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PRAYER AND THE ISLAMIC REVIVAL: A TIMELY CHALLENGE

Abstract

This article traces the emergence of the early afternoon *zuhr* prayer as a key project of subject formation during the second half of the Anwar al-Sadat period (1976–81). Drawing on three Islamic magazines of differing ideological orientation (Muslim Brotherhood-Islamist, Salafi-Islamist, and state-sponsored), all containing letters to the editor and fatwa requests, it charts contestation among religious elites and the reception of their programmatic visions. Specifically, the article explores the performance of this daily prayer as a hybrid practice that disrupted the temporal and spatial claims of a state-sponsored bureaucratic order to produce national subjects within public schools and bureaucratic institutions, even as it reproduced the state's emphasis on temporal precision and social order. Based on these texts, this article challenges previous scholarly narratives that place Islamist projects of subject formation on the fringes of secularism and previous studies of Islamist mobilization that posit a separate social universe of Islamist activism.

Keywords: Islamism; media; piety; Salafism; time/temporal

On 2 August 1981, a reported 250,000 Egyptians flocked to 'Abdin Square in the center of downtown Cairo to perform the Eid al-Fitr prayers marking the end of Ramadan. This square was a central site of political authority: it stood in front of a palace of the same name, built by Khedive Isma'il between 1863 and 1874 to replace Cairo's Citadel as an official home and workplace for Egypt's ruler. These prayers, by contrast, were organized by groups that sought to overturn the existing political order: in an event convened by al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Student Movement) and aided by the Muslim Brotherhood, Brotherhood theorist Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1926–present) gave an hour-long sermon (*khuṭba*) analyzing the landmark events of the previous century of the Islamic calendar. Following Qaradawi, the commander (*amīr*) of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, Muhammad al-Rawi, questioned the recent crackdowns on the Brotherhood mouthpiece, *al-Da'wa* magazine, and mocked calls for “national unity” (*al-wahda al-waṭaniyya*).¹

The gathering in 'Abdin Square was the latest in a series of holiday prayers turned political rallies. Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya had organized similar events for both Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha² in this square and at an athletic stadium in Alexandria since 1976, and used the growing attendance to index their support within Egyptian society in the absence

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of access to the ballot box. The pious masses in ‘Abdin Square on Eid al-Fitr served as a visual reminder to both ruler and ruled of the contrast between the state-sponsored political order and the Islamist opposition.

Yet the central site of ritual competition in Anwar al-Sadat’s Egypt was neither the annual Eid prayers nor even the weekly Friday prayer.³ Instead, as Egyptian men and women increasingly oriented their lives towards worship of the Divine and new political commitments, competition revolved around the daily *zuhr* prayer.⁴ Though “merely” one of five daily prayers—which could be performed between roughly noon and three in the afternoon⁵—the *zuhr* is the only prayer to fall directly in the middle of both the official work and school days, thus offering Islamists a novel means by which to insert their vision of religious piety into the clocks and corridors of Egyptian state institutions. While state planners and educators inculcated obedience and order through control of the spatial and temporal structure of state institutions, leading figures within the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi-Islamist al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya mobilized middle-class Egyptians to pray at certain times together with their pious peers, thus challenging the claim of bureaucratic and educational institutions to temporal and spatial primacy over religious ritual. Islamic magazines from this period, which were a central form of religious outreach, reveal the role of leading Islamists, student activists, and sympathizers within state institutions in spearheading a project whose legacy has endured even as the Muslim Brotherhood has been driven underground.⁶

This article begins by contextualizing the Islamist transformation of the *zuhr* prayer within a longer history of state efforts to form industrious and loyal citizens through governmental institutions and mass media. In doing so, it highlights the models of spatial and temporal order with which religious elites sought to organize Egyptians, how state planners framed religious practice within nationalist political objectives, and how theory and practice frequently diverged. Turning next to previous conceptions of prayer as a temporally defined act, the article examines the history of “religious” time in Egypt and 20th-century interpretations of *sūrat al-nisā’* (4:103), the key Qur’anic verse that commands prayer at defined times.⁷ The second half of the article shows how Egyptian Islamists reconstructed the *zuhr* prayer into a means of political challenge that combined prior conceptions of Islamic temporality with a state-sponsored concept of order. On this basis, leading figures within the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya, and al-Jama‘a al-Islamiyya, alongside middle-class readers of Islamic magazines,⁸ established prayer within bureaucratic schedules and claimed ritual space within state institutions to facilitate its collective performance.

This analysis of the popularization of the *zuhr* prayer within state offices and schools casts light on the cultivation of pious subjectivities in Egypt’s Islamic Revival as well as the relationship between planning and practice within state institutions. The “secular” project of subject building, as Talal Asad notes, seeks to lay claim to broad swaths of society, and, in doing so, constitutes a distinct “religious” sphere.⁹ Working from within Asad’s conceptual framework, Charles Hirschkind and Saba Mahmood have emphasized the existence of Islamist projects of subject building that are primarily centered on an Islamic tradition of ethical cultivation rather than on secular modes of subject formation.¹⁰ Hirschkind notes that “we might say that Egypt’s Islamic counterpublic is inscribed within the government rationalities and institutions of national public life but also oblique to them, incorporating orientations and modes of practical reason that

exceed or cut across modern normativity.”¹¹ Along similar lines, Mahmood states: “Piety activists seek to imbue each of the various spheres of contemporary life with a regulative sensibility that takes its cue from the Islamic theological corpus rather than from modern secular ethics.”¹² Yet even as Mahmood notes that the Islamic Revival’s practices are “deeply indebted to the logic of secular-liberal governance,”¹³ both she and Hirschkind tell a story of Islamist piety that places these projects of subject formation on the fringes of secularism.

This article argues that “government rationalities” and “the logic of secular-liberal governance” are central, rather than peripheral, to these processes of Islamist subject formation. Indeed, the Islamist popularization of the *zuhr* prayer represents a hybrid of bureaucratic logic and Islamist piety. Islamism, while challenging state institutions, emerges among people who stand at the center of critical state institutions and operate very much within their logic. Specifically, although this endeavor challenged the primacy of work over prayer time and the state’s vision of the correct relationship between national and religious identity, it shared the state’s basic assumptions of order, discipline, and temporal precision. Far from the tardy cousin of the “rationalized” state schedule, Islamist claims to temporality, represented through the *zuhr* prayer, were a model of prompt practice that would make state planners proud.

Just as importantly, this article demonstrates that the spatial bounds of the Islamist project must be broadened. Abdullah al-Arian, Charles Hirschkind, Hazem Kandil, Saba Mahmood, and Carrie Wickham have focused exclusively on “Islamist” sites of cultivation, rightfully highlighting the importance of local networks formed around mosques and college campuses.¹⁴ This scholarship, however, neglects the imbrication of these projects with state-allied religious elites and their geographic location *within* state institutions.¹⁵ Indeed, the performance of daily piety cannot be separated from the lived experience of the pious in “non-Islamic” spaces that they traverse daily. Far from marginal sites of religious practice, educational institutions and government offices—along with their particular ideological missions—shaped the performance of Islamist piety.

Finally, this article contributes to scholarship on the relationship between technocratic discourse and practice within Egyptian state institutions. Timothy Mitchell has argued that early 19th-century state building in Egypt brought about new methods of control and subject formation, thus providing a frame of order through which Egyptian society and state came to function.¹⁶ This approach productively casts light on the logic of state practices and the ways in which state planners sought to construct and monitor society. In complement, Khaled Fahmy, in his examination of the rise of the Egyptian army in the 19th century, has shown how bureaucratic practice often departed from army blueprints due to everything from haste to miscommunication to dishonesty to soldier disobedience.¹⁷ Most recently, Samer Shehata’s ethnography of shop floor workers’ culture within two state-owned textile factories in Alexandria emphasizes the “arsenal of strategies and tactics, techniques and methods, [that workers] employed often quite successfully to control and regulate when and how hard they worked.”¹⁸ This article, in turn, shows how it is not only those seeking material gain or a lesser workload who can subvert institutional structures, but also their ideologically committed peers. Through a close study of participants in one such ideological project, it sheds light on how mid-level bureaucrats, teachers, and students both undermined and reproduced the temporal and spatial vision of state planners.

