

The Brotherhood and the Islamization discourse in Egypt

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*Abstract*¹

This paper focuses on changes in the Media-Political Communications of the Muslim Brotherhood while in power in Egypt in 2012 and 2013. The MB or al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun is regarded as the mother of Islamist movements in the Middle East. During their period in power, the group established its first TV channel Misr25 and launched a daily newspaper al-Hurria wa al-'Adala. No other studies have researched the communications of the Brotherhood or their approach to media while they were in power.

The Brotherhood's communications during this period were little more than themes and trends that were communicated from the top down by the group's leadership to their media outlets, which lacked sufficient independence to do their work based on editorial values alone. This study identifies these themes, analyses them, and places them within the wider context of the literature in historical and regional contexts.

This paper concludes that the Brotherhood's main aim was to achieve a constitution with an Islamic background regardless of hostility and criticism. The study also shows that the Brotherhood moved towards antagonist discourses as the opposition rallied against them, and underlines the troubled relationship between the Brotherhood and the main actors in Egyptian society, which were the army, the Christians and the secular opposition. The paper uniquely answers questions related to the Brotherhood's rule in Egypt in 2012 and 2013 through the analysis of its media.

Keywords: *Brotherhood, Egypt, Islamization, Arab Spring*

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1. Introduction

Most Islamists in Arab countries failed to make the best use of the media to help them become a successful opposition or a ruling party (Talidy 2020). Media elements include many that Islamists could not use to help them achieve their goals (Mellor 2017). Many Islamist practices showed little understanding of how to apply editorial values, recruiting professional writers, using sound techniques and above all allowing the media entities to operate independently.

The Islamists dream of reaching power in Egypt ended up becoming nightmare that reflected one of the worst crises in their history (Pargeter 2016). Once the most organised and influential social movement in Egyptian society, the Muslim Brotherhood was eventually branded as a terrorist group, and Islamists in many Arab countries failed when they came to power. In Tunisia, the *Ennahdha*² movement struggled to stay on the right side of the power equation and they are now facing growing criticism (ibid). In Gaza, Hamas's control over the strip put them under years of siege (Handley 2010). In Iraq and Syria, the armed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria force (ISIS or *Da'esh*) took over from the moderate Islamists and causing a significant humanitarian crisis for the Islamists themselves, as well as their families and their victims (Sterio 2015). While Islamists in Turkey and Iran managed to stay in power, they faced continuous conflict with the west for various reasons (Oğuzlu 2008). There is not a single example in the Middle East where the Islamists took power and successfully achieved economic development, democratic transition or sound international relations.

To tackle the unique and hitherto unresearched idea of how the Islamists used the media when in power, this paper examines the Media-Political Communication strategies the MB adopted when they came to power in Egypt in 2012.

2. The battle over Egypt's constitution's identity (November 2012)

This paper examines the Brotherhood's media-political communications when they had full power in Egypt, from June 2012 when Morsi won the presidential elections. In this paper, I will continue answering the main research questions related to the changes in the Brotherhood's political

² Transcription from the Tunisian movement's Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/Nahdha.International/> Accessed on 02/12/2020

communications, structures, and relationships when it reached power. The sub-question that I will be concentrating upon in this paper relates to the approach the Brotherhood took when it reached power. Did the party remain nationalist as was presented in the previous paper? Did it try to take a revolutionary approach or one of gradual reform? Did it try to Islamize society? What changes took place within the Brotherhood itself during this period?

During this period, the Brotherhood were in power in Egypt and Morsi became president. Two other MB leaders, Sa'ad al-Katatni and Ahmed Fahmi became speakers in the lower and upper chambers of the parliament respectively, and many other Brotherhood members became provincial governors, ministers, and union leaders.

This paper argues that by being in power, the Brotherhood became a new and unique category within Islamist social movements, one that went beyond Bayat's Post-Islamists (Bayat 2013:16). This category could be combined with Melucci's (1996) New Social Movements argument regarding the cultural identity of social movements. The Brotherhood became a Beyond Post-Islamist new social movement once it managed to reach power.

