the political opportunity thesis becomes an explanation for the rise of any particular social movement” (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004, p.6).

Following from this, Ziad Munson, despite stressing the importance of the political opportunity structure thesis, criticizes its shortcomings when examining specific cases. Munson argues that the political opportunity aspects, mentioned by Tarrow, cannot explain the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt during the 1930s and 1940s (Munson, 2001). According to Munson, despite the repressive political environment in Egypt during that period, the MB succeeded in expanding its organizational and social structure to different urban areas (Munson, 2001, pp. 496-497).

Asef Bayat suggests another important factor in explaining how Islamists perceive themselves and how this affects their activism, which he calls ‘imagined solidarity’ (Bayat, 2005). He argues that solidarity is the cement that binds Islamists together and pushes them into taking collective action (Bayat, 2005). He claims that social movements act, sometimes, independently from external factors such as state repression. Moreover, he assumes that social movements can influence their own environment and their relationships with the surrounding social and political forces and institutions (Bayat, 2005, p.898).

### **2.3.3.3 Cultural framing process**

The third strand of the social movement theory concentrates on the cultural framing process within Islamist movements (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996; Ismail, 2002; Wiktorowicz, 2003; Yavuz, 2003). According to social movement theorists, the term framing is used to describe the process of meaning construction (Snow and Benford 1986; Kriesberg, Misztal et al. 1988; Morris and Mueller 1992; Benford and Snow 2000). However, the American sociologist David Snow points out that the process of creating or manufacturing meaning from the traditional culture is complex. Thus, he

reveals the importance of frame alignment. He highlights four alignment processes, which social movements go through to formulate their message in relation to the existing culture: frame bridging; frame amplification; frame extension; and frame transformation (taken from Tarrow 1994, p.110). Wiktorowicz claims that Islamist movements use such framing mechanisms as interpretive devices that translate grievances and perceived opportunities into the mobilization of resources and movement activism (Wiktorowicz, 2002, p.205).

Building on the framing process concept, Piscatori and Eickelman illustrate the importance of meaning manufacturing in the Muslim world. They argue that Muslim politics revolves around contesting both the interpretation of symbols and the control of the institutions that produce and sustain them (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996). According to them, Islam constitutes the language of politics and Islamic vocabulary contains words of political resonance (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996, p.12). Ismail takes Piscatori and Eickelman argument a step further by stressing the changing character of meanings and symbols. She reveals the deployment of religious symbols and the use of frames of reference derived from religious traditions. Thus, Ismail concludes that there are no inherited meanings to the texts (Ismail, 2002, p.17). The nuanced work of Yavuz on political identity examines the interaction between Islamic daily life and the meaning construction process. He contends that political identity is an outcome of the interaction between individuals and society in a constructive way (Yavuz, 2003).

Despite the significant contribution of social movements theory in studying different types of collective actions, it overlooks the religious component of Islamist movements. Apart from its western origins,<sup>4</sup> social movement theory tends to deal with Islamist movements as merely mechanical social agents without giving much attention

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Tilly explains the main reasons that lie behind the emergence of social movements by referring to the social and political changes that took place in Europe and the US during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These reasons were anchored in parliamentarization, market capitalization, urbanization, and proletarianization (Tilly, 2004). In addition, Alberto Melucci stresses that the new social movements are the product of post-industrial societies.

to their religious rationale. Therefore, it does not distinguish between various types of movements such as traditional and reformist, radical and moderate, violent and peaceful.

Furthermore, several social movements theorists tend to distinguish religious movements from social movements (Touraine, 1981; Habermas, 1987; Melucci, 1996). They assert that religious movements have a regressive and anti-modern nature. For instance, James Beckford, Habermas, Alain Touraine, and Alberto Melucci exclude religious movements from the realm of new social movements (NSMs) (Beckford 2003). Beckford criticizes the Marxist foundations of NSMs, while stressing the importance of NSMs in studying New Religious Movements (NRMs).

The social movements approach provides an important perspective for understanding the dynamism of Islamist movements through outlining their mobilization mechanisms and resource allocating strategies. Nevertheless, it needs to be incorporated with other approaches and disciplines to be able to explain why Islamist movements emerge and how they maintain their activism and identity. Therefore, this study attempts to incorporate social movements theory with social constructivism in order to provide a better understanding for Islamist movements. As will be discussed in the next chapter, social constructivism has a plausible and robust interpretive framework that can examine the underlying factors and processes that shape Islamist movements' identity and collective action.

#### **2.4. LITERATURE ON STUDYING THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD**

Despite the importance of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB hereafter) as the oldest and the most powerful Islamist movement in the Muslim world, many questions about the movement remain unanswered. The legal outlawing of the MB over the past six decades made it significantly hard to many scholars to have access to its members and leaders. Hence, the analysis and literature on the MB suffer many gaps and defects. It can be divided into four main streams. The first traces the historical and chronological background of the MB. The second illustrates the social formation of the movement and

its social presence. The third reveals the relationship between the MB and the various Egyptian regimes. The fourth highlights the ideology and discourse of the movement.

Under the first stream, after Richard Mitchell's pioneering study of the MB, subsequent attempts to study the movement lacked comprehensiveness and depth. Mitchell's work provides an influential historical account for the MB during the 1950s and 1960s (Mitchell, 1969). However, in the 50 years since Mitchell's study, the movement has experienced many changes and developments that need to be covered and analysed.

Bayat's study on the significance of social formation of the MB falls under the second stream. Bayat addresses the role of the middle class in articulating the structure of MB by exploring the interaction between the social background of MB members and the movement's political presence (Bayat, 1998). He contends that the MB exemplifies the only real threat to the incumbent regimes in the Arab world. Similarly, Ninette Fahmy attempts to examine the significant presence of the MB in Egyptian professional syndicates during the 1990s (Fahmy, 1998). Fahmy claims that the MB management of these syndicates was no different from that of their non-MB predecessors in terms of incompetence and the lack of ethical conduct (Fahmy, 1998, p.521).

Barbara Zollner's work on Hasan Al-Hudaybi, the second General Guide of the MB, falls under the third stream. Zollner highlights the relationship between the MB and the Nasser regime (Zollner, 2009). Zollner illustrates the impact of Nasser regime on the MB internal dynamics. She contends that the brutal policies against MB members in prisons inspired the radical faction which adopted Sayyid Qutb's ideology.

The relationship between the MB and Anwar Sadat's regime during the 1970s is covered by Abdelmoniem Said Aly and Manfred Wenner (Aly and Wenner, 1982). Aly and Wenner contend that MB tried to bargain with Sadat over the shape of the state. They explore the clash that occurred between both parties over amending the constitution in 1971. In addition, they reveal the changes that took place in MB strategy to reach the public through the mass media and to propagate their ideology in universities.

However, Saad Eldin Ibrahim disagrees with this analysis. He contends that the MB has achieved many gains during Sadat's epoch (Ibrahim, 1996). Ibrahim highlights the ability of MB to re-articulate its ideology to a more moderate stance in order to gain greater tolerance. He, thus, concludes that the MB succeeded in expanding its social network of the MB during 1980s. Yet Ibrahim claims that since the death of Hasan al-Banna, the MB has lacked a charismatic leader who can lead the movement into a new era.

Another prominent scholar, Gilles Kepel, argues that MB is responsible for the flourishing Islamist ideology across the Middle East and North Africa (Kepel, 1995). He claims that the ultimate goal of the MB, and other Islamists, is to establish an Islamic state. However, he differentiates between radical and moderate Islamists' strategies in achieving this goal. Accordingly, while radical Islamists resort to violence to topple secular regimes, moderates or conservatives prefer to change society itself before establishing an Islamic state (Kepel, 1995, 45). Kepel highlights the mutual interests between the MB and Mubarak's regime in containing violent Islamists. Thus, he argues that the coexistence between the two parties is based on rational calculations. However, Hesham Al-Awadi disagrees with Kepel's notion about the coexistence between Mubarak's regime and the MB. Al-Awadi argues that Mubarak launched an offensive strategy to eradicate the MB in the mid 1990s (Al-Awadi, 2005). The reasons behind this, according to Al-Awadi, were: the social growth of the movement; the political presence of the MB; and the security challenge posed by violent Islamists which gave a pretext for Mubarak to suppress the MB (Al-Awadi, 2005, pp. 75-76).

The fourth stream deals with developments in MB ideology. Mona El-Ghobashy explores the metaphors of the MB (El-Ghobashy, 2005). She refutes the allegation of the MB having a stagnant ideology. El-Ghobashy contends that the MB had to reconstruct their ideology and political discourse to adapt to changing political developments in Egypt. Moreover, she asserts that the ideological changes were driven by its political participation, primarily in the parliamentary elections during the 1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, Bruce Rutherford takes El-Ghobashy's argument a step further by assessing

the transformation in MB ideology and strategy (Rutherford, 2006). He traces the consequences of the MB's participation in politics. Rutherford contends that the ultimate goal of the MB is not to establish an Islamic state but rather to endorse Islamic governance. He states that "The MB has shown considerable flexibility and originality in its efforts to develop a viable conception of Islamic governance" (Rutherford, 2006, p.707)

In their nuanced study, Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke highlight the main differences between MB ideology and other, mainly radical, Islamist movements (Leiken and Brooke, 2007). Based on extensive interviews with different MB offshoots throughout the Middle East and Europe, Leiken and Brooke criticize the monolithic view of the MB in the west. They affirm the tendency of the MB to embrace democratic and moderate ideology and to be engaged with the west. More notably, Leiken and Brooke imply that MB plays a crucial role in preventing violence in Muslim societies. They point out that:

Other critics speculate that the Brotherhood helps radicalize Muslims in both the Middle East and Europe. But in fact, it appears that the Ikhwan works to dissuade Muslims from violence, instead channeling them into politics and charitable activities (Leiken and Brooke, 2007, p.112).

## **2.5. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has shown that the study of Islamist movements is intricate. The many attempts to understand the MB have fallen short in unpacking the internal dynamics of the movement. Clearly, despite the growing literature on Islamist movements, particularly on the MB, many questions remain without plausible answers. For instance, how do Islamist movements construct their identity? To what can extent identity generate and sustain movement activism? How do Islamist movements respond to regime repression? To what extent does political openness or closure affect the internal dynamics of Islamist movements? Therefore, this study attempts to provide plausible answers to these questions. In doing so, it avoids the dichotomy of essentialist and contextualist approaches. By incorporating social constructivism with social

movements' theory, the study would unpack the process of identity construction as it happens within the MB. It treats identity as a social construct that is shaped by interplay between different factors. It examines how the MB produces meaning constructions and symbolic production to generate collective action and preserve its existence.

## **Chapter Three**

### **SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM AND ISLAMIC IDENTITY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the theoretical framework of this study. It examines how social movements construct their collective identity, thereby revealing the underlying processes of identity construction in everyday life. It scrutinizes the strategies, mechanisms, and tools that enable collective actors to produce meanings, symbols, norms and values that shape its collective identity.

The key objective of this chapter is to propose an analytical framework that could explain the process of identity construction as it occurs within Islamist movements. This framework seeks to answer the following questions: how do social movements construct their identity? What are the components of collective identity? To what extent can collective identity sustain collective action? What are the implications of the identity construction process on identity consolidation and coherence? And last but not least, what is the relationship, if there is any, between political environment and identity construction?

In addition, this chapter will discuss the construction of Islamic identity within Islamist movements, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood. It will be argued that the construction of Islamic collective identity is contingent upon the movement's aims and objectives, its internal structure, and the political environment whereby the movement operates. Islamic identity will be treated as a frame of reference which Islamist movements employ to recruit members, generate collective action, and preserve their existence.

#### **3.2. ECHOES OF THE SELF: WHAT IS IDENTITY?**

The concept of identity is immensely problematic. Not only because of its relative character but also because of the implicit meanings and connotations it entails. Despite the plethora of literature on identity, the concept itself remains something of an

enigma. Marilyn Brewer points out that identity as a term has no single or shared meaning as “the problem with trying to extract any common definition is that the term is integrally embedded in separate theoretical structures and literatures with little or no cross-citation or mutual influence” (Brewer, 2001, p. 115). Moreover, Zygmunt Bauman contends that ‘identity’ is a matter of grave concern as it contains vexing dilemmas for individuals and communities (Bauman and Vecchi, 2004). In his words, “Identity-seekers invariably face the daunting task of ‘squaring a circle’: that generic phrase, as you know, implies tasks that can never be completed in a ‘real time’, but assumed to be able to reach completion in the fullness of time - in infinity ...” (Bauman and Vecchi, 2004, pp. 10-11).

The difficulty of defining identity stems not only from its epistemological relativity but also from its multiple empirical usages. The concept is widely used in different academic fields such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and, recently, political science. The scrutiny of its essence is the subject of much theoretical and empirical inquiry.

The roots of identity theory can be traced from the sociologist George Herbert Mead’s major work, *Mind, Self, and Society* (1934). Mead’s primary framework of identity is based on the interaction between the self and the society (Mead and Morris, 1934). He explores the genesis of the self as an organism that communicates and responds to other social organisms. Mead aptly describes the interplay between the self and the society by what he calls “the generalized other” which refers to individuals’ tendency to behave as an “organized community” or social group (Mead and Morris, 1934, p. 154). This process of interaction depends upon what Mead identifies as “self-consciousness”. According to Mead, an individual organism enters the social environment through self-consciousness (Mead and Morris, 1934, p. 172).

Despite criticism of Mead’s insights on identity as simplistic and ambiguous, many theorists have built on his notion of interactionism as a catalyst for interpreting social behaviour (Hogg, Terry et al., 1995; Stryker and Burke, 2000). To overcome Mead’s reductionist approach to identity, Sheldon Stryker, Peter Burke, and Richard

Serpe have developed an identity theory departing from Mead's notion about social interactionism (Stryker, 1968; Stryker and Serpe, 1982; Stryker and Burke, 2000). Identity theory thus explains how social structures affect the self and how the latter shapes social behaviours. The main assumption of identity theory is that the self is a multifaceted phenomenon which tends to undertake different social roles (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Social roles, the theory assumes, are "expectations attached to positions occupied in networks of relationships; identities are internalized role expectations"(Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 286). In addition, Stryker and Burke contend the self has many identities and social roles that reflect how these identities are organized within the self (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 286). Moreover, Hogg, Terry, and White assert the self as a reflection of society and it should be regarded as an organized construct (Hogg, Terry et al., 1995, p. 256).

Building on the notion of social roles, Stryker and Burke developed the sub-theory of role-identity. This explains how social behaviour becomes a role-choice behaviour and why individuals choose one particular course of action (Stryker and Burke, 2000, pp 285-286). This notion stems from Mead's concept of self-reflection which he identifies as a prerequisite for social interaction (Mead and Morris, 1934). Pert Callero takes role-identity theory a step further by identifying the social character of the self (Callero, 1985). Callero defines role-identity as "a particular social object that represents a dimension of the self" (Callero 1985: 204). He asserts role-identity must be shared, socially recognized, and defined by action. Furthermore, Michael Hogg, Deborah Terry and Katherine White contend that role identities are "self-conceptions, self-referent cognitions, or self-definitions that people apply to themselves as a consequence of the structural role positions they occupy, and through a process of labeling or self- definition as a member of a particular social category" (Hogg, Terry et al., 1995, p. 256). In this sense, identity is therefore regarded as a crucial link between social structure and individual actions which implies that identity should entail action by default (Hogg, Terry et al., 1995, p. 257).

### 3.2.1. Scrutinizing Identity: From the Self to the Social

To reveal the essence of identity, theorists are divided into two camps. Whereas some scholars focus on self-identity or what they call *identification* or *self-verification* (McCall and Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980; Stryker, Owens et al., 2000), others tackle the social aspect of identity through what they call *self-categorization* (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987; Hogg and Abrams, 1988). The former exemplifies identity theory and the latter represents social identity theory. The main assumption of identity theory is that identity reflects the individual's role-related behaviours (Hogg, Terry et al., 1995). However, social identity theory explains group processes and intergroup relations. It argues that identity can be defined as a part of the social group. It presumes that any social group is “a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or views themselves as a part of social category” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 225). Moreover, Jan Sets and Peter Burke contend that identity is the composition of two processes of identification and self-categorization. According to them, social identity is a “person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 225).

However, the segregation between the two camps of identity is not clear-cut. The proponents of both theories assert identity cannot be defined without revealing its dual character (Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Stets and Burke, 2000). Terry and White, for instance, stress that both theories of identity build their theoretical assumptions on the multifacetedness of the self that mediates between social structure and individual behaviours (Hogg, Terry et al., 1995, p. 255). Furthermore, Stets and Burke argue: “one's identities are composed of the self-views that emerge from the reflexive activity of self-categorization or identification in terms of membership in particular groups or roles” (Stets and Burke, 2000, pp. 225-226).

Therefore, examinations into identity not only reveal its theoretical and abstract character but its social manifestation and usages. Hence, identity theorists tend to treat identity instrumentally depending on the context and the purpose of using the concept (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Stryker and Burke, 2000). In this context, Stryker and

Burke highlight three popular usages of identity: 1) to refer to the culture of a people; 2) to show a common identification with a collective or social category; and 3) to reflect parts of a self-composed of different meanings and multiple roles (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 284). Similarly, Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, who extensively criticize attempts at using identity as a concept in social sciences without comprehending its derivative meanings, connotations, and usages, stress the difference between using identity as a category of practice and a category of analysis (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). Accordingly, they highlight five different uses of identity: 1) to describe non-instrumental modes of social and political action, whether individual or collective; 2) to describe a common set of values among members of a group or category which they call the '*sameness*'; 3) to identify the integral aspects of 'selfhood' of individuals and social groups; 4) to highlight the processual interactivity of collective-understanding, solidarity and groupness that enhance collective action; and 5) to reflect the unstable and fragmented nature of the contemporary 'self' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, pp 6-8).

In addition to its instrumental character, Stryker contends that when it is explicitly addressed, identity invokes cultural meanings (Stryker, Owens et al., 2000). He states: "[I]dentity is made equivalent to the ideas, beliefs, and practices of a society, its features implicitly ascribed to all members of that society" (Stryker, Owens et al., 2000, p. 22). Since it reflects individuals' and a group's sense of belonging, identity cannot be defined without revealing its collective character. In a similar way, Lori Peek defines identity as "an individual's sense of self, group affiliations, structural positions, and ascribed and achieved statuses. Identity results from internal subjective perceptions, self-reflection, and external characterizations" (Peek, 2005, pp 216-217). Likewise, Hogg and Dominic Abrams define identity as "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg and Abrams, 1988, p 2).

Nevertheless, the crucial question is: how do individuals move from self to social identity? To answer such a question, identity theorists tend to differentiate

between two levels of identity: personal and social (Hogg, Terry et al., 1995; Stets and Burke, 2000; Stryker, Owens et al., 2000). The former refers to personal traits that create a sense of self-reflection. The latter refers to traits in groups of people that create a sense of collectivity or what is called “social identity” (Hogg, Terry et al., 1995; Stets and Burke, 2000; Stryker, Owens et al., 2000). Despite the difficulty of separation between personal and social identity, scholarly work attempts to define each separately. For instance, Taylor (1989) points out that the starting point of defining personal identity is to ask: Who am I? Where do I stand? (Taylor, 1989). He states: “My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide a frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose” (Taylor, 1989, p. 27). This abstract definition reveals the intrinsic nature of identity which reflects the self-consciousness of individuals. It also traces William James’s (1890) notion of the self. James distinguished the dual character of the ‘self’ as a subject and as an object (in Leary and Tangney, 2005).

More significantly, the self cannot be revealed without being reflected by others. Mark Leary and June Tangney point out that people view themselves as they believe others see them (Leary and Tangney, 2005, p. 91). That is, the social aspect of personality comes to the fore when individuals conceive themselves as a part of others’ consciousness. According to Charles Cooley, the self is a product and a reflection of social life (cited in Holland, Fox et al., 2008). Cooley calls this interactionism the ‘looking-glass self’ whereby he asserts the idea the self cannot be separated from social influences (cited in Holland, Fox et al., 2008, p. 22). According to Cooley, such a self is a ‘social self’ as it refers to “any idea, or system of ideas, drawn from the communicative life, that the mind cherishes as its own” (cited in Holland, Fox et al., 2008, p. 161).

Following this, identity theorists have produced what is known as symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1968; Stryker, Owens et al., 2000; Leary and Tangney, 2005; Holland, Fox et al., 2008). This refers to the meaningful interactions that occur between

individuals as human actors (Stryker, Owens et al., 2000). The main proposition of symbolic interactionism stems from the mutual relationship between self and society. It assumes that “society shapes self shapes social behaviour” (Stryker, Owens et al., 2000, p. 27).

For individuals to move from personal to social identity, they need to be involved in social groups. Leary and Tangney assert individuals not only occupy a role in society but they are also members of different groups which yield their social identity (Leary and Tangney, 2005, p. 145). Individuals are thus inclined to act collectively when their personal identity is aligned with social identity. Leary and Tangney point out that such alignment occurs through a process of depersonalization whereby an individual’s perception shifts from being unique as a self towards the perception of the self as a member of a social category (Leary and Tangney, 2005, pp 145-146). It is the move from ‘I’ or ‘me’ towards ‘we’ where a person sees him or herself as the embodiment of the group rather than as a unique individual.

Another crucial concept that links self and social identities is ‘identity salience’ (Stryker, Owens et al. 2000). This refers to “the probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations, or alternatively across persons in a given situation (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 286). It denotes the multifaceted composition of self-identities, and assumes that identities are tied to roles and positions in organized social relations (Stryker, Owens et al., 2000, p. 28). Hence, identity salience creates self-commitment that helps in engaging individuals in collective action. Stryker and Burke contend that identities in the self are organized in a salience hierarchy that reflects the social importance of each identity (Stryker and Burke, 2000).

Furthermore, a number of sociologists contend that salience facilitates the interplay between personal and social identity (Callero, 1985). It helps individuals who tend to undertake social roles to be involved in social groups and networks. It thus helps social movements to generate collective action. Stryker and Burke contend that the salience of religious identities predicts the time spent in religious activities while at the

same time the salience of religious identities is predicted by the commitment to role relationships based on religion (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 286).

However, identity theorists have come to a consensus that identity is not a fixed and immutable concept but rather an evolving process of ‘becoming’ instead of ‘being’ (Cerulo, 1997; Stryker and Burke, 2000; Stryker, Owens et al., 2000; Peek, 2005). This study thus treats identity as both a fluid and a constructed concept. That is to say, despite the genesis of identity as a concept which can be manifested in different aspects of human behaviour, its construction is determined by actors’ agency and by the social context in which they operate. As Charles Taylor aptly puts it, “answering the question of ‘who I am’ cannot be possible without defining where I speaking from and to whom” (Taylor, 1989, p. 36).

### **3.2.2. Activating Identity: From Social to Collective Identity**

Social identity is important to reveal individuals’ tendency to interact and communicate with other social groups; however, it is not sufficient to explain why certain individuals take part in specific actions. Hence, to understand the rationale of collective action, one needs to distinguish between social identity and collective identity. The former refers to the physiological structural relationships between the self and other social groups. The latter treats the self as an active agent in society. In other words, the social and physiological traits of individuals do not guarantee their involvement in collective action until these traits are activated and invoked by collective actors (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995; Stryker, Owens et al., 2000). Thus, collective identity should not be perceived as an aggregation of social identities but rather as “constructed, activated, and sustained only through interaction in social movements communities” (Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p. 172). That is, collective identity is exemplifies the locus of collective action (Gamson, 1995; Johnston and Klandermans, 1995; Melucci, 1996). William Gamson argues that collective action entails a sense of collective identity (Gamson, 1995). He states: “Being a collective agent implies being a part of ‘we’ who can do something” (Gamson, 1995, p. 99). For Gamson, symbols and

language are key tools for the collective actor to frame its collective identity (Gamson, 1995).

Nevertheless, for individuals to move from social to collective identity, they need to be involved in an organized, permanent and meaningful collective action. Thus, social movements embody the vehicle that links between collective action and collective identity. Gamson argues that social movements tend to enlarge individuals identities to include the relevant collective identities as a part of their definition of the self (Gamson, 1991, p. 41). Moreover, according to Taylor and Whittier, collective identities are embedded in social movements communities (Taylor and Whittier, 1995). Hence, creating a collective identity is crucial for preserving collective action. In addition, collective actors retain the agency in creating collective identity (Melucci, 1996). Melucci states: “the actors produce the collective action because they are able to define themselves and their relationship with the environment” (Melucci, 1995, p. 43).

Therefore, collective identity, to some extent, reflects the combination of cultural and ideational components of the collective action. Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier stress the importance of culture in identity construction (Taylor and Whittier, 1995). More significantly, they contend that using collective identity instead of ideology is more adequate in understanding collective phenomenon (Taylor and Whittier, 1995). They thus define collective identity as “the shared definition of a group that derives from members’ common interests, experiences, and solidarity” (Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p. 172).

This study therefore contends that collective identity is a social construct that reflects the interactive relationship between structure and agency, meanings and actions, 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.

### **3.3. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND IDENTITY**

The past three decades have witnessed a growing interest in the study of the cultural and symbolic aspects of collective actors (Hunt, 1994; McAdam, McCarthy et al., 1996; McAdam and Snow 1997; Stryker, Owens et al. 2000; McAdam, Tarrow et al. 2001). A number of scholars argue that the emergence of this interest embodies a major distinction between classical theories of social movements which focus on structural factors such as classes, races, genders, mobilization and deprivation, and the new social movements (NSMs) theory which concentrates mainly on identity, culture, and the symbolic aspects of collective actors (Gamson, 1992; Laraña, Johnston et al. 1994). Thus, identity has increasingly become a major concern in the study of social movements (Touraine, 1981; Habermas, 1987; Melucci, 1988; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Moreover, Stryker asserts that the collective search for identity is a fundamental activity for NSMs (Stryker, Owens et al. 2000).

Additionally, the interest in studying collective identity within social movements originates from the changes that have shaped the global arena since the 1960s and 1970s. These changes are a consequence of the emergence of NSMs in Europe and the US that tackled new and different issues such as feminism, environmentalism, and peace issues (Calhoun, 1994; Melucci, 1996). More importantly, it reflects the mounting need to overcome the shortcomings of mobilization and political process models in studying social movements (Melucci, 1996; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Meyer, Whittier et al., 2002). Francesca Polletta and James Jasper point out that social movement theorists have turned to focus on collective identity for three reasons: first, to fill the gaps in resource mobilization and political process models that account for emergence, trajectories and impacts of social movements. Second, to overcome the limitations of structural analyses of social movements. Third, to respond to many new questions raised by social movements such as: why do people take part in collective action? What are the catalysts of social movements' action? What is the role of social movements' identity in fuelling collective action? (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p. 283). More importantly, they

argue that collective identity plays a crucial role in social movements' emergence, trajectories, and outcomes (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p. 285).

Furthermore, studying identity is at the heart of the emergence of NSMs. David Snow, Robert Benford and Scott Hunt point out the NSMs perspective holds that the collective search for identity is a central aspect of movement formation (Hunt, 1994). Melucci describes this shift as a move from the dualistic character of social movements studies between structural analysis and the analysis of individual motivations towards concentrating on how actors 'construct' their action (Melucci, 1996, p. 16).

However, a number of sociologists contend that the growing interest in studying identity reflects the crisis of modernity paradigm (Touraine, 1981; Melucci, 1988; Calhoun, 1994). Touraine stresses the importance of the cultural aspects of social movements in post-industrial society. According to him, a social movement is "[T]he combination of a principle of identity, a principle of opposition, and a principle of totality" (Touraine, 1981, p. 81). Hence, the target of NSMs is not changing the state, as classical movements were doing, but rather to change society (Touraine, 1981, p. 96). Melucci (1988) argues that the post-modern (information) society poses new challenges for individuals and movements. He points out that social movements have shifted their focus from structural issues, class, race, and other traditional issues towards cultural and symbolic issues (Melucci, 1988). Hence, Melucci treats collective identities as 'social constructs'. He aptly states: "[C]ollective identity is thus a process in which actors produce common cognitive frameworks that enable them to assess their environment and to calculate costs and benefits of their actions" (Melucci, 1988, p. 35).

More significantly, Calhoun claims that by focusing on identity, NSMs theory deconstructs the essential and natural assumptions about social behaviour (Calhoun, 1994, p. 12). Although Calhoun does not consider the 'newness' of social movements, he admits that identity construction is the main activity for these movements. Moreover, Calhoun thus reveals the paraxial character of NSMs. He points out that despite the modern discourse of NSMs, modernity has imposed various dilemmas which force these movements to respond by emphasizing their identities. He states:

Recent approaches to issues of identity have stressed the incompleteness, fragmentation and contradictions of both collective and personal experience. They have shown how complex is the relationship among projects of identity, social demands and personal possibilities. (Calhoun, 1994, p. 14).

However, Calhoun's notion of identity presumes that collective actors lack rationality as they are merely a reaction to identity dilemmas. This notion has been criticized by many social movements theorists such as Cohen (1985) and Polletta and Jasper (2001). Cohen contends that social movements are rational actors who build their own actions on strategic calculations (Cohen, 1985, p. 707). He asserts most contemporary movements are involved in two main activities: identity-creating and strategic/rational calculation (Cohen, 1985). In addition, Polletta and Jasper have aptly responded to Calhoun's notion simultaneously with other assumptions on the rationality of social movements. According to them, collective identity responds to the inadequacies of instrumental rationality as an explanation for strategic choice (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p. 284).

More importantly, by focusing on identity, NSMs theory has fostered the cultural studies of collective actors (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995; Melucci, 1996; Meyer, Whittier et al., 2002; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Social movements are involved in articulating their own culture through meaning, constructions and symbolic codes. By creating a cognitive map for adherents, social movements can construct a distinctive identity from the dominant culture in society (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995). According to Johnston and Klandermans, social movements not only invest in a society's culture but also can add, change, reconstruct and reformulate it (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995, p. 5). They claim that by creating a distinctive culture, social movements can maintain activism and longevity (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995, p. 12). Moreover, culture can be used as cognitive repertoires to construct collective action. According to Della Porta, culture provides ideational elements such as beliefs, ceremonies, language and rituals that orient people and influence their identity (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 73).

Nevertheless, many theorists have rejected the instrumental usage of culture in studying social movements (Steinberg 2002; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). For instance, Marc Steinberg contends that cultures constructed through contention are only partly the product of calculated action (Steinberg, 2002). Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper extensively criticize attempts of using culture as a constant structure for analysis (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). They contend that using culture as fixed frames in social movements distorts culture and limits understanding the rationale of collective actors. According to them, culture is a broader concept than frames as it encompasses symbols, emotions, codes, narratives, ideologies and discourses that have a massive role in generating collective action (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004, pp 27-28).

Thus, the critical question is: how has the NSMs approach tackled identity? The writings of Doug McAdam, David Snow, Scott Hunt, Sidney Tarrow, Robert Benford, and Charles Tilly reflect an attempt to answer this question (Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Hunt, 1994; Tarrow, 1994; Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow and McAdam, 2000). However, one could divide this literature into two main models: identity work and the framing process. Snow and McAdam claim that the convergence between individual and collective identities can be achieved through what they call 'identity work', a concept that refers to "the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept" (Snow and McAdam, 2000, p. 46). By identity convergence, Snow and McAdam refer to the coalescence of a movement and individuals who already identify with it (Snow and McAdam, 2000, p. 47). Other scholars argue that such convergence happens when linking individual and collective identities with grievances that affect everyday life (Hunt, 1994). Furthermore, Snow argues that collective identity is the outcome of the correspondence between 'one-ness' and a sense of 'we' (Snow, 2001). Thus, he claims that collective identity is constituted by the shared and interactive sense of 'we-ness' and collective agency (Snow, 2001, p. 3).

On the other hand, the correspondence between individual and collective identities occurs when both are aligned. Such alignment takes place within social

movements through the 'framing process' (Snow and Benford, 1986; Tarrow, 1994; McAdam, McCarthy et al., 1996). Snow and McAdam claim that for identity to be framed, it needs to pass four operating processes within social movements: identity amplification; identity consolidation; identity extension; and identity transformation (Snow and McAdam, 2000, p. 49). The outcome of these processes is identity construction. According to this model, social movements tend to use frame alignment as a mechanism that mediate various forms of identity construction. Moreover, Snow, Burke Rochford, Steven Worden and Robert Benford stress the importance of frame alignment in articulating collective identity and generating collective action within social movements (Snow and Benford, 1986).

In addition, the framing process assumes that social movements tend to involve a meaning construction process. Benford and Snow define framing as "an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction" (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614). Building on Erving Goffman's work (1974) on framing who defines it as a "schemata of interpretation" that enable individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" occurrences within their life space and the world at large" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21), Benford and Snow contend that social movements tend to use these schemata to construct meanings and norms that could generate collective action (Benford and Snow, 2000). They point out that collective action frames are constituted by two sets of characteristic features: an action-oriented function (core framing tasks) and the interactive and discursive processes to these core framing tasks that generate collective frames (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 615). Yet Benford and Snow assert collective action frames are not merely an accumulation of an individual's beliefs and perceptions but also the outcome of the negotiation of shared meanings (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614).

Therefore, the connection between framing and identity construction is crucial. According to Snow, Benford, and Scott Hunt, identity constructions are inherent in all social movement framing activities (Hunt, 1994). They point out that "not only do framing processes link individuals and groups ideologically but they proffer, buttress,

and embellish identities that range from collaborative to conflictual” (Hunt, 1994, p. 185). This link can be explored through three generic categories: protagonists, antagonists, and audiences (Hunt, 1994, p. 191).

Despite its remarkable contribution in revealing the construction of collective identity, these two models have faced many critiques (Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Snow, 2001; Meyer, Whittier et al. 2002; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). The main critique revolves around the linear relationship between individual and collective identities. For instance, the assumption that individuals are inevitably inclined to join a social movement to enhance their personal identities is simply misleading (Snow, 2001). It assumes that the relationship between social movements and individuals is automatic. Snow highlights the troublesome nature of the identity work model. He points out that members of social movements can have multiple identities which might create conflict in constructing collective identity. He states:

A not uncommon problem with analyses of collective identity is the tendency to reify the collective identity, and thus take-for-granted the link between the individuals that make-up the collectivity and the shared, overarching identity. This gloss is particularly troublesome in light of the observation that people typically have multiple identities that vary in salience and pervasiveness. (Snow, 2001, p.7)

In addition, the framing process entails structural bias in analyzing social movements. Goodwin and Jasper extensively criticize Snow and Benford’s framing formula because of its structural bias (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). They reveal its dichotomy as either successful framing or not. Goodwin and Jasper assert frames should not be treated as windows (such as the case with opportunity structures) that are either open or closed (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004, p.24). They point out that collective identities are not simply cognitive or discursive meaning;, they often have emotions and psychological dimensions (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004, p.25).

The aforementioned debate reveals the interplay of concepts, models and approaches that attempt to explore the construction of the collective identity process. This study, however, contends that in order to grasp this process, it is essential to

integrate different theoretical models. Yet this integration should not presume a linear connection between identity and specific presuppositions. It “avoid[s] a priori assumptions about causal mechanisms and allows for a number of different relationships between cultural and discursive practices on the one hand, and legal, political, economic, and social structures on the other” (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p.285). In addition, to conduct such an integrative framework, first one needs to address the questions that collective identity seeks to answer. In this context, Polletta and Jasper have raised several such questions, including: Are collective identities constructed by movements or imposed on them? Do individuals adopt collective identities for self-interests or do the latter flow from identities? Is identity a cause or an outcome of collective action?

Yet this study contends that to grasp the process of identity construction as it happens within social movements, many other questions should be asked, such as: To what extent does the formation process of social movement affect its collective identity? Does the nature of the movement shape its identity? To what extent do external variants help or hinder articulating collective identity? What are the impacts of ideational factors (religion, culture, ideology and beliefs) on formulating identity?

By raising these questions, this study seeks to explore how Islamist movements construct their collective identities. The departure point of this study stems from Alberto Melucci’s notion about collective identity. For Melucci, collective identity “is not a datum or an essence, a ‘thing’ with a ‘real’ existence” (Melucci, 1996, p.77). It thus treats collective identity as a socially constructed phenomenon. It is the reflection of the multiple processes and interactions that occur inside social movements and that are shaped by the opportunities and constraints in the external environment. However, to understand these interplay processes, this study adopts social constructivism as a framework of analysis that could explain how Islamist movements construct their collective identity.

### 3.4. PREMISES OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

To reveal the identity formation process, one needs to contextualize it. Identity *per se* is a social construction. It is not something that could be measured; however, it can be imagined and manifested. This study contends that social constructivism enables an exploration, a deconstruction of the imposed identities and examination of the new collective identity formation process in social movements. By bridging the gap between ‘objective’ conditions and ‘subjective’ motives, behaviour and meaning, between ‘structure’ and ‘agency’, social constructivism reveals the collective agency of social actors (Melucci, 1996, p.69).

Furthermore, if the conventional wisdom of NSMs theory, which treats action as a ‘social construct’, is true, then collective identity exemplifies the manifestation of this social construction. The NSMs theory accounts for revealing the collective character of social behaviour in everyday life (Tilly, 1978; Tarrow, 1994; McAdam and Snow, 1997). Thus, in order to give meaning to collective action, social movements tend to construct collective identity that could link between structure and meaning (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995; Melucci, 1996; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Such a link was overlooked in the dominant dualism of structuralist and essentialist approaches that tackled collective phenomenon (Melucci, 1996). Hence, the mounting interest in culture and meaning constructions has made collective identity focal in NSMs studies.

Social constructivism challenges the idea that identity is an immutable and rigid phenomenon. It denaturalizes the notion of identity as something produced by acts of individual will (Calhoun, 1994, p.13). Identity as a social reality reflects the interaction between individuals and society whereby both constitute each other (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Cerulo argues that every collective becomes a social artefact or entity moulded, refabricated and mobilized in accord with reigning cultural scripts and centres of power (Cerulo, 1997, p.387). Thus, one could argue collective identity is the outcome of these processes of interactions between the self and society, individuals and groups, structures and meanings which take place in everyday life. According to Berger and Luckmann, identity is formed by social processes and is maintained, modified and

reshaped by social relations (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p.194). The main premise of constructivism is stressing the human agency as the prime mover of history (Yavuz, 2003). It assumes that any society is a human construction and subject to multiple interpretations and influences (Yavuz, 2003, p.20).

Accordingly, social construction of identity entails various processes of meaning manufacturing. Identity is thus an ongoing process of creating meanings, norms, images and values for social agents. Such process underlies individuals' attitudes, perceptions, attitudes and actions in response to the external world. Put differently, constructivism reveals the ways in which individuals and groups participate in creating their perceived social reality. By integrating cultural, institutional and ideational frameworks, social constructivism can reveal the process of identity formation in social movements.

This study contends that individuals tend to surround themselves by meaning constructions and symbolic relationships. Hence, social movements tend to be involved in different processes of meaning constructions to reshape individuals' identity. Johnston and Klandermans highlight three different processes of meaning construction in social movements: public discourse, persuasive communication, and consciousness raising during episodes of collective action (Johnston and Klandermans 1995: 10). Social constructivism allows examining the complex relationship between individuals and society or as, Yavuz states, between agency and structure, symbols and action, and text and context (Yavuz, 2003, p.20).

Most importantly, social constructivism illustrates how collective identity helps social movements to generate collective action. That is, collective identity will be treated as a social construct which reflects the interplay between individuals' interests, values, and behaviours. Collective action, as Melucci asserts, "[m]ust be understood in terms of the processes through which individuals communicate, negotiate, produce meanings and make decisions within a particular social field or environment" (Melucci, 1988, p.20). Hence individual identity, which reflects personal and biological traits, is brought to the social space by participating in a social movement that changes this

identity formation and reconstructs its traits socially and politically (Laraña, Johnston et al., 1994, p.12).

Therefore, social constructivism provides an analysis framework that tackles the interplay between incentives, grievances and values of society members (Snow ,2001). By examining the complex relationship between human understanding and social reality, social constructivism explores mechanisms whereby social movements engender collective action. Melucci points out, “collective phenomena are viewed as the result of various types of action and elements of structure and motivation” (Melucci, 1988, p.19). Moreover, social constructivism interprets how and why collective actors seek to construct a distinctive identity for its members. Such identity helps social movements not only to sustain collective action but also to challenge other identity makers in society. For instance, Islamist movements are inclined to employ cultural and symbolic capital to construct their own collective identity as well as to respond to the challenges and pressures coming from other collective rivals and, more importantly, from the state.

In this context, constructivism will be used as a hermeneutical and interactive approach which seeks to examine the multiple relationships between aims and interests, beliefs and practices, internal and external environment. However, one needs to stress that “constructivism does not confer agency to a reified Islam but rather to living Muslims whose actions are embedded in particular loyalties and networks” (Yavuz, 2003, p.21). By revealing the interplay between aims and objectives, systems of relationships, and environment, constructivism can reveal the process of identity construction that takes place within Islamist movements.

#### **3.4.1. The Construction of Collective Identity**

How do social movements construct collective identity? To answer this question, first one needs to define collective identity. This study stresses that defining collective identity is inseparable from its construction. It thus does not treat collective identity as a ‘datum’ but rather as a constructed concept. To begin with, William Gamson defines collective identity as “a process in which movement participants socially construct a ‘we’

that becomes, in varying degrees with different individuals, part of their own definition of self” (Gamson,1991, p.45). For Della Porta and Diani, collective identity is a part of the collective action. Della Porta and Diani state: “identity production is an essential component of collective action” (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p.92). In other words, collective identity is the manifestation of collective action whether it is expressed in symbols and meanings or translated into collective behaviour. Accordingly, collective identity is not an ‘essence’ or a thing with ‘real’ existence, but rather ‘an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups at a more complex level) concerning the orientations of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place” (Melucci, 1996, p.70). This interactive character of collective identity comes through negotiations and interactions among different actors (Melucci, 1996, p.70). Despite the operational character of Melucci’s definition of identity, it reveals the manufacturing process of identity which takes place within social movements. It also reflects the interplay processes whereby individuals and collective actors are involved in creating meanings, norms, codes and symbols that construct collective identity.

Nevertheless, to overcome the operational aspect of Melucci’s definition of identity, Polletta and Jasper have attempted to integrate emotions and moral aspects of identity (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). They have drawn attention to the crucial role that emotion can play in constructing collective identity. While it is true that Melucci touches upon the ‘emotional’ aspect of collective identity, he treats it instrumentally. For instance, he states: “a certain degree of *emotional investment* is required in the definition of collective identity” (Melucci, 1996, p.71). However, Polletta and Jasper place emotion at the heart of collective identity. They define it as “an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution” (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p.285). By this definition, Polletta and Jasper attempt to integrate the cultural and institutional components of collective identity as a base for analysis. Such integration, they argue, can resolve the conflict over which factors, interests or values, structures or meanings, strategies or tactics determine the

articulation of collective identity. Yet Polletta and Jasper point out that if it is true that collective identity is expressed in cultural materials such as names, symbols, rituals and clothing, not all cultural materials are expressions of collective identity (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p.285). Moreover, they make the claim that although collective identity can be constructed by outsiders, its activation depends on the acceptance of those to whom it is applied (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p.285). The main contribution of Polletta and Jasper's definition is to draw attention towards the intangible components which play a role in forming collective identity.

The construction of collective identity originates from the ability of individuals to identify themselves in terms of 'we' in front of the other or 'them' (Melucci, 1996; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). In this context, Della Porta and Diani point out that collective action cannot occur in the absence of a 'we' characterized by common traits and solidarity (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p.94). Such solidarity, Della Porta and Diani argue, facilitates individuals' involvement in collective action as it strengthens a sense of belonging and eases the risks and uncertainties that might result from this collective action (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p.94). This notion explains how Islamist movements can sustain activism in spite of the political repression they might face. Moreover, such repression can be employed by collective actors as a tool for identity consolidation. For instance, the Muslim Brotherhood, which has experienced different kinds of political repression since its banning in 1954, tends to use state repression to construct and consolidate its collective identity.

Furthermore, construction of collective identity mirrors the recognition dilemma that faces collective actors (Calhoun, 1993; Yavuz, 2003; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). In this sense, identity is a double-sided coin which entails 'we' vs. 'them'. Della Porta and Diani point out that identity emerges from the process of self-identification and external recognition (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p.105). However, the process of self-identification is not easily achieved as it conflicts with other social groups and, more importantly, with the state over recognition. Calhoun contends that recognition is rooted in the heart of collective action (Calhoun, 1994). He points out that recognition becomes

problematic when many collective actors contest to get recognition for their identities (Calhoun, 1994, p.20). Yavuz succinctly highlights the key role of recognition in identity construction (Yavuz, 2003). He states: “every identity, by definition, carries its ‘other’ within it as a constituting element” (Yavuz, 2003, p.22). More significantly, recognition reflects the relational dimension of collective identity which in turn reflects the connection between the collective actor and its environment. This environment contains the constraints and opportunities which determine the characteristics of collective actors (Melucci, 1996). Melucci contends that auto-identification of the collective actor is contingent upon social recognition. He states: “A collective actor cannot construct its identity independently of its recognition (which can also mean denial or opposition) by other social and political actors” (Melucci, 1996, p.73). Moreover, Melucci asserts every collective actor must make the assumption of having a distinction from others to ensure collective action (Melucci, 1996, p.73).

As a result, this study contends that recognition exemplifies an integral component of the collective identity of Islamist movements. Islamist actors struggle to get recognition not only from the society and other collective rivals but also from the state. For instance, the MB has struggled since the 1950s to obtain legal recognition from the Egyptian state. This struggle, as this study will show, has shaped the way that the MB articulates its collective identity. That is to say, the struggle for recognition reveals the mechanisms and strategies that collective actors employ to construct their collective identity.

In addition, and more significantly, collective identity as a construction process guarantees the permanence and continuity of the collective actor over time (Gamson, 1991; Melucci, 1996). For instance, Gamson stresses the key role of collective identity in preserving collective action. Hence, he assumes that the durability of collective identity is contingent upon the ability of the collective actor to link solidarity, movement and organizational layers in the participants’ sense of self (Gamson, 1991, p.41). In this context, Melucci highlights three main functions whereby collective identity ensures the persistence of social movement: it regulates the memberships of individuals; it defines

the requisites for joining the movement; and it draws on the criteria by which members recognize themselves and are recognized (Melucci, 1996, p.75). These functions, Melucci asserts, reveal the dynamic character of collective identity as a social construction. Moreover, this dynamism can explain the capacity of collective actor to act autonomously and to maintain continuity over time. Yet collective identity should not be treated as a reaction to social and environmental constraints but rather as a process of producing meanings and symbolic orientations for individuals (Melucci, 1996, p.73).

Another important component of the construction of collective identity is differentiation (Calhoun, 1993; Swartz, 1997; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Indeed, the struggle for recognition reflects the tendency of collective actors to construct a sense of differentiation not only among adherents but also from other collective actors. Differentiation creates a sense of distinctiveness for collective actors and helps them to recruit new members. Yet to achieve such differentiation and distinctiveness, collective actors are involved in meaning and symbolic production (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). For instance, Islamist actors are extensively involved in constructing rituals, slogans, and symbols to distinguish their movements and adherents from others. They invest in what Pierre Bourdieu has called 'symbolic capital', which refers to all nonmaterial practices that enhance actors' ability to obtain power and distinctiveness (Swartz, 1997). In addition, rituals play a crucial role in articulating collective identity (Yavuz, 2003; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Della Porta and Diani state:

rituals represent forms of symbolic expression by which communications concerning social relationships are passed on, in stylized and dramatized ways ... they contribute to the reinforcement of identity and of collective feelings of belonging; and at the same time, they enable the movement actors to give free rein to their emotions. (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p.109)

As this study concerns an examination of Islamic identity construction, one needs to stress the crucial role of religious capital, rituals, scripts and idioms in the construction process. Religious actors are inclined to capitalize in nonmaterial goods to produce meanings and cognitive map for adherents (Taylor and Whittier, 1995; Yavuz, 2003; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). The importance of religious capital originates not

from its theological or ontological connotations but rather from its reflection on practices of everyday life. Building on Durkheim's notion on religion, Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier assert the crucial role of ritual in social movements (Taylor and Whittier, 1995). They contend that ritual mediates between symbolic divisions, sacred and profane, to produce solidarity and maintain group equilibrium (Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p.175). For example, Islamist movements tend to employ Islamic rituals and idioms to maintain solidarity among members. As this study will show, the MB has the ability to construct a cognitive map and norms system that attract potential members to join the movement. However, the penetration of Islamist movements into the public sphere depends upon their ability to transform religious idioms and rituals into everyday practices (Yavuz, 2003; Tuğal, 2009).

As a process, identity construction entails different interactions and interplay relationships. Taylor and Whittier highlight three main interrelated process of identity: the construction of group boundaries, which draw differences between a challenging group and dominate groups; consciousness, which entails the interpretive framework of the group; and the politicization of everyday life through the use of symbols and everyday actions to resist or restructure existing systems of domination (Taylor and Whittier 1995, p.173). For Gamson, construction of collective identity is embedded in three integral layers: organizational, movement, and solidary (Gamson, 1991). Gamson claims that these different layers are so closely integrated that they become a single amalgam: "a movement arises out of a particular solidary group with widespread support from it, and one particular organization comes to embody the movement" (Gamson, 1991, p.41).

Notwithstanding its importance, Islamist movements have been studied as NSMs (Wickham, 2002; Wiktorowicz, 2003; Bayat, 2005). Two important points in studying collective identity have been disregarded and scholars have treated them as secondary. First are the features that distinguish Islamic collective identity from other forms of collective identity. Second is the impact of constructing collective identity on individuals, the basic unit of the social movement.

Unpacking these aspects can be helpful in answering a number of questions that have been unresolved in social movements' literature. For instance, what factors determine the character of collective identity and are they elastic or rigid, exclusive or inclusive, and do they lean towards openness or closure? What is the role of the external environment in formulating social movement's identity? To what extent do the aims and interests of social movement forge its identity? What are the weight and the role of individuals, the main underpinning of a collective actor, in constructing collective identity? What are the impacts of collective identity on individuals? What is the role of individuals in extending collective identity to encompass others?

These questions are fundamental to examining Islamic collective identity from the social movements' perspective. As this study will show, Islamist movements tend to formulate a distinctive collective identity for adherents. In order to achieve this, they contest values, symbols, slogans, imagination and norms with other collective actors in everyday life. This struggle for reshaping societal values, norms and sometimes laws has a significant impact on constituting individuals attitudes, perceptions and, above all, identity.

To this end, this study reveals the underlying factors that affect the construction of collective identity within Islamist movements. It discards the monolithic narratives that deal with Islamist movements as merely power seekers. Thus it will be argued Islamist movements, and more specifically the MB, are identity-created movements that seek to encompass state and society under its collective identity. It does not treat identity as a given product but rather as a fluid and constructed one. In this context, identity will be tackled not only as a presupposition of Islamic collective action but also as an objective *per se* for Islamist movements.

In order to reveal the construction of Islamic identity, this study will examine three interlinked aspects of Islamist movements: their objectives and aims, the internal dynamics and structure, and the external environment where this identity is contested and manifested. This study contends that unpacking the rationale and logic of Islamist actors, what they stand for and what aims they seek to pursue, is essential to revealing

the process of constructing their collective identity. For instance, to explore how the MB constructs its collective identity, one needs to examine first the aims, objectives, targets and structure of internal interactions of the movement. In other words, this study is concerned with how the internal dynamics of Islamist movements impact on individuals' perceptions, attitudes and, most importantly, their identity. It tackles the process of identity construction in the everyday life of the Islamist as an individual before becoming a part of a collective actor.

### **3.4.2. Islamic Social Movements**

As mentioned earlier, the shift in studying collective actors from classical to NSMs theory was marked by concentrating on society as the main target of collective action instead of the state (Touraine, 1981; Cohen, 1985; Habermas, 1987; Melucci, 1988; Calhoun, 1993). This new interest in society was accompanied with a focus on identity issues: identity politics (Calhoun, 1993), culture (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995) and emotions (Goodwin, Polletta, and Jasper 2004). Building on this burgeoning literature, a number of scholars have attempted to extend the NSMs umbrella to include a scrutiny of Islamist movements (Wickham, 2002; Wiktorowicz, 2003; Yavuz, 2003; Clark, 2004; Bayat, 2005; Tuğal, 2009). Their work examines roles of identity (Yavuz), solidarity (Bayat), political opportunity structures, resource mobilizing and framing (Wiktorowicz and others), network building (Clark), and everyday practices (Tuğal) within Islamist movements. However, despite its fruitful contribution to Islamic studies, this trend is still emerging and more research needs to be done to discern the nature of Islamic social movements. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the literature by focusing on the construction of Islamic identity within Islamist movements.