The prominence of Islamist leaders on this early August day in 1981 would have been hard to imagine even eleven years earlier. The Muslim Brotherhood had re-emerged tentatively following al-Sadat's ascension to power in 1970, yet challenges to activism remained: the Brotherhood initially had to work quietly with al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya leaders due to restrictions on propagating its message on campuses or within independent mosques.¹⁹ Under the leadership of Supreme Guide 'Umar al-Tilmisani (d. 1986), the group's mouthpiece, *al-Da'wa*, returned to publication in July 1976 following a twenty-two-year hiatus.

Restrictions on grassroots organizing pushed the Brotherhood to focus on carving out a position for *al-Da'wa* in a competitive marketplace of religious periodicals. Upon the return of this periodical, it allied with *al-I'tisam* (Adherence), a magazine published by leading figures within the Salafi-Islamist al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya. Though the latter's emphasis on theology and ritual precision distinguished it from the Brotherhood, both shared a commitment to religiously based social and political transformation.²⁰ These Islamists, however, had competition: the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (al-Majlis al-A'la li-l-Shu'un al-Islamiyya) within the Ministry of Endowments (Wizarat al-Awqaf) published a periodical titled *Minbar al-Islam*. Though all three claimants to leadership sought to mobilize their readers in distinct religious projects, their opportunities differed: while *Minbar al-Islam* had access to state-controlled mosques,²¹ and *al-I'tisam* to al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya's national network of mosques,²² the Brotherhood looked to new sites of contestation.

The significance of Islamic magazines stemmed not only from their role in facilitating specific projects, but also from the dynamics of mediation and authority within the magazines themselves. Unlike other popular media forms, whether print (pamphlets and books), audio (cassette tapes and radio), or audiovisual (television), regular letters to the editor and fatwa sections provided editors and writers the opportunity to gauge the reception of their efforts and provided readers the opportunity to shape the direction of this particular project by chronicling local setbacks and successes.²³ Just as the expansion of mass education and cheap print products in Egypt under Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir (r. 1952–70) and al-Sadat (r. 1970–81) facilitated the rise of Islamic magazines as a tool of religious elites, so too did the interactions between editors, writers, and readers in these periodicals necessitate a discursive and practical shift that foregrounded the participation of middle-class readers in the formation and development of projects of piety.

Yet even as the Brotherhood's move to politicize the *zuhr* prayer through the medium of Islamic magazines was new, the effort to define ritual practice and space in order to produce particular religious subjects was not. Most notably, the Ministry of Endowments had worked since the 1920s to regulate prayer times²⁴ and since the 1940s to extend physical control over Egyptian mosques, while Muslim Brothers and Salafis had sought to retain their own sites of ritual practice.²⁵ Such contestation was not limited to Egypt: competition between government and Islamist forces to control mosques occurred in Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and elsewhere in the Islamic world.²⁶

The battle between state institutions and Islamist organizations also emerged out of the Egyptian state's late 19th-century modernization project. Alongside its goal of strengthening Egypt politically and economically in the face of European encroachment, this project sought to achieve "political order" through the creation of institutions—most notably, the army, the school, and the factory—which would produce "the modern individual. . . as an isolated, disciplined, receptive and industrious political subject."²⁷ State planners used schools in particular to model social order more broadly as "students were kept moving from task to task, with every motion and every space disciplined and put to use."²⁸ At the same time, though, practice frequently deviated from state planners' hopes; whether within army barracks or state factories, Egyptians evaded the demands of supposedly inescapable disciplinary systems.²⁹ Both al-Sadat and the institutions under his control, as well as his Islamist competitors, were heirs to this project of order and disorder.

State institutions not only sought to impart a particular conception of order but also to subordinate religion to political exigencies, most notably the promotion of nationalism or signature ideological campaigns. As Gregory Starrett has shown, late 19th-century British-led educational reforms involved a process of "objectification" that rendered Islam as a concrete set of pronouncements. This objectified religious tradition was then utilized in the service of concrete political goals: the British used it to socialize the population against political revolt, al-Nasir to justify scientific socialism, and al-Sadat to argue that the state, and not the Islamist opposition, possessed an authoritative claim to religious legitimacy.³⁰ This process of functionalization, by which religion came to be associated with particular social and political ends, produced a new understanding of religion itself: "The ideas, symbols and behaviors constituting 'true' Islam came to be judged not by their adherence to contemporary popular or high traditions, but by their utility in performing social work."³¹ The state-sponsored religious subject was a citizen whose religious obligations mirrored nationalist priorities and regime interests.

The expansion of mass media complemented state institutions' emphasis on the nation-state by creating a mass-mediated space in which religious discourse and practice were debated. Taking advantage of the spread of television in the early 1970s, al-Sadat staged televised "public dialogues" in which a state-approved representative—whether from al-Azhar or even a lay preacher—had the opportunity "to set out the issues properly for the benefit of those confused or ill-informed Muslims who might have come under the unhealthy influence of fanatics."³² Similarly, radio functioned, as it had under al-Nasir, as a means of outreach, religious or otherwise, to a population among whom roughly 60 percent were illiterate.³³ In both cases, mass media served to reinforce the "nation" as the primary frame of identity and to reaffirm the religious credentials of the ruling elite.³⁴ In the shadow of a mass-mediated nation in which bureaucratic planners sought to define the national community to organize society, and religious interpretation and practice served to affirm the legitimacy of political elites, multiple religious projects took shape.

How can we explain the timing of this particular effort to institutionalize the *zuhr* prayer? This was certainly not the first time that a contradiction between the *zuhr* prayer and state timetables had arisen; the expansion of both bureaucratic employment and education in Egypt over the 20th century suggests that this was a longstanding tension.³⁵ Yet there is little indication that prior to the 1970s either Muslim Brothers or

Salafis lobbied for government institutions to structure their schedules to accommodate this ritual practice. Though the number of “popular” mosques functioning outside state supervision increased under al-Nasir, those who prayed daily in public fashion were a distinct minority. Indeed, a memoir by Muslim Brother al-Sayyid ‘Abd al-Sattar Miliji recounts that during the 1930s and 1940s, the Brotherhood struggled to attract more than ten students to any of its mosques at universities around Egypt.³⁶

If there was any constituency likely to pray the *zuhr* prayer in spite of logistical obstacles, it would have been members of Egypt’s leading Salafi organizations, including al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya. Yet even as numerous issues of *al-I‘tisam* throughout the al-Nasir period featured fatwa requests from readers regarding prayer—whether the conditions under which one could postpone prayer, the sites at which one could pray the Friday prayer, or situations that spoiled ritual purity (*wudu’*)—there was no mention of a conflict between state timetables and religious ritual.³⁷ Elites and rank-and-file members within al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya, though aware of the temporal tension between the *zuhr* prayer and the schedule of the state bureaucracy, could sidestep this challenge to prompt prayer by praying within its roughly three-hour window between noon and three in the afternoon, rather than immediately when the call to prayer sounded.³⁸ While Salafi men and women enrolled or teaching in primary and secondary schools—in which it was difficult to pray if a specific time was not set aside—would have struggled to fulfill this obligation, others likely performed this prayer during breaks in the workday, thus engaging in a project of piety on the margins of the state temporal order.

It was only during the second half of al-Sadat’s rule that Egyptian Islamists came to focus on the *zuhr*. This focus reflected not only a tension between ritual practice and state timetables, but also available political opportunities. The Brotherhood had sought a project that would facilitate its popularity within state institutions without appearing to directly challenge al-Sadat. The attractiveness of focusing on this ritual practice increased as the Brotherhood began to cultivate the students of al-Jama‘a al-Islamiyya, themselves disproportionately affected by state-enforced schedules.³⁹ By contrast, the Brotherhood’s opportunities to mobilize at Friday prayer were circumscribed due to efforts by state security to monitor and even dictate the content of Friday sermons.

