



Missing Influence

How MB administers its foreign relations

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Introduction

Since the early twentieth century, the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood has emerged as a heavy-weight group, both domestically and regionally, gaining its gravity from the objectives it has adopted, where it seeks to achieve social and political reform and change on the basis of Islamic principles; and its gigantic size, where it is widespread among various society segments, both in Egypt and Arab countries. Despite the fact that the group's weight has granted it a strong and effective presence in the Egyptian political life, yet this has not actually reflected just as much on its regional and international status, due to subjective reasons, related to the group's perceptions about its foreign relations and how to administer them; and external reasons, related to the nature of ruling regimes in the Middle East, as well as the global order and how it deals with social movements.

In the aftermath of the 3 July coup (2013), the MB's efficacy has no longer been as it had been before, because it has been subjected to severe blows that have put its organization into severe crises related to the group's political and societal presence as well as its organizational structure. With the formation of a counter regional alliance mainly aimed at undermining the MB and eliminating its existence, essential questions have emerged regarding the group's regional and international efficacy and its adequacy to face the new challenges and the different environment that the group found itself compelled to operate in - amid internal conflict and regional pressures.

Within this framework, this paper seeks to answer a key question, namely:

What are the Muslim Brotherhood's perceptions about its foreign relations, be it regional or international, and how they have reflected on the group's practices

during the post-January Revolution (2011) period and in the aftermath of the 3 July coup (2013)?

The study addresses several elements related to the key question, where it reviews the development of relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regional and international environment since its inception until now. It also discusses the mechanism on which the group has relied to administer its international relations. Through a review and assessment of the MB ideas and perceptions about its foreign relations and regional and international efficacy on the one hand, and its practice and management of those relations on the other, the study seeks to objectively tackle how movements seeking change in Egypt may build their own international efficacy in light of the current regional and international conditions and challenges.

Chapter I: Conceptual Framework

Taking into mind that this paper seeks to understand and objectively analyze the Muslim Brotherhood's perceptions and practices of international relations, it will be significant, before proceeding with the study, to introduce some related basic concepts, including definition of the Brotherhood as a social movement and how far social movements may intersect with international relations in the area of political science.

1- Definition of Brotherhood as a social movement

Social movements are such movements that work to organize the efforts of a group of people to bring about social and political change, based on the "higher philosophical values that those movement believes in"¹; Or they are movements that represent collective enterprises that target change and establishment of a new order of life, according to the definition of American Sociologist Herbert Blumer². Generally speaking, we can use the term "social movements" to describe movements that possess a set of key components, notably: existence of individuals that share the same ideas and convictions, undertake organized work together, and strive to achieve general objectives related to changing society and facing the existing political system. Through this framework, we may understand collective action within social movements as a form of political action, whether direct or indirect, which makes differences between social and political movements extremely limited or even non-existent to those who view social movements as being in essence political movements, given that they face the state, demanding change and reform³.

The Muslim Brotherhood's key strengths may be helpful in our attempt to reach an accurate definition of the group, overcoming complications related to the fact

¹ Ghanem, Ibrahim Al-Bayoumi. "Social Movements... Structure Transformations and Openness of Field" Al Wefaq Center for Research and Training, 20 October 2014, <https://wefaqdev.net/art760.html>

² Mahmoud, Mahmoud Safi. Review of a critical study of social movements titled: Sociology of Social Movements by Prof. Francois Dubet, 2012, <https://sites.google.com/site/compmpoliticsegphd/home/mqrr-2012/syl/presentations/safisocialmovements>

³ Christopher A. Rootes (1997) Social movements and politics, African Studies, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 67-95, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00020189708707861>

that it has already had various definitions - in terms of being an organization, a group, a movement, or a party. Having been distinguished since its inception in the early 1930s for its ability to undertake various forms of collective action drawn from Islamic values, the MB has always sought to achieve change, starting from the individual, through society, up to the political system. Therefore, the MB's key attributes throughout its history may be mainly manifested in its collective action and desire for change, taking into account that the group used to enjoy a coherent organizational structure while many other movements and parties at the time lacked any organizational culture, not to forget its capability to mobilize masses across various social classes.

Thus, we can consider the Brotherhood a social movement based on the fact that it meets the characteristics and requirements of social movements; however, it also meets the requirements of a political movement in two respects: first, being a social movement, the MB actually represents a form of collective political action according to the concept of 'social movement' in political science. Second, despite the prominence of the group's role in social and economic activities, along with da'wah (advocation) and educating individuals on the basis of Islamic values; however, the MB has soon become involved in public issues and clashed with the political power. Then, it became clear that the change and societal reform that the movement has sought from its early days would not be achieved without confrontation with the political power, which led to making political change and reform among the MB's main objective shortly after its early inception. To sum up, we may describe the Muslim Brotherhood as a mass socio-political movement based since inception on "restoring the role of Islam in the overall life of society"⁴ and facing the Western hegemony manifested in colonialism the other Arab and Islamic countries were suffering from at the time.

⁴ Jadaan, Fahmy. 2012, "On Final Salvation...Article on Pledges of Contemporary Arab Intellectual Systems", pp. 58-59, 2nd..edition, The Arab Network for Research and Publishing. <https://www.neelwafurat.com/itempage.aspx?id=lbb214394-187799&search=books>

2- Social movements' intersection with international relations

It is significant to shed some light on the intersection of social movements with international relations, and explain how social movements are defined from the perspective of international relations. Despite the fact that the State is the main actor in international relations and in understanding and interpretation of developments and dynamics of international politics, the term “non-state actors” has prominently emerged in the field of international relations over the past few decades, where the concept of 'non-state actors' started to crowd out the traditional concept of the State, as a major analysis unit in international relations. The term has soon become one of the concepts that can in no way be overlooked in interpretation and understanding of developments of international politics, particularly that during the past decade (2010-2020), the non-state actors have occupied a large area of developments in political situations and crises in the Middle East and all over the world. In international relations, social movements, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and global corporations fall under the term ‘non-state actors’, where they have three common characteristics:

- They are independent from the authority of the State, whether in terms of financing or administration,
- They are transnational, where they exist in more than one country, and
- They have impact on political situations and developments in one or more countries across the world⁵.

In the area of international relations, there are wide-range differences about the significance and role of social movements as influential non-state actors in international relations or international politics. While some hold positive views of these movements, others view them from a negative perspective.

⁵ Josselin D., Wallace W. (2001) Non-state Actors in World Politics: a Framework. In: Josselin D., Wallace W. (eds) Non-state Actors in World Politics, pp. 3-4, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

The idealist school of international relations considers social movements on top of the civil society that challenges tyranny of states and global capitalism; and in the same context, proponents of values of globalization believe that social movements provide a model for building transnational networks, supporting shared values and international interdependence, and consolidating the concept of globalization in principle. Also, the perceptions of the liberal, constructivist, and critical schools of international relations about social movements do not differ much from the above views, as they consider them as contributors to balancing the influence of political systems and an inseparable part of civil society networks across the world which contribute to democratic transformation⁶. On the other hand, the realistic school views social movements as organizations that seek achievement of the interests of other countries, or as being revolutionary organizations that pose threats to the stability of political regimes and undermine national security. In addition, they believe that social movements seek liberation from the politically and economically dominant global order.

However, the most prominent problem to most schools of international relations is their attempt to reduce social movements and their international roles to only being movements supportive of democracy that prevent abuse of power and global hegemony; or in viewing social movements only in the context of posing threats to political systems, overlooking the fact that there is a wide range of social movements that have different orientations and diverse goals, including those that deal with regimes from a realistic perspective, and accordingly work to preserve or reform them; and those that deal with regimes from a revolutionary perspective, and thus, they seek to change and overthrow them.

From a different perspective, the approach presented by the English School of International Relations helps reach a deeper understanding of the connection between social movements and international relations, where they believe that

⁶ Davies, T & Peña, A, 2017, Social Movements in International Relations: Recognizing Complexity, ECPR General Conference Oslo, p. 7.

ideas, not material interests, shape international politics⁷. This perception has reflected on their vision of social movements, as they state that it is not sufficient to view them as pressure groups that may contribute to changing policies, but rather groups with diverse and even different ideologies and ideas, so that they can conflict with or correspond to the values and standards of the global order and its various institutions⁸; hence, they can play a major role in consolidation of common values and principles and changing the hypotheses that make up the international community.

