

EGYPTIAN MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD ORGANIZATION SOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

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The aims of this paper are to briefly present a comprehensive summary of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood organization sources and their relative activities. To reach this particular goal, the author examined selective literatures highlighting the different sections and activities within the organization. The result of the paper covered the roles of the following divisions: the General Headquarters, the General Guide Office, the Consultative Assembly and the General Guide Council. Under the General Guide Council, active members of the Brotherhood from the entire Egypt do their assigned jobs bottom-up through the family sections to the administrative offices in their living districts. Understanding these organizational procedures, the readers might understand the secret behind the survival of the Muslim Brotherhood despite the continuous brutal and suppressive tactics from the up-and-coming governments form 1935 to 2014.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a report highlighting the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's organization sources and their relative activities. As no big change of the organizational structure since its inception in 1928, the paper mainly covers the period of 1935 to 2014. To understand gradually the purpose of this study, the author primarily preceded a literature review. Furthermore, he highlighted the result of the study: the role of the organization sources and the General Headquarters with its two main branches. In addition, the peripheral divisions in the whole Egypt, known as administrative offices, districts, branches and family sections have been also examined in a way that the audience might understand the secret behind the survival of the organization despite several attempts to dissolve it.

Literature review: There are different versions of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's organization sources and activities among scholars of the Middle East studies. However, the differences are minor. As example, Munson mentioned that the establishment of the federated system of branches and their fundamental activities were in 1935¹. Overall, these three scholars and others agree that 1) the existing organization sources do not fundamentally differ from the old organizational structure. However, the expansion of the organization in terms of members and activities brought about expanding the activities in order to adapt the social and political developments in Egypt. Mitchell (1969), Ziad Munson (2001) and Khali al-Anani (2007) are the leading scholars among many others who are specific in presenting details about the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational structure, the internal characteristics of the organization and its recruiting strategies. Munson and Mitchell respectively provided a short summary highlighting the role of the organizational structure as follow:

One of the basic organizational structures of the Society was its joined structure of authority in which a network of branch offices all over the cities and towns of Egypt. The network was unified by a central headquarters in Cairo. The branch arrangement shaped the basic structure of the Muslim Brotherhood from its very beginning. Members presented substantial loyalty to their branch in addition to the organization as a whole, and the branch leader played a critical role as a link between the regular members with the central leadership. The organization also shifted coordination and communication responsibilities of the entire organization from branch office to branch office during periods of

¹ Munson Ziad, *Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood*, 42(4) THE SOCIOLOGICAL QUARTERLY 487–510, 497 (U.S.A, University of California Press 2001).

government authoritarianism².

Align with the above quotation, Mitchell was more specific in mentioning the periods and the different steps made by the organization towards its expansion in the 1930s and beyond:

In the first three years of the life of the Society, its primary goal was the enlargement of its membership in and around Isma'iliyya. Banna selected deputies to pursue this goal by direct contact, touring the countryside on weekends and during vacations, preaching most usually in the mosques but also in the homes, clubs, and other meeting-places of the people. The use of the mosques gave the speakers the legitimacy and respectability they needed. Direct communication with the people in their homes, at their work, and in their places of leisure added to that legitimacy the quality of sincerity and the personal touch. Within four years, there were branches along the eastern edge of the Delta in Isma'iliyya, Port Sa'id, Suez, and abu-Suwayr, and on the western edge as far as Shubra Khit; there was also minor contact with Cairo (pp. 84-6, 100-8). In Isma'iliyya, the center of activity, the Society took an old house as headquarters (p. 75). Contributions (including £E500 from the Suez Canal Company) and loans from local merchants helped to finance the building of a mosque completed in 1930 (pp. 82-6, 93-6); to this were afterwards added a school for boys and a club (pp. 96-8), and a school for girls (pp. 109-10). All new branches were founded on the same pattern: the establishment of the headquarters was followed by the creation of some project or another mosque, a school, a club, or a small home industry which came to serve as a focus for the interest or activities of the community³.

Overall, scholars of the Islamic movement studies did not mention yet any organizational change of the Brotherhood from its known organizational structure of the 1930s. However, this particular study discussed and analyzed the Brotherhood's organizational sources and their roles based on the literature review mainly written in 1969, 2001 and 2007.