In their focus on the *zuhr* prayer, Egyptian Islamists were not alone. In the late 1970s, female workers in Malaysian factories lobbied the government for the right to pray during work hours and for the provision of a prayer room; the government responded by extending lunch breaks to encompass the *zuhr* prayer.⁴⁰ Similarly, government employees in Pakistan have used a variety of tactics to obtain time and space to pray, ranging from successfully persuading their superiors to authorize the construction of a mosque on office grounds to simply spreading “reed mats out in the little-used lobby of one of the office buildings.”⁴¹ An exception to such piecemeal accommodation is the Imam-Hatip school system in Turkey, which sets aside time for *zuhr*, yet this option is available only to the minority of students in Turkey who attend these schools.⁴² Still others coped with government timetables by abstaining temporarily from their ritual obligations: a study of Islam in Bosnia notes that Bosnian Muslim government employees in the 1980s postponed regular performance of the *zuhr* prayer until after their retirement from “the ‘secular’ (and ‘Yugoslav’) public workplace.”⁴³ Yet the demands of Egyptian Islamists also reflected local specificity, particularly the emergence of a self-consciously “Islamic” temporality in Egypt during the first half of the 20th century.

THE TEMPORALITY OF PRAYER: THE CONSTRUCTION OF
RELIGIOUS TIME AND THE LAG OF QUR'ANIC COMMENTARIES

The transformation of the *ẓuhr* prayer into a temporal challenge to the state's claim to define its citizens is inseparable from the history of British colonial efforts to institute European-style conceptions of time and the subsequent reproduction of this project by postcolonial Egyptian rulers. In his study of the history of temporality in modern Egypt, On Barak traces how new means of transportation and communication produced both a "European" emphasis on "expediency and promptness" and "'countertempos' predicated on discomfort with the time of the clock and a disdain for dehumanizing European standards of efficiency, linearity, and punctuality."⁴⁴ It was in this context that "'Egyptian time' retroactively sprouted roots in the Islamic tradition and rural folklore" and the religious calendar came to represent a "sacred" or "authentic" time.⁴⁵

Temporality also emerged as a key site of political dissent. As Barak notes, the Arabic press in the 1880s used "train schedules and other technical concerns . . . to broach (techno-) politics without directly deploying the language most associated with illicit 'politics'—that of Egyptian nationalism." Put simply, the British colonial project claimed a modernizing efficiency that it contrasted with Egyptian indolence. Egyptians, in turn, accepted the broad importance of British-imported technology, even as they highlighted the contradictions within it—"[incorrect] timetables, train malfunctions, and the exposure of inefficiencies"⁴⁶—to challenge colonial authority. Though British rule had receded by 1922 and ended officially in 1952,⁴⁷ the temporal claims it made and stimulated would march on under the postcolonial Egyptian state.

These claims, however, would also be transformed by al-Nasir's religious identity and ambitions. After 1952, the conflict was no longer between "European" time and "Egyptian" countertempos—or, for that matter, a European ruler and an Egyptian population—but was rather an intra-Egyptian affair. Just as debates over *takfīr*⁴⁸ within Muslim Brotherhood splinter groups involved a struggle to devise a religious justification of violence in the face of an outwardly Muslim leader,⁴⁹ so too did the Islamic identity of the ruler necessitate a more subtle, though no less effective, exploitation of "Islamic time."

Whereas al-Nasir largely repressed political opposition, al-Sadat provided the Muslim Brotherhood with the opportunity to use religious temporality as a wedge issue with its constituency. Most notably, al-Sadat's claim to meld "science and faith" (*al-ilm wa-l-imān*)⁵⁰ and self-depiction as the "believing president" (*al-raʾīs al-muʾmin*) meant that he could hardly deny the obligation of daily prayer for those who sought to fulfill it while studying or employed in state institutions. Islamist elites and the readers of their periodicals would challenge and negotiate the disjuncture between state claims to uphold religious law and this basic practice as they sought to produce themselves and others as pious Muslims.

As the 1970s dawned, however, there was little precedence for such a challenge. Qur'anic commentaries popular in Egypt during the early and mid-20th century did not deal with this question. Most notably, Rashid Rida (d. 1935), in his discussion of *sūrat al-nisāʾ* (4:103), did not treat daily prayer as a pressing question,⁵¹ though he did devote twenty-one pages of his *Tafsīr al-Manār* (The Lighthouse Commentary) to, for example, questions of prayer requirements during travel or when an individual fears for

his or her life (generally in the context of war).⁵² Similarly, Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949), in his commentary *Nazarat fi Kitab Allah* (Glances in the Book of God), said little about regular prayer, merely enumerating the ethical and social benefits of ritual obedience.⁵³

This state of affairs did not change as the 20th century proceeded. In *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an), Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) took a strict position regarding prayer during war—he advocated praying in shifts⁵⁴—but did not consider the ordinary circumstances that restricted ritual practice for many of his readers. Similarly, the Azhari shaykh Muhammad Mahmud Hijazi (d. 1973), author of the popular 1962 commentary *al-Tafsir al-Wadīh* (The Straightforward Commentary), devoted his discussion of prayer to the complications of travel.⁵⁵ The silence of these commentators on the question of daily prayer, particularly the *zuhr*, was not due to lack of commitment to ritual practice; rather, they saw the obligation to be so obvious that there was little need to discuss it as a legal matter, and they did not consider prayer a political project. During the second half of the al-Sadat period, however, prompt performance of the *zuhr* would vault forward in textual and political prominence alike as Islamist elites, state employees, and students participated in a project that would transform previous models of religious temporality.

THE PRAYER PROJECT: STATE CLAIMS AND ISLAMIST COUNTERCLAIMS

As al-Sadat used the state's religious and educational institutions to transmit a nationalist vision in which religious piety and political loyalty went hand in hand, he could not simply silence Islamist voices. In fact, his claim to faith depended on allowing the opposition to speak and even mobilize. Al-Sadat thus sought to shape the debate over prayer through *Minbar al-Islam*, a monthly magazine published by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs.

To meet al-Sadat's ideological needs, *Minbar al-Islam* emphasized the centrality of prayer to the everyday lives of its readers. Each issue of the magazine contained a prayer chart setting out the times of the five daily prayers (*mawāqit al-ṣalāt*) for the coming month.⁵⁶ Alongside this roadmap to timely prayer were multiple fatwas by Shaykh of al-Azhar 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud (d. 1978) in which he made clear that performance of the five daily prayers constituted “the most important pillar [*rukn*] of Islam aside from the declaration of faith [*al-shahāda*].”⁵⁷ Prayer was to structure the daily life of Egyptian believers.

Yet this conception of prayer also affirmed existing political order. In this vein, *Minbar al-Islam* chronicled the president's January 1976 visit to al-Sayyid al-Badawi mosque in Tanta, noting the “citizens praising and hailing the life of their leader” (*tahlīl wa-takbīr al-muwaṭīnīn li-ḥayāt al-qā'id*). Though Friday prayer had always involved an affirmation of the legitimacy of the current ruler, this iteration doubled as a political rally: instead of reciting God's praises—the usual context in which the honorific chants of *tahlīl* and *takbīr* are used—Egyptians were to trumpet al-Sadat's rule.

Leading voices within al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya were the first to explicitly challenge the subordination of religious ritual to bureaucratic schedules. In the December 1976 issue of *al-I'tisam*, al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya leader 'Abd al-Latif Mushtahiri (d. 1995) praised Muhammad Sa'id Ahmad, a member of parliament from the Delta textile center of al-Mahalla al-Kubra, for praying the *zuhr* prayer in the midst of an afternoon

parliamentary session and then the *‘aṣr* and *maghrib* prayers as the day of deliberations dragged into evening. For Mushtahiri, this was proof of the need for an alternative schedule:

The principles of the religiously committed [*mabādī’ al-multazimīn*] do not change based on time and place . . . this is the first time in the history of parliament that the papers have noted that a Muslim man has announced the rituals of his religion at their appointed time [*sha‘ā’ir dīnihi fī mawāqīthā*] in a place in which hundreds have neglected the obligation of prayer and followed their desires . . . we salute the member of parliament Doctor Muhammad al-Sa‘id, a physician and the president of the Mahalla al-Kubra branch of al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya . . . and we place no one above God [*lā nuzakkī ‘alā Allāh aḥadan*].⁵⁸

Yet, for reasons that are unclear, this public challenge of piety among leading figures of al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya receded into the background after the publication of this article in *al-Itisam* by a leading figure.