Based on the analysis of empirical data, this paper shows that the MB's media-political communications during this period were more Islamist than nationalist, and that the Brotherhood were more interested in the Islamization of Egypt's new constitution than they were in the transformation to democracy. Evidence for this claim will be presented later in this paper. The paper also argues that media-political and social contexts impacted the communication process, not just the power of the word or the role of the influencer (Bayat 2007). Finally, this paper demonstrates that a social movement's institutionalization process is affected more by ideology and identity, regional actors, and funding than it is by internal and societal factors.

3. The importance of November/December 2012:

In a TV show on the Brotherhood *Misr25 TV*, Dr Nadia Mostafa, a professor of politics at Cairo University, contended that November and December 2012 were instrumental in the modern history of Egypt and the course of political communication practices by the Muslim Brotherhood

(Mostafa 2013)³. Those two months represented a political crisis following the announcement of a controversial presidential Constitutional Decree on November 22nd, 2012 by Morsi, and new opposition movements emerged amid anger against Morsi and the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood gave a massive push to finalizing Egypt's post-uprising constitution, putting all its political strength towards achieving that (ibid).

4. Morsi's unpopular Constitutional Decree

The Brotherhood's (MB) main goal was to achieve a constitution based on the Islamic *Shari'a*, and it was this that lay Morsi's Constitutional Decree announcement on November 22nd, 2012 and the subsequent hostilities directed against the Brotherhood.⁴ The discourse analysis of the Brotherhood's media political communication in this paper will demonstrate that its aims stopped being nationalist in the way they were during Morsi's campaign. The MB's "Islamic project" was put above any national discourse such as the idea of *Nahda* that was strongly promoted during Morsi's campaign. That change led to the Brotherhood's eventual demise, particularly because the group failed to adapt and to change itself into a post-Islamist movement that combined Islamic and nationalist tendencies. The MB's desire to make Islamic rules dominant in politics was also suggested by other scholars:

When the Muslim Brotherhood and its allies drafted the 2012 constitution, they were motivated primarily by a desire to preserve their position at the heart of the new state. Their chosen strategy was to significantly increase the powers of parliament (which they assumed they would continue to dominate in the future) and concede to both Salafi and military demands on other issues; liberals and secular Egyptians were considered to be little more than a political irrelevance and were treated as such in the drafting chamber (al-Ali 2016:125).

In his articulation of social movements' Islamisation, Behrouz Moazami (2013) offers four elements to support the process: the fact that politics dominates culture in times of crisis, the process of political elimination during the revolution, the formation of identity that follows engagement in the political process, and the universalisation of this identity for all social

³ Mostafa, Nadia. *Misr25 TV*, December 5th, 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bG1rIKsWjY> Accessed on 14 December 2020.

⁴ Al-Ansari, *Al-Hurria wa al-'Adala*, November 10th, 2012: p16 / Badie, Mohamed. *Al-Hurria wa al-'Adala*, November 2nd, 2012: p16

movement members following a political victory. While Moazami found this pertinent when applying it to the Iranian Islamic revolution model, the discourse analysis in this paper does not agree that the Iranian model could apply to Egypt. This study concurs more with Gramsci's idea that culture forms politics, not vice versa. The study also argues that social movements like the Brotherhood already had a solid Islamic identity, and remained even more adamant about not changing this during revolutions and crises to adopt a more national discourse in policies.

The post-uprising transitional period in Egypt in 2011 took the country's political landscape to the verge of collapse. Orders from the Supreme Court dissolved *Majlis al-Sha'ab* two days before the presidential elections and speculations were raised that the other two elected institutions, the Upper Parliament House (*Majlis al-Shura*) and the Constitutional Assembly were about to be dissolved too. Such practices continued after Morsi came to power, and were behind Morsi's unpopular Constitutional Decree (Pioppi 2013). Morsi claimed that he wanted to protect these institutions from being dissolved and to make sure that Egypt had a functioning Constitution and an elected parliament (Ibid). Scholars affirmed that Morsi's declaration had the opposite effect to the one he wanted to achieve:

The declaration provoked immediate and widespread outrage. It was made in a politically clumsy way, to say the least, as it was badly formulated and, above all, without previous consultation with other non-Islamist forces that were also demanding, for example, the removal of the prosecutor general and the trial of former regime officials. Still, it was suspicious of the MB's authoritarian leanings. For the first time since 2011, the non-Islamist forces united in an anti-Brotherhood platform and launched the National Salvation Front (NSF). The Front, led by the three main personalities of the opposition, Muhamed el-Baradei [sic], Hamdeen Sabahi, and Amr Moussa, aimed at the annulment of the presidential decree and the formation of a more representative Constituent Assembly (Pioppi 2013)

