

Political Actors, Territory and Governance: the case of Egypt.

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Resumen

La mayor parte de los estados árabes han buscado tras su independencia una coherencia territorial y un gobierno centralizado. La Primavera Árabe ha tenido su efecto sobre esta tendencia. En el caso de Egipto, tras la revuelta de 2011 y los sucesos que la siguieron dos actores políticos principales como el ejército y los Hermanos Musulmanes han experimentado tanto pérdidas como ganancias en el campo político y mostrado cierta continuidad y ruptura en su relación con el pueblo y el territorio. Dado que ambos actores aparecieron en el momento (y antes) de la independencia y la formación de la República Árabe de Egipto, existe un elemento de política de identidad dentro del análisis de los acontecimientos recientes. Ello hace que el análisis de las relaciones de ambos actores con el pueblo y el territorio sea un elemento clave para entender los hechos recientes, y sus efectos sobre la gobernanza y cohesión territorial de Egipto.

Palabras clave:

Ejército egipcio, Hermanos Musulmanes , *gouvernementalité*, *habitus*, hegemonía, legitimidad

Abstract

Most Arab states have sought after territorial coherence and centralized governance for the past decades following each state's respective independence. However, the Arab Spring has impacted upon this tendency. In the case of Egypt, after the 2011 uprising and the events that followed two principal political actors, such as the army and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) have had both gains and losses in the political field and shown certain continuity and rupture with their relationship

with the people and the territory. Given that both political actors initially emerged near (and before) the time of independence and formation of the Arab Republic of Egypt; there is an element of “identity” politics involved in the view of recent events. This renders an analysis of both actors’ relationship with the people and territory a key to understanding the recent and current events, and their effects on the governance and territorial cohesion of Egypt.

Keywords: Egyptian army, Muslim Brotherhood, *gouvernementalité*, *habitus*, hegemony, legitimacy.

The Arab countries that witnessed uprisings starting 2011 (December 2010 for Tunisia) have recently celebrated their fifth anniversary. However, the newly instilled regimes of these countries are far from being consolidated. Starting December 2015 in Egypt, the National Security (former, Central Security Forces, CSF) arrested dozens of social networks’ activists and political group members. Raids were carried out on apartments in downtown Cairo and the surroundings of Tahrir Square before the 25th of January anniversary. Pictures of the Egyptian army “occupying” Tahrir Square to protect it circulated on social networks and independent journalists/ columnists described the state as “having a panic attack.”¹ Although current Egyptian president, Abdel Fatah el-Sissi – previously Field Marshal – portrays a bold, strong grip on the state but the army’s legitimacy, as a political actor remains unsettled. On the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) organization – declared a “terrorist” organization by the Cabinet of Ministers in December 2013 – is unable to pull its strings together after the 2013 coup d’état and the events that took place after that.² The MB, a socio-political organization, and the Egyptian army, a state security apparatus, occupy positions as political actors in Egypt since the first half of the 20th century.

Both political actors rejuvenated their presence in the Egyptian political field since the 2011 uprising. 2011 presented an opening for both politically disappearing actors to represent or reframe the ongoing events with their own symbolic logic and common consciousness. This renders an analysis of both actors’ relationship with the people and territory a key to understanding the recent – and ongoing – events, and their effects on the governance and territorial cohesion of Egypt. This article will concentrate on symbolically relevant points for the army and MB as political actors, their relationship to each other, the people and territory. The army is part of the state’s security apparatus, and this article is not arguing otherwise; however it is treated as a political actor, which mostly concerns the ground army.³ Further, Nazih Ayubi referred to the growth of military personnel and expenditure as “growth of body and muscle” of Arab states. According to Ayubi, this growth resulted in the increased political role of the establishment.⁴ Hence, in this analysis, Ayubi’s argument places the Egyptian army justly in the role of a political actor. Events ranging from “revolutions,” birth or disappearance of a certain political discourse, mass mobilizations and repression will be highlighted in the process of carrying out this analysis. The series of questions addressed are: what is the connection between each political actor – the army and MB –, the territory, and the people (*asha’ab*)? What is the

¹ Malsin, 2016.

² The MB have had internal problems since the coming of Mohamed Badi’ as Supreme Guide or *murshid*, according to Hisham. Hisham whose name has been changed to safeguard his identity is prominent ex-MB member who was part of the Guidance Bureau (*maktab al-irshad*) until 2012; he is in his late 70s. Also, newspapers keep highlighting the ruptures within the organization since 2013. “Egypt Declares Muslim Brotherhood a Terrorist Organization,” 2013.

³ Egypt’s ground army is the one that carries out most politically affiliated activities and whose participants have most presence in the Egyptian political field. This is not only for the Egyptian case; but coup plotters are mostly ground armies with few members from the other sections.

⁴ Ayubi, 1995: 256-7.

relationship between both actors? How are they centralized or decentralized in local political agendas throughout the Egyptian territory? How does this affect the portrayed unity of the country?

The theoretical framework of this article is formed of various concepts and ideas. First is the idea of *gouvernementalité* as of Michel Foucault. Other scholars in examining the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) power dynamics in recent years have used this concept.⁵ Foucault explains it as a form of power of governance in which the population – as a mass – is the subject, and the coercive apparatus and political economy are instruments of the state and/or political actor.⁶ The distinction here between the people and the territory, for this article and in Foucault's writings, is pertinent. The treatment of the population as separate of the territory as opposed to as 'people' – land and population – gives more depth to the analysis in this article of the connection of the army and MB to each element specifically and combined.