Although there is major variation in perceptions of international relations schools about social movements, yet they have failed to provide a theoretical framework that can help analyze and understand multiple and complicated roles of social movements in international relations. To assess the Muslim Brotherhood's regional and international efficacy, and explore how far the group's perceptions of foreign relations are consistent with its practices, this study will adopt a theoretical framework that relies on a broader and more comprehensive approach of traditional concepts of IR schools about the role of social movements in international politics. In addition, this approach will include some other determinants that can help build an objective perception of the Brotherhood's regional and international efficacy, which can be summed up in the following points⁹:

- Mapping transnational networks
- Reviewing issues of engagement and patterns of interaction with countries and international institutions.
- Measuring the ability to change orientations and policies of countries.
- Exploring joint interaction with international civil society organizations.

⁷ Josselin D., Wallace W. (2001) Non-state Actors in World Politics: a Framework. In: Josselin D., Wallace W. (eds) Non-state Actors in World Politics, pp. 12-14, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

⁸ Davies, T & Peña, A, 2017, Social Movements in International Relations: Recognizing Complexity, ECPR General Conference Oslo.

⁹ Josselin D., Wallace W. (2001) Non-state Actors in World Politics: a Framework. In: Josselin D., Wallace W. (eds) Non-state Actors in World Politics, pp. 12-14, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Thus, we have reached several significant and explanatory points before proceeding with the study: As a social movement, the Muslim Brotherhood is one of the non-state actors in international relations, and regardless of the disparity in the degree of its influence in Egypt and the Middle East region over different periods since its inception, however, it been present in the minds of the Middle East decision-makers, regardless of their different orientations and interests, due to realization of the MB role and status within regional countries. Accordingly, the ruling regimes have dealt with the MB over nine decades based on different strategies ranging from confrontation, exclusion to assimilation and support.

Meanwhile, it is important to understand the perceptions of the Brotherhood's external relations in terms of a broader perspective than the group's relationship with states, to include its relationship with non-state actors of movements, organizations, and lobbies with regional and international influence.

It is also noteworthy that there is distinction between the MB's perception of its foreign relations, allies, and opponents on the one hand, and the group's view of Egypt's foreign policy and interaction with regional and international crises. The difference here is between the MB, as a movement seeking societal and political change, with its own vision of external relations with the aim of building its local, regional and international efficacy and influence, which will be addressed by this study; and the group's vision of Egyptian foreign policy, as part of its political platform that it should present as a party seeking political change, which is not subject of this study.

Chapter II: Major Events and Preliminary Perceptions (1930-1970)

The conditions that prevailed in Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century, as well as the events that occurred during that period, imposed themselves on the visions and perceptions of the Muslim Brotherhood – and all Egyptian currents and parties – with respect to their foreign relations. At the time, it was unacceptable for the national forces – with different backgrounds and ideologies – to overlook the country's key national issue then, namely working to put an end to British colonialism and achieve real national independence, whether through negotiation or resistance. It was also difficult for the Egyptian national forces to separate their perceptions and visions related to neighboring countries as well as the Arab and Islamic countries and dominant international powers at the time from the causes and outcomes of the World War I and II, given that those massive conflicts led to formation of new maps and alliances in the region, and ultimately resulted in the crisis of the Palestinian cause that emerged as one of the most significant developments of events at that time.

The first period that this study will address extends from 1936 until 1949, due to two factors: one of them is related to the Brotherhood itself, and the other relates to the major events that took place in that short period of time. On the one hand, the inception of the MB and its early years since 1928, then its development, growth and expansion of its activities, should be taken into account in this regard. On the other hand, the major events that occurred at that time, starting with the Palestine Revolution (1936-1939) and the pre-World War II events, then the war itself, which lasted for nearly six years, and the post-war events; through the UN Resolution (No. 181) to partition Palestine (1947), and declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel (May 1948); up to the 1948 war - all these major events played a prominent role in pushing the newly established MB to build its own perceptions and take positions as well as communicate and interact with various regional and international parties.

However, the period that preceded 1936 can in no way be overlooked in terms of influencing the perceptions and practices of the Brotherhood, as that period witnessed the group's follow-up and interaction with the negotiation path by the

national forces with the British occupation to achieve independence – in light of the intransigence and procrastination on the part of Britain – where negotiations ended up with signing the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 that did not achieve the country's real independence. Meanwhile, the MB paid attention to the Palestinian cause, especially after the outbreak of the Al Buraq Revolution in the Palestinian territories in 1929 and the successive events that followed it, which exposed the explicit British bias in favor of the Zionist movements. This involvement and interaction with the national cause and the Palestinian issue on the part of the Brotherhood from the very early years after inception, contributed to formation of the group's preliminary perceptions and attitude towards the British Empire and other international powers as well as the global Zionism at that time.

On the other hand, that period, during which most Arab and Islamic countries suffered from Western colonialism, contributed to crystallization of two important pillars that constituted the starting point of the Brotherhood's perceptions about the group's relations with other countries, namely: Islamic brotherhood and the jihad doctrine, as two values derived from Islamic principles, where these two values represented “the most significant pillars of Islamic political thought which regulate the internal relations of Muslims among themselves on the one hand, and their external relations with other countries and non-Muslim forces on the other¹⁰. The "Islamic brotherhood" value reflected on the Brotherhood's perceptions and calls for increasing and deepening cooperation and integration among Arab and Muslim countries, as well as calls for their solidarity and unity. Then, these perceptions developed and formed the concept of the “Islamic homeland”¹¹, which was reiterated by MB Founder Hassan Al-Banna in more than one occasion in his statements and addresses, as a broader and more comprehensive concept than the concept of the homeland with its national and legal borders.

¹⁰ Ibrahim Al-Bayoumi Ghanem, 2012, "The Political Thought of Imam Hassan Al-Banna", p. 447, 1st. edition, Madarat for Research and Publication.

¹¹ Al-Banna reiterated the concept of the Islamic homeland in more than one place, see the "Between Yesterday and Today" Message, the "Fifth Conference Message", and "A Message to Young People in General, Students in Particular".

The value of the jihad doctrine also reflected on the Brotherhood's perceptions of its role and the role of governments and peoples in resisting and confronting Western and Zionist colonialism, as it defined its vision of allies from Arab and Islamic countries on the one hand, and of enemies and opponents from the camp of Western imperialism and new international powers on the other. Thus, due to these two values, the Muslim Brotherhood's perceptions about its foreign relations were not confined to only the national cause manifested in liberation from British colonialism, but also extended to include "complete liberation from every foreign power" as one of the Brotherhood's objectives referred to by Hassan al-Banna in the Sixth Conference Message in 1941¹². Therefore, this perception, which is basically stemming from Islamic principles, was adopted in the face of the great powers in general, not only Britain, out of the MB awareness of the danger of Western colonialism; which motivated it to call for solidarity and cooperation among all Arab and Muslim countries to confront the colonialism forces and achieve independence.

Prior to World War II

The 1936 treaty between the Egyptian government and Britain was the beginning of distinctly formation of the Brotherhood's vision towards the British occupation, where the group's position did not differ from the positions of most national forces that rejected the treaty, as it gave Britain the legitimacy of existence in Egypt, detracted from Egypt's sovereignty and independence, linked the fate of the country with that of Britain, and achieved just a formalistic, not real, independence. With the emergence of signs of a likely outbreak of World War II, the Brotherhood stressed its fears of the treaty which it believed would impose on Egypt provision of support and aid to Britain in the war, which takes Egypt away from neutrality and makes it practically biased in favor of Britain, exposing Egypt to grave dangers¹³.

In fact, the national issue overlapped with the Palestinian issue among most of Egyptian national forces immediately before World War II, mainly due to the fact

¹² Imam Al-Banna's Messages Collection, 2015, p. 439, Dar Al-Nidaa, Istanbul, Turkey.

¹³ Imam Al-Banna's Messages Collection, 2015, pp. 446-451, Dar Al-Nidaa, Istanbul, Turkey.

that the outbreak of the Palestinian Revolution during the period from 1936 to 1939 clearly revealed how Britain aligned with the Zionist movements In the Palestinian territories¹⁴, which reflected on directing the interest of Egyptian political currents and parties, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Palestinian cause, within the framework of rejection of British colonialism and awareness of the dangers of the Zionist occupation on Palestine, Egypt and all regional countries.

The Palestinian cause inspired the Brotherhood's interaction with it as the first and most prominent foreign issue at the time; given its religious and historical symbolism in the Islamic perception, as well as the significance and strategic position of Palestine for Egypt. However, with the outbreak of the Palestine Revolution in 1936, the MB started to adopt a new approach different from its traditional action of mobilization, awareness, and provision of aid and donations. For the first time, the MB started to communicate with regional and international powers with respect to the Palestinian issue, and the Central Committee for Aid to Palestine was formed, where, among other roles, it used to send telegrams to the British High Commissioner in Egypt and Palestine, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini, and Secretary General of the Arab Higher Committee Awni Abdel Hadi, where the committee represented the political entity of Palestinians during the British Mandate¹⁵. The Brotherhood maintained its foreign messages during the Palestinian Revolution, whether in condemnation of international forces and their position towards the Palestinian cause, such as the telegram sent to the British High Commissioner in 1938, which held Britain responsible for the crimes committed by the Zionist movements in Palestine; or messages calling on Arab and Islamic countries to provide support for the Palestinian cause, such as the memorandum sent to the Iranian PM in 1939, appealing to Iran and all Arab and Islamic countries to take a unified and firm stance on the Palestinian cause.

