The Muslim Brotherhood and Defining the Community: An Evolution from the Universal to the Particular

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Abstract

The definition of the *umma*/(community) has evolved considerably over the existence of the Muslim Brotherhood. The evolution of this concept can be traced by following the ideological leadership of this organization from the founder Hasan al-Banna, to his successor Sayyid Qutb, and finally to the modern leadership under Muhammad Akef and Mohammed Habib. The works of Benedict Anderson and Olivier Roy regarding nationalism and globalization respectively are particularly useful as paradigmatic viewpoints in analyzing the factors which have contributed to the evolution of the *umma* in the Brotherhood. Ultimately, the organization's definition of the *umma* shifted away from the universalistic doctrine of the founder to a localized extent in the modern period. This was attributable to the rising power of Egyptian nationalism and also the growing globalization, deterritorialization, and secularism that was sweeping Egypt in the 20th and into the 21st century. This analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood's evolving definition of the *umma* is significant because it suggests that many modern religious communities are not following the trend of universalization that Roy claims is occuring in the modern period. Rather, these communities are engaging in the more complex process by which universalizing and nationalizing is occurring concomitantly within the confines of a localized re-imagining of their communities.

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I. Introduction

In Islamic history, the concept of the *umma* has been a critical yet-difficult-to-define idea both in terms of membership and territory. Traditionally, the membership of the *umma* has been interpreted to comprise Muslims as the "community of believers." Indeed, this interpretation is supported by the Qur'anic verse stating "You [Muslims] are the best nation brought out for Mankind, commanding what is righteous and forbidding what is wrong" (3:110). However, membership in the *umma* has also been interpreted to include non-Muslims, as in the Constitution of Medina where Muhammad refers to the Jews and pagan citizens of Medina as members of the *umma*, alongside other Muslims.[1] While interpretations regarding the membership of the *umma* are vague, conceptions regarding the territory of this *umma* are exceedingly more so. This has become increasingly apparent in the modern period in which Islam as a religion is no longer restricted territorially to Muslim-majority nations. In large part as a response to the perceived inability of modern Islam to sufficiently address the questions regarding the membership and territory of the *umma*, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as a group ideologically centered on the notion of uniting and defining an *umma* in the modern context.

The Muslim Brotherhood itself is an organization that is as enigmatic as it is famous. The Brotherhood is an international Sunni Islamist movement that began in Egypt in the early 20th century. It has since spread to every Muslim-majority nation and has become one of the largest opposition groups in many Arab nations including Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait. The "success," and indeed this is a complex term and perhaps

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[1] Watt. Muhammad at Medina and R. B. Serjeant "The Constitution of Medina." *Islamic Quarterly* 8 (1964), 4.

"survival" or "prosperity" are more apt descriptions, of the Brotherhood (the *Ikhwan*) has stemmed primarily from their emphasis on defining the *umma*. It is important to note that my interpretation as to the relative "success" or lack of "success" of this organization is both irrelevant and beyond the scope of my argument. However, as will soon be introduced, perceived "success" does play a role in the arguments of certain religious scholars which will be discussed in this paper. Olivier Roy (and Max Muller as I will later argue) focused their determination of the perceived "success" of a religion or a religious group largely on its universal (number of adherents) character. However, while the classifying of religious organizations as "successful" or not is important for their arguments, it is not a critical component of my study. In fact, I will argue that this trend in Roy's arguments is in fact detrimental to his overall conclusion. Indeed, I will argue that the evolving definition of the *umma* within the Muslim Brotherhood complicates many of the blanket universalist theses of Roy regarding modern religions.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood has numerous international chapters in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and beyond; the extent of this paper will focus on the premier of these chapters: the original Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood chapter. While it is important to note that defining the *umma* is a critical component of the Muslim Brotherhood, it is even more important to understand that the organization's conception of the *umma* has, for reasons that will form the core of this paper, not remained static over the course of the group's history.

Almost as a microcosm of Islamic history as a whole, the Muslim Brotherhood's conception of the *umma* has changed and evolved throughout the organization's existence. The evolving conception of the *umma* has followed the ideological changes of

the organization's leadership: from the founder Hasan al-Banna, to his successor Sayyid Qutb, and finally to the modern leadership of the *Ikhwan* including Akef and Habib. Notably, within the modern Muslim Brotherhood, this evolution has in fact extended the notion of the *umma* beyond the extent of traditional Islam. The evolution of the concept of the *umma* within the modern Muslim Brotherhood has reached this remarkable extension as a response to the modern Muslim communities who find themselves torn between the competing effects of nationalism and globalization.

While the concepts of nationalism and globalization are exceedingly broad, two writers present these topics in a manner conducive to application to modern religious communities. Benedict Anderson in his seminal work, *Imagined Communities*, argues that imagination helps to create reality in that the nation is, at its core, a completely imagined political community. According to Anderson, the rise of the modern nation-state (in essence, the definition of nationalism used in this paper) was immediately preceded by the decline of traditional religious communities. As Anderson writes, "the very possibility of imagining the nation only arose historically when, and where, [certain] cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds."[2] While this analysis would, at first glance, appear to stand in stark contradiction to the Muslim Brotherhood's stated goals of establishing an Islamic society, the lasting legacy of Anderson's treatment of nationalism lies in its versatility. While Anderson focuses his work on modern nations, his analysis and descriptions need not be restricted to this category. All communities are in fact imagined communities and indeed the real issues center around how these other imagined communities differ from the archetype of the

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[2] Anderson,Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, New Edition.* 2 ed. (New York: Verso, 2006), 36.

nation. As I will argue in this paper, the Muslim Brotherhood's conception of the *umma* emerged, particularly in the formative years of al-Banna and Qutb, partly as a response to the rise of nationalism in the classical Andersonian sense in modern Egypt. However, the organization has also, at all times, been influenced and incorporated, to varying degrees, ideas from the philosophy of nationalism, particularly in regards to defining the *umma* in Egypt and beyond in terms of membership and territory. It is important to note at this juncture that Anderson's analysis of nationalism presents an archetypal model that provides a valid analytic paradigm on the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the Brotherhood itself, while responding to nationalism at many points in its history, is not responding to Anderson per se but rather to Egyptian nationalists, pan-Islamists, and international jihadists that have all co-opted, to varying degrees, Anderson's definition of the nation. Ultimately, the influence of nationalism when coupled with the advent of globalization has resulted in the evolution of the definition of the *umma* beyond the extent of traditional Islam in the modern Muslim Brotherhood.

Olivier Roy provides an insightful analysis into the impact of globalization on religious communities in his work, *Globalized Islam*. Globalization in this context appears to be, in part, a response to the nationalism described by Anderson in that it is an adaptation of religious communities "in a context where religion has lost its social authority."[3] The basis of Roy's argument in this regards stems from the deterritorialization of both religion and society in the modern context. While Anderson addresses this phenomenon in general, Roy reaches the heart of this issue in Islam when he writes that the "deterritorialization of Islam leads to a quest for definition, because

[3] Roy, Olivier, *Globalized Islam: the Search for a New Ummah*. New York: (Columbia University Press, 2004), ix.

Islam is no longer embedded in territorial cultures."[4] The Muslim Brotherhood, from its founding, has presented itself as an organization based upon providing that definition of the *umma*. Ultimately, though this definition has changed over time, the Brotherhood's conception of the *umma* has at all times been influenced to varying degrees by the phenomenon of globalization in the modern world.

Throughout this paper, my argument will be based on teasing out the reasons behind the evolving nature of the definition of the *umma* within the Muslim Brotherhood and how it has reached its remarkable end-point in the modern period of non-Muslims being included in this definition of the community. Both Anderson and, more significantly Roy, provide a valuable analysis of the processes and rhetoric of nationalism, universalism, and globalization. However, for Roy in particular, the conclusions of his arguments are ultimately limited by the grand scope of his analysis and also by his insistence on the either/or distinction in classifying religions and modern religious communities as "successful" or not. Instead, as I will argue in this paper, the shifts in the understanding of membership and territory in the Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* complicate Roy's conclusion that political Islam has "failed." On the level of individual religious groups and communities, "political Islam" and indeed "political religion" if I can use this term, is alive and well in the modern period. They are surviving and prospering through, as I will argue, a unique trend of localizing in the face of spreading globalization and secularization that represents a new method of re-imagining the community in the modern world that is distinct from that prescribed by Roy.

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[4] Roy, p. 20

Beginning with al-Banna in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood was profoundly influenced by the growing nationalist movement in addition to the pending globalization that occurred following the First and Second World Wars. As such, al-Banna proceeded to define the *umma* of the Muslim Brotherhood mostly in terms of a pan-Islamist ideology that extended beyond Egypt. While al-Banna did not abandon entirely the concept of the nation, he focused most heavily on the idea that "all Muslims in these geographically determined countries are our people and our brethren."[5] Following al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb guided the evolution of the *Ikhwan's* definition of the *umma* away, in part, from the founder's original ideology. Qutb's conception of the *umma*, likely as a result of his confrontational relationship with Nasser and the Egyptian nationalists in power at the time, appears to have a much more solid foundation in the pragmatic than the idealistic. As such, his arguments often centered around the idea of a "vanguard nation" to lead the reformation of Muslim society. Following Qutb, the modern Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* shifted its focus to Egypt. It now encompassed *both* nationalism through territory and globalization through membership. The modern organization has attempted to decouple itself from a historical "pristine society"[6] and instead extend membership in the *umma* beyond the traditional boundaries of Islam. The *Ikhkwan* have also, however, renewed their emphasis on the national boundaries of Egypt as defining the territorial extent of the community. The often competing theories of nationalism and globalization, the universal and the particular, are thus exceedingly useful as paradigmatic viewpoints in any attempt to analyze the factors leading to the

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[5] Al-Banna, Hasan. *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949)*, trans. Charles Wendell (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 50.
[6] Roy, p. 24

evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* beyond the realm of traditional Islam.

Before embarking upon this analysis, it is important to note the appropriate definitions of certain controversial terms *a priori*. First, the Muslim Brotherhood is an "Islamist" organization in that its ultimate goal is "the establishment of an Islamic polity."[7] The basis of their Islamist doctrine stems from the attempt to present Islam as an "all-encompassing religious, political, social, economic, and cultural system"[8] that is a "model of society that posits itself as an alternative to the West's."[9] The Western press often groups organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood also as "fundamentalist." According to Aslan, they are not fundamentalist organizations in the truest sense of the word. Fundamentalism was "first coined in the early twentieth century to describe a burgeoning movement among Protestants in the United States who were reacting to the rapid modernization and secularization of American society by reasserting the fundamentals of Christianity."[10] This group was largely concerned with pursuing a literal interpretation of the Bible. However, as Reza Aslan points out, all Muslim sects accept the Qur'an to be the direct speech of God. Thus it "makes little sense to refer to Muslim extremists or militants as fundamentalists."[11] However, the revivalist movements such as the Brotherhood are also different from mainstream Islam by the fact they both take the Qur'an much more literally and are less pluralistic in their interpretations than most other Muslims. In this paper, I will refer to the Muslim Brotherhood and groups like it as an

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[7] Aslan, Reza, *No God but God*, (New York: Random House, 2005), 242.
[8] Aslan, p. 237
[9] Demant, Peter R., *Islam vs. Islamism: the Dilemma of the Muslim World*, (Westport: Praeger, 2006), 177.
[10] Aslan, p. 241
[11] Aslan, p. 242

Islamist organization and reserve, as Aslan does, the term "fundamentalist" to refer to the puritanical Wahhabi movement originating in Saudi Arabia.

Roy, in his analysis, makes use of the rather novel notion of "neo-Fundamentalism." He argues that modern Islamist groups, as a result of his conclusion regarding the "failure of political Islam," are forced to choose to either "opt for political normalization within the frame-work of the modern nation-state, or evolve towards what I termed neo-Fundamentalism."[12] He further proceeds to define neo-Fundamentalism as "a closed, scripturalist and conservative view of Islam that rejects the national and statist dimension in favor of the *umma*, the universal community of all Muslims, based on the *shari'a* (Islamic law)."[13] However, I would argue that Roy is not entirely certain as to how to specifically classify the Muslim Brotherhood within these categorizations. He admits as much when he writes that "the case of the Muslim Brotherhood is more complex because it was from the beginning a transnational organization."[14] Thus, due to the inherently dual nature of the Muslim Brotherhood as both a social and a political movement, I will, in this paper, refer to the *Ikhwan* simply as an Islamist movement and refer to the more radical offshoots of the Brotherhood as neo-Fundamentalists.[15]

While this paper will focus on an analysis of the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, a brief discourse into the background of the organization as a whole will ultimately prove valuable. Founded in Egypt in 1928 by the social and religious reformer Hasan al-Banna, it was initially a response to British colonialism. As such, the organization first attempted to "fuse religious revival with anti-imperialism- resistance to

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[12] Roy, p. 1
[13] Roy, p. 1
[14] Roy, p. 66
[15] Roy, p. 75

foreign domination through the exaltation of Islam."[16] The departure of the British, the flagging monarchy, rampant corruption and rapid modernization left a large economic and social gap between the pro-Westerners and everyone else. Into this void, the nascent Egyptian nationalist movement formed and began to gather strength. The challenges of modernity similarly led to the increased questioning of Islam as a religions and the focus of the Muslim Brotherhood immediately turned to addressing the issue of the decline of Islam in the modern era. From the position of the Brotherhood, the solution to this decline involves recognizing Islam as more than a religion, rather, recognizing it as an all-encompassing model of society.