5. The National - The dialectic nature of Morsi's Constitutional Declaration:

The Brotherhood promoted many elements of Morsi's Constitutional Declaration, to the extent where it became confusing. The MB attempted to show that the declaration was revolutionary and that it would help Morsi re-

open trials against the killers of the *Shuhadaa al-Thawra*.⁵ The media also tried to show that Morsi's actions represented a step towards democratization by saying that he was trying to protect elected institutions like *Majlis al-Shura* and the Constitutional Assembly, and that this was a step towards reform by removing Mubarak's Attorney General. In contrast, the opposition saw this step as one which brought Egypt closer to a religious state controlled by *Maktab Irshad al-Ikhwān*, the Guidance Bureau of the MB.⁶

While Morsi and the MB tried to justify his Constitutional Declaration as being aimed at protecting the revolution, the opposition considered that the declaration was an attempt by the Brotherhood to take a firmer grip on power. The opposition believed that the Brotherhood was trying to speed up the process of Islamization by ignoring the opposition's reservations on the constitution's new draft. This led Dalia Fahmy to contend that Morsi and the Brotherhood's main aim was the Brotherhoodization of the state:

But the decree would go even further: there would be no judicial review of parliament by the SCC (Supreme Court). While this could have been seen as increasing the legislative power of the parliament, it was also seen as an attempt by Morsi to issue himself more power and then protect a parliament that was sure to be overwhelmingly composed of the Brotherhood members. While he may have been trying to protect an increasingly flattering political process, it seemed that Morsi was indeed Brotherhoodizing the state. And while he explained to the Supreme Judicial Council that this decree was temporary and would only apply to sovereign decisions and not administrative ones, it was too late. (Fahmy 2016:91).

The situation brought that the Brotherhood all sorts of hostilities during November and December 2012 and after that was described by Eva Dingel:

Contrary to what many observers had been expecting, Morsi did not rule in consensus with SCAF, but instead dissolved the council and arrayed most executive powers to himself by Decree in November 2012. He subsequently reshuffled posts within the

⁵ *Al-Hurria wa al-'Adala*, May 17th 2012: p1

⁶ Many scholars, such as Sherine Fahmy, confirmed that the *Maktab al-Irshad* controlled presidential affairs and it was beginning to look as if the presidency was only a branch of the Brotherhood (Fahmy 2017:185). Many Brotherhood leaders were appointed as advisors in the presidency, including Wael Haddara, Essam Haddad and Khaled el Kazaz for the foreign affairs, Ahmed Abdel Aziz and Khaled Barakat for media, Ayman Hudhud for security and Ayman Ali as a spokesperson.

military and security services to consolidate his power. (Dingel 2017:63).

In contrast to other countries like Iran, where Islamization was publicly welcomed by the masses (Moazami 2009), this was not the case in Egypt. The main opposition, the mainstream media and a growing number of Egyptian citizens were against the Brotherhood's Islamization process and its synchronous media campaign (Bakry 2013).

It is evident through the discourse analysis of the FJ newspaper that before Morsi's Constitutional Decree on November 22nd 2012, the newspaper headlines gave no indication that such a decree would appear. Most of the paper's headlines concentrated on the Israeli attack on Gaza that started on November 14th 2012, and the aftermath of the devastating news of the death of more than 50 children in a train crash involving a school bus in the city of Asyuit in southern Egypt on November 17th, 2012. The only mention of the coming decree was in an article by the Brotherhood's *Murshid*, Mohamed Badie (2012)⁷. However, there was a noticeable change on November 23rd, when the main headline on the newspaper's front page announced in red that "Morsi declares revolutionary decisions".⁸ That complex context was presented by scholar Daniella Pioppi:

On November 22nd 2012, after successful mediation between Hamas and Israel which gained the MB international (and more importantly the US) approval, Morsi, in a surprise move, issued a new Constitutional Declaration. The Declaration removed the unpopular prosecutor general, a Mubarak-era holdover; paved the way for retrial of recently acquitted officials implicated in violence against demonstrators; protected both the upper chamber of parliament and the Constituent Assembly from possible court-ordered dissolution, prolonged the Constituent Assembly's term by two months; and, crucially, immunized all presidential decisions from judicial review until adoption of a new constitution" (Pioppi 2013).