Selective literature reviews provided to academics a clear image of the structure and the activities of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood throughout its history at least from the 1930s until 2014. Based on the focused literature review, no fundamental changes took place in the organizational structure since the constitutional approval of 1938, followed by its slight modification on July 1982⁴. However, Richard P. Mitchell stated that:

The first regulations to govern the operation of the Society came into

² *Ibid*, at 487.

³ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 9 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

⁴ Munson Ziad, *Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood*, 42(4) *THE SOCIOLOGICAL QUARTERLY* 487-510, 497 (U.S.A, University of California Press 2001).

existence, according to Banna, around 1930~1; on 8 September 1945 a revised code, proposed by Banna, was adopted...Internally, then, the fifth conference of 1939 suggested that the Society had assumed its fundamental shape and was sufficiently strong, in its own mind, to flex its muscles publicly albeit cautiously. Its external activity, limited only by the exigencies of an organization in growth, developed more boldly, more self-assuredly, and more inclusively as its ideas and the instruments of those ideas, evolved more clearly and precisely⁵.

I. THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCES

To reach the Egyptian society, the Brotherhood served the organizational sources as canals of consolidating and recruiting members and sympathizers, especially in the lower and the middle classes. This structure allowed the organization to maintain its structure and activities at the same time, even when it was formally dissolved by the state and subject to continuous police surveillance and efforts to destroy it. While previous scholars believed that much of the organization was destroyed by the raids and arrests of the period, Munson explained that:

Data contains considerable evidence that the Muslim Brotherhood was relatively successful in surviving repressive efforts by the Egyptian authorities. As an example, the government dissolved the Society in 1948, but the U.S. State Department received reports of secret mass meetings, Society organizing in mosques, and pamphleteering throughout Egypt during this time⁶.

Based on the U.S. Department Document:

The group was still sufficiently organized after three years of formal dissolution, to produce a demonstration of over three thousand members on less than a day's notice in early 1951, and to carry out well organized rallies at every branch office in Egypt. The day after the ban on the organization was lifted on May 1, 1951 (USDS 1954)⁷.

Another example of the great role of the organizational aspect of the Brotherhood, in 1954, the society was operating again within ten days of the major wave of arrests following Nasser's 1954 dissolution of it and imprisonment of its leadership and thousands of its members. By June, there were reports of a public resurgence of the society's activities. The Muslim Brotherhood was clearly not dismantled by government efforts. Its

⁵ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 15, 163 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

⁶ Munson Ziad, *Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood*, 42(4) *THE SOCIOLOGICAL QUARTERLY* 487-510, 499 (U.S.A., University of California Press 2001).

⁷ *U.S. Department of State USDS, 1949* (Confidential Central Files, Egypt. Washington. DC, USDS 1954. 2001), at 510.

organizational structure was a key to its ability to resist state attempts to eliminate it. The organizational structure of the Brotherhood not only provided advantages to the group in the traditional ways described by a basic resource mobilization model, but also provided an important avenue through which the ideology of the organization could contribute to the group's success. The Muslim Brotherhood, like any other social movement faced the task of mobilizing the support and resources of individuals with a variety of different beliefs and levels of motivation for collective action.

Comparatively, in Egypt, Communist groups were organized in a strictly hierarchical fashion too, without independent branch or federated offices. Consequently, this inadequate structure led to a constant factionalism and limited the national presence of the communists in the country. "Several studies of the Egyptian communism suggest that the movement was also decimated by government crackdowns on several occasions"⁸. Munson noticed that both in Bein and Lockman (1987) mentioned the fact that:

Communist organizations were concentrated and one-dimensional only. Once infiltrated, they had little defense against the security agencies of the state. Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, the communist presence in Egypt was virtually eliminated in the 1920s and 1930s as a result of state repression⁹.

The communist party in Egypt did not pay attention.

On the suppressive behavior of the state beside its weakness as a Soviet Union supported party in the end of the World War I.

In contrast to the Muslim Brotherhood's four-tiered membership communist organizations seldom made institutionalized distinctions between members and their levels of commitment. Tasht, one of the most influential communist groups in Egypt during the 1940s, had a "nomination" process for new recruits that could last as long as two years, during which time the individual was continually investigated and tested. A communist leader who was critical of this system equated the process to entering the priesthood¹⁰. Munson argued that there were severe ideological blockades to entry into the communist membership, and the structure made no place for members with varying stages of promise; the movement

⁸ Goldberg Ellis, *Tinker, Tailor, and Textile Worker: Class and Politics in Egypt, 1930-1952* (Goldberg 1986; Botman 1988; Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990).