The ideological history of the Brotherhood, as has been mentioned above, can be divided into three relatively distinct periods, following to the leadership of the organization at that time. These evolutionary phases can be traced from Hasan al-Banna, to Sayyid Qutb, and finally to the modern Egyptian leadership of the organization. The truly remarkable differences between each of these periods have been their respective definitions of the *umma* as it regards to both people and territory. While this aspect is not unique to the Muslim Brotherhood, there are certain factors which make this issue relevant for both Islamist groups and religious communities as a whole.

Ultimately, this analysis of the changing nature of the Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* is significant for a number of reasons. First, the Muslim Brotherhood is the largest and most powerful opposition political party in Egypt, which is arguably the most visible of the Muslim nations in the Middle East. As has been the case on Arab-Israeli relations, many Muslim-majority nations in the Middle East would likely

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[16] Leiken, Robert S. and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," *Foreign Affairs* 86 (2007): 108.

follow Egypt's lead should certain aspects of the Muslim Brotherhood's platform be implemented in mainstream Egyptian society. Second, the travails and development of this organization provide an opportunity to assess the critical question in the modern context as to whether religious communities are capable of surviving when detached, in varying degrees, from their territorial, ethnic, historical, and cultural roots. The evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood into an amalgam of nationalism and globalization/deterritorialization appear to suggest that viable religious communities must be both separated from and at the same time tied to their original "pristine societies" in order to prosper in the modern secular environment.

Finally, on a more theoretical level, the Brotherhood can serve as a model for the response of contemporary religious communities to the concurrent forces of nationalism and globalization in a modern, secularized society. This has resulted in a retreat away from the trend which Roy identifies as the universalization of religions and back to the national/local. Thus, while the modern Muslim Brotherhood and indeed other modern religious communities are not universal in terms of numbers of adherents, this does not imply that they have fallen into Roy's overly-simplified category of the "failure of political Islam." Rather, the simultaneous extension of the definition of the *umma* beyond only Muslims along with a renewed focus on the territorial national boundaries of Egypt by the modern Muslim Brotherhood provide a rather unique example for the practical coexistence of nationalism and globalization within a religious community.

II. The Formative Years: From Hasan al-Banna to Pan-Islamism

By 1928, Egyptian nationalism was already strengthening in response to a corrupt, Western-oriented monarchy. The ideology of secularism was beginning to permeate Egyptian society on the backs of these same nationalists and Egyptian society, though newly-independent, was in disarray. In that same year, Hasan al-Banna organized the formation of a small religiously-minded reform movement that would come to change the landscape of Muslim society. For him, the "greatest trial from which Muslims have suffered has been that of separatism and disagreement."[17] As such, the solution presented by the Muslim Brotherhood regarding the challenges of modernity, including secularism, nationalism, and globalization, was a renewed and intensified emphasis on the unity of the *umma*. The critical aspect of al-Banna's ideology and the organization's actions stem from their definition of this *umma* both in terms of territory and membership. As I will argue here, al-Banna formulated a definition of the *umma* that was pan-Islamist in membership and universal in regards to territory. This represented an idealistic envisioning of the *umma* that defined the basis of the Muslim Brotherhood's early doctrines: "all Muslims everywhere" charged with uniting this community through producing change through social action and preaching.

Hasan al-Banna began this definition of the membership of the community from the concept that "on the foundation of this excellent Qur'anic social organization, the first Islamic state arose."[18] This first state referring here to the state of Muhammad Indeed, al-Banna uses the first Islamic state to emphasize the importance of the unity of the Muslim

[17] Al-Banna, p. 57
[18] Al-Banna, p. 17

community. He writes that "unity, in all its meanings and manifestations, pervaded this new-risen *umma*."[19]

However, while a "look backwards" to the time of Muhammad was certainly an aspect of al-Banna's doctrine, it was not the central focus. Al-Banna remained committed to embracing contemporary concepts, philosophies, and technologies that arose out of the modern emergence of nationalism and globalization. Roy remarks that Islamists organizations are eventually forced to either "opt for political normalization within the frame-work of the modern nation-state, or evolve towards what I termed neo-Fundamentalism."[20] Within this context, al-Banna and the early Muslim Brotherhood, as they so often do, took the "Middle Path." While not the first of the Muslim reform parties formed in the colonial and post-colonial period, al-Banna's organization was unique in that it recognized the importance of tradition but also modern concepts for immediate political ends. As Leiken and Brooke note, "the Brotherhood differed from earlier reformers by combining a profoundly Islamic ideology with modern grass-roots political activism."[21] Indeed, Charles Wendell identifies that al-Banna and the *Ikhwan* were not "romantic reactionaries doting on the past."[22] Rather, al-Banna proclaimed that "it was possible to pick and choose those aspects of Western civilization that he could accept as compatible with Islamic doctrine and morality, and neatly excise the rest."[23] These modern concepts were embodied in al-Banna's doctrine of *tarbiyya* (teaching and preaching)[24] in which the organization launched numerous social and outreach projects.

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[19] Al-Banna, p. 17
[20] Roy, p. 1
[21] Leiken and Brooke, p. 108
[22] Wendell, Charles, trans., *The Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949)*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 3.
[23] Wendell, p. 3
[24] Leiken and Brooke, p. 108

In various sections in his tract entitled "Towards the Light," al-Banna further reaffirms the compatibility of Islam with societal features such as the economy, public health, science, and minority rights.

However, the significant modern concept of secularism (and through this, universal citizenship in the nation) appears largely absent from al-Banna's discourse on the make-up of the *umma* and is instead replaced by a more globalized, pan-Islamist doctrine. Al-Banna conceived of this pan-Islamist doctrine as a response to what he perceived as the decline of Islam in the modern world. As such, Anderson's analysis regarding the decline of traditional, religious-based communities in favor of nation-states is particularly useful here. Anderson presents a number of factors which contributed to this decline, the most important of which was the erosion of the "idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth."[25] This had clearly already occurred in al-Banna's context of immediate post-colonial Egypt. Arabic as both a language and a culture-marker had been superseded by both the English language and a British culture that "views itself as intrinsically superior to any other."[26] This ultimately resulted in the loss of the traditional Egyptian Muslim community's "confidence in the unique sacredness of their language, and thus their ideas about admission to membership."[27] This loss of importance and the derision of Arabic, which is the physical language of the Qur'an and Islam, brought about the decline of the Muslim community. The coalescence of these factors culminated in Hasan al-Banna's proclamation: "Egypt, where even the slightest traces of Islamic ideology have been driven off."[28]

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[25] Anderson, p. 36
[26] Demant, p. 91
[27] Anderson, p. 12
[28] Al-Banna, p. 29

The solution to this decline is presented by al-Banna as twofold: first, a renewed emphasis on the unity of the Muslim community, and second, the establishment of this newly unified *umma* through the travails and reform of the individual. Al-Banna argues that this unity has been lacking from the times of Muhammad and the first Caliphs. As such, the Muslim Brotherhood under Hasan al-Banna significantly directed their message not towards Egyptians, nor towards Arabs, but towards Muslims. This trend is likewise noted by Wendell when he writes that al-Banna's "ideology, then, before it was Egyptian or Arab or whatever, was Islamic at the core."[29] Thus, in the context of al-Banna, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood was conceived instead as the global Brotherhood. This pan-Islamist ideal can be seen when al-Banna writes that "we would like our people to know – and all Muslims are our people – that the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood is a pure and unblemished one."[30] All Muslims bear membership to al-Banna's *umma*, regardless of sectarian differences. Al-Banna, a Sunni himself, argues for the dissolution of the divides between the sects of Islam as the "mission of the Muslim Brotherhood is a general one unaffiliated with any sect."[31] Thus al-Banna's definition regarding membership in the *umma* involves leaving behind the divisions of Sunni, Shi'a, the schools of law, and even Sufis and the *ulama*. These last two classes are clearly not as blatantly opposed as the first two, however, he criticized the latter for their "withdrawal from the real world around them [...] and their abdication of their true responsibilities as spiritual guides and models."[32]

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[29] Wendell, p. 6
[30] Al-Banna, p. 40
[31] Al-Banna, p. 56
[32] Wendell, p. 6

The second feature of al-Banna's proposal to reverse the downward trend of Islam in the modern world involved a renewed focus on the individual. This was the basis of al-Banna's doctrine of *tarbiyya*: achieving change through preaching and teaching. One of his most critical beliefs was the idea that society can only be changed once the individual has overcome the obstacles separating him from a close relationship with Islam. As such, al-Banna exclaims: "Muslims, this is a period of creation: create yourselves, and your *umma* will thereby be created!"[33] There is no doubt that al-Banna's continued devotion to a Sufi order parlayed into his emphasis on first reforming the individual before society. However, this focus on the individual more importantly contributed to the relative detachment of the *umma* from a culture (Egyptian) that Roy states was a "a mere product of history and the results of many influences and idiosyncrasies."[34] This formed the basis of al-Banna's focus on the *umma* as "imagined identities"[35] but with certain, significant departures from the imagined communities model of Anderson.

Anderson's concept of "the nation" is certainly one that impels its citizens to action, however, the nation is not necessarily defined on the basis of these actions being carried out as it is, at its bases an "imagined political community." On the other hand, al-Banna defines the Islamic *umma* as one which does not "allow its principles and teachings to remain simply theories held by minds, or ideas relegated to book, or words to be bandied about."[36] Instead, al-Banna's interpretation of Islam must "*compel* the

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[33] Al-Banna, p. 84
[34] Roy, p. 25
[35] Roy, p. 3
[36] Al-Banna, p. 16

umma"[37] to action. The reason for this necessity of both social and religious action within al-Banna's *umma* stems from the pan-Islamist nature of this community. The deterritorialization of this *umma*, as Roy identifies, "leads to a quest for definition because Islam is no longer embedded in territorial cultures."[38] As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood must ground their definition of the *umma* by attempting to "formulate what it means to be a Muslim, to define objectively what Islam is – in short, to 'objectify' Islam [as a result of…] the end of the social authority of religion, due to westernization and globalization."[39]

These aspects help to define the delineations in the membership of the *umma* which al-Banna advocatedbetween "what is Islamic and what is not."[40] Within this definition of the *umma*, Hasan al-Banna is quick to point out that he considers Islam a "perfect system of social organization which encompasses all the affairs of life."[41] Within this perfect system he recognizes that "differences in the subordinate aspects of religion are absolutely unavoidable."[42] These degrees of difference within Islam are still compatible with his pan-Islamist when he writes, "Are we not Muslims as they are? […] In what way do we then differ?"[43] While this indicates that membership in this *umma* defined by al-Banna is "easy, flexible, simple, and mild, without rigidity or severity,"[44] it is important to note a certain degree of pan-Arabism concurrent with his ideology of pan-Islamism.

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[37] Al-Banna, p. 16; emphasis added
[38] Roy, p. 20
[39] Roy, p. 21
[40] Roy, p. 21
[41] Al-Banna, p. 30
[42] Al-Banna, p. 57
[43] Al-Banna, p. 58
[44] Al-Banna, p. 58

The pan-Arabism seen later in the 20th century was not present in al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood. Indeed, he writes both against the "disparagement of other races" and he also cites the *hadith* where Muhammad proclaims: "The Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab except by virtue of his piety."[45] However, al-Banna then proceeds to state that "the various nations have their own distinct qualities and particular moral characters [...] We believe that Arabdom possesses the fullest and most abundant share."[46] This hint of pan-Arabism could simply be a result of the fact that al-Banna was, at the time of his writing, concerned only with the Arab Muslims located in and around Egypt. Nonetheless, this remains an important, albeit relatively minor, aspect of Hasan al-Banna's definition of the *umma* that will serve as a foil to the policy adopted by the modern *Ikhwan*.

While al-Banna is explicit in his treatment of the place of Muslims, both Arab and non- in the *umma*, the issue of membership for non-Muslims in the *umma* as formulated by al-Banna is not nearly as clear as many of his other points. This is likely a result of the fact that during al-Banna's time, the Muslim Brotherhood was not confronted with situations in which Muslims were living in non-Muslim majority nations or the situation of considerable numbers of non-Muslims living in largely Muslim areas. Wendell makes the case that al-Banna appears to insinuate that followers of the "various missions" (non-Muslims), "can aspire to nothing higher than a kind of second-class citizenship."[47] However, it is also important to note that al-Banna's *umma* is not as starkly divided as Wendell claims. This is seen most clearly when al-Banna proclaims that Islam is, at its base, "the very religion of unity and equality, guaranteeing the maintenance of the ties

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[45] Al-Banna, p. 54
[46] Al-Banna, p. 55
[47] Wendell, p. 4

uniting the whole, so long as they continue to work for the good."[48] Along these lines, al-Banna quotes a Qur'anic verse stating: "God does not forbid you to deal with those who have not fought against you in religion and have not expelled you from your homes, with kindness and justice" (60:8).

I would argue that non-Muslims in al-Banna's definition of the *umma* are not nearly as isolated from Muslim society as Wendell presents. Indeed al-Banna does describe a dichotomous notion of communal membership in society when he writes that "the Muslim Brotherhood regards mankind as divided into two camps vis-à-vis themselves."[49] However, he also points out that "Mankind are of Adam, and therefore they are equals."[50] Thus I would argue that al-Banna's philosophy as to the membership of non-Muslims is to in fact treat them as "not-*yet*-Muslims." This is reflected in his comment that the Muslim Brotherhood believes that a "bond does exist between us and them – the bond of our mission – and it is our duty to invite them."[51] This is further seen in al-Banna's invocation of the possibility of instituting the traditional *jizya*, a tax paid by non-Muslims that grants them a level of citizenship nearly (but certainly not completely) on par with Muslims themselves.

