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CONFRONTING THE OTHER: IDENTITY, CULTURE, POLITICS, AND CONSERVATIVE ISLAMISM IN EGYPT

The rise of Islamist groups in Egypt's polity and society is given force through the articulation of a set of competing yet inter-linked discourses that challenge the authority of the post-independence secular nationalist discourse and attempt to reconstitute the field of struggle and domination in religious terms. Concurrently, these discourses seek authoritative status over the scope of meanings related to questions of identity, history, and the place of Islam in the world. The interpretations and definitions elaborated in reference to these questions by radical Islamist forces (the jihad groups and other militant Islamist elements) are often seen to dominate the entire field of meaning. However, claims to authority over issues of government, morality, identity, and Islam's relationship to the West are also made in and through a discourse that can appropriately be labeled "conservative Islamist." The discourse and political role of conservative Islamism are the subject of this article.

CONSERVATIVE ISLAMISM IN CONTEMPORARY EGYPTIAN POLITICS: BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

The conservative Islamist discourse is articulated by Islamist political forces working within legal channels such as the right-wing al-Ahrar (Liberal) Party and its ideologues.[1] The conservative Islamist discourse is best represented in the al-Ahrar Party's two publications, *al-Ahrār* and *al-Nūr*, but can be found in the al-ᶜAmal (Labour) Party's press organ, *al-Shaᶜb*, and in a number of the Muslim Brotherhood's publications, including *al-Mukhtār* and *al-Iᶜtisām*. As such, the discourse is tied to the forces of the Islamist alliance formed in 1987 and to the regrouping of al-Ahrar, al-ᶜAmal, and the Brotherhood for electoral purposes. This does not mean that the conservative Islamist discourse is the cement that binds these forces. In fact, one finds various manifestations of Islamism within these groupings. However, conservative Islamism is not confined to an oppositional role in Egyptian politics. Rather, it can be located in state institutions in the words and personage of a number of shaykhs associated with the state. It also finds expression in the official media. State-affiliated conservative shaykhs such as Shaykh Shaᶜrawi and ᶜAbd Al-Sabur Shahin are given a forum for their ideas in state-sponsored newspapers such as *al-Liwāʾ al-Islāmī* and *ᶜAqīdatī*. Further, they reach a wide audience due to the extensive

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circulation of their polemics on cassette and video and to their frequent television appearances. These forces are labeled "conservative" because of their willingness to work within the established order and because they promote hierarchical and patriarchal values reinforcing the status quo.

Before proceeding to an investigation of the terms of the conservative Islamist discourse and the role of conservative forces in shaping the political field in Egypt, it is important to note some of the lines of distinction between conservative and radical Islamists. The common denominator among the militants/radicals is their advocacy of and resorting to violence in their effort to establish the Islamic state. A first distinction between radical Islamism and conservative Islamism, therefore, concerns their respective strategies and modes of action. The former adopts violent means to bring about social transformation, while the latter works within the existing institutions to Islamize society while preserving the political status quo.[2] A second distinction relates to the content of their respective ideologies. The radicals articulate a clear denunciation of society as *jāhiliyya* (state of ignorance before Islam) and of government as un-Islamic. The concept of *ḥākimiyya* (God's sovereignty) is central to their doctrine and to their call for jihad.[3] The conservatives anchor their discourse in popular traditions with concerns about the afterlife, the spirits, and rituals. Morality is an area of convergence between the two groups, although conservatives do not dwell on the issue of the legality of present-day government. A more comprehensive basis of differentiation must include the socio-economic positions occupied by these groupings. This is captured in the categories of *Islām al-thawra* and *Islām al-tharwa* (Islam of revolution and Islam of riches), which underscore the class affiliation of the two lines of Islamism. Conservative Islamism is identified with petro-dollars, while radical Islamism draws support from the less-well-off segments of society.[4] Finally, there is a need to emphasize the location of both in the overall political configuration by looking at their relations to the state, to other political groups, and to one another.[5]

It should be noted that the two categories of conservative Islamism and radical Islamism do not exhaust the whole range of Islamist ideas and activities. Islamist politics in Egypt extends from organized groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood organization to informal groupings such as the "Islamist lawyers."[6] The Muslim Brotherhood itself is associated with positions and individuals who are seen to represent various lines of Islamism. In fact, the attempt to establish the al-Wasat Party in 1996, by individuals from the new generation of the Muslim Brotherhood, reflects divisions within the organization. There was dissension in the ranks over both the idea of establishing a party and the route to be taken. These divisions are seen as generational—between the old guard and a new vanguard—as well as representing differences over procedures and ways of thinking.[7]

Islamists pursue a variety of strategies aimed at the Islamization of social arenas and the appropriation of the public sphere. The Islamization of the professional syndicates along with social-service networks set up by the Islamists are differing facets of their struggle for power.[8] Conforming to its strategy of working within existing institutions, the Muslim Brotherhood found in the professional syndicates an arena to expand its ranks and develop a strong base among an important segment of society. In running candidates for executive-board positions in the syndicates, the Broth-

erhood presented an alternative to the government-controlled leadership as well as to the secular liberals and leftist activists. Meanwhile, social-service networks have emerged, some of which are set up by Islamic charitable organizations with no particular political affiliation; others are controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood and the militant groups. Private voluntary organizations, which are usually connected to mosques, have been established by the Brotherhood, the Jihad, and the al-Jamaᶜat al-Islamiyya.[9] The development of these kinds of organizations is of strategic importance to the Islamist groups. For instance, structures such as "the mosque complex" are engaged in expanded activities ranging from preaching and gathering believers to the provision of social services. Mosques have also served as headquarters for militant groups.[10] Naturally, the mosque is a space of activity for the conservatives. The 1980s and 1990s saw a reassertion of the phenomenon of popular preachers claiming their own followers or devotees and effectively mobilizing public opinion. In this regard, the pulpit is used by conservative shaykhs to wage battle on questions of morality with secular intellectuals.[11]

In an earlier study dealing with contemporary Islamism, conservatives are viewed as a part of a wider fundamentalist trend and a return to religiosity.[12] According to this view, a commonality of ideas and beliefs characterizes the various manifestations of Islam across time and space. Thus, in surveying the signs of the "conservative periphery" in Egypt, Emmanuel Sivan puts forward the following thesis: "Fundamentalism—in the sense of a world view harking back to the essential verities of the faith—thus seems not to be restricted to the militants alone: it permeates conservative circles as well."[13] This underlying essentialism projects a disembodied view of Islamic groups and movements, failing to appreciate the nature of the interplay among the various groups and their socio-political setting.

In contrast, conservative Islamism is seen here as being shaped by the socio-economic context of contemporary Egypt. It is articulated in relation to power positions, and in turn shapes power relations in society. Central to this approach is the concept of ideology understood as a relation to power.[14] As such, in examining the operation of ideology through language, the purpose is to evaluate its impact on the dominant relations of power in society. In other words, our interest is to assess the role of the conservative Islamist ideology in strengthening or transforming these relations. In studying movements and ideologies that ground themselves in Islam, it is important to take account of the traditions that are called upon and inserted into the contemporary Islamist discourses.[15] However, invoking particular traditions is not viewed as the expression of a revival or recurrence of some fundamental ideas and principles. Instead, Islamist movements and ideologies are placed in their socio-historical conjuncture.[16] In other words, Islamist discourses are understood by examining how they shape and are shaped by their socio-political setting.

Conservative Islamism operates in a context of socio-political transformation, marked by the rising challenge of militant Islamists. The confrontation between the militants and the state that spanned the 1980s and has continued into the 1990s took the form of assassination attempts on state officials, an escalation of jihad activities with a campaign against tourism, and a heightening of social warfare with attacks aimed at the symbols of *jāhiliyya* in society.[17] This period also witnessed the proliferation of Islamist groups, although the two main contestants remain the Jihad and

the al-Jamaᶜat al-Islamiyya.[18] These groups are most active in upper Egypt and in the peripheral areas of Cairo, particularly in the informal housing communities. The militants have virtually declared war on the state, turning certain upper Egyptian governorates and cities into war zones. Places such as Mallawi and Abu Qurqas in Minya have become contested territories. The state responded with, and at times initiated, crackdown campaigns aimed at extricating the Islamists from their stronghold.[19] Under the state emergency rules, trials of the militants went before military courts in order to speed up and control the process. In its confrontation with the militants, the state also called on its official ulema and was able to garner support in the form of al-Mufti's report in 1981, the al-Azhar statement in 1987, and various other documents condemning the Islamists as religious extremists.[20] In addition, the state has been engaged in propagating its own brand of Islam, sponsoring religious newspapers and television programs, and expanding the powers of al-Azhar in censoring un-Islamic intellectual and artistic productions.[21]

Conservative Islamism is closely associated with this state-sponsored religiosity and morality. It is precisely the insertion of the conservatives into this context that should be stressed. Conservatives put forward an alternative frame of ordering the world. As guardians of "orthodox" and "moderate" Islam, they contain the radicals while Islamizing the state at the cultural level and setting the boundaries of public discourse. Culture and morality constitute the grounds upon which the *problematique* of the time is articulated: a cultural conflict with the outside and the struggle for the preservation of public morality inside. The convergence between the conservatives and the state puts limits on the positions available, not only neutralizing the militants but also containing the Islamic left and circumventing the secularists.

The theme of cultural conflict constitutes common ground among a number of Islamist discourses and movements. This does not, however, imply unity among them, as is suggested in some studies which view Islamic thought as embodying the fundamental principles shaping the Muslims' action. Such an approach tends to attribute continuity to Islamic movements. Its underlying view, as Eric Davis has noted, is that these movements emerge as a response to the West.[22] This perspective guides William Shepard's typologies of Islamic groups, which are classified according to their position from modernity and the role they attribute to Islam in politics.[23] In a similar fashion, Hrair Dekmejian sees Islamism as an expression of a revivalist tradition in Islam and as a response to internal decay. As such, it is a cyclical occurrence.[24] These studies are instructive in terms of noting the positioning of particular groups in relation to Western material progress and values. However, they tell us little of local contexts, social groups, dynamics of interaction, and power struggles. Yet it is precisely by examining the dynamics of the insertion of Islamism into the overall political and socio-historical context that we can acquire a better understanding of the nature of contemporary Islamism. Key questions center on how a particular Islamist force interacts with other actors, and how the interplay among the various groups shapes their positioning.