Nevertheless, before doing so, one needs to highlight three main distinctions between Islamist movements and social movements. First, although there is commonality between Islamist movements and social movements in terms of networking, mobilizing and protesting, the former are inclined to rely extensively upon ideational factors (religious, cultural, emotional, etc.) to generate collective action. This

tendency sheds light on the tremendous capability of Islamist movements as meaning producers. Second, unlike social movements which focus on *collective action* as the locus of analysis, Islamist movements tend to focus on *collective identity* as the locus of action. Third, whereas society is the main target for NSMs (Touraine, 1981; Habermas, 1987; Melucci, 1996), Islamist movements target both society and the state (Yavuz, 2003; Tuğal, 2009).

### **3.4.3. The Construction of Islamic Identity**

Islamist movements are not merely power seekers but also identity makers. While it is true many Islamists tend to be involved in political activities, for example forming political parties, contesting elections and sometimes attaining power, reformulating society's values and norms remains the ultimate goal of these movements. Moreover, establishing an Islamic state, which is perceived as the fundamental goal for Islamists, is contingent upon its commitment to endorsing Islamic values and moral codes in Muslim societies. More significantly, the legitimacy of many Islamist movements is derived from their tendency, even rhetorically, to establish an 'Islamic' society, regardless of what definitions and connotations they attach to this word. They capitalize on Muslims' religious nostalgia for the primordial Islamic society founded by the Prophet Muhammed in the seventh century to claim authenticity.

The Islamists' task is thus not confined only to establishing Islamic society but also to identifying its norms, boundaries and cognitive codes. They are involved in creating what Olivier Roy has called the 'virtuous' society (Roy, 1994; 2004).<sup>5</sup> Therefore, for many Islamists, the first step in establishing this postulated society is to reformulate individuals' attitudes, perceptions and practices in everyday life.<sup>6</sup> Such a

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<sup>5</sup> Although Roy's argument, in a broader sense, is based on an essentialist view which treats Islamist movements as monolithic entities having the same imagination, it still has some plausibility if we deal with it instrumentally. By this I mean Islamist movements employ such an 'imagined' society as an incentive to attract, recruit and fuel their collective action and, more importantly, to justify it. Hence, one can understand how Islamist movements can maintain solidarity and commitment over time.

<sup>6</sup> To illustrate, there are a number of different approaches whereby Islamist movements seek to establish the Islamic society. First is the bottom-up approach which departs from the assumption that changing the moral and value codes to be more Islamic will inevitably lead to the establishment of the Islamic society.

reformulation shall constitute a new Islamic identity for individuals and subsequently the society. In this context, individuals exemplify the underpinnings of Islamist movements; it is postulated that if they do not change their identity then 'Islamic' society will remain elusive. Yavuz points out Islamic actors tend to reconstitute identities, institutional structures, ways of life and the moral code of society through penetrating the cultural, economic and educational spheres (Yavuz, 2003, p.23).

Accordingly, this study contends that the construction of Islamic identity is fundamental for Islamic movements. It argues that the permanence of Islamist movements is contingent upon its success on articulating a unique and distinctive identity for its adherents. In Muslim societies, where there is no rigid segregation between religious and political spheres, Islamic actors tend to contest values, beliefs and symbolism over claiming authenticity. For them, producing an Islamic identity, regardless of what definition they attach to it, is critical for attracting and recruiting new members, and more importantly, to preserve their existence. This assumption challenges the prevailing tradition of social movements which reduces a movement's action to either challenging political power or disrupting the existent system (Bayat, 2005).<sup>7</sup> However, it is mainly concerned with forming a distinctive identity for adherents as a goal *per se*.

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For example, Salafi trends focus on propagation as the main tool for reshaping individuals' identity and consequently the society. The second approach adopts a top-down style. It focuses on attaining power by any means including violence as a step to establishing the Islamic state and consequently the Islamic society. For example, this is seen in violent and jihadist movements. The third approach is to penetrate the public sphere by creating different political, cultural and social codes not only to contest with other actors, mainly the state, but also to appropriate the private sphere as well. This is the approach taken by, for example, the MB and other reformist and moderate movements. Nevertheless, despite the major distinctions between these movements in terms of ideology, targets, and strategies, the individual remains the sine qua non for establishing the Islamic society.

<sup>7</sup> This assumption is nuanced by Asef Bayat's article "Islamism and Social Movement Theory" where he profoundly criticizes the attempts of applying social movement approaches to Islamist movements without discerning their distinctions. Bayat points out that challenging political power is crucial; however, social movements may also succeed in changing civil societies, cultural symbols and value systems, which will lead, in the long term, to confronting political power (Bayat, 2005, p.898). However, this study extends Bayat's notion by assuming that changing members' attitudes, perceptions and norms is *per se* a goal for social movement. For instance, the MB focuses on rearticulating individuals' perceptions and practices to confront political regimes and to expand its code of values and norms to encompass the entire society.

By Islamic identity, this study refers to the cognitive elements, symbols, norms, values and emotions whereby Islamist movements view themselves, perceive the world and delineate their actions. It reflects the frame of reference that Islamist movements employ to construct collective action (Yavuz, 2003). Such a frame is used both to mobilize adherents and nurture movement action, and to reshape and solidify individuals' identity. It is the deliberate process of socialization and internalization that helps individuals to align their goals, norms and identities with those of the movement. Such a process helps individuals to identify themselves not as fragmented identities but as a solid and meaningful entity.

However, one should stress the significant role of Islamic rituals, values, idioms and symbols in constructing Islamic identity (Yavuz, 2003; Tuğal, 2009). Based on Muslims' comprehension of their religious duties and moral commitments, Islamist movements tend to produce a distinctive identity that could respond to these tendencies. According to Yavuz, Islamic political identity provides a cognitive bridge between interest and action, society and state, and tradition and modernity in much of the Islamic world (Yavuz, 2003: 7). In this context, Islamist movements can be described as both identity producers and respondents. By investing in Muslims' tendency to become more politically and religiously represented, Islamist movements produce cognitive codes that encompass and integrate fragmented Muslims and foster their sense of belonging. On the other hand, they also respond to those who are inclined to identify themselves as active Muslims. According to Yavuz, Islamic political identity has two intertwined dimensions: one governs the individual's religious devotion and shapes his or her perception of the self and the other. The other is related to the social practices and norms that direct Muslims in everyday life (Yavuz, 2003, p.21). The success of Islamist movements in combining these dimensions and fusing them into its organizational structure helps them to articulate collective identity. This means that the persistence of Islamist movements can be explained relatively by their ability to respond to individuals' emotional, religious and social aspirations.

#### **3.4.3.1. Manufacturing Islamic Collectivity**

This study contends that revealing Islamic collective identity is contingent upon deconstructing the rationale of Islamist movements. That is, Islamic identity construction reflects the relationships among a movement's aims and objectives, targets, internal system and environment where the movement operates. The greater the movement can internalize its aims, objectives, interests and norms into the individuals' identities, the more the collective identity can be produced and consolidated. This study thus seeks to scrutinize the process of building Islamic identity as it happens within Islamist movements.

To do so, this study will build an analytical framework that integrates cultural/ideational and institutional aspects of Islamist movements. As discussed earlier, this integration is crucial to overcome the shortcomings of the political process and resource mobilization paradigms in studying social movements. Many attempts have been made to achieve such integration (Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Meyer, Whittier et al. 2002; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004); however, this study seeks to extend these attempts to discern the realm of Islamist movements.

The point of departure in this model originates from Melucci's insights on collective identity. Analytically, Melucci treats collective identity as "an interactive process through which several individuals or groups define the meaning of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints of such an action" (Melucci, 1996, p.67). That is, for this process to be constructed and maintained, it should contain two related dimensions: the inner complexity of an actor (its plurality of orientations) and the actor's relationship with the environment (constraints and opportunities) (Melucci, 1996). In addition, Melucci treats collective identity as a process of interactions and negotiations which might entail "contradictory processes lying behind what appears as stable and coherent definition of a given collective actor"(Melucci, 1996, p.72). In this context, collective identity is not tackled as a monolithic unity of the subject but rather as a system of relations and representations (Melucci, 1996, p.76). Thus the construction of collective identity depends on how this set of relationships is held together (Melucci,

1996, p.76). In Melucci's words collective identity is "a laborious process where unity and equilibrium are reestablished over and over again in reaction to shifts and changes in the elements internal and external to the field" (Melucci, 1996, p.76).

However, although this study will build on Melucci's insights on collective identity, it seeks to go beyond its instrumental character to permeate the cultural/ideational aspect into collective behaviour. This can be achieved by evoking Polletta and Jasper's insights on collective identity (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). As discussed earlier, Polletta and Jasper treat collective identity as a combination of various components: values and interests, structure and agency, emotions and rational calculations, etc. They thus define collective identity as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p.285). This definition encompasses both the institutional and cultural aspects of the collective actor.

To make such a linkage more plausible, Bayat proposes what he has called "imagined solidarity" (Bayat, 2005). Bayat contends that what can bring fragmented and fluid actors together are not just shared beliefs and common interests but rather imagined solidarities. An imagined solidarity, Bayat states, is "one which is forged spontaneously among different actors who come to a consensus by imagining, subjectively constructing, common interests and shared values between themselves" (Bayat, 2005, p.904). Similarly, Melucci asserts the critical importance of solidarity in maintaining the collective action. He argues that solidarity ties individuals to each other to enable them to withstand the breakdown of social relations induced by conflict (Melucci, 1996, p.74).

Nevertheless, neither Bayat nor Melucci explains how collective actors can create such solidarity and on what basis. For instance, while Bayat stresses the crucial role of solidarity in a closed and authoritarian context, he does not elucidate how such a sense of solidarity and unity can be constituted and, more importantly, preserved. In other words, as Gamson points out, solidarity refers to the strength of our loyalties and commitment to a movement's collective identity (Gamson, 1991). It is concerned by the

question: “to what extent, people may ask themselves, is their collective entity worthy of sacrifice and how much it should take priority over the needs of everyday life, including surviving?” (Gamson, 1991, p.45). Furthermore, Bayat’s notion does not answer the perennial question of why particular collective actors, for example, Islamist movements, can create a stronger sense of solidarity and commitment among members than others do.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer these questions by revealing the internal and external factors that shape solidarity among individuals. For instance, the MB used to operate in a repressive and closed environment whereby political opportunity structures are restricted and attempts of mobilizing resources are hindered. However, the movement succeeded in creating a high degree of solidarity and coherence among its members.

#### **3.4.3.2 The construction of Islamic collectivity... the notion of the *jama‘a***

This study contends that Islamic identity is the outcome of the interaction processes that occur within Islamist movements and are affected by the external environment. As Melucci points out, collective identity is “the outcome of various axes of interaction between collective actor, identification declared by the actor, and the identification given by others” (Melucci, 1996, p.76). This study argues that Islamic identity construction reflects the interplay among three key components: the movement’s aims and targets; its internal system; and the constraints and opportunities that exist in the external environment. By deconstructing these interactions, one will be able to grasp the character, elasticity and complexity of collective identity.

To begin with, the aims and objectives of collective actors are identified by the movement’s leaders. Melucci points out that leaders formulate the aims of the movement and also determine a system of priorities which can respond to the changing conditions (Melucci, 1996, p.339). In this context, aims and objectives can be divided into two categories: expressive, which refer to the ultimate goals that the movement seeks to pursue, and instrumental, which can help in reaching the general aims of the

movement (Melucci, 1996). It is the leader's task to align individual goals and objectives with those of the movement. Moreover, leaders play a key role in the framing process which takes place within social movements (Melucci, 1996; Benford and Snow, 2000; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). In the case of Islamist movements, leaders and ideologues have a significant role in setting the general aims of the movement and drawing strategies and tools to achieve them. For instance, Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the MB, identified the movement's aims and objectives, strategies and stages. A charismatic leader, Al-Banna articulated the master frames and ideology of the MB which is still hitherto highly respected and followed by the movement's members.

Despite the fact that Islamist leaders tend to set very broad and general aims, for example, to establish an Islamic state or to apply *shari'a*, they employ these objectives to ensure the commitment and solidarity of its adherents. For instance, al-Banna set a very loose and broad aim of the MB of "dominating the world and mastering the humanity according to the Islamic teachings" (al-Banna, 2002). However, in order to pursue this aim, al-Banna laid out six objectives to be achieved, namely to build: the Muslim individual; the Muslim family; an Islamic society; an Islamic government; an Islamic state; and an Islamic *umma* (*khilafa*) (al-Banna, 2002).<sup>8</sup> Yet the accomplishment of these objectives is contingent upon the dedication of all brothers. Al-Banna states:

The creation of nations, the education of people, the realisation of hopes, and the defence of principles. The nation which tries to achieve this or the group which is calling for this will need at the very least a mighty spiritual strength which may be manifested in numerous ways: a strong will which no weakness can penetrate; a steady loyalty unassailable by fickleness or treachery; a noble spirit of self-sacrifice, unaffected by greed or avarice; a knowledge of the principles, having faith in them evaluating them, and making sure they are immune to error. They must ensure that there is no deviation, quibbling or betrayal about it (which are the characteristics of the soul). Upon this awesome spiritual strength and high principles will be erected, resurgent nations who will create educated and zealous people, life will be renewed in those who have been deprived of it for many years (al-Banna, 2002).

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<sup>8</sup> These objectives are perceived by many members of the MB as the blueprint stages which should be followed simultaneously to achieve the ultimate goal.

Nevertheless, the distinction between the expressive and instrumental objectives is not rigid. They may in fact be seen as expressive in order to maintain unity and integration within its organizational structure. For instance, while the MB considers establishing an Islamic state as an ultimate objective, to achieve it, members should commit themselves to the movement and give *bay'a* (allegiance) to its leadership. Moreover, some leaders are inclined to diffuse a movement's objective to make it difficult for members to evaluate success or failure of the movement (Melucci, 1996). In this context, many Islamist leaders tend to broaden their movement's aims and objectives not only to appease members and maintain their allegiance but also to impede any attempt to account for them.

In addition, self-preservation of the movement can become an end *per se* (Melucci, 1996). Melucci points out that the organizational apparatus in some movements tend to develop its own interests which do not necessarily coincide with those of the movement (Melucci, 1996, p.314). However, in the case of Islamist movements, self-preservation becomes essential not because leaders manipulate adherents but as an inward reaction to the repressive environment where they operate. For instance, during the 1930s and 1940s the MB endorsed political and social change in Egypt and had expanded its organizational network all over Egypt; however, after the clash with Nasser's regime in the 1950s and 1960s, the movement had limited its objective to survival.

In addition, there is a need to look at the target of the social movements and whether it is the state or the society or both. Indeed, in the case of many Islamist movements, they usually target the state and society together. Yavuz has suggested an insightful typology for Islamist movements based on its targets and strategies (Yavuz, 2003). According to Yavuz, Islamist movements can be divided into two main categories: 1) society-oriented movements which seek to change society from within, and 2) state-oriented movements which seek to change the political system and take over power as a tool to transform the society. The former, Yavuz contends, is peaceful as it accepts to operate from within the framework set by the state. Their main tool,

Yavuz asserts, is to employ opportunity spaces to penetrate and reshape the public sphere. He thus divides these movements into two sub-categories: *inward-oriented* movements which focus on changing individuals' identity and consciousness, and *everyday-life* movements which are concerned with changing individuals and society by constructing networks and spaces for adherents in the economy, education and media (Yavuz, 2003, p.30). On the other hand, the state-oriented movements tend to impose change from above by attaining power. According to Yavuz, these movements are characterized by a dogmatic ideology which "seeks total transformation of society by means of the state" (Yavuz, 2003, p.29). Yavuz divides state-oriented movements on the basis of its strategies into two sub-categories: *revolutionary* movements which reject the existent political system and use violence to change it, and *reformist* movements which participate in political processes and are involved in building alliances with other parties in a hope to capture the state or reshape its policy.

However, despite the plausibility of Yavuz's framework, its terminology and typology are blurred. For instance, it is not enough for an Islamist movement that abandons violence to be described as reformist. The Moroccan Al-Adl wal-Ihsan movement does not adopt violence; however, it has a revolutionary ideology which targets state and society that seeks to change rules of the game and reshape societal norms and attitude to align with its religious worldview. Likewise, one cannot put the MB in the same category of Al-Adl wal-Ihsan just because both abandon violence and neglect other significant differences between them. In addition, Yavuz's typology does not explain why and how some inward-oriented movements change their character to become everyday-life movements that seek to change society, for example the Salafi movements in Kuwait and Egypt. In other words, Yavuz's analysis does not fit all Islamist movements types and, to some extent, it neglects the dynamic character of Islamist movements which change their targets and strategies over time due to changes in its environment.

Notwithstanding its drawbacks, Yavuz's typology is still valid as a tool for examining the impact of a movement's targets on identity construction. That is, Yavuz

contends that state-oriented movements tend to adopt a rigid and homogeneous identity based on religious dogma (Yavuz, 2003, p.29). However, society-oriented movements are inclined to espouse a flexible and open identity. Their main goal, Yavuz argues, is “defining and living the “good life” (Yavuz, 2003, p.31). This study will expand Yavuz’s notion on the relationship between targets and identity to examine socio-state oriented movements. It will be argued that the MB is a movement that targets both the state and society. Thus its identity construction is the outcome of the MB’s attempts to reformulate societal norms and values and to alter the state to become Islamic.

The second component of identity construction process lies in a movement’s internal structure, norms, and interactions. According to Melucci, the internal system of the collective actor is designed for pursuit of the movement’s objectives, adaptation to the environment, and ensuring unity and self-preservation of the movement (Melucci, 1996, p.315). It articulates power relationships and identifies organizational roles, membership and affiliation rules, and the structure of incentives which all together constitute the movement’s character and identity. Building on Melucci’s insights, this study divides the internal system of social movements into two main categories: inclusive and exclusive. The former refers to a flexible system of membership and affiliation based on a participatory style of management and interactions. On the other hand, the exclusive system is characterized by rigidity and homogeneity of membership and reflects an authoritarian style of management. For instance, movements that require intense ideological identification tend to impose an exclusive internal system that requires a high degree of commitment (Melucci, 1996, p.315). Moreover, exclusive organizations demand a rigid discipline and intrude upon every aspect of their members’ lives (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Della Porta and Diani state: “the greater the degree to which an organization is founded on symbolic incentives—either ideological or solidaristic—the more exclusive it will be” (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p.126). In addition, the importance of a movement’s internal system stems not only from helping the members in allocating resources and building a solid network but also from enabling the movement to produce symbols, values, and rituals that form its collective identity.

Identity thus embodies a reflection of interactions that occur within the social movement. It is the outcome of conflicts, negotiations and bargaining relationships that take place within the movement.

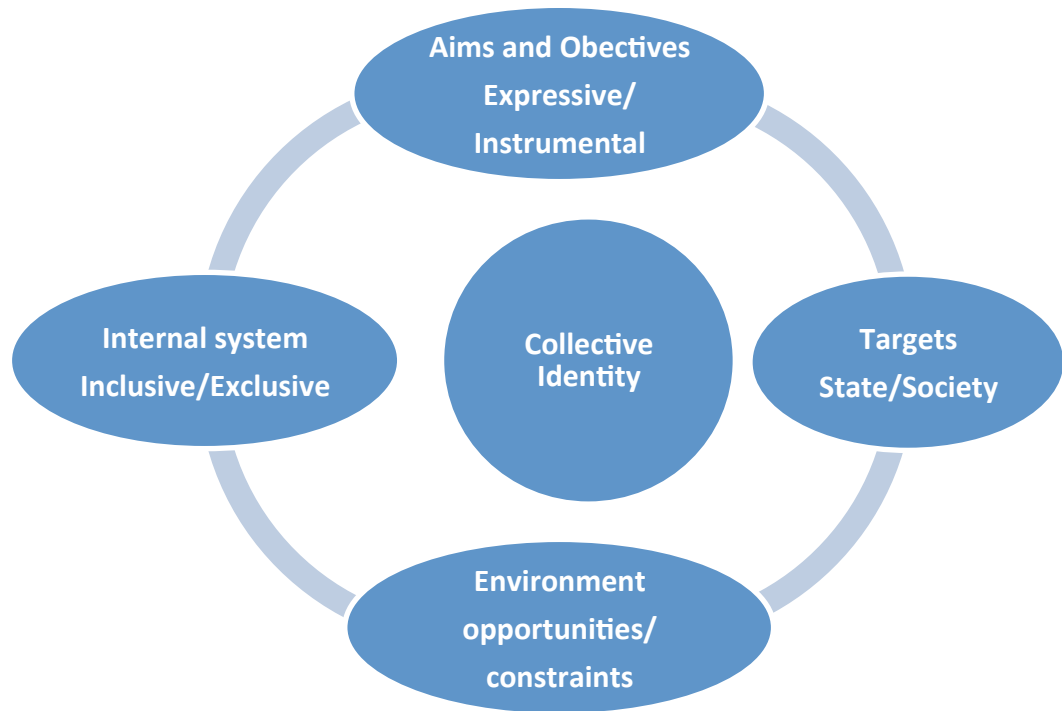
The third integral component of identity construction is the environment where the collective actors operate. Social movements do not operate in a vacuum. They engage in conflict with other adversaries, antagonistic competitors and repressive authorities over recognition and allocating resources for collective action. Moreover, the environment exemplifies the place where the potential members reside and where the movement needs to provide incentives to attract them. It is the locus of collective action. In addition, the environment entails the 'other' which creates the movement's self-identification. The response of the adversary, the tolerance or repression, constitutes the movement's strategies and ability to achieve its objectives (Melucci, 1996).

The impact of the environment on identity construction is therefore crucial. If the movement is operating in a hostile and repressive environment, its objectives, strategies and behaviour might become radical and antagonistic (Melucci, 1996). Moreover, a repressive environment makes the requirement of affiliation more tightened. For instance, Islamist movements which operate in a hostile and repressive environment tend to impose a high degree of commitment on membership to ensure loyalty and maintain unity. Furthermore, during conflict with other adversaries, the internal system of the movement reinforces identity and guarantees it (Melucci, 1996). In this context, Melucci states: "people feel a bond with others not because they share the same interests, but because they need that bond in order to make sense of what they are doing" (Melucci, 1996, p.74). However, the link between a repressive environment and radicalization of a movement's aims and strategies is non-linear. Sometimes, a hostile environment enforces the movement to moderate its objectives and aims and consequently its identity.<sup>9</sup> For Melucci, the environment is made up of the wider society

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<sup>9</sup> This assumption has empirical validity in revealing the transformations of radical and violent Islamist movements. In many cases, the repressive response of authorities towards Jihadists has led, in some cases, to moderate the movement's aims and strategies such as in Egypt and Saudi Arabia during the 1990s and

where the movement is situated and draws its support base (Melucci, 1988, p.323). It contains the opportunities and constraints that enable the collective actor to formulate its collective identity (Melucci, 1996).



**Fig. 1 Components of identity construction**

Figure 1 reveals linkages that shape the identity construction process in social movements. It reflects how Islamist movements construct their own identity framework based on integrating cultural and institutional factors. Such a framework creates what can be called the *jama'a* notion which determines a movement's identity features, development and permanence over time. However, before we go further in applying this notion to the MB, three important points should be stressed. First is the interweaving character of the *Jama'a*. This study does not claim a linear relationship between these components but rather reflects the intertwining that reveals the processes of identity construction in Islamist movements. Second, this model recognizes the significant role

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2000s. However, in other cases, it has resulted in a more radical and violent ideology such as in Algeria in the 1990s.

of institutional factors as well as cultural/ideational aspects in manufacturing collective identity. It considers the importance of structures such as mobilization, networking and protesting, as well as the symbols, values and norms of collective action. Finally, and most importantly, this model should be perceived as an analytical method that can deconstruct the process of identity construction as it happens within social movements. Its main task, as Melucci puts it, is “to dismantle the ‘reified’ appearance of those empirical dimensions of a social movement and to attain the constructive process behind them” (Melucci, 1996, p.75). By doing so, this study seeks to deconstruct the collective identity of the MB.

### **3.5. CONCLUSION**

To conclude, this chapter has discussed the theoretical framework of this study. It has been argued that social constructivism can explain how Islamist movements construct their collective identity. By producing cognitive codes, rituals, symbols and norms, Islamist movements tend to reshape individuals’ identity and enhance their sense of distinctiveness. Also, this chapter contends that Islamist movements are not merely power seekers but also meaning producers who tend to extend their collective identity to encompass the entire society.

To deconstruct and unpack the MB identity, this chapter has proposed an analytical model that could explain the process of Islamic identity construction. This model originates from a movement’s aims and objectives, internal system, and opportunity and constraints that exist in the environment whereby the MB is operating. It seeks to unveil the underlying components of collective identity of the MB. The next chapters will show how the MB constructs its identity in everyday life.

**Chapter Four**  
**THE POWER OF THE JAMA‘A:**  
**THE ROLE OF HASAN AL-BANNA IN ARTICULATING THE MUSLIM**  
**BROTHERHOOD IDENTITY**

**4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the role of Hasan al-Banna in articulating the Muslim Brotherhood’s (MB) identity. It traces the roots and sources of MB identity as constructed by al-Banna during the 1930s and 1940s. The purpose of this chapter is to reveal how al-Banna interweaved a distinctive framework of identity for the MB which is still dominant and vibrant. Like many other ideologues with unrivalled organizational skills, al-Banna left a significant legacy on his movement and followers. This chapter argues that al-Banna crafted the frameworks of the MB. He formulated the movement’s ultimate aims, norms, by-laws, and manufactured the internal structure which continues to steer the movement. However, this does not imply that the MB is static and stagnant, nor does it mean that al-Banna left no room for those who came after. It, however, denotes the lasting legacy of al-Banna’s thoughts and formulations.

In addition, this chapter argues that the MB is an identity-created movement that targets both state and society. The MB seeks not only to take power but also to reshape society’s norms, values, and identity. It aims to transform everyday life into Islamic practices which should coincide with the MB’s comprehension of Islam.

**4.2. CONTEXULIZING AL-BANNA**

Identity is a process of social construction. Hence to grasp how al-Banna articulated the framework of the MB’s identity, one needs to explore the historical, political, and intellectual context that forged his own thoughts and views. Al-Banna was born one year after the death of the renowned Islamic reformer Mohamed Abduh, on 14

October 1906, in the small town of Mahmudiyya in the province of Buhayra, 90 miles north east of Cairo (al-Husayni, 1955; Mitchell, 1969).<sup>10</sup>

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 Mahmudiyya (Mitchell, 1969), al-Banna received his basic education and religious knowledge from his father and from the rural community in which he grew up. 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 Mohamed Zahran, the head of al-Rashad School (al-Husayni, 1955; Ghanim, 1992; al-Banna, n.d). After al-Banna finished his primary school education, the 1919 revolution erupted. He joined in the demonstrations against the British occupation, an incident that fostered al-Banna's nationalist sentiment against foreign occupation and a feature of the MB's identity (Ghanim, 1992). 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.<sup>11</sup> Thus, he joined Dar al-Mua'limin (Primary Teaching School) in Damanhur, the capital city of Buhayara, where he was exposed to the Sufi Hasafiyya order (Mitchell, 1969; Ghanim, 1992; Ismail, 2010; al-Banna, n.d).<sup>12</sup>

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 shocked 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 that was

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<sup>10</sup> This chapter does not trace the personal journey of al-Banna as other studies (al-Husayni, 1955: Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998; Ghanim, 1992) have already covered this ground but rather the chapter will explore the impact of this journey on al-Banna's upbringing, thoughts, and identity. It re-visits al-Banna's literature to look at his formulations of the MB's identity and sheds light on the enduring impact of these formulations on the movement.

<sup>11</sup> Ghanim explains this desire by al-Banna to avoid the strict regulations in the traditional religious education exemplified in the kuttab and his aspiration to gain modern education (Ghanim, 1992, p.143).

<sup>12</sup> Although al-Banna embraced Sufism in his early years leaving a significant impact on his personality and religious construction (Mitchell, 1969, p.5; Ghanim, 1992, p.171; Ismail, 2010, p.36), after establishing the MB, al-Banna criticized Sufi groups for their passive approach to changes in society.

taking place in the wake of the 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.

During his stay in Cairo, three major factors occurred which left a significant impact on al-Banna's religious, intellectual, and political views. The first factor was the new political structure established in the wake of the 1919 revolution which lasted until 1952. The second was the removal of the Ottoman Caliphate in Turkey in March 1924. The third was the intensive and enduring debate that arose between the liberal-secular camp and the Islamic camp.

In 1922, Britain granted Egypt formal independence, but without devolving to the state genuine powers. Nevertheless, Egypt's first modern constitution in 1923 was a hallmark in its political evolution as it gave considerable powers to the parliament vis-à-vis the palace, King Ahmed Fu'ad and the British authorities. However, the political architecture that resulted from the constitution which lasted until 1952, created a bitter conflict between the Egyptian political factions over the relationship amongst the King, the government, and the British.<sup>13</sup> It led to a profound divide between the Wafd and the Liberal Constitutional (al-Ahrar al-Ddsturiyyin) over the formation of the governments and negotiating with the British. Not surprisingly, al-Banna criticized the on-going political partisanship and viewed political parties as a sign of disunity and a division of the nation.<sup>14</sup>

The end of the Ottoman Empire in March 1924 created an ordeal for many Muslims around the world. After more than four centuries of dominance, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish nationalist leader, abolished the Islamic Caliphate in Istanbul. In doing so, Atatürk forcefully ended the institution that linked Muslims spiritually and politically since the death of Prophet Muhammad. Although, the Ottoman

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<sup>13</sup> The main actors in the political scene during that period were: the palace, the British, the Wafd, and the minority parties, e.g. the Liberal Constitutionalists Party, Sa'adist Party, the People's Party (Hizb al-Sha'b), and the Unity (*Itihad*) Party (Daly, 1998, pp.286-287).

<sup>14</sup> Although al-Banna disdained political parties for their political corruption and divisions over the relationship with the British authorities, the MB now adopts a different view from its founder. Since the beginning of the 1980s the MB has recognized political pluralism and built an alliance with liberal and leftist parties in both the 1984 and 1987 elections.

Caliphate was weak and its power had waned, hence it was dubbed “the sick man of Europe”, the symbolic impact of its end was enormous for Muslims.

The debate that followed the end of the Ottoman Empire was crucial in the articulation of al-Banna’s thoughts and worldview. In 1926 Shaykh Ali Abdel Raziq, an Azharite scholar and judge, published his controversial book, *al-Islam wausul 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 (al-Banna, 2002). 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 (Gershoni and Jankowski, 1986). However, al-Banna, was extremely shocked to see liberals and secularists celebrating the removal of the Islamic Caliphate. Not surprisingly, he held that reviving the Caliphate was an Islamic duty Muslims needed to fulfil, with the result that he established this as one of the MB’s ultimate goals (al-Banna, 2002). In other words, the notion of pan-Islamism in al-Banna’s ideology was born with the demise of the Islamic Caliphate in Istanbul (*Ikhwanweb* 7 July 2011).

The third factor that affected al-Banna was the profound schism between so-called liberals and Islamic scholars over the reshaping of Egypt’s identity.<sup>15</sup> Al-Banna believed that liberals sought to impose secularism and apply a separation between religion and politics in Egypt (Ghanim, 1992). More significantly, al-Banna was one of those who personally was touched by this identity debate and encountered its

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<sup>15</sup> The liberal current included Taha Hussein, Salama Mussa and Ahmed Lotfy Elsayed, while the Islamic trend included Rashid Rida, Shaykh Tantawi Gohar, and Shaykh Mohamed Farid Wagdy. (Ghanim, 1992, pp.76-84).

repercussions.<sup>16</sup> He stated, “I spent days and nights watching the two camps and found the atheist camp is rising whereas the Islamic camp was shrinking” (al-Banna, n.d, p.55). He believed there was a grave danger in permitting secular and liberal currents to shape the public sphere, dominate public institutions such as schools, universities, and newspapers, and propagate their ideas which, according to him, were endangering social morality and subverting people’s beliefs (al-Banna, n.d, p.46). Therefore, after al-Banna completed his the final year at Dar-al-Ulum he became extensively involved in Islamic, spiritual, and preaching activities. He sought to preserve his Islamic identity from what he perceived as the threat of secularism and atheism.

These factors defined al-Banna’s life. As a result, he was preoccupied by the question of how to eliminate the consequences of such factors. He always believed that establishing a movement that embraced Islamic principles and sought to reshape Muslims’ identity was the only way to preserve Islamic unity, the *umma*.

#### **4.2.1. The Conflict over Egypt’s Identity**

This study contends that the creation of the MB was in part a response to the identity dilemma that Egypt faced at the outset of the 20th century. However, this does not imply that the MB exemplified a peculiar and reactionary movement that sought to reverse the course of history (Dekmejian, 1995).<sup>17</sup> Rather it represents a conscious and modern collective action based on strategic and rational calculations.

The crisis of identity in Egypt can be traced to the last quarter of the 19th century. After roughly eight decades under Mohamed Ali and his dynastic rule, Egypt was occupied by the British. However, the social and economic changes brought to Egypt during Mohamed Ali’s reign, and which continued under his successors, had created a new political and intellectual elite (Gershoni and Jankowski, 1986; Daly 1998).

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<sup>16</sup> In his memoirs, al-Banna expressed his dissatisfaction with the *Dar al-Ulum* regulations which compelled him to abandon his traditional uniform—jalabiya and imamah—and wear the ‘modern’ uniform of trousers, shirt, and fez (al-Banna, n.d.).

<sup>17</sup> Although this study concurs with Dekmejian on the revivalist character of Islamic movements, it rejects his historical determinism as it treats history as an inevitable trajectory of a cyclical pattern of challenge and response.

However, the elite was heterogeneous and fragmented by the binary educational system that prevailed in Egypt during that era: Egyptian schools were divided into western-style and traditional-religious schools (Hourani, 1983).<sup>18</sup> This elite was involved in a contentious debate over two correlated issues: attaining independence and achieving *nahda* (renaissance) (Hourani, 1983). It was divided into two main factions: modernists or westernizers, those who had a western-style education; and Islamic reformists or revivalists who received a classical religious education at al-Azhar and other traditional schools. Modernists contended that achieving *nahda* would not be possible without emulating the west and benefiting from its social, cultural, and political institutions. For them, modernization was essential to enable Egypt to obtain independence. Therefore, they believed that national sentiment should be based on law and modern values, not on centuries-old Islamic conventions (Hourani, 1983, p.242). However, Islamic reformists believed that modernization should not happen 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 the main tool with which to liberate Egypt, as well as the Muslim world, from foreign occupation.<sup>19</sup>

The debate over Egypt's identity became more intense over the first quarter of the 20th century (Gershoni and Jankowski, 1986).<sup>20</sup> The modernists, represented by Taha Hussien, Qasim Amin, and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, advocated an Egyptian nationalism and patriotism (*wataniyya*), while the new revivalists, represented by Rashid Rida and Shaykh Muhib al-Din al-Khatib, espoused a pan-Islamic orientation and advocated the notion of an Islamic League.<sup>21</sup> The new political developments in Egypt,

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<sup>18</sup> Hourani states that this binary system led to what he calls "the division of spirits" (Hourani, 1983, p.138).

<sup>19</sup> The proponents of the modernism trend were Rifa'a al-Tahtawi and Shaykh Ali Youssef, and the leaders of the Islamic current were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Mohamed Abduh.

<sup>20</sup> Gershoni and Jankowski extensively discuss the division and political polarization over recasting Egypt's national identity. According to them, the era that starts from 1870s until the World War I was marked by a conflict between proponents of Egyptian national patriotism or "Egyptianization" and those who were pro-Ottoman (Greshoni & Jankowski, 1986, p.4).

<sup>21</sup> The notion of Islamic League was created by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani in the late 19th century and embraced by the National Party (Hizb al-Watani) founded in 1907, a year after the birth of al-Banna, by

including the constitution of 1923, the western-style political settings and political pluralism, shaped the debate over Egypt's identity. More significantly, these developments were interpreted differently by both camps. For liberals and secularists, the new political settings were a victorious sign of the supremacy of modernity over traditionalism. However, for the new revivalists, they were a sign of western cultural and political invasion (*al-ghazw al-thaqafi*) which according to them would endanger Egypt's authentic identity as a Muslim country. According to Ghanim, the westernization of public institutions, education, the media, and universities had fragmented the intellectual elite in Egypt and created sense of alienation among many Egyptians (Ghanim, 1992, p,71).<sup>22</sup> As noted by Botman, this era was marked by what is dubbed "the liberal age" which lasted until 1952 (Botman, 1998, p.286).

Importantly, the debate over Egypt's identity was not confined to 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 (Ghanim, 1992). They perceived the secularist celebration of the new Turkish Republic was a threat to the Islamic character of the Egyptian state (Gershoni and Jankowski, 1986).<sup>23</sup> Therefore, it was not a surprise that many al-Azhar scholars, the *ulama*, and other Islamic scholars sought to restore the Caliphate (Kramer, 1986). 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

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two prominent Egyptian leaders: Mustafa Kamil and Mohamed Farid (Ghanim, 1992, p.88). On the other hand, those who espoused Egyptian nationalism, or Egyptianization, represented by the Umma party, founded and led by Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, rejected any political connection between Egypt and the Muslim world (Daly, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Ghanim highlights different data that show the struggle over reshaping the Egyptian identity, e.g. the number of public schools compared to foreign language schools. However, the significant indicator was the increasing number of missionary schools which sought to propagate Christianity in poor and rural areas (Ghanim, 1992, pp.73-74)

<sup>23</sup> Gershoni and Jankowski aptly describe the reaction to the abolishing 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" (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986, p.56).

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 (Gershoni and Jankowski, 1986; Kramer, 1986).

Accordingly, by the end of the 1920s it was clear that identity issues lay at the heart of political, intellectual, and religious debate in Egypt. Furthermore, it characterized the battleground between the liberal and Islamic trends for the next two decades.

#### **4.2.2. Beyond Religiosity... Unpacking al-Banna's Identity**

In contrast to accounts that over-emphasize the religious aspect of al-Banna's identity (Dunne, 1950; Mitchell, 1969; Aly and Wenner, 1982), this study argues that al-Banna was also a social activist and intellectual, gifted, charismatic leader. In Dekmejian's words, al-Banna was "the embodiment of Sufi spiritualist, Islamic scholar, and activist leader who possessed a rare ability to evoke mass support by translating doctrinal complexities into social action" (Dekmejian, 1995, p.75). However, it is important to note that al-Banna's religiosity was remarkably progressive. He was not a traditional Shaykh seeking to hold to a religious profession but was a modern activist who sought to change society. As Dekmejian succinctly points, al-Banna was "the avatar of Islamism" (Dekmejian, 1980, p.74).

Clearly, al-Banna's identity reflects a conjuncture of influences that shaped his views and thoughts. As Yavuz points out, "Identities are very much constructed as a result of dynamic interactions between agents of the state and society" (Yavuz 2003: 38). The making of al-Banna's identity reveals a significant mixture of factors and experiences that shaped his life in rural and urban Egypt. Hence, deconstructing al-Banna's identity is crucial to grasp how he articulated the MB identity.

This study highlights three main sources that shaped al-Banna's identity. The first was the close relationship with his father Shaykh Ahmed al-Banna, who made a tremendous impact on his son personally and religiously. The second was al-Banna's

affiliations with the many religious, moral, and social associations in Buhayra and Cairo. The third was al-Banna's contacts with many well-known Islamic scholars in Cairo, among them Shaykh Muhib al-Din al-Khatib, Rashid Rida and Mohamed Farid Wajdi.

Talking about the role of his father, al-Banna reveals in his memoirs how his father took care of his education and religious construction.<sup>24</sup> In addition to his profession as a watch repairman, Shaykh al-Banna was a classical Islamic scholar who was involved in reading and writing on Islamic issues (Krämer, 2010). His contribution to the realm of Islamic knowledge is undeniable. For instance, he classified over 30,000 of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal's hadith (traditions), publishing them in 24 volumes under the name *Musnad al-fath al-rabbani*. This work had not been accomplished since the death of Ibn Hanbal in the 9th century (al-Banna, 1990).<sup>25</sup> He also authored and edited several books on Islamic traditions (Taylor and Whittier, 1995). This extraordinary effort by Shaykh al-Banna created a sense of piety and disciplined norms in his life and towards his family (al-Banna, 1990). For instance, Shaykh Ahmed insisted that his elder son, Hasan, should memorize the Qur'an; something he achieved at the age of 14 (Krämer, 2010; al-Banna, n.d).

Another important impact of Shaykh Ahmed on his son lay in his tendency to teach Hasan al-Banna the Islamic sciences and introduce him to a wide library of Islamic literature and classics in linguistics, poetry, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and Islamic philosophy (al-Banna, 1990; Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p.25). Thus, al-Banna was exposed to Islamic books from a very early age. For instance, al-Banna mentioned in his memoirs his acquaintance with the standard book of Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, which fostered his Sufi and spiritual inclinations (Ghanim, 1992; al-Banna, 2002).

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<sup>24</sup> This notion has been recently revealed by Jamal al-Banna, the youngest brother of Hasan al-Banna, who collected the letters and correspondence between al-Banna and his father during the 1920s and 1930s. The collection were published in the beginning of 1990 by Jamal al-Banna under the title, *Khitabat Hasan al-Banna ila abihi* (the Letters of the Young Hasan al-Banna to His Father) (al-Banna, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> Jamal al-Banna explained extensively how Shaykh Ahmed al-Banna struggled to achieve his great work on Ibn Hanbal. He reveals the impacts of financial difficulties that postponed publishing Shaykh Ahmed's work.

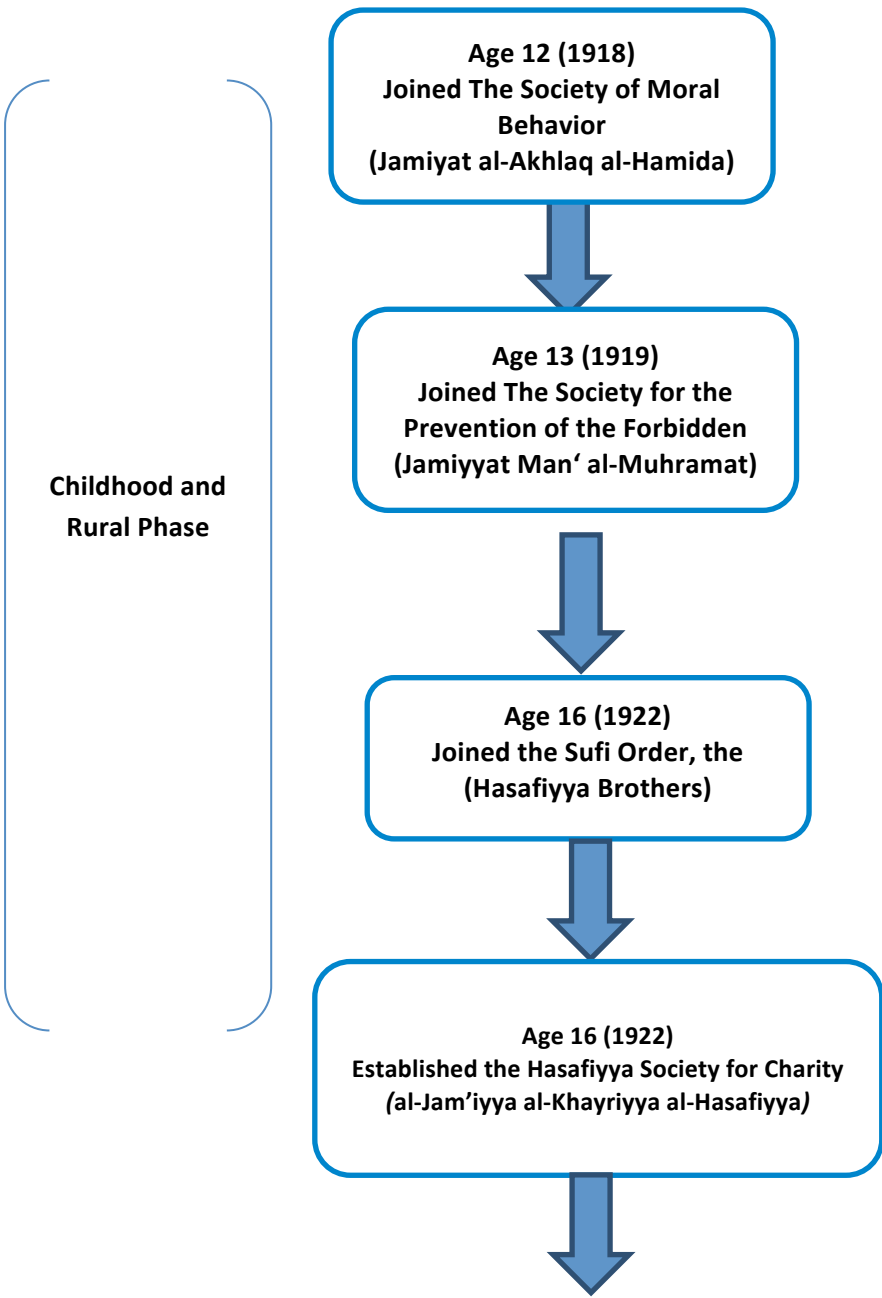
However, the most significant impact of Shaykh Ahmed lay in introducing his son to an extensive network of contacts of prominent Islamic scholars in Cairo who would play a significant role in reshaping al-Banna's identity and thoughts. As a result of his outstanding work on Ibn Hanbal's traditions, Shaykh Ahmed al-Banna gained a respected reputation in Islamic circles (al-Banna, 1990; Krämer, 2010). Hence he built strong connections with Shaykh Rashid Rida, Muhib al-Din al-Khatib, Shaykh Youssif al-Dijwi and Mohamed Farid Wajdi (al-Banna, 1990). For a rural young student, like Hassan, it would have been extremely difficult to penetrate the Islamic circles in Cairo without the access gained by his father.

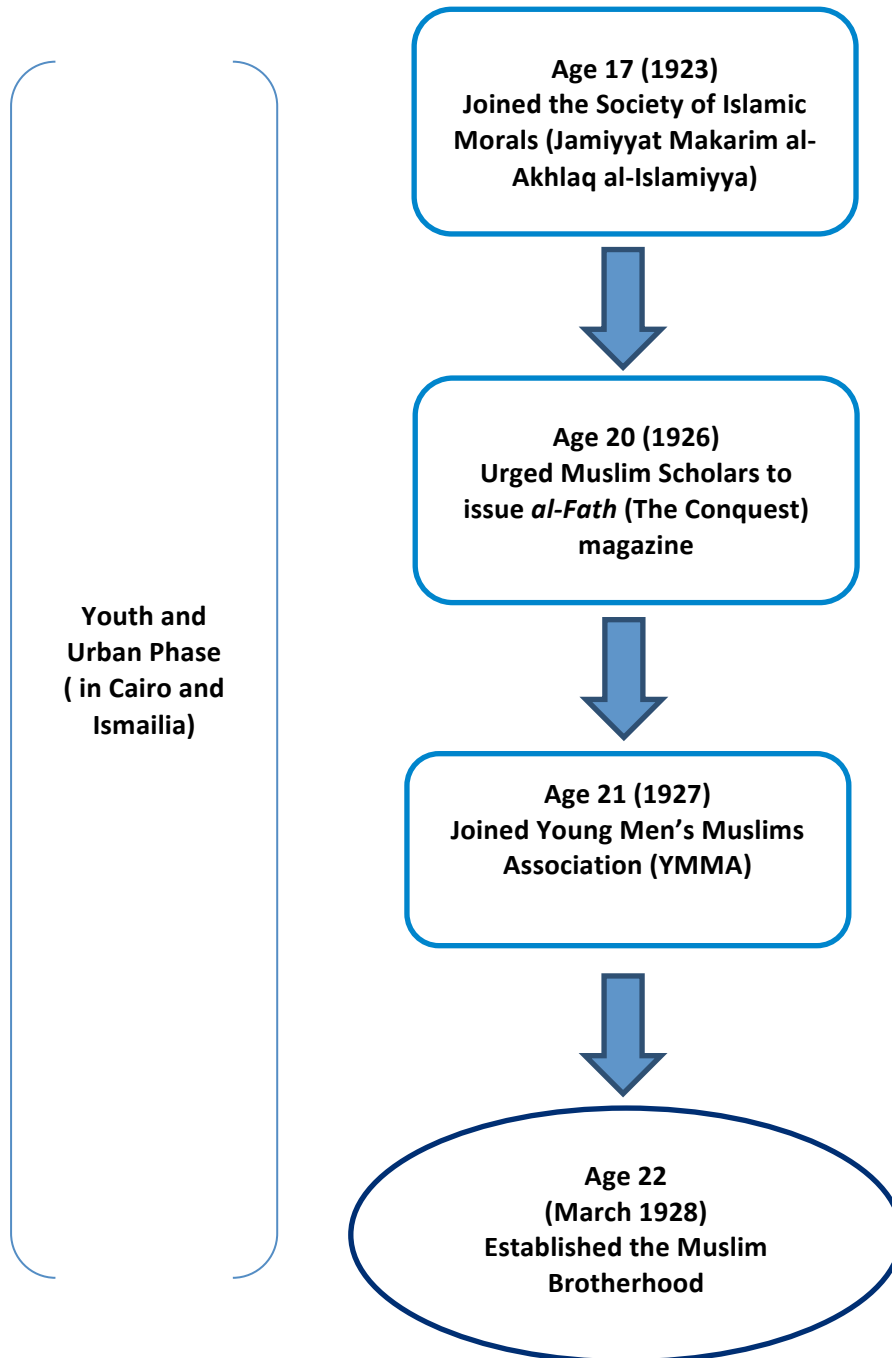
Nevertheless, unlike accounts that limit the influence of Shaykh Ahmed on Hasan al-Banna's identity to his childhood, this study argues that the father's patronage of his son continued even after the MB was established and lasted until al-Banna's assassination in February 1949. For instance, Jamal, the younger brother of Hassan, revealed how their father helped him after establishing the MB. Jamal mentions that the family house in Cairo was used to host the MB branch (*shu'ba*) after its foundation in Ismailia in 1928. Even after the MB moved from Ismailia to Cairo in 1932, the family house became the headquarters of the MB *al-markaz al-'am* until 1934 (al-Banna, 1990, p.45). More significantly, Shaykh Ahmed al-Banna was the editor-in-chief of the MB Islamic monthly magazine, *al-Shihab*, which was published for five months from November 1947 to March 1948 before it was suspended after the banning of the MB in 1948 (Shua'yr, 1985, p.323).

The second influence on al-Banna's identity relates to his tendency to join religious and social associations. Invoking Stryker's notion on identity salience, which refers to the interplay between personal identity and social roles (Stryker, Owens et al. 2000), it can be assumed that al-Banna was keen to place himself within one of the Islamic associations since an early age. According to Mitchell (1969), al-Banna always viewed himself as a responsible person who should have a mission in life (Mitchell, 1969). For instance, in the primary school when al-Banna was twelve, he joined the Society of Moral Behaviour (*Jami'yyat al-Akhlaq al-Adabiya*) and was selected to be its

leader (al-Banna, n.d, p.16). The purpose of that society was “to sensitize its members to moral offences” (Mitchell, 1969, p.2). In Damanhur, al-Banna was also involved in two other Islamic groups: the Order of Hasafiyya Brothers and then later the *Hasafiyya* Benevolent Society (al-Jam’iyya al-Khayriyya al-Hasafiyya) which he established with his lifelong friend Ahmed al-Sukkari in order to resist the prevalent Christian missionaries activities in the rural area of Damanhur (Mitchell, 1969; Taylor and Whittier, 1995; al-Banna, n.d).

After he moved to Cairo in 1923, al-Banna was involved in many other Islamic societies. In addition to his commitment to the Hasafiyya order, where he attended its weekly meeting (*hadra*) for *dhikr* (ritual recitation), al-Banna joined the Society of Notable Islamic Morals (Jamiyyat Makarim al-Akhlaq al-Islamiyya) which was led by Shaykh Mohamed Mahmoud (al-Banna, n.d, p.49). In addition, al-Banna joined the Young Men Muslims Association (Jamiyyat al-Shuban al-Muslimin, hereafter YMMA) which was established in 1927 (al-Banna, n.d, p.74).