A second concept is symbolic power and its constituents as of Pierre Bourdieu.⁷ Symbolic power is an invisible power that is derived from outside the political field and yet directly affects it. It dictates who is part of the political field, and which institutions and agents are dominating the field. In this article, symbolic power is regarded as derived from a rejuvenation of older political and socio-historical discourses for the MB and Egyptian army, which were used (or re-used) since 2011. The attempt of each political actor examined here to gather symbolic capital using the events taking place and in turn establishing a connection based on the creation of a common consciousness as of Antonio Gramsci's conception.⁸

Gramsci's idea of common consciousness and hegemony are indispensable for this analysis. First, common consciousness is essential when analyzing how each actor's political or public discourse formed a sort of common ground for groups of politicized people to mobilize themselves and others. Second, hegemony over the state apparatus played a great role in the political and symbolic power competition between the army and MB. Both concepts are of relevance in the argument regarding both political actors' centralization or decentralization.

In order to answer the above-mentioned questions using the established theoretical framework, the methodology needed to be varied. A discourse analysis of diverse material is used to highlight the connection between different instances in the Egyptian political field. This analysis included a survey research of popular discourse – includes songs, jokes, and other forms of popular expression –, speeches, television emissions, and military declarations. Further, participant observation is among the tools used to formulate and emphasize the questions surrounding the MB-army relations; and their centralized or decentralized co-existence. Three main interviews are integrated to give further evidence.

The outline of this article will be as follows: first, the connection between each political actor with Egypt, the people and each other will be analyzed. Second, the centralization and/or decentralization of either political actor is explored while considering the varied socio-historical

⁵ Scholars like Khaled Fahmy, Lisa Wedeen and Edward Said. Fahmy, 1997; Said,1979; Wedeen, 1999.

⁶ Foucault, Senellart, Ewald, and Fontana, 2007.

⁷ Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991.

⁸ Gramsci, and Forgacs, 1988.

contexts, internal and public socio-political discourses of both political formations.⁹ Last will be a further demonstration of the army and MB's relationship in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising; and its effects on their respective internal discourse and structure.

The People and the Land between Two Political Actors

What is the connection between each political actor, the territory, the people (*asha'ab*), and each other?

From the Monarchy to Mubarak

During the second quarter of the 20th century there was a rise in the anti-occupation and nationalist movements in Egypt.¹⁰ Political opposition to the monarchy like *al-Wafd* party was already set outside the 'strife for independence' map after the 1936 agreement with the British.¹¹ The army and MB – as two differently constituted types of forces socio-political and military – claim right as symbols and actors for Egypt's liberation from the British occupiers and the coming about of the 1952 "revolution" or coup d'état.¹² Until today the discourse of the "liberating army of the people" on one hand and the "*feda'eyoun*" (which was a combination of army officers, police and MB members) on the other remain a symbolic battle between the MB and the army as two political actors.¹³ The MB's founder Hassan el-Banna was among the key opponents against the British occupation.¹⁴ However, the army created originally to obey the regime and the king remained to do so as minor faults could lead to a military trial. The Free Officers (*al-thobat al-ahrar*, FO) movement within the army was created in the 1940's; the date is not precise for even the members themselves as explained by Khalid Muhi El-Din.¹⁵ Thus, both political actors claim being agents that brought about the independence of Egypt, and the formation of the first Republic.

"Don't forget that Abdel-Nasser [Nasser] was a member of the *ikhwan* [MB] in the late 1940's until before the *thawra* of 1952," Hisham, a prominent ex-MB member, stated this during an interview in 2015.¹⁶ Hisham was a MB member since before the 1952 revolution, during his school years.¹⁷ Nasser never declared himself as a MB member and none of the FO did so either.¹⁸ Muhi el-Din explained how there was a relationship between Nasser and the MB, but still no clear declaration of Nasser being a member from the army's side.¹⁹ As of 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Ra'ûf's memoirs –

⁹ The term agents is used as in Bourdieu's concept in his explanation of symbolic power and the agents who are qualified to speak for the political organization. Ibid.

¹⁰ Hourani, 1991: 340.

¹¹ Al-Bishri, 2002: 99.

¹² In the media 1952 is referred to as a "revolution," there is also the "Dictionary of the Egyptian Revolution." 'Atīyat Allāh, 1954.

¹³ The police as an apparatus here is also of importance given the recent dynamics in the Egyptian political field and starting the 1980's. However, it is out of the scope of this research to elaborate upon.

¹⁴ Al-Bishri, 2002.

¹⁵ Muhi El-Din is one of the known FO and later member of the Command Council of the Revolution; he is also known for his primary affiliation with the communist officers' group as stated in Aclimandos, 2008. Muḥyī al-Dīn, 1992.

¹⁶ Hisham said this statement as a summary about the relationship of the MB and the army during the period since the 1940's until the 1980's. The interview covered various aspects about the MB among which is the relationship with Sayyid Qutb, the army; and the recent MB defections.

¹⁷ However recurrent, this declaration becomes more legitimate when someone who witnessed this period himself states it. This falls into Bourdieu's explanation of the symbolic power given by the enunciator himself, as an agent of a certain political organization.

¹⁸ Although Muhi el-Din himself left the brotherhood in 1947 to join the communist officers' movement Iskra as stated in Aclimandos, 2004: 468.

