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THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AND THE POLITICAL: AN EXERCISE IN AMBIGUITY

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'We are a Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organisation, an athletic group, a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social idea.'[1]

Introduction

During the past fifteen years, the image of the Muslim Brotherhood has changed in the Middle East, at least among most scholars. Previously viewed as a suspect organisation linked with secret terrorist cells, it has become a more moderate movement that refutes violence and embraces democratic values, moving away from the idea of installing an Islamic state and implementing the *shari'a*. During this process, the Brotherhood in the Middle East has embraced new terms and concepts, such as the division of power, the rule of law, equal rights, an independent judiciary and freedom of speech and organisation.[2] The current debate seems to focus on a 'rest

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1   Speech by Hasan al-Banna, cited in Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, 2nd print, p. 14. In another speech, Hasan al-Banna declared the opposite but with the same meaning: 'My Brothers: you are not a benevolent society, nor a political party, nor a local organization having limited purposes. Rather, you are a new soul in the heart of this nation to give it life by means of the Qur'an […]. Ibid, p. 30.

2   See, Sana Abed-Kotob, 'The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 27 (1995), pp. 321-39; and Mona El-Ghobashy, 'The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim

category' of giving equal rights to women, the Christian minority, and total freedom of expression in cultural matters.[3]

Despite this positive turn in the Middle East, suspicions remain. No one is really sure whether these reforms are limited to the most liberal elements among the leadership, what the ultimate goals are, and what the movement exactly stands for. Although everyone recognises the enormous problems the Brotherhood faces in an authoritarian environment and the constant harassment of its leaders and followers, the movement never seems to make the ultimate decision to commit itself in one way or the other. In Europe, the opinions are even more divided (see the Introduction to this volume). Taking up the rhetoric of the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and encouraged by the Islamophobic wave in Europe, authorities, intelligence services and some researchers regard the Brotherhood as the basic source of Islamic terrorism. Or some at least consider the Brotherhood's spokespersons as speaking with two tongues, one for the Muslim following and one for non-Muslims.

Critique of the Brotherhood is not new and has dogged the movement from the beginning. The communists called it a fascist organisation. It was accused of being highly political, working with the monarchy and large landowners, but at the same time claiming to be only religious.[4] By not drawing up a political programme, nor defining the tools and terms to attain concrete goals, it was accused of opaqueness (*ghumud*).[5] Many believe that this deception, the denial of the political aspirations of the Brotherhood, has been the source of radicalisation, violence and terror. During the last ten years, the Brotherhood has been unfavourably compared by

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Brothers,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 37 (2005), pp. 373-395. El-Ghobashy states in her article that, 'Over the past quarter-century, the Society of the Muslim Brothers (Ikhwan) morphed from a highly secretive, hierarchical, antidemocratic organization led by an anointed elder, into a modern, multivocal political association steered by educated, savvy professionals not unlike activists of the same age in rival Egyptian political parties,' (p. 373).

3   Nathan J. Brown, Amr Hamzawy and Marina Ottaway, 'Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring the Grey Zones,' *Carnegie Papers*, No. 67, March 2006.

4   For an analysis of the most anti-Brotherhood tracts see *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun fi-l-mizan* [The Muslim Brotherhood in the balance], analyzed in Roel Meijer, *The Quest for Modernity: Secular Liberal and Left-Wing Political Thought in Egypt, 1945-1958*, London: Routledge/Curzon, 2002, p.117-8.

5   For the debate on this topic at the beginning of the 1980s, see Roel Meijer, History, Authenticity and Politics: Tariq al-Bishri's Interpretation of Modern Egyptian History, *MERA Occasional,* Paper No. 4, September 1989.

regimes in the Middle East to radical movements, which at least revised their ideas in public self-criticism and ideological revisionism (*muraja'at*).[6]

In this chapter, I will look more closely at the ideological development of the political thought of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Europe by analysing its key political terms and its gradual transformation. I will argue that the reason why opinions on the Brotherhood diverge so much is that the political terminology of the Muslim Brotherhood, from its inception, has been plagued by ambiguity. On the one hand, the terms are all-encompassing and lay claim to salvation in this life as well as the next. This claim is laid down in the principle that Islam is a 'total system' (*al-nizam al-kamil*), which embodies a 'comprehensiveness' (*shumuliyya*), providing answers to all aspects of life. On the other hand, the Brotherhood uses religion for political goals, which are ill-defined and vague and conceal the real political and economic interests behind them. In the end, belief (*iman*) is central to the whole ideology. It is believed that once all Muslims behave according to the norms of the *shari'a*, a perfect society will come about. In this utopian denial of politics, party politics (*hizbiyya*), with its divisions, respect for difference (*ikhtilaf*) and a willingness to compromise in order to attain concrete solutions, is rejected as an abomination that leads to dissension (*fitna*) and poses a threat to unity (*wahda*).[7]

Michael Freeden's theory of ideologies is extremely useful in analysing the ambiguity of the Brotherhood's political thought.[8] He makes a distinction between core and adjacent concepts and demonstrates the manner in which their changing relationship can be mapped. This is important because the Brotherhood has basically maintained all of its concepts (partly out of piety to the legacy of its founders and prominent thinkers), but these have moved from the centre to the periphery and vice versa. Tracing this constant repositioning of concepts like *hizbiyya*, jihad, or the introduction of new concepts such as equal rights and pluralism (*ta'addudiyya*) on the

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6   Roel Meijer, 'Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong as a Principle of Social Action: The Case of the Jama'a al-Islamiyya', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, London: Hurst & Co., 2009, pp. 189-220, http://www.clingendael. nl/staff/publications.html?id=426. The only Brotherhood branch that has revised its ideas is the Syrian branch, see Roel Meijer, Towards a Political Islam, *Clingendael Diplomacy Papers*, No. 22, July 2009, pp. 34-37, http://www.clingendael.nl/staff/publications. html?id=426.

7   Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1992. Roy's critique is that Islamism limits politics to virtue and piety. All the rest is 'sin, plot or illusion' (pp. 10, 21, and 29).