**Fig. 2 Al-Banna's links with religious, social, and moral associations**

The relationship of al-Banna with Islamic, moral, and social associations reveals three aspects of his identity: the first was his religious zeal. al-Banna has been described by many of his disciples as a “unique personality, religious zealot, talented orator and

great writer” (al-Gendy, 1978, p.285). The second aspect was al-Banna’s inclination to take practical actions to prove his convictions. Unlike many of his peers, al-Banna was passionate in voicing his opinion and challenging the status quo. Among the many Islamic associations that flourished in Egypt during the 1920s, al-Banna was inclined to join those who adopted actions, not just mystical orientations. For instance, the main task of *Jamiyaat Man’ al-Muhramat* (Society for the Prevention of the Forbidden) was to charge and rebuke those who violate Islamic values and public morality. The third aspect was al-Banna’s charismatic and talented leadership. In most of the associations he joined, al-Banna showed an innovative mind-set and strong organizational skills.

The third factor that shaped al-Banna’s identity was his acquaintance with many eminent Islamic scholars in Cairo. In his memoirs, al-Banna expressed his admiration and respect for Shaykh Muhib al-Din al-Khatib,<sup>26</sup> Shaykh Youssif al-Dijwi<sup>27</sup>, and Rashid Rida. All belonged to the Islamic camp (*al-mu’askar al-islami*) which sought to counter the secular and atheistic camp (*al-mu’askar al-almani wa al-ilhadi*) (al-Banna, n.d). They were a continuation of the Islamic trend that emerged in the late 19th century led by al-Afghani and Abduh (Hourani, 1983; Ghanim, 1992).

In his memoirs, al-Banna succinctly reveals how his identity was shaped by his life in Cairo. He states:

My life was a peculiar mixture of activities; attending the Sufi gathering (*hadra*) at the Hasafi Shaykh house or at the house of Ali Effendi Ghalib, going to the Salafiyya bookshop [al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya] of Muhib al-Din al-Khatib, visiting Shakykh Rashid Rida and his Islamic journal *al-Manar*, going to the house of Shaykh al-Dijwi and then to Farid Bey Wajdi house.

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<sup>26</sup> Muhib al-Din al-Khatib (1886-1969) was a prominent Islamic journalist and political activist of Syrian origins. He came to Egypt after the French occupation of Syria in 1920, where he published many Islamic journals including *al-Zahraa* and *Majallat al-Fath* (The Conquest) which sought to resist atheism and missionaries’ activities in Egypt.

<sup>27</sup> Shaykh Youssif al-Dijwi (1870-1948) was an eminent Islamic scholar who graduated from al-Azhar and was a member of the “Commission of al-Azhar Senior Scholars”. The close relationship between al-Dijwi and al-Banna originates from their Sufi tendencies and the personal relationship between al-Dijwi and Shaykh Ahmed al-Banna. It was in al-Dijwi’s house, which used to host discussions on different religious and political issues among the Islamic elite every night, that al-Banna urged al-Azhar scholars to take action to “stop the missionary and atheist wave in Egypt” (al-Banna, n.d., p.56). In addition, Shaykh al-Dijwi established the *Society of Nahdat al-Islam* (the Islamic Renaissance), which sought to reinforce Islamic identity among Egyptians.

Sometimes, I go to the library of Dar al-Kutub and to Shaykhun mosque (al-Banna, n.d, p.62).

However, the crucial question is: what impact did these Islamic scholars have on al-Banna's identity? According to Ghanim, al-Banna was significantly influenced by his relationship with Islamic scholars, in particular by Shaykh Muhib al-Din al-Khatib who was a political activist, Islamic journalist, and prominent writer. Ghanim goes further when he asserts al-Khatib personality fostered al-Banna's political and organizational capabilities (Ghanim, 1992). Clearly, the impact of al-Khatib on al-Banna was profound. For instance, after he moved to Cairo, al-Banna spent most of his time in al-Khatib's Salafi Bookshop (*al-Maktaba al-Salafiyaah*) where he met many Islamic scholars and Shaykhs (al-Banna, n.d., p.62). Moreover, al-Khatib gave al-Banna the opportunity to publish some of his early writings in *al-Fath* journal (Shua'yr, 1985, p.98). In addition, al-Khatib was among those who founded YMMA, which facilitated al-Banna's involvement in its activities and enabled him to judge its feasibility (Lia, 1998, p.30). As a political dissent from Syria, al-Khatib had political and organizational experience in building secret networks and organizations to resist the French occupation to Syria during the 1920s. Al-Banna was able to benefit from this experience in building the MB's organizations and social network (Ghanim, 1992, p.166). Moreover, in his memoirs, al-Banna celebrated his relationship with al-Khatib which continued after al-Banna established the MB. For instance, al-Banna refers to using al-Khatib's bookshop to print and publish the MB's first leaflets and pamphlets. Not surprisingly, al-Banna appointed Shaykh al-Khatib the Editor-in-Chief of the first MB weekly newspaper, *Jaridit al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*, in 1933 (Shua'yr, 1985, p.98).

In contrast to accounts that label al-Banna a traditionalist Islamist, Ghanim stresses that he was open to all Islamic trends ranging from conservatism to reformism, all which enhanced his identity. He states: "al-Banna was a mixture of experiences: he acquired organizational and secrecy skills from al-Khatib, authenticity of thought (*asalat al-fikr*) from Rida, political and religious reformism (*mua'sarh*) from Abduh, etc." (Ghanim, interview on 24 December 2010). A similar analysis can be found in Aly

and Wenner's work on al-Banna. They point out that al-Banna was a combination of Abduh's reformism, Rida's conservatism, and al-Afghani's political activism (Aly and Wenner, 1982, p.339).

Nevertheless, some accounts contend that al-Banna's ideology and views were characterized by Salafi narratives (Dunne, 1950; Aly and Wenner, 1982). They attribute this to two main reasons: first, the immense impact of Shaykh Ahmed al-Banna, who used to belong to the classical Salafi trend, on his son (Dunne, 1950; al-Sa'id, 1977; Ramadan, 1982); and, second, the close relationship between al-Banna and Salafi scholars (Aly and Wenner, 1982). For instance, Aly and Wenner contend that al-Banna's tendency to embrace Salafism was inevitable due to the westernization and modernization wave that overwhelmed Egypt during the first quarter of the 20th century. This notion stems from Aly and Wenner's classification of Islamic political thought during the 1920s. They divide it into three schools: traditionalists of al-Azhar who failed to adjust to modernization and secularization; modernizers or Abduh's students who sought to adapt the tenets of Islam with modernity norms; and conservative reformers or Rida's students who stressed the need for *ijtihad* (renewing Islamic thought through reinterpreting the Islamic texts) while rejecting the adoption of Western values (Aly and Wenner, 1982, p.338). According to Aly and Wenner, al-Banna was a zealous adherent of the third trend. Nevertheless, they acknowledge al-Banna's ability to construct a distinctive ideology based on a comprehensive vision of Islam (Aly and Wenner, 1982, p.339).

However, Lia challenges the notion that al-Banna was a traditional scholar in terms of his ideas and appearance. He contends that al-Banna and the MB were against traditionalism and backwardness (Taylor and Whittier, 1995). More vigorously, Lia claims that the MB was a bridge between traditionalism and modernism (Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p.74). Similarly to Lia, Ghanim asserts that labelling al-Banna as a Salafi is "unfair and inaccurate" (Ghanim, 1992, p.146).

Regardless of the controversy over al-Banna's identity, his interaction with Islamic scholars fostered his ideas and thoughts. Moreover, his involvement in various

political, religious, and intellectual debates shaped his identity and enabled him to elaborate a clear vision for his plans and mission.

#### **4.3. FROM VISION TO ACTION: THE FOUNDING OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD**

Founding the MB was a crucial trajectory for Hasan al-Banna, not only because of his self-perception as a man-with-a-mission but also because of his self-confidence that he could achieve this mission. This sense of assertiveness was profound in al-Banna's decision to establish the MB. Interestingly, al-Banna sought to infuse this sense in the MB's ideology in which the movement would act as the guardian of the Islamic identity. However, given the fact that al-Banna was a member of many Islamic societies, the question of why he chose to establish the MB is vital to understand the rationale of the MB and for what it stood.

After a vibrant life in Cairo, al-Banna moved to Ismailia, northeast Cairo, to undertake his job as a schoolteacher. As the headquarters for Suez Canal Company, which was fully under British and French administration, Isma'iliyya was marked by a heavy western presence. Al-Banna was struck by the pervasive manifestations of western life in Ismailia and acknowledged how it fuelled his national sentiment against foreign domination. He states "The English Camp located in the west neighbourhood of Isma'iliyya with its arrogance and power, had incited all Egyptians... and those streets with foreign names was a sign of humiliation and occupation" (al-Banna, n.d, p.65). Clearly, al-Banna employed the popular disenchantment from the foreign presence in Isma'iliyya to induce Egyptians and gain support for the MB. Building on his proselytizing experience in Cairo, al-Banna started to give brief talks in coffee houses and small mosques. His discourse, language, and appearance were new to those who were attracted by his preaching. He astutely avoided confrontation with important Shaykhs in Isma'iliyya who might discredit his preaching style and de-legitimize his nascent movement. After spending few months disseminating his ideas, al-Banna's audience had increased significantly and his name became familiar to the public in

Isma‘iliyya. In March 1928 a few months after his arrival, al-Banna took allegiance from six Egyptian workers to establish the MB.

#### **4.3.1 From theory to practicality, al-Banna’s elaboration of the MB’s ideology**

The answer to why al-Banna established the MB despite his membership of many other Islamic societies lies in the way he perceived those societies and how he treated them. By the beginning of the 20th century, many Islamic societies were established in Egypt as a reaction to pervasive secular and atheist activities.<sup>28</sup> However, these Islamic associations were mainly concerned with welfare, charity, and moral issues, e.g. purifying ethics, helping needy people, rehabilitation of mosques, etc. with little and sometimes no interest in political and intellectual subjects<sup>29</sup>. It is true that a small number of these associations, such as the Islamic Renaissance Society (*Jami‘at al-Nahda al-Islamiyya*) were inclined to tackle the issue of Egyptian identity issue. However, their position was mainly defensive and apologetic rather than elaborating a coherent ideology that could counter-balance the liberal and secular trends. Not surprisingly, Egyptian and British authorities allowed them to flourish and propagate their ideas as they did not threaten the existing political system.

Thus, although al-Banna was keen to attach himself to some of these associations, he was disenchanted by their lack of zeal towards Muslims’ political, social, and economic problems. Moreover, al-Banna held these associations responsible for the degradation and decadence of Muslims which according to him led to “the contraction of the Islamic camp in the face of the secular camp” (al-Banna, n.d, p.55). Furthermore, al-Banna believed that the main task of these associations should be

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<sup>28</sup> Zakariyya Sulayman Bayumi states that Egypt witnessed a growing number of Islamic associations and societies after WWI. He estimates that there were 135 moral, social, and religious societies. Their main foci were religious and social activities. Bayumi highlights that some of these associations called for applying *shari‘a*. However, he argues the organizations were not politicized (1981, pp.67-68).

<sup>29</sup> Lia’s work on the MB provides an extensive analysis on al-Banna’s dissatisfaction with Islamic associations during his time. For instance, Lia contends that the prime reasons that lay behind the dissatisfaction was the limited scope and role of these associations in terms of political targets and the social groups they represented. Moreover, Lia states, despite YMMA being “indirectly” involved in politics, al-Banna was not satisfied by its approach in tackling Egyptian youth and leading them away from “infatuation with western culture and habits” (1998, p.55).

confronting the escalating wave of missionaries and atheist organizations; something he believed that could not be achieved without a coherent and zealous ideology (Taylor and Whittier, 1995).

Accordingly, al-Banna's affiliation with many Islamic associations enabled him not only to scrutinize their weakness and problems but also to elaborate a different vision for the MB which avoided these flaws. He states:

Some people view Islam as only worship, while others view it as inherited traditions and thus reject Islam because of its irrelevance to modernity... accordingly some have perceived the MB as a worship and preaching association, while others view it as a Sufi order that cares only about asceticism... To all those, we assert that Islamic teachings encompass all life aspects... this how the MB understands Islam (al-Banna, 2002, p.75).

Meanwhile, the expansion of the Islamic associations coincided with the steady decline of the Islamic reformist trend after the departure of al-Afghani and Abduh. It is true that Rida, who was a disciple of and mouthpiece for Abduh's ideas, alongside with other Islamic scholars such as Shaykh al-Khatib, attempted to revive this trend. However, the vacuum was enormous.<sup>30</sup> Rida's attempts to resist the western hegemony focused mainly on raising the intellectual and religious awareness rather than using political activity. He was preoccupied by two main issues: social morality, which according to him should stem from Islamic teachings; and Islamic unity (Hourani, 1983).

However, the focal point of al-Banna's decision to establish the MB lay in his profound shock at al-Azhar's response to what he perceived as the westernization of Egypt. By the end of his studies in Cairo, al-Banna was fully convinced that the only way to stop the "atheism and pornography that swept Egyptian society" was to restore Islamic identity (al-Banna, n.d, p.46). He believed that al-Azhar's leaders and scholars should undertake the historic task of defending Islam in the face of western materialism (al-Banna, n.d, p.55). Accordingly, al-Banna appealed to one of the most eminent and respected Islamic scholars, Shaykh Yusuf al-Dijiwi, "to take action in the face of the

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<sup>30</sup> Hourani asserts that the writings and formulations of Rida, who claimed to be Abduh's spiritual heir, were ambiguous. While Hourani acknowledges the intellectual capacity of Rida, compared to Abduh, he criticizes Rida's intellectual attraction to the Hanbali school of thought (Hourani, 1983, p.230-231).

atheist trend” (al-Banna n.d: 48). However, al-Banna has disenchanted by al-Dijiwi’s response which, although sympathetic to al-Banna’s cause, was not translated into action. Thus, al-Banna felt that al-Azhar scholars, Azharites, betrayed the *umma* by taking no action to preserve it from the external threats (Mitchell, 1969). Not surprisingly, the relationship between the MB and al-Azhar was hostile during 1930s and 1940s. Nevertheless, al-Banna maintained a good personal relationship with Shaykh Mustafa al-Maraghi, the rector of al-Azhar during 1940s (Mitchell, 1969).

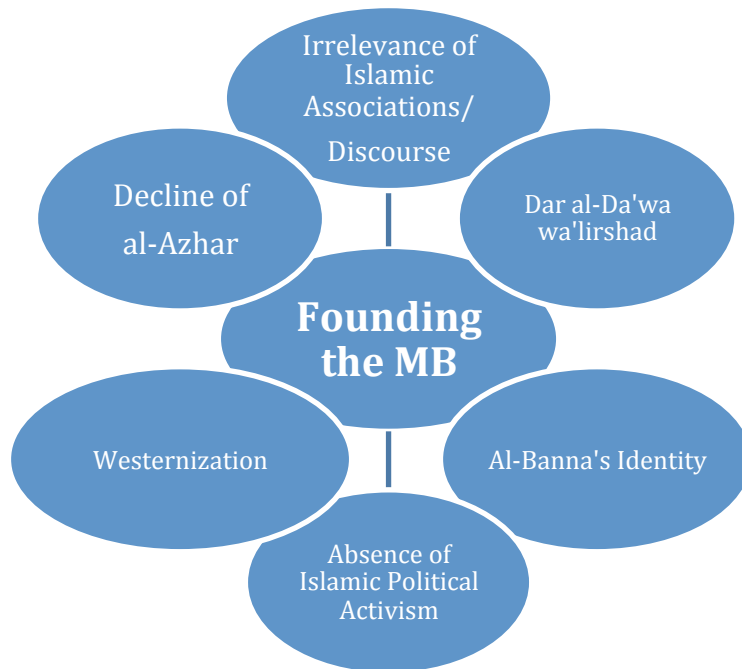
Clearly, al-Banna’s disillusionment with al-Azhar prompted him to re-think his role and mission. He was able to persuade some independent Islamic scholars such as al-Khatib and Ahmed Timor to take practical actions to challenge the missionary and atheist activities. This resulted in two significant developments: first, the publication of *Majallat al-Fath* (the Conquest Journal) which was the first Islamic journal to address missionary and atheist activities in Cairo and rural areas; and second, the establishment of YMMA, which sought to protect Egyptian youth from western influence.

Thus, one could argue that the first seeds of the MB were sown when al-Banna was in Cairo. In 1926, al-Banna urged some of his young fellows in Dar-al-Ulum and al-Azhar to start a preaching campaign to disseminate Islamic knowledge among ordinary people. He believed that the first step to restore Islamic identity was to educate people about their religion (al-Banna, n.d). To achieve this goal and instead of using mosques, the conventional venues for preaching (*da’wa*), al-Banna created a new approach for *da’wa* by targeting people in cafes and parks; an approach that marks the MB style of *da’wa*. More significantly, this new way of proselytizing achieved unrivalled success and enhanced al-Banna’s sense of self-confidence (al-Banna, n.d, pp.50-51).

However, the notion of producing compelling and skilled preachers (*du’ah*) was not new. Abduh had the idea to create preachers and scholars independent of al-Azhar and the government-controlled education system (Hourani, 1983; Taylor and Whittier, 1995). Rida, the adherent of Abduh, implemented this idea when, in 1912, he established the short-lived School of Preaching and Guidance (Dar al-Da’wa wa’l-Irshad)

which aimed to educate Muslim youth and train them to become competent preachers to disseminate Islamic knowledge (Ghanim, 1992; Taylor and Whittier, 1995).<sup>31</sup>

Although al-Banna did not make it clear whether or not the notion of founding the MB had originated from the Dar al-Da'wa wa'l-Irshad experiment he acknowledged the inspiring role of Rida in establishing the MB (Ghanim, 1992, p.163).



**Fig. 3 The factors behind establishing the MB**

Nevertheless, as Figure 3 highlights, the founding of the MB reflects a convergence of many factors: the irrelevance of Islamic associations, the decline of al-Azhar, the absence of Islamic political activism, the upsurge of westernization which created many alienated and disillusioned young Egyptians, the attractive style of *Dar al-Da'wa wa'l-Irshad*, and the personal identity of Hasan al-Banna.

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<sup>31</sup> Mohamed Shu'ayr argues that the rationale behind establishing Dar al-Da'wa wa'l-Irshad was not only to propagate Islamic knowledge but also to resist atheist and missionary arguments which attacked Islam (1985, p.112). Shu'ayr argues that because of financial hardship and what he regards as missionaries' conspiracies, the school had to close after the outbreak of the First World War.

#### 4.3.2. Weaving Identity through a 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. 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 (*da'utna*) stems from the Qur'an and Sunna (al-Banna, 2002, p.23).

To pave the way to gain acceptance for his new identity-based model, 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 transform 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. He strove to present himself and his movement as the saviour of Islam and Muslims. He bluntly stated, “our call is a call of reviving and rescuing the humanity” (al-Banna, 2002, p.159).

However, it should be noted that al-Banna was preoccupied with producing an attractive, compelling model of identity that could encompass many Egyptians who had been alienated and uprooted by westernization (Kandil 2008). As noted by Pinto, al-Banna was struck by the corruption and degradation of Muslims especially the youth (Pinto 1999). More significantly, al-Banna 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 (Lia, 1998).

However, in contrast to accounts that contend that the founding of MB was a mere reaction to westernization and modernization in Egypt (Dunne, 1950; Mitchell, 1969; Aly and Wenner, 1982; Kandil, 2008), this study argues that the reasons are deeper. It is true that al-Banna paid significant attention to the influences of westernization and colonialization on Egypt; however, he elaborated a wider vision and ideology that tackled many other important issues, including achieving renaissance (*nahda*), disseminating Islamic principles and ethics among the populace, and addressing the issue of Islamic unity.

More importantly, Ghanim and Lia refute that al-Banna was totally anti-western. Although both agree about al-Banna's antagonism towards the west, they stress his awareness of the distinction between the west as a colonial power and western civilization which was based on modern sciences and technological advancements (Ghanim, 1992; Lia, 1998). For instance, Ghanim asserts that al-Banna was only against the devastating effects of the west on the Egyptian society. Accordingly, Ghanim highlights four positions held by al-Banna regarding the west. First, he disagreed with the western style of life, e.g. values, traditions, behaviours, etc., which he saw as a sign of cultural invasion (*al-ghazw al-thaqafi*). Second, al-Banna objected to western colonialization and its attempts to divide and occupy Muslim lands. Third, he rejected the missionaries' activities because he saw it as resembling a new 'crusade'. Fourth, he accepted western technologies and called for benefiting from its innovations and inventions (Ghanim, 1992, pp.221-226). Lia affirms that the MB used a wide range of western technologies in media and propaganda industry (Lia, 1998, p.78). Moreover, he contends that al-Banna borrowed ideas such as nationalism from European political thought (Lia, 1998).

In addition, if the sole concern of al-Banna was to attack the west, he could have joined any of the existing nationalist movements and parties that prevailed in Egypt during that time instead of establishing a new movement. More importantly, if al-Banna was blindly against western civilization, he would not have praised its scientific development. For instance, al-Banna stated, "western nations have reached to a high

degree of knowledge and science because they respect human reason.... They aptly and smartly take care of mind and organize public life, which should be copied... These are the facts that no one should ignore” (al-Banna, 1945). Moreover, al-Banna expressed his admiration of the 1923 constitution, which had been created by liberals and modernists under the British mandate. Lia points out al-Banna accepted western political institutions such as representative government, parliament, and elections (Lia 1998). According to Ghanim, al-Banna vigorously opposed what he called “the blind emulation” (*taqlid*) of the west (Ghanim, 1992).

In addition, al-Banna sought to fill the 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 sought to revive Islamic existence and present 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 (al-Simman, 1977, p.23).

Al-Banna believed that it would be difficult to revive the Islamic identity in everyday life without engaging the ordinary people in the debate over the dangers that face their identity. Thus, in contrast to Abduh and Rida who limited the debate over Egypt's identity to the elitist and intellectual circles, al-Banna sought to spread it in the public sphere. In other words, while Abduh and Rida focused on reforming religious institutions, 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 stresses that al-Banna succeeded where other Islamic scholars failed (Ghanim, 1992). He brought the plight of the degradation of Islam and Muslims to the ordinary public. Al-Banna believed that the only way to overcome this plight was to guide Muslims towards the true Islam. He stated “our duty is to show people the precise aspects of

Islam without any augmentation or diminution and then to ask them to implement these aspects and to act in accordance to them in everyday life” (al-Banna, 2002). However, in order to achieve this goal, al-Banna had to construct an ideological and religious framework that could permeate the public consciousness. He believed that this could be achieved within the framework of the MB.

It has been noted that al-Banna was the first Islamic leader who raised the identity question across the whole population. He incited people’s mind by re-asking the basic questions of identity: 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. (al-Banna, 2002, p.42). Neither al-Afghani nor Abduh raised such focal questions. Their concerns focused on how to reconcile Islam with modernity. However, although some accounts argue that al-Banna reversed the progress of Islamic political thought (Mitchell, 1969; Aly and Wenner, 1982), he re-conceptualized the Islamic discourse to make it more attractive to the public. As noted by Commins, al-Banna contributed to a significant change in Islamic political thought. He states, “al-Banna’s writings on religion and politics represent a transition from earlier Islamic reformers’ insistence on their inseparability to a more detailed elaboration of an Islamic polity’s functions and underlying principles (Commins, 1994, p.135). Al-Banna believed that Islamic teachings should be transformed into a political, economic, and social programme, thereby distancing himself from other Islamic reformists. Hence, he held that the Islamic identity would not be preserved without revitalizing its ethos in everyday life.

It is important to highlight that al-Banna also employed Islamic ideology to mobilize the masses and generate collective action. In other words, al-Banna’s main concerns were how to activate the submissive masses and how to revive the Islamic activism. As noted by Smith, the MB aims to “transform Islam into an operative force actively at work on modern problems” (Smith, 1959, p.156). As Commins puts it, “al-Banna broke new ground when he made economic and social issues part of the Islamic reform programme” (Commins, 1994, p.138). Al-Banna sought to reconnect the links between the past and the present, structure and agency, text and context.

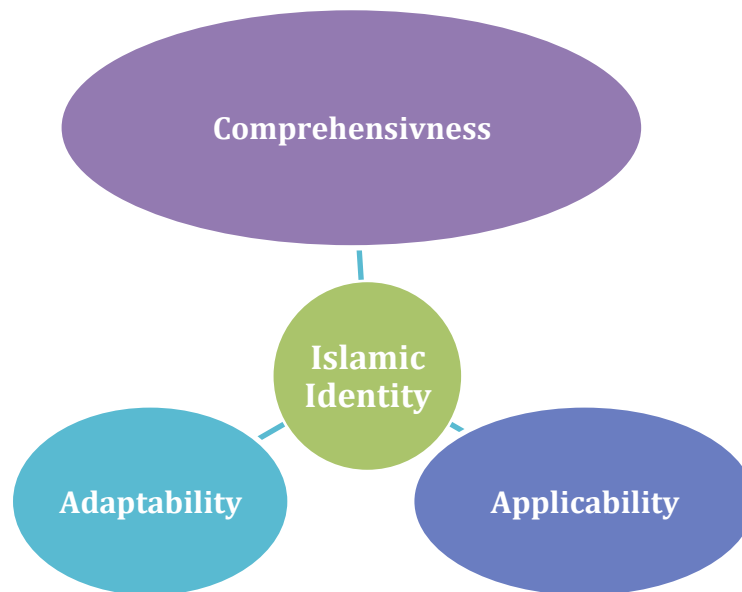
#### 4.4. AL-BANNA'S ARTICULATION OF ISLAMIC IDENTITY: REVIVING *AL-FIKRA AL-ISLAMIYYA*

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*.<sup>32</sup> 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. 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. As noted by Pinto, the emergence of Islamist ideology should be understood as an attempt to forge a genuine and autochthonous identity (Pinto, 1999, p.17).

According to al-Banna, Islamic identity is the frame of reference by which Muslims should abide in everyday life. It constitutes the code of norms, values, symbols, and idioms that Muslims should adhere in their everyday life practices. Hence, al-Banna articulated three chief aspects of Islamic identity: comprehensiveness; adaptability and flexibility; and applicability (see Figure 3).

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<sup>32</sup> *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 *Mudhakkirat al-da'wa wa-l-da'iyaa* (Cairo: Dar al-Shihab, n.d).



**Fig. 4 Al-Banna’s vision of Islamic identity**

*a) Inclusiveness and Comprehensiveness*

Al-Banna perceived Islamic identity to be an inclusive system of norms, values, and regulations that could transform 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 (al-Banna, 2002, p.171).

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 ills was dependent on the return to Islam as a comprehensive order for human existence (Commins, 1994, p.134).

Building on his concept of comprehensiveness of Islam, al-Banna was able to incorporate the ideational and ontological frame of reference in everyday life. He connected the mundane with the sacred, not through a dogmatic and theological approach, but by articulating a pragmatic and solid platform for everyday life. Although Abduh and Rida had provided al-Banna's intellectual and methodological underpinnings, they never considered creating collective action that could espouse and endorse their ideas (Commins, 1994). More significantly, Lia illustrates that al-Banna held that the other reformers were concerned exclusively with achieving political reform (i.e. independence from Britain) and ignored the need for a comprehensive programme for reform (Lia, 1998).

More importantly, al-Banna imparted and consolidated comprehensiveness in the minds and hearts of his followers by using stunning yet simple words. In one of his most succinct and 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 6:162-163]. This is who I am...who are you? (al-Banna, 2002, p,13).

In addition to its theoretical appeal, al-Banna employed the notion of inclusiveness to recruit many people to join his nascent movement. He sought to persuade his followers that the comprehensiveness of Islam could not only lead them to the eternal life but, more importantly, provide them with a practical 'Islamic' guide in their everyday life (al-Banna, 2002). Not surprisingly, many of al-Banna's disciples and subordinates already understood Islam in such an inclusive way. One of them has described Islam as:

A comprehensive system that encompasses all aspects of life, it's a state and home, government and nation, ethics and power, mercy and justice, culture, law, science, judiciary, material and fortune, jihad and call, army and idea, true faith and correct worship, all are equal (al-Hajjaji, 1981, p.3).

To legitimize and disseminate his notion of comprehensiveness, al-Banna vigorously connected it with people's daily life problems and difficulties. For instance, he asserted that Muslims' weakness and subordination to the west resulted from their lack of commitment towards Islamic teachings and principles. He stated that the Muslim needs to return to the 'true Islam' as exemplified by the first generation of Muslims (Commins, 1994).

In addition, al-Banna used the notion of Islamic inclusiveness to de-legitimize western ideologies such as communism and capitalism. He stated that Islam includes all the benefits of other ideologies. According to him, Islam overrides socialism, capitalism, east and the west, nationalism and universalism (al-Banna, 2002). Al-Banna always stressed the supremacy of Islamic identity over other ideologies. According to al-Husayni, al-Banna presented the MB as a holistic movement that contained all the righteous components of other ideologies (al-Husayni, 1955, p.78).

*b) 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. He stated, "the Muslim Brotherhood believes that Islam as a comprehensive religion that encompasses all nations and valid for every age and every country" (al-Banna, 2002, p.173). He added that it is the perfection of Islam, the last revealed message, that is compatible with all ages and nations. 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 (al-Banna, 2002).

Furthermore, al-Banna's belief in the elasticity of Islamic identity is highlighted in his attempts to fit it into the existing Egyptian political system (Commins, 1994). 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. 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 (al-Banna, 2002). 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 for its ambiguous and opportunistic disposition.

*c) Applicability and Practicality*

The third aspect of Islamic identity as perceived by al-Banna concerns its applicability. Unlike many Islamic ideologues, al-Banna was tremendously practical. He endeavoured to turn the MB's ideology into plans and a clear platform. He criticized other Islamic scholars and associations for their 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 programme 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 (*shumuliyat al-manhaj al-islami*) which implied that Islamic identity cannot prevail without being applied in a detailed programme 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" (al-Banna, 2002, p.56). Therefore, al-Banna provided a detailed programme for reform ranging from political and social issues to health, science, and ethics of everyday life.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Al-Banna's epistles reveal a clear and sophisticated platform for reform that covers a variety of topics. In a well-known tract called, "Our Internal Problems in the Light of the Islamic System", he detailed and advocated his programme for reform. He addressed the political, economic, social and moral issues that concerned Egyptian society during 1930s and 1940s. Moreover, al-Banna sent a petition to King Farouk and Egypt Prime Minister Mustafa al-Nahas calling for the application of the Islamic system in Egypt (al-Banna, 2002, p.209).

At a glance, these characteristics embody the core elements of the MB ideology. As will be shown later, al-Banna was keen to build these elements into the foundations of the MB's identity. More significantly, the relationship between these aspects is crucial. For al-Banna, the practicality of Islamic identity does not negate its comprehensiveness. Individuals can be good Muslims only if they can abide by Islamic teachings, which are inclusive, in everyday life. On the other hand, he believed any platform for change, politically or socially, should comply with the inclusive nature of Islam. The power of this platform does not stem from social appeal but rather from the Islamic 'character' it entails. In other words, al-Banna elaborated a comprehensive vision for Islam that should go hand in hand with a road map for how society, individuals, and the state should act in accordance with the tenets of Islam as he perceived them.

#### **4.4.1. Al-Banna and the Configuration of the MB's Identity**

This study contends that the MB is an identity-oriented movement that seeks to reformulate state and society values and norms to more Islamic ones. As mentioned, al-Banna was not only preoccupied by resisting the western cultural and political domination in Egypt but also by creating an alternative identity system that could encompass all Egyptians, if not all Muslims. According to Commins, by founding the MB, al-Banna created a model that Muslim revivalists could replicate throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds (Commins, 1994, p.149). However, al-Banna's search for an authentic identity was accompanied by a rational assessment of the risks and difficulties his movement would face in the long term. Therefore, in many of his tracts, al-Banna stressed the need for patience and gradualism in achieving the movement's goals.

As a leader of a social movement, al-Banna crafted the framework of the MB's identity. He identified the movement's aims, objectives, and system of values and norms. More importantly, 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 align the MB's aims and objectives with those of Islamic teachings. More importantly,

al-Banna was keen to align the MB members with the movement's aims and objectives. Thus, he set the rules, codes, and mechanisms of the MB's internal structure which still exist in 2012. Moving from theory to action, al-Banna constructed a sophisticated and coherent organization that could embody his vision and ideology and become a mouthpiece for his ideas.

However, one cannot overlook the charismatic nature of al-Banna which was crucial in consolidating the MB's identity in its early stages. Hence, the organizational and social expansion of the MB during the 1930s and 1940s reflected the appeal of the new identity that al-Banna created. For a nascent movement, which lacked reliable financial resources and proper organizational structure, it was immensely difficult to enlarge its activities without a coherent ideology, distinctive identity, and compelling leadership. Accordingly, the articulation of MB's identity was a cornerstone in al-Banna's thought and strategy. Not surprisingly, it took a decade before al-Banna formulated the MB's aims, objectives, strategies, and norms, i.e. to create the MB's collective identity. Remarkably, al-Banna constructed a distinctive and unique collective identity for the MB. The key question is: how did he did achieve this?

As discussed in chapter three, this study treats collective identity as an integrative process of ideational and institutional factors that formulates individuals' self-perception, constitutes their worldviews, and nurtures their collective action. It argues that collective identity is the outcome of the interplay of a movement's four components: aims; objectives; internal structure; and external environment. This notion is derived from the insights of Melucci, and Polletta and Jasper on collective identity which infuse the ideational and operative aspects of collective identity. Melucci treats collective identity as "an interactive process through which several individuals or groups define the meaning of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints of such an action" (Melucci, 1996, p.67). However, Polletta and Jasper perceive collective identity as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p.285). They

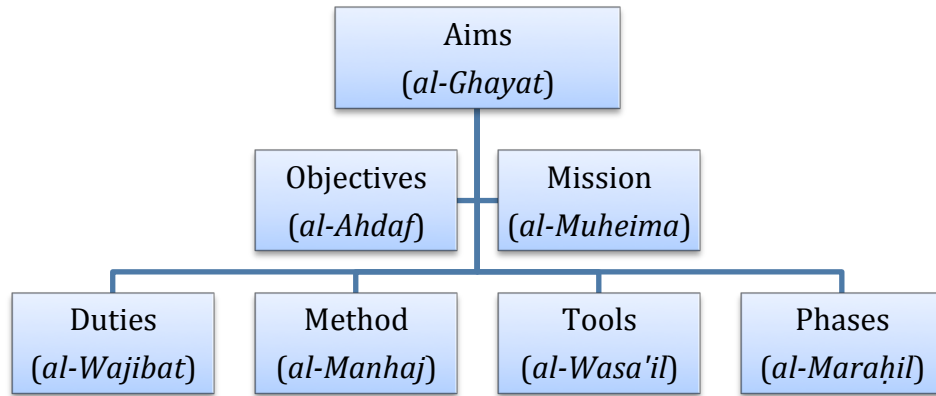
treat it as a combination of various components: values and interests; structure and agency; and emotions and rational calculations.

#### **4.4.1.1 The Jama‘a paradigm**

To infuse his vision and conception of Islamic identity into the MB’s ideology and structure, al-Banna created what this study calls the “*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 unity as brothers.

The *jama‘a* paradigm defines the MB’s *raison d’être*, self-perception, and worldview. It constitutes the underpinnings of social agents’ identity. Thus, al-Banna carved out the MB’s cognitive map that still guides and directs the MB’s members in everyday life. 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.

In this section, the study will de-construct the *Jama‘a* paradigm that was created by al-Banna. It is composed of seven integral and connected parts: aims (*al-ghayat*), objectives (*al-ahdaf*), mission (*al-muhima*), duties (*al-wajibat*), method (*al-manhaj*), means (*al-wasa‘il*), and phases (*al-marahil*) (al-Banna, 2002).



**Fig. 5 The *Jama'at* paradigm**

*a) Aims And Objectives*

Al-Banna formulated a set of broad yet vague aims for the MB. According to Melucci, the aims and objectives of collective actors are identified by a movement's leaders (Melucci, 1996). It is the leader's task to set a system of priorities that can respond to the changing conditions (Melucci, 1996, p.339). 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" (al-Banna, 2002, p.168). On another occasion, al-Banna asserted that the main aim of the MB was "to create a new generation of Muslim believers based on tenets of Islam and who seek to reformulate the *umma* identity to become Islamic in all aspects of life" (al-Banna, 2002, p.188).

By setting these aims, al-Banna constructed a vibrant and influential 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 (Snow and McAdam, 2000, p.614). It was al-Banna's task to create this link and infuse it within the MB's structures. Thus, he

formulated the lasting slogan of the MB which delineates its ultimate goals (al-Banna, 2002, p.65).

*Allah ghayatuna, al-rasul za'imuna*

*Al-Qur'an dusturuna, al-jihad sabiluna*

*Al-mawt fi sabil Allah asma amanina*

*Allah akbar wa lillah al-hamdu*

God is our aim, the Prophet is our leader

The Qur'an is our constitution, Jihad is our way

Death in service of God is the loftiest of our wishes

God is great, thanks to God.

Clearly, the MB's enduring slogan reflects the extraordinary ability of al-Banna in producing symbolic meanings and connotations that encompass members and foster their commitment to the movement. This slogan became the MB's mantra that attracted and galvanized many of members over decades. In addition, it reflects al-Banna's populist and rhetoric skills which resonated with many Egyptians.

To make these expressive aims viable, al-Banna introduced a cluster of instrumental objectives (*al-ahdaf*). These objectives can be divided into two groups: the tentative objectives and the permanent ones. 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 (al-Banna, 2002, pp.145-160).

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. Regardless of the viability of the MB's aims and objectives and to what extent they can be achieved, they are nevertheless essential for creating the movement's claims. They construct what Hunt, Benford, and Snow call "the protagonist identity field" which helps social movements to advocate, propagate, and justify their cause (Hunt, 1994). Hence, al-Banna, as well as his successors, employed these aims and objectives not only to recruit and attract individuals to the MB but also more importantly to reformulate 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" (Melucci, 1996, p.320).

Several points can be made from al-Banna's setting of the generic aims of the MB. First, the aims reflect al-Banna's capability in attracting new members for his nascent movement. By setting general, yet simple, Islamic aims and objectives, al-Banna was able to persuade many Egyptians to join the MB. Second, these aims and objectives enhanced the MB's symbolic capability 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 environment which flourished during the 1920s and 1930s. As al-Banna was keen to avoid conflict with the extant Islamic associations, these aims had to endorse his cause while precluding attempts to discredit the MB. Fourth, these broad aims preserved the internal congruence of the MB. Due to the high degree of abstraction and symbolism, these aims served to underpin cohesion and solidarity among members. Melucci points out that one of the major tasks of the movement's leader is to "guarantee the interaction and cohesion among members" (Melucci, 1996, p.339). 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 ensured the movement's survival and strategies. That is, the vague and long-term nature of these objectives enabled the MB leaders to maintain solidarity and loyalty of members.

*b) Mission*

In relation to the MB's mission, al-Banna posited different meanings and connotations. For instance, he stated, "our mission [*muhimatuna*] is to stand in the face of the prevalent wave of materialism" (al-Banna, 2002, p.114). In a more detailed statement, al-Banna stressed that the MB's mission was to reform Egypt and to enable it to lead the Muslim world. He emphasized this could 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 (al-Banna, 2002, p.116).

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 solidarity 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*

In relation to the MB's duties (*al-wajibat*), al-Banna became even more specific. He delineated six tasks 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 (al-Banna, 2002). The duties, as the study will explain in the next chapter, are an integral part of the socialization process that helps in building commitment within the MB. 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 principles: a) faith in Islamic values and principles as the foundation for everyday life; b) faith in incremental and comprehensive change which starts with individuals and then encompasses society; and c) faith in practicality and linking words with good actions (al-Banna, 2002). Al-Banna considered that the MB should adopt a comprehensive strategy with which to achieve its goals. Clearly, this inclusiveness echoes with the broadness of the MB's goals. In addition, al-Banna asserted that the Islamic approach for change should include all aspects of life: political, economic, social, and moral (al-Banna, 2002).

*e) Means*

In relation to the MB's means (*al-wasa'il*), al-Banna stressed the peaceful and gradual nature of the MB. Hence, he infused gradualism into the MB's structure and strategy. Ironically, although al-Banna wanted to achieve radical change in the norms and values of society, he stressed that this change should happen through gradual and peaceful ways. Moreover, he repudiated the use of violence by the Special Apparatus's members (al-Tanzim 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 plan. Al-Banna believed that without recasting an individual's identity, any attempt to pursue change would be superficial and ineffective (al-Banna, 2002, p.189). 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” (al-Banna, 2002, p.188). Moreover, al-Banna identified several generic tools for the MB: deep faith; precise organization; and uninterrupted work (al-Banna, 2002, p.161). Specifically, al-Banna set three explicit tools for the MB to achieve its goals: first, to propagate the Islamic call (*daw'a*) among people through persuasion; second, to select those who are willing to embrace and advocate the MB's ideology and ideas; 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 (al-Banna, 2002, p.336).

#### *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 for the MB to achieve its objectives, a sequence of stages should be followed. He outlined three main stages: first, to preach and disseminate the MB's ideology and reach out to all people; second, to recruit supporters, build the movement, and mobilizes the followers; and third, to implement, work, and produce actions (al-Banna, 2002, p.178). However, al-Banna asserted that these stages should not be segregated but should run concurrently in order to ensure the MB's survival 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 comply 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 (Munson, 2001).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Munson points out the MB had over 2,000 branches throughout Egypt with an active membership of 300,000-600,000 by 1949 (Munson, 2001, p.489).

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 (al-Banna, 2002, p.101).

Regardless of the viability of these steps, they entail significant symbolic power which enables the MB’s leadership to preserve the movement’s coherence and dynamism. First, they underscore the bottom-up approach of pursuing change: reformulating individuals’ identities is 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 goals. Third, they foster a sense of commitment and obligation among members who remain keen to achieve these goals. 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 or otherwise of the movement’s performance or question its leadership as to what stage the movement is at. Accordingly, neither al-Banna nor any of his successors acknowledged how much time each stage would take to be fulfilled.

Nevertheless, four crucial points require to be stressed regarding the *jama’a* paradigm. First, this paradigm is a social construct that has been developed over time. Hence, 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.<sup>35</sup> Second, the paradigm is amenable and elastic rather than a rigid structure. True, al-Banna sought to make this paradigm as vigorous 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 social interactions that took place within the MB. Al-Banna was keen to listen to the views of his followers while taking decisions through the *shura* (consultation) mechanism, which is why many MB members accepted and advocated the paradigm. Fourth, the concepts and terms of the *Jama'a* paradigm are broad and sometimes elusive as al-Banna was inclined to use them interchangeably. For instance, 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 identity.

#### **4.4.2. Activating the MB's Identity in Everyday Life**

Over the course of the 1930s and the 1940s, al-Banna consolidated the identity of the MB. The rapid growth of the movement can be attributed not only to its sophisticated and potent social and organizational network but also to its distinctive identity created and imbued by al-Banna. One of the main goals of al-Banna was how to activate the MB's identity in the public sphere. According to Melucci, collective identity defines the capacity of collective actor to act autonomously (Melucci, 1996). This autonomous propensity is drawn from two related dimensions: the movement's self-identification; and the recognition of this identification by other actors. Moreover,

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<sup>35</sup> The fifth annual conference was a turning point in the MB's history for many reasons. First, it was the first inclusive conference for the MB's members following four regional conferences held during the 1930s in Ismailia, 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 (Munson 2001). 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 (al-Banna, 2002, p.165). More importantly, al-Banna revealed the political ambitious and aspirations of the MB and how they would be accomplished (Bayumi, 1981, p. 146).

Taylor and Whittier point out that collective identity consists of three interrelated processes: the construction of group *boundaries* that establish differences with the dominant groups; *consciousness* or interpretive frameworks that emerge out of challenging the group's struggle to define and realize its interests; and the *politicization of everyday life* through use of symbols and everyday actions to restructure the existing system of domination (Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p.173).

The *jama'a* paradigm provides the MB with the essential patterns of self-identification and draws its boundaries with other political and social agents. As discussed previously, al-Banna sought to distinguish the MB from other Islamic associations not only through a strong organizational and social base but also by creating a new competitive model for identity that could encompass all Egyptians. However, al-Banna was also keen not to provoke tensions with other Islamic and political forces. Thus, he highlighted a set of recommendations that the MB members should embrace in order to avoid any confrontation with potential adversaries. These rules revolved around seven guidelines: 1) avoid the jurisprudence (*fiqhi*) differences with other Islamic groups; 2) keep away from the influence of the elites and celebrities; 3) keep away from political parties and religious associations; 4) take gradual steps and emphasize the education of members; 5) stress the practical aspect of the Islamic Call and employ propaganda and publicity; 6) recruit and focus on the youth; and 7) expand the organizational and social network of the MB in rural and urban areas (al-Banna, 2002, p.176).

These regulations demarcated the boundaries between the MB and other groups that challenged the status quo. It kept the movement away from debilitating conflicts that would deflect it from achieving its main goals. In addition, al-Banna's tracts and speeches had a profound impact, creating a sense of distinctiveness based on the 'we' against the 'them'. More importantly, this process of differentiation was impossible without al-Banna's ability to politicize everyday life. Therefore, by the end of the 1930s, the MB overshadowed other Islamic societies inside and outside Egypt and had become the leading political force in the Islamic arena. Politics was a vital arena in which to

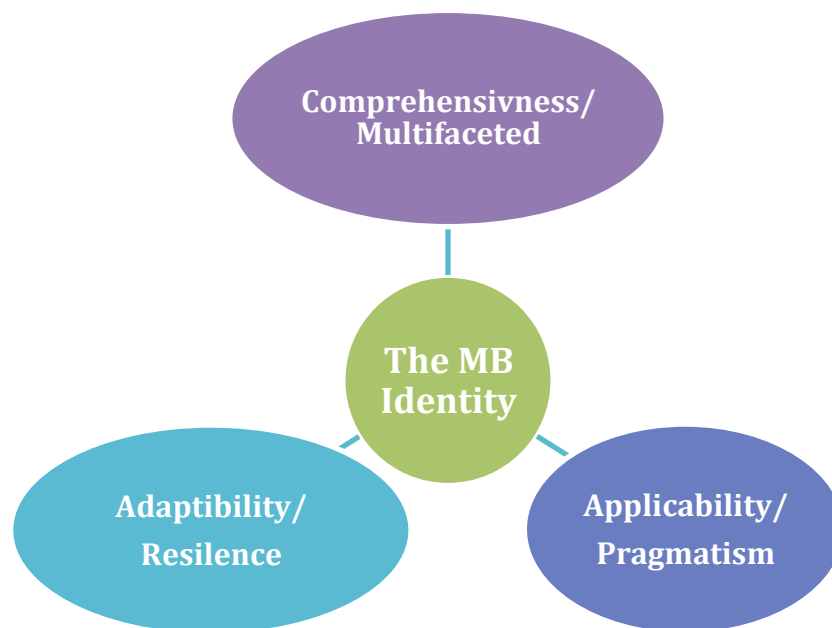
manifest its emerging identity. However, its involvement in politics alarmed political opponents who sought to undermine or contain its increasing influence (Daly, 1998).

However, to maintain the vibrancy of MB's identity, al-Banna sought to infuse it with the notion of Islamic identity: *al-fikra al-islamiyya*. Indeed, al-Banna regularly used the MB and Islamic identity interchangeably. More significantly, he was inclined to invoke Islamic history to strengthen his claims. For instance, al-Banna compared the founding of the MB with the emergence of Islam in the 7th century. By invoking Islamic history, al-Banna created a sense of religious and emotional commitment among adherents. He stressed that the MB should follow in the footsteps of the Prophet's era by propagating the Islamic call secretly before advocating it publically. Thus, the basic level through which to disseminate the MB ideology is what al-Banna termed the individualistic call (*al-da'wa al-faridiyya*) (al-Banna, 2002). Moreover, in his tract, "To Youth", al-Banna dubbed the MB as the "call of Islam in the 14th Hijri century" (al-Banna, 2002, p.99). He constantly amalgamated the Islamic call with the MB's ideology. For instance, in the epistle "Our Call in a New Phase", al-Banna claimed that the MB has two unique characters, a divine and a universal call (*da'wa rabaniyya wa 'alamiyya*) (al-Banna, 2002, p.125). In an utter tone, al-Banna stated, "Our idea is purely Islamic; its basis is Islam from which it derives its entity and identity and for which it strives; its main concern is to raise its word high. It only accepts its system and leadership and only obeys its instructions" (al-Banna, 2002, p.99).

However, al-Banna was aware that he should not make the alignment of two identities unique to the MB. He recognized the attempts by other Islamic associations to employ a similar approach to attract individuals and legitimize their cause. Therefore, he emphasised that the MB was not creating a new version of Islam, but it was a different comprehension of Islam as an inclusive and total system for everyday life (al-Banna, 2002). The move to avoid any potential disputes with Islamic associations over the exclusive use of Islamic reference was an intelligent one by al-Banna. Therefore, unlike later radical Islamist movements, al-Banna and the MB never questioned people's

beliefs and faith. He recognized that anyone was a Muslim if he/she confessed belief in God and his Prophets and performed the religious duties (Commins, 1994, p.135).

In order to make that alignment possible and plausible, al-Banna had to internalize the notion of Islamic identity into the MB's construction and ideology. Thus he implanted 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 identity to become multifaceted, resilient, and pragmatic (see Figure 5).



**Fig. 6 the characteristics of the MB's identity**

Thus, the emphasis on the entirety of Islam translated into the MB's vibrant and multi-faceted character. The result of this inclusiveness was a broad and generic definition of the MB espoused by al-Banna. He defined 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” (al-Banna, 2002, p.174). At a glance, this multi-faceted definition reveals the persistent tendency of al-Banna to portray the MB as an inclusive movement appropriate for all purposes; a one size fits all

organization. He described the MB as “a comprehensive movement that contains all reform meanings” (al-Banna, 2002, p.174). 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 comprehensiveness has been overwhelmingly employed by al-Banna’s successors. For instance, Mohamed Badie, the current General Guide of the MB, asserts that the MB views Islam as a comprehensive system encompassing all aspects of life (Badie, 2011). He states, “The MB does not differentiate between religion and politics, it views Islam as an inclusive system that 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” (Badie, 2011). More importantly, this inclusiveness is embedded in the internal structure of the MB, which has many sections that combines religious, political, social, and economic affairs together.

On the notion of adaptability, the MB has a flexible and resilient code of identity. It is clear that al-Banna recognized the obstacles that would face the MB. Thus, he stressed the need for true believers and strong defenders of the MB’s cause. Hence, al-Banna set four conditions for those who sought to be qualified to spread the MB’s call (*da’wa*): 1) to be good educators (*du’at*); 2) to be well educated and well equipped (materially, spiritually, and financially); 3) to be properly trained; and 4) to be a specialist in a specific field of *da’wa* (El-Ghazali, 2000, p.217).

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 *da'wa* is crucial to achieve the MB's goals. Thus, the MB established many economic and charity organizations during the 1930s and 1940s (al-Banna, 2002).

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 one interviewee put it, "I joined the MB because, in addition to its Islamic character, it provides me with guidelines I need in my daily life" (Ghorab, interview, 2011).

The characteristics imbued by al-Banna have given the MB a remarkably resilient identity that can help it counter different political contexts. Furthermore, in order to maintain its vibrant and coherent identity, al-Banna articulated an intensive and gradual process of socialization and education (*tarbiyya*) which each member of the MB has to go through to become an *ikhwani*.

#### **4.5. CONCLUSION**

This chapter reveals the role of Hasan al-Banna in articulating the master frames of the MB's identity. It traces the genesis of al-Banna's identity and how this influenced the MB. It notes that al-Banna's decision to establish the MB was driven by different factors. However, the salient factor was al-Banna's desire to revive and activate the Islamic identity in everyday life. Hence, al-Banna envisioned the Islamic identity as a set of values and norms that should prevail in everyday life.

In addition, this chapter examines how al-Banna formulated the MB's (*the jama'a*) paradigm, which was infused with the movement's structure and ideology. It explains how the *jama'a* paradigm produced the underpinnings of the MB's identity and how al-Banna developed a pattern of identity for the MB based on different dimensions. Al-Banna aptly synthesized these dimensions to weave a distinctive and resilient identity for the MB. However, in order to activate the MB's identity in the public sphere, al-Banna sought to amalgamate it with the Islamic identity and to differentiate it from that of other Islamic associations. The next chapter will show how the MB could benefit from the sense of collectivity that was created by al-Banna in maintaining members' commitment and loyalty.