In examining the discourse and political role of conservative Islamism, this study integrates these questions by looking at how conservative Islamism is constituted as a political and ideological force in the contemporary Egyptian socio-political setting. In trying to locate conservative Islamism in relation to other Islamist groupings, the

study goes beyond providing a classification of a particular brand of Islamism. Rather, it maps out the various positions occupied by Islamist actors on the political scene, drawing attention to their relationship to the state and to militant Islamism. In this regard, the analysis is focused on the configuration of the political scene that emerges out of the actors' positions and the dynamics of their interaction.

The article puts forward the argument that conservative Islamism occupies a key position in shaping the structure of the political field. This is done in a manner that serves to maintain a political balance, allowing a neutralization of the tensions caused by Islamist militancy. The ascendancy of conservative Islamism is also situated in relation to the material conditions of Egypt's social formation. In placing the conservative Islamist discourse in this context, the analysis demonstrates how, in constructing the *problematique* of cultural confrontation, it displaces the social and national struggle and produces an identity totalized in religious and moral terms. In so doing, it serves to sustain the dominant relations of power.

In the following three sections, the article examines the discourse of conservative Islamist forces in Egypt; points to its links to other discourses—namely, the discourses on morals and rituals and on usury; and elucidates some aspects of its relation to the material conditions in which it is inscribed. In section two, an analysis of various texts representative of these forces looks at the meanings and concepts articulated by the conservative Islamist discourse, as well as the main themes that unfold through it. In this regard, the analysis focuses on the narratives that structure the discourse, highlighting two principal narratives: confrontation with the Other and superiority of the Self. It also examines the discursive mechanisms used to validate these narratives, mainly the use of history as a tool of validation and argumentative strategies deployed against its opponents. In section three, the analysis presents the key features of two discourses, complementary to the conservative Islamist discourse, which are active in articulating definitions and restrictions in the domains of morality, culture, and commerce.[25] In their aim to circumscribe the bounds of "correct" practice in the private and public spheres, and thus construct a religious orthodoxy, these discourses are supported by actions that seek, on the grounds of morality, to challenge cultural productions. Finally, the article analyzes the discourse's position in relation to the political field and the forces that are active in it, particularly the secularists and the Islamic left.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONSERVATIVE ISLAMIST DISCOURSE

The Narrative Organization

In this section, I will proceed by providing a description of the terms of the conservative Islamist discourse. The writings under study consist of articles from official publications of the right-wing Islamist opposition party, al-Ahrar, and from independent magazines and newspapers in association with the right-wing Islamist opposition. Also included are a number of essays by Anwar al-Jindi, who has links with the Muslim Brotherhood and is associated with al-Ahrar publications.[26] In analyzing these writings, two simple but central narratives emerge.[27] One narrative announces

the confrontation with the Other (the West); and the other asserts the superiority of Islam. These narratives serve as organizing principles of the discourse. In a sense, they represent the world view of the conservatives—their vision of the present state of society and religion and how the world is ordered. These narratives are analyzed with a view to outlining their recurrent themes as well as the elements that give them a certain coherence and orientation.

Narrative of Confrontation with the Other The narrative of confrontation with the Other is articulated in terms of the threat of a cultural attack on Islam. This attack takes various forms, including proselytization, intellectual invasion, and the subjugation of Islamic concepts to Western ideas. The attack is aimed at Islam as understood as a cultural system that encompasses all aspects of the Muslim's identity. In one rendering, the "assault" by the Other is cast as "an attempt to encircle and destroy the make-up of Muslims and Arabs and denigrate their thought."[28] A number of themes signal the assault and describe its features. These themes are: the pervasiveness of the attack; interaction with the Other as a cause of corruption; infiltration and distortion; and danger of annihilation.

The threat of cultural attack finds signs in the pervasive presence of the Other. The cultural assault has, in fact, penetrated an extensive range of institutions and sociocultural realms, such as schools, the media, the arts, and popular tastes. These institutions figure as targets of the attack, and by virtue of their association with the secular state have come to signify the attack itself. Thus, "school curriculum" is a target but also bears the marks of the assault in the form of "Western concepts[:] . . . Darwin's theory of creation, Freud's theory of the psyche, Durkheim's theory of society."[29] The attack itself is likened to a "tempest" (a sign of englobing and immersion), which carries "poison through education, the press, theatre, film, fashion and clothes."[30]

A second theme that is repeated within the frame of the narrative of cultural invasion points to the corrupting effects of interaction with the Other. Contact with or opening onto the outside are presented as dangers to the Islamic identity. These contacts may take the form of "cultural exchange programs," "scientific and educational missions," "visiting professors," and "foreign training experts," all of which are identified as means and agents of proselytization. Interaction with the Other is viewed as a process of transformation causing atheism, immorality (exemplified by the casting away of the veil), and a threat to Islam. A relation of cause and effect between contact with the Other and corruption is implied, giving rise to the ideological claim that the Other is morally corrupt.

In a third theme, the infiltration, distortion, and misrepresentation of Islam are articulated as features of the cultural attack and as part of an ongoing conspiracy against Islam. The attack is achieved through infiltration, implying the presence of hidden or disguised forces that are, in turn, projected as elements of distortion. Examples of disguised attacks are drawn from contemporary developments. A case in point is Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, which serves as a symbol of distortive works against Islam. It is compared, by way of analogy, to the insertion of Israelite works into the body of the Islamic tradition. In the tradition, these latter represent both distortion and infiltration. Rushdie himself is an infiltrator "who claimed entry

to Islam," an act that is described as "an old Jewish trick used during the early age of Islam."[31]

Efforts to distort Islam have also been undertaken by internal intellectual forces working in conjunction with the Other. Writings by these intellectuals dealing with the Islamic heritage are described as an "infiltration" carried out in disguise. As indicated in the following, they constitute "the presentation of Marxist thought . . . in an Islamic dress to deceive the reader."[32]

Infiltration and distortion are articulated around the opposition between the hidden and the revealed or exposed. Thus, behind Rushdie's "satanic work," there is "a hidden Jewish hand,"[33] while supporters of secularism have "resorted to infiltration through the back door."[34] The presence of infiltrators has been exposed and revealed by al-Azhar students who "unmasked the face of the proselytizers,"[35] and by researchers who "have revealed the Judaic roots in Western concepts."[36] The hidden is associated with deception: "Proselytizers and Orientalists slip the poison into the honey";[37] "these conspiracies do not come in an explicit fashion but in deception."[38] Disguise and deception are further evoked in: "[Proselytization messages] come on paper decorated with an Islamic motif with the name of God the most merciful in the middle, and, on the sides, commandments from the Old and New Testaments";[39] "Marxism infiltrated into our countries carrying the banner of progress and security."[40] These cautionary messages about infiltration and deception serve as a pretext for an inquisition into the background of thinkers and writers, and for classifying them as either "true" Muslims or infiltrators and *kāfirūn* (infidels).

A final theme is constructed around the notion of danger of annihilation. Specifically, the cultural assault threatens Islam with destruction. This underlines the dangers of absorption, or "melting away," faced by the entire nation, region, or civilization. These images appear over and over in the discourse, as in the following: "The Orient . . . will dissolve in the wide furnace which will melt it and destroy its existence"; "Resistance to the intellectual invasion is a necessary and grave task to protect the nation from annihilation and melting away."[41] The fatality of the threat is signified in: "only Islam is the target of the swords of . . . the Crusades, Zionism and atheism."[42] The same signification is found in: "Egypt, country of al-Azhar, Mecca, 'the honest country,' are among the targeted countries."[43] Here, the signs used to designate the targets are substantive symbols of Islam. Mecca is the birthplace of the religion and is its guardian, while Egypt is "the true Islamic force," "the primary state in the Islamic East." Thus, because Egypt is conceived as the heart of Islam, an attack upon the country is fatal. All signs of the presence of the Other (invasion) are associated with such terms as "destructive," "dissolution," and "tearing down." The assault is also represented as "the attempt to destroy society and turn it into rubble via vulgarity of the novel and existential philosophy."[44] It should be stressed that the "grave" attack is conceived as a cultural invasion, thus constructing culture as the defining character of the Self and the Other.

The Multi-faceted Other Having indicated the terms by which the discourse represents the cultural confrontation, we should focus on who or what is designated as the Other in the discourse. A multiplicity of signs denominate the Other—the Crusaders, the proselytizers (i.e., the Christian West), the Orientalists (the West), the

Westernizers, Zionism, secularists, Marxists, communists, and atheists—suggesting the existence of a number of different and distinct entities. This also gives the appearance that more than one opponent exists, or that from one text to another the opponent changes, and thus it is not a unitary identity. However, all of these actors are manifested in association with the West. Secularism, for instance, is produced in total identity with the West, while Zionism is presented in conjunction with both the Crusaders and secularism. Marxists, atheists, and communists seem to belong to a different entity—the atheist world in opposition to the Christian world—yet they slide back to and acquire an association with the West, which appears as a whole of which they are a part (French Marxists, for example). They also appear in conjunction with the Orientalists and the proselytizers. Some actors, such as the Crusaders, proselytizers, and Orientalists, are presented in virtual synonymy with the West. In sum, all the signs designating the Other slide back as "the West." In a sense, the many others coalesce into a singular unit—the West—which also unfolds as the non-Islamic. The same is true of internal forces that are conceived as the enemies of Islam. Arab Marxists, nationalists, and secularists are identified with the West in statements such as: "Preachers of secularism are those who are immersed in Western culture,"[45] signifying their foreign character and association.

The Distinctive Properties of Islam The confrontation with the Other is articulated in terms of opposing systems of values. This opposition finds expression within two notional indexes: the first, an index of "completeness" whereby Islam is presented as "comprehensive" and "unitary" versus the fragmented and divided Other; and the second, an index of "mutability" in which stability has a higher value and is associated with Islam, whereas the Other is associated with absolute change and progress—values that are constituted as negative. The use of these indexes invests Islam with the properties of multi-dimensionality and unity, and confers on the West the properties of "fragmentation" and "unidimensionality." Progress is constituted as a negative value, particularly when it is associated with ethics.