¹⁴ KROIZER, G 2004, 'From Dowbiggin to Tegart: revolutionary change in the colonial police in Palestine during the 1930', The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 115-133

¹⁵ Ibrahim Al-Bayoumi Ghanem, 2012, "The Political Thought of Imam Hassan Al-Banna", 1st. edition, Madarat for Research and Publication

World War II and beyond

The World War II events and outcome played a major role in profoundly shaping the course of international relations in the twentieth century, where this reflected on the Brotherhood's awareness of key features of the new global order that came into existence in the aftermath of World War II following the decline of the influence of Britain and France as traditional superpowers and the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as new superpowers. In fact, there were several articles published in MB magazines, as well as statements and speeches attributed to the founder¹⁶ of the group on many occasions, demonstrated the Brotherhood's awareness of the dimensions of the new international relations map; and the alliances formed within the capitalist camp led by the United States, and those formed within the communist camp led by the Soviet Union at that time. These concepts constituted a new framework for the MB perceptions and practices regarding the Egyptian national cause and how to deal with British colonialism, as well as towards the Palestinian cause and issues of national liberation in the Islamic world. In fact, that period which was rich in changes and momentum during and after the World War II gives us an opportunity to monitor the peak of the MB regional and international interaction at the level of both national and Palestinian issues, as well as issues of liberation in the Islamic world, which will be further explained below.

The World War II was a significant turning point for the Brotherhood's perceptions about the British occupation of Egypt and the national issue, where the network of interests, including the Egyptian royal palace, Britain, the rich class, and some politicians that benefited from the war and increased their influence, was plainly exposed over the period of war. During those years, British interference in Egyptian political life also started to increase, to the extent that the British forces besieged Abdeen Palace in 1942 to force King Farouk to dismiss the government of Ali Maher Pasha and appoint the Wafd government that was supportive of Britain in the war. This political intervention came in

¹⁶ See the articles on the trend of the new renaissance in the Islamic world, 'our unity in the light of Islamic guidance', 'Declaration of Islamic brotherhood and preaching of the global idea.

coincidence with exploitation of Egyptian economic resources for backing the British Empire armies, where such practices on the part of Britain confirmed that the 1936 Treaty was worthless. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the number of British forces in the Suez Canal area¹⁷ at the end of World War II was 75,000 soldiers, while Britain had pledged in the 1936 Treaty to maintain a simple military garrison in the Canal area. In addition, the economic conditions at the time were dire, where it suffices to point out that a large number of labor strikes were organized in Egypt, which was unprecedented before World War II¹⁸.

The strained relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and most of the national forces on the one hand, and Britain and the royal palace on the other hand, greatly escalated at the end of the World War II, reaching unprecedented levels. Also, the difficult political, economic and social conditions in Egypt prompted the Brotherhood and other national forces to demand successive Egyptian governments to relaunch negotiation with the British occupation to reach an agreement that would achieve real independence and complete evacuation of the occupation forces from the Egyptian lands. When Britain's procrastination in the course of the negotiations was clear to the MB, the group started to demand Egyptian withdrawal from negotiations, nullify the 1936 treaty, and go to the United Nations to present the Egyptian issue there. Also, the Brotherhood then called for adherence to the unity of Egypt and Sudan, emphasizing that Sudan is an integral part of the homeland. The group used various means to express its perceptions during that critical stage; using internal memos and letters to the king and prime ministers to clarify their vision and proposals related to the British occupation and negotiation with Britain on withdrawal from Egypt, it adopted publishing articles, holding popular conferences, and delivering speeches as a means for mobilization and raising awareness about the national cause and explaining the group's perceptions regarding the British occupation.

¹⁷ Odeid Doweisha, 2019, "Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century.. From Victory to Despair," p. 115, 1st. edition, Arab and International Relations Forum.

¹⁸ Tariq Al-Bishri, 1987, 'Democracy and the July 23 Regime (1952-1970), 1st . edition, Arab Research Foundation, Lebanon.

With the acceleration of events related to the Palestinian cause in the aftermath of the end of World War II, the international powers' serious support for proposals to partition Palestinian lands between Arabs and Jews prompted the Brotherhood to move and hold regional and international contacts, in attempt to prevent a UN resolution to partition Palestine and to explain the threats it would pose to the situation in the region, including fueling the conflict between Arabs and Jews. For example, the MB sent a telegram to the American Minister Plenipotentiary in Cairo in 1944, denouncing the US alliance with Zionism and its support for the immigration of Jews to Palestine. Also, the group in 1947 sent telegrams to UN Secretary General Trygve Lie and to US State Secretary George Marshall - before the UN resolution to partition Palestine was issued - in rejection of the partition plan. Meanwhile, the Brotherhood sent a telegram to Secretary-General of the Arab League Abdel Rahman Azzam Pasha, in which it offered putting ten thousand volunteers from its members at the disposal of the Arab League to participate in the fight against the Zionist groups¹⁹.

However, the Brotherhood's perceptions of the Palestinian cause remarkably changed after issuance of the UN resolution to partition Palestine in late 1947. In addition to the group's demand for withdrawal of all Arab countries from the United Nations, the Brotherhood announced its vision on how to conduct relations with countries supportive of the Zionist movement at the time. The MB clearly stated in a letter to members of the Arab League Political Committee, that Arabs and Muslims as well as the Arab League should "notify the countries that supported Zionism expressing extreme discontent, using all possible means"²⁰. At the same time, the MB suggested taking serious and quick steps before establishment of Israeli state, which the Brotherhood expected would be the next step after ending the British Mandate in Palestine. However, after declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel, the Brotherhood stated that it would be better for all Arab countries to reconsider their foreign policy and their relations with international powers and organizations whose positions on the Palestinian

¹⁹ Ibrahim Al-Bayoumi Ghanem, 2012, "The Political Thought of Imam Hassan Al-Banna", p. 473, 1st . edition, Madarat for Research and Publication.

²⁰ Ibid, p.453

cause were almost identically negative. On the other hand, the group called for further unity, cooperation and integration with respect to the relations among Arab and Islamic countries, particularly achievement of economic unity among Arab countries²¹.

Among the World War II outcomes was the wide spread of national liberation movements in all Arab and Islamic countries falling under the yoke of occupation. The rise of these movements, in light of the new changes in the region, contributed to formation of the Brotherhood's perceptions about the significance of seeking communication and coordination with liberation movements in Arab and Islamic countries, establishment of strong relations with them, and encouraging and supporting cooperation among themselves. One of the most prominent examples of the MB's seriousness in communication, interaction and cooperation with national liberation movements, was establishment of MB Department of Communication with the Islamic World in 1944²², to boost relations with movements and peoples outside the framework of traditional relations with states, taking into account that the main objectives of the new MB department focused on assisting liberation movements in the Islamic world and reviving Arab and Islamic unity through cooperation and integration between peoples to achieve freedom and independence from colonialism.

Although the period extending from the very beginning of the MB inception until 1949 - ending with the assassination of Hassan Al-Banna - represented the first three decades of the emerging group, that period was rich in global, regional and domestic events, which reflected on the MB intensive external interaction and communication. At the end of that period, the Brotherhood entered a new phase, amid a severe internal crisis in the aftermath of the assassination of Al-Banna and the outbreak of the 1952 revolution, in addition to the dispute that broke out between the group and Gamal Abdel Nasser, resulting in arrests and trials for the vast majority of MB members, which led to absence of the group as an

²¹ Ibid, p.476

²² The 1948 Muslim Brotherhood Statute, Ikhwan Wiki, <https://bit.ly/3nAse66>

organizational entity on the domestic scene as well as the regional and international arena for nearly two decades.

With the absence of the Brotherhood at the organizational level in Egypt during the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century, the group's weight, regional influence and external outreach was limited, where it started a new phase dominated by individual characteristics away from the organization. During that stage, MB members began to migrate to the Gulf states, Europe and the United States to escape Nasser's pursuit. Amid the new conditions different from that experienced by the group in Egypt at the time, scores of MB members scattered east and west started to restore some of the group's activities, present its ideas and build communication networks in the new societies they were living in, benefitting from the available appropriate contexts. However, such activity was characterized by individualism, took a long time and needed a different regional and international context to allow it more space for presence and influence and take an organizational form, but ultimately its features began to crystallize in the early seventies of the twentieth century.