⁹ Munson Ziad, *Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood*, 42(4) THE SOCIOLOGICAL QUARTERLY 487-510, 500 (U.S.A., University of California Press 2001).

¹⁰ Ismael Tareq Y., and Rifa 'at El-Sa'id, *The Communist Movement in Egypt, 1920-1988*, 45 (Syracuse 1990). The four-tiered memberships are: (a) "assistant" (musa'id); (b) "related" (muntasib) and (c) "active" (amil).

accepted only the most devoted and dedicated individuals. In contrast to the graduated way in which the Muslim Brotherhood's structure brought its ideas to members, the beliefs of potential communist recruits had to be entirely transformed before they were given any access to the movement. Thus, the communist groups made it extremely difficult for potential recruits to move from their ordinary lives to active participation in the movement.¹¹

As far as this research topic is concerned, this particular paper gradually facilitated the readers to understand the existing organizational structure of the organization and its functions. The chart on page 13 summarizes the organizational sources from the General Headquarter to the family section. The General Headquarters in Cairo represents the center of the entire organization, both in terms of structure and activity. The family section in its turn represents the first step in structure and activity. From the Headquarters to the family section, a detailed explanation has been provided as follows.

II. GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

The General Headquarters is the main office located in Cairo, in "Hilmiyyat al-Jadidah". This office includes the office of the General Guide, the administrative, technical and consultative activities of the organization. There are three main divisions in the Headquarters' office: the office of the General Guide, the Consultative Assembly and the General Guidance Council. The office of the General Guide is simple and has no complicated task, as all the technical activities of the organization are prepared in the General Guidance Council and others in the General Consultative Assembly. The Consultative Assembly served as the source to elect or select the appropriate officers to join the General Guidance Council. In other words, all members from the Guidance Council come from the Consultative Assembly. Contrary, all members from the Consultative Assembly are not necessarily belonging to the General Guidance Council. The Consultative Assembly plays the role of uniting the most important members of the entire Organization from the entire Egyptian prefectures. The members working in the General Guidance Council are likely to be technically oriented because they are the main responsible of all administrative and technical activities of

¹¹ Munson Ziad, *Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood*, 42(4) THE SOCIOLOGICAL QUARTERLY 487-510, 501 (U.S.A., University of California Press 2001).

the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood from the highest to the lowest levels. On the other hand, the Consultative Assembly has among other duties the obligation to elect the Muslim Brotherhood's leader. The leader is known as the General Guide of the organization: "Murshid". In practice, both the General Guidance Council and the General Consultative Assembly supervise the leader of the Brotherhood. The next sections provided details about the General Guide Office, the General Consultative Assembly and the General Guidance Council.

III. THE LEADER'S OFFICE (GENERAL GUIDE OFFICE)

In this office, the leader chooses one deputy or more, depending on his own need, a secretariat accompanied by the secretary general of the organization. The General Guide Council manages the process to select the deputies, the secretariat and the Secretary General¹². However, Mitchell mentioned, the Assembly, in a secret ballot supervised by the vote-counting committee, would select from among the nine Cairo members of the Guidance Council a deputy, the secretary-general, and the treasurer. Both Al-Anani and Mitchell mentioned that the selection is in the General Guidance Council, but Mitchell said that the latter gets order from the General Consultative Assembly. Overall, in practice, both the General guidance Council and the General Consultative Assembly simultaneously share the responsibilities of the organization. In terms of the merits and the role of the Muslim Brotherhood's leader, there are no major differences of the General Guide's qualifications from the 1960s until today. According to Mitchell, "the qualifications of a candidate for this post were described as follows: a member of the General Consultative Assembly for five years; at least thirty years old of age: possessing the attributes of learning, morality, and practicality"¹³. Nevertheless, Mitchell's suggestion is not supported by the newly updated information about the organization. According to Al-Anani who followed up the Muslim Brotherhood's documents until 2007, said that the candidate should be an active and practical brother for at least 15 years. In the light of his active participation, Mitchell mentioned that the candidate should be a member of the General Consultative Assembly, however, the new research did not specify the section he should be devoted for the organization. Another contradiction is the question of the age. The

