A Critical Analysis of the Neglect of Recruiting the Lower Class by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood

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ABSTRACT

This research delves into the evolution of political Islam as an ideology within the Muslim Brotherhood, with a specific focus on its recruitment strategies and the neglect of the lower class in Egypt. It examines how the movement initially emerged from the lower class, transitioned to target the middle class, and eventually shifted attention towards the middle and upper class, while providing minimal support to the lower class in terms of daily needs and assistance. This neglect of the lower class has led to the loss of millions of supporters, some of whom have aligned themselves with the government, actively opposing the Muslim Brotherhood and lending street legitimacy to anti-Brotherhood demonstrations during pivotal events such as the January Revolution of 2011 and the military coup in 2013. These occurrences prompt crucial questions and suggestions for the Muslim Brotherhood to reconsider its ideology and approach, particularly towards the lower class, which remains a significant demographic in shaping the movement's future political trajectory.

Keywords*: Recruitment, Lower Class, Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt*

INTRODUCTION

Social movements rely on attracting individuals to join their cause, engaging in activities, and recruiting as many members as possible under specific conditions. Movements like communists and socialists aim to enlist workers, teachers, and those who share a belief in challenging the state. Recruitment often hinges on the experience of oppression and the desire to protest against perceived injustices. Conversely, Islamic movements employ different techniques, targeting various social classes. Some Islamic movements, for instance, focus on recruiting Muslims aspiring to embrace Islamist ideals and adhere strictly to Allah's instructions without delving into politics such as Tablighi Jamaat. Others emphasise the political dimension of Islam, seeking Muslims who desire to transform the state through diverse means, whether democratic or through more forceful measures.

The Islamic movement's agenda is intricately tied to the recruitment of individuals from within society who possess an understanding of the culture, language, and daily life. Despite differences in recruitment processes between movements, such as al-Qaeda's focus on online recruitment using social media and jihadist enthusiasm, the Muslim Brotherhood follows a distinct offline recruitment process. Prospective members must navigate through various stages before becoming fully affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.[4] Following the assassination of Anwar Sadat, there was a notable shift in focus within Islamic movements towards recruiting police officers and military personnel, posing a critical question: Do ordinary citizens retain the capability to advocate for change and enact the Islamic agenda? If not, what role does the state play in this dynamic? The state can adopt a biased stance against Islamic movements by influencing public opinion against their cause, potentially obstructing their goals through media

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[4] Pandian, Sivamurugan, Omar Gomaa, and Nur Hafeeza Ahmad Pazil. "Socialisation and recruitment in Islamist movements: A comparison between the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Qaeda." *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 18 (2020): 110-120.

campaigns. An example of this occurred against the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013, inciting violence that resulted in bloodshed in the streets.[5] This underscores the importance of examining the interplay between the state and Islamic movements in shaping societal perceptions and influencing the potential for transformative change. Thus, to understand this relationship, this paper aims to scrutinise the recruitment process within the middle class and aristocratic class of the Muslim Brotherhood, examining how the neglect of the lower class in Egypt led to a clash between the movement and a significant number of Egyptians from the lower socioeconomic strata. This clash ultimately contributed to the downfall of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013 and the loss of millions of supporters.

THE EARLY SOLDIERS OF THE DA'WAH

The goal of Muslim Brotherhood agenda is to establish an Islamic state. It socialises its members by instilling the belief that, for such a transformative change, individuals must be educated based on Islamic teachings and the movement's objectives. Members are encouraged to recruit and impart their acquired knowledge within the movement to their families. Subsequently, the focus shifts to the broader community and the state. Through this process, the Muslim Brotherhood aims to establish an Islamic influence and bring about a societal shift in accordance with Allah's instructions.

This sociological process, known as the socialisation process, prompts an anthropological study of the individual within this framework. Before delving into this, it is crucial to examine who the chosen soldiers are to lead the da'wah. As al-Banna stated, "the Muslim Brotherhood's most valuable members are the "unknown soldiers" — those who exert their utmost efforts, invest significantly from their own resources, and dedicate their time selflessly. These individuals intentionally shun the spotlight, preferring to remain anonymous. They are characterised by their humility, speaking sparingly but acting decisively. Their conviction lies in the belief that they serve a higher purpose, with a Lord who acknowledges their efforts in a gathering superior to any on Earth."[6] Al-Banna's statement serves as a pivotal point in cultivating a belief within an individual that their role is sacred, emphasising the notion that one need not aspire to fame. Coupled with a religious Minhaj narrating the sacrifices of the Sahabat (companions of Prophet Muhammad), this combination provides abundant rationale to mould a steadfast soldier dedicated to the cause of da'wah.