Several months later, *al-Da‘wa* editor and leading Muslim Brother Salih ‘Ashmawi (d. 1983) revived the issue of prompt prayer. His March 1977 article, “Where Is Prayer Performed in the State of Science and Faith?,” mocked the al-Sadat regime’s claim to piety by underlining the impossibility of full ritual observance within governmental institutions. For ‘Ashmawi, prayer was particularly incumbent upon rulers (*al-ḥukkām wa-wulāt al-umūr*), who should serve as models for the people. Accordingly, he reasoned, it must be performed five times daily at the presidential palace as well as in the parliament, cabinet, ministries, and judiciary, in educational institutions, and in professional offices, whether private or state owned. The obligation to pray was also a social equalizer: it applied to every level of employee, whether white or blue collar, the most senior or most junior. It was this social reach that enabled the *zuhr* prayer to serve as an effective challenge to the state’s efforts to discipline the individual citizen.

In wielding prayer as a pointed instrument of religious challenge, ‘Ashmawi singled out members of both parliament and employees of the educational system. In his article, the Brotherhood leader asked rhetorically why the speaker of the People’s Assembly—none other than the al-Sadat regime’s public proponent of the application of shari‘a, Sufi Abu Talib (d. 1981)—had not decreed that parliamentary meetings would be paused for ten minutes during prayer time. Just as dangerously, he pointed out that state-sponsored civil education (*al-ta‘līm al-madani*) was useless without moral education (*tarbiya*). ‘Ashmawi thus called on “all university administrators and deans of faculties and of primary and secondary schools to stop lessons during prayer times and to go down from their offices to the prayer hall [*muṣalla*] to join professors, teachers, white-collar workers [*muwazzifūn*], and students, both male and female.”⁵⁹ Neither should practical obstacles stand in the way of this prayer project. As ‘Ashmawi explained, “there are those who claim that the timing and work that has to be performed [are incompatible]. . . [and thus] do not allow prayers to occur in this fashion [i.e., at the correct time] . . . but this is about action [*al-‘amal*], and action alone is the strongest truth and most demonstrative evidence.” Indeed, the implementation of the *zuhr* prayer in all state-controlled institutions represented no less than “the serious path to the application of the Islamic shari‘a . . . leading to the establishment of an Islamic society” (*iqāmat al-mujtama‘ al-islāmī*).⁶⁰ At stake was not only the application of Islamic law,

but also the reorganization of society's temporal rhythms to accord with piety rather than productivity.

By the summer of 1977, the call to reorganize state schedules to accommodate timely prayer led to concrete, albeit limited, policy achievements. At this time, al-Sadat's relationship with the Islamist opposition was frayed, but not severed: despite deep dissatisfaction with the trials of the Brotherhood splinter group al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra (Excommunication and Emigration),⁶¹ elites within the Brotherhood and al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya had yet to dismiss cooperation with the regime. Accordingly, the Brotherhood allied with local branches of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya as they petitioned the Ministry of Education to provide breaks for prayer time at Egyptian universities. The July 1977 issue of *al-Da'wa* included an article written by two students at Asyut University's Faculty of Agriculture. Titled "A Pioneering Experiment at Asyut University's Faculty of Agriculture," the article detailed how classes during the 1976–77 academic year had paused for the *zūhr* prayer.⁶² According to the two authors, the faculty's dean had issued orders for all departments to allow students and white-collar employees (*muwazzifūn*) to perform prayers in timely fashion within the faculty mosque.⁶³ Neither was Asyut the only success story. Only three months earlier, Salah al-Din Hasan, the deputy of the Ministry of Education in Sharqiyya, ordered primary and secondary principals to adjust the class schedule to account for the early afternoon obligation.⁶⁴ The goal of anchoring Islamization within the daily practices—and schedules—of state-controlled institutions was clear.

With Asyut as an early model, writers and readers in *al-Da'wa* argued for restructuring class time within al-Azhar's nationwide network of primary and secondary religious institutes, acknowledged by the regime and Islamists alike as key sites for the transmission of religious knowledge in Egypt. In November 1977, the Azhar-trained *da'iya* (preacher) 'Abd al-'Azim al-Mat'ani penned a column in *al-Da'wa* in which he called for the "revival" (*nuhūd*) of this central system of Islamic education through the reorganization of class time around prayer, with teachers joining their students in this ritual practice. This reorganization, in turn, would instill "virtuous morals and praiseworthy behavior" (*al-khulq al-fāḍil wa-l-sulūk al-ḥamīd*).⁶⁵ Yet, as readers reminded Islamist elites, this problem was not limited to al-Azhar's institutes: a letter from the same month, titled "Studying and Prayer Times," demanded that al-Azhar University's classes stop for prayer times as the university president had promised.⁶⁶ The failure of religious institutes and al-Azhar University—let alone public schools—to stop for prayer was not merely a matter of ritual rectitude (or lack thereof), but symbolized a sense of moral decay that the Brotherhood and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya would exploit.

Despite Islamist efforts, the reorganization of school schedules would be piecemeal and incomplete. As readers sought to form themselves into pious Muslims who prioritized ritual over bureaucratic obedience, they filled the mailbox of *al-Da'wa* with letters that revealed the gaps. In June 1979, a reader from Damietta noted that the governorate's general director (*mudīr 'āmm*) for the Ministry of Education had ordered primary and secondary schools to coordinate prayer and class times, yet this had not yet occurred. The reader then urged "all those responsible for education in our country to take this faithful model" as a template for their actions.⁶⁷ Similarly, in February 1980, Ashraf 'Abd al-Hakim Mujahid, a student at the 'Ali Mubarak secondary school in Daqahliyya, complained about "students not responding to the call to prayer, whether in the afternoon

[*al-zuhr*] or at other points of conflict with class times.” This reader proceeded to ask the obvious question: “Why can’t teaching break during times of prayer and why can’t teachers, in cooperation with their students, perform the prayers at this time . . . as we are in a state of science and faith.”⁶⁸

Yet teachers did not necessarily disagree with their pious students. A June 1980 letter from a secondary school teacher in Daqahliyya, titled “Oh Ministry of Education: What about Prayers?,” complained that teachers should, like their students, have the opportunity to perform prayers during the school day.⁶⁹ While al-Sadat claimed to apply the shari‘a, students and teachers reported how he had fallen short and questioned the equation of nationalist and religious fidelity.

In the face of the clear limitations of al-Sadat’s claims to piety, Islamist lobbying sometimes bore fruit. In the April 1981 issue of *al-Da‘wa*, a reader recounted how, since the previous month, classes at the Faculties of Theology (Kuliyyat Usul al-Din) and Preaching (Kuliyyat al-Da‘wa al-Islamiyya) at al-Azhar university ceased when the time of *zuhr* arrived, with teachers and students directed by loud speaker to gather in the faculty mosque. In response, *al-Da‘wa* congratulated the professors of these two faculties and called on other Egyptian university faculties to follow their lead.⁷⁰ If Islamization could be anchored within the heart (and clocks) of state institutes, prayer in state space could become a norm rather than a minority practice.

While the leading thinkers of al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya hesitated to use prayer to challenge al-Sadat’s hold over state institutions, the Brotherhood worked with al-Jama‘a al-Islamiyya to transform the *zuhr*. Their success was less in educational policy—limits to implementing prayer times in schools are underscored by letters from readers in state and Islamist magazines alike—than in documenting a gap in the state’s religious claims, which was easily observable to a mass audience, educated and uneducated alike. In the process, they had cornered the al-Sadat regime, which acknowledged the daily obligation of prayer and thus had difficulty resisting the Brotherhood’s lobbying.