¹² AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

¹³ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 165 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

existing document shows that the candidate should not be less than 40 years old¹⁴. In fact, in the 1960s, the candidate should not be less than 30 years. Comparatively, the age of 30 in 1960s and the age of 40 in 2014 are reasonably understandable because in the past the majority of the active members were recruited in the very early age. Remarkably, it seems that the idea of emphasizing on the age of 40 came from the fact that the Prophet Muhammad got the prophecy by the age of 40. Two elements are interesting for the Brotherhood's leader: 1) he is not allowed to execute any kind of business after being elected; whether a private business or associated to the organization. This is to protect his personality from accusations and to spend all his time and efforts for the organization. His activities would be academic research, mainly connected to develop the development of the organization¹⁵. The second element, 2) is that the organization assumes the responsibility of his expenses according to the financial regulations associated to the General Guide. As the latter should be elected in the General Consultative Assembly, the characteristics of the General Consultative Assembly are explained in the following section.

IV. THE GENERAL CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

The General Consultative Assembly plays the role of supervising “the progress of the society, the election of the General Guidance Council and an auditor”¹⁶. This explanation of Mitchell seems to be limited because not only the three abovementioned positions are decided in the Assembly, but there are other major duties elaborated by the Assembly including the election of the General Guide, “Murchid”. In this division, there are the elites of the organization from all districts. Based on proportional perception, each district possesses many or few representatives in the Assembly based on the size of each district. Al-Anani summarizes the role of the Assembly based on Article 33 of the organization's constitutions as follows:

(a) to elect the General Guide and the members of the General Guidance Council according to Article 11 and Article 19; to endorse the objectives and policies of the Organization; and also to determine the position of the Organization in all aspects;

(b) to approve the general guidelines and necessary networks;

¹⁴ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 105 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

¹⁵ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 106 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

¹⁶ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 168 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

(c) to approve the general plan and identify the way to execute the decided plan;

(d) to discuss the annual report in general and the financial report in particular, and their approvals and the adoption of the budget of the new year;

(e) to elect the members of the Brotherhood' supreme court which is in charge to examine cases coming from the General Guide, from the General Guidance Office or from the General Consultative Assembly, whether the cases are for individual members or groups; and also to accept the resignation from members based on the absolute majority of members;

(f) to exempt the General Guide and accept his resignation in accordance with Article 16 of the relative regulation;¹⁷

(g) to regulate any proposed amendments from the General Guide, the General Guidance Council or any proposals from 8 members from the General Consultative Assembly¹⁸.

V. THE MEMBER SAND THEIR MAIN ACTIVITIES IN THE GENERAL CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly has 90 members since the 1990s¹⁹, but during Banna's period, the number was between 100 and 150²⁰. Members represent all the Brotherhood's recognized affiliations. As each district has a Brotherhood's affiliation, each group chooses its representatives to join the Assembly of the Headquarters. Three members from the Council can be selected to join the Assembly in Cairo. The new development of the Assembly in terms of its multiple divisions is the political section. This section has been introduced as result of the political development before and after the Egyptian parliamentary election in 2005, in which the Brotherhood won 20% of the national parliament members. Any member of the Brotherhood may join the General Consultative Assembly if he deserves the following qualifications: a) active membership within his district's Council or Assembly; b) he should not be less than 30 years old; c) he works for the Brotherhood no less than 5 years; d) he should be qualified of endowment

¹⁷ Article No. 16 constitutes of three amendments: 1) if the Guide neglects his responsibility or lost his credibility, the Assembly should study his case.

¹⁸ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 99 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

¹⁹ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 98 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

²⁰ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 168 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

with morality, culture, and practicality; e) he should not be previously isolated due to a misleading in his district 5 years before his candidature²¹.

The Assembly meeting in Cairo should be held every 6 months; a meeting might be held based on the General Guide's demand or his deputy, or a demand from the General Council or from three members of the General Assembly. A meeting cannot be considered as legitimate unless the absolute majority attends it. A committee of seven, preferably non-Cairenes, with training in legal and canonical doctrine, was to be elected by the General Assembly to supervise members' behavior and to meet out appropriate penalties²². In addition:

Its committee elected its own chairman and secretary and kept its own records; its meetings were constitutional with five present members including the chairman. The members of the General Council were exempt from working in the committee because of their own disciplinary procedures. The General Guide might, on his own authority, suspend any member, on condition that his order was submitted to the committee of the Assembly for review²³.