¹⁹ Hisham explained also the relationship between Nasser and Sayyid Qutb, which was one of the reasons Qutb was taken on by the MB.

a close friend of Nasser's and FO – Nasser refused to be subordinated to the MB or its Supreme Guide, adding that the army officers will not gather around the principles of the MB based on religious righteousness.²⁰ Hisham had explained that during the late forties the relationship between the army and the MB became unstable, that was concluded with an end to army-MB negotiations regarding the sharing of political space in 1949.²¹ This puts the topic of this research directly on the map of this turbulent relationship between two of the longest living political actors in Egypt and their battle of reclaiming the country and its people's common consciousness.

Further, Nasser was the army's designated face after he ousted General Mohamed Naguib in 1954; but that is not only what he represented for the people at the time. The impersonation of the army in Nasser and of the FO in Nasser is of relevance at this point since his charisma and symbolic power as the leader (*aza'im*) lives until today in popular discourse.²² For the people who lived during Nasser's time their narration of the period depends on their social and economic standard at the time. The lower class admired the fact that they got cheaper access to food, education – and more importantly higher education. He made the rise of the middle class possible.²³ However, people of the higher class saw in Nasser the figure of a lower class political hegemon that is seeking revenge from the rich, a Robin Hood that robs the rich to give to the poor, using his nationalization policy.

Abdel Halim Hafez, Nasser's designated singer at the time, sang "in the name of the people" (*besm esha'ab*) on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the 1952 "revolution;" the same opening of several of Nasser's speeches.²⁴ The reassertion of the people as connected to the army in slogans, songs and general discourse was characteristic of the time as much as it was in 2011 and since June 2013. The "army of the people" (*geish esha'ab*) was a discourse around which the Egyptian army was found, it was among the lines used by Ahmad 'Urabi in 1881 just before Britain stepped in to save Egypt's monarchy.²⁵ It is evident that the army gets its symbolic power from the people and the discourse diffused by the former renders this power and collective consciousness possible.

The 1952 coup d'état, labeled "revolution" (*thawra*), gives a certain power to the actors that carried it out.²⁶ Especially, that the 1952 coup is the only event that was explicitly referred to as a revolution in the media. The army has ignored over the years, and since the 1950's repression, the role of the MB in the *passage* from monarchy to republic.²⁷ While on the other hand, the MB in their own discourse glorifies their role in the independence of Egypt and leading the opposition

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ This is also the year Hassan El-Banna was killed.

²² Aclimandos, 2014: 59.

²³ Interview with Galal Amin, February 2016. Amin is a retired Economics professor known for his Marxist tendencies during his early academic career at Ain Shams University, Cairo. He was also a regular columnist at *al-shorouk* newspaper; he also has many critical writings of the social, economic and political state of the Arab world and Egypt (refer to Amin in the bibliography).

²⁴ This song has a lot of "contentious" terms used in it, which render a whole different analysis about symbolic logic, language and political power necessary. However, Nasser used this opening notably in his speech when going back on his resignation after the *naksah*, the 1967 defeat.

²⁵ For more details about the 'Urabi movement's historiography see: Mayer, 1988.

²⁶ Hannah Arendt in *On Revolution* explains the aura and symbolic power given to an actor that carried out a "revolution," which is mostly the reason why the term is used. (Arendt, 1965).

²⁷ Also given the lack of documentation and sources covering the MB since its early stages as stated in Lia, 2015.

during the post-Nasser period.²⁸ The MB claim itself as the active, organized and oldest social movement in the country; within their internal discourse, they profess a special “soulful” connection with the people. The use of religion as a political tool gives the MB a common language, or *langage*, when addressing society as a whole, under the umbrella of a “religious call” (*al-da’wa*). Tariq al-Bishri argues that the MB sought after “dominating Islam” and using it for their own political aspirations.²⁹ The use of religion and its convenience to organizations like the MB lies in the ‘ready-made’ common consciousness that they provide.

The MB’s contributions during the 1940’s in battling the English occupying forces in Ismailia, Port Said and Suez are highlighted in Muhi el-Din’s memoirs, and narrations written by MB members. Also, their presence in the Egyptian political field in opposition to *al-Wafd* party in 1944-46 can also be taken into consideration on the road to independence.³⁰ The *passage* from the Monarchy to the Arab Republic of Egypt matters for political actors’ political and symbolic power within their respective organizations and also to outsiders.

After the 1952 coup, the MB were approached again by the FO to see if the MB were to take part in the government (as ministers or heads of institutions), but these negotiations failed as well.³¹ Upon this second failure of the army and MB to agree and Nasser’s coming to power in 1954, a different turn in events took place. Nasser decided that the MB should be repressed, especially after the *Mansheya* incident, which Nasser took to be an assassination attempt.³² The repression of the MB became hegemonized and legitimized by the Command Council of the Revolution (*majles qeyadet el-thawra*) – which is today’s SCAF.³³ The repression did not only touch the prominent figures of the MB but also others around them; people they were acquainted with, and signs of ‘religiosity’ became a marker of those who should be imprisoned and repressed.³⁴

Political distrust, betrayal and defeat were the prominent sentiments declared from the part of the MB towards the army in their internal discourse starting the 1950’s.³⁵ The discourse of martyrdom for the good of the people and the country became the core attraction for their followers and new members.³⁶ The MB or its ‘derivatives’ grew in popularity and number during the presidency of Anouar el-Sadat – another army man and FO. However, since Sadat’s presidency political symbols and presence of the army in political positions and in institutional positions started to decline. Already during the second half of Nasser’s presidency, army personnel were not allowed to wear their uniform or stay in military positions, and occupy a political status simultaneously. This was a primary step at ‘de-symbolizing’ the army but what followed was even faster and stripped the army of its status as the hegemonic political actor in the Egyptian political field for decades.