A concept raised by Roy in his treatment of modern Islamist groups can help to illuminate this subject. The treatment by al-Banna of non-Muslims as non-members of the *umma* but also as "future members" relates to the re-Islamization of society that forms the core of the Brotherhood's doctrine. Roy notes that "re-Islamization means that Muslim identity, self-evident so long as it belonged to an inherited cultural legacy, has to

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[48] Al-Banna, p. 51
[49] Al-Banna, p. 55
[50] Al-Banna, p. 54
[51] Al-Banna, p. 56

express itself explicitly in a non-Muslim or Western context."[52] The placement of the Muslim *umma* and non-Muslims as separate members but at least on the same "playing field" thus appears to be an attempt to ground his idealistic pan-Islamist doctrine. In the increasingly globalized context in which Hasan al-Banna was formulating his definition of the *umma*, he attempted to "define a 'universal' Islam, valid in any cultural context."[53] This required a unique treatment of a Muslim *umma* alongside non-Muslims because, as Roy argues, in deterritorialization, "religion has to define itself solely in terms of religion [...] It has to define itself in comparison with all 'others.'"[54]

The critical aspect of al-Banna's definition of the *umma* regarding membership thus settled upon a vague relationship between Muslims and those "with whom we do not yet share this bond."[55] The territory upon which this *ummaic* relationship is located can begin to be seen when al-Banna refers to the Brotherhood as "not a benevolent organization, nor a political party, nor a local association with strictly limited aims."[56] Instead, al-Banna envisioned an *umma* that is not simply pan-Islamist as regards to membership but also almost entirely deterritorialized from any modern Muslim nation: "All Muslims in these geographically determined countries are our people and our brethren."[57]

During the early years of the Muslim Brotherhood under Hasan al-Banna, the *umma* was conceived of as containing all Muslims everywhere. This ideology arose out of the fervent belief that the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood was universal. As such,

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[52] Roy, p. 23
[53] Roy, p. 25
[54] Roy, p. 38
[55] Al-Banna, p. 56
[56] Al-Banna, p. 36
[57] Al-Banna, p. 50

al-Banna, argues that the "Muslim Brotherhood are not addressing their appeal to any one particular Islamic country" but rather are directing their call to "every country whose sons practice the Islamic religion."[58]

It does not appear as if any semblance of a territorially-defined nation is important in defining al-Banna's conception of the *umma*. This concept is in direct contradiction to the envisioning by the Egyptian nationalists of the characteristics of the modern nation. As has been mentioned before, Anderson argues that the central thesis of nationalists revolves around the idea that the nation is "an imagined political community."[59] This definition would not necessarily bring al-Banna's conception of the *umma* and the idea of the nation into conflict. Indeed, al-Banna and Anderson's definition of the nation mirror each other in describing the most important task of the community: to define itself. Al-Banna writes, "Create yourselves and your *umma* will thereby be created." Anderson similarly opines that "communities are to be distinguished [...] by the style in which they are imagined."[60] However, the ideological conflict between al-Banna and the nation (as described by Anderson) arises when Anderson extends his definition of the nation by writing that, "in fact all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined."[61] Anderson thus, incorrectly I will argue, removes any sort of distinction between the characteristics of a nation and any other imagined community.

Anderson, by equating all imagined communities with his idea of the nation, overextends his own definition. Beyond initially establishing the nation as "imagined,"

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[58] Al-Banna, p. 88
[59] Anderson, p. 6
[60] Anderson, p. 6
[61] Anderson, p. 6

Benedict Anderson's first classification of the nation is that it is "imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them [...] has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations."[62] This is clearly in contradiction to al-Banna's pan-Islamist philosophy where, "for every region in which there is a Muslim who says: 'There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God,' is a fatherland [... and] all Muslims in these geographically determined countries are our people and our brethren."[63] This does not invalidate Anderson's arguments. An imagined community can be a nation but it need not necessarily be one. In this regard, al-Banna's *umma* does not directly fit into the archetypal mold of a nation. However, al-Banna's *umma* does make a boundary of defining what and is not the community but this distinction is not linked to territory. Thus, al-Banna's *umma* is certainly limited, but to a different degree and in a different manner than the nation which Anderson is describing. Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood's "imagination" of the *umma* is in fact completely opposed to Anderson's description of the nation when he writes that "no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind."[64] There is no doubt that al-Banna's *umma*, united not by territory, historical culture, nor sectarianism, but rather by the sacred interpretation of Islam as an all-encompassing way of life, is in fact an "imagined community." The question then arises as to how exactly al-Banna's defining of the *umma* diverged so broadly from Anderson's characteristics required in "imagining an imagined community."

This is an important question to ask as the Muslim Brotherhood was presenting a definition of society at the same time that the Egyptian nationalists were doing the same

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[62] Anderson, p. 7
[63] Al-Banna, p. 50
[64] Anderson, p. 7

thing. As such, while al-Banna was not presenting his vision of the *umma* as a "nation," he was presenting it as an alternative to the "nation" of Nasser and the nationalists.

Hasan al-Banna created his conception of the *umma* such that it would be everything for all peoples. This is clearly against the nationalizing and secularizing trend which Anderson describes as having occurred since the Enlightenment and was occurring in Egypt at this time. Following, Anderson's logical argument, in Egypt as traditional religious social power structures came into contact with the pluralism of world religions, this led to a quest for definition. This resulted in nations and communities beginning to gradually define themselves along ethnic and national lines as they could "less and less safely rest on putative sacrality and sheer antiquity."[65] However, al-Banna refused to base his definition of the *umma* and thus the ideology of the entire Muslim Brotherhood on ardent nationalism as he believed this to be the "principal cause of the murderous world war."[66] Instead, Roy's analysis of imagined communities in fact proves more useful in this context.

Roy's focus in both *The Failure of Political Islam* and *Globalized Islam* is in fact on what he terms post-Islamism. This concept is what he describes as the response by Islamist groups to their realization of the failure of political Islam: they can either integrate into secular politics or revert to neo-Fundamentalism, described above. However, I believe that many of the factors which Roy describes are facing the Muslim community in the 21st century (globalization, secularization, increasing national consciousness) were also facing al-Banna's Egyptian society from 1930-1950. Roy mentions that modern Muslims "experience [the] deterritorialization without leaving his

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[65] Anderson, p. 85
[66] Aslan, p. 235

own country. The sense of belonging to a minority has been exacerbated by [...] 'westernization.'"[67] However, the rapid incursion of British culture, secularism, technology, and ideas created a similar sense for the Egyptian Muslims of 1928 of isolation in their own country. This was further seen in the distinct separation between the wealthy British townships and the neighboring Egyptian slums. Al-Banna, himself originally a teacher in one of these Suez Canal slums, arrived at the same conclusion which Roy reached in his analysis of 21st century Islam. That is, "the Muslim *umma* no longer has anything to do with a territorial entity. It has to be thought of in abstract or imaginary terms."[68]

As a result of this interpretation of the *umma* by al-Banna, he responded in a manner which again mirrors Roy's description of modern post-Islamist organizations. Al-Banna creates what Roy refers to as a "deculturalized Islam" which is a "means of experiencing a religious identity that is not linked to a given culture and can therefore fit with every culture, or, more precisely, could be defined beyond the very notion of culture."[69] Inherent in this ideology of al-Banna's is the detachment of Islam from culture, history, and most importantly, territory. Instead, al-Banna presents Islam as the only aspect needed to unite an "imagined community." He writes that "there is no nation in the world held together by the kind of linguistic unity, joint participation in material and spiritual interests, and similarity of suffering and hope that hold the Muslims together."[70]

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[67] Roy, p. 19
[68] Roy, p. 19
[69] Roy, p. 23
[70] Al-Banna, p. 24

An interesting aspect of al-Banna's separation of Islam from territory is his treatment of the state. He argues that within his *umma*, the state is inseparable from Islam. Subsequently, since the Brotherhood advocates an adaptation to Islam "according to the standard of creedal belief [rather than…] territorial orders and geographical boundaries,"[71] then al-Banna's "state of Islam" has no borders. There are two interesting points which can be drawn from this conclusion. First, that al-Banna envisions the *umma* he defines as not only pan-Islamic but also universal to and covering the entire world. He indicates this further when he describes the fatherland of his conception of the *umma* as first, a particular Muslim country, second, all other Islamic countries, third, an Islamic empire mirroring the first Islamic state, and finally the utopian fourth, "the fatherland of the Muslims expands to encompass the entire world."[72]

The second and more interesting point that can be drawn from this regards al-Banna's interpretation as to whether multiple states can exist within Islam. Following Arab freedom from colonialism, Muslims attempted to respond to this through the "restoration of their freedom and glory and the rebuilding of their state."[73] Although this led, as al-Banna claims, "to the concept of local nationalism," it will also ultimately result in "consolidation and a resurrection of the Islamic empire as a unified state embracing the scattered peoples of the Islamic world."[74] Thus it initially appears as if it is possible for multiple Islamic states to exist within al-Banna's *umma*. However, as I will argue, this point to al-Banna is entirely irrelevant. While al-Banna does acknowledge the presence of Islamic nation-states, it appears that he believes them to be both unnecessary and

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[71] Al-Banna, p. 50
[72] Al-Banna, p. 110
[73] Al-Banna, p. 24
[74] Al-Banna, p. 24

temporal. He writes first regarding the establishing of an Islamist government, "If someone should say to you: This is politics!, say: This is Islam, and we do not recognize such divisions."[75] Furthermore, and even more telling, al-Banna later proceeds to write that "the notion of nationalism [will] thenceforth melt away and disappear."[76] The deterritorialized *umma* which al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood was describing was envisioned as a globalizing force. However, I agree with Wendell that "precisely what powers the modern 'nation-state' of al-Banna's would possess [...] was never completely clarified in his writings."[77] This was most likely due to the fact that during al-Banna's period, for the most part, the Muslim Brotherhood was a burgeoning yet still relatively marginal group in Egyptian society. Al-Banna was not confronted with the same "nation-building" environment that faced his successors Sayyid Qutb and Husayn al-Hudaybi. This, along with other factors, was the reason why al-Banna's definition of the *umma* was eventually co-opted and almost entirely redefined by Qutb in the 1950s.

Al-Banna's choice to define the *umma* of the Muslim Brotherhood, both in terms of territory and membership, as entirely separate from any "pristine culture" was a completely unique concept in the early 20th century. Indeed, as seen in the similarities of Roy's analysis to al-Banna's definition of the *umma*, al-Banna was ahead of his time. He envisioned an idealized globalized *umma* in which nationalism would simply "melt away" before Egyptian nationalism had even firmly taken root in the figure of Nasser. The reasoning behind al-Banna's pan-Islamist, globalized doctrine is logical. He returns to the Qur'an by focusing on the individual first over society and the nation: "God does not change the circumstances of a people until they change what is in themselves"

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[75] Al-Banna, p. 36
[76] Al-Banna, p. 93
[77] Wendell, p. 3

(13:11). Thus, since the Muslim Brotherhood is focused on the individual, and Muslims, even in al-Banna's time, were located globally, his pan-Islamist doctrine should come as little surprise. Furthermore, al-Banna's belief in the territory of the *umma* matching its membership in terms of extent goes back to the ultimate duty prescribed to the Muslim Brotherhood. That is, for those who are "far from the path decreed by the Qur'an [...] then know that it is our duty to bring ourselves, as well as those who follow us, back to that way."[78]

The truly interesting aspect regarding al-Banna's definition of the *umma* is whether it is possible for a religiously-imagined community to survive as a "deculturalized Islam." Roy argues that these communities (he is here referring to modern post-Islamist groups) will ultimately not survive. He writes that "the failure lies in the project itself, as it did in the myth of an Islamic state, because it has no concrete basis (territorial, cultural, ethnic, or economic) on which to build such a community."[79] Indeed, the dramatic changes that evolved out of the Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* certainly suggest that Roy's critique may have been valid. Ultimately, Hasan al-Banna's definition of the *umma*, pan-Islamist in both membership and territory, focusing on the universal over the particular. For reasons that will be discussed, al-Banna's delocalization of Islam and the community was ultimately rolled back by the subsequent leaders of the organization. However, he did portray a model of imagining a religious community that is currently seen, with some significant alterations, in the tremendously successful modern incarnations of the Muslim Brotherhood.

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[78] Al-Banna, p. 70
[79] Roy, p. 30

III. The Sayyid Qutb Years

The definition of the *umma* in the early years of the Muslim Brotherhood was, for reasons mentioned above, an idealistic conception of a territorial-less community united by Islam, and Islam alone. For reasons that will be discussed below, the Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* evolved considerably away from al-Banna's initial formulation. Under the ideological leadership of Sayyid Qutb, the universalist doctrine of al-Banna was rolled back, in part, in favor of a slightly more localized definition of the community. This nuanced evolution occurred such that the ultimate universal goal of the Brotherhood was still maintained while the immediate and the practical were addressed through Qutb's shift of the territorial focus of the organization from the universal to a specific "vanguard nation." The architecture of these ideological changes came from an individual who, according to a Muslim *jihadist* from the 1980s, has "influenced all those interested in jihad throughout the Islamic world."[80] While there is much more behind the ideology of Sayyid Qutb than the fact that many of his followers have founded radical Islamist organizations, it is critically important to note that it was his definition of the *umma* which enabled this extension by his followers to occur. Qutb's *umma* ultimately represented a "reeling in" of al-Banna's completely deterritorialized, pan-Islamist *umma*. Indeed, the evolution of the concept of the *umma* under Qutb away from al-Banna was primarily a response to Qutb's perception as to the impossibility of establishing a Muslim community completely detached from a "concrete basis (territorial, cultural, ethnic, or economic)."[81]

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[80] Leiken and Brooke, p. 110
[81] Roy, p. 30

Hasan al-Banna was assassinated by members of the Egyptian secret police in 1949. By the time of his death, the Muslim Brotherhood had grown in size and influence to a degree that even Nasser was forced to rely upon the organization during his rise to power. There is no doubt that much of the successful rise to prominence of the Muslim Brotherhood stemmed from al-Banna's charismatic authority. As has been discussed previously, his ideology focused on reforming not just Egyptian society but all society. He argued that since Islam is universal, the organization and the movement should be as well. However, it soon became apparent that the idealistic doctrines of al-Banna were ill suited to the volatile environment of post-colonial and newly "Nasser-ized" Egypt following his 1949 assassination.