Islam as a comprehensive message does, however, account for change, albeit a change founded on the permanent and the unchangeable. Change and movement are conceived as grounded in order and stability, an order that is rooted in the religion and that sets the boundaries of change: "Change is movement within the frame of the fundamentals of religion."[46] It is important to note that ethics and instinct are produced in positive association with each other, both being immutable and stable in character and valorized due to their relation to religion. The various associations between these concepts has the effect of investing stability with a high normative content; it is instituted as part of the natural order and hence a defining aspect of instinct and ethics.[47]

In this context, the notion of "absolute change" associated with the West appears as a transgression against the norm and order of the universe and is explained as an element of Western atomism: "Atomism . . . called for the relativity of ethics and absolute progress which is not based on a fixed orbit."[48] Western concepts of change are found to inhabit the realm of the unnatural and are made contrary to instinct and belief: "The theory of evolution is in opposition to instinct and the Islamic system of thought which dictates that the universe is constant and evolving."[49] Thus, two con-

ceptions of change emerge: one associated with order and restraint and sanctioned by the religion and instinct, the other absolute and standing in opposition to nature and the rules of the universe.

It should be noted that the conceptualization of stability as the character of ethics and instinct is developed in a space of conflict with the secular discourse which posits change as the defining property of the human being. Egyptian secularists have argued that the human being is a changing creature and, therefore, the laws which govern him or her must change. The human being undergoes fundamental changes from one time to another and from one space to another. Change is also the defining character of values and ethics. In effect, there are no constants in the human field. This is carried to the conclusion that there are no laws which are valid for all space and time.[50] It is this conception of change that the conservative Islamist discourse attempts to refute through the inscription of absolute change in the realm of the unnatural.

The Narrative of Sanction: The Superiority of Islam Out of the distinction between Islam and the West, there emerges in the discourse a thematic defined here as "the superiority of Islam" and corresponding, in our analysis, to the narrative of sanction. Its two major aspects—Islam's role as the leader of humanity and the collapse of the Other—were in fact part of the turn-of-the-century discourse of *Nahda* (Renaissance). In his critique of the Arab and Islamic discourse of Renaissance, the contemporary Arab intellectual Muhammad ᶜAbid al-Jabiri points out that the tensions that underlie articulations regarding Islam's superiority develop out of the perceived difference between the lived reality and the reality that is formed from the model of Islamic resurgence.[51] These tensions appear in the conservative Islamist discourse under study, wherein the announced success of Islam is oriented toward the future—a time of uncertainty. History is called on to overcome these tensions by guaranteeing the truth of Islam's inevitable success.

The particular ideological significance of the "superiority of Islam" theme depends on the context within which it is inserted. For example, the Egyptian radical Islamic thinker Sayyid Qutb, writing in the 1950s when socialist principles were part of the opposition groups' discourses, developed a notion of Islam's superiority that was tied to values of equality and social justice. In Qutb's *The Battle of Islam and Capitalism*, the theme enters into a complex network of meanings in which the Other is both the Christian West and the imperialist West. The crusaders and the imperialists belong to the same entity. The war on Islam is caused by the latter's commitment to absolute equality.[52] In this context, Islam as a threat to the West is conceived as an obstacle in the way of imperialism and exploitation.[53] The reasons behind the Western assault have to do with the challenge represented by the social values of Islam. For Qutb, Islam's superiority is tied to its values of equality and justice.

When we turn to the manifestation of this theme in the conservative Islamist discourse, we find that the superiority of Islam is presented as a given or as an element of the religious truth. This bestows on the faith a higher duty—that of leading humanity: "Only Islam possesses a superior capacity and assets to lead the whole of humanity."[54] This duty is represented as a universal fact that is known to everyone: "The whole world recognizes the power of Islam and its capacity of expansion

and good leadership and guidance of humanity";[55] "International circles have declared . . . the longing of humanity for a merciful, just system which only Islam can offer."[56] In effect, Islam's role becomes messianic, as the religion and its followers are perceived as pre-destined to lead: "They [the Muslims] are the ones chosen by God to deliver his message to the Universe"; "They are the superiors, they carry the noblest system and the most generous and dignified message—the greatest call";[57] "The world looks to Islam as the savior from the siege of the Western system." Moreover, the Other appears as cognizant of its inevitable demise: "People in the West are searching for a religion and a creator—only Islam can provide an alternative."[58]

As the narrative proceeds, recognition of the superiority of the Self is made concomitant with the demise of the Other.[59] In other words, the sanctioning of Islam as the leader of humanity is predicated on the collapse of the West. This is presented as a process of decay that is already taking place, with the actual collapse about to happen: "Western society reveals the crises which face contemporary man, society and social life"; "The Western civilization offered to Muslims has reached a stage of deterioration and collapse";[60] "The secular experiment and most of what the West proposes today has failed to achieve its goal in its own environment."[61] The inevitable death of the Other is announced in: "Islam is the heir to these systems [capitalist and communist]";[62] "[This] behavior demonstrates the bankruptcy of the enemies of Islam and their despair."[63] The subject of the discourse, the Muslim, is used to further support the idea of the Other's failure: "Muslims have realized that their experiment with liberalism has failed";[64] "It has been revealed that both Marxist and Western ideologies have failed to provide the Muslim soul with its ambition and their experience has failed."[65] In this context, all opposing ideologies and value systems are classified as discredited remnants of the past, including secularism, which is dismissed as a failure.

Discursive Organization

In the following section, the main elements of the discourse's organization are presented.[66] As indicated, the main message of the conservative Islamist discourse revolves around the announcement of the cultural attack and the assertion of Islam's superiority. The truth of this message is established through certain discursive mechanisms—namely, the use of history as a tool of validation and the articulation of counter-arguments to refute the position of opponents (i.e., the secularists). These mechanisms serve to validate the narratives described above.

History: A Tool of Validation In the unfolding of the narrative of confrontation, history is used as a tool to establish the truth of various propositions about the present. Symbols of the confrontation, as it occurs today, are made analogous to earlier symbols, signifying not only the similarities between the past and present confrontation, but also its permanence. The extension of historical events into the present and future thus functions as a sign of the confrontation's continuity: "The role of Salah al-Din during the Crusade wars was not and will not be forgotten by history—especially [in] Europe where the name of Salah al-Din still evokes resentment and

hatred."[67] Historical continuity is further manifested in: "since the dawn of Islam"; "from the time of revelation."[68]

History also serves to validate the narrative of sanction. Here, the force and resilience of Islam are expressed in terms of the continuity of its tradition: "The deep-rooted presence of Islam in this nation for fourteen centuries . . . was always capable of protecting it from collapse."[69] This construction is made all the more effective as a means of validation by evoking the ephemeral nature of the interruption caused by colonialism. In one instance, the colonial interruption is likened to a "raid" that was a short-lived experience. In this sense, historical continuity constructs a semantic space of authenticity and truth: "The Islamic current is not a recent phenomenon but a rooted authentic reality encompassing all of society and representing its entirety, originating from its depths, soul and roots."[70]

Argumentative Discourse: Secularism as Foreign and Alien The arguments articulated in the conservative Islamist discourse are developed in response to the secular discourse. One of the main objectives of the argumentation is to establish that secularism is alien to Islam. This conclusion is arrived at by first defining secularism in terms that render it specific to the Western experience. In this respect, secularism is defined as a historical development that emerged out of the conditions of the Middle Ages in Europe. The most salient feature is the polemical confrontation over the definitions of secularism, the religious state, and the Islamic state.[71] The definition of secularism enters into the arguments deployed against secularists by setting forth the idea that, as a concept and as a principle of social organization, it can be upheld only under a particular set of circumstances. The definition produces a contextual restriction that acts as a premise for arguing that secularism is valid for Europe, but not for Islamic countries.

The specificity of secularism is established in the account of its development in the West. According to this account, secularism is a response to the religious state, which is specific to medieval Europe and has no counterpart in Islam: "Secularism finds its justification in the conditions of theocratic governments."[72] That is, Christian theocracy is viewed as producing the conditions that gave rise to secularism: "[Secularism] was a natural result of the Church's intervention in the process of life and of its opposition to science."[73] As such, the definitions given to "the religious state," "secularism," and "theocracy" aim at dissociating them from Islam. In this way, the discourse refutes Egyptian secularists who warn of the dangers of religious absolutism and the abuse of religious rule.

Islam's distinct identity is also developed in relation to Christianity. In the tradition, Islam's relationship to other divine religions is complementary in that it is conceived as a message that completes and perfects the previous messages. However, the conservative Islamist discourse constructs Islam in a relationship of antinomy with Christianity. It affirms that Christianity "did not come to order the movement of life,"[74] but that Islam did. A correlation is established between the temporal order of the religion and the nature of its message. In this order, Islam is presented as a complete message and superior to the preceding religion: "Christianity came to provide the missing normative factor in Judaism and did not deal with aspects of life."[75] Islam, on the other hand, "brought a system for the movement of life with values

devoid of rigidity."[76] The signification of Islam as complete and of Christianity as incomplete is manifested in: "the religion of the West is only a belief system, while Islam is a religion and a system of life."[77] According to this distinction, Islam is both religion and temporal, or secular (*dīn wa dunyā*). In this context, we note that by qualifying Islam as comprehensive, it is endowed, at its most basic level of meaning, with the quality of superiority.

Secularism in this sense (separation of state and religion) is established as alien and threatening and is inserted into the narrative of confrontation with the Other: "Secularism has succeeded in transposing its philosophy to Arab and Islamic countries via foreign occupation"; "Colonialism succeeded in imposing secularism on our societies which was a cause behind the current retardation and continuing regression."[76] As mentioned earlier, all signs of the secular state signify the "Western cultural attack." Secularization is presented as the object of Westernization: "Westernization efforts aimed at removing the power of Islam from the centers of influence in society . . . the school, the court, and the bank."[79]

The Confrontation with the Other: From Contrariety to Contradiction It is important at this juncture to point out the distinction between the polemic against the West articulated in the conservative Islamist discourse and the one articulated at the turn of the century, when the first long, drawn-out encounter with the West took place. The early polemic sought to prove that Islam was compatible with modern civilization and culture, as in the case of Muhammad ᶜAbduh's exchange with Western thinkers.[80] ᶜAbduh was critical of Western intervention in the Muslim world and opposed the British presence in Egypt. He also saw dangers in certain strands of Western thought, particularly metaphysical doctrines that could undermine the faith necessary for the foundation of society.[81] At the same time, ᶜAbduh and his disciples perceived that the Muslim community was in a state of decay and, therefore, in need of reform. The perspective underlying the early Arab Renaissance movement held that the decaying Islamic society could benefit from certain aspects of modern civilization. It was possible to adopt this view because the relationship between Islam and the West was articulated in terms of difference, where each existed as a positive entity in a relation of contrariety. This stands in sharp contrast to the conservative Islamist discourse's construction of a pole of negativity between Islam and the West, casting them in a relation of contradiction with each other. It should also be noted that while the early reformers sought to reconcile Islam with modern civilization, they upheld the need for their society's political and economic independence from the West.[82]

Islam is constituted in the conservative Islamist discourse as a totalized entity encompassing the people (Muslims), the civilization, history, culture, and the intellect. The focus of identity shifts from the nation and society to religion. The main thrust of the discourse is summed up in Anwar al-Jindi's proposition that: "There is a fact which cannot be transcended, the world is two cultures—Islamic and non-Islamic—and they cannot meet in a single frame."[83] This confirms a conception of Islam as a cultural system that defines all aspects of the Muslim's identity. The category of the non-Islamic is a residual one that emerges by exclusion.