VI. THE GENERAL GUIDANCE COUNCIL

The General Guidance Council chairs the ideological and political activities of the society, managing its administration, forms and executes its strategy within or outside Egypt. Furthermore, the meetings in this office are chaired by the General Guide, by the deputy in his absence, or by the oldest member in the absence of the other two; however, the Secretary General is considered as the representative of this division for all issues. The General Guidance Council has the authority to create whatever necessary "committees, sections, and divisions to achieve the objectives of the organization"²⁴. In sum, this office is known as the highest administrative and executive section in the organization. In order to be qualified for the Council's membership, the candidate should be a member of the Consultative Assembly and should not be less than 30 years. The term is for four years and renewable if the member might be elected again. One of his obligations, the member must follow strictly the rules and regulations of the organization; otherwise, he would be disciplined depending on the level of his negligence.

²¹ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 98—99 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

²² RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 168—169 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

²³ *Ibid.*, at 169.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, at 169.

According to the internal regulations of the organization, the membership under this section and their main duties are summarized based on the following fundamentals: a) the General Guidance Council is the highest executive and administrative unit of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood; b) It has 13 members excluding the General Guide²⁵. This number is the newly updated one in 2007 because in the 1940s the office accounted 12 members²⁶. Eight members are elected by the General Assembly and should come from the same region where the General Guide lives; and the rest five members who are necessarily from the General Assembly should be elected based on the regional diversity; c) the leader selects a Secretary General and a treasurer; d) it draws guides and supervises the guidelines of the ideology of the organization; e) it prepares the annual report of the leadership's acts, the status and the financial situation of the organization in order to be reported to the General Consultative Assembly²⁷.

In general, members in the General Consultative Assembly and in the General Guidance Council come from all over Egypt. Therefore, the author presented and highlighted in the following sections the organizational sources of the members who would be joining both the General Assembly and the General Council. These sections imitated the organizational structure and the mechanism practiced in both the General Consultative Assembly and the General Guidance Council, with slightly differences. Those sub-sections are classified from the lowest level to the General Guidance Council in Cairo, as they are more organizationally and technically oriented. Nevertheless, this does not mean that no connections at all between the districts and the General Consultative Assembly. There are connections but those connections are managed and organized by the General Guidance Council. The lowest institutionalized level of the recruiting unit is the "the family section" (*al-usrah*), followed by the "branch" (*al-shubah*), then the "district" (*al-mantiqah*), and finally the "administrative office" (*al-maktab al-idari*). These latter units are located in all the entire Egypt.

A. *Administrative Office*

This division is very important, as it constitutes a council composed of

²⁵ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 101 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

²⁶ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 166 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

²⁷ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 101—103 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

a chairperson, a deputy, a secretary, and a treasurer.

These, held office either because they held the same position in the leading branch of the area encompassed by the council or because they were leading or active members of either a district or some other important groups in the Society²⁸.

The Brotherhood's pyramidal system is based on a good performance from the lowest level to the highest. Therefore, in this Administrative Office, the leading figures should be known as the very active members in their perspective families, branches and districts in their records. Subsequently, "they are appointed by the Guidance Council"²⁹. Furthermore, besides the four members already mentioned previously, there are a fifth members who are direct representative of the Guidance Council whose opinions are "advisory" and who had no right to vote³⁰.

B. District

This section is geographical representation gathering numbers of branches. According to Al-Anani, three or four branches form a district³¹. The district follows the administrative office of the prefecture. The main role of a district is to do the job based on the geographic perception. The number of the districts differs from one prefecture to another³². Furthermore, it is possible for more than one district to form an entire region in order to efficiently strengthen the communication among members and administrative duties. According to Mitchell:

The district office was administered by a council composed as follows: a chairman, who was the chairman of its leading branch or a member appointed by the General Guidance Council; the heads of all of the branches in the district; visitors from the branches and the administrative offices, who had no vote; and representatives of the district's most important activities. A secretary or treasurer or both for the district might be selected by the heads of its constituent branches³³.

²⁸ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 176 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

²⁹ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 176 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, at 176.