The newspaper described Morsi's Constitutional Decree as "revolutionary" and tried to show that there was widespread support for these decisions by arguing in some headlines:

⁷ Badie, Mohamed. *al-Hurria wa al-'Adala*, November 16th, 2012: p16

⁸ *Al Hurria wa al-'Adala*, November 23rd, 2012: p1

- “Million-man march today after Friday prayer in front of *al-Ittihadiya* Palace (the presidential palace) to support the President“ (ibid).
- “Morsi speaks to the people.”⁹
- “*Al-Ittihadiya*’s million-man March in support of the president’s decisions.”¹⁰

The Brotherhood Freedom and Justice newspaper (FJ) tried to reflect the idea that many forces in society, especially the Islamists, supported Morsi in his Constitutional Decree. These are some headlines supporting this:

- “[Mahmoud] Ghozlan (MB leader): They (the decisions) will achieve the revolution’s objectives” (ibid).
- “The people are in support of the president.”¹¹
- “[Salah] Abu Isma’il [an Islamist leader and an excluded presidential candidate who is close to the MB]: He [Morsi] used his powers as an elected president.”¹²
- “Bakkar [a spokesman for the Salafists]: All support [to Morsi’s decisions]. All who want real justice should support him” (ibid).

The newspaper emphasized popular support for Morsi by reporting on the demonstrations in his favour in different governorates, followed by the so-called “million-man march”. This type of demonstration, which aimed at each occasion to gather a million protestors, had become a major political tool in Egypt since the uprising in January 2011. Any social movement in the country tried to show that its demands deserved attention by calling for mass protests. Some media referred to this as the *Harb al-Milioniat*, or the wars between million-man marches.

Meanwhile, the FJ tried to justify Morsi’s decisions by making references to historical precedents. For example, one headline read: “Preserving the presidential decisions is not a new practice. Article 191 from the 1956 constitution [in Egypt] protected the decisions of the Revolutionary Command Council [the army leadership at that time]” (ibid). The MB media attempted to Islamize their battle against liberal, civil, and secular opposition. The Islamization strategy led the Brotherhood towards a confrontation with the wider Egyptian society.

⁹*Al-Hurria wa al-Adala*, November 24th, 2012: p1

¹⁰*Al-Hurria wa al-Adala*, November 23rd, 2012: p1

¹¹*Al-Hurria wa al-Adala*, November 23rd, 2012: p1

¹²*Al-Hurria wa al-Adala*, November 23rd, 2012: p1

While the newspaper tried to emphasize that Morsi's Constitutional Decree and the process of drafting the country's new constitution were revolutionary, other political forces considered that the aims of both the Constitutional Decree and the constitution were to gain more power and push for the *Ikhwanization* (Brotherhoodization) of the state. As Dingel wrote:

Contrary to what many observers had been expecting, Morsi did not rule in consensus with SCAF, but instead dissolved the council and arrayed most executive powers to himself by Decree, in November 2012. He subsequently reshuffled posts within the military and the security services to consolidate his power.” (Dingel 2017, P63).

The FJ published headlines showing that the Constitutional Decree was intended to support the people and to put them at the heart of the constitutional drafting process.¹³

In the course of my research, I asked an official in the newspaper why the FJ would not admit that there might be obvious negative points in the Constitutional Decree or the draft for the constitution. According to Ahmed Ghanem, the newspaper's executive chief editor, the editorial policy of the newspaper did not change before or after Morsi came to power. In an interview with the author,¹⁴ he said that “as the newspaper's name was *al-Hurria wa al-Adala* and it was affiliated to the FJ Party, the political arm of the MB, the newspaper did indeed defend the MB at all times and never criticized any MB decision.” After Morsi came to power, the newspaper continued for an entire year to defend the president's decisions and policies, including the controversial ones. Even when Morsi's own aides criticized him for decisions like the Constitutional Decree, the newspaper's editorial policy did not change. The direction of the paper was aimed at defending any and every decision by Morsi and attacking his opponents. Ghanem told me:

“I was not happy with some of the paper's policies. But I was not the Chief Editor or the party's leader...we were executing all directives from the Chief Editor [Adil al-Ansari] who told us to do follow him whether we were convinced of it or not. He was frequently absent from the newspaper's offices. Still, any differences that arose [within the editorial team] meant that we had to call him to discuss those differences. We had to obey his instructions.” (Ghanem 2016).