Just as importantly, “Islamic temporality” had taken a decisive turn. Though the performance of the *zuhr* prayer had previously been less prompt than the requirements of bureaucratic timeliness, the demands to pray *immediately* following the call to prayer now compared favorably with the habitual lethargy of government offices and schools. For Islamist opposition groups though, temporal accommodation was insufficient; this opposition front also required access to mosques to facilitate the formation of specifically Islamist subjects.

WHEN TIME IS INSUFFICIENT: MAKING DAILY PRAYER COLLECTIVE

The Muslim Brotherhood and al-Jama‘a al-Islamiyya sought not only time to pray, but also the space to do so collectively. Accordingly, the two organizations teamed up to lobby for access to ritual space at the core of state institutions. In doing so, the Islamist opposition attempted to anchor their project of pious cultivation within space ostensibly controlled by the state.

It was students who led the charge by appealing to employees within state institutions. A December 1976 letter from Cairo University’s Faculty of Humanities (Kulliyat al-Adab) detailed student negotiations with upper-level administrators to provide space for

regular collective prayer: a student explained that the school's mosque could hold no more than fifteen students at a time, thus requiring students to pray in successive groups. Accordingly, this reader, a member of al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya, called on the dean of the faculty to "provide a broader space for prayer . . . [which also includes] room for women."⁷¹ Yet the problem persisted: a January 1978 unsigned column from a student at Cairo University, titled "Seven Years . . . and the Mosque Has Yet To Be Finished," noted that while promises for a university mosque had first been made during the 1970–71 academic year, the Ministry of Endowments had apparently halted the project by refusing to pay the Arab Contractors Company to finish it. The student expressed hope that the university, headed by al-Sadat-ally and Speaker of the People's Assembly Sufi Abu Talib, would complete a spacious mosque in short order.⁷² At this point, al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya saw a possibility for accommodation with the al-Sadat regime and viewed it as a potential ally for mosque construction rather than as a direct threat to the sanctity of ritual space.

This effort to institutionalize daily prayer was not limited to university students. In April 1977, a group of students from the Azhari secondary institute in Alexandria explained, "we cannot find a place to pray . . . [because] the institute's mosque has become a soccer field . . . will those responsible for the institute [within the state bureaucracy] listen to us?"⁷³ It is unclear whether the Ministry of Education responded to this call, but *al-Da'wa's* 'Abd al-'Azim al-Mat'ani grasped its importance. In the November 1977 issue, he declared that al-Azhar's renaissance (*nuhūd*) depended on the coordination of class time and prayer time as well as the existence of a prayer hall (*muṣalla*) in all Azhari institutes.⁷⁴ These young Azharis struggled to reconcile their institute's educational mission with the practical obstacles it posed to collective ritual practice.

As Islamist readers worked to affect change within their own institutions, *al-Da'wa's* editors and writers gave comparatively little attention to questions of access to spaces for performing the *zuhr* prayer. For the members of al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya who wrote in the Youth and University News (*Akhbar al-Shabab wa-l-Jami'at*) section of the magazine and the readers in high schools across Egypt who reported the local challenges of collective prayer, the obstacles to piety were clear. In response, *al-Da'wa's* elites shifted towards a focus on collective prayer within university mosques.

The conflict between state institutions and collective (Islamist) prayer began within these schools as students clashed with low-level administrators and state security forces alike: Hisham Mahmud, a secondary student at the National Model School in Alexandria, reported that he had been repeatedly physically assaulted by Central Security (*al-Amn al-Markazi*) for performing the call to prayer at school. This reader, however, *also* challenged the Muslim Brotherhood to support his efforts: "As *al-Da'wa* attacks the enemies of Islam in Somalia, Burma, Eritria, and Ethiopia, I ask it to face the enemies of Islam from those who identify themselves as Muslims."

In response, *al-Da'wa's* editors did not mince words as they criticized repression by state institutions and defended themselves:

This [action by the security services] is terrorism [*al-irhāb*] . . . they instill fear in the youth of Islam . . . carrying out the plans of the enemies of Islam . . . but God most high will bring victory to those who support him. . . . we hope that these people will remember, if only for a second, that

they belong to Islam and will return to it. We call on Dr. Hasan Isma'īl, minister of education, to investigate this matter so as to determine the validity of the complaint . . . and to extend the secure hand of supervision . . . to private schools.⁷⁵

Though we have no record of the results of a subsequent investigation by the minister of education, the challenge to repression of the *zuhr* prayer did not abate as these readers entered the mosque.

Once entrenched in the mosques, students frequently used their bodies to protect their claim to ritual space. A February 1979 letter from Amal Zayn al-ʿAbdin, a secondary student at a girls' school in Alexandria, described how, on 24 November 1978, a male teacher had entered the prayer hall (*muṣalla*) and expelled all the female students who had come to perform the *zuhr* prayer because it conflicted with the school schedule (*niẓām al-madrasa*). This student was in the midst of prayer and thus ignored her teacher's demand; in response, the teacher entered the mosque without removing his shoes and dragged her outside by her hair. When another female student came to her aid, this teacher began to assault the second student and expelled her from the prayer hall, too.

This was not merely a case of faculty brutality. As the student noted, the principal of the school and her deputy were both Christian and the teacher in question was a Muslim man who had touched a woman unrelated to him. In response, *al-Daʿwa* noted sarcastically:

We have not been aware previously that the presence of female students in the school's prayer hall [*muṣalla*] could be considered a disruption of the school system [*niẓām al-madrasa*]. . . . This constitutes audacity against God [*al-tajarrūʿ ʿalā Allāh*] and an attempt to destroy the mosque . . . at a time when there is no authority figure at the school who is ready to prevent such behavior. Once again, we call on the minister of education to investigate this new incident and to determine what occurred.⁷⁶

Educational intermediaries, though likely also involved in more quotidian struggles over authority, were fearful of a project of piety that threatened to overturn the Ministry of Education's claim to order and the subordination of religious practice within its institutions to imperatives of nationalist education. While they could not deny the time of prayer, they could seek to regulate it within the daily schedule of schools under their purview. Conversely, as students pursued piety, they used their bodies to challenge the authority of their teachers and state security forces alike.

Students did not stand alone in their attempts to perform the *zuhr* prayer; at times, they had the support of their teachers. In the March 1980 issue of *al-Daʿwa*, a former teacher at Qasr al-Nil secondary school in Cairo complained that he had lost his job for leading students in the *zuhr* prayer. When the school principal warned him that he was not to do so, he made clear that "there are no limits on who can perform or supervise prayers . . . the students need someone to guide them to the path of God and to protect them from deviation [*al-inḥirāf*]." In response, the principal cautioned him: "Don't forget that there are monitors [*ruqabāʾ*] in our school . . . [and] we want to continue earning a living in peace [*nurīd luqmat ʿaysh bi-l-salām*]." The teacher saw no solution other than to resign. Taking aim at the state, he asked rhetorically: "If we are living in a state whose slogan is science and faith [*al-ʿilm wa-l-imān*] and if the name of the Ministry is that of Education. . . . and if we are supposed to guide to

truth [*al-sawāb*] and good [*al-khayr*], then who is making the mistake here?!"⁷⁷ High schools were a key site of state control and the Ministry of Education sought to use the implicit threat of government surveillance to prevent the emergence of a new generation of Islamist youth. This teacher's story also suggests, however, that the state's employees often disagreed with, and even subverted, the directives of their superiors, thus opening up new (if temporary) spaces of socialization for this Islamist project.