8   Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

ideological map of the Brotherhood basically means studying the shift in its ideology. Freeden's other contribution is the notion of 'de-contesting', the process of establishing unambiguous relationships between political concepts. Another factor relevant to studying the ideology of the Brotherhood is the notion of human agency. Here, Chantal Mouffe's concept of 'the political' is helpful.[9] Bringing politics 'back in' entails a rehabilitation of politics as an essential aspect of human activity, human agency, to think critically and to exert democratic rights.[10] If human agency is reduced to fulfilling God's will in devoting oneself to *da'wa*, or sacrificing one's life for jihad, or being obedient to the leader (*al-sam' wa-l-ta'a*), 'the political' is diminished. The history of the concept of *hizbiyya*, or party politics, is a good indicator of the trajectory of human agency. It provides a venue to analyse those concepts that have been incorporated into the Brotherhood's political vocaubulary during the past twenty years, such as pluralism, the rule of law, equal rights, citizenship, and constitution.[11]

The Middle East

Hasan al-Banna: Islam as a total system

Undoubtedly, the modern and distinguishing character of the Muslim Brotherhood consists of its totalising concept of shumuliyya, which is one of the main mobilising concepts of the movement. The Brotherhood not only claimed that Islam presented a solution for all problems, it also claimed to represent Islam.[12] As such, the Brotherhood was not just a religious movement. Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949)[13] was clearly aware that

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9   I have borrowed the term from Chantal Mouffe, who states that the denial of the political is the denial of antagonism and conflict, *The Return of the Political*, London: Verso, 1993, p. 3-4. Although the Brotherhood, of course, thrives on conflict in the cultural/religious field, it has only recently become aware of a political conflict and has started to expand in this intellectual direction creating new terms to conceptualise this conflict.

10   In this notion of the political, I will argue against the anthropological notion of Islamic politics propounded by Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, which concentrates on symbols, such as the veil in France. I believe that this is partly because Islam has not yet developed political terminology. In that sense, Gudrun Krämer's work has been very promising and pioneering. See for instance 'Islamist Notions of Democracy', in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (eds.), *Political Islam: Essays form Middle East Report*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, pp. 71-82.

11   Roel Meijer, Towards a Political Islam, *Clingendael Diplomacy Papers*, No. 22, July 2009.

12   For an excellent, but different vision of the Brotherhood, see Gudrun Krämer, *Hasan al-Banna*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2010.

13   See also David Commins, 'Hasan al-Banna, 1906-1949', in Ali Rahnema (ed.), *Pioneers*

achieving power (*quwa*) was crucial for implementing his project.[14] This led to tensions between what the movement said and what it did. While al-Banna attracted and mobilised the youth with slogans against the politics 'of notables and names', he was only able to establish a vast network of traditional supporters in the countryside by working through these very same local notables.[15] At the same time, he maintained warm relations with autocratic politicians and advisors to King Frauq, such as Ali Mahir, the conservative shaykh of the Azhar, Mustafa al-Maraghi, and the autocratic politician, Isma'il Sidqi, who suspended the Egyptian Constitution from 1930 to 1933.[16]

This tension between words and deeds was most vividly expressed in the ambiguity towards the political system, which had been introduced in 1923 by the British and was based on the Belgian Constitution. Hasan al-Banna has made different, often contradictory, remarks on the Constitution and democracy. On the one hand, he claimed that the Constitution of 1923 was not un-Islamic as long as it did not oppose the *shari'a* and an Islamic system of rule.[17] He praised the modern democratic notion that the ruler should represent 'the power of the people' and 'respect its will'.[18] He also believed that a constitution should 'define the power and duties of the ruler and his relations with the ruled'.[19] He even accepted the possibility that pluralism could emerge after gaining independence.[20] On the other hand, he condemned the system and actively worked to undermine it by rejecting the concept of *hizbiyya*, which in his view had the negative connotation of party politics and divisiveness (*fitna*).[21] He was convinced that,

of Islamic Revival, London: ZED books, 2nd edn, 2008, pp. 125-153.

14 'Risala al-mu'tamar al-khamis [Tract of the Fifth Conference]', in *Majmu'a rasa'il al-imam al-shahid Hasan al-Banna* [Collected tracts of the imam martyr Hasan al-Banna], Cairo: Dar al-Shihab, no date, p. 169. Henceforth the Collected Tracts will be referred to as CT.

15 Lia, *Society*, pp. 132-135.

16 Ibid., pp. 137-138.

17 'Risala mu'tamar al-khamis,' in CT, pp. 173-4; 'Nizam al-hukm' [System of government], in CT, pp. 216-217.

18 'Nizam al-hukm,' in CT, p. 215.

19 'Risala mu'tamar al-khamis,' in CT, p. 172.

20 Ibrahim Bayumi Ghanim, *al-Fikr al-siyasi li-l-imam Hasan al-Banna* [The Political Thought of Hasan al-Banna], Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi 'wa-l-Nashr al-Islamiyya, 1992, p. 313. Of course, Hasan al-Banna never used the modern concept of pluralism (ta'addudiyya).

21 Ibid., p. 311. Gudrun Krämer remarked in a lecture in Leiden on 18 November 2010 that neither did the Wafd nor any of the other parties at the time accept *hizbiyya*. They all claimed to speak for the Egyptian nation. This is true, but they did not use ambiguous religious terminology for political purposes.

during the British occupation, democracy hampered national unity and postponed the gaining of independence.[22] Due to their internal bickering the political parties were 'the evil of this great nation',[23] and Hasan al-Banna repeatedly asked for the dissolution of the multi-party system.[24] In fact, he removed politics from Parliament and subsumed it under the principle of *hisba*, encouraging 'commanding good and preventing the bad', thus regarding the Brotherhood more as a social movement.[25] Within this scheme, unity (*wahda*) and brotherhood (*al-ukhuwa*) against imperialism was far more important than politics, to such a degree that unbelief (*kufr*) and *hizbiyya* and morals (*akhlaq*) became correlated. According to Hasan al-Banna, *hizbiyya* leads to 'corruption and moral degeneracy'.[26]

Other autocratic remarks confirm the anti-democratic tendency in al-Banna's thinking. For instance, he upheld the classic Islamic theory of obedience to the ruler (*wali al-amr*), which states that opposition against the ruler can only be exerted when the ruler deviates (*inhiraf*) from the straight (religious) path (*al-sirat al-mustaqim*).[27] How political disputes should be resolved, Hasan al-Banna leaves unanswered. His condemnation of multi-party democracy and public expressions of political views like demonstrations, as well as his oblique reference to the traditional instrument of (discrete) advice (*nasiha*) reflects the confusion within the Brotherhood between modern and traditional concepts of power.[28] In the end, because politics and its terms remained so vague and 'un-decontested', politics became hidden, undefined, uncontrolled, enhancing secret agreements with the authorities. Such terms as the general good (*maslaha*) were so vague that they could be employed to establish a one-party state as long as it was Islamic.

22   Ibid., pp. 305-22.

23   'Nizam al-hukm,' in CT, p. 220.

24   'Risala mu'tamar al-khamis,' in CT, p. 181; and 'Nizam al-hukm,' in CT, p. 221.

25   Ghanim, *al-Fikr al-siyasi*, p. 215.

26   Ghanim, *al-Fikr al-siyasi*, p. 333. However, also in this respect he was ambiguous. While vilifying *hizbiyya*, in 1938 Hasan al-Banna wrote that they would take part in elections. See Lia, *The Society,* p. 174; in 1942 he withdrew from elections under pressure from the Wafd and in 1945 he was defeated in a (fraudulent) electoral contest. See Mitchell, *The Society*, pp. 27-28, p. 33.