¹³ *Al-Hurria wa al-Adala*, November 23rd, 2012: p1

¹⁴ The author interviewed Ahmed Ghanem the Freedom and Justice executive editor in chief in Istanbul in 7th of March 2016.

Another example of how the newspaper fiercely defended Morsi's decisions came in the main editorial on November 21st, which was entitled "Narrowing the president's mandate."¹⁵ The article asserted that Morsi's Constitutional Decree put limits on the president rather than giving him more powers. The article argued that the president's decisions were aimed at achieving a new constitution and reforming parliament. The article accused the "secular elite" of putting a heavier load on the president by making him appear responsible for all the powers in the country after the dissolution of *Majlis al-Sha'ab*. "They were keen to delay achieving the constitution" (ibid). The article mentioned that the secular elite was causing political chaos, leading to the dissolution of parliament and putting greater responsibilities on the president's shoulders by giving him more legislative powers due to the absence of the parliament. The article said that the parliament had elected a Constitutional Assembly to draft the constitution, but that secular elites besieged this assembly and confronted its work until the court dissolved this committee and another assembly had to be elected (ibid). The FJ newspaper's chief editor, 'Adil al-Ansari, confirmed to the author in an interview¹⁶ that the newspaper's main aim was to support democratic change in Egypt and make sure that the army handed over power to the civilian authorities. Al-Ansari's argument about defending Morsi was further justified in this part of his article:

The secular elite confronted the work of this second assembly by challenging it legally. They tried to create a crisis around it, and that led to halting the declaration of the new constitution, which meant that the president had more powers and the ability to issue Constitutional Decrees. The secular elite tried to delay the constitution. Their justification was that the Constitutional Assembly did not represent all of Egypt's different cultural backgrounds. The president's latest decisions [the decree] came as a response to broad popular demands and the masses' desire to confront the status quo that was caused by "political liquidity" and the absence of state institutions. The latest decisions came to create a specific timescale for returning the institutions to the people and ending any legislative mandates the President had by having a constitution and a parliament.¹⁷

¹⁵ Al-Ansari, 'Adel. *Al-Hurria wa al-'Adala*, November 21st 2012: p12

¹⁶ The author interviewed 'Adil Al-Ansari, FJ newspaper Editor in Chief, twice. The first time was in Istanbul in 4th of March 2016. The second was via WhatsApp on 3rd of September 2020.

¹⁷ Al-Ansari, 'Adel. *Al-Hurria wa al-'Adala*, November 21st 2012: p12. Copies of these articles are available in the Appendices

Amid this attack by the Brotherhood on the secular elite, some scholars considered the opposition's position to be justified:

On the contrary, their political opponents did not wish to involve themselves in this process, and they boycotted the constitutional assembly, leaving the Brotherhood to appear to be drafting a constitution that only reflected its own interests" (al-Ali, 2016).

I now turn to *Misr25* TV and how its programmes tackled the Constitutional Decree. Cairo University's Dr Nadia Mostafa argued on a *Misr25* TV show that issuing the Constitutional Decree was a reaction to many things that had happened two years previously. She noted that the Decree did not come from a president who had been practising his authority for an extended period over functioning institutions in the country. It had come, she argued, from a president who was trying to build up the country's democratic institutions during an exceptional period after the revolution. She contended that the opposition to the Constitutional Decree did not form part of the democratic process. She claimed that there were forces (civil, democratic, liberal, leftist, national, and secular) that wanted to dismantle the revolutionary forces and prevent them from forming the country's institutions. But even so, she believed that the decree should have happened differently and with a different content – especially Clause 8, which allowed Morsi to make any decisions related to the national interest.¹⁸

6. Egypt's post-uprising Constitution: The dominance of the identity of the Islamist movement in power

For nearly ninety years before it came to power, the Brotherhood had emphasized its Islamic Identity, and its aims had been clear since Hassan al-Banna had founded the group in 1928. The Brotherhood wanted to achieve an "Islamic government" as a step towards establishing the "Islamic Caliphate" (Khalil, 2006:47). During Morsi's election campaign, the Brotherhood emphasised that this was not the case, and that the MB would form a wide-ranging government with the participation of other political forces. The Brotherhood claimed that it would participate but not dominate (*Mosharaka La Moghalaba*). The Brotherhood's practices during the drafting of Egypt's post-uprising constitution, however, cast doubts on these claims (Witteveen 2016).