Hasan al-Banna's death resulted in a vacuum of authority. Charles Wendell accurately describes this phenomenon when he writes that "it speaks volumes for the charismatic flavor of Hasan's leadership that after his assassination the Brotherhood's membership declined rapidly, nor could it thereafter command the popular enthusiasm."[82] This vacuum gave "free rein to the expression of tendencies which, while claiming allegiance to al-Banna's doctrinal legacy, interpreted it in very different ways."[83] Two of the individuals who stepped into this vacuum were the elderly judge Husayn al-Hudaybi and the activist Sayyid Qutb. The selection of al-Hudaybi was not unanimously endorsed and indeed he was described by Anwar el-Sadat as a "singularly dull-witted and colorless ex-magistrate."[84] Lacking the charismatic and intellectual authority of al-Banna, al-Hudaybi was forced to rely upon the routinized authority of the Brotherhood's founder.

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[82] Wendell, p. 1
[83] Kepel, Gilles. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharoah*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 36.
[84] Wendell, p. 1; from Anwar el-Sadat, *Revolt on the Nile*, p. 111

Sayyid Qutb, it is important to note, was never the titular head of the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact al-Hudaybi and the mainstream organization often came into conflict with Qutb's more controversial ideologies. However, Qutb quickly became the ideological leader of the Brotherhood as a result of his own new interpretations of organizational doctrine. In this rather remarkable manner, Sayyid Qutb followed in the footstep's of the charismatic founder through his own charisma. Before a direct analysis and comparison of Qutb's and al-Banna's definition of the *umma* can be made, it is first important to present a short discourse explaining why exactly Qutb's ideology became so popular and significant in Egypt and beyond seeing as he did not follow in the footsteps of the original charismatic leader.

First, almost paradoxically, Sayyid Qutb achieved a part of his charismatic authority from the ideological breaks he created with the Muslim Brotherhood's founder. It should first be noted, however, that al-Banna and Qutb shared the same basic philosophy. Qutb and al-Banna both agreed on the ultimate task of the *Ikhwan*; namely, uniting Muslim society. The conflict between the two individuals, rather, arose out of a debate of idealism. Al-Banna argued for the idealist role of the individual reforming himself and through this, society. Qutb, on the other hand, no doubt influenced by the brutal state prisons of Nasser's Egypt, adopted a more pragmatic ideology when he proclaimed that "the socialist vision of changing hearts to change society had failed."[85] This shift in ideological tone no doubt appealed to the many Muslim Brothers locked in state prisons. Additionally, the relative success of Egyptian nationalism in the 1950s resulted in al-Banna's deterritorialized, pan-Islamist doctrine being interpreted

[85] Aslan, pg. 238

differently. The rise of the Egyptian nation-state as a viable means of correcting the ills of post-colonialism certainly discredited, to a certain extent, the idealized and universal pan-Islamism of al-Banna. In essence, the people of Egypt were able to witness the success of Nasser opposing the West but witnessed little of pan-Islamism except for the failed pan-Arab attempts to remove Israel from the Middle East.

Furthermore, Qutb achieved additional authority through the persecution he experienced. Kepel argues that "the halo of persecution suffered in defense of a faith and a social ideal conferred a status of absolute truth."[86] The above reasons are primarily responsible for the impact which Sayyd Qutb had on the Muslim Brotherhood despite not being named the Supreme Guide following al-Banna's death. However, the ideological split between Qutb and al-Banna's idealism had much farther-reaching effects than simply the leadership of the *Ikhwan*.

As with al-Banna's definition of the *umma* and indeed any sort of an "imagined community," an analysis of Sayyid Qutb's formulation of the *umma* begins with the two most integral factors: membership and territory. Determining the membership of Qutb's *umma* is slightly more complicated than al-Banna's doctrine of "all Muslims everywhere." It in fact appears as if Qutb has certain contradictions in his ideologies regarding both membership and territory. Indeed, it is easier to first determine exactly what Sayyid Qutb's formulation of the *umma* is *not*.

In Qutb's ideology as in al-Banna's, the *umma* does not extend to non-Muslims. The reason for this remains that, as Qutb states, non-Muslims and Western nations in particular are "deprived of those life-giving values which enabled it to be the leader of

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[86] Kepel, pg. 35

mankind."[87] Indeed, it appears that both al-Banna and Qutb shared the ultimate universal ideological goal of establishing a universal *umma* by extending Islam to all non-Muslims. Qutb writes that Islam was intended to "initiate a special kind of *umma* [that was…] unique and distinctive, namely an *umma* that came to lead mankind, to establish the way of Allah on earth."[88] Thus Qutb's *umma* is, expectedly, a Muslim one. It is not, however (for the most part), a territorial one.

It is here that the contradictions in Qutb's writings begin to emerge. I would argue that these contradictions stem from two competing factors. First is the similarity of beliefs between al-Banna and Qutb. Ideologically, both individuals are in accord that the Muslim *umma*, "does not denotes the name of a land in which Islam resides, nor is it a people whose forefathers lived under the Islamic system at some earlier time."[89] Second, Qutb appears to be torn by al-Banna's idealism. Indeed he writes that Islam and thus the Muslim Brotherhood are "not liable to be isolated in human idealism far removed from practical worldly life."[90] From this pragmatic viewpoint stems his doctrine that, as will be discussed later, "it is necessary that there should be a vanguard which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path."[91] Therefore it appears that it is the interplay between the idealistic and the realistic which account for the contradictions in the philosophies of Sayyid Qutb. Ultimately, the pragmatic aspects of his ideologies become predominant as a result of his belief that, "man does not listen, especially in this age, to an abstract theory which is not seen materialized in a living society."[92] However,

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[87] Qutb, Sayyid. *The Sayyid Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion, and Society*, ed. Albert J. Bergesen, (New York: Routledge, 2008), "Milestones," 35.
[88] Qutb, "The Islamic Concept and Its Characteristics," p. 21
[89] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 35
[90] Qutb, "Religion and society in Christianity and in Islam," p. 154
[91] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 35
[92] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 35

beyond these equivocations, the most significant aspect as to the membership of Qutb's *umma* regards how he treats Muslims themselves.

Qutb believes that there no longer exists any Egyptian *umma*. He extends this concept when he argues that there exists no contemporary Muslim *umma*. Instead, he writes that "the Muslim community has long ago vanished from existence and from observation."[93] Qutb explains that the reason for the disappearance of the Muslim community in the modern era has been the failure of Muslim states to implement the *shari'a* (Islamic common law). He further expresses this idea when he writes that "the Muslim community [...] vanished at the moment the laws of God became suspended on earth."[94] This rather unusual argument results in an odd similarity between al-Banna and Qutb's conceptions of membership in the *umma*.

Hasan al-Banna argued for the placement of non-Muslims in the *umma* not as completely external to it but rather as what I termed, "not-*yet* Muslims." It appears as if Qutb also uses al-Banna's concept however; he uses it to define membership in the *umma* much differently. Succinctly summarizing this point, Sayyid Qutb proclaims that "all the existing so-called 'Muslim' societies are also *jahili* societies."[95] The period of *Jahiliyya* refers to the time of pagan ignorance before the arrival of the Prophet. Or, as Qutb defines the concept, "*jahiliyya* is the worship of some people by others [...] some people become dominant and make laws for others, regardless of whether these laws are against God's injunctions."[96] Thus, all modern Muslim societies are not non-Muslim in the same way as are the Western secularists Qutb references earlier, these Muslims still do not

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[93] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 35
[94] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 35
[95] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 40
[96] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 41

"believe in other deities besides God or [...] worship anyone other than God." Rather, I would argue that Muslims seem to fall into that category again of "not-*yet*-Muslims" as "their way of life is not based on submission to God alone."[97] As in al-Banna's *ummaic* membership doctrine, this classification of Muslims is universally applicable. However, unlike al-Banna, Qutb in fact presents a solution and a means to establishing this global *umma*. It is at this point that the bifurcation in Qutb's thought becomes most apparent. Ideologically, he and al-Banna see the same end-point and indeed even envision the same goal. However, whereas al-Banna remains faithful to the individual, Qutb instead recognizes and believes that the individual is helpless in the face of the strength of these *jahili* societies. As such, he claims that "it would be naïve to assume that a call is raised to free the whole of humankind throughout the earth, and it is confined to preaching and exposition."[98]

There are many factors which contributed to Sayyid Qutb's rather unique formulation as to the membership of the *umma* and the works of Roy and Anderson are useful in analyzing them. First, Qutb's classification of all Muslim societies, and particularly Egypt, as *jahili*, severed the authority of the Egyptian state from its claim to cultural and historical linearity. This must appear counterintuitive as Anderson argued that this was a major factor in the decline of religious communities and the advent of nation-states. However, Anderson also states that "nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies"[99] and Egypt's historical destiny is Islamic. Therefore, it is critical for Qutb to separate the modern Egyptian state from history in order to reestablish the

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[97] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 40
[98] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 38
[99] Anderson, p. 149

connection between, as Roy phrases it, "Islam as a religion and 'Muslim culture.'"[100] This separation was also necessary as Qutb believed that "it is necessary that the Muslim community be restored to its original form."[101] Qutb's *umma* and the modern Egyptian state cannot both call upon the same cultural environment of ancient Egypt and as such he attempts to detach the modern, secular state from history.

Furthermore, I would argue that Qutb's definition of membership in the Muslim *umma* is also a response to marginalization. Roy makes the argument that "while many Muslims live in a demographic minority, many others feel themselves to be a minority in their own Muslim country."[102] This is was an exact replication of Qutb's concept of *jahiliyya* where the "true Muslims" (according to Qutb) are surrounded by the "not-yet-Muslims" of a purportedly-Muslim society. As a minority, Qutb was in a rather unique situation. Unlike the secular backdrop upon which Roy and Anderson describe that nationalism occurred in Europe, Qutb rather was dealing with a situation where "a religion, which almost everybody considers to be pre-dominant, is trying to live up to its *de facto* political marginalization."[103]

Qutb's response to this marginalization, while controversial, forms the basis of the definition of the membership of the *umma* he envisions. The first aspect of Qutb's response to the increasing marginalization of Islam under Nasser was action, more specifically, violent revolution to overthrow the pre-existing *jahili* society. This raised yet another issue of contention between Qutb and al-Banna. Whereas al-Banna advocated a definition of the community where all Muslims everywhere are included,

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[100] Roy, p. 10
[101] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 35
[102] Roy, p. 19
[103] Roy, p. 4

Qutb introduced a criterion of works over faith. Roy's analysis of religions in the modern context can help to explain this. He writes that, "while everybody was (circumcised or baptized) supposed to be a member of a community, however virtual that membership, there is a trend now among religious activists [...] to ask believers to show, even to exhibit their faith."[104] Echoing this analysis, action is in fact the defining point of the membership of Qutb's *umma*. This is evidenced through Qutb's treatment of the concept of *jihad*.

As an individual who is often considered the "father of modern Islamist *jihadism*," it is clear that this concept is a critical component of his ideology. As such, it plays a major role in defining the extent of his formulation of the *umma*. It is at this point that an important distinction needs to be made. The modern, specifically Western, press has created a situation in which the multi-faceted nature of the Arabic term "*jihad*" has been reduced to a single translation: violent religious war. *Jihad* in fact directly translates as "to struggle." Thus the word can apply to a variety of concepts such as *jihad* of the purse (donating money), *jihad* of the self (purifying oneself from within), in addition to *jihad* of the sword. While this latter form of *jihad* is arguably Qutb's most common interpretation of the word, it is still important to note that he is not focusing on this interpretation to the exclusion of the other forms of *jihad*. Rather, Qutb was particularly interested in portraying the entire spectrum of the concept of *jihad*.