³¹ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 97 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

³² AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 97 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

³³ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 176 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

C. Branch

The “branch section” is the second unit of the Brotherhood after the “family section” from below. This stage unites several families together in order to form a bigger circle comparing to the “family circle”. The branch section has been well defined as the basic unit of administration by both Mitchell and Al-Anani³⁴. To get rid of the confusion, the family section is the first organizational unit while the branch represents the administrative one. The branch however gathers 5 to 6 families in allocated area. The number of members varies based on how many families exist in a given region. The main job of the branch section is to take action on the preaching and on the organizational aspects in a particular region. Unlike both the Assembly and the Council of the Headquarters, the branch is led by an elected leader. If the leader is absent, he would be replaced by his deputy, otherwise the oldest among all members. The function and the mechanism of the branch are similar to the General Guidance Council. The latter intervenes in a way that if “a branch’s complaint concerned either of its highest authorities; it might go directly to the Guidance Council if neither the district office nor the administrative council reported the complaint”³⁵. Similarly to the General Headquarters, the branch may have:

A section for propaganda of the message, a section for rovers depending on the local of the branch, a section for students, or workers, or professions, or peasants, singly or in combination. Each was requested to have a “library” or at least a reading room to encourage and assist the local educational programs. Similarly, in the larger branches, some medical or clinical facilities either permanently existed or were provided periodically³⁶.

The idea of the branches is to split the activities of the Brotherhood as many areas as possible. Therefore, members from one branch have authorities to open a new branch under the supervision of the administrative council unit of this particular branch. Mitchell mentioned that there are other branches called academic branches. These branches are different from the ordinary branches explained in this section³⁷. Members of these branches are universities’ students who are members of the Brotherhood. Students’ activities are similar to the ordinary branch ones, however, the difference is that the letter selects what might be suitable to the universities’ environment.

³⁴ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 176, 97 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

³⁵ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 179 (New York, New York 10016-4314, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, at 179.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, at 180.

Unlike other countries, students play a fluent role in social movements. Accordingly, students belonging to the Brotherhood are influential in the academic institutions and play a great role for the recruiting process. However, due to immaturity, they may cause a conflict between the government and the General Headquarters of the organization. One of the most famous incidences caused by the students, Al-Anani mentioned that in December morning 2007, 27 students from Azhar University but members of the Brotherhood had a culture show about exposing some fighting skills. The incidence became controversial in Egypt. The government accused the Brotherhood for military training against the government. The main stream of the local media was about suspecting the Brotherhood of hiding military agenda against the government³⁸. Because of the tension, the Brotherhood decided to institutionalize more its political bases in order to build awareness among young members and also to prevent their popularity from being diabolized. In this regard, the Brotherhood introduced elections in the branch section. In these elections, a leader and his deputy would be elected by the members. These elections first started in 2005, just after the Brotherhood won 88 seats in the Egyptian parliament. Both candidates (leader and his deputy) must be Brotherhood's active members. The elected members can renew their term once, and each term covers four years. These elected members would be played a great role in the district section as they have been already well evaluated in the family section.

D. The Family Section

The family section started in the period of the Brotherhood's highest spirit and during their intensive activities. Mitchell noticed that:

In September 1943 the "family section system" was established. First, officially called "the co-operative system" (nizam al-ta'awun), it was soon popularly referred to as "the family co-operative system" (nizam al-usra al-ta'awuni), and finally, popularly and officially, "the family system" (nizam al-usra)³⁹.

Scholars of the Middle East studies agreed that the "family section" represents the first step of the Muslim Brotherhood's Organization. According to Mitchell, "the system of 'families' was regarded by the society as 'the active fulfillment of the meaning of Islam among the Brothers', and

³⁸ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 154 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

³⁹ RICHARD P. MITCHELL, *THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS* 197 (New York, New York 10016-43, Oxford University Press, Inc. 1969).

the most fundamental of its ‘educational’ (tarbiyah) instruments”⁴⁰. Interestingly, the name and the function of the “family section” are very popular in many Muslim countries. In East Asia, many Muslims from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand use the term and the function of the “family section” in their religious activities. The reason of the family section’s popularity might be connected to the very educational and spiritual basic approaches of this section and also the content of the study curricula used by the “family section”. In addition, the success of the Brotherhood to impose itself within the Egyptian socio-political sphere impressed many Muslims from the entire world to imitate the organizational sources and recruiting strategies.

The “family section” is composed of five to seven Brothers in one “family”. This section is also called “cell” by few people in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab World. One of the members is elected as a chief, called “Naqib”. The organizational structure and the activities of the family section are fundamentally managed by the family section of the General Headquarters in Cairo. The chart on page 13 shows that the “family section” belonging to the General Guidance Council is in charge to deal with all family sections from the entire Egypt. Mitchell stated that “the high commend of the family system was located in the General Headquarters in the family section. From it, issued a special set of regulations governing the internal operation of the families”⁴¹. At the beginning, the number of one family was 10, but due to the experience of the family section’s performance, the Headquarters decided to reduce the number from 10 to seven maximum.