¹⁸ Mostafa, Nadia. *Misr25 TV*, December 4th 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opjNXf2C_rU .Accessed on 14-02-2020.

The FJ newspaper maintained its support for the constitution project, which it claimed was intended to help poor and marginalized people and provide for those in need while protecting their rights by forcing the state to impose fair wages. The paper focused on this through headlines, such as:

- “Special care for single mothers and youngsters and for developing and equipping them.”¹⁹
- “The constitution ensures state medical, financial, and social support for the disabled.” (ibid).
- “Adequate pensions for farmers and casual workers.” (ibid).

The paper also sought to link the constitution with improving the economy. For example, a headline on December 1st, 2012 read: “Economic issues within the (new) constitution, comprehensive development, and social equality.” (ibid).

On December 1st, the FJ newspaper published a diagram detailing the so-called “11 concepts of the revolution’s constitution“, which reflected the idea that the people were the source of power and stressed that the constitution sought to maintain “the people’s dignity.” This was supposed to ensure the isolation of Mubarak’s regime, deal with the army budget, protect the rights of the marginalized, workers and women, reform the work of the Constitutional Court, guarantee fifty per cent of seats in the parliament for workers and promote tourism.²⁰ On many occasions, the FJ newspaper tried to link the words “Constitution“ and “Revolution,” as underlined in a headline: “Strengthening the revolution by the constitution”.²¹ The newspaper also followed the process of drafting the constitution carefully and promoted the yes vote in its referendum.

However, despite all these bright images presented in the FJ newspaper, London-based Egyptian writer, and politician Wafik Moustafa argued that the constitution attracted hostility to the Brotherhood from all parties in the society:

The constitution left many Egyptians furious. The young street protesters who forced Mubarak’s departure [felt] that they were not protesting so that this document could be written. Those liberals who wanted a constitution to guarantee human rights and personal freedoms did not get it. The military, who sought to protect their independence from the government, have seen

¹⁹*Al-Hurria wa al-Adala*, December 1st 2012: p1

²⁰*Al-Hurria wa al-Adala*, December 1st, 2012: p1

²¹*Al-Hurria wa al-Adala*, November 30th, 2012: p1

control of the armed forces taken away from them. The judiciary, which at times threatened to derail the constitution, warned of a legal and legislative nightmare because various vague Islamic prescriptions would somehow need to be distilled into workable legislation (Moustafa 2014:94)

Many others feared that the draft constitution was flawed, and that it had been designed to change the country's identity, and could turn it into a religious state. According to al-Ali:

Hence, whereas the 2012 constitution favoured parliament, the new text [2013] strongly favoured the president (under the assumption that the Brotherhood has little chance of winning the presidency any time soon). It also grants impressive authority and independence to the military, the police, and the judiciary, which are considered to be bastions of anti-Brotherhood authority (al-Ali 2016:125).

Other Brotherhood media, like *Misr25*, were more open to discussing the controversial articles of the draft constitution, such as Article 233, which included political isolation for Mubarak regime figures. The *Alwan al-Taif* political programme featured Amr Abd Elhadi²², a liberal who presented a position that seemed more loyal to the Islamists and who was also a member of the Constitutional Assembly that was drafting the new constitution. Abd Elhadi said that Article 233 had resulted in a prolonged attack on the Constitutional Assembly.²³ He explained that this article aimed to exclude only 1800 people from practising politics, while roughly 60,000 workers in the local councils who might have been affiliated to Mubarak's party would not be included. He justified the article by saying that those 1800 people had damaged life in Egypt for many years and that they are barred from practising politics for a while because of the revolution. This exemplifies a slightly different approach on the MB TV channel, which tried to be more balanced and invite people who could reflect points of view that were not entirely aligned with the Brotherhood, unlike the FJ newspaper's more partisan approach.