27   Ghanim, *al-Fikr al-siyasi*, p. 306.

28   For more on classical political thought, see Muhammad Khalid Masud, 'The Doctrine of Siyasa in Islamic Law', *Recht van de Islam*, Vol. 18 (2001), pp. 1-29, and Ira M. Lapidus, 'The Golden Age: The Political Concepts of Islam', *Annals, AAPS*, No. 524, (November 1992), pp. 13-25.

Neither did the autocratic internal structure of the Brotherhood enhance democracy. The leader was called the General Guide (*al-murshid al-'amm*) and its members were required to pledge their allegiance (*bay'a*) and to follow his orders according to the principle of 'hearing and obedience' (*al-sam' wa-l-ta'a*). The leader appointed the members of the Executive Committee (Maktab al-Irshad), determined ideology, and decided the political direction of the movement.[29] Theoretically, the members of the Executive Committee could dispose him, but typical of the undefined nature of political terms, just as in the case of the ruler, accountability was restricted to religious deviation not political responsibility. The result was that disputes within the movement were never openly debated and invariably ended with the expulsion of the critics.[30] It is no accident that the most serious disputes focused on support of the leadership of conservative political circles.[31]

The promotion of violence was another factor that undermined democratic tendencies. The paramilitary training of the 'Rovers' and later the 'Battalions' was a way of mobilising youth and intimidating opponents. Violence was legitimised by Hasan al-Banna in his statement that it should be used for political ends: 'The Muslim Brotherhood will use violence where it contributes to strengthening belief and unity […]'[32]

Finally, on a higher, more abstract level, there was the dichotomous portrayal of the West and the Islamic world as being locked into a struggle between civilisations. The West was depicted as the source of corruption (*fasad*), bent on undermining 'morals' (*ahklaq*) and the introduction of 'self-interest', 'destructive principles', 'fanaticism' (*ta'assub*) and 'clannishness' (*'asabiyya*). This might have been a way of opposing British imperialism, and is seen by many as the raison d'être for the Brotherhood. But the depiction has also prevented al-Banna and his successors from thinking more deeply not only about the West but especially about the nature of politics.[33]

Ultimately, one cannot completely absolve Hasan al-Banna from responsibility for the demise of the movement. Even if the underground organisation was established to protect against assaults by opponents, and

29   Lia, *Society*, p. 98, p. 105, and p. 114.

30   See for example in Mitchell, *Society*, pp. 10-11, p.18.

31   Ibid., pp. 53-5.

32   CT, pp. 169-70

33   Ghanim, *al-Fikr al-siyasi*, p. 222 and pp. 230-233,

even if Hasan al-Banna was not aware of the dangers of the Secret Apparatus (*al-jihaz al-sirri*), the very fact that he condoned it shows that the Muslim Brotherhood was very much part of the violent times at the end of the monarchy. By promoting the rhetoric of jihad and the cult of violence without building controls, he was responsible for the downfall of the Brotherhood after it was banned in 1948 and 1954. Its opponents could easily use the 'comprehensive' (*shumuli*) claims of the Brotherhood against it once the fight was on and the Brotherhood became too strong. In response, the Brotherhood became more suspicious of politics and emphasised its core concept of belief (*iman*).[34]

There is, however, nothing inevitable in the Egyptian run of events, although, in many cases, the ambivalence would emerge in new forms. In Syria, the Brotherhood represented conservative groups and, as a political party, regularly took part in elections between 1946 and 1964.[35] In Jordan, the Brotherhood emphasised its character as a beneficial society (*jama'iyya*) in order to escape the ban on politics. Especially in the latter case, the Brotherhood could be used by the regime against the nationalist, pan-Arab and Leftist opposition.

Hasan al-Hudaybi: delimiting ambiguity

After the assassination of Hasan al-Banna in 1949, ambiguity would haunt the Brotherhood under Hasan al-Hudaybi (1891-1973), who became the succeeding General Guide in 1951. Al-Hudaybi maintained the same close relations with the palace and politicians, while claiming to be the spokesman of all Muslims. After the military take-over by the Free Officers in July 1952, and the abolition of the parliamentary system, the Brotherhood was again confronted with difficult political decisions. While it liked to portray itself as the 'civil protector' of the regime, it first registered as a political party against the wishes of al-Hudaybi. Later, for opportunistic reasons, when political parties were banned in January 1953, it presented itself as a religious association. Then, in 1954, it reversed its previous position, championing the reintroduction of a constitution and the parliamentary system.[36] Finally, rudderless and discredited, the Brotherhood lost the po-

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34   Barbara H. E. Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology*, London/New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009, p. 23.

35   Johannes Reissner, *Ideologie und Politik der Muslimbruder Syriens: Von den Wahlen 1947 bi zum Verbot unter Adib as-Shishakli 1952*, Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1980.

36   Mitchell, *Society*, p. 109; and Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 29-31 and p. 34.

litical confrontation with the military, which banned it in December 1954. With brief releases in 1957 and 1964, the 'ordeal' (*mihna*) would last until Sadat became president in 1970.

The immediate reaction in the prisons was an attempt to solve the ambiguity towards politics through a total rejection of all politics. Isolation from society and hatred towards the Nasserist regime that tortured the imprisoned Brothers gave a boost to the more abstract, utopian side of the Brotherhood. This would entail a new conception of belief (*iman*), which was now connected to new adjacent concepts introduced by Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). No further attempts were made to define - in Freeden's words to 'de-contest' - the Islamic concepts it used nor to define the Islamic state, Islamic law or how they could be applied; all efforts were geared towards developing and promoting a revolutionary ideology to topple the Nasserist state. Paradoxically, although such Western concepts as liberation were accepted, they were completely defined in religious terms: 'This religion is really a universal declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and from servitude to his own desires, which is also a form of servitude; it is a declaration that sovereignty (*hakimiyya*) belongs to God alone and He is the lord of all the worlds.'[37] The other concepts that Sayyid Qutb promoted, such as the pre-Islamic state of ignorance (*jahiliyya*), excommunication (*takfir*), the vanguard (*tali'a*) and jihad, all rejected politics because human agency was regarded as fallible.[38] Hedged in by these totalitarian concepts, faith (*iman*) meant a total submission to God.

If Sayyid Qutb decided to resolve ambiguity in one direction, it is clear from Zollner's book that the second guide, Hasan al-Hudaybi, tried to solve Hasan al-Banna's intellectual heritage in the opposite direction. Hasan al-Hudaybi's book, *Preachers not Judges*, written in 1969 in response to Qutb's radical tract, is not an overt political book. But it is basically rooted in classical Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and addresses those elements in Qutb's ideology that connect politics with sin (*ma'siya*). As Zollner shows, the real importance of Hasan al-Hudaybi lies in his capacity to open up space to human agency and to pull the debate down from the highly abstract and collective level to the concrete legal, individual and practical

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37   Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, Damascus: Dar al-Ilm, n.d., p. 57-8. Not surprisingly, in this totalitarian utopia there is no room for legislation, *mu'amalat*, or adjustment to circumstances. The whole Qutbian system is in favour of '*ibadat*, or religious observances and obligations. See Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 55-63.