The chosen soldiers within the Muslim Brotherhood are selected based on criteria that have evolved according to the movement's changing circumstances. In its initial formation with al-Banna, the founding members primarily comprised lower-class citizens engaged in various occupations such as mechanics, barbers, carpenters, machinists, and wheel shop sellers. This illustrates that the Muslim Brotherhood did not originate as an aristocratic movement, in contrast to the al-Wafd Party where its leaders where aristocratic like Saad Zaghloul, Mostafa Elnahas Pasha, and Foa'ad Serag Eldin, or Liberal Constitutional Party. Instead, it emerged as a grassroots movement from the Egyptian streets, gaining local legitimacy and attracting individuals from the lower class to play a foundational role in its establishment. This also have given the Muslim Brotherhood the duty to understand their coming role as Islamists. Certainly, al-Banna played a pivotal role in instilling the goals and enthusiasm necessary for his members to align with his unique Islamic trajectory. This distinctive approach enabled them to comprehend their assigned tasks and commit to fulfilling them. During this period, the primary responsibility was to recruit additional members, predominantly from the lower class in Ismailia.

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[5]   Gomaaa, Omar, Sivamurugan Pandianb, and N. H. B. A. Pazilc. "Media Socialisation-The Influence of Media that led to a Genocide: A Case of Rwanda and Egypt." *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change* 15, no. 6 (2021).

[6]   Drkhaled. A'az Ma Yamlok al-Ikhwanul Muslimin. Retrieved from https://www.dr-khaled.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=861:2016-09-19-14-18-04&catid=29:the-cms&Itemid=59

The membership of the lower class in Ismailia was influenced by the city's status as an occupied place, culturally and economically dominated by foreign employees in the Suez Canal.

Egyptians were largely confined to lower-tier jobs. [7] Al-Banna's move from working in Ismailia to Cairo opened up opportunities for Egyptians in the capital to join his da'wah. According to Abdel Halim, during the first visit of the founders of the Muslim Brotherhood from Ismailia to Cairo, they anticipated that the movement would be as popular as it was in Ismailia.[8] However, it remained obscure, and Egypt was preoccupied with other nationalistic movements. Nevertheless, the shift to Cairo attracted individuals from the middle class, including teachers and employees. The inaugural council of the Muslim Brotherhood Guidance in 1931 reflects this change in recruitment:

1. Hassan al-Banna (Schoolteacher).
2. Mostafa al-Teir (Teacher in Al-Azhar).
3. Hamed Askaryiah (Scholar in Al-Azhar).
4. Ahmed Al-Sukari (Teacher).
5. Khaled Abdellatif (Notable person).
6. Mohamed Fethallah (Employee).
7. Abdelrahman AlSaa'ati (Employee).
8. Mohamed Asa'ad al-Hakem (Employee).
9. Mohamed Helmi Nourrdin (Employee).

This list exemplifies the change in recruitment strategy by al-Banna, driven by the unique position of Cairo. The middle class, represented by teachers and employees, played a crucial role in recruiting members from their own social stratum, contributing to the expansion of the movement across various Egyptian spheres.

It is also important to note that neither al-Banna nor his secretary, Ahmed al-Sukari, held high social positions or belonged to the Pasha class. However, the movement flourished from the grassroots, emanating from the impoverished Egyptians who harboured fervent religious zeal and were aggrieved by the English occupation in Egypt. Al-Banna emerged as the mastermind not merely due to his role as the founder but owing to his ability to seamlessly blend nationalism and religion. This was a stark contrast to the al-Wafd Party, the most influential political actor, which marginalised the role of religion in politics, prioritising nationalist issues instead.

THE EARLY ARISTOCRATIC SOLDIERS OF THE DA'WAH

Like many movements in Egypt aiming to recruit members from diverse segments of society, the Muslim Brotherhood also sought and recruited individuals from aristocratic families who subsequently played significant roles within the movement. The influence of aristocratic members became particularly pronounced due to their financial resources and social standing compared to those in the lower class. For the fledgling Muslim Brotherhood, which needed to thrive and expand, financial means and social influence were crucial. The involvement of members from aristocratic backgrounds provided the movement with the necessary resources to navigate the socio-political landscape, demonstrating the pragmatic approach adopted by the Muslim Brotherhood in its early stages.