ISLAMIC IDENTITY AND THE DISCOURSES ON MORALS, RITUALS, AND USURY

The conservative ideological Islamist discourse is closely tied to an ethical and moral discourse articulated by conservative shaykhs such as Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Hamid Kishk and Shaykh Muhammad Mutawalli al-Shaᶜrawi. Both shaykhs became important figures of conservatism in the 1970s. Shaykh Kishk was a mosque preacher whose influence was felt at the popular level.[84] His sermons dealt with ethics and morality. Shaykh Shaᶜrawi is a leading conservative figure who is considered an Islamic authority and a point of reference for the public.[85]

As shown in the previous section, conservative Islamists have framed the *problematique* of the present era in terms of cultural invasion. Concurrently, there have been growing efforts to frame the daily concerns of Muslims in terms of rituals and metaphysical issues. This discourse, which has become an essential component of the popular culture, focuses on rituals and religious symbolism and on the hereafter. It expounds on ethics and morals and explains how to perform rituals "the correct way." Moreover, it is framed in terms of the permissible and the forbidden and is presented as a legal ruling (*fatwā*) on a variety of subjects related to morality and religious practice. Although it is true that these concerns are found in all moral and religious discourses, it is important to take account of how this discourse is articulated and how widely it is circulated. In Egypt, it has gained popularity, commands a vast audience, and has become part of the everyday life of the "believers." It is disseminated in books and on a daily basis in the official newspapers and on television. It pronounces on the body, sexuality, and the permissible in thought, and a large part of it is devoted to issues of the afterlife. For example, it informs its "subjects" about the maidens in heaven and conjugal relations in the afterlife. That these issues are discussed by Shaykh Shaᶜrawi in a book entitled *al-Shaykh al-Shaᶜrāwī wa Qaḍāyā al-ᶜAṣr* (Shaykh Shaᶜrāwī and the Problems of the Age) is indicative of what has been elevated to an issue of great concern to the public.

The discourse on the body and sexuality reproduces relations of domination based on gender. The instructions about physical cleanliness are articulated in terms of purity; women, in this respect, appear as less pure or as impure due to their biological make-up. Pregnancy, childbirth, and menstruation are impurities that constrain the woman's access to worship. Sexuality is also inscribed in the realm of the impure. In this context, the discourse instructs its "subjects" on the Islamic rules of sexual relations. All of this has the effect of controlling the body (if not the mind).

Torture in the grave is also paid considerable attention by many of the popular preachers. Shaykh ᶜUmar ᶜAbd al-Kafi's cassette recordings include speeches warning of the torture that awaits disobedient Muslims.[86] The increased concern with the afterlife is read by one politically engaged intellectual as a sign of the absence or banishment of reason.[87] However, given the nature of Egypt's social and ideological formation, the discourse on morals and rituals coheres well and contains its self-rationale. It acts in conjunction with the conservative Islamist ideological discourse to produce an "Islamic identity." It also produces "Muslim subjects" with "Islamic bodies" and "Islamic sexuality" and outlines in detail how the "Muslim" should

cleanse himself or herself of impurities, particularly the "Muslim" woman. The disappearance of boundaries between the public and private is manifested in the fact that individuals believe that they must refer to an Islamic authority for advice on washing their bodies or on the "Islamic" tradition regarding sexual relations. Private thoughts also come under the realm of the permissible and the forbidden. This indicates that the subjects of the discourse are active in reproducing it. The discourse pre-supposes that these areas of the individual's life belong to the fundamentals of religion and, therefore, do not change. In effect, these areas of the "Muslim's" life are ritualized.

In its attempt to construct a "religious orthodoxy" through the articulation of public morality, conservative Islamism is active in appropriating the domain of culture. In this regard, it seeks to claim authority by using the categories of the licit and illicit in reference to cultural production, investing its moral outlook into the public sphere. Court challenges and intellectual censorship are key aspects of its mode of action for imposing "orthodoxy." Recent examples of these maneuvers are the legal cases brought against Yusuf Shahin's film *al-Muhājir* and against the movie billboards.[88] In similar fashion, *ḥisba*[89] has been used as a basis for initiating a lawsuit aimed at forcing the separation of the scholar Hamid Nasr Abu Zayd from his wife. The court action followed pronouncements by the conservative Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Sabur Shahin to the effect that Abu Zayd's intellectual writings were blasphemous and represented *kufr* (infidelity to Islam).[90] In the People's Assembly, questions put to Minister of Culture Faruq Husni by Member of Parliament Jalal Gharib regarding the moral propriety of certain cultural products funded by the ministry brought the confrontation, and the conservatives' moral challenge over culture, directly into the political sphere.

The state's positioning in the cultural battle converges with that of the conservatives while maneuvering to manage the challenge of radical Islamism. The state's Islamic image is increasingly being invested in the cultural realm as a strategy of neutralizing the radicals. The state pursues this aim on the grounds of morality, using cultural productions and the media as weapons for discrediting militant Islam. In the convergence of forces, official Islam and conservative Islam close ranks. The positions that al-Azhar has taken on a number of issues demonstrate the links developing between the two. Al-Azhar's involvement in court cases brought against artistic and intellectual productions has lined up on the side of the conservatives.[91] The state courts have come to represent another area of convergence between the conservatives and the state on one hand, and between the conservatives and radicals on the other. With the verdict upholding the Islamist lawyers' case for the separation of Abu Zayd from his wife, the state adopted the discourse, ethic, and mode of action of the Islamists.[92] *Takfīr* (charge of apostasy) is now wielded by representatives of the state and official Islam.[93]

Occupying an equally important position in the complex discursive formation that is active in producing Muslim subjects is the discourse on usury. Its significance lies in the fact that it is directly linked to the material conditions of the social formation, particularly the "Islamic sector" of the economy. It purports to designate what an Islamic economy is by defining the permissible and forbidden modes of economic transaction, with a focus on the question of usury. The issue of usury (*ribā*) is artic-

ulated around the axis of the legal (*sharᶜī*) and the illegal (*ghayr sharᶜī*) in the "literal" Islamic sense, while the issue of the national economy is displaced from the debate. *Ribā*, according to the tradition, is conceived as the exploitation of the poor by the rich in money-lending transactions, and its prohibition is tied to the Islamic concept of justice. Yet it is not this sense of *ribā* that is re-activated but, rather, the literal sense of the licit and the illicit. Thus, at the second congress of the Islamic Research Group, it was stipulated, in one of the recommendations, that "interest on all kinds of loans is illegal without distinction between a loan for consumption or a loan for production. . . . A loan with *ribā* at a low rate is as illegal as one at a higher rate. . . . [A]ll forms of credit providing interest are illegal."[94]

Such directives displace the question of exploitation, which was behind the original prohibition of *ribā*, by emphasizing the literal interpretation centering on the permissible and the forbidden (*ḥalāl* versus *ḥarām*). These formulations make no mention of national interest or of the constraints placed on national economies by virtue of their position in the international system. Instead, the Secretariat of the Organization of the Grand Ulema and the directorate of the House of Advanced Research for Exhortation and Spiritual Direction call on Muslims "to protect their societies from the practice of *ribā* which will subject them to a war on the part of God."[95] As mentioned earlier, this discourse finds its support in the production of an Islamic identity in religious terms devoid of national and social content.

The anti-*ribā* utterances should not be viewed as an expression of an anti-capitalist position. Rather, they are better understood in relation to Egypt's rentier capitalist economy. The discourse is articulated by groups that are engaged in rentier activities and that seek to transform the rules governing economic investment in a manner benefiting their commercial interests. Along with the conservative ideological discourse, the discourse on *ribā* is engaged in the production of an Islamic identity understood in a limited religious sense. This is achieved through the construction of contradiction with the West in religious terms. That is, the Other, as the Christian West, inverts the capitalist West and displaces social and economic contradictions. This Islamic identity coheres with the parasitic economic activity that has been the dominant feature of the social formation.