**Chapter Five**  
**IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN EVERYDAY LIFE:**  
**HOW TO BE AN *IKHWANI* AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

**5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the process of identity construction within the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in everyday life. It tackles the inner processes of identity formation of MB members. It seeks to answer two key questions: how does the MB select and recruit its members or how does one become an *ikhwani*? And how does the MB consolidate and strengthen the identity of its members, or what does it mean to be an *ikhwani*? The aim of this chapter is to reveal the impact of the recruitment and selection processes of MB members on the construction of their identity. It is argued that affiliation and membership in the MB is a complex, yet meaningful, process that plays a profound role in creating and consolidating the MB identity. As a social movement, the MB always seeks to internalize its ideology, norms, and code of values within a member's mind-set and personality. This internalization process starts once the individual opts to join the movement and continues until they become fully-fledged members.

Furthermore, this chapter contends that the socialization process (*tarbiyya*) that takes place within the MB has a significant impact on the content and the strength of the MB identity. It spurs the identification process within the movement and creates cohesiveness and solidarity among members. The more the individuals align themselves with the MB's ideology, objectives, and norms, the more their identity becomes coherent and solid. In addition, the socialization process stimulates members' willingness to become more deeply involved in the MB's collective action regardless of any risks it might entail.

The MB's multi-tiered system of membership plays a pivotal role in reinforcing members' identity. It is through this system that the MB selects, scrutinizes, and consolidates the member's identity. Moreover, since the MB operates within an

authoritarian environment, this membership system safeguards the movement from infiltration and enables it to sustain its political and social activism.

Furthermore, the recruitment and promotion process within the MB enhances its ability to generate solidarity and commitment among members. It creates a sense of self-commitment (*iltizam*) among individuals who become keen to sacrifice their time, effort, money, and sometimes lives, to achieve the MB's objectives. More importantly, it enables the movement to create a set of norms and codes that should be followed and respected by members. Through setting standards and norms for membership and promotion with the MB, the leaders can control and reconstruct adherents' identity. Hence the movement can preserve its internal coherence and ensure its survival.

Since this study contends that the MB identity is not an abstract or a given but rather a fluid and dynamic social construct, the MB tends to encourage individuals' motivation in the recruitment process. MB leaders and cadres are heavily involved in social interactions with different social strata to expand the social base of the movement. They seek to reach out to individuals from diverse social and economic backgrounds in rural and urban areas. Hence recruitment and membership is dependent on the MB's communication and interaction with individuals in everyday life. The epicentre of these interactions is social networks, such as kinship, friends, neighbourhoods, universities, and mosques. The more intensively MB cadres reach out into society, the more the MB's social presence is entrenched. Moreover, the process of recruitment and manufacturing the MB's identity is contingent upon the alignment with Islamic identity. The more the MB internalizes Islamic norms and values within its structure, the more its members become keen to participate in any collective action regardless of the consequences.

However, before we proceed in explaining the mechanisms and tools of recruitment within the MB, it should be noted that this study demonstrates how 'institutional identity' is 'infused' to membership cadres in order to sustain and consolidating. In other words, participants do not determine the identity but the institutional identity determines their identity formation. Therefore, the study will

examine how the MB could reshape individuals' identity in order to be part of the *jam 'a* paradigm that was explained in chapters three and four.

## **5.2. RECRUITMENT, IDENTITY, AND PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

The abundant literature on social movements enhances the understanding of the relationship between identity and collective action. Many studies focus on the relationship between: culture and collective action (Tilly, 1978; Calhoun, 1994; Hunt, 1994; Johnston and Klandermans, 1995; Benford and Snow, 2000); identity and modes of mobilization and participation (Snow and Benford, 1986; Tarrow, 1994; McAdam and Snow, 1997); interests and the incentives of individuals (their rational calculations) and participation in collective action (Gamson, 1975; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Cohen, 1985); and between grievances and collective identity (Hunt 1994; Laraña, Johnston et al., 1994).

However, despite the contributions of this literature, it is mainly concerned with investigating the impact of identity on collective action but not the other way around. Theorists of social movements sought to answer the question: to what extent can collective identity stimulate and foster collective action? However, they disregard the impact of participation in collective action on an individual's identity. It was social psychologists who focused attention on the impact of participation in collective action on the construction of individuals' identity (Drury and Reicher, 2000; Huddy, 2001; Klandermans, Sabucedo et al. 2002; Drury, Reicher et al. 2003; Strümer, Simon et al. 2003). The seminal works of Strümer, Reicher, Drury, and Klandermans provide ample empirical evidences on the pivotal relationship between an individual's participation and collective identity construction and vice versa. For example, Strümer's data show that participation and collective action shapes collective identity (cited in Klandermans, Sabucedo et al., 2002, p.239). Moreover, Klandermans and his colleagues point out that membership in identity organizations has a profound impact on an individual's

participation in the movement's activities (Klandermans, Sabucedo et al. 2002, p.238).<sup>36</sup> They assert that protest participation is more likely among people with a 'strong' collective identity (Klandermans, Sabucedo et al. 2002, p.235). Their assumption is based on the self-identification process that occurs within social movements. The more participants identify themselves with the movement's aims and norms, the more likely they are to participate in its collective activities (Klandermans, Sabucedo et al. 2002, p.240). More significantly, Klandermans' work suggests that the relationship between both variables (willingness to participation and identification process) is causal. According to their findings, "identity processes stimulate action preparedness and that action preparedness generates action participation. Action participation, in turn, fosters someone's sense of identity" (Klandermans, Sabucedo et al., 2002, p.248).

Building on these insights, Simon, Stürmer, Loewy, and Jörger took Klandermans' findings a step further to probe individual motivation and willingness to participate in social movements (Stürmer, Simon et al., 2003). Based on Klandermans' Expectancy-value model,<sup>37</sup> Simon and his colleagues have developed a Dual-Pathway model which postulates that participation in social movements is driven by two interlinked factors: an individual's rational calculation of participation (costs and benefits); and an individual's identification with others in the social movement (Stürmer,

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<sup>36</sup> Klandermans and his colleagues have built their insights on the standard work of Tajfel and Turner (1979) on social identity. According to the latter, collective identity has three components: a *cognitive* component that refers to the process of categorization; an *evaluative* component that refers to the assessment of the group's position relative to that of other groups; and an *affective* component that refers to the degree of attachment to the group or category. Klandermans and colleagues added a fourth component: the behavioural or the participation in identity organizations (Klandermans, Sabucedo et al. 2002, 238).

<sup>37</sup> Klandermans derives his 'Expectancy-value' model from psychology theories about motivations, attitudes, choices, and decisions. Embedded in social psychology, this model refers to the relationship between individuals' behaviours and expectations. It argues that individuals decide to participate in social movements according to their expectations. Klandermans asserts that, based on their expectations about the behaviour of others, people assess the probability of success and their own contribution to it (Klandermans, 1984, p.585). According to Klandermans, this assumption is derived from the psychological notion that the motivation for a certain behaviour is a function of the expectation that it will yield certain outcomes and the values of those outcomes (Klandermans, 1984, p.584).

Simon et al. 2003, p.71).<sup>38</sup> They point out that calculation and collective identification processes can make unique contribution to the willingness to participate in social movements' activities (Stürmer, Simon et al., 2003, pp.79-80). However, the main shortcoming of the Dual-Pathway model, which is recognized by its proponents, lies in the scope of its validity. The model can work effectively in the case of small and in-groups (e.g., groups concerning equal rights, antidiscrimination laws) but not with large and more diverse ones (Stürmer, Simon et al., 2003, p.80).

In an attempt to overcome these drawbacks, Simon has extended the scope of the Dual-Pathway model by moving it from social psychology to the political realm (Simon, 2011). He also reveals the operational role that collective identity can play in stimulating participation. Building on his previous work with Klandermans on the Politicized Collective Identity (PCI) (Simon and Klandermans, 2001)<sup>39</sup>, Simon examines the political tendency of minorities to be engaged in social movements to pursue social change. He points out that collective identity is functioning as a mediator (the meso-level) between social structures (the macro-level) that affect individuals and individuals' perceptions, feelings, and motivations that affect their participation in social movements (the micro-level). According to Simon, collective identity connects the individual and the social (Simon, 2011, p.139). Furthermore, Simon contends that participation in the activities of social movements strengthens collective identity which in turn empowers and fosters the willingness to generate collective action (Simon, 2011, p.143). However, despite its promising insights, Simon's work is limited to particular movements (minority and in-groups). In addition, its findings cannot be generalized out of its European context.

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<sup>38</sup> Stürmer and his colleagues have attempted to incorporate rational-choice models (collective and selective incentives, costs and benefits, interests and risks, etc.) and ideational models (framing, emotions, collective identity, etc.) to understand the reasons for participation in social movements.

<sup>39</sup> Simon and Klandermans have developed a theoretical model for the politicization of collective identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). It suggests that "people evince politicized collective identity to the extent they engage as self-conscious group members in a power struggle on behalf of their group knowing that it is the wider, more inclusive societal context in which this struggle has to be fought out" (Simon & Klandermans, 2001, p.319). Simon and Klandermans hold that for people to become involved in political protest on behalf of a group, the collective identity of that group must be politicized (Klandermans, Sabucedo et al., 2002, p.239).

Notwithstanding the significant contributions of Klandermans, Stürmer, Simon and others in enhancing understanding of the impact of collective identity on participation in social movements, they disregard the impact of recruitment mechanisms and strategies on the process of identity construction. Thus, to fill this scholarly gap, Reicher and Drury sought to illuminate the process of creating new identities through collective participation (Drury and Reicher, 2000; Drury, Reicher et al. 2003; Reicher and Drury, 2011). The seminal work of Drury and Reicher draws attention to the transformational dynamics that occur within crowds and social movements and lead to reconstructing an individual's identity (Drury, Reicher et al., 2003).<sup>40</sup> Moreover, in their recent work, Reicher and Drury (2011) extend the notion of transformational dynamics to examine the depth and strength of collective identity. Their starting point can be summed up in answering the question: why do people invest so much in the groups to which they belong and why do they respond so passionately to the fate of the group? According to Reicher and Drury, the changes that occur in an individual's identity as s/he becomes a part of a collective identity (the identification process) happens through three types of psychological transformations: 1) A *cognitive transformation* which occurs when people become members of a crowd and their thinking shifts from *personal identity* to *social (collective) identity*; 2) A *relational transformation* which results from the *cognitive transformation* when people stop redefining themselves as being the 'other' to become a part of the one's collective-self. This leads to a significant shift in social relations which can take two shapes: social validation and social solidarity; 3) An *affective transformation* which refers to the content and the meaning people give to their action and which is fundamentally derived from the previous two transformations (Reicher and Drury, 2011, pp.162-165). However, these transformation processes do not occur in a vacuum. They are usually affected by external factors and the context in

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<sup>40</sup>Drury and Reicher's study was a hallmark in crowd studies. They refuted the conventional notion about crowds' actions and behaviours as meaningless and irrational. In their work, Drury and Reicher use the term 'identity boundaries' which refers to the extent small groups or crowds can attract others to join their collective action. According to Drury and Reicher, this could happen through the transformation processes that occur intra- and inter-groups and lead to reformulating the sense of self-definition ((Drury, Reicher et al., 2003, p.32).

which the social movement operates. Hence, social networks play a pivotal role in facilitating the cognitive and perspective transformations. This happens through the socialization process that gradually reshapes an individual's orientation and consciousness (Passy, 2001).

This chapter contends that the socialization process that occurs within social movements plays a crucial role in identity construction. Hence, it seeks to explore the socialization process that happens in the MB, not from a psychological perspective such as Reicher, Drury, and Passy have done, but primarily from the social movements' perspective. Whereas Drury and Reicher focus most of their analysis on crowds and small groups, this study examines a mass, more organized and politicized movement. Whilst Drury and Reicher, along with other social psychologists, treat socialization as a spontaneous, and sometimes unconscious process, this study argues that this process is a deliberate social construct by MB leaders and cadres. By scrutinizing recruitment strategies, mechanisms, and targets, this study seeks to reveal the underpinnings of the identification process that takes place within Islamist movements.

### **5.2.1 Integrating Structural and Ideational Factors**

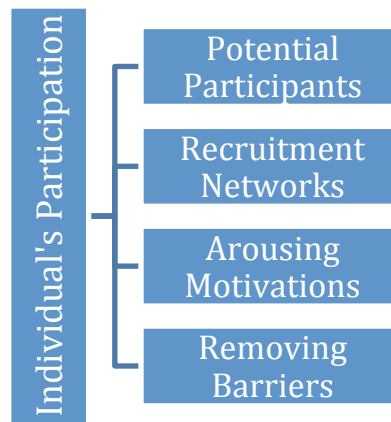
Several scholars have sought to integrate social psychologists' insights with those of sociologists of social movements in order to understand the process of identity construction in social movements (Gamson, 1992; Goodwin, Jasper et al. 2001; Klandermans, Sabucedo et al. 2002; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004; Azzi, 2011). This study aims to add to these efforts in two ways: 1) revealing the role of the recruitment and selection processes in fostering the identification process within social movements; and 2) examining the impact of this process on the content and strength of collective identity. The research thus seeks to go beyond the two predominant arguments on identity construction—the rational calculations of individuals and the identification within social movements—to investigate the underlying factors underpinning these two processes. Hence, the validity of these arguments is not discussed but rather how both processes of identity construction come to the fore are examined.

The best way to do this is to incorporate recruitment and participation mechanisms (the structural factors) with the identification process (ideational and transformational factors) that occur within social movements. The starting point is that the recruitment and mobilization dynamics enable the movement to identify its targeted audience, simulate an individual's motivation for participation, and expand its network. On the other hand, the socialization process reformulates an individual's ideas and perceptions, enhances their identification with the movement's norms and goals, and fosters and consolidates collective identity. Thereby, it creates meanings for an individual's participation. It is through both processes that a movement can promote its mobilization capabilities and consolidate its identity.

To achieve its objectives, this chapter will draw upon Klandermans and Oegema's participation model (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987) and on Passy's findings on the role of the socialization process and social networks in fostering an individual's participation (Passy, 2001). Klandermans and Oegema's model provides one of the most sophisticated syntheses on how social movements recruit and mobilize individuals. They suggest four steps or aspects of mobilization: 1) forming mobilization potential, which refers to people in society who could be mobilized by a social movement; 2) forming and activating recruitment networks, which refers to the target audience of the movement; 3) encouraging the motivation to participate, which entails identifying the costs and benefits of participation; and 4) removing barriers to participation, which means the ability of social movement to overcome and remove any obstacles to participation in the movement's activities (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987, pp.519-520). Importantly, these steps do not operate separately but rather combine in an interactive and intertwined manner.

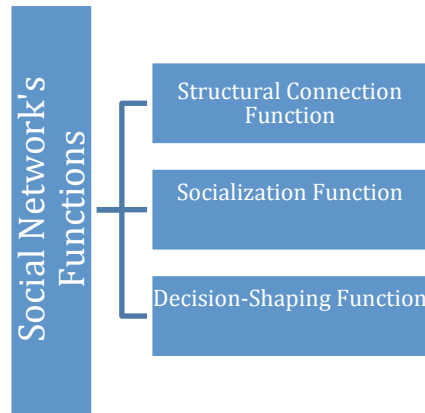
This chapter will extend the participation model in order to examine the recruitment and participation processes in the MB and their impact on identity construction. Accordingly, a number of changes will be made. First, although Klandermans and Oegema's model focuses on the structural factors of participation (incentives, motivations, barriers, etc.), this study will accentuate the role of ideational

influences that underlie an individual's participation in social movements. Second, whereas Klandermans and Oegema apply their model to a relatively small group (the Dutch Peace Movement), this study will extend the model to examine mass movements that contain various social, educational, and cultural backgrounds. Finally, while Klandermans and Oegema, as well as many other sociologists examine the mobilizational capacity of social movements at specific events (demonstrations, protests, campaigns, etc.), this study will examine the 'state' of this capacity over a long span.



**Fig. 7 Klandermans and Oegema's participation model**

As for the socialization and identification process, Passy and Giugni's seminal work on social networks provides instructive insights on how social networks facilitate and enhance an individual's participation. According to Passy social networks perform three fundamental functions in the process of participation: 1) A *structural-connection* function which refers to opportunities that can be created by social networks for recruitment and participation in a movement; 2) A *socialization* function which refers to the process of re-configuring an individual's identity; and 3) A *decision-shaping* function which refers to preferences and incentives that help individuals to decide to join the movement (Passy, 2001, p.173). However, this study will extend Passy's findings in order to examine the impact of the socialization process on identity consolidation and intensity.



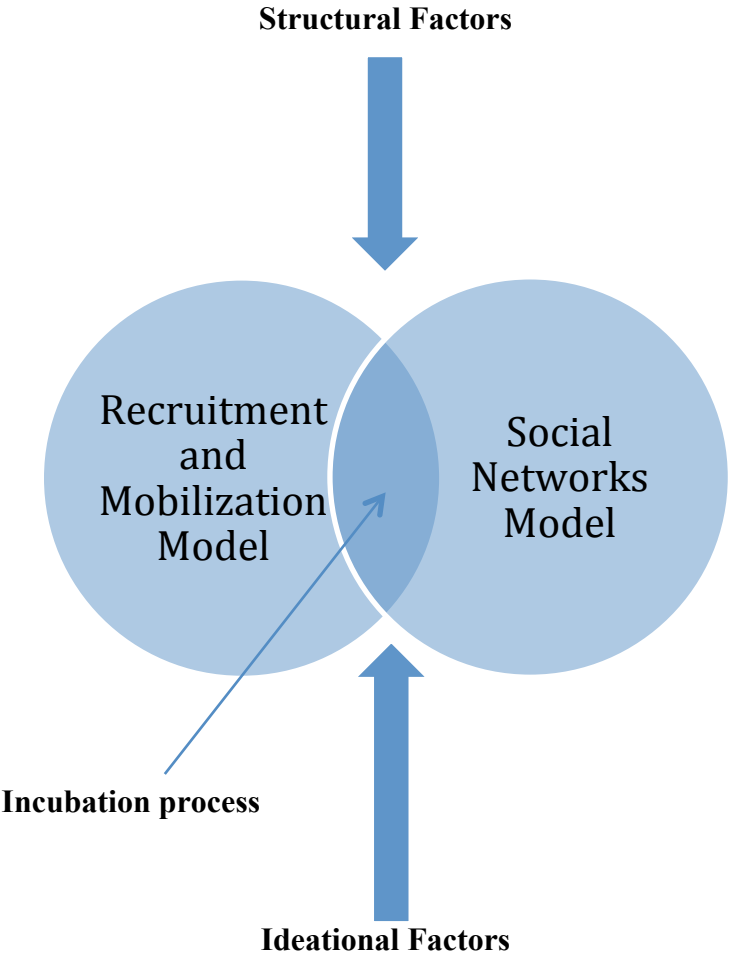
**Fig. 8 Passy's social networks model**

By incorporating Klandermans and Oegema's model with Passy's model, this study develops what can be dubbed the *incubation* model in which incubation is a higher and more intensive degree of socialization that aims to intensify and consolidate an individual's identity. It is through this process that social movements can infuse and place new members within its structures. In large and highly ideological movements, it is significantly difficult to align new members with a movement's ideology and norms without articulating a rigorous and disciplined process of identification. Whereas socialization focuses on changing an individual's perceptions and views, incubation aims to activate the new perceptions and identities in everyday life.

The incubation model fosters the identification process within social movements through three main functions: 1) align members with movement's ideology, objectives, and norms; 2) foster their commitment and loyalty to the movement's leadership; and 3) preserve the movement's cohesion and consistency. This can happen through adopting a rigorous and disciplined system of membership.

Many Islamist movements tend to incubate their members for a period of time before permitting them to become full-fledged cadres. Hence, these movements adopt a multi-level system of membership. The rationale behind this system is four-fold. First, it accustoms new members to the movement's rules and norms. For new members to

become committed to Islamist movements' ideology and cause, their perspectives and views need to be reshaped. Second, it creates cohesiveness and consistency between old and new members. Hence for members to move from one level to another, they have to meet a specific set of conditions and criteria. Third, it enables a movement to generate a sense of solidarity and commonality among members. As highly ideological movements, Islamist movements tend to act as a solid entity rather than a fragmented movement. Finally, this system safeguards Islamist movements from regime repression. Operating in a repressive and authoritarian environment, Islamist movements tend to be cautious in selecting their members.



**Fig. 9 Incubation model and identity consolidation**

This study will apply the incubation model to the MB. It will examine how the MB selects and incubates its members. It is through the incubation process that the MB can recruit members, reshape their mind-set, and consolidate their identity. The more members are exposed to this process, the more their identity become intensified and strengthened. This model explains how the MB's recruitment and mobilization strategy encounters its socialization and identification process which results in consolidating the MB identity.

### **5.3. PARTICIPATION IN ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS**

Unlike most other social movements, membership and affiliation in Islamist movements is a complex, yet meaningful, process. Since re-shaping societal norms and values is a key objective for these movements, reformulating an individual's perceptions and ideas is of profound importance to the success of the movement. Hence the process of recruiting and attracting individuals to join Islamist movements constitutes an integral component of the process of reshaping their identity. It is in this process that Islamists strive to produce meaning constructions, create symbolic solidarity, and internalize their ideology and objectives within an individual's identity.

For Islamist movements, preaching (*da'wa*) is the main tool in recruiting and mobilizing members. Hence throughout the recruiting and mobilization process, the movements' leaders and cadres tend to align their practices and activities with Islamic norms and values. In addition, since reviving Islamic identity is a key objective of Islamist movements, selecting and recruiting new members is deemed to be a religious duty *per se* rather than only a mobilization tactic.

More importantly, Islamist movements allocate resources, mobilize individuals, and generate collective action not only to challenge or protest against the state or the political regime, as many of other social movements tend to do, but also, and more importantly, to disseminate its ideology and expand its social and religious network among a wider audience. For these movements, reshaping an individual's identity is a target *per se*. It is true that Islamist movements tend to employ social and economic

grievances to serve their mobilizational purposes; however, they do so not primarily to gain political power but more importantly to alter the existing system of values, norms and morality to one that is more Islamic. As Wickham points out, “the Islamist *da‘wa* tapped into [these] grievances and portrayed Islam as the means to fundamentally transform the conditions in which they were rooted” (Wickham, 2002, p.160). Hence, regardless of the reasons underlying an individual’s participation (interests, morals, motivations, emotions, etc.), the mode and the process whereby they are selected and socialized is crucial in re-formulating their identity.

In addition, operating within an authoritarian and repressive context, it is fundamentally important for Islamist movements to control the membership and recruitment process in order to prevent any penetration by security forces. Thus, they tend to pick their members carefully and cautiously. Hence the strategies and mechanisms of selecting, recruiting, and instilling individuals within the movement’s structures are profoundly vital for its survival strategy. Therefore, unlike other social movements, membership in Islamist movements is not available to all individuals. Those who seek to join the movement need to become highly committed and loyal to the movement’s ideology and leadership. Anyone who seeks to attain such a degree of commitment has to undergo an intensive and rigorous process of re-configuration to his/her mindset and behaviour in order to comply with the movement’s norms and codes of action. Moreover, those who decide to join Islamist movements tend to show willingness and readiness to pay the cost of affiliation to an opposition and, sometimes, illegal movements.

The influence of Islamist movements is pervasive among lower and middle classes. Hence, the mobilizational and recruitment capabilities target those who live in rural areas and in the impoverished suburban areas and outskirts of cities.<sup>41</sup> The movements rely heavily upon social networks of friends, kinship, and neighbours to

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<sup>41</sup> Despite the long-standing validity of this argument, it does not negate the ability of Islamists to penetrate the upper classes. The new Islamist rhetoric, particularly that which utilizes new technology, (e.g. the ‘televisionist’ Islam), has attracted many young Muslims who are western-educated and openly accept democratic values.

recruit new members (Munson, 2001, Wickham, 2002, Al-Awadi, 2004). The conventional venues to attract those members are mosques, schools, universities, and social gatherings. However, the ability of Islamists to capitalize in these social networks is contingent upon two factors. The first is to accompany their outreach strategy by preaching *da'wa* activities. Many of those who tend to join Islamists acknowledge their commitment and adherence to Islamic values. The second is to synthesize their activities with individual grievances and needs. Hence, one of the basic arguments that Islamists use is their advocacy for social justice. They tend to link their religious and social activities to the broader crisis of unfairness and corruption in society at large (Wickham, 2002).

Importantly, membership and affiliation in Islamist movements does not require individuals to break their previous social ties (Wickham, 2002). Rather, Islamists draw upon these ties to attract and recruit new members. They employ social interactions among friends, relatives, and peers to reshape an individual's perceptions and ideas. The appeal of Islamist movements stems from the fact that they are a part of the social fabric. They do not seek to fragment this fabric but rather to re-weave it into an Islamic mode. Hence, the impact of Islamist movements increases in cases of ethnic and socially divided communities as they provide a link that transcends local loyalties.

#### **5.4. THE ART OF RECRUITING: HOW THE MB SELECTS ITS MEMBERS**

Despite its populist character, membership and affiliation of the MB is not an easy task. The recruitment and mobilization process in the MB has diverse, disciplined, and complex steps and procedures. Since the MB is a cross-cutting movement that targets different individuals from a wide spectrum of social, educational, and economic backgrounds, the movement is keen to integrate its individuals within its organizational network. Hence to ensure congruence and cohesiveness among its members, the MB adopts an inclusive process of recruitment and membership. This process provides a code of values and norms by which all members have to abide. In addition, it generates a sense of solidarity and commitment among members.

One of the significant differences between the MB and other social movements lies in its membership pattern. Whereas membership in most social movements is open to all individuals, it is highly selective in the MB. Those who seek to join the movement need to align their behaviours and actions with the movement's rules and standards. Therefore, individuals do not join the MB but rather are selected by the movement. As one MB cadre puts it, "the movement selects its sons".<sup>42</sup>

The MB tends to scrutinize its members before they officially join the movement. This tendency reflects not only the religious character of the MB, which requires certain personal characteristics, but also reveals the cautious and vigilant character of the MB. The authoritarian environment in which it operates puts its members under relentless surveillance. Thus, the MB maintains a tight grip on its recruitment and selection process in order to avoid penetration by the security forces.

The recruitment and mobilization process of the MB can be dubbed as 'chasing the prey', which refers to its attempt to capitalize on the religious and cultural tendency of individuals. The movement's leaders and cadres strive to persuade individuals to join the movement through different means, such as religious propaganda, social services, educational leaflets, etc. However, the most fertile ground for recruiting members is through social networks, such as kinship, friendship, universities, and neighborhoods. MB cadres tend to permeate the private sphere of an individual and surround them with Islamic idioms and symbols in everyday life. With time, the targeted individual (the prey) comes under intense emotional, religious, and psychological influence which facilitates his/her attachment with the movement. More importantly, when they reach out into society, MB recruiters and cadres do not initially espouse their ideological and political affiliation. Their message revolves mainly around fostering Islamic teachings and principles in everyday life. However, this should not be taken as an implication that the MB deceives members, but rather that it shows its considerable ability to employ Islamic symbolism in attracting and recruiting new members.

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Salah Abdelhalim, a 35-year-old middle-rank cadre in the MB, on 26 December 2011.

For example, at the inception of the outreach process, MB recruiters tend to focus on propagating broad Islamic values and principles in society. After a short period of time, they gradually infuse the MB ideology alongside their proselytizing message. Those who show a salient religiosity and sympathy with the MB's cause become potential members. Once those potential members have been identified, MB cadres and recruiters chase them remorselessly until they officially join the movement; thereafter, a new course of recruitment starts. It should be noted that these mechanisms of recruitment and attracting new members would be discussed extensively later in this chapter.

Clearly, the chasing the prey tactic reflects the MB's tendency to select its members carefully. It enables the movement to detect and scrutinize an individual's religiosity before they are recruited. However, it is worth mentioning that not all MB members are targeted through this tactic. The tactic functions effectively with young people particularly school pupils and university students. However, adults are targeted with different tactics. Thus, the MB's recruitment process varies according to the targeted group. More importantly, this process is gradual and can last for years until individuals obtain fully-fledged membership of the MB.

The following section probes the recruitment process within the MB and how it works in everyday life.

#### **5. 4.1 How to be an *Ikhwani*: The Ripple Effect**

Proselytization or making *da'wa* is an integral activity of the MB and other Islamist movements. As Shaykh Abduelkhalik Al-Sherif, Head of Disseminating the Call Section (Nashr al-Da'wa) in the MB, puts it, "the MB has been created for nothing except *da'wa*".<sup>43</sup> However, *da'wa* also is a fundamental tool for recruiting new members. Individuals join the MB not only because of its social character but also as a result of its preaching and outreach activities. Hence the recruitment strategy of the MB can take the shape of proselytization.

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Abduelkhalik Al-Sherif on 5 April 2012.

The preachers (*du'at*)<sup>44</sup> act as recruiters who seek to propagate and disseminate the MB's ideology. More importantly, with repression and brutal security surveillance, making *da'wa* becomes the only way for the MB to communicate and reach out to its constituency. According to Al-Sherif, the MB has 140 preaching schools with at least 45,000 preachers from al-Azhar and other educational institutions.<sup>45</sup>

It should be noted that recruiters or *du'at* tend to align their preaching activity with Islamic values. As mentioned previously, al-Banna was keen to combine Islamic identity with the MB's ideology. Therefore, through reaching out into society, *du'at* tend to operate under the banner of Islam, not *ikhwan*. Hence, they tend to merge propagation with the MB's ideas, albeit in a subtle way. For instance, *du'at* tend to downplay their link with the MB while they are making *da'wa*. Hence, new members in the early stages can not distinguish if the preaching is promoting Islam or the MB's ideology.

Moreover, making *da'wa* is considered to be a religious duty that should be fulfilled by all members. According to Al-Sherif, each member in the MB should act as a preacher (*da'i*) in his family, among his friends, and with his work fellows.<sup>46</sup>

The MB's preaching activity has a ripple effect that helps to expand the movement's social and organizational boundaries. By capitalizing on individual connections and social networks, the MB can enlarge its umbrella to encompass various audiences. It seeks subtlety to influence the public's perception of its image. Therefore, recruiters tend to back up rhetoric with good deeds and act as true Muslims who are willing to sacrifice their time and efforts for the sake of the Islamic Call (*al-da'wa al-Islamiyya*).

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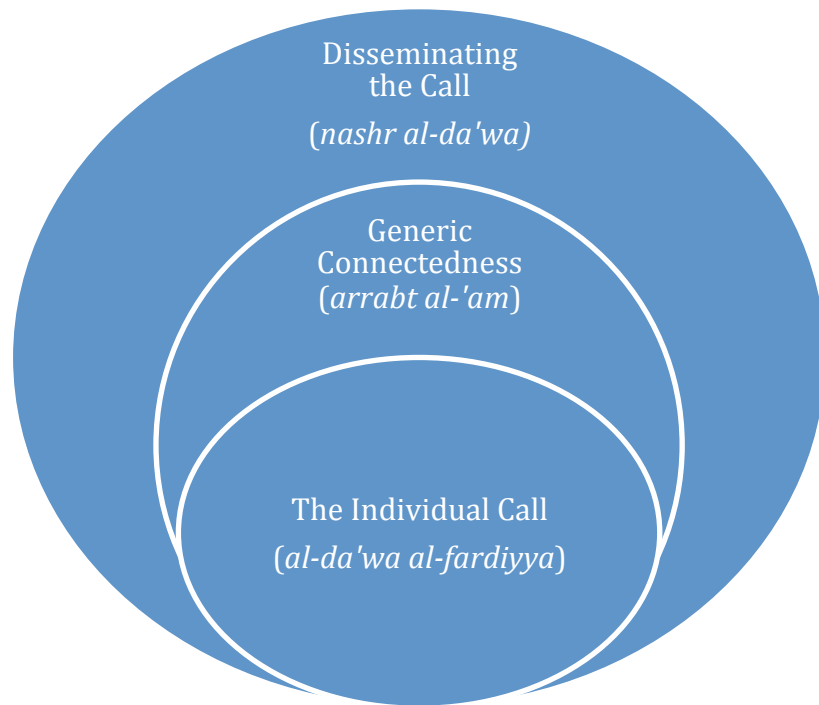
<sup>44</sup> *Du'at* (preachers) refers to religious activists who seek to proselytize and encourage Islamic faith among ordinary Muslims in everyday life. Traditionally, *du'ah* should acquire religious knowledge or education. However, most *du'at* in Islamist movements are not religiously educated but rather have a professional or secular education. Since the objective of Islamists' preaching is to attract and recruit new members to their movements, they tend to focus on the way and means of preaching or how to preach rather than on the content of their preaching.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Abduelkhalik Al-Sherif on 5 April 2012.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Abduelkhalik Al-Sherif on 5 April 2012.

More importantly, the recruitment process within the MB follows the proselytization model established by its founder, al-Banna, who highlighted three main phases for recruiting and attracting new members. The first is to disseminate and proselytize the MB's ideology amongst all people. The second is to select and recruit adherents among those people. The third is to implement the MB's ideas and goals (al-Banna, 2002, p.178). According to al-Banna, these stages should be followed strictly. Thus the recruitment process of the MB goes through three interlinked stages or circles. The first is the dissemination stage, termed Disseminating the Call (*nashr al-da'wa*), which aims to reach the entire society. The second is the Generic Connectedness circle (*arrabt al-'am*) that targets the narrow circle in which each recruiter operates. The third is the Individual Call (*al-da'wa al-fardiyya*) which targets those who can be potential members of the MB.

These stages constitute the beginning of the full-fledged membership in the MB, highlighting the complexity and multi-facetedness of the MB's recruitment mechanism. However, it is worth mentioning that these stages or recruitment circles are not rigidly applied. While recruiters should respect the sequence, actual recruitment relies on an individual's ability to comprehend the MB's ideology. For instance, some *du'at* might start their recruitment activity in stage two, Generic Connectedness; however, they cannot jump from stage one *nashr al- da'wa* to the third *al-da'wa al-fardiyya*.



**Fig. 10 Circles of recruitment in the MB: the ripple effect**

#### **5.4.1.1 Disseminating the call (*nashr al-da'wa*)**

The key objective of the MB in this stage is to diffuse its ideology among the public in general. This stage launches the first level of communication between the MB and society. It also aims to reshape the image of the MB among ordinary people. Eslam Ramadan, a 28-year-old member, points out, “at this stage, we seek to improve the image of the MB among people and not to ask them to join the movement. It is our very basic job.”<sup>47</sup> The benefits of this step are twofold: to establish the initial connection between MB recruiters and the public; and to change any negative stereotypes formulated by the regime or other political and religious adversaries against the MB. According to Mustafa Mashhur (d. 2002), the fifth General Guide (*al-murshid al-'am*) of the MB, this stage is essential as it is the first step on the MB’s path and any deviation in achieving its objectives can lead to negative consequences (Mashhur, 1989, p.22).

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Eslam Ramadan on 11 January 2012.

The tools to achieve the objective of dissemination are through media campaigns, mosques, and public lectures. However, throughout this stage, MB recruiters tend to keep their affiliation to the MB hidden. Hence they are seen to operate as individuals rather than as members of the MB. They give talks, lectures, and endorse social activities not in the name of the MB but rather for the sake of Islam. Moreover, this stage invokes al-Banna's notion of the importance of spreading the MB's ideas in both rural and urban areas.<sup>48</sup>

#### **5.4.1.2 The Generic Connectedness (*arrabt al-'am*)**

The second stage or circle in the MB's recruitment strategy is called the Generic Connectedness (*arrabt al-'am*). In this stage, recruiters seek to convey the movement's message and ideas to a more specific audience. Recruiters move from the broader society to specific networks and segments of society. This circle includes potential members who can with a degree of effort join the MB. According to Klandermans and Oegema potential participants of a social movement are "those who take a positive stand toward a particular social movement" (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987, p.519). In this case, among those who were targeted in the first stage any who show significant inclinations towards the MB's ideology and cause become the focus of recruiters. Once they have been identified by the recruiters, new tactics to attract them are applied.

This stage detects the potential members of the MB. Recruiters try to infiltrate the private sphere of individuals with a specific message on the MB's ideology and objectives. However, the aim of this stage is not to recruit new members but rather to foster a relationship with potential members. This can happen by using different means, such as organizing soccer competitions, giving gifts, distributing leaflets, picnics, etc. According to Sherif Ayman, a 26-year-old member, these means create an intimate relationship between new members and MB cadres.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> In the Fifth Conference tract, al-Banna stressed the importance of spreading the MB's ideology throughout the country in villages and cities (al-Banna, 2002, p.120).

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 12 January 2012.

The fertile ground for this stage is social networks, such as family, relatives, friends, neighbours, and work colleagues. These informal networks facilitate the recruitment and mobilization process of the MB. Klandermans and Oegema point out, “networks condition whether people become targets of mobilization attempts. The more a movement’s reach-out networks are woven into other organizations, the more people are reached by mobilization attempts” (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987, 520). Thus, MB recruiters strive to stretch this circle to its maximum through kinship and friendship relationships. Eslam Ramadan points out, “this circle is the closest to each *akh* (brother). We do not seek to recruit new members but rather to create sympathizers to the Islamic idea (*al-fikra al-Islamiyya*). This circle consists of our relatives and friends.”<sup>50</sup> For MB members, it is a duty at this stage to avow the MB’s character and ideas in everyday life to those who are not familiar with it. This mirrors al-Banna’s notion of *nashr al-fikra* or spreading the word of the MB among the public (al-Banna, 2002, p.178).

#### **5.4.1.3 The individual call (*al-da‘wa al-fardiyya*)**

The third stage of the MB’s mobilization and recruitment strategy is termed the Individual Call (*al-da‘wa al-fardiyya*) and is the most important stage in the MB’s strategy to recruit new members. It aims directly to encourage individuals to join the MB. Thus it constitutes the core of al-Banna’s mobilization strategy. He stated, “at this stage we should select protagonists, prepare the soldiers, and mobilize supporters from those who have been reached out to” (al-Banna 2002: 178). Unlike the preceding stages, the MB tends to make its ideology and objectives visible to potential members. In short, this stage is deemed the threshold of the real membership in the MB.

According to Islamists, the Individual Call<sup>51</sup> refers to the process of reaching out to ordinary Muslims to alter and transform their perceptions, ideas, and behavior to become more Islamic. Abd al-Halim al-Kinani, one of the MB middle-rank leaders,

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Eslam Ramadan on 11 January 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Another use of this term is the Special Call (*da‘wa khasa*) which refers to a personal connection between the recruiter and a potential member; the former aims to change the latter’s ideas and perceptions.

defines the Individual Call as, “the direct and personal communication between two individuals: the preacher who seeks to make a significant transformation in others and the person or ‘the target’ who should be transformed to become more committed to Islam” (al-Kinani, 2007, p.15).

Clearly, al-Kinani’s definition of the Individual Call encompasses three key elements: first, it is a face-to-face connection between the MB recruiter and potential members. Second, the aim of this connection is primarily to alter an individual’s perceptions and views. Third, this connection happens under the banner of Islam which gives it a significant symbolic power. Moreover, for recruiters, Individual Call activities are considered a religious duty that should be fulfilled. Alaa Moharm, one of the MB’s recruitment leaders, points out that Individual Call is a tool to disseminate Islamic principles, not the MB’s ideology (Moharm, 2010, p.1).

In addition, members who seek to be involved in Individual Call activities should exhibit certain skills and characteristics. According Moharm, the recruiters should meet three main conditions: desire, ability, and understanding. Each of these elements is divided into two aspects. In terms of desire, the preacher (*da‘i*) should have the enthusiasm and the motivation to proselytize the Islamic call, while for ability, he also should also have the knowledge and skills to do so. The understanding aspect means that he should comprehend the internal and external environment that can affect his preaching activity (Moharm, 2010).

In terms of personal characteristics, Al-Sherif points out that *du‘at* should be: 1) passionate, 2) knowledgeable, 3) truthful, 4) patient, 5) rational and wise, and 6) outspoken and know how to reach out to people.<sup>52</sup>

#### ***5.4.1.3.1 Stages of the individual call: chasing the prey***

Because of its pivotal importance, the Individual Call attracts considerable attention within the MB. In this stage, the MB’s recruiters seek to reshape and alter the perceptions and mind-set of potential members. Hence they are heavily involved in

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Abduelkhaliq Al-Sherif on 5 April 2012.

meaning and symbolic production processes to convince individuals to join the MB. This process can be dubbed ‘chasing the prey’. It is a dynamic and intensive interaction process between two parties: the recruiter (the hunter) and the potential member (the prey). During this interaction, the former attempts to infiltrate the latter’s private sphere and to put him under persistent, but gradual, process of psychological and ideological change that should subsequently convince potential members to join the MB. The time involved in the intensive processes differs across individuals.

Throughout this process, the hunter surrounds the prey, with Islamic idioms, symbols, and norms in their everyday life. However, it is worth mentioning that this tactic does not require that a potential member break with his existing social relationships. Rather, it seeks to reshape the relationship between the potential member and the MB.

According to Mashhur, the Individual Call should go through six stages. The first is to detect the potential member. At this stage, the MB cadre (*da‘i*) builds a personal relationship with a potential member by using different means, such as gifts, home visits, frequent phone calls, etc. It is the job of the *da‘i* to detect and identify those individuals who might be inclined to embrace the MB’s ideology. Once detected, the MB cadre seeks to permeate the individual’s private sphere. According to Mashhur, this stage can take between three to four weeks.

The second stage is to stimulate and reinforce the Islamic faith within potential members. At this stage, recruiters move from individuals’ personal to the religious realm. Hence recruiters focus on leading potential members to fulfil their religious duties, i.e. rituals, prayers, reciting Quran, etc. They can use different tools to achieve this goal, such as video tapes, cassettes, Islamic books, etc. The prime aim of this stage is to trigger the transformation process within a potential member’s perceptions and behaviours. As Sherif Ayman describes how he has been touched at this stage, “I felt as if I started a new life or I am born again.”<sup>53</sup> According to Mashhur, this stage should last for around one month or six weeks.

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 12 January 2012.

The third stage of the Individual Call aims to instill the idea of Islamic comprehensiveness within a potential member's mind-set. Recruiters seek to interweave ideas with practices. Hence they focus on how a potential member acts as a true Muslim in his/her everyday life. To help the *du'at* to accomplish the goals of this phase, Mashhur recommends a list of readings that can help them, such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi's book, *The Comprehensiveness of Islam* (Shumuliyat al-Islam), and Abul Hasan Ali Nadawi's book, *What Has the World Lost with the Degradation of Muslims?* (Madha Khasr al-'lam Binhitat al-Muslimin). Mashhur suggests a month for this stage which should end when a potential member entirely succumbs to Islam in their everyday life.

The fourth stage is called 'the duty to work for Islam' and focuses on activating the political identity of a potential member. According to Mashhur, this can happen by connecting them with the state of Muslims around the world. The main task of recruiters at this stage is to spur the Islamic sentiment of potential members. Mashhur states, "the targeted person should become sympathetic with Muslims around the world, in Palestine, in Chechnya, in Kashmir, etc. and become eager to help and support them" (Mashhur 2004). The means to achieve this is through newspapers, Islamic conferences, and giving a potential member books that explain difficulties that face Muslims across the globe.

Thus, this stage seeks to create a sense of commitment and solidarity among towards the MB's cause. More importantly, it prepares a potential member to move from passivity to action. Hence Mashhur defines four main stages to be achieved before recruiters move to the next step. These are: 1) when the potential member becomes passionate and sympathetic with other fellow Muslims; 2) when he donates money to Muslim causes; 3) when he becomes active among his family, friends, and community; and 4) when he himself starts to preach and recruit others. In addition, Mashhur recommends a number of al-Banna tracts to help new members, such as *A Message to Youth* and *To What We Call People?*. This stage should last a month.

The fifth stage of the Individual Call is collective action. At this stage recruiters stress the fundamental role of collective action in achieving the MB's objectives. Hence

the main task is to spur individuals' motivation to take part in collective action. According to Mashhur, *du'at* should emphasize the importance of establishing the Islamic State as an ultimate goal for all Muslims and to persuade individuals to take part in achieving this vital goal. However, Mashhur draws a subtle link between achieving this goal and joining the MB. He states, "since establishing the Islamic state is the duty of all Muslims, the only way to achieve it is through joining a collective movement or '*jama'a*'" (Mashhur, 2004, p.1). He also highlights five standards to which MB members should commit: obedience; brotherhood; vigilance; sacrifice; and integrity.

The main objective at this stage is to create a self-disciplined member who will devote his life and time to the MB's cause. According to Mashhur, by the end of this stage, potential members should become fully committed and devoted to the MB's leadership and ideology. The reading list suggested by Mashhur at this stage is, Fathi Yakan's books, such as *What Does it Mean My Belonging to Islam?*, *Between Individuality and Collectiveness* and *The Path to the MB*. This phase should last for a month.

The last stage of the Individual Call is to encourage potential members to join the MB. Mashhur points out that the main goal of this stage is to make a potential member ask: which movement or group should I affiliate with to serve Islam? Mashhur stresses that the answer should direct a potential member to join the MB. To achieve this, Mashhur highlights six features of the movement: 1) it should be an Islamic movement that follows the path of the Prophet and seeks to establish the Islamic state; 2) the movement should believe in the comprehensiveness of Islam; 3) the movement should have branches around the world; 4) the movement should have a global experience in dealing with major issues; 5) the movement should be moderate and peaceful; and 6) the movement should have a well-established organization. Clearly, the movement that encompasses such features is the MB. Moreover, to help potential members to make their decision, Mashhur recommends more of al-Banna's tracts, such as *The Horizons of the Teachings*, *The Fifth Conference Tract* and *Brothers under the Banner of the Qur'an*.

Clearly, the Individual Call plays a vital role in enabling the MB to attract and recruit new members. Moreover, it creates an emotional and personal connection between a potential member and the movement. Many interviewees stress the role of the Individual Call in shaping their decision to join the MB. For instance, Sherif Ayman points out that he was recruited after he attended some activities in the neighbourhood. He states, “The Individual Call fosters human and faithful connection between members who act as Brothers.”<sup>54</sup>

**Table 1 Mashhur’s Blueprint of the Individual Call**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Tools</b>	<b>Time scale</b>	<b>The targeted outcome</b>
<i>1. Selection and acquaintance</i>	To select carefully a potential member	Personal connection, gifts, home visits, sports, phone calls, brotherhood	Three weeks	To familiarize a potential member with the MB
<i>2. Stimulating religious faith</i>	To create religious commitment and stimulate ethical and moral behaviour in everyday life	Islamic video tapes, cassettes, Islamic books, etc.	One month	To transform the behaviour and customs of a potential member
<i>3. Imbue the notion of Islamic comprehensiveness</i>	Infusing Islamic ideology in the mindset of potential member	Islamic books about the comprehensiveness of Islam and gifts	One month	A potential member should entirely succumb to Islam in everyday life
<i>4. The duty to work for Islam</i>	To politicize an individual’s identity	Attending conferences, participating in religious and public activities, etc.	6 weeks at least	To stimulate the Islamic sentiment within the potential member and connecting with the Islamic cause
<i>5. Collective Action</i>	To create a sense of responsibility and commitment within a potential	Involve more in organizational activities and test his obedience and commitment to the	A month	To reformulate the personality of a potential member to become more disciplined and oriented

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 12 January 2012.

	member	movement		by the movement's norms and standards
6. <i>Affiliating with the MB</i>	To encourage the potential member to join an Islamic movement	Participating in organizational activities and meet with senior leaders of the movement	A month	To become a member in the MB

Source: Mashhur, (2004, pp. 3-4)

Importantly, three aspects require to be taken into account regarding the stages of the Individual Call. First, since the Individual Call aims to alter and transform an individual's perceptions and behaviour, the time scale of the stages differs amongst potential recruits as it depends on the ability and the skills of the recruiter and the response of the potential member. Second, since it deals with human beings, the stages of the Individual Call are conducted in a gradual and subtle way. Hence the sequence is important. Third, and most important, in many cases potential members do not know or realize the significance of these stages. They move from one stage to another without realizing the difference between them. The symbolic power of the notion of the Islamic Call (*al-da'wa al-Islamiyya*) inspires potential members and spurs their religious commitment. They decide to join the MB for no other reason than to serve Islam. Thus, the more the recruiters align their activities with Islamic norms and principles, the more strongly potential members will become attracted to the MB and be involved in its activities regardless of the potential costs or risks it might entail.

In short, the Individual Call works as a 'laboratory' preparation for potential members before they become fully ready to join the MB. It internalizes the movement's ideology and norms within potential members. After selecting them to join the MB, potential members go through another intensive process of identification to consolidate their identity.

#### **5.4.2 Social Networks and the MB: *Ikhwanizing* the Private Sphere**

The importance of social networks in mobilizing and generating collective action is indisputable. Social networks embody the reservoir that social movements employ to

allocate resources, recruit new members, and create collective action. However, the most important function of social networks lies in its impact on an individual's identity. According to Passy, social networks have three key functions: networks offer participation opportunities to individuals (structural function); they shape individual preferences before an individual decides to join a movement (decision-shaping function); and they socialize and build individual identities (cultural function) (Passy, 2001, p.173).

For the MB, social networks are fundamental to achieve these three functions. The MB heavily capitalizes on different types of social networks, such as kinship, friendship, neighbourhoods, schools, universities, and mosques. As a cross-cutting movement, the MB always seeks to extend its network in both rural and urban areas. Hence it has different types of recruiters who can adapt to the different type of networks.

In addition, the organizational structure of the MB contains different outreach committees depending on the targeted individuals and their age. For instance, in each district office there is a 'children' committee (*bara'm*) that is responsible for attracting and recruiting young members. Ayyash highlights that he was recruited at the age of eight by what he calls 'cub entertaining activities' conducted by the MB's committee in his neighbourhood.<sup>55</sup> The main venues of recruiting children are mosques and schools. The MB tends to target children by organizing different activities, e.g. Quran lessons, educational quizzes, fun ceremonies, etc. They interweave their ideology within the materials provided in such occasions. They also employ their cadres who work as teachers in recruiting students in early age to embrace the MB norms and ideas.

Moreover, the MB has an active division responsible for attracting and recruiting students called *Maktab al-Talaba* (Students Office). It aims to reach out and recruit students at schools and universities. For example, Sherif Ayman emphasized that he was recruited through the activities of the Students Committee at the university.<sup>56</sup> Many of those interviewed for this research affirmed the important role of the Student Office in recruiting new members. Historically, the MB expanded its network through this office

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash on 12 January 2012.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 12 January 2012.

during the 1930s and 1940s, particularly in Cairo and Alexandria. At the time, universities were one of the most active centres for protest against British authorities and the Egyptian government. However, the role of the MB at universities waned during 1950s and 1960s as a result of the confrontation between the MB and President Nasser's regime. During the 1970s and 1980s, the MB restored its strong presence at universities. Since then, schools and universities have become the main source of MB recruitment and mobilization. Not surprisingly, many of the MB's current leaders were recruited during the 1970s and 1980s, including Abdelmoniem Abuelfotuh,<sup>57</sup> Essam Al-Eryan, Mohamed Morsi and Helmi El-Gazar.

The main tools to spread the MB's ideology among students are by distributing flyers and leaflets, providing subsidies to poor students who come from rural areas to settle in urban cities, and contesting student union elections. Moreover, the movement has strong activities in universities' residences and accommodation (El-Melegie, 1994).