Aristocratic members in the Muslim Brotherhood during its early flourishing in the 1940s ascended to ruling positions despite their initial membership status. Mounir al-Dalla, a notable figure who served on the State Council and hailed from a noble background, joined the Muslim Brotherhood, signifying a diversity that was often lacking in many political parties of the time. Unlike other prominent parties such as Liberal Constitutional Party, which had popular appeal but leaders from aristocratic backgrounds, al-Dalla's entry marked a departure from this trend.

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[7]   Abdel Halim, Mahmoud. 2013. Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, Aḥ. dath ̄ S. ana " at al-Tarikh, Ru ̄ " ya men al-D ̄ akhel (The Muslim Brotherhood, Events that ̄ Shaped the History, a View from Inside). Alexandria: Dar al-Da ̄ " wa, Parts I.

[8]   See note 4.

Al-Dalla's inclusion paved the way for other members from high-class families to join. Common perceptions in political circles painted the Muslim Brotherhood as a movement of poverty, seemingly unattractive to educated Egyptians. Additionally, it was thought that only Muslims seeking affiliation with Islam, mostly the poor, would join. However, the aristocratic class possessed a distinct advantage – connections with Princes, the Royal Family, and the government. Egypt at that time was often referred to as *"Dalwlat al-Pasha"* (Pasha State),[9] reflecting a vivid racial classism among Egyptians.

Al-Dalla wielded considerable influence, notably in a case during the Cleansings Court in the aftermath of the 1952 coup. A Muslim Brotherhood member faced false witness accusations, but al-Dalla persuaded his friend, a council member in the case, to pardon the accused.[10] His financial influence also came to the fore when the Muslim Brotherhood faced dissolution in 1948. Al-Dalla occupied a prominent position alongside his long-time friend and brother-in-law Hasan al-Ashmawy. They both played pivotal roles during the movement's uprisings in the 1940s and the 1952 coup that ousted King Farouk.

Furthermore, al-Ashmawy, owing to his position and affluent background, had a close association with Gamal Abdel Nasser. In a notable incident, Abdel Nasser sought al-Ashmawy's help to bury some weapons in his villa during the Cairo Fire of 1952, fearing potential repercussions. However, after the coup's success, Abdel Nasser directed the police and military to discover the concealed weapons in al-Ashmawy's villa in Al-Sharqyiah. This move supported Abdel Nasser's claim that the Muslim Brotherhood had hidden weapons with the intent of fomenting violence in Egypt.[11]

Al-Banna demonstrated social acumen by strategically attracting individuals from high-class families who could provide logistical and financial support during the movement's hardships, validating his perspective. One aristocratic figure, Salah Shady, born into a wealthy family and a police officer, played a crucial role during the Muslim Brotherhood's clashes with Abdel Nasser and the Free Officers.[12] Shady successfully recruited numerous police officers into the Muslim Brotherhood, allowing al-Banna to establish a network among affluent individuals and law enforcement, facilitating the movement's expansion across effective social classes.

Notably, Hassan al-Hudaibi, a judge, faced significant challenges in becoming the Supreme Guide after al-Banna's assassination. Many leaders, including Mohamed al-Ghazali, Saleh Ashmawy, and Abdelrahman al-Sanadi, opposed al-Hudaibi's selection. Interestingly, most of those who contested al-Hudaibi's choice were from the middle class. Al-Ghazali even suggested Masonic interference in the Muslim Brotherhood,[13] later retracting his statement after the Muslim Brotherhood's release from incarceration in 1970.
On the other hand, al-Dalla, Ashmawy, and Salah Shady supported al-Hudaibi. This initial clash between the middle class and the aristocracy within the Muslim Brotherhood occurred, with the lower class seemingly absent from this scenario. Despite this, the promotion of aristocratic members to high positions within the movement raises questions about the founders' roles, as most played no significant part in the movement's future. Ahmed al-Sukari, the only founder involved, was expelled due to conflicts with al-Banna.[14]

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[9]   Abi Diyaf, Ahmad Ibn. *Consult Them in the Matter*. University of Arkansas Press, 2005.