The Islamic identity constructed through the conservative Islamist discourse rejects and opposes the secular state and its institutions, including the banking system based on usury. The alternative was found in the Islamic Banks and the Islamic Societies for the Placement of Funds (ISPF) which absorbed the influx of capital from the Gulf. These societies operated outside government control and legal regulations. They did not conform to the structure of share-holding societies or that of financial institutions. The ISPF diverted capital from the national economy and invested it in speculative and non-productive commercial activity.[96] The main areas of placement were in the importation of consumer goods and speculation on foreign currency. However, the ISPF were legitimized as Islamic. This notwithstanding the fact that speculation and commercial transactions took place in the West, and that this segment of the economy is tied to the West and to the bureaucratic elite. In the confrontation with the Christian West, the issues of exploitation and dependence do not figure in the discourse. As such, the discourse coheres with the interests of a parasitic class and petit bourgeois strata associated with petro-dollars. In this respect,

state ulema and independent shaykhs such as Sha^crawi and ^cAbd al-Sabur Shahin provided the ideological support for this sector. In fact, many of these religious figures, including Sha^crawi and Shahin, acted as consultants to the ISPF.[97]

The parasitic economic activities of the early years of *Infitāḥ* took on an Islamic identity with the advent of the Islamic societies and banks. Publicity for the "Islamic sector" of the economy (mainly finance and commerce) used the following Qur^ɔanic verse as a slogan: "God permitted commerce and forbade usury" (*Aḥalla Allāh al-bay^c wa ḥarrama al-ribā*). Commerce was represented as an Islamic activity par excellence anchored in the image of the Prophet as a merchant. In this context, all commercial activities were considered licit, including trading in foreign currency on the black market, which was declared legal by a prominent shaykh of the Islamist movement, who happened also to be a member of the al-Ahrār Party and a representative in the National Assembly.[98]

There has also been a blurring of the difference between *muḍāraba*, or speculation in the traditional Islamic sense (partnership in trust), and *muqāmara*, market speculation in the contemporary sense (which implies risk and is prohibited by Islamic legal rulings). Thus, when a founder of one of the main Islamic societies was asked about its speculative activity on the international stock market, he answered that speculation is found in all forms of commerce and, therefore, the word "speculation" applies to any type of buying and selling.[99]

All aspects of the Islamic societies' operations were articulated in Islamic terms, including commercial operations (which were classified according to Islamic concepts), and their corporate names were Islamic or had Islamic connotations—such as, for example, *al-Hudā*, *al-Nūr*, *Sa^cūdiyya*. Furthermore, the products they sold were labeled "Islamic." Thus, advertising campaigns marketed the "Islamic" refrigerator and washing machine. The fact that the appliances were produced in the West and merely assembled in Egypt was irrelevant to those who sought to confer an Islamic identity on inanimate objects. Indeed, inanimate "Islamic" objects are more marketable in a society of "Muslim" subjects who are invested with "Islamic" bodies and minds.

THE CONSERVATIVE ISLAMIST DISCOURSE AND THE STRUCTURING OF THE POLITICAL FIELD

The conservative Islamist discourse articulates social categories and political positions that draw on different discourses and practices. For instance, the articulations concerning such questions as the wearing of the *ḥijāb* (veil) and the segregation of the sexes call on the practices of male domination in patriarchal society and are embedded in the system of social values. In this way, the code of female chastity and honor is brought into play, and restrictions are imposed on the whole field of interaction between the sexes. Ideology, understood as a relation to power, functions at two levels: as a universal system whose categories are not bound by class, and as a particular position appropriated by the dominant group.[100] The conservative Islamist discourse cannot be identified as a bourgeois ideology; rather, it is a universalizing discourse that produces totalizing positions (the Muslim, the Islamic). These positions are appropriated for tactical purposes by the dominant power bloc, which comprises various class fractions involved in rentier activities, including a state

bourgeoisie in conjunction with parasitic private capital (financial, commercial, industrial).[101] Its hegemonic strategy consists not only in yielding ground to popular tradition and allowing the articulation of autonomous discursive positions, but also of totalizing or universalizing these positions and expanding them beyond their particular domain, from religion to culture and ethics. The conservative Islamist discourse is also the ideology that mediates the role of the dominant bloc as a force in the political field, although the components of the bloc do not necessarily assume a homogeneous position. As a result of the interplay of the conservative Islamist discourse with radical Islam, the field of struggle is defined in terms of a contradiction between a correct understanding of Islam and a mistaken and misguided one. Both sets of representations belong to the religious domain, where categories draw upon the discourses of culture and ethics.

The roles of the state and the political forces constituted through the conservative Islamist discourse represent a division of labor in the production and dissemination of the ideology. The state through its ideological apparatuses—the media in particular—is active in producing and spreading the discourse. Meanwhile, the most prominent agents of production are located outside the state and thus appear independent of it (Shaykh Shaᶜrawi for example). The conservative Islamist discourse is also produced by "oppositional" forces represented in the al-Ahrar Party and by segments within the Muslim Brotherhood.

The convergence of forces that arises in the political field is mediated by two inter-related factors: first, the constitution of the Muslim subject in ethical and cultural terms; and second, the divergent and convergent positions assumed by the state and the "moderate" oppositional forces in relation to radical Islam. These two factors enter into the production of a "state of balance,"[102] where the state deploys a strategy of co-optation and coercion, while the "oppositional" forces assume the role of guardianship and arbitration. On one hand, the state uses dialogue and repression to contain the resistance positions articulated by radical Islamist groups such as the Jihad. On the other, the "oppositional" forces of "moderate" Islam act as defenders or guardians of *al-Shabāb al-Ṣāliḥ* (the good youth) and as mediators between them and the state. Hence, the "moderates" condemn violence,[103] while faulting the government for allowing transgressions against Islam.[104] Structuring the political field in terms of the positions mapped by these political forces (Muslim identity totalized in cultural and ethical terms and a contained position of resistance) maintains a "state of balanced tension."

The conservative Islamist discourse plays a key role in structuring the political field by the manner in which it positions itself in relation to militant Islam, the government, and the secularists. A re-grouping in the political field takes place with a polarization of positions whereby secularists face off with various lines of Islamism.[105] Positions of resistance and confrontation revolve around the two poles. As noted, different points of convergence have emerged between the conservatives and the militants and between the conservatives and the state. This convergence puts limits on the positions available to other actors and, as such, attempts to break down the ideological dominance are contained. This is the case of the secularist position as well as that of the "Islamic left." The secularists develop a position of "counter-identification" taking the form of "your Islam versus my Islam," best exemplified by

Faraj Fuda's text *al-Ḥaqīqa al-Ghā'iba* (The Missing Truth).[106] The Islamic left, while attempting a subversion from within, is itself absorbed into the dominant ideology. Following is a brief discussion of these two positions.

The insertion of *al-Ḥaqīqa al-Ghā'iba* into the debate illustrates the confrontational space in which secularists operate. The text is representative of the secularist position and, at the time of its publication, was viewed as the strongest secularist challenge to the Islamists. Its author, assassinated by militant Islamists in 1992, was a member of the National Unity Committee, an umbrella organization established in 1990 that comprised both leftist and liberal secularists. *Al-Ḥaqīqa* was produced as a response to *al-Farīḍa al-Ghā'iba* (The Missing Precept), by the militant Islamist leader ᶜAbd al-Salam Faraj.[107] Its objective was to provide an evaluation of the truth value of the opponent's (Islamists') discourse. However, the text's search for the truth is carried out on the same ground of history as its adversary. Arguments draw on the referential discourse of early Islamic history, itself a weapon in the hands of the conservative and radical Islamists. The narrative structure of Fuda's text is developed around the opposition between "what they say" and "what actually happened." In other words, history is called upon to invalidate the assertions of the Islamists. The narrative episodes serve as the premises for the refutation of the two main propositions in the Islamist discourse: one asserting the unity of politics and religion in Islam; the other asserting that "the application of the shariᶜa will be followed by an immediate reform of society."[108] The episodes are presented as proof for the dissociation of Islam and government (as in the recounting of the Saqīfa meeting and the murder of ᶜUthman) and the dissociation of justice from piety and from the application of the shariᶜa. The objective is to demonstrate that the Islamists' model of the early period does not correspond to the historical record of that period. The values they invest in the example of the Companions and rulers of the Golden Age were in fact absent. In other words, the claims of the Islamists are illusory. Furthermore, by the standards of morality that they propagate, the early Islamic history is found lacking.[109]

Much of the text is dedicated to negating affirmations about the Islamic character of the caliphate, using the moral and ethical code as a basis of proof. The validation of the proposition that the caliphate was not an Islamic state is undertaken in chapters three and four of the text, which are advanced as a new reading of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. The episodes recounted in these chapters aim to demonstrate the profanity of government and the moral laxity of the ruler. The themes of sexual promiscuity and permissiveness, treachery and barbarity are developed in different stories advanced as proof.

In recounting events from the period of the Umayyads, Fuda underscores the brutality of caliphs such as Yazid ibn Muᶜawiya and Yazid ibn ᶜAbd al-Malik. Both caliphs are referred to as *zanādiqa* (transgressors) whose rule serves as "proof against those who claimed that the state is not separate from religion."[110] The new reading of the Abbasid dynasty calls on fragments of that historical period that are designed to invalidate the opponents' claim that the caliphate was an Islamic institution. The founder of the Abbasid caliphate, al-Saffah, is projected as the embodiment of the religious state. Fuda starts his reading of that period with an account of two actions by al-Saffah: the desecration of the Umayyad tombs and the assassination of his

opponents at a dinner party. The account of these two events articulates the theme of barbarity and treachery. The latter event is posited by Fuda as a revealing knowledge, which confronts the author and his readers with a question on the nature of the caliphate: "The event poses a question . . . about the nature of the Caliphate which they [the Islamists] claimed was Islamic and we proved was not. . . . [I]t was an absolutist government covered in the garb of religion . . . ; we demonstrate to them the difference between the absolutism of religious government in the Middle Ages, the ages of torture . . . and the secularism of the contemporary age—the age of democracy and human rights."[111]

Fuda ends his journey into history with anecdotal accounts of al-Wathiq's (the last caliph of the early Abbasid era) and al-Amin's sexual relations with young men in their courts, thus bringing back into focus the violation of the moral code by the caliphs. It is, in fact, on the ground of morality that Fuda positions himself in combat against the Islamists. His counter-arguments in this regard map the field into two positions: the upholders of the moral code and the violators. The latter are identified as the caliphs and, by association, as those calling for the establishment of the caliphate, while the contemporary government occupies the former position. In effect, the combative strategy of Fuda's text is that of "your Islam versus my Islam." In commenting on al-Wathiq's and al-Amin's actions, Fuda concludes that the reader is likely to share his conviction that "[today's] rulers are better."[112]

The political field has also been marked by the movement of the Labor Party into the arena of Islamic politics, a move viewed by some as an attempt at subversion from within. The shifts in the party's position and discourse can be dated to the mid-1980s. Prior to that, the themes covered in the party's newspaper *al-Sha^{c}b* showed an emphasis on "socialist" principles, while the party's relation to Gamal Abdel Nasser and Nasserism was stressed.[113]

A marked transformation in the terms of the Labor Party's discourse takes places in the mid-1980s with the arrival of ^{c}Adil Husayn as editor of the party's paper (a position he held until the early 1990s). This does not mean that the shift in the party's ideological articulations is due to a change in personnel; rather, the transformation should be situated within the context of wider changes in the convergence of forces. ^{c}Adil Husayn's own conversion to Islamic politics should be understood in this context. The instrumentalization of Islamist articulations in the constitution of political forces started with the return of the Muslim Brothers, the manipulation of Islamic symbols by President Anwar Sadat, the rise of the Jihad group, and the Muslim Brothers' alliance with the Wafd in 1984. This brought about a re-arrangement of forces, part of which is the Labor Party's alliance with the Muslim Brothers and al-Ahrar in 1987.