The MB also capitalizes on family connections to recruit new members. Ammar El-Beltagi, a 23-year-old and the son of the prominent MB leader Mohamed El-Beltagi, mentioned that he was born '*Ikhwan*' as are all his family.<sup>58</sup> More significantly, the MB tends to expand its family and kinship network through marriage and personal links. Ibrahim Hassan, a 25-year-old member, states, "I was born *Ikhwan* and will remain so for the rest my life."<sup>59</sup> The MB created an extensive network of relatives and friends who build their relationships not only on ideology but also on personal links. For example, many MB members choose their spouse from *Ikhwani* families.<sup>60</sup> Getting married to a member of an *Ikhwani* family can also serve the MB's ultimate goal of

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<sup>57</sup> Abdelmoniem Abuelfotuh is considered to be one of the MB leaders who rebuilt the MB in the 1970s after the imprisoning of its first-line leaders during the 1950s and 1960s. However, he was expelled from the MB in 2011 when he decided to run for the Egyptian presidency. For more about the role of Abuelfotuh in reviving the MB see: Hossam Tammam, *Abuelfotoh, A Witness on the Islamist Movement from 1970 to 1984*, (Cairo: Shorouk Press), 2010.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Ammar El-Beltagi on 28 March 2012.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Ibrahim Hasan on 25 December 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Marriage from within the MB ranks is a key feature of the movement's social base. Since its foundation in the early 1930s, the Sisters Section (*Qism al-Akhawat*) has played an important role in facilitating and maintaining marriage and kinship relationships within the MB. Fatima Abdelhady, the First Secretary of the Sisters Section, points out her role in facilitating the marriage of many MB leaders (Abdelhady, 2011, p.38).

creating an Islamic society. It reflects the ripple effect which helps the MB to expand its boundaries and widen its organizational and social networks. Ironically, one prominent MB leader argues that members should not married to those from outside the MB. He stresses that Brothers should get married to Sisters (*al-akhawat*), otherwise the MB's societal domination will be delayed.<sup>61</sup> According to Husam Tamamm, a prominent expert on the MB, the MB creates its own community within society. He points out that the MB is a sub-society within the society. He states, "the group gradually evolved into a parallel society."<sup>62</sup> He adds, "the brother lives, gets educated, makes friends, gets married, finds a job, gets politically engaged in a fully Muslim Brotherhood-based environment."<sup>63</sup>

In addition, recruitment within the MB can also happen through kinship and family networks. Based on the notion of *da'wa*, relatives are the first target for *du'at*. Mohamed Sha'ban, a 32-year-old member points out that he joined the MB through his uncle who was an active member in the movement. He describes this as "a family business whereby my uncle used to accompany me to the mosque and introduce me to peers in my age group" when he was 12 years old.<sup>64</sup>

However, the flip side of the strength of relative and family connections is that these can create problems for the leadership, as it can raise questions and concerns over transparency over issues such as promotion. In other words, the MB tends to adopt a sense of nepotism that plays out in favour of certain individuals, families or groups within the movement. For instance, some MB members use family ties to enhance their position within the movement. This pattern of promotion has provoked many questions among members and led some to leave the movement. Mohamed Yussif, a 26-year-old former member of the MB, points out that he left the movement after he discovered the lack of transparency. He states, "my leader was not so transparent when he sided with some members who were not as committed to the movement as I was, hence I decided

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<sup>61</sup> Sobhi Saleh, a MB MP, asserts that the closer members get together, the more the MB takes power (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 24/5/2011).

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Husam Tammam conducted by Noha El-Hennawy, *Egypt Independent*, 17/4/2011.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Mohamed Sha'an on 3 April 2012.

to leave the movement.”<sup>65</sup> Clearly, this type of criticism hits the credibility of the MB, as well as creating feuds and tensions among members. For instance, some members consider that the family connection between Khairat Al-Shater, the former Deputy to the MB General Guide, who is the brother-in-law of the spokesperson of the movement, Mahmoud Ghozlan, allowed the latter to gain quick promotion within the MB.

Overall, affiliation with the MB can be attributed not only to its ideology but also to the incentives it can provide to its members. For instance, 36-year-old Salah Abdelhalim, points out that some individuals join the MB for social purposes. “There are those who seek to be socially promoted, and others who need to improve their life conditions Both can fulfil their needs in the MB”, he stresses.<sup>66</sup>

Clearly, social networks create opportunities for many to join the MB. However, they also help in reshaping an individual’s perceptions and identity. This happens in part through the socialization process. The intensive interactions of members in everyday life reformulate their personality and character and enhance their commitment to the MB. These interactions create a sort of subculture that facilitates the socialization process within the movement. This subculture, as Wickham points out, is the springboard of Islamists’ activism (Wickham, 2002, p.247).

## **5.5. CONSOLIDATING IDENTITY: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN *IKHWANI*?**

Consolidating a member’s identity is a matter of great importance in social movements. Movements always seek to internalize their ideology, norms, and codes of values within a member’s identity and mind-set. One of the main ways to achieve this internalization is through the socialization process. However, consolidating identity depends, among other factors, upon the extent social movement can intensify interactions among its members in everyday life. The more these interactions are intensified, the stronger a member’s identity is reinforced and consolidated. Intensifying

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<sup>65</sup> Interview with Mohamed Yussif on 29 March 2012.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Salah Abdelhalim on 28 December 2010.

the socialization process within social movements can happen through what this study terms the incubation process. It refers to an intensive degree of socialization that transforms an individual's perceptions and views to match the movement's norms, values, and objectives. Incubation is the vehicle that connects an individual with the movement, ideas with practices, and norms with values.

In addition, the incubation process reinforces the content and strength of an individual's identity. For instance, in the MB it is not sufficient just to be affiliated with the movement in order to become a full-fledged member but rather it requires a person to act as an *Ikhwani* in their everyday life. Hence, incubation creates a sense of commitment and solidarity among members within the movement.

The incubation process within the MB happens through two main mechanisms: education (*tarbiyya*); and the membership system. Both play a pivotal role in consolidating the MB identity. Education is one of the main tools the MB employs to reshape an individual's perceptions and views. It is an integral component of the MB's ideology. al-Banna viewed *tarbiyya* as the "rope that binds brothers together" (al-Banna 2002: 44). It is through the *tarbiyya* process that the MB can intensify its members' identities. Hence, it fosters the identification process with the MB.

However, the education process cannot happen without the rigours and disciplined system of membership. While many studies stress the impact of participation on an individual's identity, this study contends that in certain movements it is the pattern of membership, the underpinning unit of participation which is the main mechanism in consolidating an individual's identity. In highly ideological and disciplined movements, membership procedures, norms, and levels are crucial for consolidating an individual's identity. Hence members are required to meet a certain set of conditions and procedures before they become full members.

The MB has a disciplined and rigorous system of membership, which has a significant impact on the strength and content of the MB's identity. It is designed to spur an individual's commitment, devotion, and solidarity with the MB. Thus the MB has a multi-level system of membership that plays a vital role in reformulating an individual's

identity. For instance, under this membership system members are always subject to being monitored by their leadership. They have to abide by the MB's rules and norms to be promoted. The more they abide by the MB's codes of values and regulations, the greater chance they have of being promoted. Overall, moving from one stage of membership to another is a matter of great significance within the MB.

However, the most important function of this membership system lies in enhancing the MB's ability to reinforce a member's identity. The education process is rooted in the membership system. Members have to meet their *tarbiyya* obligations to be able to move from one stage to another. The multi-tiered membership system enables the MB leadership to entrench *tarbiyya* concepts and values within a member's identity. It is through this system that members strive to align themselves with the MB's norms, values, and objectives. Hence it fosters the identification process between a member and the movement. Moreover, members have to apply the MB's codes of values in their everyday life. The more members abide by this code, the more their identity is intensified. Therefore, for the identification process to succeed, members have to spend a period of time in each level before they become fully-fledged members in the MB. As they spend this time in each level, they tend to adapt their perceptions and views to coincide with the movement's ideology and code of values. Hence their identity is reshaped and deepened.

Moreover, the membership system tightens the MB leaders' grip on the movement and enables them to avoid penetration by the security forces. Since an individual's membership and promotion depends on their record of commitment to the movement's ideology and leadership, those who do not follow the rules and standards of the MB have to leave the movement or at least be marginalized.

To grasp how the MB consolidates its members' identity, the next section sketches out both the *tarbiyya* and membership system of the MB.

### 5.5.1 The Education Process (*tarbiyya*) within the MB

Education (*tarbiyya*) is a central concept in the MB's ideology and structure. It refers to the process of reshaping an individual's identity through practice. As one of the MB's well-known leaders succinctly puts it, "the most important product which is expected from *tarbiyya* is that it provides us with individuals who adopt certain values in everyday life" (El-Ghazali, 2000, p.218). That is, *tarbiyya* exemplifies the underlying process that alters an individual's views, perceptions, and behaviour to match with the MB's norms, standards, and ideology. It is through the *tarbiyya* process the MB can reformulate a member's mind-set and actions in everyday life.

According to El-Ghazali, the main objective of *tarbiyya* is "to develop, mobilize, and prepare men who are able to shoulder the responsibility of spreading and informing the Call and establishing the project of the revival to achieve an honourable life based on Islam" (El-Ghazali, 2000, p.218). Clearly, *tarbiyya* is a cornerstone in accomplishing the MB's mission and objectives. It was for this reason that al-Banna was keen to create a separate division for *tarbiyya* (Qism al-Tarbiyya) within the movement's structure.

A prominent MB figure defines *tarbiyya* as "the proper way to influence individuals and direct them through specific tools to change them for the better" (Mahmoud, 1997, p.11). Hence *tarbiyya* is about how the MB directs and guides an individual in their everyday life. All MB members and cadres have to go through the *tarbiyya* process in order to comprehend and get accustomed to the MB's norms and ideology. Mohamed Yussif, a 28-year-old member, points out that "*tarbiyya* is the main tool that binds Brothers together."<sup>67</sup> According to Mohamed Badie, the current General Guide of the MB and the former head of the *tarbiyya* section, *tarbiyya* is the main tool used to reshape a member's ethics and values to become Islamic. He states, "*tarbiyya* is central to our project and the main goal of it is to rebuild individuals' personality."<sup>68</sup>

*Tarbiyya* has different dimensions and applications. Atef Shahin, a middle-rank leader, highlights five types of *tarbiyya*: religious; preaching; social; political; and active

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<sup>67</sup> Interview with Mohamed Yussif on 29 March 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Mohamed Badie by Abdelgalil Al-Sharnoubi on 7 March 2010 at: <http://www.dakahliaikhwan.com/viewarticle.php?id=4041>

(Shahin 2011). The multi-task character of *tarbiyya* coincides with the comprehensiveness notion of the MB's ideology as discussed in the previous chapter. Thus, the formation of an individual's identity should match the all-inclusive character of the MB's ideology. Amer Shemakh, a MB historian, asserts that *tarbiyya* should be based on five pillars: the oneness of God (*rabbaniyya*); integration and comprehensiveness (*al-takamul wa'l-shumul*); positive constructivism (*ijabiyya wa'l-bina*); moderation and balance (*i'itidal and tawazun*); and collective action (*jam'iyya*) (Shemakh, 2011).

Clearly, the key goal of *tarbiyya* in the MB is twofold: religious self-purification and organizational attachment and commitment which equate with the spiritual and physical construction of individuals. As this study shows, *tarbiyya* sessions foster an individual's religiosity and piety. al-Banna stressed the role of *tarbiyya* in "purifying individuals' ethics and practices to be sincere and truthful" (al-Banna, 2002, p.392). He states, "each member should be physically strong, ethically committed, intellectual, self-sufficient, faithfully purified, organized, and keen to get the maximum benefit from his time" (al-Banna, 2002, p.394). Moreover, al-Banna wrote an important tract, *The Teachings (Risalat al-Ta'lim)*, that includes the norms and values that active members should follow and embrace in their everyday life (al-Banna, 2002).

In addition, *tarbiyya* aims to connect members with the movement and the leadership. Mohamed Abdurrahman, a member of the Guidance Bureau, highlights two aspects of *tarbiyya*: the individual and the collective. He states, "*tarbiyya* is based on individuals' self-education and the collective education through the movement's programmes" (Abdurrahman, 2006, p.107). Al-Banna synthesized these two dimensions in a succinct and inspiring statement, "reform yourself and call the others" (al-Banna, 2002, p.399).

Furthermore, *tarbiyya* is a gradual, on-going process that continues as long as members are affiliated with the MB. As Sherif Ayman argues, "*tarbiyya* lives with us from birth to death."<sup>69</sup> *Tarbiyya* is a fundamental part of an individual's identity

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 26 March 2012.

formation. Therefore, in each stage members have to embrace a certain set of norms and values in their everyday life, such as obedience, confidence in leadership, loyalty, sincerity, sacrifice and commitment. In other words, *tarbiyya* is a key mechanism that helps the MB to instil its norms and code of values within an individual's identity.

In addition, the *tarbiyya* process works in conjunction with the membership system in the MB. Each level of membership has its own *tarbiyya* platform and techniques. For instance, those who are newcomers have to follow a gradual platform that focuses on ethical and moral reform. However, those who have spent more time in the MB are subject to stricter standards and duties. By the end of the recruitment process, each member of the MB is supposed to embrace the movement's ideology and aims.

Moreover, *tarbiyya* in the MB is not confined to a particular line of leadership. Cadres, as well as members, in the lower levels are subject to *tarbiyya* sessions that are suited to their rank. Abdurrahman Mansour, a 24-year-old, points out that even the General Guide of the MB has to follow a certain *tarbiyya* programme and attend *tarbiyya* sessions.<sup>70</sup>

Because of its fundamental role in consolidating a member's identity, the MB has embedded *tarbiyya* in its structure. From the main *tarbiyya* section in the Guidance Bureau (Maktab al-Irshad) through to the *usra* (family), the basic unit in the MB, there are *tarbiyya* officers.

#### **5.5.1.1 *Tarbiyya* tools and incubating identity**

From the creation of the MB, al-Banna was keen to articulate a lucid and gradual system for educating MB members. He stressed the role of *tarbiyya* in reshaping an individual's behaviour and perceptions. For instance, he highlighted seven principles that should be followed by MB members in their everyday life: 1) to believe in God and His Prophet Muhammad; 2) to abandon bad ethics and perform daily prayers; 3) to work hard and become a good citizen; 4) to be a responsible Muslim and apply Islam in personal and public life; 5) to work hard to revive Islamic glory and advocate Islam

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<sup>70</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Mansour on 26 March 2012.

wherever one is; 6) to believe that all Muslims are one nation bound by the Islamic faith; and 7) to understand that embracing Islam in everyday life is the only way to empower Muslims and to believe that the MB is founded to achieve such a goal (al-Banna 2002: 16).<sup>71</sup>

*Tarbiyya* is achieved through what is termed *mhaden al-tarbiyya* (educational incubators), which refers to the places and venues where members meet, communicate and interact within the MB. Indeed, *mhaden al-tarbiyya* is a common terminology among MB members and cadres. Sometime, it takes the shape of a social gathering that deliberately brings MB members together to strengthen their relationships. According to one MB cadres, *mhaden* (singular of *mahdin*) is the main tool for members to reach out and get to know each other. He states, the *mhaden* is the primary means for members to deepening their relationship and unify their vision on different issues” (Shehab 2007: 12). It aims to create an intimate environment in which members from various educational, social, and cultural backgrounds can come together, communicate and exchange thoughts.

In addition, *mhaden* provide venues for members for religious purification and spiritual revitalization. Hence the platform of *mhaden* includes religious rituals, such as reciting the Quran and Sunnah, and performing prayers as well as organizational activities. For instance, in an *usra* meeting each member should be prepared to give a short religious talk based on his research and understanding of the scripture. The meeting of *usra* takes place on a weekly basis; hence it fosters personal and organizational ties between members. As Ibrahim Saleh, a 24-year-old puts it, “*usra* meetings reinforce the brethren’s connection and creates intimate atmosphere within the movement.”<sup>72</sup>

However, the most important role of *mhaden* lies in fostering the sense of commitment and solidarity among members. The regular meetings on *mhaden* help members to interact and communicate personally and ideologically. It provides a free

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<sup>71</sup> These principles used to be printed on the cover page of the MB weekly magazine (*majilat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimon*) during the 1930s (Mahmoud, 1997, p.142).

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Ibrahim Saleh on 30 March 2012.

space for them to discuss, debate, and build their views about the movement and the external world. Mohamed Mustafa, a 42-year-old, stresses the vital role of *mhaden* in consolidating collective identity. He describes his relationship with the movement as fundamental to his life. He states, “I can’t feel myself except within the movement. The MB to me is my family, home, and nation.”<sup>73</sup>

Moreover, for some members, the MB is more than a social movement. According to Mohamed al-Qassas, who was first exposed to the MB as a middle-school student and left the movement after the 25<sup>th</sup> of January Uprising, the relationship between the MB and members can be eternal. He states, “The Muslim Brotherhood is more of an educational incubator for a Brother. You get introduced to the group at an early age and ultimately your formative years become tied to it.”<sup>74</sup>

The main tools and mechanisms of *tarbiyya* in the MB are helpful in reshaping individuals’ identity. They are divided into seven: 1) *usra* (family); 2) *katiba* (battalion); 3) journey (*rihla*); 4) camp (*mu’askar*); 5) workshop (*dawra*); 6) seminar (*nadwa*); and 7) conference (*mu’tamar*). These are discussed in the following section.

#### **5.5.1.1.1 Usra (family)**

*Usra* is the basic unit in the MB organizational structure. It consists of five or six members who meet once a week for religious, personal, and organizational purposes. The leader of *usra* is called *naqib* (captain) and is responsible for monitoring the religious and ideological adherence of members. Each member in the MB has his own *usra* including high leaders. Usually, the meeting takes place in the *naqib*’s house and if not then in another member’s house. *Tarbiyya* within *usra* is based on three main tasks—acquaintance (*ta’arruf*); understanding (*tafahum*); and solidarity (*takaful*)—which each *usra* aims to imbue in a member’s identity.

Furthermore, *usra* plays an important role in linking new members with the movement. It aims to accommodate them within the movement’s structure and to

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with Mohamed Mustafa on 1 April 2012.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Mohamed al-Qassas conducted by Noha El-Hennawy, *Egypt Independent*, 17/4/2011.

accustom them with its ideology and standards. It also gives novices an opportunity to explore the MB from within and to build new relationship with leaders and cadres. Hence, the main tasks of the *usra* are twofold: to spur the religious and ideological commitment of members; and to facilitate the organizational communications and activities of the movement. According to Abdurrahman, *usra* is “the main incubator of *tarbiyya* as it binds members together through education and guiding” (Abdurrahman, 2006, p.117).

#### **5.5.1.1.2 *Katiba (battalion)***<sup>75</sup>

The *katiba* is a flock of seven to eight *usra* who gather once monthly to spend a number of days together (usually three or four days). It aims to strengthen the religious and ideological commitment to the MB through an intensive programme of education. According to Abdelhalim, *katiba* is the most important incubator of *tarbiyya* because it relies on direct communication between the educator and the educated (Abdelhalim, 1979, p.150). He points out that al-Banna was keen to educate and direct MB members through the use of *kata'ib* (the plural of *katiba*) meetings. Hence al-Banna founded a section within the MB structure, the Battalions Unit (Nizam al-Kkata'ib), to supervise the activities of battalions.

The *katiba* has two main goals: the first is to reinforce the spiritual and religious preparation of members; and the second is to imbue the norms of obedience and confidence in members. It consists of a strict programme of physical and mental training over a number of days. According to Abdelhalim (1979), *kata'ib* are designed mainly to increase the spiritual preparation of members and to raise their capabilities (Abdelhalim 1979). This can be through night prayers, rituals, or reciting Quran. He states, “*kata'ib* help members to have a high degree of spiritual purification and keep their hearts connected to God” (Abdelhalim, 1979, p.152).

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<sup>75</sup> Some accounts highlight that al-Banna founded *kata'ib* units to prepare MB members for *jihad* particularly against Israel during the 1930 and 1940s. It is also believed that *kata'ib* system was the cornerstone in establishing the Secret Apparatus, the military wing of the MB at the beginning of the 1940s. (Ramadan, 1982; Mitchell, 1996; Lia, 1998).

Additionally, *katiba* aims to prepare members physically and mentally. This happens through a tough programme of activities, such as running and exercise. According to Ibrahim Saleh, *kata'ib* help members to learn patience, tolerance, and self-control.<sup>76</sup> In addition, they give an opportunity to the MB leaders and cadres to evaluate and gauge an individual's adherence and commitment to the rules and standards of the movement. During the full course of the *katiba* each member has to fulfil a certain set of duties and activities, such as memorizing some Quranic chapters, or abstain from food and sleep for many hours.

Each *katiba* has a leader (*amir*) and assistant and members should comply with the rules and duties set by the leader. The *amir* is supposed to be the oldest and the most religiously knowledgeable of the members. The duties of members towards the *amir* are to: listen and show obedience, respect and love, help, be polite when talking and acting (Mahmoud 1997).

#### **5.5.1.1.3 Rihla (journey)**

*Rihla* refers to a collective journey for a number of MB members who march together in the countryside or desert area. It is supposed to be for active members but sometimes can include new members in order to explore their perceptions and commitment to the movement. It also include families; however, it should avoid mixing men and women (Shemakh, 2011). According to Shehab, the platform of *rihla* can include exercise, training, and patience to learn to face up to hunger and thirst (Shehab, 2007). Hence, *rihla* seeks to foster a sense of solidarity and brotherhood among members. *Rihla* takes place once a month and usually lasts from dawn until sunset.

The main objective of the *rihla* is to instil a certain set of values in a member's personality and mind-set; for example, commitment and obligation, secrecy, passion and collective action. Like *katiba*, each *rihla* has a leader (*amir*) and aides; again the *amir* should be the oldest member in the group and he is responsible for supervising and directing members who should listen and obey him (Mahmoud, 1997).

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<sup>76</sup> Interview with Ibrahim Saleh on 30 March 2012.

#### 5.5.1.1.4 *Mu'askar* (the camp)

The camp (*mu'askar*) is a continuation of the Rover Scouts (*Jawwala*) system that was founded by al-Banna in the 1930s. The main purpose of the camp is to strengthen the physical and mental capabilities of MB members through exercise and training. It seeks to supplement the spiritual and intellectual activities of the movement (Lia, 1998)<sup>77</sup>.

According to Mahmoud, camps or *mu'skarat* (the plural of *mu'skar*) has three chief objectives: aggregation (*tajmi'*); education (*tarbiyya*); and exercise (*tadrib*) (Mahmoud, 1997, p.282). As for the first objective, *tajmi'*, camp is a place where members can gather to be involved in religious and physical activities. Those who gather are usually members but can include non-members who might join to become more acquainted with the MB. The number involved is upwards of two hundred and the camp lasts between two and three weeks.

However, to ensure effectiveness and differentiation within the MB, aggregation is based on four levels. The first level is for the public which includes all Muslims “who are eager to serve Islam and help other fellow Muslims” (Mahmoud, 1997, p.282). The second level is for ordinary members and includes active members who belong to a particular district and come together to strengthen their relationship and to work for Islam. The third level is designed for senior members of the MB or leaders who gather to discuss different organizational duties and responsibilities. The final level is for members and leaders who come from different MB branches around the world. They gather to coordinate and discuss MB affairs in their countries and to develop policies on

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<sup>77</sup> According to Lia, al-Banna established Rover Scout units by mid-1930s and they officially registered in the Egyptian National Scout Movement in 1938-1939. The functions of Rover Scouts were threefold: to recruit new members through sporting activities; to maintain order and security in large meetings and conferences; and to prepare MB members to resist British imperialism and Zionism (Lia, 1998, pp.170-172). However, Lia points out that Rover Scouts were rarely involved in militant activities. He states, ‘The Rover Scout served as a reservoir of trained youth who could easily rallied to social welfare and services and public health projects which became a preoccupation of the Society [MB] during the war [WW II]’ (Lia, 1998, p.172). According to Abdelhalim, by the end of 1930s, the MB had many scout teams when it became mandatory for all members to join Rover Scout branches including al-Banna himself who lead Rover Scouts in national ceremonies and celebrations (Mahmoud, 1997, p.280). Moreover, the MB bylaw of 1944 outlined the organization, membership, and structure of Rovers Scouts.

how to deal with problems and counterbalance other ideological and antagonistic currents (Mahmoud, 1997, pp.282-284).

The second goal of the camps is education (*tarbiyya*). According to Mahmoud, camps provide a pure Islamic life of worship, exercise and brotherhood (Mahmoud, 1997). Clearly, camps are structured so as to underpin a sense of commitment and solidarity among members. Salah Abdelhalim emphasized the vital role of camps as a tool for self-education. He states, "in camps members learn three rules: to have self-restraint; to become accustomed to life's hardships; and to obey and be committed to leadership."<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, during the camp, members are exposed to an intensive *tarbiyya* programme. This happens through different readings and discussions. Mahmoud highlights many issues that should be discussed during camps, including collective action, commitment and loyalty (Mahmoud, 1997).

The third objective of camps is exercise (*tadrib*). For the MB, this aspect of *mu'skarat* is crucial. Not only because of the physical and mental training to which individuals are exposed but also because it imbues many of the MB's chief norms and standards, such as secrecy, commitment and obedience, within their identity. In other words, these camps aim to embed the MB sub-culture in a member's identity. As Sherif Ayman puts it, "camps transform your entire life and reformulate your personality."<sup>79</sup> In camps, each member has to behave and act in a responsible manner and comply with the MB rules and standards.

In addition, camps help the MB to build the physical and athletic capacity of its members. According to Mahmoud, during camps members get solidarity, athletic, sporting and security training. He also stresses that camps have rules and conditions to which members should be abide (Mahmoud, 1997).

Each *mu'skar* has a leader (*amir*) and assistants. The *amir* should have leadership skills and a wide religious knowledge in order to set an example for other

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with Salah Abdelhalim on 28 December 2010.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 12 January 2012.

members. He is responsible for supervising the camp and ensuring that members follow the rules of the MB.

#### **5.5.1.1.5 *Dawra (workshop)***

The *dawra* is a study group for MB members who gather for a day or two to acquire more in-depth knowledge and understanding on specific issues. This study group is organized periodically and a selected number of individuals and leaders join. According to Mahmoud, the main goal of the *dawra* is to create leaders and well-informed cadres who can be subject to more duties and responsibilities. The topics that are covered during the session can be political, social, or economic. Those who can take part in sessions can be students, workers, peasants, or professionals (Mahmoud, 1997, pp.306-310).

In addition, these sessions cover a variety of activities, such as management, sports, and preaching (*da'wa*). The programme of each session is articulated by MB leaders who direct and lead members during the session. Salah Abdelhalim highlighted that he went on an intensive course in preaching and recruiting new members.<sup>80</sup>

#### **5.5.1.1.6 *Nadwa (seminar)***

The *nadwa* is a weekly symposium in which members can meet with experts to discuss different topics or to resolve a problem. It is not exclusive to MB members. Topics, such as politics, religion, women, and the veil, can be discussed at the *nadwa*. According to Mahmoud, *nadwa* aims to enhance the intellectual and cultural skills of Muslims. It has a leader or manager who organizes the seminar, selects its topic, and invites the speakers. He also should have a strong religious background with oratory skills. The *nadwa* manager can have assistants to help in organizational and logistics matters.

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Salah Abdelhalim on 28 December 2010.

#### **5.5.1.1.7 *Mu'tamar* (conference)**

The *mu'tamar* is a meeting for large numbers (exceeding hundreds) of MB members. It aims to gather members from different parts of the country in one place to discuss and debate topics and issue decisions. It also includes the general assembly of the MB. The educational role of the conference lies in enhancing solidarity and commitment among brothers. It provides members with an opportunity to get to know each other and to exchange thoughts and views on specific topics.

There are different types of conferences. They can be regional which are assigned for a set of MB districts or national covering all MB members. They also can be held to discuss private matters, including organizational changes and bylaws or to raise public issues, such as Palestine, development and Muslim affairs.

Since its foundation, the MB held many general conferences. However, since the 1950s the movement has been prohibited from convening any public conferences. It was not until after the Egyptian revolution of 2011 that the MB restarted holding public conferences.

### **5.5.2 Consolidating Identity through Membership**

This section contends that there is a causal relationship between the membership system and the identity consolidation of the member. The more members are exposed to the different levels of membership, the more their identity is strengthened and consolidated. The MB has a disciplined and rigorous multi-tiered system of membership that reformulates an individual's identity. It also defines the level, type, and rank of each individual in the movement. Furthermore, it acts as a laboratory that constructs and articulates identity.

One of the chief distinctions between the MB and the other social movements lies in its membership system. While membership in other social movements does not require any prerequisites to become a fully-fledged member, except through participating in a movement's activities, it is essential for those who want to join the MB to meet a specific set of conditions and standards.

Furthermore, the multi-tiered system of membership helps the MB in a number of ways. First, it enables new members to become accustomed to the rules and norms of the MB. Since the MB is a cross-cutting movement that encompasses individuals from different social and economic backgrounds, it is essential to accommodate them within its structure. Second, a gradually deepening membership reinforces an individual's commitment to the movement's ideology and objectives, as climbing from one level of membership to another is based on the degree of commitment and loyalty shown. Therefore, it is a merit-based system. The more you adhere to the movement, the higher you will be promoted. Third, the membership system safeguards the MB from regime penetration. Since the MB operates in an oppressive and hostile environment, it is fundamental to ensure the security of its leadership and members. The multi-tiered system prevents attempts by the security forces from penetrating the MB's structure. Hence the commitment and loyalty of members are regularly monitored.

More importantly, the membership system works as a barometer for promotion. Thus, if a member wants promotion s/he has to attain specific standards and duties. The more they comply with these standards and duties, the higher they can be promoted. Moreover, the membership system gives MB leaders greater control over members. As promotion and member evaluation rests in hands of movement's leaders and cadres, these are able to maintain control over members.

Overall, the result of the MB's membership system is to intensify an individual's identity. It reformulates their views, perceptions and aligns them with movement's ideology and standards.

### **5.5.3 Levels and Types of Membership in the MB**

Since its inception, al-Banna was keen to formulate a disciplined and well-controlled system of membership in the MB. He also created explicit criteria for membership that should be followed by all members. For instance, the first internal

bylaw (*al-la'iha al-dakhiliyya*) of the MB<sup>81</sup> outlined four types or degrees of membership: assistant member (*musa'id*) which was open to any Muslim who declared an intention to join the movement, signed a membership card, and accepted the payment of membership dues. He became an associate member (*muntasib*) if he proved to be able to master the principles of the movement, attended regular meetings, and committed himself to obedience. In addition, the associate member had to be older than fifteen, recommended by three members, and the membership ratified by the movement's chief bureau. The third level of membership, the active member (*'amil*), was achieved when, in addition to the previous duties, the individual became totally involved in the movement's activities, received physical training, fulfilled his Islamic obligations, and memorized a certain number of the Quran's chapters and the Prophetic Sayings (*ahadith*). Accordingly, he gave the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*)<sup>82</sup> to the movement and received a full membership which entailed different responsibilities, including attending all required meetings, paying the monthly subscription fees and executing specific missions. (Mitchell, 1969). The fourth and the highest degree of membership is *mujahid*.<sup>83</sup> This level was not open to all active members but was confined only to those who met all their duties and were strictly selected by the Guidance Bureau (*Maktab al-Irshad al-Amm*). However, members at this stage would have to follow a stricter programme of education (*tarbiyya*) and become ready to sacrifice their wealth and life for the sake of the movement (al-Banna n.d).

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<sup>81</sup> The first version of the General Law of the MB (*al-Qanun al-Assasi*) was issued in 1930. However, its Internal Bylaws (*al-la'iha al-dakhiliyya*) have been amended in 1932, 1935, 1944, 1945, 1948, 1951, 1982, 1994 and 2009. The amendments were a recognition of the need for the MB to adapt to the changing internal or external circumstances. In terms of membership categories, three main changes have occurred. At the outset, there were four degrees of membership, but in 1945 these were reduced to only two levels, tentative (*taht al-ikhtibar*) and active (*'amil*) (Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998). However, since the return of the MB in the 1970s it has increased to five levels (*muhib*, *muay'id*, *muntasib*, *muntazim*, and *'amil*). For security reasons, these membership levels have been removed from the MB's bylaws. Ironically, these rules remain in place following the political recognition of the MB in the wake of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January Revolution.

<sup>82</sup> *Bay'a* is an Islamic terminology that derives from the Qur'an and was practiced by the Prophet Muhammad. It refers to an oath given by a subordinate to his leader as token of allegiance. For more, see Landau-Tasserion (2010).

<sup>83</sup> This degree was added to the MB's bylaw in 1935 and it sown the seeds of the Special Apparatus (*al-Tanzim al-Khas*), the military arm of the MB which became operationally active since the beginning of the 1940s.

However, after the violent clashes between the MB and the Egyptian government at the end of the 1940s which culminated with the assassination of Hasan al-Banna on 12 February 1949 and the dissolution of the MB, the movement changed its membership system to become broader and more ambiguous. Instead of being based on the four degrees, the levels were reduced to only two: tentative (*taht al-ikhtibar*); and active (*'amil*). The former refers to those who had only recently joined the MB and embraced its ideas. They were monitored for a minimum of six months until they fulfilled their membership's duties. The individual then gave allegiance (*bay'a*) to the General Office which ratified the membership. However, he did not have the right to vote in the Society's elections. *'Amil* refers to those who abided by the movement's regulations, fulfilled all the requisite membership's duties and responsibilities and gave *bay'a* to the General Guidance (Mitchell 1969).<sup>84</sup> Moreover, a Brother who did not meet his duties or abide by the regulations of the Society was subject to disciplinary action by the branch head, which could be a warning, fine, suspension, or even expulsion from the movement (Mitchell, 1969, pp.183-184).

#### **5.5.4 Intensifying Identity in Everyday Life**

The consolidation of the MB identity in everyday life happens through two mechanisms: increasing scrutiny of members and using membership as a promotion incentive. To spur the identification process, the MB re-structured its membership system to be based on five different levels. Despite the similarities between previous membership systems and the present one, membership and promotion procedures have become stricter.

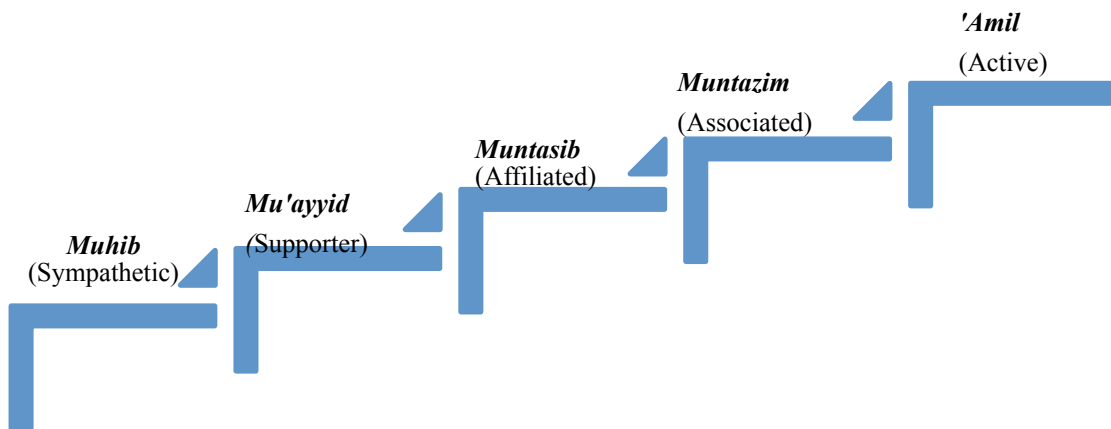
In addition, as mentioned, *tarbiyya* and membership are closely interlinked. *Tarbiyya* is the main vehicle of membership promotion. This *tarbiyya* process takes places in different venues, e.g. family, mosque, school, etc. The intensity of members' identity depends upon the requirements and duties of their membership level. Moreover,

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<sup>84</sup> According to the Article 7 of the 1951 Bylaw, the conditions for MB's membership were: 1) the candidate should be eighteen years of age, 2) honourable and upright, 3) able to comprehend the ideas of the MB, 4) willing to pay the dues, and 5) willing to give oath to the MB (Mitchell, 1969, p.183).

each level has its own *tarbiyya* programme. The more members comply with the MB's rules and norms, the greater the chance they can be promoted. The result of this is an intensification of members' identity and an increasing commitment to the MB's ideology.

The current membership system can be divided into five levels: 1) *muhib* (sympathetic or lover); 2) *mu'ayyid* (supporter); 3) *muntasib* (associated); 4) *muntazim* (regular or registered); and 5) *'amil* (active or operating brother). These levels reflect how the MB intensifies and consolidates a member's identity. Hence each member has to meet a set of duties and responsibilities to move from one level to another.



**Fig. 11 the multi-tiered system of membership in the MB**

#### **5.5.4.1 *Muhib* (sympathetic or lover)**

*Muhib* is the first level in the MB's membership system. In that level, members are exposed to the MB's world. According to Eslam Ramadan, new members start to become acquainted with other members and are gradually involved in the MB's activities.<sup>85</sup> The main goal of the level is to accustom new members to the MB's rules and codes of values. At this level, the *muhib* joins the *usra* (family) in the weekly meetings. The main goal of *usra* at this stage is to gradually internalize the MB's

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Eslam Ramadan on 11 January 2012.

ideology and norms into the new member's mind-set<sup>86</sup>. According to Ramadan, the *muhib* level is the primary phase that enables new members to get to know existing members.<sup>87</sup>

In addition, members at this level are not required to be involved heavily in organizational activities. According to Abdurrahman Ayyash, the main objective of the MB at the *muhib* level is to alter an individual's morals and behaviours.<sup>88</sup> Also, Ramadan highlights that the MB does not set hard conditions for members to fulfil at this level. He states, "the MB facilitates membership at this level and new members are not required to fulfil any organizational responsibilities."<sup>89</sup>

This stage can last for between six months and one year and members are closely monitored by the leader of the *usra* the *naqib*. The *tarbiyya* programme at this level is simple and encouraging. Each *muhib* should study some Islamic textbooks and readings as a part of his education process. According to Abdurrahman Ayyash, books at this level are designed to meet the requirements of beginners.<sup>90</sup>

#### **5.5.4.2 *Mu'ayyid* (supporter)**

*Mu'ayyid* is the second stage of membership in the MB, during which members become more committed to the MB's norms and standards. Those who have spent between six months and one year at the previous level are eligible to become supporters (*mu'ayyidun*) if they have successfully fulfilled their duties and commitments. Despite the higher level, members remain unofficially registered in the MB. Hence, they do not have voting rights or to hold any organizational position. According to Abdurrahman Mansour, *mu'ayyid* can not join a *shu'ba* (division) or attend its meetings.<sup>91</sup>

The *tarbiyya* process at the *mu'ayyid* stage is more intense than at the previous level. Members spent at least one year at this stage and they are required to fulfil many

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<sup>86</sup> The *usra* and the organizational structure of the MB will be explained in-depth in chapter six.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Eslam Ramadan on 11 January 2012.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash on 11 January 2012.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Eslam Ramadan on 11 January 2012.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash on 12 January 2012.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Mansour on 26 March 2012.

duties, such as memorizing chapters of the Quran, reading some of the MB's literature, and being involved in local activities. According to the interviewees, the main book at this stage is *Fi Rihab al-Islam* (In the Spaces of Islam), which is written by one of the MB leaders, Ali Labn.

At this stage, members are closely monitored by their leaders who evaluate and gauge their commitment and devotion to the MB. At the end of the stage, leaders have to write a report about the *mu'ayyid* and send it to the District Office which convenes a committee to evaluate the *mu'ayyidun* (plural of *mu'ayyid*) members. After evaluation, the committee sends its report to the Governorate Administrative Office, which confirms whether or not the members should be promoted to the next level.

#### **5.5.4.3 *Muntasib* (affiliated)**

At this level, members become officially registered with the MB, but it is not a full membership. According to Eslam Ramadan, this level is on the threshold of real membership in the MB. He states, "at *muntasib* level members become real Brothers."<sup>92</sup> At this stage, members spend at least two years before moving to the next level. Abdurrahman Ayyash highlights that some members can stay at this level for the rest of their time in the MB<sup>93</sup>. Hence, if wishing to be promoted, members have to fulfil their duties and make greater efforts to comply with the MB's norms and standards.

The programme of *tarbiyya* at the *muntasib* level is rigid. Members have to strengthen their commitment and adherence not only to the movement's ideology but also to its leadership. Sherif Ayman emphasizes the importance of loyalty and allegiance of the *muntasib* to his leader. He states, "this level verifies members' devotion to leaders and the movement."<sup>94</sup> Moreover, members at this level are required to increase their religious knowledge in order that they can lead religious sermons and talks. They are

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with Eslam Ramadan on 11 January 2012.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash 12 January 2012.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 26 March 2012.

also asked to undertake organizational responsibilities and duties. According to Ayyash, *muntasib* can attend *shu'ba* (division) meetings<sup>95</sup>.

The promotion from *muntasib* goes through same process as that from *mu'ayyid*. A committee of five members evaluates the member's performance, commitment, and adherence to the MB and its leadership and sends a report to the Governorate Administrative Office which decides whether or not the member should be promoted. However, it is worth mentioning that many MB members are not aware of which stage they are in until they are told by their leaders. According to Ammar El-Beltagi, leaders tend to obscure a member's rank within the movement until they verify and ensure their commitment and loyalty to the movement.<sup>96</sup>

#### **5.5.4.4 Muntazim (associated)**

If the *muntasib* evaluation report was positive the member can be promoted to become a *muntazim*. This is the penultimate stage before an individual obtains full membership in the MB. Hence the duties and responsibilities of members at this level are more rigorous. For instance, members are becoming subject to closer monitoring of their behaviour, ethics, and organizational performance. They have to follow the code of values and norms in their relationship with leaders. They should also show a high degree of obedience and loyalty to the movement's ideology and leadership.

The time span of this stage is at least five years. However, some members can stay at this level for their entire life within the MB. Abdurrahman Mansour accentuates that some MB's members might get stuck at *muntazim* for years.<sup>97</sup> For many reasons, including an obsession with security and the evaluation of devotion, members can not leave this stage without undergoing an intensive process of *tarbiyya*.

The *tarbiyya* programme for this level contains religious and organizational duties. For example, *muntazim* should memorize large sections of scriptures such as the Qur'an and the Prophet sayings. He also should be able to give a *khutba* (religious

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash 12 January 2012.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Ammar El-Beltagi on 28 March 2012.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Mansour on 26 March 2012.

sermon) and guide people in prayers. The curriculum at this stage includes the book by Mahmud Abu Ra'ia, *Anwar al-Islam* (Lights of Islam), some of al-Banna's epistles, and some of Sayyid Qutb's writings.

In relation to the organizational duties, all *mntazimin* (plural of *mntazim*) are eligible to join a division. They also can be elected to the executive board but not as head or the deputy of *shu'ba*. Members also are asked to donate and contribute to movement's local activities. However, these are not dues but are voluntary payments. Moreover, *mntazim* can join any of the committees in *usra* and *shu'ba*, such as the political, media or *da'wa*.

After a period of time, depending on the leaders' subjective evaluation, *mntazimin* attend a workshop that prepares them for promotion to the final stage. It is a promotion workshop in which each candidate has to fulfil certain duties and pass religious and psychological tests to gauge his capabilities. If he succeeds, he is promoted and becomes an active member (*'amil*) or a real Brother.

#### **5.5.4.5 Active (*'amil*)**

*'Amil* is the final stage in the membership hierarchy in the MB. Members reach this point after fulfilling numerous and disciplined duties and responsibilities. According to Eslam Ramadan, active membership means that members are entitled to attain positions and responsibilities in the MB. He states, "all active members are equals in rights and duties."<sup>98</sup>

Because of the significance of their role in the MB, al-Banna wrote an exclusive epistle for active members, *Risalat al-Ta'alim* which outlines their duties. It also identifies the importance of allegiance (*bay'a*). The epistle stipulates that all active members should give the oath to the MB's leadership. The oath should be based on ten principles: understanding (*fahm*); sincerity (*ikhlas*); action (*'amal*); jihad; sacrifice (*tadhiyya*); obedience (*ta'ah*); perseverance (*thabat*); devotion (*tajarud*); brotherhood

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<sup>98</sup> Interview with Eslam Ramadan on 11 January 2012.

(*akhwa*); and trust (*thiqa*) (al-Banna 2002).<sup>99</sup> This code of values should be internalized in an active member's identity and reflected in their manners and actions. Hence they are subject to monitoring and evaluation to gauge their commitment to the movement. In other words, active members should fully adopt the MB's ideology and act as devoted Brothers in everyday life. They also have to pay all dues and subscription fees based on a proportion of their income.

The *tarbiyya* programme of active members is extensive and rigid. Members at this stage are fully exposed to al-Banna's literature. They are also required to widen their religious knowledge by reading on the history of Islam and about other issues related to fellow Muslims around the world. In addition, active members are asked to intensify their religious commitment through worship, night prayers, fasting, etc. They also should have a daily recitation of and memorize the Qu'ran and the sayings of the Prophet. According to *Risalat al-Ta'alim*, ' members should carry out more intensive obligations, such as having a strong and healthy body, having a good character, raising their intellectual capacity, and working hard to earn their living (al-Banna, 2002, p.212)

The multi-tiered membership system reflects two key features of the MB: the MB's vigilant and cautious character; and the intensity of its members' identity. Operating in a repressive environment, the best method by which to maintain coherence and solidarity in the MB is through the close control of the membership system. Thus, for decades the Egyptian security apparatus has failed to infiltrate the MB as it did with other political forces. In addition, the membership system enables the MB to reinforce and consolidate a member's identity. Members who seek promotion have to exhibit a high degree of commitment to the MB's ideology and leadership. This is how the MB maintains its internal coherence and has preserved its existence over the decades.

## 5.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter explores the process of identity formation within the MB. It reveals the underlying processes of identity construction within the movement. It examines the

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<sup>99</sup> A more detailed explanation to these principles will be given in the next chapter.

selection, recruitment, and mobilization methods that the MB employs to expand its social network and organizational structure. It argues that an MB member's identity is the outcome of two interlinked processes: membership and education. The MB adopts a complex yet meaningful pattern of membership that reshapes an individual's perceptions and views. It also has an intensive process of education that consolidates and reinforces an individual's identity.

The chapter draws upon the scholarly work on social movements. However, it extends this work to examine how massive movements can recruit and mobilize members. It has been shown that the MB uses different mechanisms to attract and recruit members. One of these mechanisms is what this study dubs the 'ripple effect'. It refers to the tendency of the MB to expand its social and political constituency throughout the social strata. The MB capitalizes significantly in social networks to recruit new members and enlarge its audience. Moreover, the MB creates its own social network or community that encompasses families, friends, and kinship.

In addition, this chapter contends that there is a visible link between membership patterns and identity consolidation within social movements. The MB has a disciplined and well-controlled system of membership that seeks to reshape members' identity. This system is based on multi-tiered categories of membership. The more members follow this system, the stronger their identity can be consolidated.

**Chapter Six**  
**ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND HIERARCHY:**  
**THE IMPACT OF *IKHWANISM* ON THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S**  
**IDENTITY**

**6.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the impact of the organization and hierarchy of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) on its identity formation process. It examines how structure, organization, and internal dynamics affect the process of identity configuration. The aim of this chapter is to probe the interplay between structure and norms, members and leadership, and organization and identity.

The primary argument in this chapter is that organization of a social movement has a significant impact on the construction of its identity. Organizational norms and values, patterns of leadership, hierarchy, and social interactions affect individuals' identity and reshape their perceptions and behaviours. The interplay between these elements creates a sub-culture that dominates and guides individuals in everyday life. This sub-culture, more precisely the code of norms and values, plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' perceptions, worldview and more importantly identity. It defines power relations, organizational roles, membership and affiliation rules, and the structure of incentives that foster collective action. The MB, as a socio-religious movement, constructs its own sub-culture, which this study calls '*ikhwanism*'. It refers to the cognitive code of norms, values, attitudes, standards, and regulations that encompasses and guides the MB members in everyday life. Put differently, *ikhwanism* embodies the code of identity that signifies the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the MB as a social movement and maintains its organization and structure over time.

In addition, it is argued that the MB organization plays a vital role in preserving the movement's survival and nurturing its activism. Operating in a semi-authoritarian environment that entails systematic repression and exclusion, the MB has developed a certain pattern of hierarchy, structure and tactics that can work within such an

environment. The semi-clandestine character of the MB is a direct outcome of this environment which has imposed upon the MB an austere and disciplined organization. For instance, to protect its members from security repression and surveillance, the MB follows a firm system of membership and promotion which counts not only on individuals' competency or skills but also more importantly on their commitment and loyalty to the movement's ideology and its leadership. This vigilant system protected the MB from regime penetration and preserved its internal unity for decades.

Further, the argument contends that the internal structure of the MB and the pattern of organizational norms create a certain type of identity that tends to be obedient and submissive. The norms of allegiance, obedience, commitment, and loyalty that are prevalent within the MB organization affect individuals' identities. Abiding by these norms in everyday life can result in creating a subservient identity that succumbs to and follows the leadership. The MB organization does not encourage protest or discontent against leadership and members do not have the power to criticize or challenge their leaders. Thus, the MB tends to employ organizational norms and tenets to solidify its internal coherence and maintain its control over individuals. The MB adopts two main mechanisms in order to contain internal criticism. First is marginalizing the dissents and exclude them from high positions or taking decisions within the movement structure. Second is to push them to become more self-isolated. These two mechanisms were significantly effective in enabling the MB to avoid critical schism or fissures under Mubarak. Moreover, the MB ideologues and leaders tend to demonize and discredit the internal opposition among rank-and-file. Moahmed Hamza states that "the movement tends to exclude reformist figures by discredit not only their ideas but also their religious commitment".<sup>100</sup>

This chapter proposes a crucial link between the MB's organization and its identity. It accounts for the impact of internal dynamics, structure, and norms on individuals' identities. As a highly ideologically-committed movement, the MB tends to

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<sup>100</sup> Interview with Mohamed Hamza on 11 January 2012.

follow a tightly knit structure in order to pursue its objectives. Moreover, the internal dynamics of the MB, e.g. social interactions, communication system, promotion procedures, file and rank order, etc., reflect a strong and disciplined order of organization. However, before this is discussed, it is worth mentioning that this chapter does not aim to trace the hierarchal structure of the MB, i.e. organizational levels, division of labour, leadership order and command, etc. since this is covered by other studies.<sup>101</sup> Instead, it will unpack the underlying norms, rules, culture that govern this structure and lead to certain actions and behaviour.

## **6.2. ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND IDENTITY**

The burgeoning literature on social movements enhances the understanding of the relationship between ideology and movements' organizations and structures (Zald & McCarthy, 1979; Zald & McCarthy, 1987, p.711; McAdam, McCarthy, et al. 1996; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). However, the literature does not reveal much about the impact of the organizational structure and dynamics on identity pattern and formation. The seminal work of Della Porta and Diani (2006) accentuates the importance of organization in social movements. According to the authors organization helps movements to achieve a number of functions, e.g. encouraging participants, defining organizational aims, managing and coordinating contributions, collecting resources from the environment, etc. (Della Porta and Diani 2006, p.137). While Della Porta and Diani recognize the role of organization as a source of a movement's identity, they confine this role to the extent of generating collective action and ignore identity construction. They point out: "For people committed to a certain cause, organizations are an important source of continuity, not only in terms of identity, but also in terms of action" (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p.138). However, in a highly ideological movement, such as the MB, organization plays a vital role in fostering identity and enhancing internal cohesiveness.

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<sup>101</sup> Mitchell (1969) and Lia (1998) have extensively discussed the organizational and hierarchical structure of the MB.

Another body of the scholarly work focuses on the role of organization in maintaining organization unity and accommodating internal rifts and factionalism (Zald & McCarthy, 1987; Gamson, 1992; Meyer, Whittier, et al. 2002; Reger, 2002). Zald and McCarthy, for example, highlight the role of heterogeneity in creating splits and factions within social movements (Reger, 2002). They also attribute schism within the movement to the concern of ideological and doctrinal purity (Reger, 2002, p.134). Melucci also stresses the impact of organizational dynamics on movement coherence. He points out that the complexity of organization can generate tensions and conflicts among members (Melucci, 1996, p.320). He weighs the role of organizational norms and regulations in maintaining movement integration (Melucci, 1996, p.316).

However, the work of Reger provides a valuable and lucid contribution to the impact of organizational dynamics on a movement's identity. In her study about the American National Organization for Women (NOW), Reger highlights the crucial link between a movement's structure and identity. She stresses the vital role of interactions between "the individual, the group, and the larger political and cultural environment" in constructing collective identity" (2002, p.711). Reger points out that organization functioning as a 'facilitating' level that mediates between individuals, movement, and environment to produce and construct collective identity (2002, p.711). Moreover, she underscores the role of leadership in shaping the strategy, tactics, and goals of the movement and most importantly its identity. According to Reger, collective identity is affected by three organizational dynamics: the socio-political environment, diversity of membership, and leadership (2002, p.712). Nevertheless, despite its significance, Reger's work is mainly concerned by the role of organization in maintaining a movement's unity and integration. It disregards the impact of a movement's norms, symbols, and regulations on identity manufacturing. In other words, while Reger's study highlights the integral role of organization in consolidating the internal unity of the movement by resolving conflictual identities that might occur, it does not explain the underlying factors that shape those identities. It overlooks the impact of a movement's culture and code of values on identity construction.