38   Ibid., p. 61

level in which human fallibility is accepted as inevitable. This made politics again possible.

'Umar al-Tilmisani and hizbiyya

The Muslim Brotherhood entered a new period after 1973, following Sadat's release of its members from prison. This allowed it to structure itself once again and to rebuild the 'organisation' (*al-tanzim*), which then became the main activity of the movement during the following decades.[39] The more liberal climate, however, opened up the possibility to revise its previous condemnation of politics. In 1986, the Muslim Brotherhood even applied for a license as a political party.[40] But the internal struggle was never really resolved and the aversion to party politics (*hizbiyya*) remained strong.[41] However, once its leaders decided to take part in elections, the Brotherhood did not remain unaffected and new concepts were introduced into the terminological landscape of the Brotherhood. The participation of members in elections to professional organisations in this period also promoted the new direction.

In the 1980s, the terminology of the Brotherhood gradually changed and its leaders started to use political terms employed by secularists: rights (*huquq*), freedom (*hurriyya*), the constitution (*al-dustur*), the rule of law (*siyada al-qanun*), democracy, ministerial responsibility (*al-mas'uliyya al-wizara*), opposition (*al-mu'arada*), and the party of the ruler (*hizb al-hakim*).

39   See especially, Hesham Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak*, 1982-2000, London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004, pp. 41-43, p. 55, pp. 61-64.

40   See also Huda Raghib and Husayn Tawfiq, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun wa-l-siyasa fi Misr: Dirasa fi al-tahalauf al-intikhabiyya wa-l-mumarisa al-barlamaniyya li-l-Ikhwan al-Muslimun fi zill al-ta'addudiyya al-siyasiyya al-muqayyada, 1984-1990*, Cairo: Kitab al-Mahrusa, 1995, pp. 99-102.

41   For the first analysis of the change in the Muslim Brotherhood and the concept of hizbiyya, see Olaf Farschid, 'Hizbiya: Die neuorientierung der Muslimbrudershaft Ägyptens in den Jahren 1984 bis 1989,' *Orient*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1989), pp. 53-73. In a discussion between al-Tilmisani and the later General Guide Muhammad 'Akif at the end of the 1970s, 'Akif objected to becoming a political party: 'I told Tilmesani that my understanding of the Brotherhood was that it was a comprehensive organisation [and]…therefore would not accept or agree to its abolition or replacement by a political party regulated by the Parties' Law'. Quoted in Hesham Al-Awadi, *Pursuit*, p. 39 and pp. 55-56. According to Al-Awadi, al-Tilmisani never became an enthusiastic supporter of *hizbiyya* (p. 83). El-Ghorbashy confirms the pragmatic reasons quoting al-Tilmisani that the parliamentary election 'was the opportunity of a lifetime, had the Ikhwan let it slip from their hands they would surely have counted among the ranks of the neglected' (p. 378). In interviews with Egyptian media, al-Tilmisani was critical of political pluralism, regarding it as a Western invention that contradicts Islamic unity. See Raghib and Tawfiq, *al-Ikhwan*, p. 93.

These did not supplant but rather were added to the earlier Qur'anic political terms, such as: tyranny (*zulm*), consultation (*shura*), justice (*'adl*) and discord (*fitna*). They similarly supplemented religious terms that did not in themselves have political meaning but were given this meaning, such as belief (*iman*), which was given the connotation of adherence to political Islam. Nevertheless, these concepts did make a difference in the constellation of the ideological map of the Brotherhood. Adjacent terms began colouring older concepts, and relegating some of them to the periphery. The question remains how well they were integrated and if they provided a more coherent political ideology.

The major ideological shift was initiated by Umar al-Tilmisani (1904-1986), who succeeded Hasan al-Hudaybi as General Guide after his death in 1973. He would pave the way for the Brotherhood's participation in the elections of 1984 in a coalition with the neo-Wafd, and later with the Workers' Party in 1987.[42] His own writings reflect the introduction of the new terms and the reinterpretation of older ones.[43] Al-Tilmisani, for instance, was careful to avoid any support for violence. He condemned terrorism (*irhab*),[44] and jihad was reinterpreted as the exertion for the common good;[45] that is, it was given the meaning of striving, of giving money and time to the benefit of other Muslims.[46] Its banishment to the periphery, out from the centre where it had been pulled by Qutb, was enhanced by asserting other terms, such as religious education (*tarbiya/ta'lim*) and *da'wa*, to replace it.[47]

The transition to a more open ideology was, however, made cumbersome because al-Tilmisani retained the plethora of older terms. In doing so, al-Tilmisani remained faithful to Hasan al-Banna's claim that Islam is a 'complete system' (*al-nizam al-shamil*), as expressed in al-Tilmisani's idea that Islam is 'religion and state, Qur'an and sword, worship (*'ibadat*)

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42   The coalition won in total 58 seats (15.1 percent of the national vote) out of the 448 seats in Parliament during the elections of 1984. The state's party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), won 389 out of 448 seats. See, El-Ghorbashy, 'The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers,' *Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 37 (2005) p. 378. For an analysis of the coalition, see Raghib and Tawfiq, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, pp. 86-88.

43   'Umar al-Tilmisani, *Dhikraya, la mudhakkirat* [Memories, not memoirs], Cairo: Dar al-Tiba'a wa-l-Nashr al-Islami, no date (probably 1985); and 'Umar Al-Tilmisani, *Ayyam ma'a al-Sadat* [Days with Sadat], Cairo: Dar al-'Itisam, 1984.

44   al-Tilmisani, *Dhikrayat*, p. 69. Almost all researchers agree that the Brotherhood rejects violence since al-Hudaybi. See Abed-Kotob, 'Accommodationists,' pp. 332-336.

45   al-Tilmisani, *Dhikrayat*, pp. 81-82.