[10]   Ikhwan Wiki. "Counselor Munir Al-Dalla...a symbol of sacrifice and redemption." The official historical encyclopedia of the Muslim Brotherhood. 2022. Accessed January 4, 2024. https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B1_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A9#

[11]   Abdel Halim, Mahmoud. *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, Aḥ.dath ̄ S. ana " at al-Tarikh, Ru ̄ " ya men al-D ̄ akhel* (The Muslim Brotherhood, Events that ̄ Shaped the History, a View from Inside). Alexandria: Dar al-Da ̄ " wa, Parts I–III, 2013.

[12]   Aboushady, Nadia. "Brotherhood's Internal Conflicts and their Outcomes: Historical Overview (1928–2011)." In *Factionalism in Social Movements: The Case of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood After 2013*, pp. 67-99. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2023.

[13]   Kandil, Hazem. *Inside the brotherhood*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

[14]   See note 7.

The recruitment of aristocrats set a trajectory for businessmen and high-class families to join the movement and, more importantly, wield influential roles within it.

THE BATTLE OF SYMPATHY

As an opponent Islamic model to all previous Egyptian regimes from 1928 until 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood's strategy for recruiting Egyptians extended beyond mere enlistment. It also focused on educating its members in Islamic teachings and fostering an affiliation with Islamic ideology. In a country as diverse as Egypt, with a multitude of ideologies and political movements, the Muslim Brotherhood found it challenging to establish a singular nationalist Islamic ideology for all Egyptians.[15] Consequently, its political Islam ideology faced opposition not only from authorities but, more significantly, from various segments of the Egyptian population, including Muslim Salafists, liberalists, extremists, and even secularists.

This situation raised a critical question for the Muslim Brotherhood: whether they needed mass recruitment without necessarily fostering strong affiliations or sympathy toward their political actions. This gap in the Muslim Brotherhood's literature review has yet to be adequately addressed, as most of its books lack practical studies on Egyptians or problem-solving approaches. Instead, the literature tends to be thematic, recounting stories based on the authors' experiences in exile and incarceration. Despite its extensive expansion, the movement has struggled to produce comprehensive studies at each stage of Egyptian political crises, aimed at finding solutions or avoiding recurring mistakes. However, the Muslim Brotherhood has consistently highlighted its significant sympathy among Egyptians.[16] This section aims to explore how the Muslim Brotherhood garnered widespread sympathy among Egyptians and whether this sympathy has the potential to instigate change.

The inception of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was marked by a challenge to the existing state and monarchy, particularly in the context of an Egypt where Islamic principles were not prominently upheld, and Al-Azhar's role was marginalised during the British occupation. Following Al-Azhar's significant contribution against the French Occupation in Egypt from 1798-1801, British authorities diminished its political influence, leaving space for societal vices such as brothels and gambling to become commonplace.

Amid this backdrop, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged, presenting a fusion of politics and Islam. The movement, with influential clerics from Al-Azhar like Sheikh Sayed Sadiq, Mohamed al-Ghazali, and Ahmed Al-Baquri, positioned itself as a champion of Islam, imbued with a spirit of religious dedication and resistance against the British. Notably, under the leadership of Hassan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood successfully advocated for the banning of brothels in Egypt through a political agreement with Nahas Pasha, revealing the movement's reformist and nationalist character.[17]

This strategic move prompts the question: did the Muslim Brotherhood gain sympathy from Egyptians? The answer is nuanced. Secularists who comprehended the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda to transform Egypt into an Islamic state were sceptical. However, another group of Egyptians found solace in the Muslim Brotherhood as a platform for their da'wah (religious preaching). Although this second group did not join the movement en masse, its members were drawn to the Muslim Brotherhood's perceived shelter for their religious advocacy. At that time, the nationalist banner of al-Wafd overshadowed various religious trends, including those represented by the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the Muslim Brotherhood managed to garner sympathy from outsiders, highlighting the complexity of its relationship with different segments of Egyptian society with on-going recruitment in all Egyptian diameters.

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[15]   Al-Anani, Khalil. "Upended path: The rise and fall of egypt's muslim brotherhood." *The Middle East Journal* 69, no. 4 (2015): 527-543.

[16]   Willi, Victor J. *The fourth ordeal: a history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, 1968–2018*. Vol. 62. Cambridge University Press, 2021.

[17]   Frampton, Martyn. *The Muslim Brotherhood and the West: A History of Enmity and Engagement*. Harvard University Press, 2018.