²⁸ Often referred to as “*al-jama’a al-monadilah*” (the striving group) or “... *al-sameda*,” (stern) (Abu Shadi, 1998 and al-Telmisani, 1982)

²⁹ Al-Bishri captured this from the MB’s third conference in 1935’s stated principles, al-Bishri, 2002: 119. However, al-Bishri later argued that he judged the MB too harshly, see Lia 2015.

³⁰ Al-Bishri, 2002: 116.

³¹ Hisham and Muhi el-Din, 1992.

³² Nasser was shot at while giving a speech in *el-mansheya*, Alexandria in 1954. Hisham refuted that the MB had nothing to do with this particular incident but he did admit that the MB carried out other assassinations, like that of al-Nou’rashi, which were more organized.

³³ ‘Atiyat Allāh, 1954.

³⁴ Which is a current case with different ranked officers of the army written about in a research by Hossam Bahgat, the officers were imprisoned for alleged ties with the MB and Bahgat was imprisoned for writing the article. (Bahgat, 2015).

³⁵ Hisham and other anonymous MB members in lower ranks.

³⁶ This falls under the idea of “religious nationalism” as Hourani referred to it in his book *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Hourani, 1967: 341).

Starting the 1970's, one of the most prominent army slogans is "one hand builds and the other carries arms."³⁷ This connects the army, as a political actor, to the Arab Republic of Egypt on a different level that is absent from the MB's discourse.³⁸ The image of the army, which builds, manufactures and modernizes Egypt links the army and the vision of a developed Egypt.³⁹ Different sections attached to the army were formed to lead the new industries and projects in the 1950's until the early 90's. After all they were "among the relatively more educated, organized and technologically oriented sectors of the society."⁴⁰

In continuity, during the Mubarak era, both political actors were kept out of politics in one way or the other. However, the MB with its social base and mobilization remained in the political field from afar. Some of the members ran for parliament membership, as independent candidates; demonstrations were organized on several occasions but mostly for a regional cause than to oppose the government. The army was absent during this time. The army as manufacturer of commodities became the main presence of the army in the people's lives.⁴¹ Abdel Halim Abu Ghazala – a previous chief of SCAF, 1981-89, and Minister of Defense – continued the process started during Sadat's era of diminishing the army's presence in the political field while expanding its economic potential and production.⁴² The army kept an "agreed subservience rather than total submission" policy towards the regime.⁴³ Nevertheless, after Mubarak's fear mounted from the increasing popularity of Abu Ghazala, the army retreated further from politics.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, when it came to the 2011 uprising as an example it was not clear whether either political actor has any special connection with the people that they claim to be 'theirs' for decades. This was seen in the symbols circulating among the protestors and their acceptance or acknowledgment of the army or MB's symbolic power. The detachment from the people grew more evident as the events continue to unravel until today. Both – the army and MB – place themselves in superiority to the people as portrayed in the coming section of this article. This is evident in many recent and historical instances of confrontation between these political actors and the people as a politicized mass. The MB claim to be religiously knowledgeable and moderate that their members address the others with a sense of superiority in this aspect. Similarly, the army has its superiority from having a society of their own, which is formed on the basis of selection and filtration.⁴⁵

Centralization and/or Decentralization: the Army and MB

How are they centralized or decentralized in local political agendas throughout the country or more accurately territory?

³⁷ Chams el-Din, 2013: 5.

³⁸ Richards and Waterbury, 1998: 329.

³⁹ The same slogan can be seen today on signs in the streets and on bridges in Cairo Egypt, specifically the New Cairo district.

⁴⁰ Ayubi, 1995: 258.

⁴¹ The army manufacturers food products and has outlets for distribution.

⁴² Chams el-Din, 2013: 6.

⁴³ Droz-Vincent, 2007 as quoted in Chams el-Din, 2013: 5.

⁴⁴ Robert Springborg gives a solid account of the time in his book, *Mubarak's Egypt*. He also elaborated on how the clientele ties between Abu Ghazala and the US made Mubarak fear him and regard him as a threat (Springborg, 1989: 95). Also, see Bellin, 2004: 155.

⁴⁵ Abdel-Malek, and Markmann, 1968.

The centralization and decentralization debate is crucial to understanding the current situation in Egypt, and also to put historically significant socio-political events into perspective. As evident from the previous section, the army and MB have had a turbulent relationship, which affected their structures and recruitment of candidates.⁴⁶ The repression of the MB starting the late 50's motivated their dispersal around Egypt and in neighboring Arab countries.⁴⁷ This section will portray how centralized or decentralized both organizations as political actors are on the Egyptian territory.

Also, there is the Sinai issue. Ismail Alexandrani explained that the army was not present in Sinai since the 1970's, while the MB was.⁴⁸ Sinai being a disputed part of the country because of the preceding Israeli occupation, making it a matter of pride and glory for the army to be able to re-enter it again. The army did enter Sinai in 2011 with the claim to "protect the borders" and as part of the state of emergency, which is one of the fruits of the army reaped from the 2011 uprising. However, the diffusion of the MB in the area is much more profound than the physical and visible presence of the army in the recent years.⁴⁹

The MB is a decentralized institution, which is manifest in various aspects on both structural and functional levels. First, the MB's founding and dispersal throughout Egypt, which goes back to when el-Banna traveled throughout Egypt to recruit members starting the 1930's, supported by the monarchy.⁵⁰ The MB has a history and ties in each governorate in Egypt – they even have a logo for each governorate's cell (*sho'ba*). The organization's structure that starts at the Supreme Guide (*murshid*) and goes all the way to family members gives flexibility; but is complimented with the internal concept of obedience to the *murshid*. The organization is divided into governorates; each governorate has its head. Within the governorates there are districts and what is referred to internally as families (*osra* or *osar*). So the hierarchy is socially decentralized in that manner. The outlined structure of the MB should not be taken for granted when examining its effects on the diffusion of their historical, political and socio-religious discourse or more precisely their *imaginaire*.