Action on behalf of Muslims is demanded of members of the *umma* by both al-Banna and Qutb. Reflecting this, Qutb writes, "Islam is not a mere ideology to be explained to people [...] it is a way of life represented in a social set-up that takes the

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[104] Roy, p. 37

necessary action to liberate mankind."[105] Indeed, as has been suggested above, Qutb in fact replaces the social action trumpeted by al-Banna with a renewed focus on *jihad*. He claims that participation in *jihad* is incumbent on all Muslims. Indeed, this argument is supported by both Roy and Kepel when they write that Sayyid Qutb "explicitly considers *jihad* a permanent and individual duty (*fard 'ayn*)."[106] Since "Islam is a declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men," it is necessary for the *umma* to "release him from servitude to other human beings so that he may serve his God."[107] However, Qutb is also adamant that this movement of liberation will not be met unopposed and this is precisely the reason for Qutb's shift of the focus of his doctrine from the individual to the "vanguard nation." Rather, he writes that "any effort that tries to spread the Islamic way of life is bound to meet obstacles created by the power of the state, the social system and the general environment."[108] As such, Qutb argues that the *umma* must use "*jihad* for abolishing the organizations and authorities of the *jahili* system which prevents people from reforming their ideas and beliefs."[109] Thus, in summary, membership in Qutb's community is defined not "simply by birth," but through "one's faith and commitment."[110]

The membership in Qutb's *umma* is much more restricted than that found in al-Banna's doctrine. While Qutb claims that the community "addresses itself to all humanity, considering the entire earth its field of work,"[111] it is in fact significantly more limited than Qutb idealistically expressed. The restricted extent of this *umma* has just

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[105] Qutb, "Prologue *Surah* 8, *Al-Anfal* (The spoils of war)," p. 57
[106] Roy, p. 41
[107] Qutb, "*Jihad* in the Cause of God"
[108] Qutb, "Prologue *Surah* 8, *Al-Anfal* (The spoils of war)," p. 55
[109] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 36
[110] Roy, "Milestones," p. 37
[111] Qutb, "Prologue *Surah* 8, *Al-Anfal* (The spoils of war)," p. 48

been established regarding membership where action (*jihad*) defines the community. The territorial extent of this *umma* is likewise significantly more restricted than al-Banna's doctrine but not in the sense of "territory" as traditionally conceived. The limited territorial nature of Qutb's *umma* stems ultimately from the shift in modern religions identified by Roy from "self-evident universal religions embedded in given cultures, to religious communities surrounded by secularized societies."[112] As such, Qutb's response and solution to these challenges, and it is important to note that Qutb in fact presented a pragmatic solution rather than al-Banna's idealistic philosophy, was twofold: action (*jihad*) and the doctrine that "a religion cannot continue to exist in isolation from society."[113]

Sayyid Qutb argued that the isolation of Islam from society could only be overcome through the implementation of what he terms a "vanguard nation." The membership of this vanguard nation is the same *umma* formulated by Qutb and described above. It is important to note that at the time of his writing, Qutb did not believe this vanguard *umma* to yet exist. Rather, the vanguard nation was his conception of what the Muslim community *should* be. The need for this vanguard nation stems from Qutb's doctrine that Islam is "really a *universal declaration* of the freedom of man from servitude [...] it is a declaration that sovereignty belongs to God alone."[114] As such, it is the duty of the vanguard nation to "march through the vast ocean of *jahiliyya*"[115] and employ "*jihad bis saif* (striving through fighting), which is to clear the way for striving

[112] Roy, "Milestones," p. 36
[113] Qutb, "Religion and society in Christianity and in Islam," p. 154
[114] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 37, emphasis added
[115] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 35

through preaching."[116] However, whereas the membership and responsibilities of the vanguard *umma* in Qutb's thought is relatively clear cut, it is important to note that the literature regarding Qutb's philosophies are often, at times, contradictory.

Sayyid Qutb remains one of the most analyzed modern Muslim intellectuals largely as a result of his emphasis on the critical importance of *jihad* in defining the membership of the Muslim *umma*. As such, there are numerous interpretations of Qutb's doctrine, some of which appear to have little basis in the actual writings of Qutb himself. Included in this latter category is the concept of *takfir* which is often ascribed by many analysts of modern Islam to Qutb. However, the practice of *takfir*, which is the declaration of a lapsed Muslim as an apostate to the faith, is in fact an extension of Qutb's doctrine of *jahiliyya* by his followers. Indeed, this is evidenced by Bergeson's statement that it was "Shuki Mustafa who drew the implication of the doctrine of *jahiliyya* to its logical extreme. If Egyptian society was *jahiliyya* [...] then it must be excommunicated (*takfir*)."[117] Furthermore, additional misconceptions regarding Sayyid Qutb exist in the literature regarding Islamist organizations. I would argue that the reasons behind many of these misconceptions stem from the complicated, at times contradictory, and yet critically important nature of "territory" in Qutb's conception of the "vanguard *umma*."

Indeed, any first attempt at addressing Qutb's formulation of the territorial extent of the vanguard nation must begin with his contradictory treatment of the term "territory." In the traditional sense of the word, Qutb's concept of territorial extent mirrors al-Banna's idealistic philosophy when he writes that the *umma* "addresses itself

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[116] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 37
[117] Bergeson, Albert J. ed. *The Sayyid Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion, and Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 5.

to the whole of mankind, and its sphere of work is the whole earth."[118] However, I would argue that Qutb does not in fact intend the "territorial" extent of the vanguard nation to be interpreted in this manner. Instead, the extent of this *umma* is much more limited, favoring the particular over the universal. The extent of the vanguard nation is restricted by Qutb's critically important proclamation: "it is necessary that this group separate itself from the *jahili* society, becoming independent and distinct from the active and organized *jahili* society whose aim is to block Islam."[119] It is this separation of the vanguard *umma* from society which both restricts the "territorial" extent of Qutb's *umma* and creates a sense of a "social territory." Underlying these arguments is the issue of to what extent the *umma* can be brought into harmony with the idea of the nation. Qutb's *umma* was not a nation in the traditional Andersonian sense of the word. However, Qutb's definition of the *umma* was *competing* with the idea of the Egyptian nation as presented by the Egyptian nationalists. The attempts by Nasser to shift the social authority in Egypt from Islam to the state certainly led to Qutb's definition of the *umma* being interpreted as in direct opposition to the idea of "the nation" even though they share certain characteristics. Indeed, it is here where the contradictions in Qutb's doctrine become most readily apparent.

As has been stated previously, Qutb based his doctrine of redefining Muslim society on the belief that "a religion cannot continue to exist in isolation from society."[120] Thus it is certainly surprising that Sayyid Qutb would ordain that his "vanguard, which I consider to be a waiting reality about to be materialized,"[121] withdraw themselves from

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[118] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 37
[119] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 36
[120] Qutb, "Religion and society in Christianity and in Islam," p. 154
[121] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 36

society. The analyses of both Roy and Anderson are useful in elucidating the reasons behind this seemingly irreconcilable difference in Qutb's doctrine.

Although in this context, Roy is in fact analyzing the unintended secularization that occurred among the people accompanying the forced implementation of the *shari'a* in Saudi Arabia and Iran, the basis of his argument can in fact be applied to the case of Qutb. Roy writes that in the modern context, there is a growing trend among Muslims to "'save' religion from encroachments by political authority [...] to save Islam from politics."[122] This is precisely the reason behind Qutb's advocating the withdrawal of the vanguard *umma* from society. The *jahili* society is the target of Qutb's *umma*, however, his argument that they must be separated from this society in fact stems from one of Hasan al-Banna's proclamations. Al-Banna previously wrote that "the ultimate goal of Islam has been obscured in the modern *umma* [the non-vanguard *umma*]."[123]

Anderson's analysis of traditional religious communities is also useful in elucidating this difficult contradiction in Qutb's thought. Anderson proposes that much of the success of traditional religious communities prior to their decline came from the "juxtaposition of the cosmic-universal and the mundane-particular."[124] Indeed, he further argues that in that context, "however vast Christendom might be [...] it manifested itself *variously* to [...] communities as replications of themselves."[125] In response to the universal and vast extent of the Islam which Qutb consistently advocates, I would argue that his "vanguard *umma*" was in fact intended to serve as the "replications of themselves" for the global Muslim community, localizing this community to a certain

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[122] Roy, p. 91
[123] Al-Banna, p. 72
[124] Anderson, p. 23
[125] Anderson, p. 23

extent in the face of increasing globalization. This is ultimately reflected in Qutb's belief that the vanguard *umma* would not simply come into being and exist perpetually as an independent entity, but rather that it would serve as the guide for the lax Muslims of the *jahili* societies to follow.

One of the most common yet also least understood critiques of Sayyid Qutb's *ummaic* ideology centers on the racial component of this community. Indeed, as I previously mentioned, the primary reason for the misconceptions surround this aspect of Qutb's doctrine stem from the contradictory nature of his conception of the extent, territorially and socially, of the *umma*. It is relatively common, particularly in the older literature, to dismiss Qutb's ideology as entirely pan-Arabist in nature. The basis of this argument stems from Qutb's formulation of the "vanguard *umma*" which was undoubtedly directed, at least initially, primarily at Arabs. Furthermore, I would argue that Qutb's doctrine is also often considered pan-Arabist in light of the other events ongoing during his lifetime including the question of whether the "emerging autonomous Egyptian state have a pan-Arabist orientation and work toward something like the United Arab Republic?"[126] In fact, I would argue that much of the pan-Arabist outlook that has been traditionally ascribed to Sayyid Qutb stem more from his Nasserite contemporaries as well as his increasingly-radical followers. At the core of Qutb's own writings was his proclamation that "this religion is not merely a declaration of the freedom of the Arabs, nor is its message confined to the Arabs."[127] Indeed, I would argue that Qutb's doctrine cannot even be construed as pan-Arabist in terms of the traditional Arab territory to which he was preaching. Rather, Qutb writes that "when Islam strives for peace, its

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[126] Bergerson, p. 7
[127] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 37

objective is not [...] that only part of the earth where the followers of Islam are residing."[128] Thus while Qutb's writings are in fact not centered upon the concept of pan-Arabism, the misinterpretations of his doctrine stem from the concomitant factors of first, mistakenly analyzing the writings and beliefs of his contemporaries and followers and second, the contradictions present between the idealistic and the practical, the universal and the particular, in Qutb's definition of the extent of the *umma*.

The contradictory aspects of the extent of Qutb's *umma* can further be explained by the environment in which Sayyid Qutb was preaching his doctrine. It should be first noted that the bulk of Qutb's writings, particularly his more incendiary tracts, were written from within the infirmary of Nasser's prisons. Furthermore, whereas al-Banna had been dealing with a failing monarchy, Qutb was interacting with and had in fact been betrayed by the increasingly popular Free Officers movement. As a result of the environments in which he was writing, Hasan al-Banna ultimately formulated an idealistic pan-Islamist ideology as he was, as described previously, responding to the global force of modernization. Sayyid Qutb was undoubtedly responding to many of the same issues of modernity as al-Banna and as such Qutb proclaimed, idealistically, that "the soil of the homeland has in itself no value or weight."[129] However, unlike al-Banna, Qutb was also responding to the historical and tangible force of nationalism embodied in Nasser's Free Officers. The globalized, pan-Islamist view of Islam put forth by al-Banna was not feasible in the environment context in which Qutb was writing. In the face of the rising success of Egyptian nationalism, Qutb proposed a solution which, while contradicting his own ideology to varying degrees, represents a unified response to what

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[128] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 38
[129] Qutb, "Milestones," p. 39

Roy identifies as the argument that "the failure [of political Islam] lies [...] in the myth of an Islamic state, because it has no concrete basis (territorial, cultural, ethnic, or economic) on which to build such a community."[130]

To overcome the challenges of establishing a religious community in the modern era which Roy identifies, Sayyid Qutb reels in the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology, established under Hasan al-Banna, of presenting a "deculturalized Islam." Instead, Qutb ultimately argues for the utmost necessity of creating a vanguard *umma* that is both defined by action (*jihad*) and is limited in extent and withdrawn from society at large.

Based on Sayyid Qutb's definition of the membership and territorial extent of the *umma*, it appears that Qutb concluded that, in contrast to al-Banna, a modern religious community cannot exist completely divorced from culture, history, and territory. In essence, Qutb appears to have concluded that, unlike Roy's argument, static universalizing is not necessarily the path of all modern religious communities. Indeed, Qutb argues that the great failure of modern Islam resulted because "we have divorced our faith from practical life, condemning it to remain in ideal isolation" and because "we continually cast aside all our own spiritual heritage, all our intellectual endowment, and all the solutions which might well be revealed by a glance at these things."[131] As such, I would argue that Qutb's formulation of the *umma* was an attempt to ground and localize, to a certain extent, the Muslim community in tangible reality. Indeed, Qutb argues that "rather, our summons is to return, to our own stored-up resources, to become familiar with their ideas, and to test their validity and permanent worth."[132] Thus, the primary difference and indeed the influencing principle in the evolving concept of the *umma*

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[130] Roy, p. 30
[131] Qutb, "Religion and society in Christianity and in Islam," p. 151
[132] Qutb, "Religion and society in Christianity and in Islam," p. 159

between these two leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood stem from the debate between the idealistic universal and the practical local. Under Qutb and in the context of an increasingly popular Nasserist national Egypt, Qutb determined, although it may contradict some of the idealistic principles of the Brotherhood, that Islam cannot be "isolated in human idealism far removed from practical worldly life."[133]

IV. The Modern Muslim Brotherhood: The Confluence of Islam, Globalism, and the Nation

In August of 1966, Sayyid Qutb along with six other leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood were condemned to death by the Egyptian state for attempting to overthrow the government. The impact which Qutb's radical ideology has had on the Brotherhood was undeniable. The ideological split between Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb resulted in a subsequent split in membership. The divide between those who remained true to al-Banna's formative doctrine by following the moderate Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood Husayn al-Hudaybi and Qutb's followers who radicalized his ideology into one based on *takfir* and an over-emphasis of one of the many aspects of Qutb's philosophy: violent *jihad*. Following the death of Qutb, the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood began to slowly evolve away from many of Qutb's controversial doctrine including his definition of the membership, territory, and violent responsibilities of his proposed "vanguard *umma*."

Following the death of the organization's ideological leader, the Muslim Brotherhood was again confronted with a disheartening fact. Despite years of social reform and action under al-Banna and years of working with, being betrayed by, and

[133] Qutb, "Religion and society in Christianity and in Islam," p. 154

eventually violently opposing the nascent Free Officers movement, the Brotherhood was still, as Roy suggests, typical of Islamist organizations in that they were "unable to provide an effective blueprint for an Islamic state."[134] Ensuing this realization, the organization was confronted by the challenge which Roy argues eventually faces all Islamist organizations: "they could either opt for political normalization within the framework of the modern nation-state, or evolved towards what I termed neo-Fundamentalism [...] a conservative view of Islam that rejects the national and statist dimension in favor of the *umma*."[135] As I will argue in this chapter, Roy's argument becomes too tied up in the either/or delineation in describing modern religious communities. Instead, the modern Muslim Brotherhood beginning with al-Hudaybi adopted a "Middle Way" between Roy's two distinct options that is much more representative of the ideological trends in modern religious communities as a whole than Roy's static and prescriptive doctrine of "success through universalism." The modern Muslim Brotherhood instead straddled Roy's either/or categorical conclusions by advocating establishing a normalized socio-political organization which retained its emphasis on the *umma* as the vehicle for change with Islam as its guide. This "Middle Way," influenced by both the nationalism and globalism overtaking Egypt in the modern period, resulted in the envision-ment by the Muslim Brotherhood of an *umma* universally extended beyond even Islam yet still grounded within the territory, culture, and history of the borders of Egypt.