Popular sympathy or the support of sympathetic individuals often does not seek justification for the movements they support or their failures. In the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, it experienced a loss of popular sympathy following violent actions carried out by *al-Tanzim al-Khas* (the Special Apparatus).[18] While some members disowned those who committed violence, others followed figures like Abdelrahman Al-Sanadi.[19] Although *al-Tanzim al-Khas* was initially founded to resist British occupation, its trajectory became misguided.

This shift raised questions among Egyptians about whether the Muslim Brotherhood was preparing for chaos rather than engaging in legitimate jihad, especially following the organised fight against the Zionists in 1948. King Farouk, concerned about the Muslim Brotherhood's potential success and the validation of the Islamic project, sought to curb its influence.[20] On the other hand, Farouk, lacking political experience, considered himself a Caliph in hopes of gaining popular support.[21] Despite his reputation being tarnished by drinking and gambling, which was not uncommon for the royal family, Farouk found no alternative but to limit the Muslim Brotherhood's influence, eventually leading to the assassination of Hassan al-Banna in 1949.

The manner in which Farouk handled al-Banna's assassination, leaving him bleeding without medical treatment, reignited sympathy for the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly after learning that Farouk was the primary suspect in the incident.
With the rise of the military coup in 1952, the Free Officers initially sought assistance from the Muslim Brotherhood, and their collaborative efforts placed them at the forefront of Egyptian politics. Many political actors were imprisoned,[22] and the Muslim Brotherhood became the most influential political entity in the country, with several Free Officers being members of both the Muslim Brotherhood and the military.[23]

However, tensions arose within the Free Officers, particularly between General Mohamed Naguib and other members.[24] Naguib turned to the Muslim Brotherhood for support during this conflict, leading to a massive demonstration in favour of Naguib's leadership and the implementation of the coup's principles. During the protest, the Free Officers struggled to disperse the crowd, prompting them to enlist the help of Muslim Brotherhood Judge Abdel Qader Ouda. Unfortunately, Ouda was later executed on Abdel Nasser's order after allegations that the Muslim Brotherhood had dispatched Mahmoud Abdel Latif to assassinate Abdel Nasser during a political gathering in Mansheya, Alexandria.[25]

Despite this claim, according to the Muslim Brotherhood's literature, they had met with Abdel Nasser on more than 15 occasions, asserting that they had the opportunity to harm him if they had intended to do so. The alleged assassination attempt, however, became the pretext for the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood, leading to over 15 years of political marginalisation. Members faced death without a fair trial, torture, and exile. The Egyptian public, at the time, did not widely oppose the crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood.

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[18] Zalaf, Ahmed Abou El. "The Special Apparatus (al-Niẓām al-Khāṣṣ): The Rise of Nationalist Militancy in the Ranks of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood." *Religions* 13, no. 1 (2022): 77.

[19] Abdel Halim, Mahmoud. 2013. Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, Ah. dath ̄ S. ana " at al-Tarikh, Ru ̄ " ya men al-D ̄ akhel (The Muslim Brotherhood, Events that ̄ Shaped the History, a View from Inside). Alexandria: Dar al-Da ̄ " wa, Parts I–III.

[20] See note 16.

[21] Tripp, Charles. "Al-malik al-salih–Islam and the monarchy in 1930s Egypt." *Middle eastern studies* 58, no. 3 (2022): 354-370.

[22] Reid, Donald M. "Political assassination in Egypt, 1910-1954." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15, no. 4 (1982): 625-651.

[23] Cook, Steven A. *The struggle for Egypt: from Nasser to Tahrir square*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

[24] Poljarevic, Emin. "Egypt, Revolution of 1952." *The International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest* (2009): 1-4.

[25] Zalaf, Ahmed Abou El. "The Muslim Brotherhood and State Repression in Egypt." *The Muslim Brotherhood and State Repression in Egypt* (2022): 1-232.

It was only when Sadat succeeded Abdel Nasser and initiated political liberalisation,[26] allowing media and political discussions, particularly in movies that delved into the dark years of Abdel Nasser,[27] that Egyptians began to sympathise with the Muslim Brotherhood. The mistreatment they endured during Abdel Nasser's rule garnered public sympathy, attracting a significant number of followers, especially among university students like Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, who later ran for the Egyptian presidency in 2012.[28]

During Hosni Mubarak's rule since 1981 until 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood was indeed an important political actor. Despite the relationship with Mubarak was teetering on the brink of collapse, but the social services provided by the Muslim Brotherhood was ample to leave room for social emancipation,[29] and by thus the Muslim Brotherhood succeeded to socially become active among Egyptians but their role was not focused on recruiting those who receive their services which normally are the lower class. They more focused on middle class by many activities such as camping football games, and cultural competitions.[30] For the Muslim Brotherhood, the lower class was only enough to have their empathy not the membership as they may become burden to the movement as their demanding are high and they might ask for services instead of providing. The question of whether neglecting the lower class to become members was favoured in the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda and structure is rooted in the ideological structure of the organisation. According to the Muslim Brotherhood, the benefits gained from engaging with the lower class are primarily recognised during elections, where their voices can potentially bring about meaningful change.