However, the decision-making rests in the closed circle of the Guidance Bureau (*maktab al-irshad*), which has members from different governorates (originally) even though most of them reside in Cairo. This Bureau consists of about 15 members, which according to Hisham, have been constituted mostly of members from the armed wing of the MB, Special Organization (*al-tanzim al-khass*), since Mohamed Badi's term as Supreme Guide.⁵¹ The decentralized organization does not imply delegation of decision making when it comes to political mobilization. Al-Bishri explains that the MB with its hierarchy is made up of a way that made all decision-making was dependent on el-Banna.⁵² Accordingly, Brynjar Lia states that the MB has an authoritarian style of leadership,

⁴⁶ This is especially visible in the higher ranks of the army.

⁴⁷ This was mentioned in the first part of this article. Some members moved to governorates of Upper Egypt to stay away from the eyes of the authorities. However, many members also traveled to Jordan and Saudi Arabia to take refuge.

⁴⁸ Ismael Alexandrani is a researcher that covers the Sinai and its surrounding areas, concentrating on the presence or not of the army in this part of Egypt. His presentation was part of a conference entitled "With or Without the Brotherhood," (Alexandrani, 2015).

⁴⁹ The struggle for *gouvernementalité* throughout the Egyptian territory is a point that should be further explored in detail beyond the scope of this article but is covered in other works.

⁵⁰ Al-Bishri, 2002: 109-110.

⁵¹ As stated by Hisham. Some sources refer to the same organization as "*al-nizam al-khass*," but the term is used as according to the candidate's statement.

⁵² Al-Bishri, 2002: 450.

which goes back to el-Banna and the early late 1930's clashes and internal defections within the organization.⁵³

Second is the MB's repression in the "central" governorates – Cairo, Alexandria, Ismailia, Suez, Port Said – goes back to 1941 and el-Banna's banishment to Qena.⁵⁴ This phase did not last long due to concessions made on the part of el-Banna towards the regime in 1942 in order to ensure the brotherhood's survival.⁵⁵ However, after the *Mansheya* incident in 1954 the MB's dispersal (and in turn decentralization throughout Egypt) played a strong role in their survival and continuity.⁵⁶ The decentralization is still ongoing, today on a global scale even with MB members and ex-members living in diaspora around the world.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the army does not even have a recruitment section for each governorate. The conscription is centralized, collecting from each governorate while grouping them together in fewer segments. Thus, having little direct contact in each specific governorate.

Third, there is the "obedience" (*ta'a*) discourse within the MB, which is the backbone of the organization's hierarchical and decentralized structure. This concept is diffused from the lower, student ranks to the highest. The MB leaders claim that obedience of the members is a must in order to keep the unity of the "line." This explains how MB leaders and members are mobilized or demobilized according to the Guidance Bureau's orders and above all the *murshid's*.⁵⁸ While this gives rigid boundaries internally between leaders and members, it gives flexibility to the MB as an organization and a political actor. For example, taking the previous reference to the MB as "latecomers" to the 2011 uprising. The MB was able to officially declare not participating and not give internal orders of doing so. But at the same time they used their autonomous members' participation to prove presence from the beginning and enforce such rhetoric.

The Egyptian army as organized today is the same as Nasser organized it after 1967, with the exception of el-Sissi's recent addition of the Quick Intervention Forces in 2014. The army however remains a distant political actor if compared to the MB. The army is socially feared and shut off from the public, which surely is explainable since it is still a coercive apparatus and not just a political organization like the MB. The army's hierarchy is not of importance here, while keeping in mind that the higher the rank in the ground sectors the more politicized the personnel are.

Conscriptions to the army are not divided into each governorate, so the army does not have a physical appearance and representative in each of the 26 governorates. Therefore, the army is not visible on most of the territories of Egypt. Conscripts are referred to collective offices that gather candidates from several governorates at a time. However, starting 2013 for the army's vending points of their consumer products increased in an attempt to have more physical presence in each

⁵³ Lia, 2015: 222.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 211.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 212.

⁵⁶ Some of the members took refuge in some Upper Egyptian governorates and villages, which is referred to in many books by the MB and by Hisham.

⁵⁷ Many MB members, especially younger generations moved to the US and Canada during the last decade of Mubarak's term, when work opportunities became rare for educated graduates. Also, after 2011 many MB families came back to Egypt and some of the male members held positions in the Freedom and Justice Party of the MB, others held high government positions. A good and exposed example is Khaled Gazzaz who became Morsi's consultant.