46   Ibid., p. 81

47   Ibid., pp. 77-78.

and social interaction (*mu'amalat*),' etc. In short, 'it is everything in life.'[48] Al-Tilmisani invokes the same religious vagueness by claiming that the Brotherhood is a 'new spirit' and a 'new light'.[49] From these remarks, it is apparent that politics is still conceptualised in moralist and utopian terms. Thus, corruption can be combated by adhering to the 'true religion' (*al-din al-sahih*). If the government implements Islamic duties, 'belief' (*iman*) will prevail and all problems will be solved.[50]

On the other hand, it is clear that al-Tilmisani is living in another, more liberal period. The major breakthrough occurred in the greater tolerance towards difference (*ikhtilaf*). In this sense, he continued on the road that al-Hudaybi had taken. Al-Tilmisani accepted the problem of differences of opinion, beliefs and ideologies (*khilafat*), which he regards as 'part of human nature'.[51] However, he tackles the issue of a difference of opinion cautiously, first condoning the existence of difference between schools of jurisprudence as long as this does not lead to fragmentation (*tamziq*). Then he accepts the difference among Islamic groups (*jama'at*), all of whom, he asserts, deserve 'respect' and 'appreciation'. He finally ends with the remark that this respect should be extended to political parties. Yet, he remains ambivalent towards them, condemning their infighting (*fitna*) and their 'methods' to destroy their competitors, which he asserts will end when they return to the book of God.[52]

The new interest in tolerance of 'diversity' derives not just from the realisation that violence has worked counterproductively in the Brotherhood's relationship with the state. It also is a result of the fact that, in the modern world, tolerance is inevitable: the 'world in our times is based on opinions and views' and has new media, such as TV, at its disposal.[53] Al-Tilmisani therefore calls upon members of the Brotherhood to 'objectively and rationally discuss' differences with opponents, for no one is infallible and repentance for mistakes is normal.[54] In this instance, he explicitly states -

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48   al-Tilmisani, *Dhikrayat*, pp. 51-58. See also al-Timisani, *Ayyam*, p. 91. Elsewhere he enumerated a similar list of qualities but added that Islam is also 'citizenship'. See Abed-Kotob, 'Accommodationists,' p. 323.

49   al-Tilmisai, *Dhikrayat*, p. 87. He also stated that he had 'absolute trust in everything he (Hasan al-Banna) did' (*Dhikrayat*, p. 104).

50   Ibid., p. 96-99.

51   Ibid., p. 76

52   Ibid., p. 76

53   Ibid., p. 73

54   Ibid., p. 60 and p. 69.

contradicting other remarks - that the Brotherhood does 'not monopolize Islam'.[55]

Having opened up greater space for politics, al-Tilmisani, in contrast to al-Banna, explicitly claims the right to criticise the ruler as a political act. In a revealing section in which he seems to embrace liberal political theory, he states, 'Sadat is head of the executive, the judiciary and the legislative', in other words, the whole of Egyptian state power derives from Sadat's claim to be the head of the Egyptian family [in the sense of pater familias]. From this evil, al-Tilmisani believes that an endless line of crises in finance, food supply, morals, social relations, and doctrine (*'aqida*) ensue, ending with the admonition, 'we must distance ourselves from this source'.[56] As a counterweight to the executive, al-Tilmisani uses new terms, such as 'the citizen' (*al-muwatin*)[57] and 'civil rights', which assert certain bold claims that had not been made before: 'first we believe that every citizen has this right (to criticize the ruler, or ruling political party)'. He even emphasises that this 'is their duty'.[58] In this context, he praises Mubarak for releasing political prisoners in 1981 and for allowing them 'to criticise everything they want in newspapers and political parties'.[59]

At the same time, however, al-Timisani's embrace of these concepts is not absolute. Their position in the ideological landscape is never certain. For instance, he argues that political decisions should only be based on such modern notions as 'debate, discussions, proofs, arguments, consultation, and majority and minority [opinions].' Yet, he immediately draws the teeth out of these demands by underlining the classic Islamic political doctrine that focuses on the 'equitable ruler' who should make 'informed and wise decisions'.[60] Likewise, he states that, 'one of the cornerstones of politics in Islam is freedom of expression in word, print and media.' However, he immediately weakens this assertion by referring to the classical form of 'advice', which must be worded in the form of 'courteous critique' (*al-naqd*

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55   Ibid., p. 66.

56   al-Tilmisani, *Ayyam*, p. 81.

57   The term citizen (*al-muwatin*) is of course old, but in its nationalist connotation it usually claimed rights vis-à-vis British colonialism; it did not imply democratic rights.

58   Ibid., p. 99.

59   Ibid., p. 196. See also his praise of a free press and its right to criticise politics, p. 213.

60   Ibid., p. 211.

al-muhadhdhab).[61] And although he accepts the concept of political opposition (*mu'arada*), in practice he contends it should be circumscribed.[62]

The ambiguity in all these new terms stems from al-Tilmisani's natural reflexes to return to the comprehensive (*shumuliyya*) concepts of Hasan al-Banna and to regard the Brotherhood as primarily based on belief (*iman*). At the end of the day, this covers politics but only in a vague sense. In a revealing paragraph, he, for instance, denies that the Brotherhood represents a political current. Instead, he asserts the old concept that it is 'foremost a community (*jami'*) of Muslims bound by the law of God'.[63] He claims that only when general principles and laws of God, or 'truths', are trespassed should a Muslim speak up. Tyranny, torture, corruption should be condemned. And therefore he believed Nasser should be condemned as a tyrant (*zalim*),[64] but also the Camp David Accords of 1978, 'which are against our religion'.[65] Severing politics from religion is therefore not an option, for 'if the mosque is not the place to discuss matters of life, including politics, what is the value of the preacher?' How, al-Tilmisani asks himself, can the *alim* otherwise pursue his task to give guidance (*irshad*).'[66] In other words, if the Qur'an condemns tyrants (*zalimun*) explicitly, how can politics and religion be separated, as the state wants?[67]

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61 Ibid., p. 119.

62 He only mentions the term *al-hizbiyya* once (*Ayyam*, p. 24). He does use it on this occasion in a negative sense as partisanship. He writes 'governmental partisan newspapers' (*suhuf hukumiyya hizbiyya*) (al-Tilmisani, *Ayyam*, p. 11). Many quotations make apparent that he was never enthusiastic about taking part in politics. In 1978, he criticized hizbiyya and political parties, which did not rule in the interest of the nation (Al-Awad, *Pursuit*, p. 39). It seems, however, that he admired certain politicians, who, not surprisingly, were autocratic. Under the monarchy, he looked up to Isma'il Sidqi, who had suspended the constitution of 1923, for his 'political realism' and his 'step by step' approach (al-Tilmisani, *Ayyam*, p. 90). His excellent relations with the right-wing Wafdist leader Fu'ad Siraj al-Din under Mubarak go back to the 1940s when he was secretary-general of the Wafd party. Under Sadat, he admired the leaders of the political parties, such as Khalid Muhyi al-Din (who was a democrat), for they were 'experienced' politicians who were 'effective' (al-Tilmisani, *Ayyam*, p. 65).

63 al-Tilmisani, *Dhikrayat*, p. 76. He did, however, reject being registered as an NGO (society = *jama'a*) when Sadat made him this offer in 1979, as it would subsume the Brotherhood under the Ministry of Social Affairs and give it power over the board. He was also offered the possibility of becoming a member of the Majlis al-Shura (Senate), but he refused. (p.17).

64 al-Tilmisani, *Dhikrayat*, p. 179.