In the early years of the ideological evolution of the post-Qutb Muslim Brotherhood to the modern organization, there was certainly a significant emphasis on

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[134] Roy, p. 1
[135] Roy, p. 1

the first of Roy's options: "political normalization within the framework of the modern nation-state." This involved a refutation, of sorts, of many of the philosophies of Sayyid Qutb. Indeed, the issue of Sayyid Qutb remains an exceedingly difficult issue for the Muslim Brotherhood due to his immense popularity as well has his ideological advancement of the organization during the 1950s and 1960s. As Leiken and Brooke point out, "critiquing 'the martyr,' as Qutb is known, requires a surgeon's touch: he died in the service of the organization yet had strayed far from the founder's vision."[136] As a result, al-Hudaybi initiated the evolution away from Qutb's ideology obliquely. His work, *Preachers Not Judges*, is often argued to be a direct refutation of Qutb's doctrine, however, Qutb is never mentioned directly in the entirety of the piece. Instead, I would argue that al-Hudaybi was in fact responding to the followers of Qutb who radicalized "the implication of the doctrine of *jahiliyya* to its logical extreme,"[137] namely, *takfir*. Whereas Qutb was attempting to purify society through religion, the followers who radicalized many of his concepts were instead attempting to purify the religion of Islam itself. As such, al-Hudaybi and the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood responded against many of Qutb's *takfiri* followers when he wrote that "whoever judges that someone is no longer a Muslim [...] deviates from Islam and transgresses God's will."[138] The organization also attempted to evolve away from, as Aslan describes it, Qutb's belief that societal change must "be a cataclysmic, revolutionary event that could be brought about only through the establishment of an Islamic state"[139] and remain true to al-Banna's doctrine of reforming the state, peacefully, through reforming the individual. This shift

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[136] Leiken and Brooke, p. 113
[137] Bergerson, p. 5
[138] Leiken and Brooke, p. 110
[139] Aslan, p. 239

in ideological focus indicates a re-emphasis on the individual. I would argue that this shift suggests that the modern Muslim Brotherhood no longer views the nation-state of Egypt as an unassailable bastion of opposition to Islam. Rather, the state is a means by which through cooperative effort the *umma* could be recreated. Indeed, the ultimate evolution of the modern Muslim Brotherhood away from many of Sayyid Qutb's philosophies can be seen in the critiques directed against the organization from Qutb's more radical followers. One of the founding members of the notorious Egyptian *jihadist* organization *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* exclaimed in the 1980s: "The Brothers have abandoned the ideas of Sayyid Qutb."[140]

While the modern Muslim Brotherhood has certainly trended towards Roy's description of the "normalization" of Islamist groups, they have also not completely nor even significantly abandoned their desire to establish and base the reform of society on the *umma*. Indeed, following the death of Sayyid Qutb, the Brotherhood dropped both al-Banna's emphasis on deterritorialized pan-Islamism and Qutb's doctrine of the "vanguard nation," which he never solidly localized in an actual territorial entity, in favor of shifting the focus of the organization to the state of Egypt. In this regard, Roy is entirely incorrect in assuming that Islamist organizations either opt for the extreme of complete normalization and secularization or what he terms "neo-fundamentalism [...] a conservative view of Islam that rejects the national and statist dimension in favor of the *umma*."[141] As will be argued further in this chapter, while the Muslim Brotherhood retained their emphasis on the *umma*, they in fact envision an *umma* which itself takes on

[140] Leiken and Brooke, p. 110
[141] Roy, p. 1

a "statist dimension" while at the same time not entirely abandoning the guiding force of Islam in favor of secularization.

This point raises an interesting and critical question in analyzing the modern Muslim Brotherhood: has the Muslim Brotherhood in fact accepted the principle of secularization in their ideology? Mohamad Farahat notes that many analysts question whether Islamist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood have "truly accepted secularism as a prerequisite of becoming a liberal movement."[142] The simple yet rather complicated answer to this question as regards the Brotherhood is both yes and no. Farahat, in his analysis of the electoral platforms and reform initiatives released by the Muslim Brotherhood between 2004 and 2007, notes that the distinction between "what is religious or evangelical, and what is political [...] is still lacking among many Islamist movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood."[143] As will be discussed later, while I agree with Farahat that there is certainly a murky relationship between religion and politics in the modern Muslim Brotherhood, I would argue that there is in fact a relatively firm distinction in that while the *Ikhwan* is not fully secular, it does still advocate an *umma* ruled by a completely civil state. The state is viewed of as civil in that the Brotherhood does not recognize the right of the religious to co-opt the popular governance of the state.

Almost all of the changes that have resulted in the modern manifestation of the Muslim Brotherhood, including the difficult relationship between politics and religion within the organization, can be attributed to the evolution of the definition of the *umma* of the Muslim Brotherhood both in terms of membership and territory. In part a response to

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[142] Farahat, Mohamed F. "Liberalizing the Muslim Brotherhood: Can it be Done?" *Arab Insight* (2009): 11. http://www.arabinsight.org/aiarticles/214.pdf.
[143] Farahat, p. 11

the Egyptian nationalism which persecuted the organization in the 1950s and in part a reaction to the phenomenon of globalization, the *umma* envisioned by the Muslim Brotherhood is now both idealistically universal with regards to membership while simultaneously pragmatically limited in extent territorially. Despite the modern organization's established distance from Qutb, it is clear that the Muslim Brotherhood is currently an amalgam of the idealistic and universalistic philosophy of Hasan al-Banna and the more practically-minded and slightly localized doctrines of Sayyid Qutb. In analyzing the unique combination of global forces and ideologies which have created the remarkable definition currently held by the modern Muslim Brotherhood regarding the *umma*, it is useful to begin first by looking at the membership envisioned in this community.

The membership of the modern Muslim Brotherhood's *umma* contains, as did al-Banna's and Qutb's, Muslims. This rather obvious point is reflected in the comment made by Mohamed Habib, the current deputy Supreme Guide of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, that the organization is, at its base, "an Islamic, civilized, uplifting project."[144] The distinction about the treatment of Muslims between the modern group and al-Banna and Qutb regard the extent to which membership is extended. It is undeniable that, like the two formative leaders, the modern organization considers all Muslims everywhere as "brothers." This is seen, for example, in their communal relationship to Hamas in Palestine when Habib states that, "We share the same ideology, an Islamist one."[145]

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[144] Habib, Mohammed, interview by Sandmonkey. *An Interview With Muslim Brotherhood's #2, Mohammed Habib* (August 24, 2008). http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=17673&ref=search.php.
[145] Habib, Mohammed, interview by ikhwanWeb. *Habib Clarifies MB Stance towards Hamas, the Palestinian Cause* (June 12, 2008). http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=17258.

However, a different emphasis in the modern Muslim Brotherhood comes to replace the pan-Islamism of al-Banna and even of Qutb. There is a very clear focus of the modern organization's message and indeed the membership of the *umma* itself on the Muslims of Egypt rather than Muslim worldwide. Habib states that "the Muslim Brotherhood [...] is based on the idea that Egypt needs to rise again to greatness."[146] While Muslims everywhere are "brothers" of the organization, it is only the residents of Egypt who are the envisioned members of the Muslim Brotherhood's *umma*. Habib again confirms this point when he argues for the critical importance of the *Egyptian* government when he writes: "if we, as Egyptians, are suffering from a bread crisis or an unemployment crisis, or whatever, in reality we only have one crisis and that's a crisis in ruling the country."[147]

The limit of the focus of the modern Muslim Brotherhood under Habib to Egyptian Muslims rather than "all Muslims everywhere" represents a contradiction to one of the key arguments set forth by Roy regarding the contemporary "deculturalization of Islam." Indeed, it could be argued that this ideological shift in the Muslim Brotherhood is attributable to the modern organization's decision to work within the confines of the government and as such the group has adopted certain nationalistic assumptions. However, I would argue that this stems in fact from the decision by the modern Muslim Brotherhood to present their model of society as completely on par with the current national model and that the social agenda of their program can be implemented most successfully *within* the confines of the localized, pre-existing nation.

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[146] Habib, "Interview"
[147] Habib, "Interview"

Roy argues that the "failure of political Islam" has resulted in the "construction [by Islamist organizations] of a 'deculturazied' Islam [which] is a means of experiencing a religious identity that is not linked to a given culture."[148] Instead, the focus of the modern Muslim Brotherhood has in fact turned to embracing the culture defining Egyptian Muslims. Indeed, this is but one facet of the reason why the Muslim Brotherhood has not been subject to the same failures as other Islamist groups. To quote Sayyid Qutb, the originator of this thought in the evolution of the Brotherhood, the organization has embraced rather than jettisoned, "our own spiritual heritage, all our intellectual endowment, and all the solutions."[149]

The reason for this unique position and mainstream success of the modern Muslim Brotherhood as compared to other Islamist organizations stems from their rejection of one of the trends identified by Roy in the modern era. He writes that "globalization has blurred the connection between religion, a pristine culture, a specific society and a territory."[150] Indeed, he is correct in that, particularly in Europe, Muslims are almost entirely "delinked of religion and culture."[151] However, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has decided to shift its focus from *Dar al-Islam* to the people of Egypt. Indeed, Leiken and Brooke illustrate this transition, if rather violently, when they write that "while *jihadists* have been sorting out the finer points of international slaughter, the *Ikhwan* has hunkered down to purse national goals."[152]

I would argue that the modern Muslim Brotherhood stands as the exception to the "rule" presented by Roy. He is correct in identifying that the majority of modern Islamist

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[148] Roy, p. 3
[149] Qutb, "Religion and society in Christianity and in Islam," p. 150
[150] Roy, p. 24
[151] Roy, p. 24
[152] Leiken and Brooke, p. 113

organizations have declined largely because, as he writes, "Islamism [...] has little appeal for many Muslims who have no desire to be involved in such a project because they are uprooted, migrants and/or living in a minority."[153] However, as I argued above, the Muslim Brotherhood has been able to reverse this trend by, in essence, "de-globalizing." This has allowed the organization to reach unparalleled heights of mainstream success in Egypt, culminating notably in the November, 2005 legislative elections in Egypt in which the Muslim Brotherhood "which is officially banned but still tolerated, won a surprising 20 percent of the assembly."[154] A logical yet critical question regarding Islamist organizations in general must arise concerning the mainstream success of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: Why have other Islamist organizations not mimicked the *Ikhwan's* tactics to stave off Roy's perceived "failure of political Islam?" The answer to this question is at first simple. The success, survival, and prosperity of modern religious communities cannot be broken down into the categorical "either/or" delineations of Roy's analysis. Yet, the more nuanced answer to this question regards the treatment by the modern Muslim Brotherhood of non-Muslims in their Egyptian-centered *umma*.

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the modern period has evolved the truly remarkable definition of the membership of the *umma* that in fact extends beyond the extent of traditional Islam. While the Brotherhood, as discussed above, shifted their focus to the "national goals" of Egyptian Muslims, they also began to include non-Muslims in their definition of the *umma* to a degree heretofore unseen by a modern Islamist organization. It should be noted, however, that this was a gradual process which did not occur overnight.

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[153] Roy, p. 2
[154] Leiken and Brooke, p. 113

During the time from Husayn al-Hudaybi to the present, the Brotherhood determined that "its road to power is not revolutionary; it depends on winning hearts through gradual and peaceful Islamization."[155] This slow process came to be dominated in the 1980s by "middle-class professionals [...] working within labor unions and professional organizations, these reformers [...] learned to forge coalitions."[156] This diversification of the membership of the Muslim Brotherhood caused a gradual moderation of the organization following the divisive era of Sayyid Qutb. Indeed, as Leiken and Brooke argue, this moderation is illustrated by activities of those who chose to leave the Brotherhood. Following the martyrdom of Sayyid Qutb, many Brethren left the organization when al-Hudaybi refuted the violent rhetoric of Qutb. Indeed, modern radical organizations including Al-Qaeda are in fact splinters from the Muslim Brotherhood in the Qutb era. Leiken and Brooke correctly point out, however, that the organization has slowly moderated through a focus on, for example, as al-Banna initially proposed, "more affordable housing [...] judicial reform and independence."[157] As a result of this, in the modern context, "Brothers who leave the organization are more likely to join the moderate center than to take up *jihad*."[158] I would argue that it is this gradual moderation by the organization, in response to both the repressive nationalist agenda of the Egyptian state as well as the growing deterritorialization of religion and society, that has resulted in the inclusion of non-Muslims as part of the membership of the Brotherhood's envisioned *umma*.

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[155] Leiken and Brooke, p. 111
[156] Leiken and Brooke, p. 114
[157] Leiken and Brooke, p. 114
[158] Leiken and Brooke, p. 113

Alongside Egyptian Muslims, the modern Muslim Brotherhood views the *umma* of being composed of *all* members of Egyptian society. One of the key components of Egyptian society which has proved problematic to other Islamist organization, including earlier versions of the *Ikhwan*, is the prominent Coptic minority. Although Egypt has been a Muslim-majority nation for centuries, the small yet vocal minority of Copts has persisted in Egyptian society. There has long been a perceived animosity between the Brotherhood and Copts based on the belief that Coptic Christians would not desire to live under an Islamist state.