Ultimately, the most significant clashes and repression would occur on the campuses of Egyptian universities, particularly Cairo University,⁷⁸ near the end of the 1979–80 academic year. It was during this period that the Islamist opposition not only laid claim to ritual space but also vocally challenged al-Sadat's negotiations at Camp David. Of course, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya organizers had faced restrictions previously: a crackdown by state security forces at Cairo University at the end of the 1977–78 academic year had forced student participants in one of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya's summer camps (*mu'askarāt*) to flee the university campus to a nearby mosque.⁷⁹ By the the 1979–80 academic year, the conflict had escalated significantly as state security entered Cairo University's Faculty of Medicine (Kuliyyat al-Tibb) on two different occasions. The latter occasion, on 3 July 1980, involved security forces surrounding the campus mosque for female students.⁸⁰

The scene, as described by a member of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, was mayhem. The mosque library was ransacked and copies of the Qur'an and other Islamic books were removed. Most symbolically, security forces reportedly tore down a banner bearing *sūrat al-jinn* (72:18), which states: "The mosques are for Allah, so do not invoke anyone alongside Allah."⁸¹ This "criminal act" (*'amal ijrāmī*) had prevented worshippers from fulfilling their religious obligations; accordingly, there could be no doubt that those who had committed it had engaged in "injustice" (*ẓulm*). The student cited *sūrat al-baqara* (2:114) rhetorically: "And who are more unjust [*wa-man aẓlamu*] than those who prevent the name of Allah from being mentioned in His mosques and strive toward their destruction." Whereas the students were the emissaries of God and His party (*awliyā' Allāh wa-ḥizbihi*), their opponents awaited great punishment (*'adhāb 'alīm*) in the hereafter.⁸² The precise identity of these opponents, however, remained unspoken.

With students spearheading the claim to mosques, *al-Da'wa's* mufti, Muhammad 'Abd Allah al-Khatib (b. 1929), elaborated the religious implications of the crackdown at Cairo University's Medical Faculty. Textually, al-Khatib took a similar line to the students, citing both *sūrat al-jinn* (72:18) and *sūrat al-baqara* (2:114). Yet the mufti had additional targets in mind: he castigated al-Azhar for the "silence" (*sukūt*) of its scholars in the face of such "aggression" (*'udwān*). He then appealed to the rank and file of the security forces: "Those troops who stand ready to defend Satan . . . they should prepare to defend their *umma*, to regain Jerusalem, and to struggle against [the forces of] atheism and aggression that face every Islamic community whose inviolable sites are being violated and holy objects stomped upon."⁸³ Citing the Qur'an in rhetorical fashion, he asked: "Have you heard the story of the soldiers of Pharaoh and Thamud?⁸⁴ But they who disbelieve are in [persistent] denial while Allah encompasses them from behind. But this is an honored Qur'an [inscribed] in a preserved slate."⁸⁵ Khatib had taken the rhetoric of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya one step further: the troops of the security services were those of the pagan civilizations of Pharaonic Egypt and Thamud, and their leader was equally beyond the pale.

It was left to the elites of *Minbar al-Islam* to respond to the accusations of clear inconsistencies in the state's claims to religious legitimacy and to the potent claim to place religious temporality and identity before their respective bureaucratic and nationalist counterparts. On the discrete question of daily prayer, there was little use arguing. *Minbar al-Islam's* Muhammad al-Ghawi acknowledged that prayer was a central component of Islamic education (*al-tarbiya al-islāmiyya*) and that "the most important aspect of [religious education] is the timely performance of prayers during the school day."⁸⁶ Yet al-Ghawi sought to push back against claims that the state had failed to provide proper ritual space:

Let us be honest: the mosques in schools or university faculties are abandoned [*mahjūra*] or nearly so . . . few students go there . . . and indeed, [these] mosques sometimes serve as places for students to flee from lessons . . . rather, all students should go to the prayer hall [*muṣalla*], as it is a class period [*hiṣṣa*] in the day like any other.⁸⁷

That al-Ghawi sought to make prayer a "class period" like any other only underscores the success of the Islamist challenge of the previous half decade. This representative of the Ministry of Endowments now placed the *zuhr* prayer *within* a state-sanctioned temporal and spatial order.

Although school prayer had arrived, cooperation with the Islamist opposition was short-lived. The year 1981 saw the arrest of thousands of leftists and Islamists alike and the shuttering of not only dozens of mosques in Egypt but also, in the late summer of 1981, the offices of *al-Da'wa* and *al-I'tisam*. In this environment of far reaching repression, and less than one week before al-Sadat's 6 October assassination, *Minbar al-Islam's* 'Abd al-'Azim Mahdi authored an October 1981 opinion piece titled "Mosques Are for God." This piece attempted to reappropriate Islamist claims to the inviolability of university mosques by describing the religious opposition as a source of social disorder (*fitna*), in contradistinction to the security and well being provided by the state.⁸⁸ Accordingly, mosques represented the center of the state's focus: whereas radicals (*al-mutaṭarrifūn*) sought to use mosques to foment social discord by transforming them into "dens of Satan" (*awkāran li-l-shayṭān*), the regime sought to reassert control over them to "realize peace and avoid bloodshed."⁸⁹ This supposed control and the avoidance of bloodshed would not last long, however, as al-Sadat was assassinated only a few days later by a Brotherhood splinter group.

CONCLUSION

Between 1976 and 1981, leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Jam'īyya al-Shar'īyya challenged al-Sadat's religious legitimacy by transforming the *zuhr* prayer into a tool for altering the temporal and spatial arrangement of state institutions. Leaders from al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and Islamist readers supported this effort by reporting the contradictions between the regime's claims to religious observance and the reality of its educational institutions. Individual prayer was insufficient to resolve the contradiction, leading to efforts by Egypt's Islamist opposition to acquire space within state institutions to support collective ritual performance through lobbying, protest, and bodily resistance. Far from walled off citadels, the offices, classrooms, and courtyards of state institutions were key sites of Islamist activism. State writers and institutions, in both word and

deed, had little choice but to concede to many of this project's demands. Schools were instructed to cease instruction during prayer times and new mosques were built in both schools and government offices.

Yet this is not solely the story of an Islamist takeover of state institutions. Though leading figures within the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya successfully teamed with student activists to entrench the *zuhr* prayer within state institutions, they also adopted their opponent's vision of order and discipline. While the temporality of this Islamist project ostensibly emerged from the "natural" rhythm of daily prayer, it ultimately constituted a striking replication of their adversary's logic.

The hybrid temporality of the prayer project also casts light on how state institutions both shape and are shaped by those who work and study within them. The story of the *zuhr* prayer is one of neither straightforward resistance nor cooptation and compromise. It reveals how Islamist leaders, professionals, and students were shaped by state-sponsored conceptions of time and space, even as they consciously and unconsciously reappropriated these concepts and reshaped institutions to serve new ends. Just as importantly, it highlights the internal diversity of a state whose employees had differing preferences and priorities. The regime might not have approved of how Central Security carried out its directives, while teachers and principles often found themselves on either opposite sides or to be members of other ideological factions and religious communities with little stake in this battle.

The success of this hybrid project of pious cultivation through a transformed *zuhr* lies in its ubiquity in contemporary Egypt. Whether at the National Archives, in parliament, or in the cavernous Mujamma', it is the norm rather than the exception to allocate time and space to the collective performance of the *zuhr* prayer. While this project began as an Islamist endeavor to occupy state institutions under al-Sadat, its diffusion has been accompanied by a comparative dilution of its Islamist undertones. Indeed, contemporary Islamists and their opponents alike brandish their ritual piety: both jailed Muslim Brotherhood president Muhammad Mursi and his successor and jailor 'Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi proudly sport the "prayer bump" (*zabiba*), and al-Sisi regularly appears on television engaged in prayer. That Egypt's first democratically elected president and his successor are both products of this shift not only points to the shared logic that binds state institutions and Islamist organizations, but also underscores why representatives of each work so hard to deny this shared history. Within a polarized political landscape, the story of how the *zuhr* prayer first spread throughout society is easily forgotten.

NOTES

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¹"Akhbar al-Shabab wa-l-Jami'at," *al-Da'wa*, September 1981/Dhu al-Qa'da 1401, 50–51.

²Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan while Eid al-Adha falls on the tenth day of Dhu al-Hijja and honors the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice Isma'il to God.