Assessment and Views

Tackling specific temporal contexts, this study seeks to assess how far application and practice were in line with and related to the Brotherhood's vision and perceptions of its international relations. With regard to the period from 1936 to 1949, it is appropriate to rely on monitoring and understanding the group's perceptions by following up on articles, letters and various correspondences of MB Founder Hassan al-Banna, which represented the key perceptions of the group during its early years - like all social and political movements at the initial stages of their inception, where their perceptions to a great extent rely on the vision of the charismatic founder.

Despite the fact that several statements and correspondences of Hassan al-Banna during that period were monitored, it is difficult to describe them as expressive of a comprehensive vision of the group's perception of its international relations, including organization of its relations with states, movements, allies and

opponents, as well as consolidation of its regional and international efficacy. However, the implications of these statements, correspondences and addresses of Hassan Al-Banna can be identified as preliminary perceptions characterized by clarity of values in relation to the group's reaction to developments of major events, taking into consideration the framework of values -that are derived from Islamic principles- adopted by the MB. However, these perceptions can be divided into two directions:

- The first direction is related to the Brotherhood's understanding of maps of regional and international relations that were formed during and after World War II, and its understanding of the Middle East transition from an arena of conflict between traditional superpowers to an arena of alliances with the United States on one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other. In addition, the Brotherhood was clearly realizing the coherent alliance between the Western colonial powers as well as the new international superpowers with the Zionist movement²³.
- The second direction is the outcome of understanding the reality of international politics and the grave dangers threatening Egypt and the Arab and Islamic countries at the time, and accordingly the perception about opponents and allies and how to shape relations with them.

The Brotherhood's practical practice of international relations during that period was limited to sending telegrams, memorandums, and sometimes missions to Arab and Islamic countries, the Arab League, and international powers and organizations. These numerous correspondences and telegrams sent demonstrate shaping preliminary visions of the significance of conducting direct contacts with regional and international forces and organizations in order to clarify and explain the group's positions towards various events, and to maintain channels of communication with those forces. On the other hand, with respect to the liberation movements in the Arab and Islamic countries, the MB communication with them was not limited to only sending messages and telegrams, but also included

²³ BROWN, P 1948, 'The Recognition of Israel', The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 620-627

provision of support and assistance in addition to backing coordination and cooperation among these movements.

In fact, the Brotherhood played a key role in pushing for Egypt's participation in the 1948 war along with some Arab countries, to confront the Zionist movements that had announced the establishment of the State of Israel. In this regard, the group's ability as a social and political movement appeared in influencing states' policies or actually contributing to their making. The MB influence in the Egyptian decision to join the 1948 war can be understood via following up on statements of Mahmoud El-Nokrashi, the Egyptian Prime Minister at the time, in which he told King Farouk that "participation in the war would be a political show to calm down public opinion²⁴". It seems that the Brotherhood, through mobilization of Egyptians, contributed to influencing the domestic public opinion, which accordingly reflected on the power's political decision-makers.

However, Al-Banna was of the opinion that limiting action in the national and Palestinian issues to condemnation and registering protests would not help, which pushed the Brotherhood to move directly towards resisting the British occupation and the Zionist movements immediately after the end of World War II. In this context, the MB focused its internal discourse on raising the awareness and mobilization while training and equipping volunteers to fight. However, this vision and understanding that Al-Banna and the Brotherhood adopted did not prevent using all diplomatic tools available at the time, including sending telegrams, letters, and memorandums to officials and diplomats representing Arab and Islamic countries, Western countries, and regional and international organizations.

In the same context, despite the Brotherhood's understanding of the role of the United Nations as a tool in the hands of Western international powers to ensure achievement of their interests within the framework of the international law and consensus - given that the UN as an international institution came in the aftermath of the allies' victory in World War II - however, this did not prevent the

²⁴ HINNEBUSCH, R 2003, The international politics of the Middle East, p. 156, Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York.

Brotherhood from dealing with the UN for achievement of some partial objectives that could contribute to practicing pressure on British colonialism. Accordingly, the Brotherhood demanded the Egyptian government to present the Egyptian issue in the United Nations in 1947 to reach a fair solution, where the MB realized that it was the appropriate time that should be invested, especially after the waning of British influence after World War II and emergence of new international powers. In fact, this step by the Brotherhood was aimed at internationalization of the Egyptian cause and announcement of failure of the bilateral negotiations between Egypt and Britain, which would give the resistance against the British occupation international legitimacy.

One of the remarkable things in this context, with regard to the Egyptian national issue, was that the Muslim Brotherhood did not send any letters or telegrams to Britain or other international powers, while most of the MB messages were domestic, addressed to the king and prime minister, tackling the practices of the British occupation against the Egyptian people and violation of their rights, and explaining their vision for the course of negotiations with Britain. However, things were different with regard to the Palestinian issue, where the group sent telegrams and memorandums to various countries and organizations; to clarify its vision about the dangers of the Zionist presence in the Palestinian territories and expressing its rejection of the bias of international forces in favor of Zionism. The disparity of the destination of correspondences and telegrams in the two national and Palestinian causes indicate that the Brotherhood is well aware of the significance of uniting the national forces in the face of the British occupation and not allowing it any opportunity to sow divisions between national parties and currents. On the other hand, the MB was aware of the significance of communicating with Britain and other international powers to demonstrate the value and symbolism of Palestine to all Arab and Islamic peoples.

In fact, Nasser's repressive procedures against members of the Brotherhood in Egypt were not the only reason for the absence of Brotherhood influence in Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s: With the rise of Nasser's popularity in coincidence with the rise of the ideas and ideologies of Arab nationalism, socialism, and

secularism, spread widely both in Egypt and all Arab countries, and soon Arab nationalism ideas dominated the Arab world at this time, which greatly affected the attractiveness of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology, which led to temporary absence of the MB ideas and perceptions.

Chapter III: Transnational Networks and Constrained External Action (1970-1990)

In the early seventies, there was a set of new influential factors that led to changing the internal scene in Egypt as well as the regional and international scene, which contributed to restoration of the Brotherhood's presence, influence and the practice of external action once again. In this regard, the June 1967 defeat had a significant impact on the internal and regional scene, where it actually ended the Abdel Nasser era and led to rapid and horrific fall of Arab nationalism²⁵. In such situation, it seemed that there was a need to seek a different ideology that would contribute to explaining the successive defeats from Israel and the severe internal crises and give Egyptians and Arabs hope in the likeliness of achieving victory over Israel and overcoming internal crises, which opened the way once again for the return and rise of the ideology of political Islam, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood. In addition to the 1967 defeat, there were local, regional and international factors that contributed to the return of the Brotherhood. At the domestic level, there was a new political regime led by Anwar Sadat, but it was facing a set of internal challenges that prompted it to allow the MB limited freedom to exist and operate²⁶. At the regional and international levels, the shift of the regional center of gravity to the Arab Gulf countries as well as the developments of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union played a pivotal role in the Brotherhood's return to action again.

In addition, the emigration of some MB members in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century had a significant impact on the wide spread of the group overseas in the 1970s and the 1980s, whether in the Arab Gulf countries or in Europe and the United States. Individuals and scattered mini groups of the Brotherhood - mostly initiative-taking with no organizational framework - had started to practice their activities and spread their ideas benefiting from the atmosphere of freedom available in Europe and the U. S. that they lacked in

²⁵ CLEVELAND, W & BUNTON, M 2008, A history of the modern Middle East, p. 344, 4th edn, Westview Press, Colorado

²⁶ Fawaz A. Gerges, 2018, "Making The Arab World", pp. 318-326, Princeton University Press.

Egypt. Amid the increasing presence of Arab and Muslim students in Europe and the U. S., the MB individuals and groups had an opportunity to connect with the students, mostly belonging to the middle class, coming from their home countries to maintain their educational path in Western universities. This led the Brotherhood to engage in student action in Western universities and formation of Muslim student unions, where political practice and openness to experiences of other ideologies gave the MB opportunity to understand the global order, the nature of politics in Europe and the United States, and the role and significance of international organizations. This also gave them opportunities to contact political figures, communicate and build relationships with civil society organizations and human rights organizations²⁷.

Due to the impact of that period on the Brotherhood, most notably the wide spread of MB students and members in Europe and the U. S., resulting in formation of student unions, associations and Islamic centers, the group turned into a “global movement where individuals of similar ideas interact via an international network - not formal, but extremely complicated - of personal, financial, organizational, and most importantly ideological ties²⁸”. This contributed to opening external channels of communication for the Brotherhood of Egypt, which gave it external effectiveness through some institutions or members in Europe and the United States, as it is the case, for example, with MB Commissioner for International Political Relations Youssef Nada, who played significant roles in mediation and communications during regional and international crises during that period.