⁵⁸ Al-Bishri, 2002: 450.

governorate and fill the void left by the MB's preceding NGOs.⁵⁹ The army's presence is heavier in "key" governorates like Cairo, Alexandria, Ismailia, Suez and Port Said, among which the first, second and third Field armies are divided.⁶⁰ On the other hand, there are areas in Greater Cairo where the army and the police cannot enter un-accompanied by tanks and armored vehicles because of the heavy MB presence in those areas.⁶¹ Until today these same areas witness protests by the MB against the ouster of Morsi. The physical appearance of the army today in some areas like Sinai changed the status of the army in the area as a political actor and security apparatus. Last but not least the Military Intelligence Unit (*al-mokhabarat al-'askaryah*) of the Egyptian army. This section is used largely for internal surveillance of army personnel, politically active persons, journalists and anyone else that could remotely fall under either category. For example, a human rights activist and journalist, Hossam Bahgat was held at the Military Intelligence Unit's headquarter in 2015. Tewfik Aclimandos transcribed the testimony of one of the FO mentioning that internal surveillance is a key purpose of the Intelligence to exclude any MB members within their ranks.⁶²

The Uprising's Repercussions: the MB-army relations; and their centralization, and/ or decentralization

The uprising in Egypt came following weeks of private television channels and state media repeating, "We are not Tunisia!"⁶³ This phrase is true on different levels, but *not* on the level of a shared grievance of the people in both Egypt and Tunisia (among other Arab countries). A regional grievance sparked the uprisings and encouraged the Egyptian people to mobilize and have hope in witnessing change as Fahmy Howeidy – a known columnist – stated.⁶⁴ The people welcomed the army's presence in the streets of Egypt on the 28th of January 2011; it was a step seen previously on television in the case of Tunisia. Thus, for the people it meant that they struck the Mubarak regime in some way. However, the army was not the only political actor that officially re-entered the Egyptian political field on that day the MB did as well. The civilian patrol groups (*legan sha'beya*) organized in the streets around Egypt after the disappearance of the police and CSF were largely managed and handled by the MB throughout Egypt and not just in Greater Cairo.⁶⁵ Also, on that same Friday, the MB officially announced its participation in the demonstrations, which it had not before that day. The army also re-entered Sinai on the same day for alleged protection of a national and symbolic territory.⁶⁶ In the first instance the links with the centralized structure of the army, as a political actor, and the midway decentralization of the MB are evident.

The re-emergence of both political actors in the Egyptian political field resulted in a power struggle (symbolic power struggle) and a gap in governance.⁶⁷ As explained by Bourdieu, such struggles are present in times of openings to new political rivalries.⁶⁸ Internal and/or public discourses are of importance in this part of the analysis as they prove the levels of centralization, decentralizations and symbolic power of each political actor in the different instances since 2011.

⁵⁹ Ibrahim, 2015.

⁶⁰ This is explained in hierarchical charts on the website of the Egyptian Armed Forces.

⁶¹ Examples of these places are: *Kerdasah* and *el-Matareya*.

⁶² Aclimandos, 2004: 468. This was also referred to in an interview with a close acquaintance to army personnel, using the words "MB penetration," explaining that this internal surveillance is part of an ongoing procedure.

⁶³ Which is: "we are not Tunisia!"

⁶⁴ Howeidy, 25 Jan. 2011.

⁶⁵ Accounts of MB participants and other participants in these patrols.

⁶⁶ The army was not allowed to enter Sinai since the Camp David peace agreement, which is a milestone and alleged victory for the army since the 2011 uprising.

⁶⁷ A similar confrontation was last symbolically and politically witnessed in the 1950's and carried on until the crackdown on the MB by the army retreated.

⁶⁸ Bourdieu, 1977.

Also, the relevance of this discourse to the power and hegemony of the MB and army was clearly presented in the media; and thus, the battle between the army and MB to win over the state and the people.

An example of the demonstration of the army's centralization post-2011 can be noted in different instances. One instance is the ground army's appearance in Tahrir Square, other main governorates starting the 28th of January 2011.⁶⁹ Thus showing that the army was seeking central strategic control rather than a peaceful support for the demonstrators as allegedly stated at the time. As with regards to symbolic power, the army had the impression that since the people welcomed the tanks in Tahrir Square that its symbolic power was on the rise or enough to place it as the hegemonic political actor. However, this speculation was soon proved wrong when the people insisted on keeping *asha'ab* before *al-geish* in the famous 1952 slogan "the army and the people are one hand" (*el-geish w esh'ab eiyd waHda*).⁷⁰ This became clearer as the events continued with the Maspero, Mohamed Mahmoud and Port Said massacres.⁷¹

Also, the fixation of the army's discourse on not being subordinate to a civilian is still alive among the army members since the time of Nasser and resurfaced during Morsi's year in power. A first sign was Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi's refusal to salute Morsi as the new Supreme Chief of the Armed Forces (*al-qa'ed al-'ala lel qowat al-mosalaHa*) when being sworn in as the first defense minister and chief of SCAF in 2012.⁷² Tantawi swore to never salute Morsi, a civilian president.⁷³ The refusal to salute is a symbol and a sign; it shows if the new political agent, Morsi, is considered part of this military society or even on the fringe of their *habitus*, using Bourdieu's terms. It is a sign given to the people and the army corpus equally that the army does not accept a civilian president.⁷⁴ This salute or non-salute drains some of the MB's symbolic power to their counterpart, the army, when being presented on the different media.

Further, the timing of the murder of 16 army soldiers in Sinai during Morsi's rule increased the army's symbolic power, as the patriotic army; while asserting its presence in the territory even more.⁷⁵ Morsi's repetition in several speeches of being the Supreme Chief of the Armed Forces showed how the MB were threatened by being on bad terms with the army politically and disrespected in their 'society.' Also, it showed how the socio-historical competition between both political actors started in the 1940s was not over. This situation showed the MB's vulnerability and lack of confidence in a 'transparent' political status, in which they had the legitimacy of the ballot boxes; but not the hegemony over the centralized state and its apparatuses.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Mentioned during a conference proceeding by *al-masry al-youm* video journalist and an activist from an Upper Egyptian governorate at Cairo University in May 2011.