THE RESULT OF NEGLECTING THE LOWER CLASS

Despite the Muslim Brotherhood's origins in the lower class, its composition shifted over time to include members from the middle and aristocratic classes.[31] The term "aristocratic" here does not imply recruitment from ambassadorial or ministerial ranks, particularly during Mubarak's era. Instead, the aristocratic class within the Muslim Brotherhood extended to include businessmen and affluent families, such as Hassan al-Hudaibi, Umar al-Telmesani and Munir al-Dalla, alongside figures like Khairat al-Shater.

An examination of the 13-member Council Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood reveals a notable absence of individuals from the lower class, with the majority hailing from high-class backgrounds, occupying positions in fields like medicine, engineering, and academia. The composition of the Council Guide is as follows:

1. Mohamed Badie - Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood (Veterinarian)
2. Khairat Elshater - Deputy of the Supreme Guide (Businessman)
3. Mahmoud Ezzat - Professor in Medicine
4. Rachad ElBaioumy - Professor in Geology
5. Mahmoud Hussien - Professor in Engineering
6. Abdelrahman ElBar - Professor in Al-Azhar
7. Mohamed Ali Beshr - Professor in Engineering
8. Mahmoud Ghozlan - Professor in Agriculture
9. Mohi Hamed - Physician
10. Mohamed Wehdan - Professor in Agriculture
11. Abdel Azim ElSharqawy - Engineering

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[26] Ryan, Curtis R. "Political strategies and regime survival in Egypt." *Journal of third world studies* 18, no. 2 (2001): 25-46.

[27] Taha, Amir, and Amir Taha. "Film and Politics in Egypt." *Film and Counterculture in the 2011 Egyptian Uprising* (2021): 67-103.

[28] Hamid, Shadi. "Brother President." *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs* 6 (2012).

[29] Al-Awadi, H. (2009). A struggle for legitimacy: the Muslim Brotherhood and Mubarak, 1982–2009. *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, 2(2), 214-228.

[30] Munson, Ziad. "Islamic mobilization: social movement theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood." *The Sociological Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (2001): 487-510.

[31] Leiken, Robert S., and Steven Brooke. "The moderate Muslim brotherhood." *Foreign Aff.* 86 (2007): 107.

12. Mahmoud Abou Zeid - Professor of Surgery
13. Mohamed Ibrahim - Research Management Consultant

This list redirects our focus toward the composition of the councils, indicating a predominant presence of individuals from high-class families rather than the lower or even middle class. This raises questions about how a movement like the Muslim Brotherhood, initially founded by people from the lower class, does not include them in its leadership or representation even from the middle class.

This shift in composition prompts further investigation into the dynamics of the Muslim Brotherhood's internal structure and the reasons behind the absence of individuals from the lower and middle classes in key leadership positions. It highlights a discrepancy between the movement's origins and its current leadership, emphasising the need for a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic dynamics influencing the Muslim Brotherhood's internal hierarchy. However, this demographic shift poses a paradox for the Muslim Brotherhood, as its aim to establish an Islamic state seems incongruent with the composition of its leadership councils. Despite originating from the lower class, these councils predominantly consist of individuals from high-class families. This shift may be attributed to changes in the Egyptian demographic and labour migration from villages to urban centres.

Nevertheless, this deviation from the lower class may contradict the Muslim Brotherhood's mission, which ostensibly aims to represent the Egyptian streets and comprehend their demands. The lower class, facing challenges beyond illiteracy and unemployment, has become a tool for the regime when needed. Mubarak's regime, for instance, did not incorporate the lower class into its political agenda, leading to an increase in their numbers.