However, the external efficacy gained from the MB expansion and spread in the West during that era was limited, due to several key reasons, including:

First: Despite the historical and ideological ties between unions and Islamic centers in the West on the one hand and the Brotherhood of Egypt²⁹. on the other, all these institutions and associations later became organizationally independent from the MB of Egypt, which made them possess their own vision and objectives

²⁷ Sami Al-Khazindar, 2008, "Evolution of Political Islam Movements' Relationship with Regional and International Environments", pp. 23-24, Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research.

²⁸ RAND, 2011, “The Muslim Brotherhood in the West”, p-5

²⁹ RAND, 2011, “The Muslim Brotherhood in the West

that are often far from the objectives of the group in Egypt, which was dominated by domestic characteristics.

Second: Despite the atmosphere of freedom and openness witnessed in the 1970s and the 1980s in Egypt, this situation did not motivate MB members and students in Europe and the United States to return to Egypt, except for a few individuals that contributed to development of the group's thought and vision related to external communication, international relations and a better understanding of the new global order. However, these contributions remained limited due to the small number of MB students and members who returned home, and also due to the nature of the MB organization and the difficulty of joining organizational structures in Egypt after spending years abroad.

Third: The MB of Egypt attempted to maximize benefits from the group's expansion in Europe and the United States by establishment of the so-called "MB International Organization" in the early 1980s, where Egypt's MB was keen to control it organizationally since its inception, and sought to benefit from it in building networks of external relations, yet the International Organization did not grant the MB more external efficacy due to the nature of the organization, which was a marginal entity whose role did not exceed the limits of coordination and cooperation between the MB-related associations in various countries, which were actually independent and had their own objectives away from those of the MB in Egypt.

The 1980s witnessed the accelerated rise of the Brotherhood both internally and externally, which left a clear impression that the group was on its way to becoming a growing force in the Middle East. At the internal level, the MB participation in the 1984 and 1987 parliament elections was a clear indication that the group had regained its domestic weight. At the regional and international levels, some major events gave the Brotherhood an opportunity to establish its foreign relations, where it sometimes played the role of mediation. Also, the success of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 gave the MB two opportunities: First, introducing an Islamic model that succeeded in gaining power and overthrowing an authoritarian regime, which contributed to increasing the Brotherhood's

ideological appeal. Second, highlighting the Brotherhood's role in front of the outside world as a moderate Islamic force that can establish relations and communications with the world and play a role in resolving regional crises, where that role emerged clearly when the United States administration asked the Brotherhood to mediate in ending the US hostage crisis at the American Embassy in Tehran during the Iranian Revolution³⁰.

Also, developments of the Cold War represented another influential factor in the return of the external efficacy of the Brotherhood, in light of the US desire to contain and besiege the Soviet Union continued, amid the continued communist expansion in South America, and the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, which represented the peak of threats posed to the American influence in the Middle east region. At the regional level, the US allies also had fears of communist expansion and desired to stop any expansion of the Soviet Union into the Middle East. Thus, this regional and international context contributed to building relations and communication between the Brotherhood and the regional and international powers, albeit in the context of confronting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and supporting the Afghan resistance and jihad, where undoubtedly, "the MB figures, communications networks, and extended institutions played a critical role in mobilization and provision of logistics in support of the Afghan jihad"³¹.

Assessment and Views

Although the 1970s and 1980s witnessed influential events that changed the features of the Middle East and opened the door for the MB to build its own external efficacy, nevertheless, it is difficult to conclude that this period witnessed building of approach or vision for regional and international relations. The main reason behind this may be due to the Brotherhood's focus on its efforts to restore its domestic position after absence for many years.

³⁰ Vidino, L, 2013, "The West and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring", Al Mesbar Studies & Research Center

³¹ Vidino, L, 2013, "The West and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring", p. 17, Al Mesbar Studies & Research Center

However, a review of the course of events indicates that there is another key reason for impeding formation of the Brotherhood's vision about the group's regional and international relations, namely the fact that regional and international powers have always controlled the form and limit of the relationship with the MB, which made the relations between the two sides remain confined to a certain framework.

For example, the Brotherhood's foreign relations with the West, especially the United States, remained constrained by several key factors, preventing the MB from attempting to develop its external influence and effectiveness. On top of these factors was the West's view of its relationship with the MB within a framework governed by the challenges and interests of the West in the Middle East. This restricted relations with the Brotherhood to a narrow scope within requirements of the Cold War and the struggle waged by the West and the United States against the Soviet Union and communist expansion in the region³².

On the other hand, Israel played a crucial role in stifling relations between the West and the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite the West's realization that there are many advantages from establishing positive relations with the MB and benefiting from the group's weight in the Arab and Islamic world in light of its wide spread at the international level, yet the Brotherhood's attitude towards Israel and its vision of the Palestinian cause, especially after the Camp David Accords in 1979 between Egypt and Israel, remained a major obstacle in the way of building positive relations between the West and US with the group.

In addition to these two factors, the strong relations between the West, particularly the United States, with the Middle East political regimes, especially Egypt, represented a decisive factor in restricting and sometimes blocking relations between the West and the MB. The most prominent example to demonstrate this fact was the contacts witnessed in the 1980s between the US and

³² Texas National Security Review, 2021, Book Review Roundtable: The Muslim Brotherhood and the West, p.2.

the Brotherhood in Egypt, which were blocked in the early 1990s upon Mubarak's request from the United States³³.

During that period, there was a rise in expansion of MB institutions in the West, where the group established networks extending in Europe and America. However, these networks, which could have been invested in building external influence and weight for the group, they unfortunately did not perform such role for two main reasons: First, due to the fact that these networks are independent of the MB in Egypt. Although the group was later keen to establish organizational connection between various MB entities through the so-called MB International Organization, this organization only focused on coordination and consultation with the MB in Egypt. Second, due to the fact that since their establishment and over an extended period, the institutions and associations that made up those networks, have confined their activities to dissemination of their ideas, practicing advocacy and educational activity, and working to overcome the daily challenges facing Muslims in the West. Perhaps the role of these institutions and associations evolved after that stage, as these networks have established high-level potentials for dialogue and communication with the cultural and political elites in the West.

To sum up, it can be concluded that during that period the Brotherhood acquired a more accurate understanding of the global order, requirements of international politics, complications of foreign relations with the West that are subject to equations of common interests with the Middle East political regimes. That period was also characterized by formation of transnational networks and engagement in experiences and initiatives for external communication and cooperation, nevertheless, this understanding and those practices did not develop into a comprehensive MB vision of international relations and external action, as its relations and roles were confined to only reaction to events, and within the framework of the restrictive pattern set by regional and international powers.

³³ Texas National Security Review, 2021, Book Review Roundtable: The Muslim Brotherhood and the West, p.17.

Chapter IV: Vision in Unfavorable Context (1990-2010)

The limited freedom enjoyed by the MB in the 1970s and 1980s in Egypt and expansion of the group's networks in Europe and the United States, along with the emergence of the idea of setting up the so-called 'International Organization' that was closely related to the Guidance Office in Cairo, to play a major role in maturation of the MB vision of regional and international relations, realization of the challenges of external action and the global order complications, and the group's perception of regional crises, especially the Palestinian cause, which witnessed accelerated developments since signing the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel in 1979. Meanwhile, the Brotherhood tended to establish regional and international relations from a new perspective to be proportionate and interactive with the new challenges it was facing. Accordingly, the MB imposed itself on the regional and international scene in the early 1990s, specifically in the aftermath the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and the implications of the military intervention in the Middle East. Among the challenges at the international level, was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist project, and the talk by the West of emergence of a new threat and enemy, manifested in Islam in general, and various diverse groups that practice the so-called 'Islamic action' in particular.

Whereas the 1970s and 1980s witnessed intensive MB external activity in Europe and the United States, the 1990s started with a severe regional crisis that imposed a new reality in the region, including limitation of the Brotherhood external action to the Middle East only. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood took the initiative and quickly reacted with the crisis of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, where the MB in Egypt, in coordination with other branches in the Arab countries as well as the 'international organization', managed to engage in mediation roles and initiatives in attempt to reach solutions to the crisis within the Arab and Islamic framework. This Iraq-Kuwait crisis provided the Brotherhood an opportunity to boost its regional role and influence and enabled it to communicate and establish relations with senior officials in the Middle East.