Another constitutional article that was debated in that program was Article 6, which stated that the democratic political system would be based on the Islamic concept of *Shura*, or consultation. Abd Elhadi explained that

²² Name transcription is according Elhadi's official twitter account.

²³ Abd Elhadi, Amr, 5th December 2012.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjfqhV9pJ2w&t=3661s> ,Accessed on 10/12/2020.

according to the views of some opposition members, it should be based on democracy as well as *Shura*. There was also controversy around Article 11 which stated that “society would look after morals, ethics and public order”. He explained that the word “society“ should be replaced by the word “state“ as some people might think that the use of the word society would open the door for vigilantes to begin imposing morals or ethics.

As far as the withdrawals from the Constitutional Assembly were concerned, Abd Elhadi said there were no substantial grounds for members to withdraw from the Assembly, and that most of them had no reservations regarding the articles, even those that related to the army and its independence. He hinted that the withdrawal might not be sincere and confirmed his belief that the authority of the president in the new constitution was actually diminished. He argued that the state had changed from a Constitutional Presidential system to a Constitutional Parliamentary system in which the president had less authority in general.

This theme showed that the Brotherhood’s media tried to defend Morsi’s decisions, mainly his constitutional decree and his tireless efforts to pass Egypt’s new constitution. This unlimited support, especially from the FJ newspaper, did not deal with the controversial points of Morsi’s decisions, causing a massive divide within Egyptian society and between political forces. That was the first divide between the revolutionaries who supported Morsi’s presidency over Mubarak’s Ahmed Shafiq. Many of the opposition considered Morsi’s actions undemocratic and not in the national interest, served only the interests of the Brotherhood. That was not the case during Morsi’s election campaign.

7. Conclusion

When the Brotherhood took power in Egypt, its primary aim was to speed up the process of Islamization through the new constitution. The MB’s primary tool to achieve this aim was to make sure the public endorsed a constitution based on Islamic *Shari’a*. During November and December 2012, a time that saw the finalisation of Egypt’s post-uprising constitution, the MB changed its strategy from a national movement (the strategy used during Morsi’s campaign) to a more overtly Islamic movement which spoke openly about establishing an “Islamic government.” The media-political communication language emphasised the Islamic *Shari’a*, the advantages of its implementation, and the rejection of calls from the opposition to delay or slow down this process. The MB’s media attacked anyone who resisted this

idea and portrayed them as fighting against God's will and claimed that they did not want Islam to be dominant. The MB believed that after it had won both the parliamentary and presidential elections, it was empowered to make that shift in their discourse without giving heed to the growing resentment against their policies.

The most contentious of the Brotherhood policies at the time was the Constitutional Declaration that gave Morsi extra powers beyond the judiciary. However, the Brotherhood's media showed that this declaration was revolutionary and was aimed at reforming politics in Egypt for the better. The decision was met with opposition, most notably ElBaradei's NSF, which insisted that the new constitution posed a stark violation of democratic transformation in Egypt. The Brotherhood ignored opposition calls to stop their drive to endorse the constitution in this way.

The Muslim Brotherhood can succeed in passing this constitution despite the opposition, but in so doing they are likely to poison the country's political atmosphere for years to come and my assumption is that the constitution, if passed, will not survive beyond Brotherhood rule (Hussein quoted in al Khalifa 2016:84).

The Brotherhood's attempts to Islamize society and build a constitution based on Islamic *Shari'a* brought them hostility not only from the opposition but also from the judiciary, who considered the removal of the Attorney General by Morsi as a violation of judicial independence. In this heated and polarized political atmosphere, the MB media's policies focused on Islam and attacks against the opposition, accusing them of violence, forming illegal militias, committing massacres against Brotherhood members, promoting civil war and plotting a coup. But none of the Brotherhood's efforts to gain legitimacy for their policies – either by appealing to the west or the families of the martyrs "*Shuhadaa al-Thawra*" – helped its image in the face of growing anger. This demonstrates that internal pressures within Islamic social movements, including historical ideologies, led the group's leadership to seek to achieve an Islamic government – even in the face of opposition and giving little consideration to the political and social context.

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