The neglect of recruiting the lower class within the Muslim Brotherhood left them susceptible to manipulation by the regime, leading them in two directions—into the streets and under the government's shelter. Exploited as "*Baltagiya*" or thugs, they were used to suppress political opponents, pose a threat during demonstrations, and support the regime's interests in the streets especially during general elections.[32]

Despite Mubarak's regime not including the lower class in its political initiatives, it capitalised on their involvement as a tool for oppression, utilising them as supporters in the streets and instigating clashes during political events. For instance, during the January Revolution of 2011, they were deployed to attack protestors in Tahrir Square.[33] Similarly, in the aftermath of the 2013 *Tamaroud* Campaign, they were instrumental in attacking Muslim Brotherhood quarters.

The lower class, despite being marginalised within the Muslim Brotherhood, proved to be a potent force in politics, especially during significant events like the January Revolution and the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. The regime's strategic use of the lower class highlighted their potential to bring about meaningful change in political dynamics, even if their roles were often manipulated and exploited by those in power.

While the Muslim Brotherhood did offer assistance to the lower class in terms of daily needs and social activities, it failed to establish a social shelter where individuals could find affiliation and resolve their daily problems. This may not be solely the Muslim Brotherhood's problem as an opposition political actor, but it highlights a critical gap in the movement's approach to engaging with the lower class. This vulnerability leaves them open to manipulation by the regime and perpetuates their marginalisation in broader political discourse.

Towards the end, the lower class should be acknowledged as an integral part of the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda in recruitment, education, and socialisation. Their significant role in guiding the military to topple the Muslim Brotherhood underscores the importance of buying their loyalty and fostering their membership within the movement. Inclusion of the lower class could contribute not only to the terms of mobilisation or recruitment but also to building a nationalist movement that permeates all Egyptian streets—from slums to high-class

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[32] Shehata, Samer S. "Political Daˁ Wa." *Islamist Politics in the Middle East: Movements and Change* (2012): 120.

[33] Amar, Paul. "Turning the gendered politics of the security state inside out? Charging the police with sexual harassment in Egypt." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13, no. 3 (2011): 299-328.

areas—embracing members from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, be they poor or wealthy. This approach goes beyond restricting membership to a particular class, fostering a more inclusive and representative Muslim Brotherhood. Towards the end, the lower class should be recognised in the Muslim Brotherhood agenda in recruitment, educating and socialisation. As they contributed with guidance of the military to topple the Muslim Brotherhood, buying their loyalty and membership would contribute to popular shelter and such a diversity within the Muslim Brotherhood could become beneficial to the movement not limited to the terms of mobilisation or recruitment but to a nationalist movement that is founded in all Egyptian streets in slums, high classes areas and among the poor and wealthy instead of restricting the membership class.

THE POWER OF LOWER CLASS

It is indeed challenging to bring together three different classes within one movement, as seen in social movements that aim to advance a specific cause or ideology. For example, communism tends to attract members from the working class and lower socio-economic strata,[34] while secular movements in Egypt, like those led by Farag Fouda, primarily draw support from the middle class. These secular movements often oppose the dominance of Islam in society and challenge the influence of institutions like Al-Azhar. In contrast, Islamic movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, centre around a core idea—the dominance of Islam.[35] While the Muslim Brotherhood may adapt its slogans over time, the central focus remains on Islam. The lower class, however, may not be sufficiently educated to grasp ideologies such as secularism or liberalism—but they certainly *may have* a clear understanding of Islam.

The process of integrating the lower class into the Muslim Brotherhood raises a critical question: what role would they play within the movement? While the middle class often engages in recruitment and educational roles based on qualifications and loyalty, the potential role of individuals from the lower class requires careful consideration. It is essential to avoid misplacing them in positions that might burden the movement.

Understanding the strong connection between Egyptians from the lower class and Islam is crucial. This connection has remained steadfast over time, resisting external influences. Even during historical periods like the Fatimid Caliphate or under the domination of Turks and Mohamed Ali Pasha, Egyptians resisted adopting different religious practices or languages. The failure of attempts by leaders like Abdel Nasser to transform Egyptian society into socialist or secular ideals highlights the enduring influence of religion, particularly Islam, in the lives of Egyptians. Despite the introduction of ideologies such as communism and secularism, their mobilisation on the ground has proven ineffective and intangible.

This resilience indicates that Egyptians from the lower class can be drawn to Islamic ideology by understanding their needs and placing them in positions where they can express their feelings and establish a social identity. Importantly, the current socio-political conditions under al-Sisi have unfortunately increased the number of individuals in the lower class.[36] Many from the middle class have descended into this category, exacerbating issues related to political participation and the struggle for basic freedoms, particularly regarding access to essential resources like bread. Careful study and consideration of these dynamics are essential for the successful inclusion of the lower class in the Muslim Brotherhood.