Activities in the Family Section:

The role of the “family section” was defined in three words: “action, obedience, and silence”. The recitation of the ritual at night was knowingly patterned after Prophetic Practice recording that the Prophet took pleasure in such activity⁴². Meeting weekly with his “family”, the adherent had prescribed duties defined as “personal”, “social”, and “financial”. Personal duties include the sincere and diligent practice of the rituals of the faith; the avoidance of the known evils (gambling, drinking, money lending, and adultery); continuous determination towards the Islamization of the member’s family; and the constant reaffirmation of fidelity and devotion to the organization, its principles, and its leaders. Socially, the Brothers were advised to make the most of the “brotherly relationships of the family”, i.e.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, at 195.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, at 198.

⁴² *Ibid.*, at 196.

to attend the weekly meetings outside the branch headquarters, if possible at members' homes in a rotation system, to spend at least one night of the month together, sleeping and participating of common meals, and to pray together the Friday prayer and if possible, the morning and night prayers. Financially, members of the family were made "mutually responsible" for each other, sharing each other's burdens, needs, and gains. A "co-operative treasury" was to be established to which each Brother contributed a part of his income. One fifth of the treasury was to be sent to a general fund in the Headquarters to be invested in "the Society for Islamic Social Insurance"⁴³.

The whole idea which reinforced the system was summed up in three words which Banna called "the pillars": "familiarity" (ta'aruf); "understanding" (tafahum); and "responsibility" (takaful), all three are understood in the form of the verb indicating mutuality. "Familiarity" meant "the strengthening of brotherhood among the Brothers", the notion derived from the Quranic verse which reads: "And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate" (Quran 3:103); and from the Prophetic Tradition which said "The believer to the believer is like the building [held together] one part with another" (Prophet authentic tradition). "Understanding" meant the true understanding of Islam and willingness to abide by its teachings and be personally responsible before one's fellows. "Responsibility" was defined as "the core of brotherhood" and the meaning of Islam; in the Prophet's words: "It is better that ye pursue the needs of your brother than to isolate yourself in my mosque for a month, and whoso brings happiness to the house of a Muslim, God will reward with no less than Paradise"⁴⁴.

For the reading and studying materials for the family, it has been reported as it was limited in the period of the founder. The book, "Rasail" that he had compiled for the battalions and to other general literature of Islam was mainly served in the family section. The curriculum is based on the regular Islamic teaching such as the Quran and its interpretation, the life and the advice of the prophet, the Islamic ideology and a selection of books mainly authored by the Brotherhood's scholars including the founder's books (Banna) and Said Qutb's. According to Al-Anani, a new subject has been introduced few years ago in the family section: the political awareness at the national and international levels. This new idea has been reinforced by the Brotherhood's political success in the Egyptian society, especially from 2004 to 2005 before and after the Brotherhood's success to win 88 seats in

⁴³ *Ibid.*, at 198.

⁴⁴ *Prophet's Authentic Tradition* 199 (Mitchell 1969).