### 6.2.1. Which Organization Are We Talking About? A Typology of Organizations

The type of organization is a matter of importance in analyzing social movements. It reflects not only the movement's objectives and ideology but also its complexity, elasticity, and cohesiveness. Many studies stress the importance of an organization's typology in identifying its strategies, tactics, and internal structure (Zald & McCarthy, 1987; Melucci, 1996; Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Zald and McCarthy, for instance, highlight the relationship between the type of organization and its activism. They point out that Social Movement Organization (SMO) is a "complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preference of social movement or countermovement and attempts to achieve those goals" (Zald & McCarthy, 1987, p.20).

The organizational structure of social movements has different forms based on a variety of criteria. For instance, building on Scott's classic typology of organizations (1981), Della Porta and Diani highlight the heterogeneity of organizational forms within social movements.<sup>102</sup> They refer to three types of organizations based on different factors. First, the professional movement organizations are characterized by clear leadership with a non-existent membership base. Second, mass protest organizations combine internal democracy with certain levels of formalization and organizational structure. The third are the grassroots organizations which combine strong participatory orientations with low levels of formal structuration (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp.145-149). However, Melucci points out that "instead of thinking in *types of organizations*, one should use the dimensions relevant to the classification as *analytical tools* to make distinctions, to 'deconstruct' empirical unities, and to account for their complexity" (1996, p.326). Thus, Melucci provides vital criteria that are useful in analysing organizations' forms. For example, in terms of an organization's objectives, Melucci refers to two types of goals: expressive and instrumental. The former refers to the

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<sup>102</sup> Scott (1981) proposed three basic types of organizational forms: rational, natural, and open system. The first sees organizations as collectivities oriented to achieving specific goals with a relatively formalized structure. The second maintains that organizations are collectivities whose members/participants are little influenced by formal structure or official goals but share interests in the survival of the system and are engaged in activities. The third approach conceives of organizations mainly as unstable coalitions of interest groups that determine goals through a negotiation process (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 138).

satisfaction of the social and psychological needs of members through participation and solidarity and the latter are achieved in the attainment of specific goods external to the organization. Also, organizational structure can be articulated based on the requirements of affiliations and membership as imposed by the organization which can be divided into inclusive and exclusive organizations. According to Melucci, the inclusive organizations do not apply rigid mechanisms for selecting members, and they expect a relatively low degree of commitment. However, the exclusive forms of affiliation exercise a rigid control over the process of affiliation and require intense ideological identification, a high level of commitment, and total discipline. However, the most important criteria of an organization's forms are pertinent to the distribution of power within the movement or the level of internal democracy in the decision-making process. Melucci highlights two forms of organizations: authoritarian and participatory. The former reflects a high level of monopoly of power within the movement and the latter assumes more power and access for many members to the decision-making process (1996, pp.326-327).

As a social movement, the MB has a complex organizational structure that exhibits many of Melucci's analytical criteria. For instance, as mentioned in chapter four, the MB has two groups of objectives: expressive and instrumental. The former reflects the key objective as set by al-Banna "to lead the humanity towards the well-being under the banner of Islam" (al-Banna, 2002, p.168). The latter include: liberating Islamic countries from foreign occupation, resisting the materialistic and atheist wave that dominates Muslim societies, and reformulating the political, social, economic, educational, and judiciary systems to be based on Islamic principles (al-Banna, 2002, p.169). In terms of affiliation, as shown in chapter five, the MB has an exclusive system of membership and affiliation that requires a high degree of indoctrination and ideological education. The accessibility of individuals to the MB organization is limited and restricted by ideological and religious pre-requisites. As for internal democracy, the MB has a significantly centralized decision-making process that does not allow all members to participate in articulating the policies and decisions of the movement.

However, this can be partially explained by the authoritarian and oppressive environment in which the MB operates, meaning that leaders and members cannot meet and discuss issues freely. Nevertheless, as will become apparent, many members in the low levels of the MB hint at the tendency of leaders to employ authoritarian constraints in order to avoid internal criticism and disagreement.

### **6.2.2. The internal system of the organization**

Identity within the MB is not a product of the religious or theological convictions of members. Rather, it is a socially constructed outcome of the movement's organizational dynamics, symbolic production, and ideational framework set by its leaders. Accordingly, identity is contested in everyday life not only with the similar or rival identities but also more importantly within the movement itself. Each organization, as a social entity, encounters different views and conflictual interests of members, leaders, and stakeholders.

Melucci's seminal work on collective identity (1996) provides a persuasive analysis as to the impact of the organization's internal systems on a movement's activism. Melucci defines social movement as "an actor engaged in a conflict directly or indirectly affecting the distribution of power within a society" (1996, p.314). This definition illustrates the extent of complexity a movement seeks to build its organization. The more the movement is involved in social and political conflict, contests power and defies the existing regime and other dominant groups, the more solid and well-knit its organization should be. Melucci maintains "the organization of a movement must take shape in very specific conditions, both internal and external. It must maintain a high level of unity and integration within itself, at the same time facing the challenge of a hostile environment" (1996, p.315).

In addition, the internal structure of a social movement is subject to various influences depending on its objectives, activities, size and ideology. Thus, the crucial question is not how a movement can craft its organizational structure but more importantly how it can ensure its vibrancy and efficiency. Melucci highlights three

important and interrelated components of a movement's organizational system: the first is the internal system of allocating resources and production of symbols. The second is the formation of norms. The third is the recruitment and succession of leadership. As for the internal system, Melucci points out that an internal system should include a) a system of roles and the division of labour, b) mechanisms and criteria for the distribution of costs and benefits, and c) a structure of incentives. Thus, the key objective of that internal system is to pursue a movement's goals, adapt to the environment, and maintain the unity and self-preservation of the movement (Melucci, 1996, p.317).

As for the internal system of allocating resources, Melucci points out that each organization should have a system that defines roles and division of labour, mechanisms and criteria for distributing the costs and benefits among members, and a structure of incentives (Melucci, 1996, p.315). These elements have a significant impact on the organizational structure of the social movement. In order to realise its objectives, social movement has to have a clear order of leadership and a disciplined system of rewards and sanctions that can be used in generation collective action. More importantly, the internal system identifies the flexibility and rigidity of the organization. It determines the diffusion of power, the distribution of resources within the organization, and rewards and sanctions that motivate individuals to perform their organizational roles (Melucci, 1996, p. 315).

As to the formation of norms, Melucci defines norms as "the point at which operational needs (the allocation of resources) come together with the needs of integration and control (power)" (1996, p.317). Norms ensure the institutionalization of the movement in terms of the relationship between the leadership and its members, the flexibility or rigidity of movement's regulations, and the distribution of power within the movement. However, the degree or level of institutionalization depends on the complexity of the movement and the importance of its organizational structure. Obviously, the elasticity and rigidity of these norms vary from one organization to another (Melucci, 1996, pp.317-318). The third important element in a movement's

organizational structure is the recruitment and succession of leadership. This deals with the normative bases and mechanisms of selecting and promoting leaders within the organization and is vitally important in a secretive and highly ideological movement. Thus, the procedures and norms of leadership can affect the internal dynamics of the movement.

The research will extend Melucci's analysis of organizational structure in order to unpack the MB organization and understand its impact on the identity formation process. It will be argued that the MB's organizational structure is deliberately tailored to create a certain pattern of identity. That is, the organizational norms and regulations of the MB lead to a sub-culture, code of norms and values that dominate and orient individuals in their everyday life. This sub-culture, which is termed *ikhwanism*, internalizes the movement's objectives and ideology, governs its internal dynamics, and shapes members' identities. Put differently, this chapter investigates the interplay between the MB's organizational structure and its identity construction.

However, two important points need to be mentioned. The first is that the MB is not a mere social movement but is also a religious society. It blends religious preaching with political and social activism which has a significant impact on the level of commitment and obedience within the movement. Thus, the religious and devotional character of the MB affects the construction of its organizational norms and regulations. The second is that the semi-clandestine character of the MB imposes a specific pattern of organization. Operating in a hostile and repressive environment, the MB has to adopt certain norms and standards to ensure members' loyalty and commitment.

### **6.3. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MB**

The organizational structure of the MB is one of its enduring and potent features. Al-Banna was keen on erect a complex yet efficient and well-knit structure for the MB that dominated the movement and would be able to run its multiple activities for decades. The valuable work of Nathan Brown (2012) on the MB and its offshoots in the Arab world underscores this reality. Brown stresses that formality is "the most notable feature

of the Muslim Brotherhood model” (2012, p.66). Furthermore, he points out that movements that follow the MB model strive to have ”bylaws, clear criteria for various gradations of membership, regular arrangements, established procedures for selecting officers and determining policies and positions, collegial and consultative decision-making organs, and specialized bodies with clear function tasks” (Brown, 2012, p.67).

Since many leading studies have extensively discussed the organization and hierarchy of the MB (Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998)<sup>103</sup>, this chapter focuses primarily on the impact of the MB’s organizational structure on its identity formation. It probes the interplay between organizational structure and the identity construction process. Thus, the objective is to connect the ideational factors with the operational and organizational ones in order to grasp the identity formation process of the MB. In this regard, three key dimensions of the MB organizational structure are highlighted: 1) the impact of ideology on the movement’s organizational structure; 2) how organization and structure shape norms and regulations of the MB; and 3) the impact of institutionalization and the routinization process on members’ identities.

### **6.3.1. Ideology and Organization: How They Interplay**

The role of ideology in modelling a movement’s organization and structure is evident. The form of the organization, whether tight/loose, centralized/decentralized, democratic/ authoritarian, reflects the movement’s ideology and worldview.<sup>104</sup> Unlike scholars who undervalue the role of ideology in shaping social movements’ actions or decisions (Kalyvas 1996), this study argues that ideology does matter when it comes to the organizational structure and crafting a movement’s norms and standards that govern its members in everyday life. Furthermore, the interplay between the ideology and

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<sup>103</sup> The standard work of Mitchell (1969) provides a detailed explanation of the MB hierarchy. The hierarchy of the MB that was set by al-Banna in 1930s still operates today with a few amendments. For instance, the categories and levels of membership have been slightly altered (see Chapter 5). In addition, the selection and promotion of the middle and low rank leaders has become a subject for greater scrutiny.

<sup>104</sup> To avoid the conceptualization polemic of ideology, this study treats ideology as an operational concept or as Snow highlights as a “cover term for relatively stable and coherent set of values, beliefs, and goals associated with a movement or a broader, encompassing social entity, and is assumed to provide the rationale for defending or challenging various social arrangements and conditions” (2004, p.409).

organizational structure of the MB is significant. Whereas the ideology determines the breadth and complexity of the organization, the latter internalizes the ideology and movement's objectives within members' identities.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the ideology of the MB is broad, comprehensive, and to some extent vague. However, its impact on a movement's structure, organization, and internal dynamics and interactions is considerable. From the highest level of the MB, where the General Guide (*al-murshid al-'am*) presides at the top of the organization, to the lowest level of ordinary members, all members are connected by an inclusive ideology and broad objectives. However, the real impact of ideology on the MB's organizational structure stems from formulating the movement's norms and code of values, e.g. allegiance, obedience, commitment, solidarity, loyalty etc. Ironically, al-Banna established the MB organizational structure before he fully elaborated its ideology and mandate. He astutely blended the organizational structure (*tanzim*) with its ideology (*al-fikra al-Islamiyya*) in a strong but loose formula.

Furthermore, the religious character of the MB has a significant impact on its organizational structure. For many of the MB's ideologues and leaders, the organizational structure is not only an important tool with which to propagate the movement's ideology and attain its objectives but is also a religious duty.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, some of the MB's leaders treat organizational structure as an essential vehicle with which to spread the message of Islam (Yakan, 1981; Hawwa, 2004). For example, Said Hawwa,<sup>106</sup> an eminent Islamist ideologue, points out that Islamists should establish a strong organizational structure in order to realize *da'wa* objectives. He states, "building an organization is a necessity in order to reach Islamic objectives and deepening Islam

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<sup>105</sup> This is a common feature among Islamist movements, even those that are not heavily politicized, e.g. Salafis and Sufis maintain a minimum organizational structure that run their social and ritual activities.

<sup>106</sup> Said Hawwa (1935-1989) was a prominent figure in the Syrian offshoot of the MB. He is regarded as one of the most influential theorists in the MB's history. He joined the MB while he was in high school and became one of its eminent leaders during the 1970s and 1980s. He published more than 15 books which are used widely among many MB's branches around the world. He is regarded among the MB's members as a strategist and organizational theorist. However, Hawwa's most important books are his three volume series *Jund Allah* (Soldiers of God). For more about Hawwa see his website: <http://www.saedhawwa.com/>

among people” (Hawwa, 2004, p.15).<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, Fathi Yakan<sup>108</sup>, another prominent Islamist leader and ideologue, highlights the need for Islamist movements to build a vigorous organizational structure. For him, it is in fact a religious duty (Yakan 1981). He states, “Islamic *manhaj* should be based on an organizational system that can guide Muslims in everyday life” (Yakan, 1981, p.14).

The relationship between the MB ideology and organizational structure is reciprocal. While ideology identifies the type of objectives (expressive/instrumental), worldview (rigid/plastic), and normative reference of the movement, organizational structure is the vehicle that can turn these abstract elements into reality.

The impact of the MB ideology on its organizational structure is twofold: first, it helps the movement to expand its social network in order to disseminate its message and ideas; and second, it shapes programmes of the MB in everyday life. However, ideology does not result in an organisational structure that has a rigid and fixed character; rather, conversely, it gives the movement more flexibility and astuteness to manage its organization. Thus, in contrast to its broad and vague ideology, the MB has a disciplined and well-knit organisational structure. As a multifaceted movement, the MB cannot manage its multiple activities without a complex organizational structure. In order to spread its ideology, the MB has an extensive structure and wide-range network that encompasses the whole of society. Thus, the lowest levels to the highest executive board of leadership are strongly inter-connected.

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<sup>107</sup> Hawa claims that Islamists need to articulate an ‘Islamic organizational theory’ that could save the Muslim *umma* from the ‘intellectual disarray’. According to Hawa, the Islamic organizational theory should be based on Islamic ethics, good manners, and clarity of objectives. Furthermore, Hawa stresses the necessity for Islamist movements to have by-laws, an hierarchal structure, and a specific system for membership (2004, pp. 51-52).

<sup>108</sup> Fathi Yakan (1933-2009) was one of the most influential ideologues of Islamist movements modelled on the MB. He was born in Tripoli, Lebanon and was one of the founders of the Islamic Action Front in Lebanon in the 1950s and the leader of the Islamic Community (*al-Jama‘a al-Islamiyya*) movement. According to Elsassser, “Yakan is regarded as one of the most important contemporary protagonists of Muslim Brotherhood-style moderate Islamism in the Arab world, and the most influential Sunni Islamist leader in Lebanon” (2007, p.377). Furthermore, many Islamists regard Yakan as the mastermind of Islamic activism and pragmatism. His books focus primarily on Islamic activism, organization, and factionalism within Islamist movements. For a leading study on Yakan see Elssasser, 2007.

The organizational structure of the MB can be divided into two principal axes: vertical and horizontal. The vertical axis is the hierarchical structure which starts from the family *usra*, the basic organizational unit of the MB, to the Guidance Bureau (*maktab al-irshad*). In between these two come branches (*shu'ba*), districts (*manatiq*), and governorates offices (*muhafazat*). The chain of command and the flow of orders, decisions, and instructions from one level to another are governed by general by-laws and explicit procedures that are respected and followed by all members. As Brown aptly puts it, “the [MB] movements not only work hard to follow formal procedures; they take great pride in doing so” (2012, p.67).

On the horizontal axis are committees (*lijan*), sections (*aqsam*), and units (*wahdat*).<sup>109</sup> The communication and interaction on the horizontal axis are defined and articulated by internal by-laws and regulations. Importantly, they are set in a way that serves the chief objectives of the MB. Mohamed Mustafa, a middle-rank leader in the rural province of Sharqia, highlights that the organizational machinery of the MB is designed to realize its objectives. He stresses that all members including leaders and rank and file have to follow and abide by the regulations.<sup>110</sup>

The MB tends to instrumentalize its ideology in order to achieve social change. Munson (2001) illustrates the significant impact of the MB's organization on disseminating and spreading its ideology. He underscores the importance of the organizational structure of the MB in expanding its social network. According to Munson, the structure of the MB helps not only in allocating resources and expanding its social network but also in diffusing its ideology among different social strata. He points out that the federated structure of the MB facilitated its penetration to urban and suburban areas in Egypt during the 1930s and 1940s (Munson, 2001, p.498). He states, “This kind of [MB] ideological nimbleness was facilitated by its federated structure”

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<sup>109</sup> Mitchell called this axis the ‘technical’ or operational level which is mainly responsible for executing and implementing the plans and programmes of the MB. Mitchell divided this level into two aspects; the administrative machinery of the movement which consists of different committees (*lijan*), e.g. financial, policy, legal, statistics, services, etc; and the sections (*aqsam*) which are concerned with ideology and indoctrination, e.g. propagation section (*nashr al-da'wa*), family (*usra*), students, etc. (Mitchell, 1969, p.170).

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Mohamed Mustafa on 1 April 2012.

(Munson, 2001, p.498). Furthermore, the broadness of the MB ideology helps its organization to survive regime repression. According to Munson, the MB structure was key to maintaining the movement against the attempts by the state to eliminate its activities (2001, p.499). Therefore, one of the salient features of the MB lies in its mobilization efficiency. The MB has a significant capacity to mobilize thousands of members during elections and protests. The movement's ideology galvanizes members and spurs their willingness to devote time and effort in order to realize the movement's goals.

In addition, ideology is a key source for the MB's political programmes, statements, and actions.<sup>111</sup> Brown (2012) underlines the significance of the MB's worldview in shaping its programmes and ideological stance. Ironically, despite the distinctiveness of the MB's ideology, it is fairly broad and vague, or in Brown's words, characterised by "stickiness...and hardly codified" (2012, p.52). The MB leaders and strategists always claim to align their plans and decisions with the movement's ideology. They employ the vagueness and stickiness of the MB ideology to articulate certain policies. Therefore, despite the broadness of the MB ideology, its plans and platforms are more clearly defined. As Brown precisely puts it, "movements based on the Muslim Brotherhood model have only vague ideology texts, and their leaders are generally highly practical people rather than ideologues or intellectuals" (2012, p.72). Moreover, while Brown acknowledges the vagueness and stickiness of the MB's ideology, he underlines how this can work for the movement's flexibility. He states,

Islamist movements modelled on the Muslim Brotherhood are indeed highly ideological. And their ideologies do inform their actions. But their ideologies are also fairly general and allow considerable flexibility not on merely tactics but also on strategy and especially on the question of elections and even on democracy (Brown, 2012, p.73)

Additionally, the broader and vaguer the ideology of a movement, the more its organizational structure can be elastic and adaptable. For instance, the broad and vague slogan of the MB, "Islam is the solution", is a visible example of the MB's ideological

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<sup>111</sup> This part draws heavily upon Brown's findings on the MB.

elasticity. When they are asked about the slogan, leaders of the MB give various and loose answers that are still meaningful. For Mahmoud Ghozlan, a senior member in the MB, the slogan reflects the MB comprehensive ideology. He states, “Islam is the solution is not a mere slogan but rather it is our firm belief that Islam should encompass all aspects of life” (Ghozlan, 2007, accessed on 25 July 2012). However, Essam al-Erian, Deputy of the MB’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), views that the slogan is reflected in the platform of the party. He states, “we adhere to the slogan of Islam because it reflects our party program” (al-Erian, 2011, accessed on 25 July 2012). The differences among MB leaders reflect how ideology is perceived and implemented in everyday life. On the one hand, it implies that the MB should have multiple activities in order to transfer this slogan into reality, but, on the other hand, it gives more room for the leaders to manipulate both members and the public. Therefore, the MB tends to employ this slogan on different political occasions, e.g. elections, protests, etc. in order to mobilize members and legitimize its cause in the face of political adversaries.

Furthermore, ideology has a significant impact on the decision-making process within the MB. Leaders and cadres have to align their decisions with the movement’s objectives and ideological commitment. This legitimizes the leaders’ decisions and actions and grants the leaders significant symbolic and executive power. As al-Erian puts it, “our decisions are made for the sake of *da’wa*, not the organization.”<sup>112</sup> Therefore, any opposition to leaders’ decision is perceived not only as violating the organization’s rules but also as disobeying the ideological mandate of the MB. Thus, those who challenge or disagree with the leadership are subject to rebuke and punishment and any violation of the movement’s regulations and rules can be met with different degrees of penalties. For instance, when Al-Wasat group disagreed with the MB’s leadership they were rebuked and expelled out of the movement in 1996. It was clear that the leadership would sacrifice those who don’t follow the MB rules and regulations.

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<sup>112</sup> Interview on 24 December 2010.

### **6.3.2. *Ikhwanization* through Structure: The Construction of MB Norms and Regulations**

Melucci defines norms as "the point at which operational needs (the allocation of resources) come together with the needs of integration and control (power)" (1996, p.317). Moreover, norms and regulations articulate the relationship between leadership and members, identify membership rules and procedures, distribute power within the movement, and the structure of incentives. Melucci (1996) considers the role of an organization's norms on shaping the internal dynamics of social movements. He highlights four roles that norms can play within the organization: 1) governing the relationship between the organization and members; 2) regulating the relationship between different components of the organization; 3) articulating the relationship between movement and society; and 4) specifying the objectives and means of collective action (Melucci, 1996, p.318).

To ensure connectedness, integration, and competence of the organizational structure, social movements construct a set of norms and regulations that control structure and dominate members. These norms reflect the code of values and standards that members abide by in everyday life. Furthermore, the norms of the organizational structure solidify a movement's coherence and unity. They generate a sense of loyalty and commitment among members towards the movement's objectives, leadership, and ideology.

When individuals join the MB, they are educated as to how to follow the rules and regulations of the organization. However, the enforcement of these rules is part of individuals' duty towards the movement. Individuals freely match their behaviour 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. Internal divisions or disagreements are treated strictly. The hierarchical order of the MB adopts a top-down approach that does not allow much space for splits or cleavages in the structure. Those who have different views can express their disagreement, but softly. Apparently, the MB's norms have played a significant role in preserving organizational coherence, despite the brutal and recurrent repression of different regimes. Moreover, the MB astutely employs these norms and values in order to control members and reinforce their commitment and loyalty to the movement.

#### **6.3.2.1. *Ikhwanism* as a sub-culture**

The MB has a strict set of norms, regulations, and rules that govern its members and leadership in everyday life. From its foundation, al-Banna was keen to create a distinctive culture that could preserve the MB and differentiate it from the plethora of other societies. In many of his tracts, al-Banna stressed the necessity of setting clear rules and regulations that could connect members with the movement. Over the past eight decades, and with the increasing politicization of the MB, its organizational structure has become one of its main features. The foundation of the MB organizational structure lies in its sub-culture which this study dubs '*ikhwanism*'. It refers to the cognitive code of norms, standards, and regulations that encompasses and guides MB members in their everyday life. It embodies the code of identity that signifies the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the MB which could preserve its organization over time. When individuals join the MB, they abide by its rules and regulations. After a while, members start to act not as individuals but rather as Brothers: *ikhwan*.

Furthermore, *ikhwanism* reflects the development of the MB's organizational structure over time. Therefore, if al-Banna was the leader who sowed the seeds of *ikhwanism* in the MB ideology, it was his successors who implanted it within the MB organizational structure. Al-Banna wrote a specific tract, *Risalat al-Ta'alim*, which identified the norms and code of values of the MB. This epistle is of prime importance

in the MB indoctrination process; all fully-fledged members have to memorize it and act upon in everyday life.<sup>113</sup>

Nevertheless, it should be noted that *ikhwanism* is not a rigid set of sacred or spiritual ideas but a constellation of social norms and values that spring from the internal dynamics and interactions within the MB. It represents the underlying factors that explain why a certain action or behaviour of the MB or its members comes to the fore. Put differently, it is the culture that articulates the MB's behaviour, views, and modes of action in everyday life. In summary, *ikhwanism* is the main mechanism for generating symbolism and creating meaning constructions that shape the MB identity in everyday life. Moreover, *ikhwanism* as an identity does not negate the fact that MB's members can have other personal identities. In other words, to be and to act as an *ikhwani* does not contradict of being a lawyer, a doctor, or a teacher. Indeed, the uniqueness of the MB among other Islamist movements that its members have multiple layers of identity that facilitate the dissemination of the MB's ideology in the wider society.

The next section unpacks *ikhwanism* and illustrates how it interacts with members, leaders, and the organizational structure of the MB. The MB's code of norms and regulations is revolved around a certain set of values which constitute the core of *ikhwanism*. These norms are allegiance (*bay'a*), obedience (*ta'ah*), trust (*thiqa*), commitment (*iltizam*), and loyalty (*intima*). However, before explaining these norms, two important points should be mentioned. The first is that the MB tends to blend these norms with Islamic teachings and principles to ensure its symbolic power and influence. Second, these norms are imbued and instilled within the MB organization, structure, and members' mind-set through the intensive socialization and incubation process highlighted in Chapter 5. It is part of the identity construction process of the MB.

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<sup>113</sup> It is widely known that al-Banna wrote *Risalat al-Ta'alim* to the devoted and committed members who reached the level of *mujahidin* on the membership scale. However, after al-Banna's death all members have adopted the epistle as a part of their commitment to the MB.

**a) Allegiance (*bay'a*)**

Allegiance is a central norm and procedure in the MB.<sup>114</sup> It has its roots in the Islamic traditions.<sup>115</sup> According to Landau-Tasseron, *bay'a* is commonly interpreted as “an oath given by a subordinate to a leader as a token of allegiance” (2010, p.1).

From the MB's inception, al-Banna was keen to stress the religious character of *bay'a* by invoking Qur'anic verses and emulating the Prophet Muhammad who took the oath from new converts to Islam in the early years of his message.<sup>116</sup> When al-Banna established the MB, he took the *bay'a* from the first six members who, along with him, created the MB in 1928. He states in his memories:

One evening of March 1928, six brothers came to my house and asked to work together for the sake of Islam and the interests of the nation (*watan*). I said; let us exchange pledges with Allah (fa-l-nubayi' allah 'ala...) that we shall be soldiers in the service of the Call to Islam (or, the Cause of Islam, *da'wa*), for the life of the homeland and the glory of the [Islamic] community depend upon [this call/cause].<sup>117</sup> (cited in Landau-Tasseron, 2010, p.1).

Furthermore, al-Banna linked *bay'a* not only to himself as a leader but more importantly to the MB's cause and ideology (Landau-Tasseron, 2010, p.2).<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> This part draws heavily upon the leading study of Landau-Tasseron on leadership and *bay'a* in the MB (Landau-Tasseron 2010). Landau-Tasseron provides a sophisticated historical account of the role of *bay'a* in the MB, particularly during al-Banna's era in the 1930s and 1940s.

<sup>115</sup> The term *bay'a* is cited repeatedly in the Qur'an in different contexts. However, the most common understanding of *bay'a* is that it is a contract or pledge between the ruler and the ruled to obey Allah and to serve the Islamic message. Historically, *bay'a* was a traditional Islamic institution that used to refer to “a pledge exchanged with a leader, entailing obligations of leaders and led, towards one another” (Landau-Tasseron, 2010, p.2). The caliphs were given *bay'a* by 'ulama (*ahl al-hal wa'l-aqd*) and then the *umma*.

<sup>116</sup> It is stated in the Quran that Prophet Muhammad took *bay'a* from those who converted to Islam in the verse “Those who exchange pledges with you (i.e. Muhammad), it is with Allah that they exchange them” (Quran, 48:10). Landau-Tasseron highlights that al-Banna was smart enough to deliberately invoke and emulate the Prophet when he established the MB. She states, ‘like the Prophet in his time al-Bannā created an enclave, that is, a new society that consolidated around an ideology and a way of life and separated itself as far as it could from the society in which it lived’ (2010, p.5).

<sup>117</sup> Some scholars contest al-Banna's story portraying it as myth (Jansen, 1997; Landau-Tasseron, 2010).

<sup>118</sup> Landau-Tasseron highlights the link between the emergence of the concept of *bay'a* and the *Sufi* character of al-Banna. Based on historical investigation, she points out that the submissive relationship between al-Banna and his followers resembles the spiritual relationship between the *Sufi shaykh* and his novices. Hence al-Banna chose his title to be the General Guide (*al-murshid al-'am*), similar to a *Sufi shaykh* being called *murshid* (Landau-Tasseron, 2010, pp.3-4).

In addition, al-Banna was keen to internalize the concept of *bay'a* within the MB structure. He enforced *bay'a* as an integral procedure for joining the MB. Ever since, *bay'a* has become one of the central concepts of the MB organization. More importantly, al-Banna linked *bay'a* with other values and norms of the MB, e.g. obedience, commitment, etc. In *Risalat al-Ta'alim*, al-Banna identified ten pillars of *bay'a* that should be adopted by members in order to become full and active members in the MB. These pillars are: understanding, sincerity, action, Jihad, sacrifice, obedience, perseverance, devotion, brotherhood, and trust (al-Banna, 2002, p.185). Al-Banna provided a detailed explanation for each element of these pillars and asked all members to memorise and act upon them. Among the many tracts written by al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta'alim* stands as one of the most influential in relation to the MB organization. The 20 tenets of *al-Usul al-'Ishrin*, which explain the meaning of understanding as a pillar of *bay'a*, are highly valued and respected by the MB members. They represent a normative reference for the adherence and commitment of the leaders and members.<sup>119</sup>

The implications of *bay'a* on the MB organizational structure are considerable.<sup>120</sup> First, on the procedural level, members cannot have their membership activated without giving *bay'a*. As discussed in Chapter 5, the MB's multi-tiered system of membership identifies several requirements and conditions that individuals have to attain to become fully-fledged members. Once these conditions are met, individuals are allowed to give *bay'a*. Thus, *bay'a* is an instrument of access to the MB. Despite the fact that there is no fixed statement or formula for *bay'a*, the most common one stipulates that each member should give the following oath:

I pledge with God to abide by the rules of Islam and jihad for Allah's sake, and to fulfil and commit myself to the conditions and obligations of the Muslim Brothers, and to listen and obey its leadership whether willingly or

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<sup>119</sup> The pillar of understanding is considered to be the most important pillar of *bay'a* in the MB. Al-Banna explained this pillar in 20 points which delineate the MB's worldview and orientates members in everyday life (al-Banna, 2002, p. 219).

<sup>120</sup> Indeed, many of the MB ideologues consider *bay'a* as the most important norm in the MB. For instance, Hawwa treats *bay'a* as the core value and norm of the MB in order to achieve its goals. Despite that Hawwa views *bay'a* as not binding, he believes that it is the only way to solidify and strengthen the MB organization (Hawwa 1980: 101).

not (*fi'l-manshat wa'l-makrah*) as long as he succumbs to Allah. I swear by God on that and he is the witness on my pledge (Mitchell, 1969, p.165).

According to the MB by-law,<sup>121</sup> the oath of *bay'a* should be given to the General Guide (*al-murshid al-'am*); however, because of practical difficulties and due to security surveillance, the oath is given to the middle-level leaders in branches and the provinces who subsequently give it to the General Guide.<sup>122</sup>

Nevertheless, members perceive *bay'a* in different ways. While some stress the importance of giving *bay'a* in connecting them to the organization, others view it as merely a symbolic procedure. For example, Ammar El-Beltagi highlights the role of *bay'a* in ensuring members' commitment and loyalty to the MB,<sup>123</sup> while Abdurrahman Ayyash plays down the importance of the oath. He points out that "giving *bay'a* is a symbolic act rather than an actual procedure; therefore I didn't give *bay'a* literally."<sup>124</sup> However, both assert that each member should embrace the ten pillars of *bay'a* and act upon them to become a full member of the MB.

Second, on the practical level, *bay'a* reveals the pattern of relationship between members and leaders which tends to be based on submission and adherence. *Bay'a* implies that members should obey and follow the leadership. Members are required to respect and abide by leaders' orders and decisions even if they disagree with them. Giving *bay'a* means that members should succumb and devote themselves for the sake of the movement. Thus, leaders' decisions are perceived as orders that seek to realize movement's objectives.

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<sup>121</sup> The MB had seven bylaws since its foundation (1930, 1944, 1948, 1951, 1982, 1994, and 2009). Although there is a slight difference between these bylaws, one of the main distinctions between them is in the oath of *bay'a* and the membership criteria. For instance, the first bylaw in 1930 did not mention the *bay'a*. However, in 1944 *bay'a* was added to the MB's bylaws. However, in the 1990s the *bay'a* was removed from the MB's bylaw as along with the degrees of membership. While Landau-Tasserou explains this notion as result of the familiarity of the MB's members with movement's regulations and norms, this study contends that the main reason behind this change was in the obsession of the MB with security. Revealing the MB's degrees of membership can imperil members and leaders as it could allow security forces to monitor and arrest them.

<sup>122</sup> Over the past three decades, the MB was under tough and continuous repression and surveillance under the Mubarak regime. It was impossible for members to meet without endangering their life and freedom. Thus, it was difficult for members to give *bay'a* to *al-murshid al-'am* in a public meeting or ceremony.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Ammar El-Beltagi on 26 March 2012.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash on 26 March 2012.

However, while members justify their submission and subordination to leaders by organizational discipline and necessity, the religious foundations of *bay'a* are unavoidable. Members perceive *bay'a* as a religious duty not just an organizational norm. According to Mohamed Mustafa, *bay'a* reflects a member's religious devotion. He states, "*bay'a* is a contract between me and God who will hold me accountable for this in the afterlife."<sup>125</sup> He ardently defends the importance of *bay'a* in maintaining the links between members and the MB. Thus, some members believe that violation of *bay'a* can be religiously prohibited (*haram*).

Furthermore, *bay'a* fosters a sense of commitment among members. As Landau-Tasseran puts it, "By choosing the term *bay'a*, al-Banna expressed all at once the ideology, the modes of its implementation, and the commitment to both" (2010, p.12). Landau-Tasseran maintains that "for al-Banna *bay'a* was not merely an expression of loyalty to the leadership, but an articulation of the ideology to which the Brothers committed themselves" (2010, p.12).

Third, *bay'a* is a fundamental tool for internal promotion. According to the MB's by-laws and structure, members cannot attain the highest level of membership in the MB, which is active members, *'amil*, without giving *bay'a*. Thus, to give *bay'a*, members have to become strongly dedicated to the MB's ideology and leadership. They have to grasp the ten pillars of *bay'a* and act accordingly in everyday life. Thus, *bay'a* reflects a high degree of commitment and loyalty towards the movement and its leadership. Moreover, *bay'a* is the vehicle for promotion within the MB. Members cannot get promoted and move from one rank to another without aligning their behaviours and manners with the pillars of *bay'a*. Thus, the relationship between *bay'a* and the multi-tiered system of membership is vital. *Bay'a* functions as a fundamental instrument by which to securitize the commitment and loyalty of members towards the MB's objectives and rules.

Fourth, *bay'a* includes certain duties and responsibilities that should be carried out by members. Thus, any violation or abuse of *bay'a* rules can result in organizational

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with Mohamed Mustafa on 1 April 2012.

and ideational punishment, e.g. suspending the membership, marginalization, etc. According to Karim Radawan, a member of the MB's *Shura* (Consultative) Council, any violation of *bay'a* rules makes members subject to penalties (Al-Wazeri, 2012, accessed on 15 July 2012). In a crude manner, *bay'a* implies that members are fully responsible for their actions and practices not only to the leadership but also to God,<sup>126</sup> and that it is both symbolic and practical exposition of power.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that beyond its sacred character, *bay'a* has organizational face. It is a sort of contract that entails mutual duties and responsibilities between two parties: the ruler and the ruled. Thus, the MB leadership is also responsible in the face of members, albeit indirectly. This became clearer after the significant amendments in the MB General By-laws (*al-la'iha al-'ama*) introduced in 1982. It has been made clear that the General Guide (*al-mursihd al-'am*) is responsible to members and is entitled to give *bay'a* as well. According to the current by-law, *al-murshid al-'am* is obliged to give the oath to the General Consultative Council (Majlis al-Shura al-'Am), the legislative body of the MB which is responsible of electing *al-murshid al-am* and Maktab al-Irshad (the Guidance Bureau). According to the by-law, *al-murshid al-'am* should give the following pledge, "I give my word to Allah and the Sunna of His messenger as far as I am able and to abide by the programme of the MB and its basic law, thereby performing the resolution of the Society regarding myself even if they differ from my opinion, Allah is witness" (The Basic Law of the MB, accessed on 20 July 2012). Moreover, according to the by-law, *al-murshid al-'am* can be held accountable for his decisions and actions if he violates the rules and regulations of the MB or cannot perform his job. Thus, the relationship between members and leadership became more balanced.

However, to avoid criticism over the unlimited powers *bay'a* grants the leadership, the MB ideologues differentiate between two types of *bay'a*: the general (*al-*

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<sup>126</sup> Despite the religious and symbolic character of *bay'a*, members who oppose the leadership or reject its decisions can still abandon the movement without breaking their oath. The multiple interpretations of *bay'a* enable members to contest and challenge the leadership. Hence, one of these interpretations is that the oath or *bay'a* is not given to individuals or persons but rather to the ideology and principles of the movement which members can embrace even if they leave the MB.

*bay'a al-ama*) and the special (*al-bay'a al-khasa*) (al-Barr, 2012, accessed on 15 July 2012). According to Abdurrahman al-Barr, a member of the Guidance Bureau and jurist (*mufiti*) of the MB, the general *bay'a* is the one that should be given to the leader of the nation (the *imam*) who rules the country according to Islamic teachings and principles. Hence, all citizens are required to give *bay'a* to the *imam* and obey him as long as he obeys Allah. The special *bay'a* is a pledge or oath between a group of people who agree to work for the sake of Islam. In this case, the leader can take *bay'a* from the group and this *bay'a* is only binding on the group not the entire society. The MB, according to al-Barr, adopts the special version of *bay'a*, not the general one (al-Barr, 2012).<sup>127</sup>

Over time, *bay'a* has become a mutable and flexible norm. According to Landau-Tasserion, members still can contest and reject the leadership's decisions without annulling their *bay'a* (Landau-Tasserion, 2010, p.17). Since *bay'a* is not given to an individual but in order to apply Islamic teachings in their daily life, members can oppose their leaders without committing a sin.<sup>128</sup>

Moreover, *bay'a* is a subject of contestation within the MB. Some members, particularly those who embrace a reformist agenda, object to the political use of *bay'a* to suppress opponents.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, members have different choices by which to oppose the movement's leadership without breaking their *bay'a*. For instance, they can abandon the weekly meetings or freeze their membership for a period of time to protest certain decisions. More importantly, members can use *bay'a* to de-legitimize the leadership. For example, some MB senior leaders, such as Mohamed Habib, the former

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<sup>127</sup> Al-Barr was defending Mohamed Morsi, the newly elected Egyptian president, following the controversy over his relationship with the MB after the elections. As all members, Morsi gave *bay'a* to the General Guide Mohamed Badie. However, after the elections he had to break his *bay'a* and Badie has publically released Morsi from his pledges and commitment to the MB. See the video of Badie at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfoYRRmKKus>

<sup>128</sup> According to Landau-Tasserion, the changing position of *bay'a* in the MB organizational structure was due to the changing circumstances whether internally, i.e. the demands for more democracy within the MB, or externally, i.e. the relationship with the branches of the MB outside Egypt (2010, p.16). The changes have made *bay'a* more loose and subject to progressive interpretations. For instance, according to Landau-Tasserion, the words such as 'I swear' (*uqsimu*) and the clause stipulating complete trust in the leadership have been removed (Landau-Tasserion, 2010, p.15).

<sup>129</sup> For a historical review of the old procedures and circumstances of giving *bay'a* from the 1950s to the 1990s see (Landau-Tasserion, 2010, pp.13-22).

deputy of the previous General Guide Mahdi Akef, Abdelmoniem Abulfotouh and Ibrahim al-Za'farani, did not give *bay'a* to Badie as a protest against the way in which he was elected.<sup>130</sup>

In summary, *bay'a* can be best described as an agreement between members and the leadership of the MB based on mutual commitments and responsibilities. As Landau-Tarreson puts it, "*bay'a* is both a concept and practice... As such it has always been broad and flexible" (2010, p.24).

#### **b) Obedience (*ta'a*)**

Obedience or *ta'a* is a fundamental norm in the MB's organizational structure. It is the flip side of *bay'a* whereby members should submit to regulations and the leadership. After giving *bay'a* members become fully committed and responsible for their own actions and behaviour. They are obliged to follow the movement's rules and leadership. Like *bay'a*, *ta'a* is derived from the Islamic traditions.<sup>131</sup> Thus, the religious and symbolic effect of *ta'a* is significant. It enables the MB leaders to maintain influence and control over the organization. Not surprisingly, al-Banna was keen to make *ta'a* one of the main pillars of *bay'a* in *Risalat al-Ta'alim*. Al-Banna persistently stressed the vital role of *ta'a* in achieving the MB's objectives (al-Banna, 2002).

Moreover, the oath of *bay'a* states that members should 'listen and obey whether willingly or not', which embeds the concept of obedience and subordination within the MB organization. As Lanadaw-Tasserion notes, al-Banna aptly blended allegiance *bay'a* and *ta'ah* together to create the credo for the MB (2010, p.7). Some MB leaders view the link between *bay'a* and *ta'a* as inseparable. Thus, the motto 'Listen and Obey' has become one of the most repeated slogans of the MB. However, this slogan provokes much criticism and harms the image of the MB as an authoritarian organization. Therefore, the MB's leaders and ideologues started to differentiate between two types of

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<sup>130</sup> Chapter seven will extensively discuss the crisis caused by electing Mohamed Badie and its consequences.

<sup>131</sup> Many Qur'anic versus and prophetic traditions induce Muslims to obey the rulers. Historically, the caliphs and sultans abused the principle of *ta'a* to prolong their rule and suppress any opposition.

*ta'ah*: blind obedience (*ta'a 'am'ya*) and sighted obedience (*ta'a mubsra*). According to Amer Shemakh, a cadre in the MB, the blind *ta'a* is to follow leaders blindly without questioning their decision or actions, which, according to him, does not exist in the MB (Shemakh, 2012, accessed on 10 July 2012). However, the sighted *ta'a* allows members and cadres to voice their opinion and express their views, even if these disagree with leaders. Furthermore, some members state that *ta'a* is contingent upon the leaders' commitment to the movement's objectives and as long as they work for the sake of Islam.

Nevertheless, the differentiation between the blind and sighted *ta'a* remains vague and tactical. Many of the MB's youth have repeatedly criticised the application of *ta'a*. They accuse leaders of abusing the norm to impose certain decisions or justify the stance of the MB on certain issues. Thus, over the past decade, the MB has witnessed a growing trend of dissent among the youth who have been infuriated by the political stance and internal decisions of the MB leadership.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, some of these youth claim that the MB exhibits an 'absolute' pattern of *ta'a* that does not allow real discussion or criticism within the movement. Ahmed Samir al-Koumi, a former member of the MB, asserts that the MB does not allow members to voice their opinion freely (interview by Naguib, 2012, accessed on 10 July 2012). According to him, members have to obey orders and commands of leadership blindly and without discussion.

The impact of *ta'a* on the MB's identity is considerable. First, it reinforces the pattern of subordination and submission within the MB. The hierarchy of the MB adopts a top-down approach that makes it difficult for members at low levels to influence the decisions and policies of the MB. The relationship between members and leaders is more subservient than equal. Furthermore, members in branches and districts cannot hold their leaders accountable, not only because of the movement's rules but also of the symbolic power of *ta'a* which impedes accountability within the MB.

Second, *ta'a* is employed by the MB's leadership to accommodate, and sometimes suppress, internal calls for reform and change. Mustafa al-Naggar, an ex-

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<sup>132</sup> The phenomenon of youth dissent in the MB is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

member in the MB and political activist, points out that the MB always manipulates members' calls for change. He repeatedly criticizes the MB leaders and code of norms which according to him made the MB an "autocratic" organization (al-Naggar 2009, accessed on 10 July 2012). In one of his blogs, al-Naggar states, "when people hear words like obedience, allegiance, battalion, trust, etc. they start to believe that the MB has a secret and quasi-militant organization" (al-Naggar 2009, accessed on 10 July 2012).

Third, *ta'a* is utilized to maintain the internal coherence of the MB and avoid any rifts. Islamist movements, particularly the MB, used to be accused of internal stagnation and inertia. According to critics, *ta'a* is responsible for this state of inertia. Furthermore, those who oppose or disobey the commands and decisions of the MB's leadership are usually marginalized and sometimes demonized. Mohamed Hamza, a mid-level member and prominent blogger, asserts that the MB does not tolerate troublemakers or dissenters who challenge the leadership. He points out, "the listen and obey motto is a mere weapon used by leaders to maintain unity of the organization and avoid cleavages."<sup>133</sup> Moreover, the MB employs the religious and symbolic character of *ta'ah* to de-legitimize and discredit dissent. The MB tends to treat dissenters as "deviants" (*munharifin*) from the MB path. Ayyash points out, "if you confront your leader, he will, indirectly, demonize and discredit you among members."<sup>134</sup>

More importantly, operating in a hostile and repressive environment makes the MB very sensitive to criticism and firm in its response. It always endeavours to contain internal disputes in order to maintain its image as a unified movement. Therefore, instead of expelling or questioning dissent, the MB isolates and marginalizes them. Those who persist are marginalized. Not surprisingly, the MB has seen many dissenters leave the movement without fuss.<sup>135</sup>

Fourth, like allegiance, *ta'a* is an influential instrument for promotion. Those who obey and follow the rules are likely to be promoted and obtain higher positions.

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<sup>133</sup> Interview with Mohamed Hamza on 11 January 2012.

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash on 26 March 2012.

<sup>135</sup> The internal rifts are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Leaders use *it* as an indicator of devotion and loyalty. As Abdurrahman Ayyash puts it, "the more you 'listen and obey', the higher your chances in promotion will be."<sup>136</sup>

Indeed, the procedures for promoting members are a matter of a great importance but also controversy. On the one hand, it ensures the movement's ability to maintain control over members. The merits of promotion originate mainly from members' loyalty and commitment. The more they obey and follow the leaders, the more they will be trusted and promoted. According to Ayman Ashraf, the only way to become a *naqib* (captain), a leader of an *usra*, is to "listen and obey."<sup>137</sup> On the other hand, according to many of the interviewees the standards and measurements for promoting members are fairly subjective. They express dissatisfaction with the rigidity and personification of the promotion process within the MB. and highlight that the promotion criteria focus mainly on members' religious and personal traits, i.e. obedience and devotion, rather than on their competencies or skills. Anwar Hamed, a mid-rank member of the MB, highlights the subjectivity of the promotion process, pointing out that the lack of objectivity and clear measurements cost the MB many of its qualified members who left because they were less "submissive to the leadership" (Hamed 2008, accessed on 12 July 2012). One of the main criticisms of the MB's membership system is the lack of transparency and democracy in promoting members. The critics refer to the excessive power and control of middle-rank cadres and leaders over promotion procedures and tactics which according to some young members are subjective and based on an individual's listening and obedience (*asam' wa ta'ah*) to the leadership rather than their qualifications and merits.

### c) Trust (*thiqa*)

Trust (*thiqa*) is the third norm of the MB organizational structure. It is an integral pillar of *bay'a* as articulated by al-Banna in *Risalat al-Ta'alim*. Al-Banna treats *thiqa* as an essential element for helping the MB to reach its objectives. He called upon members to be fully trusting in their leaders. Furthermore, al-Banna asserted that relations between leaders and members should be as that between the soldiers and their

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<sup>136</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash on 26 March 2012.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Ayman Ashraf on 27 March 2012.

leader. Indeed, that is how the MB leaders treat members as obedient soldiers. In order to strengthen the position of the leadership in the face of members, al-Banna connected *thiqa* with *da'wa*. He stated, "the leader is part of the *da'wa* and latter cannot be possible without the former and the more leadership and members have mutual trust, the stronger our movement will be" (al-Banna, 2002, p.24). Clearly, al-Banna sought to give symbolic power to *thiqa* as a norm by linking it to the chief objective of the MB: to disseminate *al-fikra al-Islamiyya*.

The concept of *thiqa* is prevalent within MB literature and among members. The degree of trust reflects not only individual submission to the leadership but more importantly their devotion and commitment to the movement's ideology and message. As with the other norms, the MB tends to blend *thiqa* with religious symbolism. According to Mohamed Hamed Eliwa, a mid-rank member of the MB, *thiqa* is a matter of belief and faith. He points out, "*thiqa* is part of our inner belief that connects members with Allah" (Eliwa, 2011, accessed on 12 July 2012). Eliwa asserts that members should have a firm belief in the leadership based on "obedience, respect, and love" (Eliwa, 2011, accessed on 12 July 2012).

Moreover, the MB treats *thiqa* as a fundamental instrument with which to solidify and enhance its internal structure. In his explanation of *thiqa*, Emad Ghanim, a Brotherhood member, highlights five aspects. The first is trust in the movement's approach (*manhaj*) which is derived from the Islamic teachings. The second is trust in the organization and the collective action which, according to Ghanim, should be for the sake of Islam and *da'wa*. Ghanim ardently urges members to believe that the MB is the only "trustful" organization that should be followed. The third is trust in the MB's decisions, which according to him, should be followed and implemented by members. The fourth is trust in leadership and submission to its decisions, which Ghanim links to leaders' piety and their willingness to follow *shura* (consultation in making decisions). The fifth aspect is trust in God's help. Ghanim calls upon members to believe and trust that Allah will support the MB and its endeavours to revive Islam (Ghanim, 2011, accessed on 14 July 2012). Moreover, the vast majority of MB members perceive *thiqa*

as a duty and part of their commitment to the MB and its leadership. It is embedded in their mind-set that trust in the leadership can save the movement and enable it to realize its objectives. Therefore, some MB leaders defend trust as a fundamental tool by which to enhance the movement's coherence. According to Mohamed Mustafa, trust is the only way to measure members' commitment and loyalty. He points out, "the more members succumb to the leaders and follow the regulations, the more solid and cohesive our organization will be."<sup>138</sup>

In addition, *thiqa*, like other norms, has a significant impact on social interactions and dynamics within the MB organizational structure. The pattern of relationship between leaders and members is shaped by trust, confidence, and loyalty. The procedures of membership, promotion, etc. are primarily built on trust rather than members' competencies. The more members trust and succumb to leaders, the higher they can be promoted within the movement. Not surprisingly, the rigid and dogmatic application of trust creates criticism and discontent among members, particularly younger members. According to Mohamed Hamza, some MB leaders advocate a 'blind trust' that enforces members to follow leaders without questioning their decisions or actions.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, some MB youth contest the concept of trust with the leadership. Al-Komi, for instance, points out that leaders tend to misuse trust to avoid any discussion or critique of their decisions and behaviour (interviewed by Naguib, 2012, accessed on 10 July 2012). Like *ta'a*, the prejudicial application of *thiqa* irritates many members. Promotion is based on the degree of trust in the leadership, not the qualifications of members. Abdurrahman Mansour, for instance, highlights that members can only be promoted if they obey and trust leaders.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, such application of trust eliminates the accountability and responsibility of the MB leadership. Leaders tend to use members' trust to manipulate them and avoid accountability (Melucci, 1996). According to Amr Soliman, a young member in the MB, some leaders use trust not to make rational decisions but rather to suppress opponents. He explains,

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<sup>138</sup> Interview with Mohamed Mustafa on 1 April 2012.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Mohamed Hamza on 11 January 2012.

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Mansour on 26 March 2012.

“trust is a double-edged sword; on the one hand it strengthens the relationship between leaders and members, but on the other hand it undermines responsibility and accountability of the leadership.”<sup>141</sup>

#### **d) Commitment (*iltizam*)**

Commitment is a crucial component of social organizations. Thus, it is considered to be a central concept in the social movements literature. Social movements persistently seek to create a sense of commitment among their members in order to sustain their collective action (Burke & Reitzes 1991; Gamson 1991; Burke & Stets 1999). Burke and Stets define commitment as “a binding tie between an individual and some other social entity, whether an identity, another individual, a group or organization, or an exchange relationship” (1999, p.384). Social movements constantly tend to construct and reinforce this ‘tie’ to generate collective action and ensure internal coherence and unity.

Nevertheless, commitment in socio-religious movements is unique. Its importance goes beyond the instrumental use to the essence of commitment itself as one of the movement’s chief objectives. Islamist movements endeavour to transform and reshape individual identities to become religiously committed. The ritualization and habituation process in these movements aims to internalize and imbue certain types of norms and values that can be perceived as Islamic. Thus, Islamists passionately seek to Islamise social norms and practices of members’ everyday lives.