The question now turns to the literature of the Muslim Brotherhood to assess whether the organisation has conducted a study on the lower class and developed strategies to include them in the movement. However, it appears that the Muslim Brotherhood has not undertaken such a study or formulated a plan to recruit individuals from the lower class.

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[34] Johnson, Christopher H. "Communism and the working class before Marx: the Icarian experience." *The American Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1971): 642-689.

[35] Wagemakers, Joas. *The Muslim Brotherhood: Ideology, History, Descendants*. Amsterdam University Press, 2022.

[36] Aboushady, Nora, and Nadia Aboushady. "The Social Contract Undermined through Economic Reforms: the End of an Era for the Egyptian Middle Classes." *MENA-direkt* (2018).

According to a study conducted by Rihan, Elkassas, Seham, and Walaa, the poverty rate in Egypt has reached 27% of the population, with 5% living below the poverty line.[37] In 2023, Alwali, in an article with Al Jazeera, stated that the official number of those living in poverty, considered part of the lower class, is 29% of the population.[38] Whether the poverty rate is higher or around 30%, it indicates an increase in the number of individuals in the lower class. The economic situation is currently deteriorating, marked by the Egyptian regime's challenges and the depreciation of the Egyptian pound against the US dollar. This economic downturn is expected to further increase the number of individuals in the lower class.

This economic challenge not only affects the government but also impacts the Muslim Brotherhood. Members of the movement are facing economic and political crises under President al-Sisi's stringent regime, which has resulted in the confiscation of businesses and bank accounts belonging to many members. Additionally, the poverty line encompasses all Egyptians, irrespective of their political ideologies. This places the Muslim Brotherhood in a complex economic situation, especially considering that more than 60,000 political prisoners in Egypt are mostly affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Given the economic challenges and the confiscation of the Muslim Brotherhood's properties and bank accounts belonging to its leaders and members, questions arise regarding the movement's ability to provide financial support to its members who have fallen below the poverty line. Furthermore, with the international community observing the situation, there is speculation about whether Islamic organisations will offer aid to the Muslim Brotherhood, potentially through clandestine channels.

CONCLUSION

It is imperative for Islamic movements to adapt various recruitment techniques, yet the oversight of social class divergence within these movements, as exemplified by the Muslim Brotherhood, remains a critical issue. Founded by six workers from the lower class, the Muslim Brotherhood's trajectory has shifted towards the middle, high, and aristocratic classes, alienating it from the Egyptian streets and their grievances. This detachment has led to accusations of temporary solutions through electoral tactics, rather than addressing the root issues facing the lower class. Neglecting this demographic has proven costly, as they were manipulated by the regime to oppose the Muslim Brotherhood during pivotal events such as the January Revolution of 2011 and the 2013 military coup. With Egypt's lower class swelling due to economic failures under Al-Sisi's regime, including former Muslim Brotherhood members who lost jobs and property, it is paramount for the movement to reassess its approach. Learning from past mistakes, the Muslim Brotherhood must prioritise the inclusion of the lower class in its future plans, recognising them as essential stakeholders in Egypt's political landscape.

The research paper highlights that the absence of economic and political initiatives and formal studies by the Muslim Brotherhood is a crucial aspect for understanding Egyptian society's dynamics with the government. This absence was one of the contributing factors to the collapse of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. Additionally, it is a fundamental tenet of the Muslim Brotherhood to maintain communication links with Egyptians by addressing their daily needs. However, under al-Sisi's leadership, the Muslim Brotherhood was compelled to retreat from the political arena, resulting in a void and the absence of a moral guiding role in Egyptian society.

In conclusion, this research paper recommends future studies to explore the recruitment patterns of the elite within the Muslim Brotherhood, examining their evolving roles and assessing whether there are distinctions between middle-class and aristocratic members.

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[37] Rihan, M. K. I.; Elkassas H. I; Seham, A; Walaa A. The Phenomenon Of Poverty In Egypt Between Reality And Hoped And Its Position Among Some Of The Developing Countries. Journal of Environmental Science. (2018).

[38] Alwali, M. "The poorest of the poor" in Egypt...a disturbing picture painted by the numbers. Retrieved from Aljazeera (2023).

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