65 Ibid., p. 180.

66 Ibid., p. 203.

67 Ibid., p. 90.

Mustafa Mashhur and the general elections of 1987

Just how limited the acceptance of new terms was among the older genera-tion is clear from the political thought of Mustafa Mashhur, who, in many ways, was a throwback to Hasan al-Banna.[68] Mashhur became General Guide in 1996, but was the de facto leader of the movement for a long time before he became *murshid*.[69] For him, elections were simply a means to gain a legal platform in order to spread the word of God (*da'wa*).[70] To be sure, in his book *From the Islamic Movement to the Egyptian People*,[71] he addresses many of the problems that arose from the *infitah* policy initiated under Sadat and continued under Mubarak, such as economic and political cor-ruption, inflation, unemployment, and the stagnated peace with Israel. But he, even less than Umar al-Tilmisani, rarely provides concrete answers. In fact, under his guidance, the Brotherhood adopted the slogan, 'Islam is the solution' (*al-islam huwa al-hall*) for the 1987 elections. This irritated the Mubarak regime to no end. Mashhur plays on this concept with vacuous phrases like the (political) solution lies in 'belonging to Islam', 'returning to religion', 'embracing the victorious truth' and implementing the 'prin-ciples of Islam' (*mabadi' al-islam*). In all of this, belief (*iman*) is essential and political goals can only be attained by perseverance (*sabr*), endurance (*tahammul*) and wisdom (*hikma*).

That his discourse swerves away from the political is apparent from his designation of such political problems as diseases (*'ilal/da'*), sicknesses (*am-rad*), moral degeneracy (*inhilal*) and corruption (*fasad*). For these afflictions,

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68   The Islamic Alliance won 17 percent of the national vote. The opposition parties won quite a number of Seats, 100 out of the 448 seats. The neo-Wafd won 10.9 percent of the vote and 20 seats. The NPD won 309 out of 448 seats, falling from 390 in 1984. The NDP had only won 70 percent of the vote. The Brotherhood claimed that if the elections had been legal it would have won 150 seats. See Al-Awadi, *Pursuit*, p. 114; and El-Ghobashy, 'Metamorphosis,' p. 379.

69   Mustafa Mashhur died in 2002 and was succeeded by Ma'mun al-Hudaybi who was *murshid* until 2004. He was then succeeded by Muhammad 'Akif, who was succeeded by the present leader Muhammad Badi' in 2010.

70   Abed-Kotob, 'Accommodationists,' p. 331. Other members conform to this view with such utterances as: 'working for politics is working for Islam'. Mustafa Mashhur's own not very principled but positive comment after the electoral victory was: 'We must benefit from the experience for our future, for elections are an art with its own rules, expertise, and requirements, and we must push those who have given up on reforming this nation, push them to get rid of their pessimism and register to vote as soon as possible.' Quoted in El-Ghobashy, '*Metamorphosis*,' p. 380.

71   Mustafa Mashhur, *Min al-tayyar al-islami ila sha'b Misr* [From the Islamic tendency to the Egyptian people], Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi' wa-l-Nashr al-Islamiyya, 1988.

he believes, only Islam is the appropriate medicine (*dawa*).[72] In another case, he uses psychology, asserting that Islam can overcome 'psychological defeatism' (*al-hazima al-nafsiyya*) and build a 'strong personality',[73] or counter a lack of responsibility. In this respect, his programme is first of all one of moral regeneration.[74] The state should, in his mind, therefore promote the return to belief (*iman*), for the correct belief will liberate the individual from diseases and sicknesses.[75] In a stunning section, Mashhur calls upon the state to pay more attention to *tarbiya* than to formal education (*ta'lim*). He argues that reform of the spirits (*arwah*) and souls (*nufus*) is more important than knowledge, which has been a legacy of imperialism.[76] He also denies the importance of rationalism (*'aql*) and blames the general disorder (*khalal*) on the mixture of Islamic and Western ideas.[77] When Mashhur accepts concepts such as 'the will of the people' (*irada al-sha'b*) and 'freedom' and supports the idea of 'representatives of the people', or respect for the 'opinion of the other', these concepts are always accompanied by adjacent Islamic terms, which cast them in a more ambiguous light.[78] It seems that he regards the Muslim Brotherhood more as a broad social movement than a party. He called the social activities of the Brotherhood 'pleasing God by benefitting people' and regarded social legitimacy (*al-shar'iyya al-ijtima'iyya*) as being more important that political legitimacy.[79] This is also apparent from his support for *hisba*. Typical for someone so steeped in the older ideology of the Brotherhood, as General Guide (1996-2002) he made the blunder of advocating for the imposition of *jizya* tax on the Egyptian Christian minority, the Copts. His statements were made in an interview in 1997, which resulted in an enormous outcry.[80]

New trends

The real breakthrough only appeared with the emergence of a new generation. Under its aegis, ideological change was considerable. Most academic

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72   Ibid., p. 29.
73   Ibid., p. 46 and p. 71.
74   Ibid., p. 87.
75   Ibid., p. 102.
76   Ibid., p. 105.
77   Ibid., p. 24.
78   Ibid., pp. 81-84
79   Al-Awadi, *Pursuit*, p. 181.
80   El-Ghobashy, '*Metamorphosis*,' p. 386.

researchers quote extensively from documents and leaders at the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s to demonstrate the Brotherhood's change of mindset.[81]

The new trend was laid down in ever more elaborate elections programmes. The earliest attempt to draw up a party programme was in 1984 when the Brotherhood intended to establish the Egyptian Reform Party (Hizb al-Islah al-Misri). This programme was regarded as 'pragmatic'.[82] The 1987 programme considered voting to be a 'religious and nationalist duty'; it wholeheartedly accepted the 'multi-party system' (ta'addud al-ahzab), and called for the full control of the legislature over the budget, direct municipal and regional elections, the freedom to establish political parties, the termination of all relations between the state and the ruling party, the independence of the judiciary, etc. In some respects it did not go far enough, such as in equality before the law, notably the equal rights of Copts.[83] The election programme of 1995, *Shura and Party Pluralism in Muslim Society*, went a step further by stating that 'the umma is the source of all powers.' Its more than 100-page programme expressed explicit views on industry, energy, external debt, health care, drugs, population growth, education and the media. In fact, at this point democracy and freedom became a more important part of the programme than the demand for installing an Islamic state and applying the *shari'a* piety and symbolic expressions of identity.[84]

Other utterances and publications seem to confirm the new trend. In 1994, a position paper on women acknowledged their equality.[85] Isam al-Aryan later confirmed the previous trend towards pluralism by stating that, 'God created humans with differences, so plurality is the normal state of things.'[86] Most of these new trends were anchored in the Reform Initiative of March 2004, which recognised the separation of powers, party pluralism

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81   For a positive analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood, see Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, 'The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood,' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 2 (March April 2007), pp. 107-121.