Whereas during the 1980–84 period the narrative of Young Egypt's[114] history emphasized the connection with Nasser, in the 1985–89 period these narratives recounted Young Egypt's relationship with the Muslim Brothers, stressing the similarities in their principles and programs. The construction of the party's identity in religious terms was the new basis for its constitution as a political force. The tense balance achieved in the political arena as a whole can be seen in the party's positioning on particular issues. In a sense, the convergence of the "Islam of riches" and the "Islam of revolution," is crystallized in the party's defense of both the Islamic

Societies for the Placement of Funds (ISPF) and the militant and sometimes violent activities of the Islamist groups. In his editorials, Husayn attacked the government for its treatment of the *al-Shabāb al-Mustaḍᶜaf*[115] (oppressed youth), as well as for its new regulations concerning the ISPF. In this context, the antagonistic positions of these two groups are not articulated, because the *al-Shabāb al-Mustaḍᶜaf* belong to the dominated class, while the ISPF has close links to the dominant bloc. An overlap with the conservatives can also be discerned in the increased concern with issues of morality.[116]

Some analysts see the Labor Party's movement into the Islamic camp as an attempt to capture the "revolutionary" force of Islam.[117] Within this perspective, the party must provide an alternative to the readings of Islam advanced by "the organizational Islamic current" (identified with the Muslim Brothers) and the radical Islamist groups.[118] Such an alternative reading is a third way lying between "literal conservatism" and "idealist radicalism," and imposes a progressive understanding of Islamic values.[119] Yet the apparent takeover of the party by the conservative forces associated with the Muslim Brothers indicates that the potential for the left as a political force working within an Islamic alliance has been undermined. Between the rise of the alliance in 1987 and the party's Fifth National Conference in 1989, leftist forces, including those espousing the Islamic identity of the party, withdrew or were pushed out.[120] The Islamic current that emerged victorious in this internal power struggle is closely linked to the Muslim Brothers. Thus, rather than separating the "Islam of riches," or conservative Islam, from the "Islam of revolution," the party incorporates both, reinforcing the convergence of forces that maintains the political balance.

CONCLUSION

In the conservative Islamist discourse, the opponent is designated as either the Christian West or the West (secular) whose attack on the Self is carried out against an identity defined in solely religious terms. Little attention is paid to the different relationships in which this homogenized Self is engaged. This representation brings about an inversion of the nationalist articulations in which the opponent was cast as the capitalist West, with all that this involved in terms of relations of dependence and exploitation. In this respect, the conservative Islamist discourse expresses the "opening to the outside world" as a cause of corruption in cultural terms (the dangers of conversion or secularization) rather than in economic terms. Similarly, subjugation is presented as "intellectual" (subjugation of Islamic concepts to Western concepts) instead of economic. In this way, the discourse displaces the image of the West as an imperialist force in opposition to the Third World, wherein the struggle is conceived as primarily a political and economic one. The national and social identity is reduced to a "religious Self" in which social antagonisms are evacuated. The only contradiction that is conceptualized is between that religious Self and an undifferentiated Other—the West, subsuming both the left and the right, the religious and the secular. A similar inversion is noted in the articulation of the Arab–Israeli conflict in terms of an Islamic–Judaic confrontation that displaces the question of the national identity and national rights of the Palestinians.

This inversion is clear in utterances that postulate the field of conflict and "competition" with the West as that of values and principles: "[the enemies] do not *possess* the 'life' values and principles Islam possesses, if they did they would have depended on the quality of their *goods* in their competition and struggle. But their feeling of bankruptcy is what led them to . . . vulgarity" (emphasis mine).[121] Here, the lexicon common to the domain of trade and finance is transposed to the field of ethics and morality, limiting the nature of the confrontation and superimposing morality on the whole field of exchange. Within this perspective, Islam's superiority is tied to the moral corruption of the West, itself a cause of its supposed deterioration, bankruptcy, and inevitable collapse. As such, the increased reliance on Western powers in matters of security, along with the deepening of dependency relations in the economic realm, is left out of the discussion of the relationship between the West and the Arab and Islamic countries.

The conservative Islamist discourse is articulated by the right-wing opposition party al-Ahrar and elements of the Muslim Brothers, as well as by segments of the state apparatus, the official newspapers, and the state-run mass media. It is produced in relation to a particular set of material conditions and finds support among various class fractions tied to the rentier economy (a parasitic bourgeois class, a fraction of the petit bourgeoisie, a transformed labor aristocracy, and professionals). Positions of individuals such as Shaykh Sha^{c}rawi, a former cabinet minister who now occupies a central place in the ideological state apparatus, exemplify the links between the state and a bourgeoisie involved in parasitic economic activities.

The ideological significance of the notions and concepts developed in the conservative Islamist discourse can be grasped further in the way they function as a support for the discourse on usury and how they work in conjunction with a discourse on rituals and morality as articulated by Sha^{c}rawi and Kishk for the production of "Muslim" subjects.

NOTES

Author's note: This article is a much-revised version of Chapter 4 of my Ph.D. dissertation, "Discourse and Ideology in Contemporary Egypt" (McGill University, 1992). Parts of this text were presented at the conference "The Future of Nationalism and the State," University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, July 1996. I thank Brian Aboud for his comments on earlier drafts of the article. I also thank the anonymous reviewers for their constructive criticism.

[1]al-Ahrar (the Liberal Party) emerged out of one of the three platforms of the Arab Socialist Union that were formed at the beginning of President Sadat's political-liberalization experiment. The leader of the party, Mustafa Kamal Murad, was a second-rank free officer. The party proclaims a liberal identity. However, it articulates a conservative Islamist line in reference to morality and the social sphere. In 1987, it entered an election alliance with the al-^{c}Amal (Labor) Party and the Muslim Brotherhood and was allocated 20 percent of the seats won. Among its better-known figures were Shaykh Salah Abu Isma^{c}il and Yusuf al-Badri. See Mona Makram Ebeid, "Le rôle de l'opposition officielle en Égypte," *Maghreb-Machrek* 119 (February–March 1988): 5–24.

[2]This partly corresponds to Yahya Sadowski's distinction between radicals and legalists. Yahya Sadowski, "Egypt's Islamic Movement: A New Political and Economic Force," *Middle East Insight* 25 (1987): 37–45.

[3]For an analysis of the radical Islamist discourse in Egypt, see Salwa Ismail, *Radical Islamism in Egypt: Discursive Struggle*, Montreal Studies on the Contemporary Arab World (Montreal: Inter-University

Consortium for Arab Studies, 1994); also Hamied Ansari, "The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16 (1984): 123–44.

[4]On petro-Islam, or the Islam of riches, see Fuʾād Zakariyyā, *Al-Ḥaqīqa wa al-Wahm fī al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya al-Muᶜāṣira* (Truth and Illusion in the Contemporary Islamist Movement) (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr lil-Dirāsāt, 1986).

[5]A thoughtful analysis of the dynamics of interaction among these various players is provided by Alain Roussillon in "Entre al-Jihad et al-Rayyan: Phénomenologie de l'islamisme égyptien," *Maghreb–Machrek* 127 (January–March 1990): 17–50.

[6]This is an informal group of lawyers active in initiating court cases in the name of safeguarding morality and religious values.

[7]Differences on matters of doctrinal interpretations have come to the fore recently and revolved around the position of Copts in Egypt. Mustafa Mashhur, the Spiritual Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, classifies Copts as *dhimmiyyūn* (protected subjects) who must pay the *jizya* (tribute, close in nature to a poll tax) and be excluded from military service. See *al-Ahram Weekly*, 3 April 1997. Other figures with links to the movement critiqued this view, asserting that Copts are citizens with full national rights; Muḥammad Salīm al-ᶜAwwā, "Bal al-Jizya fī Dhimat al-Tārīkh" (But al-Jizya Is in the Realm of History), *al-Wafd*, 18 April 1997. For other examples of responses to Mashhur, see *al-Muṣawwir*, 25 April 1997.

[8]On the role of the Islamist current in the syndicates, see Mustapha K. al-Sayyid," Le syndicat des ingénieurs et le courant islamique," *Maghreb–Machrek* 146 (October–December 1995): 27–39.

[9]On Islamic PVOs, see Sarah Ben Nafissa, "Le mouvement associatif égyptien et l'Islam: Elements d'une problematique," *Maghreb–Machrek* 135 (January–March 1992): 19–36. On the social and charitable organizations affiliated with the Brotherhood and the Jihad, see Ḥāla Muṣṭafā, *al-Niẓām al-Siyāsī wa al-Muᶜāraḍa al-Islāmiyya fī Misr* (The Political System and the Religious Opposition in Egypt) (Cairo: Dār al-Maḥrūsa, 1996).

[10]In 1988 and 1989, in clashes with the Jihad militants, the police laid siege to the Adam mosque in ᶜAyn Shams.

[11]In the censorship campaign waged against writers and artists, popular preachers such as ᶜUmar ᶜAbd al-Kafi used Friday prayer sermons to issue *fatāwī* (rulings) condemning various scholarly and artistic works.

[12]Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

[13]Ibid., 137.

[14]On the development of this concept of ideology, see John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), particularly chap. 3.

[15]Here I am drawing on Talal Asad's notion of discursive tradition. Asad defines an Islamic discursive tradition as "simply a tradition of Muslim discourses that addresses itself to conceptions of the past and future, with reference to a particular present" (Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* [Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1986], 14).

[16]For a critique of the revivalist explanation, see Eric Davis, "The Concept of Revival and the Study of Islam and Politics," in *The Islamic Impulse*, ed. Barbara F. Stowasser (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 37–58.

[17]Social violence has been used in attempts to enforce the *ḥijāb* (veil) and to prohibit the sale of alcohol. This comes under the rubric of *al-amr bi-l-maᶜrūf wa al-nahy ᶜan al-munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil).