The concept of commitment (*iltizam*) is one of great importance within the MB. It is treated as a tool and an outcome. On the one hand, as a social movement, the MB utilizes commitment to strengthen its internal organization. The movement invests in individuals’ religious inclinations and adherence to generate a sense of commitment that goes beyond the self. On the other hand, as a proselytization society, the MB seeks to reshape individuals’ views and manners to align with Islamic values and principles to make them pious and religiously committed (*multazimin*). For some leaders, the MB’s

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<sup>141</sup> Interview with Amr Soliman on 25 March 2012.

organizational structure is mainly aimed at realizing this goal (Yakan, 1983; Hawa, 2004).

As Melucci points out, commitment to a movement is based on solidarity and strong identification with the goals of the organization (1996, p.318). Thus, the intensive incubation and socialization process of the MB discussed in Chapter 5 plays a crucial role in fostering members' commitment. Throughout their membership, members are subject to a contentious process of re-formulating their identity. The MB members tend to accept this process fervently as an expression of their religious devotion. Furthermore, they become committed not to the movement's ideology but also to its leadership.

The process of constructing commitment within the MB is worthwhile. It is an on-going process of reconfiguration and reshaping members' views and perceptions. It starts when individuals join the movement and continues until they leave it. According to Mohamed Mustafa, the main goal of *usra*, the basic unit in the MB, is to create and maintain the sense of commitment among members.<sup>142</sup> He asserts that members are constantly connected with the MB's objectives, cause, and ideology throughout their membership life.

However, sustaining commitment requires a movement to intensify its socialization and habituation process (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p.292). Thus, the incubation process of MB members provides different venues for participation and interaction in everyday life. Camps, seminars and weekly meetings all play an influential role in nurturing and enhancing individuals' commitment and facilitating their integration within the movement. Moreover, the MB tends to surround members with different types of symbolic and meaning constructions through different social networks at home, work, neighbourhoods, etc.

The impact of *iltizam* on the MB organizational structure is significant. According to many interviewees, there are four types or levels of commitment within the MB. The first is members' commitment to the movement's objectives and cause. The second is commitment towards the movement's rules and regulations. The third is

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<sup>142</sup> Interview with Mohamed Mustafa on 1 April 2012.

commitment towards leaders. The fourth is the commitment towards other fellow members.

At the outset, MB members are educated to become committed to the movement's objectives and cause. The MB tends to keep members connected with its ideology through the notion of *al-fikra al-Islamiyya*. According to Salah Ghorab, members' commitment can be enhanced keeping them fully attached and connected with *al-fikra al-Islamiyya*. He emphasizes, "commitment is not mere words but rather actions and deeds for the sake of Islam and the *jama'a*."<sup>143</sup> Moreover, the oath of *bay'a* underpins individual commitment. Once they give the oath, members are expected to become self-committed and work hard to pursue the MB's objectives. Mohamed al-Naggar, a young MB member, views commitment as a fundamental component of his membership. He states, "my commitment to the MB's cause is unshakable; it is part of my identity."<sup>144</sup>

The second manifestation of commitment in the MB is pertinent to the movement's rules and regulations. Members express their commitment by respecting the rules and following the movement's canons. The MB has a clear and firm by-law by which members should abide. Indeed, members tend to follow the by-law as a part of their initial commitment towards the movement. According to Sherif Ayman, following the rules of the movement is an essential part of "my commitment". He points out: "to be a real brother, *akh multazim*, one should devoutly follow the movement's rules and regulations and act upon them."<sup>145</sup>

Commitment and respect for leaders' decisions is an important norm in the MB organization. Members keenly obey and follow leaders' orders as a sign of commitment and dedication to the movement. According to Mohamed Abduh, a mid-rank member, trust and obedience in the leadership are important emblems of members' commitment (Abduh, 2012, accessed on 20 July 2012). Indeed, members' commitment is measured

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<sup>143</sup> Interview with Salah Ghorab on 24 December 2012.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Mohamed al-Naggar on 3 April 2012.

<sup>145</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 26 March 2012.

by the degree of their submission and obedience to the leadership. For some, it reflects their religious devotion and organizational loyalty.

Finally, members' commitment is related to their relationship with how members perceive and deal with each other. They adopt the notion of brethren (*ikhwa*) as a mechanism for communication and interaction. As Mohamed Sarahn puts it, "I do not feel my belonging to the MB without interacting with my fellow brothers."<sup>146</sup>

#### e) Loyalty (*intima*)

Loyalty (*intima*) is one of the most enduring features of the MB identity. It denotes the adherence and devotion of members to the MB's ideology and leadership. From the early years of the MB, al-Banna was keen for loyalty to permeate throughout the MB's ideology and structure. In one of his tracts, *Da'watuna* (Our Call), al-Banna called upon members to become loyal to the *da'wa* and *al-fikra al-Islamiyya* (al-Banna, 2002, p.35). He identified seven ways for members to foster their loyalty to the MB: 1) to have belief in the movement's objectives and cause; 2) to become a good believer and preacher of the MB ideology; 3) to have a strong willingness to work for the movement; 4) to be a good example for others; 5) to adopt secrecy in their activities; 6) to have a firm belief and trust in the leadership; and 7) to abide by the laws and regulations of the MB.

Loyalty is closely related to individual commitment. Indeed, commitment is considered to be the most visible manifestation of a member's loyalty. Members tend to show and stress their loyalty by aligning their manners and practices with the movement's code of norms and values. Moreover, the religious grounds for loyalty are undeniable. The movement's ideologues and leaders tend to link loyalty to a member's religious adherence. Yakan, for instance, has written a tract, *What Does My Belonging to Islam Mean?*, that stresses the meaning and importance of loyalty. Yakan urges that members should become firmly committed and loyal to the Islamist movement. He identifies two types of loyalty: loyalty to the movement's ideology and cause; and

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<sup>146</sup> Interview with Mohamed Sarhan on 2 April 2012.

loyalty to its leadership. He asserts that those who seek to work for Islam should have a firm belief in the movement and its objectives (Yakan, 1983, pp.137-140).

Moreover, MB members perceive loyalty to be part of their religious commitment. According to Sayyid Sho‘iyb, a mid-rank member, members’ loyalty to the MB reflects their belief that Islam should be a part of their daily life. He points out, ”belonging to the MB is belonging to Islam as understood by the movement” (Sho‘iyb, 2011, accessed on 22 July 2012).

The creation of loyalty is an integral goal of the socialization and indoctrination process in the MB. Religious lessons, rituals and weekly meetings aim to reinforce their sense of belonging and loyalty to the MB. According to Mohamed Sarhan, loyalty is a duty for members to fulfil. He points out, ”loyalty to the MB is not something to know but to practice in everyday life.”<sup>147</sup>

The impact of loyalty as a norm on the MB organizational structure is significant. Through loyalty, the MB ensures domination and control over its organization. First, members’ loyalty helps the MB to uphold its coherence and unity. Since the loyalty of members is measured by adherence and commitment to the movement’s ideology and leadership, differences are marginalized. Abdurrahman Ayyash highlights that committed members tend to obey their leaders even if they disagree with them. He states, “loyalty is above personal opinions.”<sup>148</sup>

Second, loyalty helps the MB to maintain control over members. As mentioned, members tend to stress their loyalty to the leadership by following decisions and acting accordingly. They proudly obey and follow their leaders not only because the rules and regulations should be respected but as a part of their religious commitment. As Mohamed al-Naggar puts it, ‘obeying my leader is part of my commitment towards the movement and the *da‘wa*.’<sup>149</sup>

Third, the MB employs loyalty to stretch its organizational umbrella. One aspect that demonstrates members’ loyalty is their willingness to disseminate the MB ideology.

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<sup>147</sup> Interview with Mohamed Sarhan on 2 April 2012.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash on 26 March 2012.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Mohamed al-Naggar on 3 April 2012.

By doing so, they recruit new members widening the movement's reach. As Ashraf Ayman puts it, "attracting new members is part of our loyalty as a duty."<sup>150</sup> The circles of *da'wa* are considered as influential avenues for recruiting new members. Cadres and leaders employ social networks (e.g. friends, kinship, neighbourhood, etc.) to expand the organizational umbrella of the MB.

Finally, loyalty operates as a shield for the MB from regime repression and security penetration. As we will discuss in the next chapter, the brutal policy of the regime forced the MB to adopt a relatively strict and semi-clandestine structure that is based on the loyalty and adherence of members. Without ensuring a strong loyalty and commitment, the MB could have become more vulnerable to security suppression and, importantly, disintegration.

### **6.3.3. The Impact of Institutionalization on *Ikhwan*'s Identity**

The organization of social movements is complex. One way to deal with this complexity is through institutionalizing, or routinizing, the norms, values, and practices of members. Melucci points out that each movement constructs its constitutional system of norms in order to foster a certain degree of institutionalization (1996, p.315). He maintains, "the norms of the organization guarantee integration, regulate the criteria for the distribution of rewards, and provide the critical point of reference for every process of transformation of the organizational structure" (Melucci, 1996, p.316). The organizational norms and regulations provide the MB with a cognitive map that can preserve the movement from internal cleavages and external infiltration. However, as Melucci points out, the degree of institutionalization relies upon the complexity of the organization and the relationship among members and with the leadership (Melucci, 1996). The more levels, tasks, ideational and operational objectives the organization has, the more the institutionalization process needs to be durable. The MB operates in a hostile environment which places significant pressure on its organizational structure.

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<sup>150</sup> Interview with Sherif Ayman on 12 January 2012.

Without institutionalizing the norms of allegiance, loyalty, commitment and obedience, it would become significantly more difficult to maintain the movement.

The MB organizational structure has different mechanisms through which to institutionalize and routinize its norms and standards, including crafting by-laws and regulations, setting regular meetings and assemblies of members, and intensifying the socialization process. The movement also has a set structure of moral and material incentives that foster a sense of commitment and loyalty among members (Wickham, 2002). However, the most important mechanism is through imbuing and embedding the notion of *ikhwanism* within the MB structure and members' mind-set. According to many interviewees, members have to embody MB norms and values in their practices and actions. They should act not as individuals but rather as committed members: as *ikhwan*. Salah Ghorab, for instance, highlights that individuals start to act as fully committed and responsible members as soon as they join the movement.<sup>151</sup>

The *ikhwanization* of social norms, values, and practices is a strategic goal of the MB, not only to ensure the Islamisation of members' morals and practices but more importantly to guarantee their commitment and loyalty towards the organization. Hence, members are constantly surrounded by symbolic images and meanings that shape their worldview and attitudes. It is the organizational structure rather than just the ideology that keeps members connected with their leadership and other fellow members. With time, *ikhwanization* has become a social reality that members take for granted in their everyday life.

Unlike other social movements in which members can have a temporary or transient identity (Klandermans, 1994), the MB norms and values tend to create a resilient and permanent identity for members. Husam Tammam, a renowned Egyptian expert on the MB, highlights that the MB creates a parallel community for its members that reinforces their commitment and loyalty to the movement. He points out, "the Brother, *al-akh*, lives, educates, make friends, finds a job, gets married, all through the *ikhwan* community" (Tammam, 2012, p.48). Indeed, this collective sense is one of the

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<sup>151</sup> Interview with Salah Ghorab on 24 December 2010.

enduring features of the MB. With time, *ikhwanism* becomes the foundation of the MB identity. According to Melucci, collective identity provides actors with the “common cognitive framework that able them to asses their environment and to calculate the costs and benefits of their actions“ (1988, p.35). Clearly, the organization of the MB plays a prime role in crafting this cognitive framework of identity. The continuous processes of indoctrination, ritualization and routinization reshape individuals’ identities and foster the sense of self-identification. At some point, members start to merge between their identities and that of their movement. As Sheikh Abduelkhalig Al-Sherif, a 60-year-old MB member, puts it, “after sometime within the MB, members start to feel that they not only live within the MB but also the MB lives within them.”<sup>152</sup>

In addition, the organizational structure of the MB reinforces the relationship among members. The regularity of internal activities (i.e. seminars, battalions, camps, etc.) helps members to interact, communicate, and most importantly to homogenize. Mohamed Mustafa stresses the importance of weekly and monthly meetings and assemblies in fostering collective identity, particularly in rural and suburban areas. He points out, “camps (*mu’askarat*) help members to interact and socialize with other fellow members and to generate a sense of brethren among themselves.”<sup>153</sup> Such a collective sense of brotherhood (*ikhwwa*) is an outcome of the MB organizational structure.

Furthermore, the organization allows leaders to orchestrate, and sometimes manipulate, individuals’ identities. The chain of command, hierarchy, and the multi-tiered membership system of the MB enables leaders to dominate and reshape individuals’ perceptions and behaviours. According to Haitham Abu Khalil, a former leader, the leadership has a strong influence on members’ identity that thwarts their independence (Abu Khalil, accessed on 12 July 2012). Moreover, the top-down style of the MB affirms the impact of leadership on each individual’s identity. It creates a certain type of submissive and obedient identity. As mentioned, members are required to abide

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<sup>152</sup> Interview with Abduelkhalig Al-Sherif on 5 April 2012.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Mohamed Mustafa on 1 April 2012.

not only by the rules and by-laws of the organization but also by its norms and standards. They do that mostly voluntarily as a part of their religious devotion and moral commitment.

#### **6.4. CONCLUSION**

The analysing of the MB organizational structure demystifies its identity construction process. This chapter examines how ideology, organization, and identity interplay. It reveals how the MB employs structure, hierarchy, and norms in reshaping members' identities. It highlights the role of MB organizational structure and its internal dynamics in generating the movement's norms and regulations.

It is argued that the MB develops a certain type of sub-culture, *ikhwanism*, which dominates and guides members in everyday life. *Ikhwanism* provides members with the symbolic code of norms and standards that reinforce their sense of loyalty and commitment towards the MB.

Furthermore, the MB organizational structure operates as a mechanism that merges norms, values, and members' practices. It interweaves key religious values—allegiance (*bay'a*) and obedience (*ta'a*)—with mundane ones—trust, commitment, and loyalty—to strengthen and articulate members' identity. The MB leadership employs organizational structure to dominate members and control the movement's structure. Hence, it could maintain internal unity and avert fracturing.

In addition, the chapter examines the relationship between institutionalization and members' identity. The processes of indoctrination and routinization of the MB's norms and regulations impact on the individuals' identity. They produce meaning constructions and symbolic imageries about the MB's ideology, cause, and objectives. Thus, they underpin the members' sense of belonging and loyalty to the MB.

**Chapter Seven**  
**THE ENFORCED COHERENCE:**  
**THE MB IDENTITY UNDER REGIME REPRESSION**

**7.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the ability of the Muslim Brotherhood to maintain its identity and coherence under regime repression. It examines the effects of the environment on the identity formation process within the MB. Under the Mubarak regime, the MB was a constant target for regime repression which consistently sought to undermine its leaders and eliminate its social and political activism. Thus, its members were systematically arrested, imprisoned and tortured. Nevertheless, the MB only survived but also maintained its activism, unity and organizational coherence. Contrary to conventional wisdom which assumes that political actors have little space to operate within an authoritarian environment, the MB flourished and became more politically and socially visible under the repression of the Mubarak regime.

This chapter aims to answer two key questions: first, how did the MB maintain its identity and coherence under regime repression? and, second, how did the movement's leaders employ repression to solidify their grip on power and control the organization? In other words, this chapter attempts to understand why the MB did not split under Mubarak's attempts to eliminate it. Hence it explores the effects of the repressive environment on MB unity and integration. Political environment is the place where resources, potential members, adversaries, and targeted audience can exist. It contains opportunities, as well as threats and constraints, that affect social movements. Therefore, a repressive environment limits a movement's ability to allocate resources, recruit new members, and generate collective action. However, the most important effect of a repressive environment lies in its impact on a movement's unity and coherence. Operating in a hostile and aggressive environment places significant pressure on the movement and its members who become subject to regime oppression, surveillance, and harassment.

Nevertheless, some movements tend to accommodate and tolerate regime repression. They alter their strategy and structures in order to adapt and operate within the repressive environment. Furthermore, certain movements tend to use regime repression to maintain internal unity and coherence. They employ repression as a tool that binds members and fosters their commitment and solidarity. Moreover, during repression, a movement's survival becomes the chief priority of the leadership and members. A movement's sense of self-preservation overrides internal divisions or disputes. Thus, the greater the regime repression, the more solid a movement's structure and identity become. This chapter contends that the MB has shrewdly capitalized on regime repression to preserve its unity and consolidate members' identity. Contrary to the desires of the Mubarak regime, the relentless waves of repression bestowed on the MB a resilient sense of self-preservation that enhanced the movement's integration and coherence.

In addition, this chapter investigates the impact of regime repression on the balance of power within the MB. It argues that repression helped factions, such as the conservatives, to dominate and control the MB. It contends that the conservative current employed regime repression in order to deflect calls for reform of the movement. The MB is an umbrella that includes different currents, factions, and generations who compete and debate over ideology, discourse, strategy, and tactics. However, the movement's leadership was able to accommodate and contain internal differences. They safeguarded the MB's organization from fissuring under Mubarak. Furthermore, the attempts to divide or split were mainly by individuals and did not hamper the MB from operating as a solid and united movement.

The resilience of the MB poses serious questions for scholars and observers who endeavour to fathom the essence of the MB's identity. For instance, how could the MB operate for decades under regime repression? How could the movement survive different waves of repression without fissuring? What are the strategies and tactics that the MB used in order to maintain its coherence and unity over years? And more importantly, how could the MB accommodate and defuse internal calls for change and

reform? In other words, what are the effects and consequences of regime repression on the MB's ideology, organizational structure, and coherence?

This chapter seeks to provide plausible answers to these questions, which on the one hand can enhance the understanding of the relationship between repressive regimes and social movements, and on the other hand, explain the resilience of certain of these movements. Therefore, the argument is that repression is not necessarily a hurdle for social and political agents. Conversely, it can become a viable tool by which a movement can strengthen its unity and consolidate members' identities. More importantly, the greater the repression, the more resilient and solid a movement can become. That is, movement's leaders use repression in order to justify certain decisions, adopt specific political or ideological behaviour, and, most importantly, de-legitimize and undermine internal opponents.

## **7.2. SEMI-AUTHORITARIANISM, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND POLITICAL CHANGE**

The focus of this chapter is concerned with the controversial relationship between semi-authoritarian regimes and opposition movements. The literature on semi-authoritarianism suggests that autocratic regimes tend to manipulate the opposition through different mechanisms, such as competitive yet meaningless elections (Schedler, 2002; Brownlee, 2007; Blaydes, 2011), decorative representation in parliament and government, and restricted access to the media (Levitsky & Way, 2002; Magaloni, 2006; Brown, 2012).<sup>154</sup> As Schedler puts it, "Electoral authoritarian regimes neither practice democracy nor resort regularly to naked repression. By organizing periodic elections they try to obtain at least a semblance of democratic legitimacy, hoping to satisfy external as well as internal actors" (2002, p.36). Moreover, elections can strengthen autocratic regimes' legitimacy and justify its actions. As Blaydes argues, these regimes endure because of conducting frequent and competitive elections (2011, p.1).

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<sup>154</sup> Since the end of the 1970s, many authoritarian regimes have become semi-authoritarian, hybrid, or competitive authoritarian systems that attempt to maintain power through ostensibly democratic means (Schedler, 2002; Magaloni, 2006; Brownlee, 2007).

In addition, the relationship between the political environment and social movements is one of great importance. As noted by Melucci, “the environment of an organization is made up of the wider society in which the movement is situated and from which it draws its support base” (1996, p.323). Hence, social movements always seek to adapt with the changing environment in order to avoid regime repression and maintain their identity and unity. The environment is composed of the state, or the political regime, and other social actors, supporters as well as adversaries. An influential body of scholarship has argued that social movements operate within the structures and frames that are outlined and created by the state (Jenkins & Klandermans, 1995; Melucci, 1996; Kriesi, 2004). As Kriesi argues, “the configuration of political actors at any given point in time is partly determined by the structures of the political context” (2004, p.74). Moreover, many scholars contend that social movements can be viewed, in a sense, as product of their ‘structural’ environment (Tarrow, 1998; McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996). According to the political opportunity structures (POS) thesis, social movements emerge, act, and interact (McAdam, 1982; Kriesi, 2004).

Since the end of the 1970s, political process theory (PPT) and the POS model have dominated the terrain of social movements (Tarrow, 1998; McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996). These provide a distinctive contribution to the understanding of the relationship between the state, or more precisely the political system, and social movements (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001). According to social movement theorists, political opportunities shape a movement’s ability to allocate resources, mobilize members, frame identity, and generate collective action (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001, pp.16-17). As noted by Kitschelt, POS are composed of “specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others” (1986, p.58).

However, other scholars contest the assumptions of PPT by questioning the hegemonic nature of the POS model in analyzing and understanding the activism of social movements (Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Goodwin & Jasper, 2004). For instance,

Goodwin and Jasper (2004) provide a robust critique of the PPT based on its structural bias. In their seminal volume, *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion*, Goodwin and Jasper vigorously assert that PPT “remains conceptually muddled insofar as political process theorists have been unable to reach agreement about the definition of its basic concepts” (2004, p.4).

Moreover, Gamson and Meyer highlight the risks of relying on POS as a dominant analytical paradigm in explaining the emergence and dynamism of social movements. They state:

The concept of political opportunity is in trouble, in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment—political institutions and culture, crises of various sorts, political alliances, and policy shifts... It threatens to become an all-encompassing fudge factor for all the conditions and circumstances that form the context for collective action (1996, p.275).

By identifying the ‘trouble in paradigms’, Goodwin and Jasper dismantle the structural bias of the PPT and advocate for a more incorporative and constructive approach that can adequately address the multi and micro dominions of social movements (2004, pp.75-93). Interestingly, the founding fathers of the PPT have acknowledged some of the problematic and elusive pitfalls of PPT (McAdam, 1996, p.24). Moreover, they recognize the defects of PPT as an analytical model that can explain contentious politics (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001).<sup>155</sup>

Nevertheless, regardless of the debate between the proponents and opponents of PPT, the need to comprehend the logic and rationale behind collective action persists. As Jasper states; “If we ignore theory in social movement research, we will make more conceptual mistakes. But the most productive way to do theory today may be to avoid

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<sup>155</sup> McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly highlight four main defects: “(1) It [PPT] focuses on static, rather than dynamic relationships. (2) It works best when centered on individual social movements and less well for broader episodes of contention. (3) Its genesis in the relatively open politics of the American “sixties” led to more emphasis on opportunities than on threats, more confidence in the expansion of organizational resources than on the organizational deficits that many challengers suffer. (4) It focused inordinately on the origins of contention rather than on its later phases.” (McAdam et al., 2001, p.42).

big theories and concentrate on small ones. An explicit but realistic theory of action may help us get the little things right” (2010, p.974). Therefore, to preserve the interpretive power of PPT, Kriesi (2004) confines the usage of the POS model to the structural characteristics of state-variables (Jasper, 2010). She differentiates between the open and the closed structures, which determine the accessibility of social movements into the political system (Kriesi, 2004, p.69). This openness or closure gives social movements signals as to whether to participate or not. It helps the movement to assess the rewards and risks of its participation (Melucci, 1996; Brown, 2012). Likewise, Melucci asserts that the degree of the closure or openness of the political system has a significant impact on the characteristics of the organization and whether it can be inclusive or exclusive (Melucci, 1996, p.317).

### **7.2.1. Regime Repression and Identity Formation**

Despite the critique of the PPT as an analytical model, it still has validity in examining the relationship between political regimes and social movements. However, instead of claiming a causal or linear relationship between both variables, albeit in a structural fashion, it is important to investigate how social movements can employ the regime actions and behaviour internally. In other words, instead of looking at the reaction of a certain movement towards the regime actions such as repression or exclusion, it is more important to grasp how repression interplays with the internal dynamics of the movement. Therefore, this chapter seeks to unravel the interaction between regime repression and a movement’s identity and coherence. It suggests that there is a crucial link between repression and the identity formation process within the movement. Under relentless waves of oppression and exclusion, some movements, particularly those that are highly ideological and ideational, tend to focus inward in order to preserve their unity and integration. Over time, a sense of resistant or defensive identity is generated which comes to dominate members. As noted by Castells, defensive or resistance identity is the product of regime hegemony and repression (Castells, 2010, p.9). Moreover, Castells maintains that the *identity of resistance* leads to

the formation of communes or communities. Hence, it constructs “forms of collective resistance against otherwise unbearable oppression, usually on the basis of identities that were, apparently, clearly defined by history, geography, or biology, making it easier to essentialize the boundaries of resistance” (Castells, 2010, p.9). Furthermore, in highly ideological movements, such as the MB, regime repression heightens the indoctrination and socialization process. Therefore, the greater the repression, the more intense the identification process becomes. Under regime repression the main goal of the movement becomes focused on how to *survive* rather than how to *participate*. Over time, the sense of self-perseverance becomes more visible and influential among members who seek to avoid divisions within the movement. As Melucci highlights: “During a conflict the internal solidarity of the group reinforces identity and guarantees it” (1996, p.74).

Under the Mubarak regime, the MB has shown an unusual degree of unity and resilience, compared with other political forces in Egypt which experienced different degrees of factionalism and fragmentation. Despite the brutal repression and humiliation under Mubarak, the MB was able to remain a solid resilient movement. True, the MB may have witnessed a number of quarrels, divisions, and sometimes splits over the past decade particularly between the old and young generations; however, they did not result in a significant disintegration or disunity within the organization.

Therefore, the crucial question is: why did the MB not fissure? This study contends that regime repression played an important role in maintaining the MB as a united movement. Moreover, it argues that the resilience of the MB’s identity can be attributed, in a sense, to the hostile and oppressive environment in which the movement was operating. Contrary to the aims of Mubarak, the MB was able to protect its organization and maintain individual solidarity.

As discussed in the previous chapters, to ensure commitment and adherence of its members, the MB established a complex system of and criteria for membership. Those who seek to join the movement have to undergo an intensified process of identification and indoctrination that can reshape their views and mindset.

Furthermore, the continuous repression influenced the movement's system of norms and values. As a result of repression, the MB developed a sub-culture of victimization that dominated members and impacted on their identity. This sub-culture helped the MB to connect members as victims of Mubarak's regime and enhanced their sense of common identity. Hence the victimization culture became a significant tool that was able to preserve the MB's integration and unity. Moreover, the MB's leaders employed this culture in order to maintain members' commitment to the leadership. Members perceived regime repression as an ordeal (*mihna*), albeit psychological, that could only be faced by solidarity and unity. Therefore, the MB leaders have repeatedly utilized the ordeal narrative to preserve the movement's integration. More importantly, certain MB leaders, particularly the conservative faction, used regime repression in order to exclude, and sometimes suppress, those who held different views. Thus, since the middle of the 1990s, many reformists were alienated and marginalized. While some of them left the MB, others remain silent and alienated.

In summary, whereas the ordinary members of the MB perceived regime repression as a threat to their existence, the MB's leaders viewed it as an opportunity that enhanced their control over the movement. The next section sketches how the MB employed regime repression in order to maintain unity and consolidate members' identity.

### **7.3. MUBARAK REGIME AND THE MB: THE UNAVOIDABLE CONFRONTATION**

Until his downfall in February 2011, Hosni Mubarak presided over one of the most durable and aggressive semi-authoritarian regimes in the third world (Kassem, 2004; Bwonelee, 2006; Nicola, 2007; King, 2009; Shehata, 2009).<sup>156</sup> Since he took power following the assassination of his predecessor, Anwar Sadat, in October 1981,

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<sup>156</sup> Ironically, before the uprising of 2011, no one would have predicted that Mubarak's resilient regime would have fallen in less than three weeks. Nevertheless, the downfall of Mubarak can, in a sense, be interpreted by its durability not the opposite. The unrelenting closure of political space that preceded the uprising accelerated the collapse of the Mubarak regime.

Mubarak sought to dominate and control the political scene. After a very short honeymoon period with the opposition (Tripp & Owen, 1989; Amin 2011), during which he launched a series of limited and cosmetic reforms in pursuit of legitimacy (Al-Awadi, 2004), Mubarak turned against the opposition and attempted to undermine its leaders. By empowering his party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), Mubarak solidified his grip on power and secured his rule since the 1980s and until his downfall in 2011.

After taking power, the chief challenge to Mubarak was Islamist movements, particularly those that espoused a radical and violent ideology. While he attempted to eradicate extremists who belonged to al-Jama‘a al-Islamiyya and the Jihad Movement, he adopted a softer and more tactical approach with the MB. Mubarak realized that it would be highly risky to fight on two Islamist fronts at the same time (Tawfiq, 1996). Hence, he deliberately ignored the MB during the 1980s.

On its side, the MB astutely seized the new atmosphere created by Mubarak to entrench its social network and maximize its political gains (Ibrahim, 1996; Wickham, 2002; Al-Awadi, 2004; El-Ghobashy, 2005). The POS that opened during the 1980s gave the MB a chance to rebuild its organization and expand its social network after decades of dysfunctionality under Nasser and Sadat (Al-Awadi, 2004, p.55). The movement plunged into electoral politics and achieved major success in the parliamentary elections of 1984 and 1987. Because it was banned, MB members competed as independent candidates. However, due to the extant Electoral Law 114/1983, which followed the absolute list system that required political parties to reach a threshold of 8% of the votes before seats could be gained in parliament, the MB was forced to build electoral alliances with other political forces. Hence, in the 1984 and 1987 elections, the MB allied with al-Wafd Party and Labour Parties (Hizb al-‘amal al-Islami and al-Ahrar Party) respectively (Ibrahim, 1998; Wickham, 2002; El-Ghobashy, 2005) and achieved surprising results.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, the MB dominated several

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<sup>157</sup> In 1984 the MB received eight seats out of 58 gained in its alliance with al-Wafd Party and in 1987 it received 36 seats out of the 56 gained by the Islamic Alliance (El-Ghobashy, 2005).

professional syndicates. Dissatisfied with the corruption and poor socio-economic performance of the syndicates (Al-Awadi, 2004; Zahid, 2010), many doctors, lawyers, and engineers have sought to change the executive boards. Emboldened by its emerging political clout, the MB fielded many candidates in the professional syndicate and associations elections. The movement won the majority of seats in medicine, pharmacy and engineering (Wickham, 2002; El-Ghobashy, 2005). Therefore, by the end of 1980s, the MB had become the major opposition movement in Egypt. The movement consolidated its presence in the political arena and expanded its social network across the country (Ibrahim, 1996; Wickham, 2002; El-Ghobashy, 2005). Moreover, the movement witnessed the birth of a new political generation that would lead the movement for the ensuing two decades (Al-Awadi, 2004; El-Ghobashy, 2005).

Clearly, the rewards associated with political participation encouraged the MB to invest heavily in politics during the 1980s. However, Mubarak came to realize that the expansion of the MB was undermining his growing legitimacy and threatening his rule. Therefore, by the beginning of the 1990s, confrontation between Mubarak and the MB was unavoidable. During the 1990s, the Mubarak regime carried out the heaviest crackdown by the state against the MB since the 1950s and 1960s (El-Ghobashy, 2005). Mubarak employed the surge of violence in Egypt during the first half of the 1990s to suppress all Islamists regardless if they were violent or non-violent. The MB, in turn, sought to de-legitimize the regime and discredit its party, NDP. Hence, it boycotted the parliamentary election in 1990 and sought to renew its alliance with other political forces. The MB also sought to replace its political activism by expanding its social activities and network in the public sphere. Its candidates swept many syndicate and university elections (Ibrahim, 1998; Al-Awady, 2004; El-Ghobashy, 2005).

By the mid-1990s, the relationship between Mubarak and the MB reached an impasse. As noted by Wickham: “After more than a decade of toleration, the government launched a major counteroffensive against the Muslim Brotherhood, arresting many of its most dynamic leaders and hammering away at its reputation by

condemning it as an ‘illegal organization with ties to extremist groups’” (2002, p.3).<sup>158</sup> In addition, the regime resorted to the military trials to jettison the MB’s active leaders. Thus, many were persecuted and imprisoned for periods of more than five years (Ibrahim, 1998). As Al-Awadi points out, the period from the 1995 to 2000 witnessed the regime’s strongest dependence on coercion as a response to the growing political and social influence of the MB (Al-Awadi, 2004, p.189).

### **7.3.1. Mubarak and the MB... From an Utter to a Subtle Conflict**

If the 1990s were dubbed by a noted MB leader as the ordeal decade,<sup>159</sup> the new decade in the second millennium can be best described as a subtle confrontation between Mubarak and the MB or, as Brown (2012) puts it, the cat-and-mouse game. After a decade of outright confrontation, Mubarak and the MB became more attuned to the rules of the game and they unconsciously shifted positions during the 2000s. During the first half of the decade, while the MB became more offensive and bold, Mubarak, for many reasons related to regional changes and international pressure, became more defensive.

This era can be divided into two phases. The first is 2000-2005 and the second is 2005-2010. During the first phase, the MB sought to reposition itself within the boundaries set by the regime; however, with a more offensive and bold strategy than previously. Not only did the movement participate in the 2000 elections in spite of the legal restrictions and security harassment against its candidates, it also nominated for the first time, a woman, Jihane al-Halafawi, to run in the elections; a step that took many by surprise but further provoked the regime that had been responding brutally (El-Ghobashy, 2005).<sup>160</sup> Moreover, the MB sought to re-build its relations with other

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<sup>158</sup> More details about Mubarak’s harsh campaign against the MB during the 1990s can be found in Tawfiq (1996), Wickham (2002) and El-Ghobashy (2005). However, it should be noted that Mubarak, for the first time since Nasser, used the military courts against the MB leaders, many of whom were detained and sentenced in the 1990s (Wickham, 2002).

<sup>159</sup> Interview with Essam al-Eryan on 25 December 2010.

<sup>160</sup> Al-Halafawi was nominated in Alexandria’s al-Raml district. The nomination reflected a significant change in the MB ideology and religious thinking. Although the MB issued a statement in 1994 that allowed women to participate in public life, it was the first time in the MB’s history that the organisation

political parties after a decade of isolation. Senior leaders, such as Essam al-Eryan and Abdelmoniem Abulfotouh, attempted to improve MB relations with secular, leftist, and liberal forces (El-Ghobashy, 2005, p.398). Nevertheless, the boldest and provocative move by the MB came when the newly elected General Guide, Mohamed Mahdi Akef, issued the Political Reform Initiative in March 2004 which unequivocally advocated a civil and democratic state (Essam El-Din, 2004), while the initiative was another indication that the MB was determined to adopt political reform including democratic values. Furthermore, it was an attempt to embarrass the regime that previously described the MB as a regressive movement. For many, the MB's initiative was a hallmark in the ideological and political development of the MB (El-Ghobasy, 2005). It reaffirmed the MB's commitment to democracy and the Initiative addressed, in detail, the social, political, and economic problems that faced Egypt. It also provided a comprehensive vision of the MB on how to deal with these issues.<sup>161</sup> By the close of 2004, the MB had developed a good relationship with Nasserists and liberals particularly after the launch of the Kifaya (Enough) movement<sup>162</sup> which became an umbrella for many of the political opposition leaders.

After the re-election of George W. Bush in the 2004 US presidential election, the relationship between the US and Egypt entered a critical era. The Bush administration adopted a freedom agenda to promote democracy and political reform throughout the Middle East. However, it complicated the relationship between the US and its long-standing authoritarian allies in the region, including Mubarak. Hence, Mubarak, for the first time in three decades, became under severe pressure from the US administration to adopt politically liberal policies. The first change, albeit cosmetic, happened when

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nominated woman in the elections despite the harsh repression of the security forces against the MB's candidates. Hence, the security forces harassed al-Halafawi and her family and the election in its district was suspended for two years before being rigged in favour of the NDP's candidate (El-Ghobashy 2005: 373).

<sup>161</sup> The initiative can be found at this link (Arabic):

<http://www.aljazeera.net/specialfiles/pages/a7d9e130-0f09-4b77-bbb0-ee07dd61afd3>

<sup>162</sup> Kifaya movement was established in 2004 by various political activists and forces including the MB who opposed Mubarak and rejected what they perceived as attempts to give power to his son, Gamal Mubarak. For more see, Oweidat, 2008.

Mubarak amended Article 76 in the constitution in order to allow competitive presidential elections for the first time in Egypt's modern history. While the official media celebrated Mubarak's step as a significant step towards real democracy, the opposition leaders, particularly the MB, viewed it as a sign of the weakness of Mubarak regime. Hence, they pressed for more political gains. Over 2005, many political groupings demonstrated against Mubarak, including judges, university activists, workers, and, most importantly, the Kifaya movement. The MB shrewdly capitalized on the momentum and joined, for the first time since its return to politics in the 1970s, in protests against Mubarak. It was clear that the MB continued its offensive strategy against the Mubarak regime as it organized more than 15 demonstrations across the country and developed its relationship with judges, Kifaya, and other political parties (al-Anani, 2007, p.222). The persistent pressure of the MB against Mubarak resulted in the startling success of its candidates in the November and December 2005 elections. For the first time in its history, the MB garnered 88 seats (20% of total seats) despite brutal repression from the security forces.

However, the second half of the 2000s witnessed a tough confrontation between the MB and Mubarak regime. The relationship between both parties reversed once again the regime become more offensive and attacked the MB harshly which retreated and became more defensive. The success of the MB after 2005 elections threatened Mubarak and jeopardized the NDP's domination. Thus Mubarak considered that only elimination and suppression could stop the MB and undermine its electoral success. Hence, the regime unleashed a harsh campaign against the MB leaders and undermined its social activities. In addition, the startling success of Hamas, the Palestinian offshoot of the MB, in the Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, and the easing of international pressure for democracy in the Middle East, encouraged Mubarak to repress the MB more brutally. In 2007, around 40 senior leaders of the MB were sentenced to between three and ten years in a military court including Khairat al-Shater, the Deputy of the General Guide, and Hasan Malek, the business tycoon. Between 2008 and 2010, the Mubarak regime tightened the pressure on the MB and undermined its social and

economic activities. Moreover, the security forces arrested many middle-rank members across the country, shut down the MPs offices, confiscated their belongings, and banned them from leaving the country.

#### **7.4. THE RESPONSE OF THE MB TO REGIME REPRESSION**

Islamist movements respond differently to regime repression. While some movements can be radicalized and react violently, others respond peacefully and attempt to accommodate and tolerate regime repression. An influential body of literature suggests that regime repression leads to significant changes in a movement's ideology, behaviour and organization (Wickham, 2004; El-Ghobashy, 2005; Schwedler, 2006; Tezcur, 2010; Wegner, 2011). This strand of scholarship belongs to what has become known as the 'inclusion-moderation' thesis. The main premise of this thesis is that the anti-system movements tend to shift their position and discourse once they are integrated into the political game (Wickham, 2004; El-Ghobashy, 2005; Tezcur, 2010). The change in a movement's ideology and behaviour is usually conducive to their participation in the political process. Hence the greater the political opportunities and rewards, the more moderate movements will become. However, many scholars contest the basic assumptions of the 'inclusion-moderation' thesis (Tezcur, 2010; Schwedler, 2011; Brown, 2012). Not only is moderation as a concept by its very nature vague, controversial, and elusive but most importantly the response of Islamist movements' to inclusion is not identical (Eva & Pellicer, 2009). While some movements can become more moderate when they participate in the political process, for example, the MB and the Moroccan Party of Justice and Development (PJD), others do not, for example, Hizbullah and Hamas. Moreover, some movements never radicalized despite regime repression and exclusion, for example, al-Nahda Party in Tunisia, and the MB in Syria.

While this study concurs with the broad criticism of the 'inclusion-moderation' thesis, it is not concerned with the impact of inclusion/exclusion on a movements' behaviour or ideology. Rather the thesis is mainly preoccupied by the effects of repression on a movement's internal dynamics. In other words, instead of focusing on

the external outcome of the regime repression, such as moderation or radicalization, this chapter probes the internal effect of repression on the movement. It reveals how repression interplays with the MB's internal power structures and how it affects the movement's unity and coherence. Therefore, instead of looking at the response of an Islamist movement to regime repression, the research focuses on the utilization of this repression within the movement.

This study argues that repression, among other factors, can explain the MB's coherence and unity. As is explained, the MB invests in regime oppression in order to foster solidarity and ensure unity among members. This utilization manifests itself in two main forms: identity consolidation or the enforced coherence between the MB members; and the balance of power within the movement between different factions. The next section sketches these two effects of repression on the MB.

#### **7.4.1. Mechanisms of Enforced Coherence**

For many years, the MB capitalized on regime repression to enhance its internal coherence and unity. Despite the high cost of repression, the movement was able to turn it into a source of solidarity that bound members and maintained their loyalty to the movement and its leadership. This happens through developing a sense of victimization among members. The social and physiological impact of repression gave the MB an image of underdog. The movement's leaders have cleverly employed this image to ensure solidarity and gain public approval. This sense of tribulation became prevalent among the MB members and leaders and was rooted in the movement's literature and socialization process. Accordingly, the greater the repression, the more the coherence could be enforced.

In addition, regime repression plays a crucial role in shaping the relationship between different factions within the MB. The relationship between the conservatives, or hard-liners, and the reformers has always been shaped by regime repression. The conservatives shrewdly utilized oppression to maintain their power and control over the organization. Moreover, they employed regime repression in order to undermine and de-

legitimize the internal calls for reform. Those who oppose the MB leadership or seek to reform the internal systems and structure to become more transparent and democratic are regularly marginalized and excluded from the movement, not only because of their ideological or religious views that can be different from the leadership but also as a result of power conflict within the movement. Over the past two decades, the conservatives have crushed the reformists and defused their call for change. In turn, the reformers have been caught between leaving the MB and abandoning their reformist agenda.

#### **7.4.1.1. The construction of the ‘Victimization Narrative’**

The question of why the MB did not fissure is significant. The ability of the MB to survive and recover from attempts which could have cracked it reveals its resilient and self-disciplined nature. The regime repression played an important role in this regard. This happens through what can be called the ‘ordeal narrative’ or *mihna*. It refers to the sense of tribulation that prevailed among the MB members as a result of regime oppression. It originated primarily from the memories and images of torture and execution of many of MB leaders under Nasser’s regime in the 1950s and 1960s. The brutal attempt of Nasser to eliminate the MB affected the spirit and the mindset of its leaders and cadres. Over time, these memories, images, and emotions became an integral part of the MB’s organizational culture. Therefore, many MB leaders repeatedly recall them in order to create solidarity among members and ensure the movement’s unity.

Furthermore, this sense of tribulation is frequently constructed and reproduced within the MB structure and discourse. For instance, the rhetoric and literature of the MB are overwhelmed by ordeal meanings and stories. Notions like patience (*sabr*), test (*ibtala*), sacrifice (*tadhiyya*) are prevalent in the MB’s everyday discourse and statements. They are regularly invoked in times of oppression and always accompanied by religious connotations. For instance, Mohei Hamed, a member of the MB’s Guidance Bureau, points out that tribulation is a test of members’ faith and beliefs. He asserts that

prisons are venues where members can be tested and he calls upon members to be ready for sacrifice in order to save the movement and the *da'wa* (Hamed, 2008, accessed on 16 October 2012).

Furthermore, the tribulation and sufferance of members can enhance their position within the movement. Those who are frequently arrested or tortured tend to employ their oppression as a means to strengthen their position within the MB. Some are able to achieve material interests, such as promotion and economic compensation. However, this does not imply that the MB members are keen to be arrested or tortured. Rather it means that regime repression can sometimes benefit certain members materially and organizationally. Hence, it is widely known in the MB that those who oppose the regime are likely to be promoted and become highly respected among the rank and file of the movement. Furthermore, imprisonment and torture can become a source of credibility and trust. Thus, those who were tried and persecuted became symbols in the MB.

More noticeably, repression plays an important role in increasing the MB's popularity and appeal. The movement tends to portray itself as the regime's victim. Not only do the MB's leaders and cadres strengthen this image among their networks but also they utilize it to attract and recruit new members. According to Mahmoud Ezzat, the Deputy of the MB General Guide, the MB gains from repression and torture more than it loses. He states, "It is remarkable that after each tribulation supporters and members of the MB increase. People always show sympathy and support with the families of those who are arrested" (Ezzat interview with Zahraa Bassam on Ikhwanonline on 24 March 2008).

In addition, the indoctrination and socialization process within the MB plays a crucial role in maintaining and embedding the culture of oppression. For instance, many of the MB leaders and members view regime repression as a sign for their just cause. As Mahmoud Ezzat puts it, "regime repression is the glue that binds us together and reflects that we are on the right path" (Ezzat interview with Zahraa Bassam on 24 March 2008). This sense of acceptance of regime repression is employed by leaders to spur members'

commitment and adherence to the movement's ideology and leadership. Islam Lotfi, a former young member of the MB, expressed his astonishment at the reaction of some members towards the trials of the MB leaders. He states in one of his blogs, "I received many comments and messages from young members who seemed thrilled by the verdict of their leaders as they view it a sign of the MB's success" (Lotfi, 2008).

Furthermore, during times of repression the MB tends to focus inwardly in order to maintain internal unity and integration. As Melucci (1996, p.319) highlighted, with regime repression, self-preservation and group solidarity become the sole goal of the movement. According to Mohamed Mostafa, a middle rank member of the MB, the main goal of the movement during repression is to keep members connected and ensure their solidarity and loyalty and this can only happen through intensifying the identification and socialization process.<sup>163</sup> In addition, repression prompts the MB to change its organizational rules. For instance, to protect members from security surveillance and arrest, the MB changed its membership system and procedures. From the beginning of 1990s, joining the MB became more disciplined and members' backgrounds were scrutinized more closely. Moreover, the MB omitted the levels and procedures of membership in its bylaw in 1994 in order to outmanoeuvre the security forces. It was the first time since the foundation of the movement that the section on membership levels and duties was not included. Moreover, the new bylaw was not made available to ordinary members or to the general public until recently.<sup>164</sup> Only leaders and high-rank cadres were able to access the bylaw.

Another factor that could explain the unity and coherence of the MB is the absence of political and organizational alternatives. The political closure in Egypt under Mubarak discouraged many members from abandoning the MB. Hence, those who might adopt different political and ideological views are caught between the choice of regime repression and the MB. As Abdurrahman Ayyash states: "They are stuck

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<sup>163</sup> Interview with Mohamed Mostafa in Zagazig on 3 April 2012.

<sup>164</sup> It was not until the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 that the MB revealed its bylaw on its official website [www.ikhwanonline.com](http://www.ikhwanonline.com). While there is no significant difference between the old and news bylaws in many instances, the section pertinent to membership levels and procedures remains omitted.

between the ugly and the bad”<sup>165</sup>. Moreover, the case of the Al-Wasat Party overshadowed many of members in the MB. As is discussed in the next section, Al-Wasat members had to struggle with the Mubarak regime for more than 15 years in order to secure a political license. Hence, many reformers were caught between remaining in the MB and confronting regime repression alone. In other words, the MB benefited from regime repression as dissenting members remained in the movement.

Finally, the last factor that can explain the MB’s coherence and resilience is the ability of the MB to marginalize and exclude members without creating major internal rifts. One of the main features of the MB as a social organization lies in its ability to isolate dissenters. The movement rarely dismisses members who criticize the movement or defy its leadership. Neither does it materially or physically punish them if they violate its rules. It merely marginalizes them and demonizes their cause. The movement has developed a sub-culture that de-legitimizes any calls for reform. Hence, dissenting members are frequently confronted by two unpalatable options: to leave the MB without the ability to reform it or to remain in the movement but abandoning their views and following the leadership. Given the degree of political closure and the lack of other political alternatives in Egypt under Mubarak, it was immensely difficult for dissenters to leave the MB. Thus, many of them remained in the MB but became self-marginalized.<sup>166</sup> For instance, reformist figures such as Abdelmoniem Abuelfotouh, Mohamed Habib, Ibrahim El-Za‘farani and Khaled Daw‘ud could not leave the MB under Mubarak despite their progressive and reformist views. On the other hand, the MB could not allow them to disseminate their views among the rank-and-file which led them to abandon the movement after the revolution.

#### **7.4.2. Many Quarrels, Rare Splits**

It is important to stress that the MB’s unity and integration does not mean that it is a monolithic or unbreakable organization. By contrast, it means that the movement’s

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<sup>165</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayyash in Cairo on 26 March 2012.

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Abdurrahman Ayash on 26 March 2012.

leadership can manipulate and employ internal divisions in order to control and maintain power in the organization. The MB is an umbrella of different factions, currents, and generations who compete and debate over ideology, discourse, and the political stance of the leadership. Its leaders contest many ideological and political issues, for example, participating in the election, how to react to regime repression, and whether or not to participate in the government. However, they are rarely split. As Brown points out, the MB's followers and leaders can quarrel endlessly; however, it is usually over short-term tactical and organizational issues, not the ideological or religious ones (2012, p.130). He asserts that Islamists rarely split, and if they do, it is over how to organize or act, not over what to say or think (Brown, 2012, p.130). However, although this study agrees with Brown's notion of ideological resilience of the MB, it contends that internal divisions and tensions within the MB go beyond organizational and tactical questions to reach ideological and religious questions. More importantly, the dividing lines between conservatives and reformers are always triggered over the ideological and religious stance of the MB which sometimes can result in serious clashes and rifts within the movement. Moreover, organizational and tactical questions, such as promotion procedures, generational relationship and accountability, can lead to serious divisions within the MB. Al-Wasat members did not leave the MB just because of ideological and political differences with the leadership but also because they perceived an organizational inertia in the movement's structures (Wickham, 2002; El- Ghobashy, 2005).

Therefore, this chapter contends that the MB's leaders and members do have ideological, political, and organizational differences; however, these differences rarely result in creating a substantive schism. Divisions within the MB are marginal and not in the core of the organization. Over the past three decades, the MB has shown a remarkable ability in controlling and accommodating members' differences. Moreover, the movement used regime repression to mitigate these differences and reconnect members with its ideology.

However, before the management of splits within the MB are analyzed, two important points need to be mentioned. First, the tendency of members to split becomes greater during times of political openness, which proves the argument about regime repression and the MB's 'enforced' coherence. The politicization of the MB makes it more prone to changes and transformation. The second point is that regime repression increases when the MB takes bold and progressive ideological or political initiatives.

#### **7.4.2.1. Managing the splits**

Since its foundation, the MB witnessed different types of divisions. However, these have not weakened the movement. In contrast, each time the movement encounters an attempt to split it, it becomes stronger and more solid. The history of divisions within the MB dates back to its early days under Hasan al-Banna.<sup>167</sup> Rifts continued after the death of al-Banna when a significant division occurred under the leadership of Hasan al-Hudaybi, the second General Guide of the MB. Some of the Special Apparatus (al-Tanzim al-Khas) cadres led by Abdurrahman al-Sanadi, the head of the Special Apparatus, sought to take over the movement and isolate al-Houdabiy because of what they perceived as his unfriendly attitude towards Nasser regime.<sup>168</sup>

Despite the relative openness under Sadat, the MB maintained the tribulation culture as an effective tool to rebuild the organization and ensure members' solidarity. However, under Mubarak, the MB faced different critical periods for maintaining its organizational unity. However, the movement was able to survive different attempts to split it. With the increase of its politicization, the MB started to witness different opinions regarding its ideological and political stance. For instance, by the end of 1980s the MB witnessed the first attempt to divide it under the Mubarak regime. A group of

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<sup>167</sup> Two serious attempts occurred under al-Banna's leadership during the 1930s and 1940s. The first was led by Ahmed al-Sokkary, a close friend of al-Banna and the first Secretary General of the MB. The second was by a group of zealous members who wanted to use force against the British occupation and were called Mohamed's Youth Group (Lia, 1998).

<sup>168</sup> This division was more serious than the previous ones. Not only because of the organizational influence of al-Sanadi but also because it came at a time when the MB was struggling to recover from al-Banna's death and the attempt of the new regime under Nasser to capitalize on this division (Tamam, 2012).

*ikhwan* at al-Azhar University led by the Azharite Mohamed Rushdi decided to leave the MB in protest against “its deviation from the righteous Islamic path” (Tamam, 2012, p.46).<sup>169</sup> However, this attempt to create splits within the MB was useless.