³For an example of this focus on the Friday prayer, see Patrick Gaffney, *The Prophet's Pulpit: Islamic Preaching in Contemporary Egypt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994), esp. 194–207; and Gaffney, "The Changing Voices of Islam: The Emergence of Professional Preachers in Contemporary Egypt," *Muslim World* 81 (1991): 27–47. While Friday mosque attendance is important for its inclusion of both communal prayer and a sermon that, implicitly or explicitly, affirms or denies the ruler's political authority,

it has received a disproportionate share of scholarly attention. This focus on the Friday prayer is mirrored by a particular concern with the Friday sermon (and its reproduction through mass and small media). See, for example, Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). In the work of both Gaffney and Hirschkind, the “battle” over mosques is a contest to define the Friday sermon and is measured by the balance between “official” and “popular” (i.e., Islamist) mosques.

⁴For more on the emergence of the Islamic Revival under al-Sadat, see Aaron Rock-Singer, “Guiding the Pious to Practice: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2016).

⁵Notwithstanding this range, there is also a strain within the Sunni legal tradition that emphasizes the performance of prayers at the earliest possible time. See al-Tirmidhi, “Ṣalāt,” in A. J. Wensinck, “Mikāt,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1st ed. (1913–36), ed. M. Th. Houtsma, T. W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann (Brill Online, 2015), accessed 16 July 2015, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/mikat-SIM_4667.

⁶*Al-Da’wa* circulated between 60,000 and 80,000 copies per issue, while *al-I’tisam* distributed roughly 20,000 copies per issue. *Minbar al-Islam*’s circulation fell somewhere between its two Islamist competitors. For *al-Da’wa*, see *al-Da’wa*, January 1977/Safar 1397, 17. For *al-I’tisam*, this figure was cited by Muhammad Madbuli, former subscriptions administrator of *al-I’tisam*, interview with the author, 24 February 2013. The March 1980 issue of *Minbar al-Islam* cited a survey of Islamic magazines conducted by the Egyptian Union for Radio and Television that had ranked it as the second most popular religious publication in Egypt. See “Kalimat al-Tahrir,” *Minbar al-Islam*, March 1980/Rabi’ al-Thani 1400, 1. Though magazine editors undoubtedly excluded letters to the editor and fatwa requests that challenged their basic approach, they were well served by including reader correspondence detailing both the successes and challenges of this project.

⁷*Sūrat al-nisā’* (4:103) reads: “And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allah standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, re-establish [regular] prayer. *Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times* [italics added].” It was revealed during the Medinan period when the nascent Muslim community was first able to practice and preach Islam publicly.

⁸See Aaron Rock-Singer, “A Pious Public: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt, 1976–1981,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42 (2015): 427–46.

⁹Talal Asad, *Formation of the Secular: Christianity, Islam and Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 199.

¹⁰See Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, esp. 117–18 and 137–38; and Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), esp. 113–17. See also Richard Gauvain, *Salafī Ritual Purity: In the Presence of God* (London: Routledge, 2013).

¹¹Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 138–39.

¹²Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety*, 35.

¹³*Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁴This is distinct from highlighting the ways in which Islamists have “captured” official positions (such as that of leadership of student unions) within state institutions. See Abdullah al-Arian, *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat’s Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Hazem Kandil *Inside the Brotherhood* (Walden, Mass.: Polity, 2015); Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013), esp. 46–75. This limitation applies to scholarship on Islamism outside of Egypt as well. See Janine A. Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism: Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2004); Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 2002); and Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2001).

¹⁵Mahmood mistakenly attributes the popularization of daily (presumably *zuhr*) prayer in the Islamic Revival to the proliferation of “Islamic schools” in Egypt since the 1970s. Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety*, 48.

¹⁶Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991).

¹⁷Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha’s Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (New York: AUC Press, 2002).

¹⁸Samer Shehata, *Shop Floor Culture and Politics in Egypt* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2009), 4.

¹⁹For example, ties between the Brotherhood leadership and the emergent al-Jama‘a al-Islamiyya were often kept secret so that both parties could avoid being seen as threatening al-Sadat. See ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Abu al-Futuh and Husam Tammam, *‘Abd al-Mun‘im Abu al-Futuh: Shahid ‘ala Tarikh al-Haraka al-Islamiyya fi Misr, 1970–1984* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2010), 75.

²⁰Following Roxanne Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, I define Islamism as referring to “contemporary movements that attempt to return to the scriptural foundations of the Muslim community, excavating and reinterpreting them for application to the present-day social and political world.” Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Writings in Islamist Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 4. Throughout the article, I refer to *al-Itisam* as “Salafi-Islamist” because it balanced between the Salafi-inspired ritual and theological emphasis of al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya and a Brotherhood-style commitment to sociopolitical transformation.

²¹Najah al-Zanira, *al-Majlis al-A‘la li-l-Shu‘un al-Islamiyya: Nafidhat Misr ‘ala al-‘Alam* (Cairo: Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, 1995), 105.

²²Al-Jam‘iyya al-Shar‘iyya often sheltered Muslim Brothers during the al-Nasir period and received permission from the Ministry of Endowments in 1971 to maintain its network of mosques independently. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Aziz Dawud, *al-Jam‘iyyat al-Islamiyya fi Misr wa-Dawrha fi Nashr al-Da‘wa al-Islamiyya* (Cairo: al-Zahra li-l-‘Ilam al-‘Arabi, 1992), 151.

²³For related studies of the importance of mediation to religious thought and practice, see Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*; and Emilio Spadola, *The Calls of Islam: Sufis, Islamists and Mass Mediation in Morocco* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2014).

²⁴Daniel A. Stolz, “The Lighthouse and the Observatory: Islam, Authority, and Cultures of Astronomy in Late Ottoman Egypt” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2013), chap. 6.

²⁵Law 157 of 1960 granted the Ministry of Endowments the authority—and responsibility—to supervise and financially support all Egyptian mosques over the coming decade. These attempts, all-encompassing as they may have been, were defined by practical limitations that confronted the Ministry of Endowments: in 1961, only 17.5 percent of the 17,224 mosques in Egypt were staffed and funded by the Ministry of Endowments; by 1975, the number of mosques had increased to 28,738, but the proportion of government mosques was 17.9 percent. To put it differently, the number of mosques administered by the government had increased by 71 percent (from 3,006 to 5,163), but the government’s share of mosques had hardly budged. Patrick Gaffney, “Changing Voices of Islam,” *Muslim World* 81 (1991): 30–40.

²⁶On Indonesia, see Florian Pohl, *Islamic Education and the Public Sphere: Today’s Pesantren in Indonesia* (Münster, Germany: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2009), 64. On Pakistan and Malaysia, see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 123–38.

²⁷Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, xi.

²⁸Ibid., 71.

²⁹See Fahmy, *All the Pasha’s Men*, esp. 199–238; and Shehata, *Shop Floor Culture in Egypt*, 58–93.

³⁰Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 77–86.

³¹Ibid., 62. Jeffrey T. Kenney notes the proliferation of self-consciously “Islamic” self-help manuals since the 1970s, which “entangle[d] the [Islamic] tradition in new discourses and practices that facilitate the emergence of distinct understandings of what it means to be Muslim.” Kenney, “Selling Success, Nurturing the Self: Self-Help Literature, Capitalist Values and the Sacralization of Subjective Life in Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47 (2015): 665.

³²Patrick D. Gaffney, *The Prophet’s Pulpit: Islamic Preaching in Contemporary Egypt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994), 266–67.

³³Paul Starkey, “Modern Egyptian Culture in the Arab World,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 424.

³⁴Charles Hirschkind notes this dynamic in 20th-century Egypt more broadly. Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 41. Emilio Spadola makes a similar observation for contemporary Morocco. Spadola, *The Calls of Islam*, 7.

³⁵In 1952, 350,000 Egyptians worked in the public sector; by 1969–70, the number stood at 1.2 million. This nearly 70 percent increase came during a period in which both employment generally and population growth remained below 20 percent. Nazih M. Ayubi, *Bureaucracy and Politics in Contemporary Egypt* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), 243–44. Between the 1952–53 and 1972–73 academic years, the number of Egyptians

studying in higher education institutions increased from 42,485 to 334,000. Haggai Erlich, *Students and University in Twentieth Century Egyptian Politics* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), 176, 200. Similarly, primary education between 1952–53 and 1965–66 expanded from 1 to 3.5 million. Further, between 1956 and 1961, preparatory (*i'dādī*) enrollment increased from 8,000 to 42,000 and secondary enrollment jumped from 22,000 to 75,000. Alan Richards, "Higher Education in Egypt," *Policy Research Working Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Education and Employment Division, 1992), 8.