⁷⁰ And making it "the people . . . the army" (*ash'ab . . . al-geish*). Menna Khalil elaborates on the history and difference in both slogans (Khalil, 2012: 249-275; Tonsy, Albrecht, and American University in Cairo, 2014).

⁷¹ These were events when mass killings of the people by the army took place, from November 2011 to February 2012. For further information about these events, consult the articles in the bibliography.

⁷² Link to the video is included in the appendix.

⁷³ The symbols are many and range from this refusal to salute Morsi to referring to Mubarak as "*al-ra'ays al-ma'zoul*" (alienated president) and the SCAF's 2011 coup as a "*tanaHi al-ra'ays*" (the stepping down of the president).

⁷⁴ Roland Barthes explained in his book *Mythologies* about the signs, signifier and signified, which is present in Tantawi's decision to diffuse his message (Barthes, 1972).

⁷⁵ The manner in which Tantawi addressed Morsi during their visit of the site where the 16 soldiers were killed was circulated on social networks.

⁷⁶ The term hegemony is taken from Gramsci (Gramsci, 1988).

On the other side of the political battle, the MB's symbolic capital was as insufficient in 2011 as the army's. The reasons were more apparent than the people's rejection of the army. The MB was (and is) regarded, as remnants of the Mubarak era, throughout Mubarak's time there were no attempts of grass-root change or rebellion. The quasi-decentralized structure of the MB is more vivid than the centralization of the army in several post-2011 events. First, as much as the phrase "latecomers" to the 25th of January uprising upsets some academics when describing the MB's attitude towards the 2011 uprising. They are regarded as such until today by interviewees because of the Bureau's orders to not take part on the 25th of January 2011's demonstrations.⁷⁷ Yet, their decentralization and partial autonomy of their members provided the flexibility to note presence. Second, as mentioned previously, their official presence with the *murshid's* orders on the 28th of January, which is evidence for the 'quasi-decentralization' and abuse of the concept of obedience.⁷⁸ Third, in Mohamed Mahmoud's demonstrations against the SCAF, the Bureau again retreated from the Square, while autonomous members proved presence. In continuity, the defections in the lines of the MB that started on the eve of the 2011 uprising and apparent rupture between the centralized decision making process of the Bureau and *murshid*, on one hand; and the rest of the members on the other, rings the bells with similar historical ruptures in the MB. Reminiscence far back as the 1930's come about with defections in the lines of the MB attributed to their decentralized structure; but centralized decision making, or consultation (*shura*) of the few.

Other symbols of the MB's quasi-decentralized existence are numerous during the period from 2011-2014; however, the last most relevant example is that of the Rab'a Square sit-in in 2013. Accounts by several members – and even in later corpse identifications in late 2013 – confirmed that there were members from various governorates and not just Greater Cairo. This example demonstrates two different points; one, the centralization effects of the state structure; and two is the centralization of the MB's actions and mobilization accordingly.

In Rab'a Square, the sit-in had MB members, their families and supporters; even some ex-members went to protest there despite their differences with the organization.⁷⁹ The spirit there had nothing beyond the regular MB vibe that could be caught in any of their organized public gatherings. After July 2013, different state and private television channels put a logo "against terrorism" at the corner of their screens.⁸⁰ Thus, renewing an old discourse from the 1950's and 60's of the Egyptian army fighting the "terror" of the Islamists or the MB in particular. During the late 50's and 60's in Egypt, state newspapers *akhbar al-yom* and *al-ahram* wrote about "terrorists" (*al-irhabeyoun*) referring to hundreds of MB members and their trial at the time.⁸¹ In 2013, for the first time since Nasser, the MB's repression came from the army itself. After the 2013 coup terms like "vengeance" (*qassas*) circulated among some MB members, mostly youth (ages 15 until 40), signaling further fractures within the MB's social network, adding to the previous point on the effects of their social decentralization. As the association of the MB with the

⁷⁷ They are regarded as "latecomers" according to most interviewees since the 25th of January 2011 (some of which were or are still MB members). Several scholars arguing otherwise have criticized the point of the MB being latecomers, which requires thoughtful consideration and details outside of the scope of this research. The interviewees explained that "they [MB] refused to go out officially," as one of the interviewees, Samer, stated. Samer (whose name has been changed for security purposes) is an ex-MB member in his late thirties. After January 2011 he became a member of the Egyptian Current (*al-tayyar al-masri*) political party, founded in 2011, the interview was carried out in November of the same year. Samer currently lives in exile.

⁷⁸ Samer, November 2011.

⁷⁹ Samer was one of the people, for example, who demonstrated in Rab'a despite his leaving the MB a couple of years before.

⁸⁰ Channels like the first channel, Nile TV, *al-qahera wal nas* and CBC.

⁸¹ This includes Sayyed Qutb and Abdel-Fatah Ismail, among others.

term “terror” in the media continued, in August 2013 the Rab’a Square dispersal took place.⁸² Some MB members in 2014 and 2015 declared that the sit-in was made to mainly stay on the table of negotiations with the army.⁸³ The ‘othering’ of one political actor or the other at the different instances provide for the explanation of how symbolic power shifted during the three years following the initial uprising.