However, after aggravation of the crisis and its accelerated developments, the MB external action was no longer appropriate, especially after most Arab regimes supported US intervention in the Middle East for ending the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Also, in light of the Brotherhood's adherence to rejecting the US intervention in the region, against the will of the majority of Arab and Gulf regimes that supported the American solution to the crisis, the MB mediations and initiatives to solve the crisis of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait became useless. However, the problem did not stop there, as the discrepancy between the Brotherhood and most Arab regimes, soon led to exacerbation of crises between the Brotherhood and those regimes, particularly in Egypt and the Gulf, which resulted in a significant decline in the MB weight and efficacy in the Gulf countries, and accordingly weakening its ability to conduct communications or undertake external action in the Middle East.

No sooner had the 1990s – that witnessed the Brotherhood's loss of contacts with the Gulf countries – ended, than a new phase started with the advent of the first decade of the twenty-first century, which also led to curtailment of the MB political activity in Europe and the United States, in the aftermath of the 9/11 events, which further exacerbated the gap between the Brotherhood and the United States and the Western powers that considered all Islamic movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood, a direct threat to their interests. On the other hand, the Brotherhood's attitudes towards the United States became more hostile due to the latter's occupation of Afghanistan and invasion of Iraq, especially that the popular rage that swept the Arab and Islamic worlds against the US invasion of Iraq put the MB at the forefront of leading the popular protests in the Middle East in rejection of the US and Western policies in the region in general, the military intervention in particular, and . One of the most prominent effects of this wide gap between the two parties (the Brotherhood and the West) was the clear absence of the MB 'international organization' that had been basically established to be the MB external communication and foreign relations arm, as those events led to weakening the organization and remarkably reducing its role. In addition, the United States started to pursue Islamic associations and centers and target drying up their funding sources in the US and Europe, which made the MB

international organization's performance of its tasks and roles difficult. Also, the organization at the time suffered from acute divisions due to the discrepancy in attitudes and visions between the MB various branches on how to deal with the US invasion of Iraq³⁴.

In the context of the Brotherhood's reaction to the absence of their external influence and their poor communication at the regional and international levels due to the implications of events at the time, there were serious attempts to restore the group's external efficacy, including the launch of an external initiative in 2005 aimed at redefining the Brotherhood to the West³⁵. The initiative originated from a practical view based on reality and awareness of the gap that deepened between the MB and the United States and the West, and sought to achieve two main goals: First, to expose and explain the violations that the Mubarak regime was practicing against the group despite its commitment to peaceful action and the democratic path in practicing politics; second, to forestall attempts to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization and prevent them. Among the activities adopted by the MB initiative was publishing an article by Khairat Al-Shater, the MB Deputy General Guide, in the British 'The Guardian'³⁶ newspaper, to explain and highlight the Brotherhood's perceptions about the practice of political action. Meanwhile, an English version of the MB website was launched to serve as a link with Western researchers and a channel for external communication.

Assessment and Views

Despite the maturity of the MB perceptions of international relations at the early 1990s, where they became more realistic than ever before, however, the events that occurred in that period were also more complicated than any previous events, where the Brotherhood's realistic perceptions remained in place within a strained

³⁴ Frampton, M, 2018, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the West: A History of Enmity and Engagement", p. 411, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

³⁵ Vidino, L, 2013, "The West and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring", p. 22, Al Mesbar Studies & Research Center.

³⁶ El-Shatir, K, 2005, "No need to be afraid of us", The Guardian, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/nov/23/comment.mainsection>>.

and complicated context, which made pursuit of enforcement of these perceptions extremely difficult. This was evident from assessment of the group's influence on regional and international powers, and the performance of its transnational networks during that era. Despite the MB efforts in the context of the crisis of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, via communication and initiatives at the diplomatic level, and through mobilization at the popular level, the group was unable to make any change in the positions of either side of the crisis. Moreover, the situation became more complicated after the group lost its relations and influence within the Gulf countries due to rejection of the US intervention in the region. Then, the performance of MB transnational networks in Europe and the United States sharply declined, in terms of roles and ability to communicate and build relations, due to the 11/9 events and the subsequent siege imposed on Islamic action in the West and tightening the noose around it.

However, despite the tension witnessed in the early 1990s between the Gulf countries and the MB in Egypt, an important shift occurred during that period in the group's view of relationship with Iran. It was clear that the Brotherhood's celebration of the Iranian revolution during the early days of success, in coincidence with establishment of contacts and building relations between the two parties, started to wane over time, in light of the complicated regional crises in which Iran was a major party. However, regional crises alone were not the main motive behind lukewarmness of relations between the Brotherhood and Iran, where there was another major factor related to the MB attempt to protect one of its main sources of funding, coming from its members residing in the Gulf countries, which manifested the MB financial center of gravity³⁷, in light of the escalating oil prices. This factor made the group more careful not to provoke the Gulf countries by adopting any policies aimed at developing its relationship with Iran.

In assessment of this period, it is important to highlight several other subjective factors that contributed to weakening the Brotherhood's external action and the

³⁷ Tamer Badawi and Osama El-Sayyad, 2018, "Iran and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: A Trend Towards Developing Relations or Just Reforming them?", Al Sharq Center for Strategic Research.

divergence between the group's perceptions of foreign relations and its practices on the ground, including:

First: the wide gap between the da'wa (advocacy) and organizational culture on the one hand, and the political culture on the other, as there is a significant lack of cultural and intellectual content related to politics, whether theoretically or practically, given that the theoretical content that consolidates morals, advocacy, and collective action dominates the "Osra" meetings, amid absence of any political content therein, taking into consideration that the "Osra" (mini-group of 5 to 7 members), is considered a key structural unit of the Muslim Brotherhood.

At the same time, the political mind of the group, so to speak - the political decision-makers - was confined to MB leaders that emerged in Egyptian universities in the 1970s, along with some historical leaders that represent the spiritual line related to the approach of the early founder. However, the group's huge body remained far from any theoretical or practical political culture, with the exception of the presence of limited MB members that acquired their political culture and experience through engagement in the political activity practiced within Egyptian universities. Those members also used to practice and lead political action during the events accompanying elections of parliament and unions. However, they remained at a distance from the political decision-makers of the group.

This internal environment of the MB may have created a positive atmosphere at the level of advocacy and organizational action that significantly developed during that period. Meanwhile, it also created a negative atmosphere due to absence of innovation and creativity in political action, which reflected on the group's domestic political practices and its external action practices and ability to build effective foreign relations networks overseas.

Second: the group's self-centered approach, where the restrictions imposed on the group and the security blows against it - seemingly a policy followed by the government at the time in dealing with the Brotherhood - led to weakening, and sometimes blocking, its external communication channels. In addition, the policy

adopted by the regime at the time set red lines for any communication between Egyptian opposition and the outside world - whether countries or civil society organizations - which the Brotherhood realized well and refrained from surpassing these lines, except in the narrowest possible limits, at the level of Islamic organizations and institutions associated with relief work.

Chapter V: Exceptional Openness and Success (2011-2013)

The January Revolution created a new environment amid atmosphere of freedom that the Muslim Brotherhood had not experienced since its inception and throughout its long history, which prompted the group to crystallize its vision of external relations to be commensurate with these new domestic developments and with other no less significant regional developments. Reviewing the history of the MB foreign relations over the past decades, the phase that followed the January Revolution can be described as characterized by openness and a desire to build multiple relations both regionally and internationally. Although this stage only lasted for a fleeting period of time, the Brotherhood's view of its external relations can be understood from three main angles:

First: Messages of reassurance and trust building:

Immediately after the downfall of Mubarak, the MB embarked on extensive external contacts that were not mainly aimed at achievement of regional and international influence and effectiveness or building a network of external relations, but, due to the regional and international fears of the Muslim Brotherhood, whose access to power or participation in government in Egypt was clearly imminent, the group had to convey messages of reassurance to the outside world about their perceptions, objectives, and the nature of their tools and means, as a top priority. These messages of reassurance and trust-building were based on two main contents: First, the Brotherhood's vision of the domestic situation in Egypt and its attitude towards running for the presidential elections; second, the Brotherhood's vision of Egypt's foreign policy, where the MB messages affirmed that it would not witness major transformations or acute changes at the regional and international levels, and adherence to international treaties.

Second: Strong relations with revolution supporters:

The MB sought to forge alliances with regional forces and actors that closely support the Arab Spring revolutions, or at least that do not conflict with their ideologies, at a time when several Middle East countries adopted a hostile or conservative approach from the Arab Spring revolutions or the Muslim

Brotherhood. In this context, the relations between the MB on the one hand and Turkey and Qatar on the other hand significantly developed, as a natural result for emerging powers seeking to build their alliances amid regional and international changes, as the MB, after the fall of Mubarak, needed supporters for its presence on the regional and international arena as political forces likely to access power in Egypt. Meanwhile, Turkey and Qatar were keen to build their soft power and support their popularity in the Middle East through continued support for the Arab Spring revolutions, particularly the key force in those revolutions.