³⁶Al-Sayyid 'Abd al-Sattar Miliji, *Tarikh al-Haraka al-Islamiyya fi Sahat al-Ta'lim* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1994), 13.

³⁷*Al-I'tisam* initially served as the mouthpiece of al-Jam'iyah al-Shar'iyah, but from the mid-1960s was officially independent, even as its editors remained leading members of the group.

³⁸Technically, this period begins when the sun reaches true noon as it crosses the celestial meridian. At this point, it is precisely between sunrise and sunset.

³⁹For more on Brotherhood efforts to cultivate al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah, see Mustafa Dasuqi and al-Sa'id Ramadan 'Abbadi, *Tarikh al-Haraka al-Tullabiyyah bi-Jama'at al-Ikhwān al-Muslimin 1933–2011* (Cairo: Mu'assasat Iqra' li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi' wa-l-Tarjama, 2013), 144–45.

⁴⁰See Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany, N.Y.: State University Press of New York, 1987), 111–12, 203, 234.

⁴¹Matthew S. Hull, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2012) 67–68.

⁴²Iren Ozgur, *Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey: Faith, Politics and Education* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 74–75.

⁴³Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 165.

⁴⁴On Barak, *On Time: Technology and Temporality in Modern Egypt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2013), 5.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 4–5. As Daniel A. Stolz notes, however, Egyptian scholars in the 18th and 19th centuries drew on a premodern tradition of *miqāt* to respond to the popularization of mechanical timepieces and claims by state institutions in Ottoman Egypt. Stolz, "Positioning the Watch Hand: 'Ulama' and the Practice of Mechanical Timekeeping in Cairo, 1737–1874," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47 (2015): 489–510.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷Egypt functioned as a British protectorate between 1922 and 1952 even as it was officially ruled by the Egyptian monarchy.

⁴⁸*Takfir* is the practice of declaring another Muslim to be an infidel (*kāfir*). It was used by Islamists in Egypt who took Sayyid Qutb's *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq (Milestones)*, first published in 1964, as a guide and later by Salafi-Jihadi groups across the Middle East and South Asia.

⁴⁹For more on this, see William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahiliyyah," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003): 521–45.

⁵⁰For more on al-Sadat's claim to meld science and faith, see Anwar al-Sadat, *The Public Diary of President Sadat: The Road to Diplomacy* (London: E. J. Brill, 1979), 2:534.

⁵¹The latter part of the verse reads: "For such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times."

⁵²Muhammad Rashid Rida, *Tafsir al-Manar* (Cairo: Dar al-Manar, 1948), 5:362–83.

⁵³Hasan al-Banna, *Nazarat fi Kitab Allah* (Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi' wa-l-Nashr al-Islamiyyah, 2002), 179.

⁵⁴Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (Riyadh: Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Nur, n.d.), 4:268.

⁵⁵Muhammad Mahmud Hijazi, *al-Tafsir al-Wadih* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, 1969), 419–22.

⁵⁶For example, see *Minbar al-Islam*, March 1976/Rabi' al-Awwal 1396, 97.

⁵⁷"Al-Ifṭā'," *Minbar al-Islam*, May 1976/Jumada al-Uwla 1396, 170.

⁵⁸'Abd al-Latif Mushṭahiri, "Aqwal al-Suhuf," *al-I'tisam*, December 1976/Dhu al-Hijja 1396, 40.

⁵⁹Salih 'Ashmawi, "Ayna al-Salat fi Dawlat al-'Ilm wa-l-Iman?," *al-Da'wa*, March 1977/Rabi' al-Thani 1397, 41.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹For example, see Muhammad 'Abd al-Quddus, "Mawqif al-Sihafa min Qadiyyat al-Takfir," *al-Da'wa*, September 1977/Shawwal 1397, 46. Along similar lines, see Jabir Rizq, "al-Sihafa al-Misriyyah fi Qafas al-Itiham," *al-I'tisam*, September 1977/Shawwal 1397, 4.

⁶²"Akhbar al-Shabab wa-l-Jami'at," *al-Da'wa*, July 1977/Sha'ban 1397, 44.

- ⁶³Ibid., 45.
- ⁶⁴“Akhbar al-‘Alam al-Islami,” *al-Wa‘i al-Islami*, May 1977/Jumada al-Uwla 1397, 113.
- ⁶⁵‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Mat‘ani, “Min Ajl al-Nuhud bi-Risalat al-Azhar,” *al-Da‘wa*, November 1977/Dhu al-Hijja 1397, 31.
- ⁶⁶“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, November 1977/Dhu al-Hijja 1397, 63.
- ⁶⁷“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, June 1979/Rajab 1399, 64.
- ⁶⁸“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, February 1980/Rabi‘ al-Awwal 1400, 64.
- ⁶⁹“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, June 1980/Rajab 1400, 64.
- ⁷⁰“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, April 1981/Jumada al-Ukhra 1401, 60.
- ⁷¹“Akhbar al-Shabab wa-l-Jami‘at,” *al-Da‘wa*, December 1976/Muharram 1397, 38.
- ⁷²“Akhbar al-Shabab wa-l-Jami‘at,” *al-Da‘wa*, January 1978/Safar 1398, 46.
- ⁷³“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, April 1977/Jumada al-Uwla 1397, 62.
- ⁷⁴Al-Mat‘ani, “Min Ajl al-Nuhud bi-Risalat al-Azhar,” 31.
- ⁷⁵“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, December 1978/Muharram 1398, 64.
- ⁷⁶“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, February 1979/Rabi‘ al-Thani 1397, 64.
- ⁷⁷“Barid al-Da‘wa,” *al-Da‘wa*, March 1980/Rabi‘ al-Thani 1400, 65.
- ⁷⁸In 1979, al-Sadat shut down summer camps at Alexandria, Cairo, and Zaqqaziq Universities. Clashes also occurred in Minya and Asyut, both on and beyond university grounds. See Gilles Kepel, *The Roots of Radical Islam* (London: Saki Books, 2005), 153–61.
- ⁷⁹Muhammad Yahya, “Kalima La Buddha minha hawl al-Mu‘askarat al-Islamiyya fi al-Jami‘at,” *al-I‘tisam*, July 1978/Shab‘an 1398, 19.
- ⁸⁰“Akhbar al-Shabab wa-l-Jami‘at,” *al-Da‘wa*, September 1980/Shawwal 1400, 60.
- ⁸¹Ibid. This verse is traditionally used to denote the exclusive sovereignty of God, rather than man, over the world.
- ⁸²Ibid., 61.
- ⁸³“Akhbar al-Shabab wa-l-Jami‘at,” *al-Da‘wa*, September 1980/Dhu al-Qa‘da 1400, 40.
- ⁸⁴The Thamud were a pagan people in Arabia prior to the advent of Islam. The Qur’an (7:73–74) exhorts the people of Thamud to worship Allah lest they face a “painful punishment” (*‘adhāb ‘alīm*).
- ⁸⁵This is a reference to *sūrat al-burūj* (85: 17–22). The reference to Pharaoh therein was hardly innocuous: ‘Abd al-Salam Faraj, author of *al-Farida al-Gha‘iba* (The Hidden Obligation) and leader of the organization Jihad, referred to Egypt’s ruler by this designation. On 6 October 1981, al-Sadat’s assassin exclaimed, “My name is Khalid Islambuli, I have killed Pharaoh, and I do not fear death.” See Kepel, *The Roots of Radical Islam*, 198.
- ⁸⁶‘Abd al-Fattah al-Ghawī, “Nahwa Minhaj Afdal li-Tadris al-Tarbiya al-Iniyya,” *Minbar al-Islam*, March 1980/Rabi‘ al-Thani 1400, 126.
- ⁸⁷Ibid.
- ⁸⁸‘Abd al-‘Alim Mahdi, “al-Masajid li-Llah,” *Minbar al-Islam*, October 1981/Dhu al-Hijja 1401, 50.
- ⁸⁹Ibid., 52.