[18]Despite the wide-scale arrests that followed the assassination of President Sadat by Jihad members, the group was reconstituted several times under different names, such as the Vanguard of Conquest. Al-Jamāᶜat al-Islāmiyya is made up of numerous cells active on university campuses. In the last two years, out of seventeen trials of Islamist groups, fifteen involved cells of al-Jamāᶜat. The nature of the structure of this group and the links between the various cells are not clearly established. See Nabīl ᶜAbd al-Fatāḥ and Ḍiyāʾ Rashwān, eds., *Taqrīr al-Ḥāla al-Dīniyya fī Miṣr* (Report on the Religious Condition in Egypt) (Cairo: Markaz al-Ahrām lil-Buḥūth al-Istrātījiyya, 1997).

[19]On state violence, see Ahmed Abdalla, "Egypt's Islamists and the State: From Complicity to Confrontation," *Middle East Report* 183 (July–August 1993): 28–31; see also, The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, *Difāᶜa ᶜan Ḥuqūq al-Insān* (In Defense of Human Rights) (Cairo: al-Munaẓẓama al-

Miṣriyya li-Huqūq al-Insān, 1997). For an overview of the clashes between the state and the militants over the last two years, see ᶜAbd al-Fatāḥ and Rashwān, eds., *Taqrīr.*

[20]For an analysis of the mufti's report, see Ansari, "Islamic Militants," and Ismail, *Radical Islamism in Egypt.*

[21]I dealt with the positioning of the state in relation to the cultural politics of the Islamists in my paper "The State, Religious Orthodoxy and Public Morality in Egypt," presented to the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, September 1996. On al-Azhar's expanding role in censorship, see, The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, *Ḥurriyat al-Raʾy wa al-ᶜAqīda: Qiyūd wa Ishkāliyat, Riqābat al-Azhar ᶜalā al-Muṣannafāt al-Fanniyya* (Freedom of Thought and Belief: Constraints and Problems; al-Azhar's Censorship of Artistic Productions) (Cairo: al-Munaẓẓama al-Miṣriyya li-Ḥuqūq al-Insān, 1994).

[22]Eric Davis, "Ideology, Social Class and Islamic Radicalism," in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 133–47.

[23]William Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987): 307–36.

[24]Hrair Dekmejian, "Islamic Revival, Catalysts, Categories and Consequences," in *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, ed. Shireen Hunter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 3–22.

[25]Works by state-affiliated and independent shaykhs as well as selected reports on economic and financial affairs from the official press make up the corpus of texts used to study the discourses on morals, rituals, and usury.

[26]The texts cover the period 1978 to 1989 and are representative of conservative Islamist writings. Jindī's early writings fall within the field of literary criticism. His later works, beginning in the 1960s, deal with issues surrounding Arab and Islamic civilization, Islam's relation to the West, and contemporary Arab intellectual writings. For a critical examination of Jindī's writings as representative of contemporary Islamist thought, see Muhammad Arkūn, *Tāʾrīkhiyyat al-Fikr al-Arabī al-Islāmī* (The Historicity of Arab Islamic Thought) (Beirut: Markaz al-Inmāʾ al-Qawmī, 1987).

[27]The method used for analyzing the writings under study benefits from certain concepts developed in the field of discourse analysis, particularly those of A. J. Greimas. In particular, A. J. Greimas, *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*, trans. Paul J. Perron and Frank H. Collins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); idem, *The Social Sciences: A Semiotic View*, trans. Paul Perron and Frank H. Collins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990). Some of the technical terminology common to this methodology, and to the presentation of its findings, has been omitted or modified in this text. However, the meanings, concepts, and themes found in the conservative Islamist discourse, as well as the elements identified as being part of its organization and structure, are distilled through detailed textual analysis.

[28]Anwar al-Jindī, *Shubuhāt al-Taghrīb* (The Suspect Claims of Westernization) (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1978), 15.

[29]"Al-Islām lā Yatalawwan abdān . . . Yā Duktūr" (Islam Does not Change Colors . . . Oh Doctor), *al-Nūr*, 30 March 1988.

[30]Al-Jindī, *Shubuhāt*, 17. It is interesting to compare these formulations with the following lament of a prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood organization: "Marxism and secularism are being propagated openly and publicly. The contemporary 'Crusaders' plan and act to infiltrate everywhere without fear; the media, in addition to clubs and theaters, spread obscenities and misconduct." Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism* (Washington, D.C.: The American Trust Publication, n.d.).

[31]"Ḥamalāt Waqiḥa Min Warāʾ al-Ḥudūd" (Rude Campaigns from Across the Border), *al-Nūr*, 14 December 1988.

[32]"Al-Fikr al-Dīnī al-Mustanīr" (Enlightened Islamic Thought), *al-Mukhtār al-Islāmī*, 73 (February 1989): 72–77.

[33]"Ḥamalāt Waqiḥa," *al-Nūr.*

[34]"Al-Shaykh al-Shaᶜrāwī Yuwājih Duᶜāt al-ᶜIlmāniyya" (Shaykh al-Shaᶜrāwī Confronts the Preachers of Secularism), *al-Ahrām*, 12 January 1986.

[35]"Mustaqbal al-Tabshīr fī Miṣr wa al-Amal fī Makka" (The Future of Proselytization is in Egypt and the Hope is in Mecca), *al-Nūr*, 22 June 1988.

[36]al-Jindī, *Shubuhāt.*

[37]"Mustaqbal," *al-Nūr.*

[38]Anwar al-Jindī, "Marāḥil al-Mukhaṭṭaṭ al-Marsūm li-Iqtiḥām al-Islām Min al-Khārij" (The Stages of the Planned Plot to Invade Islam from the Outside), *al-Nūr,* 3 November 1988.

[39]"Mustaqbal," *al-Nūr.*

[40]"ᶜUlamāᵓ al-Islām Yuḥaddidūn Mafhūm wa Maẓāhir wa ᶜIlāj al-Taṭarruf" (The Ulama of Islam Define the Concept, Symptoms, and Remedy of Extremism), *al-Nūr,* 2 March 1988.

[41]Al-Jindī, "Marāḥil."

[42]"Ḥamalāt," *al-Nūr.*

[43]"Mustaqbal," *al-Nūr.*

[44]Al-Jindī, *Shubuhāt,* 16–17.

[45]"Al-Shaykh al-Shaᶜrāwī Yuwājih Duᶜāt al-ᶜIlmāniyya" (Shaykh al-Shaᶜrāwī Confronts the Preachers of Secularism), *al-Ahrām,* 12 December 1986.

[46]Al-Jindī, *Shubuhāt,* 120.

[47]The term for "instinct" used in the original Arabic text is "*gharīza.*" It is argued that "religiosity is an instinct" (*al-tadayyun gharīza*). "Al-Islām lā Yatalawwan," *al-Nūr,* 30 March 1988.

[48]Al-Jindī, *Shubuhāt,* 107.

[49]Anwar al-Jindī, *Suqūṭ al-ᶜIlmāniyya* (The Collapse of Secularism) (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1980), 175.

[50]Fuᵓād Zakariyyā, "al-Muslim al-Muᶜāṣir wa al-Baḥth ᶜan al-Yaqīn" (The Contemporary Muslim and the Search for Certainty), in *al-Ḥaqīqa wa al-Wahm fī al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya al-Muᶜāṣira* (The Truth and the Illusion in the Contemporary Islamic Movement) (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr lil-Dirāsāt, 1986), 5–20.

[51]Muhammad ᶜĀbid al-Jābirī, *Fī al-Khiṭāb al-ᶜArabī al-Muᶜāsir* (On Contemporary Arab Discourse) (Beirut: al-Ṭalīᶜah, 1982).

[52]Sayyid Quṭb, *Maᶜrakat al-Islām wa al-Raᵓsmāliyya* (The Battle of Islam and Capitalism) (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1987), 101–2.

[53]Ibid.

[54]"Ḥamalāt," *al-Nūr.*

[55]Ibid.

[56]Al-Jindī, "Marāḥil."

[57]Anwar al-Jindī, "al-Tayyār al-Islāmī Ḥaqīqa Thābita" (The Islamic Current is a Rooted Fact) *al-Iᶜtiṣām,* 1 December 1988.

[58]"Al-Islām lā Yatalawwan," *al-Nūr.*

[59]Vladimir Propp's analysis of Russian folk tales posited the presence of underlying narrative structures organized in terms of a basic trajectory: the quest by the subject or hero for the realization of an object of value. Greimas's model of narrative as the organizing principle of discourse is inspired by the Proppian schema.

[60]Al-Jindī, "Marāḥil."

[61]Al-Jindī, *Suqūt,* 136.

[62]"Ḥamalāt," *al-Nūr.*

[63]Ibid.

[64]Al-Jindī, "al-Tayyār al-Islāmī."

[65]"Al-Islām lā Yatalawwan," *al-Nūr.*

[66]Discursive organization refers to the communication process, or how the message is communicated to a locutee. In this process, the sender of the message makes use of and manipulates discursive tools to ensure the good reception of the message.

[67]"Ḥamalāt," *al-Nūr.*

[68]"Mustaqbal," *al-Nūr.*

[69]Al-Jindī, "al-Tayyār al-Islāmī."

[70]Ibid.

[71]In debates with the secularists, thinkers associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Muhammad al-Ghazali, have used this strategy of argumentation. See Nancy E. Gallagher, "Islam vs. Secularism in Cairo: An Account of the Dar al-Hikma Debate," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25, 2 (April 1989): 208–15.

[72]Al-Jindī, "al-Tayyār al-Islāmī."

[73]"Al-Shaykh al-Shaʿrāwī," *al-Ahrām.*

[74]Ibid.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Al-Jindī, "Marāḥil."

[78]"Wā Islāmāh!" (O Islam!), *al-Ahrār*, 24 August 1987.

[79]Al-Jindī, "al-Tayyār al-Islāmī."

[80]Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798–1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 144.

[81]Ibid., 138–44.

[82]This position was expressed by nationalists such as Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, who voiced concern that Egypt pay its debts in order to regain national independence. See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 180.

[83]Al-Jindī, *Shubuhāt.*

[84]Shaykh Kishk is an al-Azhar graduate who studied *uṣūl al-dīn* (the fundamentals of religion). He was an *imām* (leader of the prayer) at a government mosque and a preacher in ʿAyn al-Ḥayāt mosque. He was arrested in 1966. His recorded sermons gained wide distribution in the early 1970s. He also contributed a column in the government-sponsored *al-Liwāʾ al-Islāmī.* See Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (London: al-Saqi Books, 1985), 174–76. See also Johannes J. G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), chap. 4.