Third: Balanced relations with traditional forces

While the Brotherhood was seeking to increase its external political endeavors, openness, communication and building alliances, there was an apparent challenge manifested in Egypt's traditional allies and their perception and assessment of the Brotherhood's foreign policy, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as Egypt's regional allies, where they had fears towards the MB rise to power. Meanwhile, the United States, as an international ally of Egypt, despite having its own fears in this regard, yet it adopted a more flexible and pragmatic policy with respect to its view of the MB. On its part, the Brotherhood adopted a non-confrontational approach towards Egypt's traditional allies, and the group was more inclined to reassuring those allies that it had no intention of undertaking radical changes in Egyptian foreign policy once they came to power.

However, relations between the Brotherhood on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other, did not develop, for several reasons, most notably the two Gulf countries' continued concern about the expansion of revolutions and MB rise and expansion in the region. On the other hand, relations between the Brotherhood and the United States developed positively and went beyond the stage of sending messages and communication through mediators to visits and direct meetings that immediately started in the aftermath of the parliamentary elections in late 2011, where senior US officials visited the MB in Cairo, and a

delegation from the Freedom and Justice Party paid an official visit to Washington in April 2012³⁸.

With the MB access to power in June 2012, after Mohamed Morsi won the presidential elections, the group, through the Freedom and Justice Party, which became the ruling party in Egypt, adopted perceptions about their foreign relations that were in line with the foreign policy adopted by the presidency, which means that the MB foreign policy perceptions during that period can be assessed through reviewing the foreign policy of the presidential institution. Despite the fact that this period did not last long, spanning for only one year, it witnessed active movement and interaction from Morsi and his presidential team in three main axes: First, the Arab circle; second, openness to the east towards China and East Asian countries, and to the west towards countries of South America; third, seeking to establish an alliance with what some call the “corner states” in the region: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran³⁹, with Egypt as the fourth corner. Meanwhile, Morsi’s foreign policy toward the United States adhered to an approach close to Mubarak’s foreign policy in preserving the alliance between the two countries, and maintaining relations and cooperation, while adhering to the peace treaty with Israel, known as the Camp David Accords. The foreign policy of Morsi towards the Gulf countries also was not much different from Mubarak’s foreign policy. However, although Morsi sought to emphasize maintaining relations with the Gulf countries at the same level of alliance, however, relations remained strained, especially with Saudi Arabia and the UAE for the reasons mentioned above.

Assessment and Views

Due to the long years of restrictions that the Muslim Brotherhood experienced during the Mubarak era, it was difficult for the group to develop its potentials in communication, building relations and external action in a short period - the period from revolution to government - or to immediately manage to have visions

³⁸ Vidino, L, 2013, “The West and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring”, p. 34, Al Mesbar Studies & Research Center

³⁹ Khaled Fouad, 2021, “The Making of Egyptian Foreign Policy between Constants and Variables: Towards a Conception of a More Effective Foreign Policy,” Political Stimulus Groups, <https://bit.ly/3rui5uO>

commensurate with the new phase, amid the major internal and regional changes. However, that period witnessed exceptional success in the MB achievement of external efficacy and building relations and communication with the outside world, where in one way or another it became clear that after the fall of Mubarak the Brotherhood had a vision for its external relations with practices commensurate with them. In this regard, it seems that the main reason behind this success was a product of the institutional action that the MB engaged in.

Throughout the long history of the MB, the external communication and action were characterized by individuality and absence of institutional work, which was clearly evident in the model presented by Youssef Nada who possesses vast relations that qualified him to represent the MB in regional and international mediation and roles. However, despite the significance of the role played by an individual with extensive relations in the field of international relations cannot be overlooked, yet it is also difficult for an individual to achieve tangible success for a group seeking achievement of social and political change in a country with a prominent regional and international position such as Egypt.

The significance of the institutional factor emerged during the period that immediately followed the Egyptian Revolution, where the Freedom and Justice Party's Foreign Relations Committee, most of whose members were later transferred to Morsi's presidential team, introduced advanced practices in formal and informal communication with most regional and international parties. Despite the heavy legacy of the group's external image and its crises, this committee succeeded to establish a positive image of the MB in Western circles, commensurate with the new situation in Egypt, particularly the Brotherhood's imminent access to power.

Chapter VI: Lack of efficacy and limited relations (Post-Coup Phase)

The 2013 coup imposed a new domestic and regional reality, where the MB objectives shifted from building external efficacy and communication networks with the outside world to seeking delegitimization of the regime that removed the group from power, while at the same time emphasizing Morsi's legitimacy, through external action. In this context, it is significant in the first place to understand the events and challenges that emerged during that period, to help draw a more accurate picture of the Brotherhood's perceptions of its external relations and political practice, including:

- Moving to work within the framework of a new reality, where conditions are completely different from those of the previous reality that was characterized by freedom, openness and ease of external action.
- Absence of effective figures that were experienced in the perceptions and practices of the group's foreign relations, due to arrest, as happened with the presidential team, or security pursuit that prompted other figures to quit the country.
- Internal crises and divisions within the Brotherhood, which hindered shaping of a coherent and agreed vision in the face of the new reality after the coup.
- Operation in an external environment, whether Turkey, Qatar, or some European countries, given that this new reality imposed restrictions and obligations related to the Brotherhood's activity there.

In the midst of these circumstances, the MB perception related to its foreign relations focused at that period on achieving a major objective, namely delegitimization of the existing regime in Egypt and seeking to isolate it internationally. This objective came within a broader vision of the group whose main goal was to overthrow the July 3 regime and restore the democratic path. In addition, the Brotherhood aimed through this vision to achieve a set of other sub-objectives related to exposing the regime's practices and violations to the outside world, to help create international pressure to release political detainees or at least

improve their living conditions in Egyptian prisons. On the other hand, the group worked to repel the external counter-revolutionary attacks that sought to designate the group as a terrorist organization in the United States and Europe.

It can be said that the MB practice on the ground was far from its perceptions and objectives regarding the group's foreign relations at that stage. Despite the fact that the group's movement during that period covered wider spaces compared to its movement during the revolution and government, in terms of openness to external civil society organizations and expansion of the group's network of relations with Western activists and researchers, yet communication with foreign official circles, diplomacy, and international institutions, and seeking to build influential relations that could contribute to changing the Egyptian reality, was relatively limited, due to the challenges that faced the group at the time, as mentioned above. Ultimately, the accelerated regional and international events and developments, in conjunction with MB internal crises and schisms, were behind the group's limited external efficacy and poor influence, pushing the Brotherhood's to regional and international isolation that deepened with the passage of time amid continued internal crises.

Assessment and Views

The 2013 coup was confusing for everyone, where it coincided with the new authorities launching a ferocious campaign to arrest MB prominent figures and leaders, which left its impact on the internal situation of the Brotherhood for a long time. In response, the group was prompted to hastily engage in heightened activity of external action in a race against time in attempt to delegitimize the existing regime and restore the legitimacy of the 2012 presidential elections. However, this hasty perception of external action neither helped achieve the MB key objective, nor led to building strong and sustainable external relations. In fact, absence of an internal vision that estimates how to achieve MB external efficacy and influence, and identifies tools needed to achieve this, was the main reason behind failure of MB external activity. This absent vision could have created a consensus among various political and popular forces in support of the legitimacy of President Morsi. However, the perceptions and calls related to the legitimacy

of Morsi and the demands to restore the democratic path as well as mobilization of protests and demonstrations remained below the required level and too weak to bring about the desired change.

In addition, there were other unignorable factors that have greatly contributed to weakening the Brotherhood's external efficacy. While the group was seeking external communication using limited potentials to achieve its objectives, Emirati and Saudi diplomacy on the other side was sweeping the western circles in defense of the Egyptian regime with the aim of enabling it to acquire regional and international legitimacy. Moreover, this diplomatic move did not stop at defending the Egyptian regime but moved to attack by exerting more diplomatic effort in attempt to push the United States and Britain to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization.

After some Brotherhood leaders and prominent figures that were able to quit Egypt, had settled in Turkey, Qatar, the United States and some European capitals, the group had to accept the new challenges of external action in a new environment amid restrictions and obligations related to the conditions of the hosting countries. On the other hand, regional and international contexts were inappropriate for conducting communication or establishment of relations with the Brotherhood, which made operation under the banner of the MB organization by the group's leaders and prominent figures unacceptable to many official and unofficial Western circles. Accordingly, this situation contributed to making any attempt to build external relations networks more difficult than ever before, although the group at the time was in a dire need for such networks.