82   Al-Awadi, *Pursuit*, pp. 90-92.

83   Ahmad Abdallah (ed.), *al-Intikhabat al-barlamaniyya fi Misr: Dars intikhabat* 1987 [Parliamentary elections in Egypt: The lesson of 1987], Cairo: Sina li-l-Nashr, 1990, pp. 305-318.

84   Al-Awadi, *Pursuit*, pp. 83-85 and pp. 115-116.

85   El-Ghobashy, '*Metamorphosis*,' p. 382-3,

86   Ibid., p. 383.

and the peaceful rotation of power and, for the first time, promoted civil society.[87]

Despite the major injection of new terms and concepts in the ideological landscape of the Muslim Brotherhood, the problem remains to what extent these new ideas supplanted the previous ones. When the Brotherhood participated in the 2005 elections, again under the slogan 'Islam is the solution', it won a staggering 88 seats.[88] All observers were positive regarding the quality of the Brotherhood MPs.[89] However, ambiguity was still noticed by some observers.[90] What has bothered most are the perceived limitations being set on democracy in the sense that democracy has to fit within the 'Islamic reference' (*marja'iyya al-islamiyya*) and the limits on rights for women, minorities, and freedom of expression, especially in cultural affairs.[91] Close observers, such as the Egyptian journalist Husam Tamam, are especially sceptical of the Brotherhood ever attaining a more democratic stance as the vast majority of its following are not interested in more enlightened ideas and uphold older values. Uncritically these members submit themselves to obedience (*ta'a*). The result is a new hodgepodge of old and new terminology, *da'wa* and politics, belief (*iman*) and civil rights, without most members understanding their meaning and the leadership unable or unwilling to politically educate their following.[92]

Especially in comparison with other groups, like the Egyptian liberal split-off from the Brotherhood, Hizb al-Wasat, and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, it is apparent that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's transformation is far from complete. The Hizb al-Wasat chooses unequivocally for politics and fundamentally differs from the Brotherhood in its outspokenness on issues that the Brotherhood does not clearly address, such

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87   The Supreme Guide's Reform Initiative of 3 March 2004,'
      http://www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.asp?ID=5172&SectionID=0, and Noha Antar,
      *The Muslim Brotherhood's Success in the Legislative Elections in Egypt 2005: Reasons and
      Implications*, EuroMesco, October 2006., pp. 24-6.

88   The success is even more pronounced when considering that the Muslim Brotherhood
      only fielded 161 candidates. It won 65 percent of these seats. See Antar, T*he Muslim
      Brotherhood's Success*, p. 6.

89   Al-Awadi, *Pursuit*, p. 82 and El-Ghorbashy, '*Metamorphosis*,' p. 378 and 380, and Antar,
      The Muslim Brotherhood's Success, pp. 28-33.

90   Antar, *The Muslim Brotherhood's Success*, pp. 4, 21, 25.

91   Brown, Hamzawy and Ottaway, 'Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process.'

92   Husam Tamam, *Tahawwalat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun: tafakuk al-idlujiya wa nihaya al-
      tanzim* [Changes in the Muslim Brotherhood: ideological fragmentation and the end of
      the tanzim], Cairo: Madbuli, 2006, pp. 46-53.

as the rights of minorities (i.e. Christians) and women.[93] Hizb al-Wasat's leaders have also proposed a more democratic internal structure. The whole discourse of tolerance, compromise, coalition building and equal citizenship breathes in another atmosphere. The Islamic state is off the agenda and *shari'a* is reduced to a set of 'guiding principles'.

Europe

Needless to say, the European dimension differs from the Egyptian one. Muslims in Europe have citizenship rights, are able to organise themselves, are able to vote, etc. Muslim organisations are not suppressed. The problems lie mostly in the field of discrimination and the suppression of their identity. The Muslim Brotherhood suffers from its image as the representative of 'political Islam' and 'fundamentalism'. Several authors in this volume have pointed out the Brotherhood's evolution in thought and practice on issues such as the mixing of genders (*mixité*), the rejection of the concept of Dar al-Harb, the development of a *fiqh al-aqalliyyat* (jurisprudence of minorities), etc.

Less clear are the political concepts. A look at this aspect is all the more imperative, as there have been direct links between the leaders of the Brotherhood and Europe. Moreover, Sayyid Qutb[94] and Hasan al-Banna are still generally venerated.[95] The question is therefore the following: to what extent does the ideological map of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe differ fundamentally from that in Egypt? I will try to answer this question by drawing parallels between the Brotherhood's discourse in Egypt and that of Tariq Ramadan. This is not an attempt to find a hidden meaning, but rather to unearth the similar ambiguous-enclosed thought of his totalizing concept of *shumuliyya* (Islam as complete system). I will do this by retranslating his English terminology back into Arabic.

Tariq Ramadan

Tariq Ramadan's ideology is in many ways different from that of the Muslim Brotherhood. Much of this has to do with his environment and his

93   For instance, one of the latest books written by its leader Abu al-'Ala Madi, *al-Mas'ala al-qibtiyya wa-l-shari'iyya wa-l-sahwa al-islamiyya* [The issue of the Copts and the shari'a and the Islamic revival], Cairo: Safir al-Duwwaliyya li-l-Nashr, 2007, deals with the equal rights of Copts.

94   See Chapter 5 by Innes Bowen in this volume.

95   See especially, Brigitte Maréchal, *The Muslim Brothers in Europe: Roots and Discourse,* Leiden: Brill, 2008.

upbringing. He writes in a relatively free environment and does not face the threat of being arrested. He also does not have the same struggle with the past as the Brothers in Egypt; his following is relatively unaware of the background of the Brotherhood and faces completely different problems and prospects, mostly related to identity. His own problems derive mostly from the tremendous pressure and scrutiny he is under in Europe. This makes it easier for him to accept certain concepts. In many ways, he resembles the progressive line in the Brotherhood, the liberals, Hizb al-Wasat, the intellectuals Tariq al-Bishi, Ahmad Kemal Abu Majd, Muhammad Salim al-Awwa and others. For instance, without much ado he accepts: the concept of citizenship, the coexistence of different religions and civilisations, freedom of speech and organisation, the acceptance of difference (*ikhtilaf*), pluralism (*ta'addudiyya*)—even stating, 'God wanted pluralism'[96]—equality before the law, conflict, transparency, politics as critique and 'critical consciousness', the parliamentary system and party politics (*hizbiyya*), and political programmes.[97] The word dissension (*fitna*)—so recurrent in Islamist debate —does not feature in his vocabulary. He repeatedly states that Muslims in European countries are citizens and should obey their laws and constitution. Politics is accepted as the 'management of differences'.[98] He also gives a more modern interpretation to the principle of consultation (*shura*), which Ramadan turns into a contractual relation of not just giving advice, but also of 'consultation, discussion and mutual participation' in all human relations (men and women, the ruler and the ruled, etc.). He emphasises rationality, and associated concepts, such as *ijtihad* and flexibility, finding a median way between fixed basics and a changing environment. He even criticises the slogan 'Islam is the solution' as utopian and a naïve reflection of a formalistic 'façade Islam'.[99] As such, his works are a marvellous illustration of the Brotherhood's jurisprudence of reality (*fiqh al-waqi'*).[100] But this is not really that difficult, as the Brotherhood has already taken that step in Egypt and this is what people want to hear in Europe. Moreover, the whole situation of Muslims as a minority is unique

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96   Tariq Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2004, p. 186.