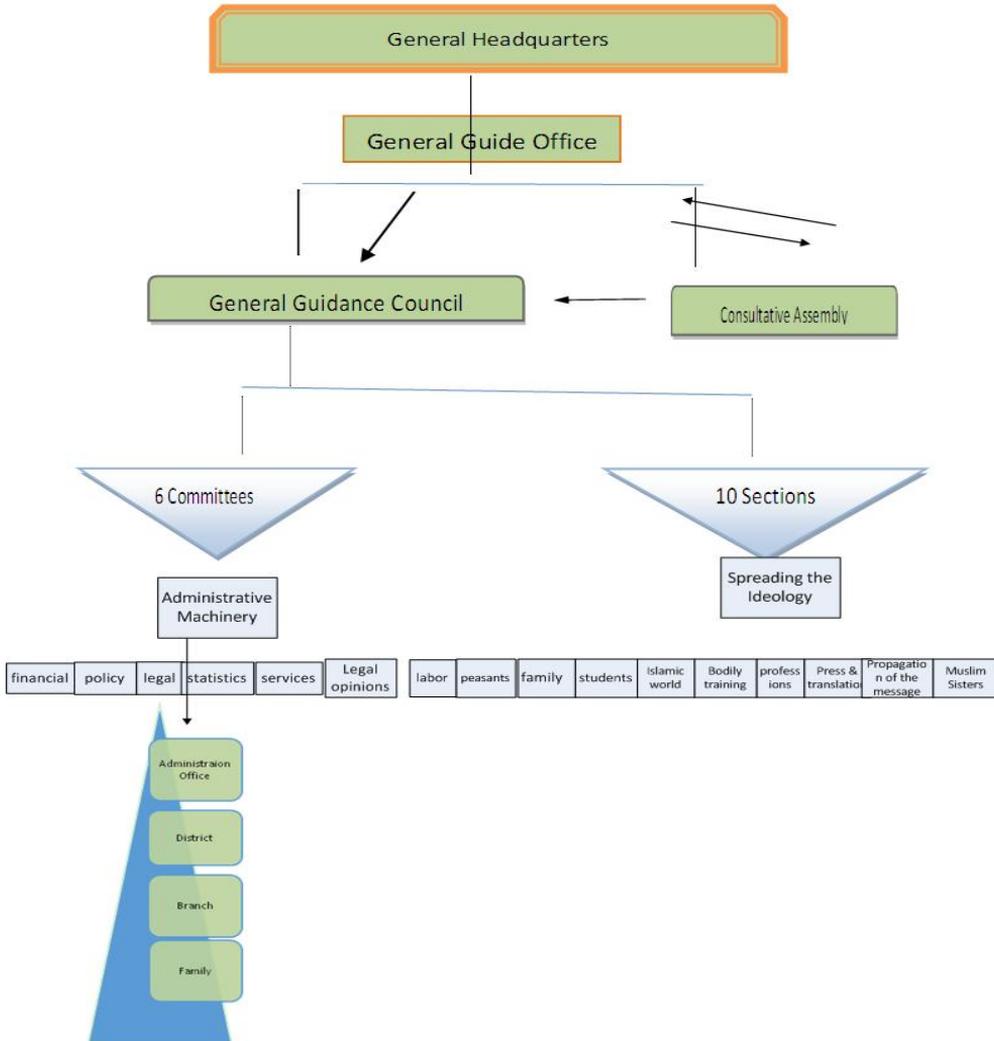
the parliament⁴⁵. The idea of introducing political studies in the family section's curriculum is due to the political understanding deficit for the young Egyptian society in general and the youth of the Brotherhood in particular. Since the confrontation between the Brotherhood and the state started, the interest to study political science or other relative social science subjects decreased dramatically last 60 years. The fear of being suspected as anti-government led many Brothers to struggle for entering in scientific fields, such as medicine, engineering and so forth. Therefore, it is remarkable to see many medical doctors and engineers in the rank of the Muslim Brotherhood and few of them graduated from social science, especially political science and political economy. In sum, the family section represents the first step to start involving in the Muslim Brotherhood's activities. If the member successfully follows the rules and regulations of this particular section, he would gradually grow to the upper levels.

CONCLUSION

This paper presented and analyzed the organization sources and activities of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The aim is to critically highlight the different sections and their roles in order to perceive the consolidation and ties among divisions of the organizational structure. As the Egyptian authoritarian regimes attempted to destroy the organization in 1948, 1981, 1954 and finally 2014, this study explained the reason behind the survival of the Brotherhood despite the continuous brutal suppression from the successive Egyptian governments. The study of the organization sources and their activities explains also the recruitment strategies and mechanism adopted by the Brotherhood from the family sections to the Headquarters. The family sections, branches, the districts and the administrative offices of the Brotherhood in the country are monitored by the Headquarters in Cairo. This pyramidal structure with its canals is the secret behind the survival of the organization despite governments' suppressive tactics.

⁴⁵ AL-ANANI KHALIL, *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT: THE AGING WRESTLES THE TIME* 96 (Cairo, Egypt, Al-Shuruk International Press 2007).

The Organization Sources and their activities.



Source: the author.

This chart presents the organizational structure of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. However, this particular paper only covered the main sources of the Brotherhood’s activities (light green color). These sections explained the activities between the Headquarters and its divisions from the whole Egypt.

Under the “Administrative Machinery” and “Spreading the Ideology”, there are 6 committees and 10 sections. All these divisions are monitored and supervised the similar sections from the peripheral sections in the whole Egypt. For example, the family section in the Headquarters is in charge of administrating and guiding the family sections from the entire Egypt.