Centralization and the People: the effects on the portrayed unity of the country

Since 2011, attempts of shedding light on the different governorates of Egypt by different researchers have been made. However, in May 2011 in a conference at Cairo University in collaboration with the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, several presentations made clear the following effects of political actors’ centralization (and political events). First is the concentration of the media on certain governorates and not covering the rest, which affects the discourses of the key political actors today; their influence; and eventually structure as in the case of the MB. The fact that there are protests until today that take place in some governorates, which are only found out about through some elements of social media through personal accounts. Second is that some people came from other governorates to protest in what the researchers in that seminar highlighted as *masr*, which is Egypt in Arabic, and by which they are referring to Cairo’s Tahrir Square. The same goes for the demonstrations that followed in 2012 until 2014. Thus, if it is not happening in *masr* it is not taking place. This is relevant when ignoring the protests that take place today in the governorates away from the coercive apparatuses’ reach (military included).⁸⁴

Last, but not least, is the unimportance given to the people in general as political actors. A key example is the strikes by the textile and weaving workers in Helwan (considered part of Greater Cairo, which includes Giza).⁸⁵ The workers’ strikes since 2005 and in 2008 were among the most felt mobilizations in Egypt at the time.⁸⁶ Nadine Abdalla gives exact numbers of labor protests 1,200 in 2011 and 3,400 in 2012.⁸⁷ The number, and socio-economic composition of the labor movement since the early 2000s renders their existence in the Egyptian political field and as a social force necessary. However, voices of organizations like the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU) remain unheard despite their continuous struggle to gain political significance and empowerment since 2011 until today.⁸⁸ In this lays again the media’s concentration on *masr*, and what their choice of what to cover (or ignore) as part of the instruments of domination – using Bourdieu’s idea – of the hegemonic political actor.

⁸² The event of the dispersal is referred to in numerous contexts as a “massacre.” People died during the Rab’a dispersal and the numbers are always not confirmed. Also, the al-Nahda square sit-in was dispersed but had less coverage and casualties than Rab’a. For further information on this point and the use of the term terrorism consult: Tonsy, 2015.

⁸³ Hamza Zawba’, MB spokesperson, declared in 2015 on a pro-MB television channel *Mekameleen*.

⁸⁴ Interview June 2015 with ex-MB member, Mohamed. He explained how MB members wore “Rab’a” t-shirts to play football in some governorates as a sign of protest.

⁸⁵ Beinini, 2014.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Abdalla, 2016: 197.

⁸⁸ Ibid and Regeni, 2016.

Conclusion

Egypt like most Arab states, as ex-colonies, sought after territorial coherence and centralized governance for decades following each state's respective "independence." The MB and the army are 'contingent' political actors that emerged (or reemerged) during the 2011 uprising in Egypt. This article analyzed how both actors represent "*la greffe de l'État*" as of Jean-Francois Bayart's terms.⁸⁹ Bayart explained that there are social groups that "instrumentalize" the newly formed state apparatus during the passage from colonialism to globalization for their own power gains and economic interests.⁹⁰ The MB and the army are both symbolically and bureaucratically attached to the making of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Partisans of both actors repeat symbols, slogans and discourses manifesting a profound political and symbolic power rivalry, which was proved through the inclusion of their historical relationship in the analysis.

Also it can be concluded that the gap in *gouvernementalité* of the army and MB could be attributed to several bureaucratic and institutional reasons. First is the centralization of the state (as an apparatus, bureaucracy and even opposition); second, the institutionalization of this same centralization in certain state institutions including the coercive or security apparatuses (among which is the military). Third, the reliance of the state for years on Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), many of which are religiously or MB affiliated, to fill in the gaps in state services (education, health, welfare, etc.).

While the Egyptian people attempted to seek change and express themselves since 2011, the presence of the army and MB in the political field resulted in the surfacing of an old vicious socio-political and symbolic rivalry. The centralized pillars of the MB's discourse, their use of religion with "*fanatisme borné*" (*tazammut*) – borrowing Aclimandos' terms – and quasi-decentralization are manifest in the appointment el-Sissi as Defense Minister and Chief of SCAF based on his religious appeal.⁹¹

Further, the division of both actors' political, economic and social influence is evident from the symbols present in each governorate and how much the people are connected (or not) to these symbols. The army is the hegemonic political power today but still some tasks previously fulfilled by the MB are left unattended to.⁹² The army is unable to provide the social and health care services the MB carried out before they were declared a terrorist organization. The MB's repression following the events of 2013 and their internal problems are making it more difficult for them as an organization to recompose itself today; in addition to the absence of a clear and uniting Supreme Guide. However the relationship between both actors might seem non-resolvable, their continuity is highly co-dependent on each other's presence even if in the shadows of the Egyptian political field and the manifested rupture.

⁸⁹ Bayart, 2008.

⁹⁰ The quoted term as in the article is "*instrumentalisé*." Ibid.

⁹¹ Starting August 2015, according to Bahgat, 26 members of the armed forces were charged with having ties and collaborating with the MB in an attempt to stage a coup within the army. The story boils down to these 26 members (of different ranks) having religious tendencies, praying, reading the Quran and having veiled wives. They were given sentences that range from 10 years to life. The el-Sissi- Morsi situation explains how these 26 members could turn out to be innocent of all charges and that the *mokhabarat al-'askaria* (military intelligence) is mistaken; but also that the MB was misguided about el-Sissi's loyalty and took "religious" appearance to a new shallower level.

⁹² The army for a while in 2013 and 2014 relayed on the Salafis to perform this task but they did not succeed nor in filling in the MB's shoes politically or socially. Although previously predominantly MB mosques turned Salafi, it is even apparent in the frequenters' dresscode (based on observation).

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