However, the moderation and reformulation of the membership of the Muslim Brotherhood's Egyptian *umma* has largely removed the animosity between these organizations. Indeed, as recently as June of 2008, Coptic intellectual Milad Hanna stated that there is a "state of harmony and coexistence between Muslims and Copts in Egypt unlike in many other countries, which makes them share the same traditions and habits. The Egyptian people are religious by nature, both Muslims and Christians."[159] Indeed, it may in fact be the cultural religious history of the Egyptian people as a whole, be it Islamic or Christian, that has contributed to the shift away from the universal in a time where globalization and deterritorialization are the norm. This is further evidence of the Brotherhood's increased focus on the national and territorial lines of Egypt over the religious and sectarian ones. Hanna even goes on to argue that the Brotherhood should be "granted official recognition by the government" because, "If the Muslim Brotherhood

[159] Hanna, Milad, from ikhwanWeb. *Coptic Intellectual Says MB Won't Oppress Copts*, (June 25, 2008). http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=17293.

takes over, it will never adopt violence towards Copts. We already have strong ties with MBs and we are confident of their tolerance."[160]

It is important to emphasize, however, that the modern Muslim Brotherhood does not simply view the Coptic minority as a tolerated entity, but as full citizens within the Egyptian *umma*. Supporting this point, Habib argues that Copts "are part of the fabric of this society, they form with us one body of citizens living in one country and have all the rights associated with citizenship."[161] Furthermore, Farahat, in his analysis of official Brotherhood platforms and publications from 2004 to 2007, notes that the stance of the organization towards Copts is as "equals to their Muslim brothers in all rights and duties, and in assuming government jobs on the basis of competence and specialization."[162] Thus, the Muslim Brotherhood has not only adopted a moderate, religious tolerance ideology but in fact has accepted a doctrine of membership within the *umma* not limited to the Muslim faith.

This truly remarkable extension of the *umma*, and indeed I would argue that the modern organization's doctrine of the *umma* is now coterminous with Egyptian society, is in fact extended further to encompass not only Muslims and Copts but every member of Egyptian society. Echoing this point, Habib states that the *umma* envisioned by the Muslim Brotherhood is one which "doesn't discriminate between all sections of society [and…] includes all citizens regardless of their religion or creed."[163] Indeed, this concept of universal membership has been extended to a point unrecognizable by other modern

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[160] Hanna, "Coptic Intellectual"
[161] Habib, Mohammed, interview by ikhwanWeb. *Democracy is Our Choice Toward a Civil State* (June 13, 2007). http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=807.
[162] Farahat, p. 19
[163] Habib, Mohammed, interview by ikhwanWeb. *We Agree with Egypt's Mufti, Reject Religious Parties* (February 2, 2007). http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=2544.

Islamist organizations. The general guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Mahdi Akef, even goes as far as to write that "there is no conflict between the Muslim brotherhood and the Jews."[164]

Anderson's treatment of modern nation-states can help to analyze this concept by the Muslim Brotherhood of universal membership within the *umma*. Reflecting the open nature of the Brotherhood's membership doctrine, Anderson writes that "from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood, and that one could be 'invited into' the imagined community."[165] Indeed, within the ideology of the modern Muslim Brotherhood, the trait linking and defining society has shifted from the religious to the national/local: Egypt. While I will not go into a detailed linguistic analysis, it is still important to note the shift in emphasis on the physical language of Arabic that has accompanied the modern evolutions of the Muslim Brotherhood. Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an and Islam, led traditional Muslim communities to, as Anderson argues, have a greater "confidence in the unique sacredness of their languages, and thus their ideas about admission to membership."[166] However, in the modern period, I would argue that the "sacredness" of the Arabic language has been deemphasized by the Muslim Brotherhood. Rather than the sacred, Islamic nature of Arabic defining the *umma*; Arabic, while still critical religiously, is instead a trait common to and defining the citizens of Egypt. This shift in linguistic focus is mirrored in Anderson's remark that "language is not an instrument of exclusion [...] on the contrary, it is fundamentally inclusive, limited only by the fatality of Babel."[167]

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[164] Leiken and Brooke, p. 116
[165] Anderson, p. 145
[166] Anderson, p. 13
[167] Anderson, p. 134

In addition to Anderson, Roy's analysis of the relationship of modern religious communities to what he terms "pristine cultures" is also exceedingly useful in evaluating the unique membership definition of the *umma* by the modern Muslim Brotherhood. Roy argues that "globalization has blurred the connection between a religion, a pristine culture, a specific society and a territory."[168] Both the phenomenon of globalization and nationalism has led to an increased emphasis on the importance of defining modern communities. This is reflective of Anderson's proto-concept of imagined communitarian definitions originally stemming from the notion: "our nation is the best."[169] In the case of modern Islamist organizations, Roy similarly argues that "common to all fundamentalist or reformist movements is a quest to define a 'pure' religion beyond time and space."[170] Thus, according to Roy regarding Islamist organizations, the relationship between religion and "pristine culture" is not only blurred (to a greater degree than is normal) but "pure" Islam is in fact "not linked with inherited cultural habitus or collateral knowledge."[171]

While this trend was certainly seen in the doctrines of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, I would argue that the modern organization has in fact gone beyond the limited aspects of certain arguments made by Roy. It is true that the Muslim Brotherhood's conception of the *umma*, was, at one point, delinked from culture and viewed as a "'universal' Islam, valid in any cultural context."[172] The point of divergence between the modern Muslim Brotherhood and Roy centers on the fact that the modern organization has in fact "reattached" their definition of the *umma* to a "pristine culture," i.e. Egyptian.

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[168] Roy, p. 24
[169] Anderson, p. 16
[170] Roy, p. 11
[171] Roy, p. 25
[172] Roy, p. 25

It should be noted here that "pristine culture" may not be the best description as the Muslim Brotherhood's interpretation of Egyptian religious culture is a novel one not associated with prior interpretations. However, the organization has nonetheless associated themselves with the "pristine culture" of historical and territorial Egypt. This re-association has resulted in the inclusion of non-Muslims along with Muslims in the membership of the *umma*. Thus, it certainly appears as if the Islamist doctrine described by Roy of re-Islamization, the process of "drawing of lines between true believers and the rest of the world,"[173] has been subverted in the modern period. Indeed, this shift in ideological focus appears to be the response by the Muslim Brotherhood to the modern "context where religion has lost its social authority."[174]

Thus I would argue that the modern Muslim Brotherhood in fact stands in direct contradiction to one of the key arguments by Roy in his work on "Globalized Islam." As I related to al-Banna's conception of a pan-Islamist *umma*, Roy describes the modern phenomenon he perceives of the "construction of a 'deculturalized' Islam [which] is a means of experiencing a religious identity that is not linked to a given culture and can therefore fit with every culture."[175] Rather, I would argue that the modern Muslim Brotherhood has in fact trended towards a slightly de-Islamified culture. This is a very delicate argument as the organization is undeniably itself based on the establishment of an Islamic society. Therefore how could it be that this group could possibly advocate even the slightest "de-Islamification" of culture? The answer lies in fact that, as Farahat

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[173] Roy, p. 36
[174] Roy, p. ix
[175] Roy, p. 23

identifies, the organization "does not draw a line between its religious and political functions."[176]

The modern Muslim Brotherhood is an organization in which the religious and the civil are complicatedly interwoven. The reason for this complex and murky interplay stems from Brotherhood's belief that, as Farahat argues, "political reform is viewed as part of religious reform."[177] However, the general trend in the past two decades has certainly been directed towards the civil aspects of the Brotherhood. Indeed, Mohammed Habib reflects this when he states that the *Ikhwan* is "a civil party with Islamic reference in a way that doesn't discriminate between all sections of society."[178] Echoing the increased emphasis on the civil nature of the Muslim Brotherhood's *umma* is also the notable lack of the terms "Islamic state" or "Islamic government" in their 2004 reform initiative.[179] This emphasis is ultimately seen in the Brotherhood's 2007 electoral platform when they write that "the state in Islam is a civil state with its systems and institutions put in place by the umma, and in which the umma represents the source of authority."[180] This 2007 platform also provides further evidence of the slight "de-Islamification" of culture that is currently ongoing within the organization when it states that "Islam does not have religious authority for anyone."[181]

Furthermore, the Brotherhood's embracement of democracy stands as further evidence of the increasingly civil/political nature of the *umma*. Habib proclaims that "we have announced our acceptance of the rule of democracy that is based on real political

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[176] Farahat, p. 12
[177] Farahat, p. 13
[178] Habib, "We Agree with Egypt's Mufti"
[179] Farahat, p. 14
[180] Farahat, p. 14
[181] Farahat, p. 15

diversity, and the peaceful exchange of power, and that the people should rule and that they have the right to choose their leaders."[182] Indeed, Leiken and Brooke further support this claim when they write that the Muslim Brotherhood argues that "the *umma* (the Muslim community) is the source of the *sulta* (political authority)."[183] This concept in the modern organization is certainly reminiscent of al-Banna's proclamation of, "create yourselves and your *umma* will thereby be created." However, the difference between these two interpretations of the *umma* again lies in the fact that the modern Brotherhood opted to ground and localize the *umma* in the culture and history of the Egyptian nation.

It is critically important to note that while the organization may be trending towards the political and the civil, the group is not secular and nor does it embrace secularism. In fact, the organization is quick to point out while both the religious and the political coexist in the organization, the religious is still predominant. In the organization's 2004 reform initiative, Farahat argues that "even though the Brotherhood did not deny that national and patriotic duty was also an important motivation for the initiative, this still came in second place beyond religious responsibility."[184]

While it is undeniable that the current leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood is torn over the exact role of the religious and the political in their conception of the *umma*, Habib attempts to present a model which balances the two. He argues for the necessity of "an ideological reference given that the law issued by the People's Assembly is stemming from the Islamic *Shari'a*." This concept is further reinforced in the organization's 2007 electoral platform in which the group claims that "the application of the Islam *shari'a* itself would take place through 'the vision which the *umma* agrees upon, through a

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[182] Habib, "Interview"
[183] Leiken and Brooke, p. 110
[184] Farahat, p. 13

parliamentary majority in the freely elected legislative authority.'"[185] Thus, while the Muslim Brotherhood is certainly not secular, there is in fact a "Middle Way" between the religious and the political that the organization is attempting to straddle.

While the uneasy relationship between the religious and the political/civil has engendered conflict within the organization, it is also the unique coexistence of these two aspects in the organization's *ummaic* doctrine which has led to group's success in "the context in which the religion has lost its social authority."[186] Conflicts within the Muslim Brotherhood have arisen over the interplay between the religious and the politica. Indeed, Leiken and Brooke identify that "the sharpest divisions [within the Muslim Brotherhood] have occurred over the issue of forming a political party."[187] However, the combination of the religious and the political/civil has enabled the modern Muslim Brotherhood to escape the fate which Anderson believes will ultimately face all traditional religious communities. While these factors have been discussed previously, Anderson also notes that the decline of religious communities left a vacuum of sorts in society. He writes that "the extraordinary survival over thousands of years of Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam [...] attests to their imaginative response to the overwhelming burden of human suffering- disease, mutilation, grief, age, and death."[188] Following the decline of traditional religious communities, these issues did not disappear from the earth. As such, Anderson argues that "what then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning [and...] few things were better suited

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[185] Farahat, p. 15
[186] Roy, p. ix
[187] Leiken and Brooke, p. 114
[188] Anderson, p. 10

to this end than an idea of nation."[189] While this is true in the context of a secular nation-state, the Muslim Brotherhood's definition and conception of the *umma* allows for the maintenance of an adapted traditional religious community without the complete transition to a secular nation. Thus, the "great merit of traditional religious world-views"[190] is still applicable by the contemporary Muslim Brotherhood even in the context of a modern, globalized, nation-state of Egypt.

As has been seen in the above arguments, it is clear that the membership definition of the *umma* within the modern Muslim Brotherhood has been nationalized to a certain extent and the tension between the *umma* and the nation has been significantly lessened. The Brotherhood's restriction of the extent of the *umma* to the territorial borders of historical Egypt is the primary reason for the organization's ability to overcome Roy's "failure of political Islam" because the *umma* now has a "concrete basis (territorial, cultural, ethnic, or economic) on which to build such a community."[191]

It is certainly logical that if the modern Muslim Brotherhood defines membership in society through being an Egyptian that the organization would similarly define the territorial extent of this *umma* along the borders of the traditional Egyptian state. Indeed, lost in this adaptation of *ummaic* doctrine is the deterritorialized, pan-Islamist doctrine of al-Banna. Similarly, although Qutb did advocate the need for a "vanguard nation," he never reached the point of suggesting a specific modern nation or community which should take on this mantle. On the other hand, the modern organization has presented their definition of the *umma* as the exemplary "vanguard community" which Qutb called for. Illustrating this point, Habib stated that "the Muslim Brotherhood has an Islamic,

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[189] Anderson, p. 11
[190] Anderson, p. 10
[191] Roy, p. 30

civilized, uplifting project that is based on the idea that Egypt needs to rise again to greatness, because in its rise it will uplift the entire Arab world with it."[192] Inherent in this remark is an important belief of the modern Muslim Brotherhood. Unlike al-Banna's universal *umma*, the modern organization clearly believes that *other* Muslim nations can and should exist. These nations are separate and distinct from the *umma* of Egypt, however, there appears to be an implied relationship between the two reminiscent of Qutb's doctrine.