[85]Shaykh Shaʿrawi is recognized as the star of television preachers. He is an al-Azhar graduate of no scholarly distinction. He worked as a religious teacher in the state educational system. In 1976, he was appointed minister of religious endowments by Sadat. Prior to this, he had spent some time teaching in Saudi Arabia. Shaykh Shaʿrawi is a central figure by virtue of the multiple positions he occupies. He is a popular preacher whose Friday sermons are televised. He has worked as a consultant to the Islamic Societies for the Placement of Funds. In addition, he has been engaged in various attempts to broker peace between the government and the militant Islamists. For a critical reading of Shaʿrawi's discourse and his rise to prominence, see Fuʾād Zakariyyā, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa al-Wahm fī al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya al-Muʿāṣira.* See also Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Muḥammad Mutawalli al-Shaʿrāwī—A Portrait of a Contemporary ʿĀlim in Egypt," in *Islam, Nationalism and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan*, ed. Gabriel R. Warburg and Uri M. Kupferschmidt (New York: Praeger, 1983), 281–97, and Jansen, *The Neglected Duty*, chap. 5.

[86]ʿAbd al-Kafi belongs to the younger generation of preachers who have gained a large following. His sermons are said to be behind the decision of many middle-class women to don the veil. He is also known for a *fatwā* stipulating that Muslims should not be the first to greet non-Muslims.

[87]Zakariyyā, "al-Muslim al-Muʿāṣir."

[88]Court proceedings initiated by the head of a Sufi order sought to ban the film from Egyptian cinemas. An earlier version of the screenplay had been deemed "blasphemous" in an al-Azhar ruling. In addition, conservative Islamist figures such as Yusuf al-Badri have been involved in initiating court cases against movie billboards—charging theater owners with transgression against the moral code.

[89]Intervention carried out in the name of the public good.

[90]In March 1993, Abu Zayd's candidacy for promotion to professor in the Arabic Language department of Cairo University's Faculty of Arts was denied. This decision was based on an apostasy charge made against his writings in the report of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Sabur Shahin, a member of the promotion committee. Shaykh Shahin used the pulpit of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAs mosque, where he is the Friday preacher, to denounce Abu Zayd and his works. The "offensive" works include a semiotic study of the Qurʾanic text and a critique of contemporary Islamist discourses. The court case seeking the annulment of his marriage was brought by the Islamist lawyer Muhammad Samida Abu Samad.

[91]One should keep in mind the role of the rector of al-Azhar in influencing the direction of the institution. Under the late Shaykh Jad al-Haq, al-Azhar was more aligned with the conservatives and came into conflict with the mufti, Shaykh Sayyid Tantawi, who was considered a liberal figure. Following the death of Shaykh Jad al-Haq, Shaykh Tantawi succeeded to the position of rector of al-Azhar. Conservatives within al-Azhar have organized in the form of the Ulema of al-Azhar Front, issuing statements denouncing the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in September 1994. The text of the statement appeared in *al-Wafd*, 7 August 1994. On al-Azhar's position on the ICPD, see Donna Lee Brown, "Abortion, Islam and the 1994 Cairo Population Conference," *International Journal*

of Middle East Studies 29 (1997): 161–84. The front has been active in declaring liberal and secular intellectuals as infidels. The latest target of this charge is the Egyptian thinker Hasan Hanafi; Richard Engel, "Apostate Ruling Endangers Professor," *Middle East Times*, 11 May 1997.

[92]See the text of the ruling; *Maḥkamat Istiʾnāf al-Qāhira, al-Dāʾira 14, Istiʾnāf 278*, 1995 (Cairo Court of Appeal, District 14, Appeal Case 278, 1995).

[93]Islamic authority figures from the "moderate" camp were party to *takfīr.* For example, at the trial of the assassin of Faraj Fuda, Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali, a prominent Islamic figure identified with the Muslim Brotherhood, testified that it was permissible for a Muslim to apply *ḥadd al-ridda* (the ordinance of apostasy) to an apostate.

[94]Mustafa Ali Ahmad, "Les intérêts bancaires sont illicites," *al-Ahrām al-Iqtiṣādī*, 2 June 1986, in *Islam et dérégulation financière*, ed. and trans. Jean-François Rycx (Cairo: CEDEJ, 1988), 60–67.

[95]Ibid., 61.

[96]On the activities of the Islamic banks and companies, see Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam* (London: Routledge, 1991), 178–95.

[97]On the links between the religious establishment and the ISPF, see ᶜAbd al-Qādir Shuhayb, *al-Ikhtirāq: Qiṣṣat Sharikāt Tawẓīf al-Amwāl* (The Infiltration: The Story of the Islamic Societies for the Placement of Funds) (Cairo: Dār Sīnā, 1989).

[98]"Les banques islamiques et les Sociétés islamiques de placement sont-elles une réaction de l'Islam des riches ou une réaction de l'Islam politique?" *al-Ahrām al-Iqtiṣādī*, 12 May 1986, in *Islam et dérégulation financière*, 92–93.

[99]Fathi Mohammed Tawfik, "C'est leur succès qui attire des attaques contre les investissements islamiques," *Middle East Times*, 23–29 November 1986, in *Islam et dérégulation financière*, 227.

[100]John Frow, "Discourse and Power," *Economy and Society* 14 (May 1985): 204.

[101]For more on these, see Muhammad Nūr al-Dīn, "Taṭawwur Raʾs al-Māl al-Maṣrafī fī Miṣr" (The Development of Finance Capital in Egypt), *Qaḍāyā Fikriyya* (August–October 1986), 136–64; Malak Zalouk, *Power, Class and Foreign Capital in Egypt* (London: Zed Books, 1989).

[102]This idea is drawn from Frow, "Discourse and Power."

[103]"Taqrīr Muftī al-Jumhūriyya ᶜan Kitāb al-Farīḍa al-Ghāʾiba" (The Mufti's Report on the Book 'The Missing Precept'), appendix in Niᶜmat Junayna, *Tanẓīm al-Jihād: Hal Huwa al-Ḥāl al-Badīl fī Miṣr* (The Jihad Organization: Is it the Islamic Alternative in Egypt?) (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥurriyya, 1988).

[104]"Baᶜd Musalsal al-Ṣidām bayn al-Shurṭa wa al-Jamāᶜāt al-Islāmiyya" (After the Episode of Confrontation between the Police and the Islamic Jamāᶜat), *al-Nūr*, 18 January 1989; "Kalafū Anfusahum bi-taṭbīq Ḥudūd Allāh wa Jaladū al-nās fī al-Shawāriᶜ" (They Abrogated the Right of Applying the Religious Ordinances and They Flogged the People in the Streets), *al-Aḥrār*, 26 December 1988.

[105]According to Alain Roussillon, Egypt has witnessed a rearrangement of the political scene, with new lines of division between the secularists and the Islamists replacing the left/right division. Alain Roussillon, "al-Jamāᶜāt al-Islāmiyya fī al-Siyāsa al-Miṣriyya" (The Islamist Groups in Egyptian Politics), *al-Mawqif al-ᶜArabī* 94 (February–March 1988): 74–102.

[106]Faraj Fūda, *al-Ḥaqīqa al-Ghāʾiba* (The Missing Truth) (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr lil-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīᶜ, 1988).

[107]ᶜAbd al-Salām Faraj, "al-Farīḍa al-Ghāʾiba" (The Missing Precept), appendix in *Tanẓīm al-Jihād.*

[108]Fūda, *al-Ḥaqīqa*, 22.

[109]There have been a number of recent works devoted to a re-reading of the early Islamic period. Among these writings are Sayyid Maḥmūd al-Qimmanī, *Hurūb Dawlat al-Rasūl* (The Wars of the Prophet's State) (Cairo: Dār Sīnā, 1993); Khalīl ᶜAbd al-Karīm, *Mujtamaᶜ Yathrib* (The Society of Yathrib) (Cairo: Dār Sīnā, 1997); and idem, *Shadw al-Rabāba bi-ʾAḥwāl Mujtamaᶜ al-Ṣaḥāba* (The Fiddle's Chants on the Ways of the Society of the Companions) (Cairo: Dār Sīnā, 1997). Khalil's works deny any puritanical pretension to the society of Madina and to the Companions. Profane concerns governed much of the actions of the members of the model society. Again, an underlying message is that the sexual code and practices of the period are far removed from their idealized representation by the Islamists.

[110]Fūda, *al-Ḥaqīqa*, 86.

[111]Ibid., 100.

[112]Ibid., 130.

[113]A more detailed analysis of the discourse can be found in Salwa Ismail, "Discourse and Ideology in Contemporary Egypt" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1992). The findings are based on an examination

of thirty articles covering the party's weekly seminars and the leaders' speeches given on different occasions, such as religious celebrations, memorial anniversaries, and party conventions. The survey looked at issues covered in a three-month sample for each year between 1980 and 1984.

[114]The Labor Party traces ideological and membership roots to Young Egypt, a pre-revolutionary political organization.

[115]A position taken by the Muslim Brotherhood and the "independent" ulema who condemn violence as a weapon of opposition while maintaining a critical view of the government for its delay in applying sharīᶜa in a comprehensive manner.

[116]The party paper's position on the International Conference on Population and Development was articulated in moral terms. It termed the conference "*muʾtamar al-ibāḥiyya wa al-shudhūdh*" (the conference of promiscuity and deviance). See *al-Shaᶜb*, July and August 1994.

[117]Roussillon, "al-Jamāᶜāt al-Islāmiyya."

[118]Ibid., 86.

[119]Ibid.

[120]Differences between the Labor Party and the Muslim Brotherhood developed in the early 1990s. They were largely tactical rather than ideological in nature. For instance, the Muslim Brothers' acquisition of a weekly publication in 1993 reflected an internal competition for leverage over common political and doctrinal positions. In the Labor Party's Sixth National Conference, executive-committee positions were filled predominantly by party members, while the Muslim Brothers' presence was marginal. The continued alliance between the party and the Brothers was, however, affirmed by party leader Ibrahim Shukri in his speech at the conference; *al-Ahāli*, 12 May 1993.

[121]"Ḥamalāt Waqiḥa," *al-Nūr.*