Chapter VII: Findings and Recommendations

The Muslim Brotherhood's regional and international efficacy is partly due to subjective factors related to the group's nature as a transnational social movement that disseminates its ideas and ideologies related to Islamic principles and morals through social networks that interact with political and cultural issues in different countries. However, the Brotherhood's special interest in the Palestinian cause may simply explain the rapid spread and expansion of the group outside the Egyptian borders since the early days of inception, and may also explain the group's regional effectiveness immediately after spread of its ideas in various countries, where the MB has become a major driver of the orientations and policies of Arab countries with respect to the Palestinian issue and confrontation with Zionist movements during the first half of the twentieth century.

It is also significant to understand this effectiveness from the perspective of competition between regional powers in the Middle East, which pushed some of them - in different time contexts - to support Islamic movements, particularly the Brotherhood, with the aim of using them as tools of their foreign policy, including boosting their interests and granting them legitimacy in the face of other regional competitors⁴⁰. Perhaps the most prominent example of this situation was the policy pursued by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the mid-fifties of last century, in coincidence with the emergence of Arab nationalism and Nasser's sweeping popularity in all Arab countries. Saudi Arabia then used Islam as a tool to legitimize its government and face Arab nationalism and socialism that posed threats to the Gulf monarchies at the time⁴¹. In this context, Saudi Arabia, along with other Gulf countries, hosted some leaders and members of the Brotherhood that managed to escape Nasser's pursuit. In the early 1970s, the high oil revenues supported the Kingdom's desire to extend its leverage and influence in the Arab and Islamic world through provision of support to Islamic movements in different countries. Undoubtedly, this desire on the part Saudi Arabia became stronger after

⁴⁰ Dalacoura K, (2001) Islamist Movements as Non-state Actors and their Relevance to International Relations. In: Josselin D., Wallace W. (eds) Non-state Actors in World Politics, p. 247, Palgrave Macmillan, London

⁴¹ Dalacoura K, (2001) Islamist Movements as Non-state Actors and their Relevance to International Relations. In: Josselin D., Wallace W. (eds) Non-state Actors in World Politics, pp. 240-242, Palgrave Macmillan, London

success of the Iranian revolution, which soon started to compete with the Kingdom in provision of support of Islamic movements. This was clearly demonstrated through Saudi Arabia's support of educational activities, conferences, and the construction of mosques and centers for many Islamic movements in Arab and Islamic countries as well as in Europe and the United States during the 1970s and 1980s.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood has for decades been characterized by organizational cohesion⁴², however it also suffered from lack of ideological coherence, which became evident with the advent of the atmosphere of freedom coinciding with the January Revolution, where it led to exposing how far differences and divergences in ideas and convictions were within the Brotherhood. To provide an accurate description of the situation of the MB before the revolution, one may say that it was an incubator of different social strata and schools of thought that desired to practice collective action in various fields, in light of the nature of political life in Egypt at the time amid the repression practiced by the regime. This intellectual divergence contributed to the group's lack of a coherent political vision of foreign relations and communication with the West and international organizations and movements most of the time. Also, this intellectual difference contributed to the contradiction that have always haunted MB members and affected their perceptions, between "idealism" and "realism". Those who adopted "idealism" used to call for resisting Western political and cultural hegemony and avoiding any engagement in relations or communication with Europe and the United States, while others were convinced of "realism" based on the need to understand the complications and rules imposed by the global order with respect to exercising influence and engagement in regional issues and crises. They also believed that such situation requires conducting communications and establishing relations with the West, despite the biased practices of the West in favor of Israel on the Palestinian cause, as well as occupation of some Arab countries and waging wars against others, not to

⁴² Obaid, N, 2017, "The Muslim Brotherhood: A Failure in Political Evolution", Harvard Kennedy School-Belfer Center

mention the West's strategic relations with the authoritarian regimes in the Arab world.

Recommendations for those who aspire for change

This study sought to conduct a review of the Muslim Brotherhood's perceptions and practices of external relations with the aim of undertaking an objective assessment of one of the most significant movements that have sought political and social change in Egypt since the early twentieth century, and accordingly deducing recommendations and practical duties that would not be limited to the Muslim Brotherhood alone, but to include all spectra of political movements seeking change in Egypt. We hope that this study and other studies of the like will motivate researchers and those concerned with the Egyptian and regional affairs, to introduce similar studies that handles other movements, bodies and parties that seek political change in Egypt, so that such studies can review and assess their ideas and experiences with respect to effectiveness of their foreign relations, and also provide findings and recommendations that can be integrated with those presented by this study, to help draw a road map for those who seek change in Egypt on how to gain external weight and efficacy.

1- Fine-tuning ideological fantasies

Ideas and convictions are considered the lifeline of every movement or group that seeks change; therefore, it is significant to check ideas as they would greatly reign definition of interests, specify patterns of relations and alliances, and map out external relations. However, ideological fantasies often seem to impede access to a clear view of foreign relations, because of adoption of idealistic ideas and perceptions that are unrelated to the reality and complications of international politics. Accordingly, these ideas need to be checked and tuned on the basis of accurate understanding away from wishful thinking or wishful analysis of politics and international relations, so that it could ultimately lead to a clear and coherent vision thereof. Despite the significance of this step, it remains a preliminary and insufficient step, while the main challenge remains in how to transform that

reality-related vision and ideas into practices and external action that ensures success and makes the movement effective regionally and internationally.

2- Organizational cohesion and domestic efficacy

Based on international relations concepts, there are two key integrated requirements that movements and groups should meet to achieve efficacy and weight overseas: namely, organizational cohesion and domestic efficacy, where the significance of these two factors can be understood from the perspective of ability of these two factors to achieve domestic influence and change, in addition to the movement's position as a significant component that cannot be excluded from the domestic scene. This domestic equation grants movements and groups the ability to communicate and build successful external relations based on appreciation of the movement's weight as well as its domestic and regional position.

3- Institutional action and appropriate leadership

The idea of reliance on personalities that have strong external links and contact networks is no longer sufficient for achievement of external efficacy, given the complications and developments the world is undergoing nowadays. Based on this fact, movements and currents have to mainly rely on an evolvable professional institutional approach in administering their external relations. This can only be achieved through existence of an organization with structures that would undertake management of communication and external action to achieve and maintain external efficacy based on professionalism in political action, international communication and external relations. However, this institutional work also needs influential and talented individuals with great communicative, diplomatic and negotiating potentials and capabilities, along with an understanding of the reality of other parties' interests, which always requires assigning these tasks to effective leading figures that are appropriate and prepared to play such active role, without being contented with only performance of organizational functional roles.

4- Foreign relations' position in the political mind

The process of external communication and building relationships is influential in the regional and international positioning of a movement, where it leads to its survival and effectiveness or, on the contrary, decline or restriction. Therefore, movements seeking change must realize that the international relations system is linked to leadership and vision of a movement, as it affects and is affected by it. This means that a movement's external relations file should not be framed in a limited space or assigned to a body away from the movement's political decision-makers. Therefore, it is significant that those responsible for the external relations file should participate in the movement's leadership, policy-making and decision-making, to help achieve both domestic and external efficacy.

5- Apparent and consistent political discourse

In general, it is significant for political discourse to be apparent and consistent with the international relations' vision and perceptions, regardless of the targeted audience, for two reasons: one is domestic, related to building awareness among the masses supporting the movement in a way that does not conflict with the movement's external contacts and relations, and the other is external, related to building and boosting trust with external parties whose perceptions about a movement are shaped through its clear political discourse, as well as the changes this discourse undergoes in various contexts.

6- Beware of falling into the functional role trap

In fact, the risk of sliding into the trap of performing a functional role for the benefit of external parties is one of the main challenges facing various movements and groups while attempting to build contacts and establish external relations. In this context, various Egyptian regimes over decades have always accused the opposition of being agents recruited for performing certain functions, when the opposition attempt to conduct any official or unofficial contacts with the outside world. Therefore, it is significant for movements and groups to address this issue seriously and be aware of the risk of "recruitment", which would turn a movement into a tool for serving the interests of foreign powers, and accordingly losing its

efficacy and ability to influence. This requires a deep and long-term vision, a strategy that can continuously be developed and assessed, an accurate understanding of the interests of other parties, and aware political practice amid comprehension of the difference between external activity and common interests on the one hand, and the danger of being recruited and being used for performance of certain functions, on the other.

7- Assessment and development of practices

The pursuit of external weight and efficacy requires a continuous assessment of the practices of communication and external action, especially amid the rapid regional and international changes that often pose different threats and challenges. The process of assessment and development of practices is mainly aimed at building solid gains that would be able of influence the political equation and the balance of power, with keenness on avoiding fragile gains that would regress and recede with changes and developments.

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