Furthermore, the modern organization's emphasis on the territorial extent of Egypt to define the *umma* approximates Anderson's concept of the nation to an extent heretofore unseen in the doctrines of al-Banna, Qutb, and even al-Hudaybi. Indeed, this is reflected in the hallmarks which Anderson claims are associated with modern nation-states. Anderson asserts that "the nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them [...] has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations."[193] The imagination of the *umma* as limited by the modern Muslim Brotherhood along with the conception of universal membership within this restricted extent of society has established the relationship that the *umma* is the embodiment of the nation.

The similarities between the modern Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* and Anderson's conception of a nation-state arise from a variety of factors. First, the limited territorial extent of the *umma* is certainly a response to the pervasive nationalism of the past century. Echoing this point, the limited territorial extent of the Brotherhood's *umma* is reflective of the point raised by Anderson that "no nation

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[192] Habib, "Interview"
[193] Anderson, p. 7

imagines itself coterminous with mankind."[194] Furthermore, the Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* no longer has as its goal the establishment of, as Anderson terms it, a "traditional religious community." Anderson writes that these communities were "centripetal and hierarchical."[195] On the other hand, the modern organization has defined the *umma* on the basis of both membership (universal within the nation) and territory (the physical extent of Egypt). As such, the Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* is certainly very similar to the Anderson's definition of modern nations as "boundary-oriented and horizontal."[196] Additionally, the Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the *umma* has taken on the trappings of a religiously-based nation precisely because, as Anderson argues, communities "in an age of capitalism, skepticism, and science, could less and less safely rest on putative sacrality and sheer antiquity."[197]

While Anderson is useful in analyzing the similarities between the modern Muslim Brotherhood and his archetype of a "nation-state," Roy is even more useful in analysis of the modern group precisely because they are in direct contradiction to many of his claims regarding "Globalized Islam." The limiting of the extent of the *umma* to the territorial borders of Egypt is certainly in stark contrast to Roy's argument that globalization in the modern period has led to a deterritorialized Islam. Indeed, as has been discussed prior, his arguments regarding modern Islam "revolve around the concept of deterritorialization."[198]

Thus, it is important to elucidate the reasons why the modern Muslim Brotherhood stands in opposition to many of Roy's theses. The first and most obvious

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[194] Anderson, p. 7
[195] Anderson, p. 15
[196] Anderson, p. 15
[197] Anderson, p. 85
[198] Roy, p. 3

aspect of his argument which contradicts with the Muslim Brotherhood's conception of the *umma* is his statement that "the Muslim *umma* no longer has anything to with a territorial entity. It has to be thought of in abstract or imaginary terms."[199] It is likely, although unclear, that Roy here is referring to the global Muslim *umma* and as such is arguing the point that an *umma*, such as the one defined by al-Banna, conceived of as encompassing "all Muslims everywhere," is impossible to attach to territory. This point is in fact a valid one and represents one of the reasons for the gradual territorial restriction of the *umma* that occurred throughout the group's evolution.

While Roy continues his argument for the deterritorialization of modern Islam, he in fact lays the groundwork for the reasons why the Muslim Brotherhood opposes that idea. Roy writes that "at a time when the territorial borders [...] are fading away. mental borders are being reinvented to give a second life to the ghosts of lost civilizations."[200] He extends this point in the context of modern religious communities by arguing that "ethnicity and religion are being marshaled to draw new borders between groups whose identity relies on a performative definition."[201] Indeed, this is certainly the case as groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood are using both the religious (as a "guiding point") and the ethnic/national (Egyptian citizens) to "draw new borders" in establishing their vision of the *umma*. The flaw in Roy's argument stems from his denial of the possibility that these "new borders" could be territorial. As such, he writes that "these new ethnic and religious borders do not correspond to any geographical territory or area."[202] The aspect which Roy is ignoring involves the consideration of religious communities which have

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[199] Roy, p. 19
[200] Roy, p. 20
[201] Roy, p. 20
[202] Roy, p. 20

not only arisen out of a response to nationalism and its inherent secularism, but have also incorporated, to varying degrees, aspects of these philosophies in their communitarian doctrine. Roy certainly seems to recognize the possibility of this occurrence when he writes that "the issue of cultural and social change no longer rests on a dichotomy between tradition and modernity, religion and secularism."[203] It is precisely this grey-area between the strictly religious and the strictly secular in which the *ummaic* doctrine of the modern Muslim Brotherhood resides. From this ideological position has arisen the truly unique philosophy of embracing universal membership, including non-Muslims, in a territorially-limited yet Islamically-guided state.

Based on the membership definition as well as the territorial conception of the *umma* in the ideology of the modern Muslim Brotherhood, it certainly appears as if the organization decided that a modern religious community cannot in fact exist entirely delinked from "pristine cultures." Whereas, as Roy argues, al-Banna's vision of the *umma* ultimately failed because "it has no concrete basis (territorial, cultural, ethnic, or economic) on which to build such a community;"[204] the modern organization opted to ground their definition of the *umma* in a specific, territorially-defined state. I would argue that it has been this shift of focus on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood to the territorial borders of Egypt and the citizens therein that has not only saved the organization from Roy's "failure of political Islam," but has in fact led to their remarkable success in the modern period. Indeed, the increased emphasis on territory and the individuals within those borders is ultimately evidenced through the opposition inherent between the modern Muslim Brotherhood and other more radical Islamist

[203] Roy, p. 19
[204] Roy, p. 30

groups. Leiken and Brooke point out this critical shift in territorial emphasis by comparing two quotes from the Brotherhood and al-Qaeda (an ideological yet radical off-shoot of Qutb's ideology). They write to "compare the statement from the Brotherhood's Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who argues that 'the enmity between us and the Jews is for the sake of land only,' with this one from Zawahiri: 'God, glory to him, made the religion the cause of enmity and the cause of our fight."[205] The unique coexistence of the religious and the political and civil within the modern Muslim Brotherhood establishes the group as not only a truly unique modern religious community but also as one of the most successful in the Islamic world.

Conclusions

From Hasan al-Banna to Sayyid Qutb to the modern leadership of Mohammed Habib, the ideological leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood has guided the evolution of the organization's definition of the community. The Muslim Brotherhood made this definition one of the pillars of its doctrine from its inception. Considering the historical difficulty in Islam of defining the *umma*, it should come as no surprise that the Brotherhood's conception of the *umma* has not remained static through the years. As has been discussed in detail in this paper, the additive factors of (1) the ideological doctrine of the group's leadership as well as (2) the challenges of modernity including nationalism and globalism are primarily, although not exclusively, responsible for the evolution of the community envisioned by the Muslim Brotherhood.

The arguments and theses of Benedict Anderson and Olivier Roy are exceedingly useful as paradigmatic viewpoints through which the evolution of the *umma* within the

[205] Leiken and Brooke, p. 116

Muslim Brotherhood can be analyzed. Their arguments are very applicable to the specific study of this organization as has been performed in the preceding chapters. However, while a study of the Muslim Brotherhood is significant in and of itself, especially given the current political climate in the Middle East, the Brotherhood as an organization can be used as a surrogate for analyzing modern religious communities as a whole. Specifically, the evolving concept of the *umma* and its remarkable modern incarnation in the Muslim Brotherhood can be used to provoke questions regarding the identity, both in terms of territory and membership, of modern religious communities around the world.

The most critical aspect of the evolution of the definition of the *umma* in the Muslim Brotherhood has been the treatment of the universal and the particular. The religious and anthropological scholars Max Muller and Abraham Kuenen were among the first to illuminate these competing aspects although they became too bogged down (as did Roy, I will argue) in attempting to classify the essences of religions in the same sense that organisms are classified on a phylogenetic tree. Although dated, their arguments regarding the classifications of a religion as "universal" or "national" are still valuable in the context of this paper as a means to analyze precisely how Anderson, Roy, and my analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood have advanced the concepts of the universal and the particular in the modern context.

To summarize, Muller argued that the three universal religions are also the three "missionary" religions: Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam. He further argues that it is the missionary character of these universal religions which contributes to their superiority of any other non-universal, "national religion." As such, "national" religions such as, as

Muller argues, Hinduism, will ultimately fail precisely because they are "more exclusive, and in many cases [is] opposed to all missionary propaganda."[206] The classification of a universal religion is further elucidated by Kuenen when he writes that these religions spread " beyond the limits of a single people, over many and diverse nations."[207] Conversely, Kuenen writes that "a national religion is in every case confined to a single people or to a group of nearly related peoples."[208] The critical aspect of Muller and Kuenen's division of religions in this manner is their belief that the categories of universal and national are two entirely distinct entities. Illustrating this, Kuenen argues that "the universal religions are, with fair unanimity, placed in one group, and opposed to the national religions. Nothing is more natural."[209]

While Roy is in no way analyzing religions in the same vein as Muller and Kuenen, many of the aspects of his argument for the "failure of political Islam" fall into the same static, "either/or" distinctions of Muller's strict dichotomy between universal and national religions. I would argue that Roy's thesis in this regard, although highly applicable to the modern context, ultimately become entangled in his insistence that universal religious communities are inherently "better" religious communities. As I will argue below and opposed to Roy, religious communities (exemplified here by the Muslim Brotherhood) need not be constrained by *either* the universal *or* the national. Instead, there is a much more complex process of universalizing and nationalizing that is ongoing

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[206] Muller, Friedrich Max. *Introduction to the Science of Religion.* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893), 80.

[207] Kuenen, Abraham. "National religions and universal religions. Lectures delivered at Oxford and in London, in April and in May, 1882." *The Hibbert Lectures 1882.* (London: Williams and Noegate, 1882), 6.

[208] Kuenen, p. 5

[209] Kuenen, p. 5

in the re-imagining of modern religious communities. Indeed, it is in fact the interplay rather than the distinctions between these two aspects which has resulted in the persistence and survival of political religious communities in a modern, globalized, and secular environment.

The evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood from al-Banna to the modern organization has included various emphases on the universal or particular aspects of the group's *ummaic* doctrine. Hasan al-Banna envisioned Islam as both a universal religion but also as a universal, global community of believers. The community envisioned by Sayyid Qutb differed, in part, from that of al-Banna with regards to both membership and territory. Qutb's *umma* was ultimately distinguished from al-Banna's by a retreat from the latter's universalist doctrine. Instead, Qutb, in the face of the growing success and popularity of Egyptian nationalism, advocated a certain degree of localization of the *umma* through his doctrine regarding the "vanguard nation." This vanguard *umma* will then lead the other Muslim communities to the idealistic fulfillment of establishing a universal Islamic community. Thus, while both al-Banna and Qutb envision the same endpoint, Qutb, in a sense devolved al-Banna's definition of the *umma* away from the universal so that it could develop within the confines of a localized, although unspecified, nation.

The modern Muslim Brotherhood further extended (to a considerable degree) Qutb's devolution of the organization's doctrine away from the purely universalistic. As has been previously discussed, the modern Muslim Brotherhood has in fact abandoned any claims of pan-Islamism and has grounded itself in the territory and membership of the state of Egypt. This shift is certainly in direct contradiction to Muller's (and Roy's)

pronouncement that ultimately all non-universal religions and religious organizations will fail. Indeed, I would argue that the theories presented by these thinkers are too focused on identifying the "either/or" determination of a religious communities' success or failure.

In this paper, I argue that modern religious communities, including notably the Muslim Brotherhood, no longer opt to define themselves and their mission by the number of members in their community. Instead, the advent of nationalism and globalism in the modern period have caused many religious communities to localize in a sense that the goal is no longer a universal community. There is now in fact the modern phenomena of nationalizing and localizing within the universalist ideology of a world religion.

This argument must at first certainly appear counter-intuitive, particularly to students of religion ascribing to Roy's emphasis on the universal over the particular. Indeed, it would appear to make little sense that in a time in which the world has become increasingly linked and information can be shared at the speed of light, that many modern religious communities would opt to localize rather than globalize, as Roy argues. However, Roy's case for the modern globalization of religious communities stems from his argument that "the Muslim *umma* [or indeed any modern religious community] no longer has anything to do with a territorial entity. It has to be thought of in abstract or imaginary terms."[210] This analysis is completely valid for modern religions as a whole. The challenges of modernity and globalization have resulted in, as Roy states, the "individual reformulation of personal religiosity."[211] This "retreat into the self" in the face of the growing secularism of modern societies has certainly led to a detachment and

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[210] Roy, p. 19
[211] Roy, p. 26

globalization of religious communities. However, Roy's argument that religious communities must be "thought of in abstract or imaginary terms" is not in fact valid for modern individual religious organizations.

I would argue that there is an increasing trend among modern religious communities and organizations, illustrated in this paper by the modern Muslim Brotherhood, away from Muller and even Roy's definition of the universal and more towards the classification of the "local." I would further argue that the relative lack of any effort on behalf of the modern Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to unite, even ideologically, with the chapters in other nations is illustrative of this trend. As such, it appears that many modern religious communities are reimagining themselves not in light of the numbers or extent of adherents as Roy would often argue but rather in light of their survival and prosperity in a largely secular world through political and social action. Thus, while many modern religious communities which are not globalized would be qualified as a "failure" under Roy's doctrine, I would argue that these groups are in fact establishing a blueprint for local, limited, yet ultimately successful religious communities. Indeed, it appears that Muller recognized the importance of the localization of religious communities, even if he argued that the success of a religion as a whole depended upon its universal and missionary character. Muller wrote that "it is perfectly true that no religion has ever struck root and lived, unless it found a congenial soil from which to draw its real strength and support."[212]

Thus, in summary, I would argue that while religions as a whole are generally globalizing and becoming deterritorialized, there is a concomitant localization by modern religious communities as a response to nationalism, globalism, and secularization. The

[212] Muller, p. 80

Muslim Brotherhood, as presented in this paper, is a model organization at the forefront of this trend: exemplifying the emphasis of many modern religious communities on defining themselves through social and political authority and action while simultaneously limiting the extent of their re-"imagined community."

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