By the beginning of 1990s, and after a decade of political success and social expansion, the MB started to witness an increase in internal tensions and discontent (El-Ghobashy, 2005). Emboldened by its political success, the young generation that emerged during the 1970 and 1980s pressed the MB’s leadership to become more decisive on certain controversial issues, such as establishing a political party, rights for women and Christians, and political pluralism. Thus, in 1994 the MB made its first ideological revision when it issued a bold initiative that defined clearly the position of the movement on these issues. The statement, which was called “Shura and Party Pluralism in Muslim Society”, stresses the political rights of women and Christians to hold public office (Ibrahim, 1998; El-Ghobasy, 2005). The statement was a significant development in the MB’s ideological and religious thinking. It was the first time that the MB accepted party pluralism and recognized democracy as the only viable political system. Clearly, the Shura statement was the outcome of the intensive debate between the old and young generations. It aimed to make a clear break from the ambiguous stance of the old guards on the issues raised by the statement (El-Ghobashy, 2005, pp.382-383). More significantly, the statement came under a harsh campaign of regime repression. As mentioned, the political success of the MB and its growing influence in professional syndicates provoked the regime to respond strongly.

By the mid-1990s, the MB faced its most critical organizational crisis during the Mubarak era when a group of young members led by Abu Ela Madi and Essam Sultan decided to establish a political party. Emboldened by the political success of the MB and disappointed by its organizational inertia, this group took the initiative to end the outlawed and ambiguous status of the MB. They created the Al-Wasat Party and attempted to obtain a political licence. Initially, Al-Wasat Party was perceived by the

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<sup>169</sup> According to Tamam, this group embraced extreme ideas that were derived from Sayyid Qutb’s ideology (Tamam, 2012, p.46).

regime and the international media as a front for the MB (Wickham, 2002, p.218). Hence, the regime arrested Madi and his fellows, in addition to many MB leaders. However, according to Madi, Al-Wasat Party was entirely an independent attempt to break the frozen relationship between the MB and Mubarak regime (Madi. 2005).<sup>170</sup> Clearly, the movement's leadership under Mustafa Mashhur, the fifth General Guide of the MB and his deputy and strong man Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, did not tolerate the Al-Wasat bid and forced Abu Ela Madi and his colleagues to resign from the MB (Tawfiq, 1996; Wickham, 2002; El-Ghobashy, 2005). Moreover, Mashhur and al-Hudaybi, ordered all members who joined Al-Wasat Party to withdraw or they would also face expulsion (Wickham, 2002, p.218).

Clearly, the crisis of Al-Wasat reveals how the MB treats those who defy its leadership. Despite the organizational consequences of Al-Wasat crisis, the MB remained united. The movement's leadership were able to exploit regime repression in gaining support in the face of the Al-Wasat dissenters. Moreover, the subsequent dispute between the Mubarak regime and Al-Wasat leaders over obtaining official recognition strengthened the MB position and discouraged others from leaving the movement. Not surprisingly, since the Al-Wasat crisis, the MB has not witnessed any further significant attempt to divide the movement.

## **7.5. THE ELUSIVE GAME BETWEEN THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE REFORMISTS**

Scholars of Islamist politics tend to divide Islamists into two main currents: the conservatives or the hawks, and the reformers or doves (Brown, 2006; Abu Ruman, 2009; Tamam, 2012). Regardless of the precision of such a classification, factions

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<sup>170</sup> The establishment of Al-Wasat Party is still highly contested between the MB and Madi. While many of the MB senior leaders insist that the Guidance Bureau supported the idea of establishing Al-Wasat, Madi ascertains that it was his original idea. For instance, Mahdi Akef, the former General Guide of the MB, affirms that he was responsible for the new party when he was a member in the Guidance Bureau. Likewise, Mahmoud Ezzat and Essam Al-Eryan stress the role of the Guidance Bureau in allowing Madi and his fellow members to proceed in establishing Al-Wasat Party. Ezzat, for instance, underscores this claim by referring to the arrest and trials of many MB leaders in reaction to the attempt to establish the party.

within Islamist movements are evident. These movements have ideological, religious, and political differences. Members and leaders can adopt different and conflictual views. The very social and political nature of Islamist movements renders them prone to internal conflicts and disputes. The power structure, generational gap, and organizational roles are crucial factors in shaping the dynamics and interactions within Islamist movements. However, regime repression remains one of the most important factors that affect the internal dynamics of Islamist movements, particularly the relationship between the conservatives and reformers. This chapter argues that the relentless waves of repression, detention and torture against the MB played out in favour of the conservatives. It empowered them at the expense of the reformers. The conservatives, in this regard, refer to those leaders who adopt strict ideological and religious beliefs and concentrate on how to preserve the movement's survival even at the expense of political participation. In the MB they used to be called 'The Organizational Current' (*al-taiyyar al-tanzimi*). They are primarily concerned with preaching, making *da'wa*, and expanding the social base of the MB. In contrast, the reformers are those who adopt a progressive religious and political ideology and seek to integrate the MB into the political process. They concentrate on political activities and building coalitions and alliances with liberal and secular forces. They also call for fundamental reform within the MB structure in order that it becomes a more transparent and democratic organization. The Reformers were dubbed 'The Public Affair Current' (*taiyyar al-al-'amal al-'am*) (al-Anani, 2007; Tamam, 2010).

Since the return of the MB in the 1970s, these two currents co-existed, disputed and confronted in the MB. The relationship between them was usually one of ebb and flow. However, regime repression was crucial in shaping the dynamics of this relationship. It played well in favour of the conservatives who dominated the MB since the mid of 1990s. It was apparent that the greater the repression, the powerful the conservatives became. Moreover, the reformers were usually squeezed between the regime and the hardliners. On the one hand, it was in the Mubarak regime's interest to portray the MB as a regressive and reactionary movement with no democratic

credentials in order to suppress it and stop any internal or external support. Therefore, the reformist current was the main obstacle to Mubarak in achieving this goal, not only because of their progressive ideology, such as accepting democratic values, religious tolerance, and contesting politics, but also because of their ability and skills in building alliances and forming coalitions with non-Islamist groupings. On the other hand, it was in the hardliners' interest to weaken and marginalize the reformers in order to solidify their grip on power in the MB and enforce their religious and ideological views. Thus, they utilized regime repression to marginalize reformers and de-legitimize their demands for change. Hence, reformers were perceived of as a threat by both the regime and the MB's conservatives. They were always caught in the crossfire between both groups. The result was the gradual erosion and elimination of the reformers over the past two decades.

The crucial question is: how could the conservatives employ regime repression in order to exclude and marginalize the reformists? In other words, how did regime repression interplay with the internal power balance between the two factions? This question can be answered by examining the balance of power within the MB since 1970s and how it shifted in the favour of the conservatives. The next section probes this issue.

#### **7.5.1. The Balance of Power in the MB: The Shift towards the Conservatives**

During the 1970s and the 1980s, the reformist current was influential in the MB. After Nasser's ordeal, a new generation emerged in the MB by the mid-1970s. People such as Abduelmomiem Abulfotuh, Esaam al-Eriyan, Abuelela Madi, Helmi al-Gazar, Ibrahim al-Za'farani and others sought to rebuild the MB after two decades of fragmentation and inertia. They benefited from the relative political openness under Sadat who sought to manipulate Islamists in order to counterbalance his adversaries: the leftists and Nasserists. This generation rebuilt the institutional and organizational structure of the MB across the country. It was that generation that pulled the MB out of its political isolation and apathy to become more integrated and politicized. Moreover,

they pushed the MB towards electoral politics and pressed its leadership to develop their ideological and religious views (Wickham, 2002; Al-Awadi, 2004; El-Ghobashy, 2005; Abulfotouh, 2010). This generation flourished in Cairo and other urban centres such as Alexandria, Assuit and El-Menia and expanded the social and organizational network of the MB into new areas. It was backed and supported by a senior line of leadership particularly the third General Guide, Umar al-Tilmissani, who embraced moderate views and was keen to politicize the MB (Abulfotouh, 2010). This generation embodied the core of the reformist current that would become very influential in the MB for the subsequent two decades. If the 1970s witnessed the birth of this current, the years of the 1980s were the heyday of those who represented the MB in the 1984 and 1987 elections. They also strengthened the presence of the MB in syndicates and universities across Egypt. Moreover, they reshaped the MB ideology and discourse to become moderate and pragmatic. Thus, under al-Tilmissani tenure, the MB renounced violence, accepted political participation, and built historical coalitions with liberal, leftist, and secular forces (Wickham, 2002).

The death of al-Tilmissani in 1986 was a major blow to the reformist current. Many of its leaders felt alienated and traumatized by the departure of their mentor (Madi, 2009). As Abulfotouh argues, “the departure of al-Tilmissani was a big loss to the movement and the reformist wing” (2010, p.42). Tilmissani was not only a genuine supporter of the reformers but also a bulwark that protected reformists from the domination of the conservative old guard (Madi, 2009). According to Essam Sultan, a former MB leader and the co-founder of Al-Wasat Party with Madi, Tilmissani was the pivot that maintained a balance between the conservatives and the reformists. He points out, “By the death of Tilmissani, the balance between the generation of the Special Apparatus (al-Tanzim al-Khas) and the reformers ended in favor of the old guards” (cited in Sultan, 2009, accessed on 22 October 2012).

The death of al-Tilmissani was a turning point in the relationship between the conservatives and the reformists. Since then the balance of power shifted incrementally in favour of the former as many of the MB’s old leaders who left the country under

Nasser and Sadat returned and sought to have an influential role in the MB.<sup>171</sup> Three of them, Mustafa Mashhur,<sup>172</sup> Ma'mun al-Hudaybi<sup>173</sup> and Mahdi Akef,<sup>174</sup> would become later the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh General Guides of the MB respectively. Moreover, another group of conservatives leaders emerged and sought counter-balance with the reformers, among them Mohamed Badie, who would become later the eighth General Guide of the MB, Mahmoud Ezzat, who would become the Secretary General of the MB, and Khairat al-Shater, the business tycoon and most powerful leader in the MB since 2000s.

The shift in the power balance between the conservatives and the reformers became more visible under the tenure of the fourth General Guide of the MB, Mohamed Hamed Abu al-Nasr (1986-1996). A veteran member who spent more than 20 years in prison under Nasser, Abu al-Nasr was a conservative but weak leader. He was certainly less progressive than his predecessor, al-Tilmissani, and his feeble tenure encouraged the conservatives to become powerful and dominate the organization at the expense of the reformers (Habib, 2012).<sup>175</sup>

During the first half of the 1990s, the conservatives sought to solidify their position in the MB. They dominated the Guidance Bureau and the administrative offices of the MB. Moreover, the regime repression during that time was, partially, a response

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<sup>171</sup> In September 1981, Sadat had unleashed a harsh security campaign against his opponents from all ideological currents. Many of the MB leaders fled and did not return until the second half of the 1980s.

<sup>172</sup> Mashhur left the country in 1981 and was based between Kuwait and Germany. He returned in 1986 and became the Deputy of the General Guide. He became the MB's fifth General Guide from 1996 to 2002 after a fierce debate over his competency.

<sup>173</sup> He left Egypt in 1981 for Saudi Arabia where he worked at the Ministry of Interior before returning in 1986. He had run in the 1987 elections and became the head and the spokesperson of the MB's parliamentary bloc. He became the sixth General Guide from 2002 to 2004.

<sup>174</sup> He fled Egypt in 1981 to Germany where he established the Islamic Centre in Munich. After his return in 1986, he was selected as a member of the MB's Guidance Bureau. He became the seventh General Guide from 2004 to 2010.

<sup>175</sup> Habib points out that the selection of Abu al-Nasr was a surprise for many MB members, particularly the outsiders. Ironically, he refers to how he along with Mashhur and Ma'mun al-Hudaybi orchestrated the selection process of Abu al-Nasr which reveals how much the latter was weak in the face of those who propelled him into the leadership. Furthermore, Sultan points out that the selection of Abu al-Nasr to be the General Guide of the MB after al-Tilmissani was because he was weak and unaware of the internal dynamics of the MB which, according to Sultan, were controlled and directed by the conservatives (Sultan, 2009, accessed on 22 October 2012).

to the power shift in the MB towards the conservatives. That is, in 1992 the security forces arrested many of the MB conservative leaders through what was known as the case of Salsabil Company. At the end of 1986, Khairat al-Shater and Hasan Malek established a company for electronics and computer devices called Salsabil. Within a few years, the company expanded and brought on-board a new partner, Taher Abdelmoniem. In February 1992, the security forces raided Salsabil Company and confiscated the computers and many secret documents. The regime claimed that the security forces found documents under the rubric of 'The Empowerment' (*al-tamkin*), which, according to the regime, contained a detailed plan on how the MB could take over the country and establish an Islamic state (Al-Awadi, 2004, p.162). Al-Shater, Malek, and Taher were arrested along with other prominent leaders in the MB, among them Mahmoud Ezzat and Gomma Amin, a member of the Guidance Bureau. The Salsabil case revealed the tireless attempts of the conservatives to control the MB after the death of al-Tilmissani. Many MB leaders have asserted that al-Shater and Ezzat were planning to control the MB and marginalize the reformists after the death of al-Tilmissani (Meligi, Madi and Sultan). Furthermore, the Salsabil issue witnessed the emergence of al-Shater, who would become later the strategist and the most influential leader in the MB.

In January 1995, the General Shura Council (Majlis al-Shura al-'am), the legislative body of the MB, convened for the first time since the 1950s to choose the 16 members of the MB's General Guidance Bureau (Maktab al-Irshad al-'Am), the most powerful executive body in the MB. Abulfotouh was the only reformist elected. Moreover, the regime arrested many of many of the reformists after the elections. After two successful decades for the reformers during 1970s and 1980s, their influence within the MB started to diminish.

In conjunction with the waning influence of the reformists, a new line of conservatives was consolidating its power over the MB. After the death of Abu al-Nasr in January 1996, conservatives installed one of them as the new General Guide. In a strong show of power, a small group of the hardliners declared Mustafa Mashhur as the

fifth General Guide of the MB immediately after the burial of Abu al-Nasr in what became the infamous “cemetery pledge of allegiance” (*bay‘at al-maqabir*) (El-Ghobashy, 2005, p.386). As El-Ghobashy aptly described it:

A tight-knit circle led by Guidance Bureau members Ma‘mun al-Hudaybi and Mashhur himself essentially anointed Mashhur to the highest executive post without election or consultation with Shura Council members, citing as justification the security clampdown on the last Shura Council meeting in 1995 (2005, p.386).<sup>176</sup>

The inauguration of Mashhur was a stark confirmation of the shift in power in the MB towards the conservatives; not only because it violated the rules and bylaws of the MB for choosing the General Guide but also because it paved the way for a new line of conservatives who would dominate and control the MB in the following years.

Under the Mashhur tenure, which was dominated by his strong Deputy Ma‘mun al-Hudaybi, who would succeed him as General Guide, the conservatives adopted an uncompromising stance towards the reformists. Not surprisingly, the MB witnessed the first genuine split in three decades.<sup>177</sup> In addition, the ideological and religious development of the MB’s discourse, which flourished in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, stalled. Mashhur provoked many internally and externally by his controversial statements on the rights of women and Christians (Al-Awadi, 2004; El-Ghobashy, 2005). By the end of the 1990s, the MB was entirely under the control of the conservatives who did not tolerate reformists’ attempt to claim power over the organization.

### **7.5.2. The Make Up of the Conservative Power Centre**

By the turn of the new millennium, the reformist current in the MB was practically fading away. Only Abulfotouh remained as a member in the almost fully

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<sup>176</sup> Essam Sultan, a former MB member and prominent figure of Al-Wasat Party, highlights that Mashhur was pushed by al- Hudaybi to become the General Guide. He refers to a meeting between him and Mashhur after the crisis of Al-Wasat where he asked Mashhur about the illegal way of taking *ba‘ya* and Mashhur replied, “I was really surprised by what al-Hudaybi did” referring to al- Hudaybi profound role in *bay‘at al-maqabir*.

For more <http://www.youm7.com/NewsPrint.asp?NewsID=132880>

<sup>177</sup> The case of Al-Wasat Party.

conservative Guidance Bureau but merely for decorative reasons (Eissa, 2009). Other reformist figures such as al-Eryan, Mohamed Habib, Gamal Heshmat and Ibrahim El-Za'frani, were completely powerless. In addition, a new conservative power centre was being developed. The conservatives sought to consolidate their control over the MB by creating a power centre that could dominate the MB's organization and structure, particularly in rural and urban governorates. It was primarily anchored in two key figures: Khairat al-Shater, the member of the Guidance Bureau and who was appointed as the Second Deputy of the General Guide in 2004, and Mahmoud Ezzat, the member of the Guidance Bureau and the former Secretary General of the MB from 2001 till 2010 and who is currently serving as the Deputy of the General Guide.

After the Salsabil issue and his arrest in 1992, al-Shater became a popular figure within the MB. The story of al-Shater's promotion within the MB proves how commitment and submission to the leadership is more effective than adopting reformist views. Born to a middle class family in the rural area of El-Mansoura, 120km inside Egypt's Delta, two years before the 23 July 1952 coup d'état, al-Shater promoted himself as a strong advocate for the MB's organizational survival. Ironically, he started his political career as a socialist during the Nasser regime when he was in high school and was arrested after participating in the student's protests against Nasser in 1968. However, when attending university in Alexandria he became more attached to the then emerging Islamic trend that had overwhelmed Egyptian universities, which resulted in him joining the MB in 1974. After he joined the MB, al-Shater was influenced mainly by two prominent yet conservative leaders, Shaykh Sabri Arafa, a veteran member of the Guidance Bureau for more than two decades, and Mohamed Al-Adawy, a veteran member of the MB. Both belonged to what was known as the generation of 1965 (Abu Khalil, 2012).<sup>178</sup> During the 1980s, al-Shater, as many others did, spent around seven years in exile, in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the UK in order to avoid prison in

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<sup>178</sup> This generation refers to the MB leaders who were in prison during the 1960s and were profoundly affected by the MB's ideologue Sayyid Qutb. Many of them were released under Sadat and became influential in the MB from the 1970s. It includes many incumbent leaders among them the General Guide Mohamed Badie, Mahmoud Ezzat, Sayyid Nezzili, Rashad El-Bayoumi, Mahmoud Hussien and Gomma Amin.

the aftermath of Sadat's assassination in 1981. During his travels he made a fortune and built a good business network that would allow him to become a key player in the MB.

In 1992, al-Shater was arrested for one year due to the Salsabil case which brought him to the attention of the MB's leadership. A businessman with strategic and outstanding managerial skills, al-Shater proved himself as an unflinching loyal member to the MB's ideology and message. In 1995, in a surprising move, he became a member of the Guidance Bureau which was dominated by elderly and veteran conservative members. Between 1995 and 2000, al-Shater was the key player in the MB yet, a subtle influence. As a banned movement, the MB could not invest or generate money to enable it to run activities and recruit members. Moreover, front line leaders could not publicly use the financial sources of the MB or otherwise the funds would be confiscated. Hence, there was a need for someone who would have a relatively low political profile, with business experience and skills, and most importantly could be trusted. It was al-Shater who was chosen for this role. According to Haitham Abu Khalil, a former member of the MB, al-Shater's main job was to boost and increase the MB financial resources.<sup>179</sup> Hence, he created and supervised many small and medium-sized businesses that could serve as a front for the MB's financial activities without drawing the attention of the regime (Abu Khalil, 2012).<sup>180</sup> Over time, al-Shater strengthened his position within the MB to become a key player responsible for its main financial assets and resources.<sup>181</sup>

The other influential leader in the MB who helped al-Shater in creating the conservative power centre was Mahmoud Ezzat, the former Secretary General of the

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<sup>179</sup> The main source of finance is members' dues and donations. Dues are divided into different schemes depending on members' income. Generally, there are three main schemes: the first scheme is for lower income members who should pay between 1% and 2% of their income. The second is the medium income members who pay between 3% and 5 % and the last scheme is for those whose income is high and pay from 5% to 7 % of their earnings (al-Anani, 2007, p,258).

<sup>180</sup> There are different estimates as to al-Shater's fortune. While he admits that his wealth is no more than five million dollars, others value it at more than 15 million dollars. Regardless of the accuracy of these numbers, it is widely known that al-Shater is the most important business tycoon in the MB. His fortune came mainly from a range of businesses that include furniture, textiles, supermarkets, car manufacturing, banking and software. Many claim that al-Shater's business empire flourished even when he was in prison (Kaminski, 2012).

<sup>181</sup> Despite the blurred relationship between al-Shater and the MB financial resources, it is clear that he is the MB's economic and business strategist.

MB and one of three current deputies of the General Guide and a member of the Guidance Bureau. He is considered as one of the most conservative and hardliners in the MB. He joined the MB at an early age and was heavily influenced by Sayyid Qutb when he spent around nine years between 1965 and 1974 in prison under Nasser. After he was released he became an active member and played an important role in rebuilding the movement as part of the old conservatives' camp which included Mashhur, al-Hudaybi and Ahmed Hassanin. He fled to Yemen when he found out about Sadat's arrest campaign in September 1981 and returned to Egypt in the mid-1980s with many other leaders. After returning from exile in 1986, Ezzat became a very influential leader. However, the turning point in Ezzat's role came when he was selected as a member in the Guidance Bureau in 1995. Since then he has consolidated his position by taking responsibility for two sections in the organization, the Students Section (Qism al-Talaba), which is responsible for recruiting new members in the universities' campuses and the Education (Indoctrination) Section (Qism al-Tarbiyya), which is responsible for internalizing the MB ideology and reshaping individuals' views and mindsets. Thus, he gained important experience and influence in the MB. However, Ezzat became significantly more powerful and influential after he became the Secretary-General of the MB in 2001, a post he held until 2010. Like al-Shater, the promotion of Ezzat within the MB was mainly because his loyalty to the movement's ideology and conservative leadership. Due to his position, Ezzat controlled the structure of the MB. For instance, he was responsible for supervising and following the work of regional and the governorates offices and selecting their leaders. He also had a profound impact on the Shura Council members and influenced their decisions, particularly during internal elections.<sup>182</sup> Hence, he played a significant role in the main decisions taken by the MB over 2000s. Not surprisingly, the domestic media have portrayed Ezzat as the 'iron man' in the MB and its devoted guardian (Nassar, 2012).

The relationship between Ezzat and al-Shater dates back to the beginning of the 1980s when they met in Yemen after they fled from Sadat. However, their relationship

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<sup>182</sup> Interview with Mohamed Hamza on 11 January 2012.

was intensified when they met in England where both were pursuing their postgraduate studies (Hussien, 2010). Since then, they became close allies and worked together to enhance the role and position of the conservatives in the MB. Some accounts highlight that Ezzat participated with al-Shater in establishing the Salsabil Company in the late 1980s, highlighting his arrest in 1992 with Shater and Malek (Hussien, 2010). Moreover when al-Shater was in prison, Ezzat was his most trusted person in running MB activities.

#### **7.5.2.1. Ezzat and the al-Shater bloc: The kingmakers of the MB leaders**

The death of Ma'mun al-Hudaybi in 2004 helped al-Shater and Ezzat to become more influential and powerful in the MB. Both inherited the legacy of the older conservatives. Together, they became the spearhead of the new conservative bloc for the ensuing period. According to Abu Khalil (2012), the MB is gripped by al-Shater and Ezzat, the former through his financial control and the latter by his control over the organization. After al-Hudaybi, the MB selected Mohamed Mahdi Akef to be its seventh General Guide. Under Akef's tenure (2004-2010), the alliance of al-Shater and Ezzat became more visible. Akef (76 by then), a veteran leader who joined the MB in 1940 and was sentenced to death in absentia before the ruling was commuted to life imprisonment, was a continuation of the conservatives' leadership, albeit with a more accommodating propensity. His tenure, therefore, was more participatory and inclusive than his predecessors and he tried to re-engage the reformers in order to counter-balance the hardliners. Hence he appointed Mohamed Habib as a first Deputy and maintained a good relationship with Abulfotouh, al-Eryan, al-Za'farani and other young reformers.

However, al-Shater and Ezzat, who played a crucial role in selecting Akef, undermined his new policy. Benefiting from his financial and organizational capabilities, al-Shater became the second Deputy to Akef, a position that had not existed previously. Moreover, he sought to strengthen the new conservative power centre through different methods. First, he put in place plans to restructure the organization to become more active and dynamic. Hence, he rebuilt the media section and promoted many young

leaders in different organizational sections, such as the Students Section. Second, he engaged with the regional and administrative offices across the country and supported some of its leaders to become members in the Shura Council and the Guidance Bureau. Third, and more importantly, he became the mediator between the MB and the regime during the 2000s.<sup>183</sup> According to Abu Khalil, al-Shater created a parallel organization within the MB which is loyal to him rather than anyone else including the General Guide (Abu Khalil, 2012). However, al-Shater could have not achieved his control without significant help from Ezzat who controlled the MB's organization. Ezzat, who was Akef's brother-in-law, utilized his strong position in the MB to promote many subordinates and followers in the MB's regional offices (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2009, accessed on 30 October 2012).

Between 2005 and 2010, the al-Shater-Ezzat bloc solidified its grip over the MB and was finally able to completely sideline the reformers. This is illustrated by exploring the power struggle in the MB during 2008 and 2009 particularly after the decision of Akef to step down from the MB leadership after finishing his first term in January 2010.

### **7.5.3. The Ascendance of the Conservatives and the Decline of the Reformists**

The second half of the 2000s witnessed the waning of the reformists in the MB. They were excluded from its highest institutions particularly the Guidance Bureau. The al-Shater-Ezzat bloc dominated the decision-making process within the MB and was able to marginalize the reformists. In May 2008, five new members joined the Guidance Bureau; the first time since 1995 there was such a significant change on its highest executive body.<sup>184</sup> According to the MB's bylaw, the Shura Council, which consists of

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<sup>183</sup> The MB nominated 150 candidates in the 2005 parliamentary election after negotiating the number with the regime. Different media reports claimed that al-Shater and Mohamed Morsi, who by then was responsible for the elections section in the MB, were the two main members who dealt with the state security apparatus to handle this issue. However, after the startling performance of the MB in the first round of the elections, the security forces cracked down on the MB which was asked to withdraw some of its candidates in the second and third rounds. However, the MB rejected the proposal, which resulted in greater repression and the rigging of the elections by the regime in most constituencies (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2011, accessed on 28 October 2012).

<sup>184</sup> The last election of the Guidance Bureau before 2008 was in 1995 in which the regime cracked down the MB and arrested many of the Shura Council's members and tried them in a military court. The

105 members (90 by election and 15 by appointment from the Guidance Bureau), is responsible for electing the 16 members of the Guidance Bureau.<sup>185</sup> However, some Shura Council's members contested the results claiming that the new members had been selected by the conservative current.

Moreover, they accused Ezzat of appointing those members without respecting the rules and bylaws of the MB. Hence, they signed a petition asking Akef to cancel the elections and open an investigation into their accusations which, was refused. (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2008, accessed on 30 October 2012). Regardless of the claims and counter-claims of the MB leaders, the promotion of the new members revealed how powerful the al-Shater-Ezzat bloc had become. The newly selected members belonged to the middle-rank conservative generation and who had maintained a close relationship with al-Shater and Ezzat. They were Mohamed Sa'ad al-Katatni, who by that time was the head of the MB's parliamentary bloc in 2005 parliament and who a few years before was promoted to the head of the MB's Administrative Office in Al-Menia,<sup>186</sup> Sa'ad al-Husseini, MP and the head of the MB's Administrative Office in al-Mahalla, Mohei Hamed, head of the MB's Administrative Office in al-Sharqia and very close associate of Ezzat, Osama Nasr the head of the MB office in Alexandria and close to al-Shater, and, finally, Mohamed Abdel Rahman who was the Deputy Administrator of al-Daqihla office. The promotion of these members outraged many in the MB and outside, not only because of the way in which they were selected but more importantly because of the exclusion of reformist figures such as al-Eryan, al-Za'farani and Heshmat. Moreover, this crisis

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selection of the new members was to fill the vacuum in the Guidance Bureau. By that time seven out of 16 members were unable to exercise their role due to different reasons. Three of them were in prison, (al-Shater, Badie and Mohamed Ali Beshr) and four of them were old and ill (Mohamed Hilal, Sabry Arafa, Abdullah al-Khatib, and Lashin Abu Shanab). (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2009, accessed on 30 October 2012).

<sup>185</sup> The MB's internal elections have many curiosities. For instance, there are no candidates since all members are considered candidates and voters at the same time. On election day, a list containing Shura Council names is circulated among the members and each member has to choose a number of members, however, excluding himself. Those who gain the highest votes are promoted to become members in the Guidance Bureau. This way is also applied in all other elections in the MB.

<sup>186</sup> Some members claim that the promotion of Katatni is complete evidence of al-Shater's power in the MB. Katatni was not supposed to be the Head of El-Menia since he belongs to a different governorate (Suhag). According to the MB's traditions, the heads of the Administrative Offices should come from the same governorate or geographical area. Interview with Mohamed Hamza on 11 January 2012.

opened the door to many to criticize the MB's transparency and democracy. While some members accused the MB of lacking transparency and internal democracy, others cast doubts on the legality of the whole process of selection as they alleged it did not follow the bylaws and rules of the MB (Al-Masry Al-Youm 2008, accessed on 30 October 2012). The selection was secretive and the MB did not issue any statement to clarify how and when this selection took place which gave a golden chance to the regime and its sponsored media to discredit the MB as an authoritarian movement.

In September 2009, another crisis erupted in the MB, dubbed by the media as 'al-Eryan's crisis'. On 23 September 2009, Mohamed Hilal, an aged member of the Guidance Bureau passed away. According to Article 7 of the MB's bylaw his place was to be filled by the member who gained the highest number of votes in the preceding elections that is, al-Eryan. It was reported that Akef attempted to promote al-Eryan to the Guidance Bureau; however, the conservatives in the Bureau refused to accept his promotion, which heightened tensions between Akef and other senior leaders in the MB (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2009, accessed on 30 October 2012). Moreover, different media reports claimed that Akef resigned from the MB in protest at the conservatives' control over the Guidance Bureau (Elaph, 2009, accessed on 30 October 2012). However, Akef asserted later that he only delegated his powers to his Deputy, Mohamed Habib, and did not resign (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2009, accessed on 1 November 2012).

Habib, in turn, sought to use the crisis to strengthen his position (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2009, accessed on 3 November 2012). Initially he attempted to exercise some of Akef's powers and sought to defuse the crisis by suggesting that new elections to the Guidance Bureau could be held in June 2010. However, the conservatives led by Ezzat rejected Habib's proposal and campaigned for immediate elections. They interpreted Habib's endeavour as an attempt to take over the MB and to instil himself as the *de facto* General Guide. Hence, they planned to remove him from his post as the Deputy of the General Guide as well as from the Guidance Bureau.

The al-Eryan crisis was intensified by Akef's decision in March 2009, to leave his office at the end of his six-year term (Al-Arabiya, 2009, accessed on 1 November

2012). The MB's bylaw states that the General Guide has the right to two terms of four years each. Akef, unexpectedly, decided not to use his second term in order "to give a chance to a new generation and to give an example of change within the MB" (Ikhwanweb, 2009, accessed on 1 November 2012). Akef's decision to step down appeared to take many by surprise inside and outside the MB. Not only because of it was the first time in the MB's history that the General Guide had voluntarily stepped down<sup>187</sup> but also because the critical status of the MB in terms of its relationship with the Mubarak regime and the mounting power struggle between different factions. Moreover, Akef's decision can be interpreted as a sign of his disenchantment at the conflict between the conservatives and the reformists, which was worsened by the al-Eryan crisis.

Thus, the MB was divided over how to resolve the crisis and at the same time deal with the looming succession crisis. The conservatives led by Ezzat and backed by al-Shater, who was by then in prison, insisted on holding immediate elections to the Guidance Bureau and to elect a new General Guide. However, Habib rejected their suggestion and asked to postpone the elections until June 2010. The only way to resolve the impasse was to consult the Shura Council, the legislative body of the MB and which was responsible for choosing the General Guide and the Guidance Bureau. After a few weeks of in-fighting, it was reported that the Shura Council, which was entirely under the control of Ezzat,<sup>188</sup> decided to hold immediate elections to select the Guidance Bureau and the new General Guide. Habaib rejected the decision of the Shura Council and threatened to resign from the MB. Moreover, he claimed that the Shura Council was in favour of postponing the elections and its members were pushed into changing their minds (Al-Jazeera Net, 2009, accessed on 1 November 2012).

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<sup>187</sup> Traditionally, the MB's General Guide used to be replaced by his Deputy after his death. At least that was the case with the previous two General Guides, Mashhur and al-Hudaybi.

<sup>188</sup> According to media reports before holding the Guidance Bureau elections, Ezzat along with other conservative leaders restructured the Shura Council in order to control the elections and direct the outcome. Hence, instead of waiting until the election of a new Council in July 2010, unannounced elections were conducted despite the rejection of many MB's members (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2009, accessed on 1 November 2012)

At the end of December 2009, the MB announced that the Shura Council had elected a new Guidance Bureau which, unsurprisingly, was almost fully conservative with almost no representation of the reformists (Al-Youm Al-Sab', 2009, accessed on 1 November 2012). Apart from al-Eryan, who was elected, neither Abelfotouh nor Habaib was re-elected. Dismayed by its results, some reformists rejected the elections and accused Ezzat of abusing the bylaws in order to exclude reformists and control the movement (Interview with Khaled Dawoud by Al-Masry Al-Youm, 21 February 2010). While Abulfotouh remained silent, Habib reacted furiously and accused Ezzat of dominating the MB and abusing its bylaws and rules (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 30 December 2009, accessed on 1 November 2012). Moreover, the reformist al-Za'farani rejected the outcome and sent a protest petition to the MB's leadership asking for the elections to be investigated and for reform of the MB's bylaw (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 16 February 2010, accessed on 1 November 2012). However, this proved to be too late as a new conservative General Guide was installed.

In 16 January 2010, the MB announced that Mohamed Badie was elected to be its eighth General Guide. At a press conference, Akef told journalists that Badie was "chosen by consensus by members of the consultative council" (Ikhwanweb, 16 January 2010, accessed on 1 November 2012). A veteran member, who was described as a hardliner and a devotee of the Qutbist ideology and faction in the MB, Badie took office amidst an intensive power struggle over his legitimacy. Thus, under Badie it was unlikely that the reformists would be able to have an influential role in the MB. Not surprisingly, after the downfall of Mubarak many of reformists left the MB including Abulfotouh, Habib and al-Za'farani, along with many young reformists who were completely disenchanted by the difficulty of reforming the MB even after the departure of Mubarak.

By electing an almost fully conservative Guidance Bureau headed by a conservative General Guide, it is clear that the power struggle within the MB between the conservatives and reformists was finally settled in favour of the former who are likely to dominate the MB for years to come.

## 7.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter explores the effects of repression on the MB's coherence and identity. It examines how the MB was able to preserve its unity and integration under the Mubarak regime despite the attempts to eliminate the movement. Under Mubarak regime, security forces arrested and imprisoned many of the MB leaders and members in order to undermine and curb the movement's activism. However, the movement was able to accommodate and tolerate regime suppression. It is argued that the MB benefited from the Mubarak repression in maintaining its organizational solidity and the loyalty of its members. The MB leadership used repression to create an ordeal narrative that bound members and fostered their solidarity and commitment. During times of repression, the sense of self-preservation was one of the main factors that enabled the MB to maintain its identity. It is also argued that the MB did not crack despite the various divisions among its members but rather because repression mitigated and lessened these divisions. It enabled the MB leadership to accommodate and contain any attempt to create splits. While the MB has experienced many attempts to divide it, they were marginal and did not fragment the MB.

In addition, this chapter contends that regime repression has had a significant impact on the power balance and structures within the MB. It served the conservatives at the expense of the reformists. The former employed Mubarak's repression not only to preclude the latter's attempts to reform the MB but also to maintain power and control over the MB. It is argued that the conservatives worked tirelessly to marginalize and exclude the reformers from the MB leadership. They utilized regime repression to delegitimize the reformers' calls for change. Moreover, since the mid of the 1990s the balance of power within the MB has shifted in favour of the conservatives. It was Khairat al-Shater and Mahmoud Ezzat who were able to entrench the conservatives' power in the MB at the expense of the reformists. They succeeded in creating a conservative power centre that was able to control the MB. Currently, the MB is entirely under the control of the conservatives who will likely dominate the movement for years to come.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **8.1. INTRODUCTION**

This thesis explores the process of identity construction in the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). It focuses primarily on unpacking the underlying factors and processes that formulate the MB identity in everyday life. It aims to understand the ability of the MB to construct a distinctive and resilient identity for its members. The study findings reveal that the MB identity is a social construct that reflects the interactions between ideology and structure, religion and politics, and individuals and leadership. The MB employs different mechanisms and tools in order to reshape individuals' perceptions and worldview. The study highlights the integral role of socialization and the indoctrination process in formulating the MB identity. It also explores the effects of the political environment on the MB identity. By unravelling the internal logic of the MB, the study creates a discursive analysis of the formation of the MB identity in everyday life. Thus, it accounts for the interplay between ideology, organization, structure, and environment in forming the MB identity.

In addition, despite the literature on Islamist movements, many issues, i.e. recruitment, mobilization, socialization, still needs more scrutiny and studies. Therefore, this study sought to provide new insights that could enrich this literature and enhance our understanding to the internal dynamics and politics of these movements. Moreover, the vast majority of studies on Islamist movements tend to focus on their "external" behaviour and how it interacts with political regimes without looking at the underlying factors that shape this behaviour and bring it to the fore. This study sought to bridge this gap in the literature by providing an "insider" account to the processes of MB's identity formation and its impact on the movement's political and social activism.

## 8.2. RESEARCH SUMMARY

This study answers the key question: how could the MB construct its identity in everyday life? In other words, what does it mean for members to be *ikhwani*? This question entails many points that directed the research. For instance, it revealed the mechanisms and processes that are used by the MB in recruiting members. It also explored how the MB reshapes its members' identity and the relationship between the internal dynamics and the identity construction process. Moreover, the study illustrated the effects of the political environment on the MB identity and how the movement's leaders employed repression to maintain unity and coherence.

In order to answer these questions, I relied upon primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from interviews that were conducted with several members at different levels of the MB and with academics and experts on the MB. The interviews provided compelling data on the MB which helped to answer the research questions.

The research organization was designed in a way that connected hypothesis, argument, and methodology in a persuasive analysis. It is argued that the MB identity is the outcome of three main factors: the MB's aims and objectives; its internal organization; and the political environment in which it operates. Chapters were designed in a way that illuminates these underpinnings of the MB identity.

In addition to the introduction and the conclusion, the thesis was divided into six substantial chapters. After a critical survey of the literature on Islamist movements in chapter two, chapter three articulates theoretical framework. It sought to avoid the dichotomy of the essentialist and contextualist approaches that have dominated the terrain of Islamist movements since the beginning of the 1980s. Thus, it incorporated social constructivism with social movement theory (SMT), in order to provide a sound and plausible explanation for the formulation of the MB identity. The main findings of this chapter are that no single approach can explain the complexity of the MB as a socio-political organization and there is a need to integrate more than one discipline in order to capture the real essence of the MB identity.

To understand the impact of the ideational factors on the MB identity, chapter four provides a comprehensive account of the impact of al-Banna's views and thoughts on the MB. It reveals how al-Banna articulated the master framework of the MB identity. By blending the notion of *al-fikra al-Islamiyya* (the Islamic identity) with the ideology and structure of the MB, al-Banna was able to create the collective identity of the MB under the banner of the *jama'a*. It refers to the code of values, standards and behaviour that members should abide by in everyday life. The chapter concludes that al-Banna was able to forge a unique and distinctive identity for the MB.

Building on the legacy of al-Banna, the ensuing leaders maintained his impact on members' identity through internalizing his ideas and views in the socialization process. Chapters five and six reveal how the MB integrates ideational and institutional factors in order to create its identity. Specifically, chapter five examines the mechanisms and tools that the MB employs in recruiting members and reshaping their views, perceptions, and identity. The chapter explores the multi-tiered system of membership. It unpacks this system and highlights the criteria and degrees of membership. Moreover, it analyzes the significance of this system and why the MB adopted it. It was clear that members have to fulfil certain prerequisites and conditions in order to obtain a fully-fledged membership. Therefore, they have to undergo an intensive process of indoctrination and education (*tarbiyya*) that facilitates the internalization of the MB ideology and doctrine. The study explores the strategy and tactics of the MB in selecting and recruiting new members. Interestingly, the MB employs social networks, friendship and kinship connections in seeking new members. It embraces a 'ripple effect' strategy to expand its grassroots and social networks.

Moreover, the thesis explores the interaction between the MB's structure, ideology, members and leadership, and norms and behaviour. It reveals that the MB creates a sub-culture that is termed *ikhwanism* which encompasses and guides members in their everyday life. *Ikhwanism* denotes a set of norms, values and standards that enhance the identification process within the MB which facilitates internal dynamics and interactions. It signifies the code of identity that directs the MB members in their

everyday life. Moreover, the study reveals that the institutionalization of *ikhwanism* plays a vital role in consolidating the MB identity. The MB by-laws and statements are set up in order to create a self-disciplined and resilient structure and identity for the movement.

The study also reveals the importance of the organizational norms, values, and standards in preserving the MB identity. The norms of allegiance (*bay'a*), commitment (*ilitzam*), trust (*thiqa*) and loyalty (*intima*) embody the core values of the MB. Members and leaders have to abide by these norms in their everyday life in order to achieve the MB objectives.

Furthermore, the study investigates the effects of repression on the MB identity. Under the Mubarak regime, the MB experienced different forms of repression, exclusion, and oppression. However, it was able to preserve its unity and maintain its political and social activism. The findings reveal the ability of the MB to employ regime repression in solidifying its internal coherence. The movement's leaders always capitalized on regime repression in order to strengthen members' commitment and solidarity. Moreover, the study demonstrates that regime repression enabled the conservatives within the MB to dominate the organization at the expense of the reformers who were constantly marginalized. The study also highlights how the recurrent waves of oppression enabled the MB to create a resilient and solid identity.

### **8.3. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH**

The findings are divided into two main aspects: the theoretical and the practical findings.

#### **8.3.1. The Theoretical Findings**

The study re-examines different theoretical assumptions that have dominated the terrain of social movements since the end of 1970s. It highlights the problems of relying on one theoretical approach or discipline in studying Islamist social movements. The study reveals that the multi-faceted nature of Islamist movements requires

interdisciplinary approaches that can capture their real essence. Therefore, the research avoids applying one single approach in analyzing the MB identity. Likewise, it shuns the dichotomy of the essentialist and contextualist approaches in studying Islamism. Since the study treats identity as a social construct, it incorporates social constructivism with SMT, in order to examine the process of identity construction as it occurs within the MB.

The study findings on theoretical level can be divided into five points. The first is concerned with the study of Islamist movements. The study reveals that Islamist movements should not be treated as mere social movements but rather as multi-faceted agents which employ ideational, material, and institutional factors in order to formulate their own identity. Therefore, the study highlights several key distinctions between Islamist movements and conventional social movements, particularly those that emerged within a western context. One is that unlike other social movements, Islamist movements are mainly concerned with reshaping an individual's identity to align with religious values and ideals regardless what are these values and ideals. Therefore, disseminating Islamic values and idioms in the public sphere is a key objective for Islamist movements. Hence they focus on reviving Islamic identity in everyday life. Another distinction is that while social movements concentrate on protest as the locus of collective action, Islamist movements focus on propagation and preaching as the centre of their activism. That is, Islamist movements, at least until the Arab Spring, avoided rebellion against autocratic regimes. True, they have unrivalled organizational and mobilizational capabilities; however, they utilize these for expanding their social networking and during elections. A final distinction is that unlike other social movements, membership in and affiliation with Islamist movements is not easily attained and is contingent upon certain criteria and prerequisites that individuals have to fulfil in order to become fully-fledged members.

Nevertheless, these findings do not imply that Islamist movements are exceptional movements that cannot be studied by SMT; rather the thesis underlines the need to integrate other disciplines and approaches in order to understand Islamist

movements more accurately. Therefore, this study draws on different theoretical aspects in order to discern particular aspects of the MB. For instance, it is difficult to probe the changes in the identity and perceptions of the MB members without using social psychology. It helps to discern the process of indoctrination and socialization that occurs within the MB and how it alters members' perceptions and worldview.

The second theoretical finding pertains to the essence of identity. The study reveals that identity is not an immutable or rigid phenomenon; rather it is a social construct and subject to multiple influences. Therefore, unlike accounts that portray Islamist movements as rigid, this study has shown that Islamists' identity is a product of many factors and processes. It reflects the interaction between individuals and society, ideology and organization, and the movement and environment in which the movement exists. In other words, Islamic identity is outcome of the interplay between institutional, material, symbolic, religious and cultural factors that exist within and outside the movement.

The third theoretical point concerns the importance of examining the effects of collective action on an individual's identity. Despite the abundant literature on social movements, individuals, the core element of collective action, are significantly disregarded. Therefore, this study examines how collective action can reshape an individual's identity. It illuminates the relationship between the movement and individuals not only as members but also as human beings. While other studies focus on *collective* identity at the expense of *individualistic* identity, this study re-affirms the need to understand the changes that happen to individuals when they are involved in collective action.

The fourth theoretical point is the relationship between membership and identity. The vast majority of studies on social movements neglect this important issue. This study demonstrates that there is a significant link between both variables (membership and identity). It highlights that Islamist movements utilize the multi-tiered system of membership in order to reshape and consolidate individuals' identities. Thus, members have to inculcate the movement's ideology, standards and rules before they can attain

full membership. Moving from one level of membership to another prompts members to acquire certain behaviours and values in their everyday life.

The fifth, and final theoretical point is that the study reveals the interplay between collective identity and collective action. The vast majority of social movement studies concentrate on one of the two variants as the base of the analysis. However, this study highlights that both variants—action and identity—are mutually influenced and interacted.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that incorporating social constructivism with social movements theory reveals these findings. The infusion of Klandermans and Oegema's participation model and the social networks models enabled us to discover the intricate process of recruiting and reshaping the mindset and identity of MB members. As a socio-religious movement, the MB tends to employ different factors, i.e. religious feelings, idioms, symbols, in order to recruit individuals and reshape their worldview. This process of reconfiguration is not possible without adopting a discipline and persuasive program of recruitment and socialization.

### **8.3.2. Findings on the Dynamics of Islamist Movements Level**

On the practical level, the study findings are anchored around key themes. The first concerns Islamist movements as vibrant and dynamic social organizations. The study demonstrates that there is a crucial link between the internal dynamics and the external behaviour of Islamist movements. It demonstrates that Islamism, as a social phenomenon, is a reflection of multiple factors and processes. Whereas the majority of studies on Islamist movements, particularly those on the MB, focus on political and social activism, this study unpacks the several underlying factors of this activism. In other words, instead of focusing on the *external* layer of Islamism, this study analyzes its *internal* layer and the resultant connotations. It provides an internal analysis of the interplay between ideology and structure, religion and politics, and values and actions. It uncovers the methods, mechanisms, and processes that forge Islamists and make them what they are. Therefore, instead of taking the MB ideology and behaviour as given, as

many accounts have done, this study investigates how this behaviour came into being. Moreover, the study does not treat Islamism as only a religious phenomenon, nor does it focus only on its social and political activism. Instead, it deals with Islamism as a social construct that entails different processes and dynamics and that can manifest itself in different forms. Thus, the study was mainly preoccupied by the interplay between these processes in everyday life.

The second theme is the impact of the ideational and symbolic factors on the MB identity. The study reveals how Islamists, as social agents, think, behave and perceive the surrounding realities. It shows how Islamist movements can reshape and reformulate individuals' perceptions and worldviews. The indoctrination and socialization process within the MB reveals an unrivalled ability to forge members' views and personalities. The components of identity, e.g. culture, norms, values, and manners, are social constructs that reflect the alignment between the member's and the movement's ideology. In other words, after spending time in the MB, members become the mouthpiece of the movement's ideology. The MB interweaves key religious values—allegiance (*bay'a*) and obedience (*ta'a*)—with mundane ones—trust, commitment, and loyalty—to strengthen and articulate members' identities.

In addition, the study reveals how the MB infiltrates individuals' private spheres in order to reshape their perceptions and worldviews. The *ikhwanization* process that dominates the socialization process embodies a key tool in the creation of identity. It refers to the way in which members perceive the world and interact with it. The study demonstrates that members are happy to align their views and behaviour with the norms and standards of the MB. Moreover, members are willing to follow their leaders without questioning their actions and decisions.

The third point concerns the mechanisms of recruiting members in Islamist movements. The study reveals the complexity of recruiting new members into the MB. It demonstrates that despite the populist character of the MB, membership and affiliation with the movement is a complex yet meaningful process. It shows the mechanisms, tools, and procedures that are used to recruit new members. Moreover, the study underlines

the strong connection between membership and promotion within the MB. Members and cadres cannot be promoted without spending a certain period in the MB, embracing its ideology, and obeying the leaders. However, the study reveals the subjectivity of promotion procedures and rules. Therefore, members who adopt different views from that of the leadership are unlikely to be promoted from one level to another.

The fourth key theme is the relationship between repression and identity. The study demonstrates that the response of Islamist movements to regime repression varies from one to another. While the majority of literature on Islamism focuses on inclusion/moderation versus exclusion/radicalization, this study discards this dichotomy by discerning the actual dynamics that happen within Islamist movements in their response to regime repression. It shows how Islamists adapt their discourse, structure, and strategy within different environments. Moreover, contrary to the conventional wisdom that assumes that Islamists do not thrive in an authoritarian environment, this study reveals the ability of the MB to benefit from regime repression. It highlights how the MB leaders capitalized on regime repression in order to foster members' commitment and solidarity. By creating a sense of victimhood among members, they were able to maintain the unity and loyalty of members. This sense of ordeal (*mihna*) enables the MB to accommodate and defuse potential splits within the MB.

Moreover, the study unveils the balance of power within the MB and how it shifted over the 1990s and 2000s. The relationship between the conservatives and reformists was affected profoundly by Mubarak repression. The conservatives were able to exclude and eliminate the reformists using the repression as a cover for avoiding criticism or permitting checks on their power. Moreover, they restructured the influential bodies in the MB, the Guidance Bureau and the Shura Council, in order to control and dominate the organization. The study also reveals how the conservatives utilized regime repression to suppress any calls for internal reform. During the second half of the 2000s, the conservatives solidified their grip on power within the MB. Therefore, many reformist figures, disillusioned by the conservatives' hegemony, left the movement.

#### **8.4. FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study attempted to provide new insights that can enhance future research on Islamism. Despite its contributions on the theoretical and practical levels, further research needs to be undertaken in order to capture the complexity of Islamism as a social phenomenon. In this regard, I highlight three main areas that require more research. The first concerns the paradigms and approaches that study Islamism. Although this study builds a new analytical framework that can capture the real essence of Islamist movements, there is a need for more research to explore the multi-faceted aspects of Islamism. This can only be achieved through conducting interdisciplinary research combining various disciplines and tools. Despite the significant contribution of SMT in studying Islamist movements, it is insufficient to unpack the complexity of Islamism. Scholars who study Islamism from a social movement perspective have neglected two key points. The first is the multi-faceted nature of Islamist movements which necessitates an interdisciplinary approach in order to understand these movements within their environment. For instance, it is important to incorporate social psychology in order to examine the ideational aspects of Islamism. The second neglected point is the role and place of individuals in the analysis of Islamism. There is a need to examine the effects of collective action on individuals' identities, perceptions, and personalities. Therefore, instead of focusing on the macro and institutional factors in studying Islamism, we need to weigh the micro and individualistic aspects of the members. In other words, sociologists need to rethink how to move beyond the boundaries of SMT in order to explore the effects of Islamism on individuals' lives.

The second proposed area of research is to re-examine the relationship between Islamist movements and their wider environment. This study attempts to capture the effects of the political environment on the internal dynamics of Islamist movements. However, further research is required to unpack the mutual influences and interactions between Islamist movements and their environments and how each shapes the other.

Third, and most important, are the effects of the so-called Arab Spring on Islamism. The new political landscape in the Middle East that followed the downfall of

a number of autocratic regimes provides a golden opportunity for research on Islamist movements. There is a fundamental need to compare between the state of Islamist movements before and after the Arab Spring. It appears that the Arab uprisings have significantly reshaped Islamist dynamics in many countries. Changes in Islamists' discourse, ideology, and strategy are underway and it is vitally important to probe the consequences of these transformations which are set to change the terrain of Islamist politics in the years ahead.

To sum up, the complexity of Islamist movements, as a social phenomenon, prompts us to continue the search for more nuanced approaches and tools that can capture the nature of this phenomenon.

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