97   Ibid., pp. 94-6, and Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1999, 2nd print 2002, pp. 121-123, and pp. 132-133, pp. 135-136.

98   Ramadan, *Islam, the West*, p. 62.

99   Ibid., p. 34 and p. 45.

100   Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim*, pp. 42, 44, 61, 65, 71, and 140.

and demands a unique innovative jurisprudence. Ramadan does not have the luxury to know the 'Truth,' as some circles of the Brotherhood do, or as the Salafis claim. He is also European in the sense that he recognises the individual and appeals to his or her responsibility. In this regard, he forwards human agency and emphasises making choices, and acting responsibly. He also upholds a discourse of rights: rights to life, education, housing and work. Lacking a disciplined organisation, imposing blind obedience to such concepts as 'hearing and obeying' (*al-sam' wa-l-ta'a*) would be impossible. He, in fact, has no other choice than to make a meek appeal to the 'responsibility' of European Muslims.

However, despite Ramadan's more progressive terminology,[101] the way he embeds these concepts in his general discourse is crucial to their meaning. None of the political concepts are valued in themselves, but are only a means to achieve an end: to create, protect or enhance an Islamic identity based on faith (*iman*) and those ethics and norms connected to that faith. As with al-Banna, al-Tilmisani and Mashhur, faith is the core concept. Other concepts revolving around *iman* are strategically positioned with regard to it; they support it and give it a specific meaning. In its turn, faith gives meaning to adjacent concepts and holds them together in a coherent whole. For instance, the concept of citizenship, which one would expect to be important in the European context, is only an adjacent concept that provides Muslims with those rights that are essential to live according to one's faith.[102] Education is based on the process of learning not just to understand the world and one's environment, but also to understand the meaning of Islam and to deepen one's faith. Likewise, jihad is not a violent activity, but rather an exertion to deepen that faith. Accepting difference is not, as in Egypt, the acceptance of minorities, but is here turned around as the right of Muslims as a minority to claim their rights and identity and to live according to their faith. Coexistence is primarily meant as a means to recognise the right of Muslims to exercise their faith.[103]

On closer scrutiny most of his concepts of pluralism, coexistence and citizenship are not clear. They suffer from the same ambiguity regarding democracy as a means to establish a society based on faith. Citizenship for minorities later appears to be connected to a Muslim concept of pluralism,

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101   Ibid., p. 122. He values the rule of law and the fact that Muslims have the right to organise themselves.

102   In Ramadan's book *Islam, the West*, it is only mentioned for the first time on p. 86.

103   Ramadan, *Islam, the West*, p. 102.

which is linked to older concepts of protected non-Muslim communities (*dhimmis*). Political participation is primarily a moral crusade against corruption.[104] Citizenship and human agency are linked to 'gerency' (*khilafa*), which sets other limits and duties on an individual, who is again bound by faith, for instance in dealing with private property.[105]

As with the Muslim Brotherhood's original project, the strengthening of faith is also closely related to portraying the West as a threat. In the 1930s it was British imperialism and the threat of values. Now it is the decay of the West expressed in such startling terms as the 'dismantling of the social tissue', the 'profound crisis of values' and of course 'doubt', 'egoism', 'individualism' and 'finance'.[106] Muslims are besieged by 'social, political and economic problems'.[107] Pointing out the repression of Muslims (in Bosnia, Iraq, Palestine) is also a typical Brotherhood frame, as is referring to the conspiracy of the Orientalists. Ramadan also adheres to theories of purity and the idea that modern Muslim societies have denigrated as a result of 'importing' Western ideas and laws.[108] In economics, similarly, Islam rejects capitalism and promotes an equitable economy. All in all, he uses the same rhetoric of imperialism as the Brotherhood in the Middle East has used then and now, although it has been modernised and 'philosophised'. In this manner, he creates a new dichotomy, a clash of civilisations between a Western civilisation based on 'doubt' and 'scepticism', and an Islamic one based on 'faith'. In this sense, with his concept of Islam as offering a 'holistic vision of life', Ramadan reintroduces the concept of *shumuliyya*,[109] which is now embodied by the *shari'a*.[110]

Finally, another element that directly derives from the Brotherhood is the relationship with spreading the faith, *da'wa*. Faith and action are closely related in the typical form of mobilisation and the almost Marxist praxis, which the Brotherhood has patented ('to believe is to act').[111] Such con-

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104   Ibid., p. 123.

105   Ibid., pp. 146-9.

106   Ibid., p. 57.

107   Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim*, p. 117.

108   Ramadan, *Islam, the West,* p. 111.

109   Ibid., p. 228.

110   Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim*, pp. 45 and 60.

111   Ibid., pp. 20 and 134 He states, for instance, that engagement in social and political activities is an expression of the commitment of Muslims as citizens and 'is imperative for it is the sole way of completing and perfecting their Faith (*iman*) and the essential Message of their Religion.' Faysal Mawlawi stated that, 'It is this call (*da'wa*) which is the basis of our relations with non-Muslims and not fighting or war.'

cepts as responsibility, justice ('*adala*) and the right to education are only valuable if they are expressed in terms such as solidarity with the umma and action. Jihad is social action against the forces that infringe upon rights and dignity that are closely related to the Muslim identity. It is no accident that Ramadan substitutes the Dar al-Da'wa for the Dar al-Harb.[112]

Conclusion

The Muslim Brotherhood has always had a problematic relationship with politics. It has, at times, rejected it as superfluous, because moral rectitude can replace politics, yet it has also been attracted to it because it leads to power. In the end, the attainment of power has proven illusive. This is partly the fault of the Brotherhood itself, which has never acquired a hold over what politics means and how it functions. For it, it was partly a way of surviving the ordeal of the authoritarian regimes and working with them. Although the circumstances differ in Europe, and the Brotherhood-affiliated organisations have changed over the years, we can discern the same mechanism in some of its European organisations. The Union des organizations islamiques de France (UOIF) suffers from the same confusion about the nature of politics, becoming more attuned to being accepted by the French state than to mobilising its following. But even in Tariq Ramadan, one finds the same totalising ideology of a complete system, which results in a profound ambiguity in the meaning of its terminology.

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112   See the chapter 'Where Are We?', which is a good illustration of *fiqh al-waqi'* with regard to the classic concepts of Dar al-Harb and Dar al-Islam in *To be European Muslim*, pp. 119-52.

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