

to make demands—and force concession—did once exist (75). They were indeed actively destroyed. If seen through the lens of authoritarian practices, such a dynamic—that is, political pacification as the key outcome of Rawabi—becomes much more central.

In addition, many of Rabie's insights brought existing work on state capacity to mind. The author convincingly describes the way in which the state has ceded space to private forces, retreated from its role in planning, imposing laws and channeling public will more generally. Instead, the PA has decentralized itself as it empowers local institutions. Nevertheless, Rabie also describes how both local and national governance are coming under the control of the Ministry of Local Government, which then enables large projects in terms of national priority. This leads to the question: Is the PA disempowering or circumventing the public and institutions which might hold it accountable? Or is it indeed in retreat, as it takes fuller form as a neoliberal state? Here the literature on state capacity might have clarified how both dynamics exist at the same time, by using concepts of coercive versus infrastructural capacity. The concept of coercive power or capacity encompasses the range of actions that state elites can undertake without routine negotiation with civil society groups, while infrastructural power is the capacity of the state to enforce policy throughout its entire territory. When viewed through these terms, the PA has clearly built a good deal of coercive capacity, through repression and co-optation mechanisms, while simultaneously eroding its infrastructural power in key policy realms—such as housing—in order to surrender space to private entities.

Finally, the literature on institutional formalization, particularly the work of Palestinian scholar Nadya Hajj, provides an interesting juxtaposition to Rabie's findings. Hajj finds that in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, despite the transitional nature of the camp and lack of formalized institutions or classic state authority, Fatah (as a non-state hegemon) was able to engage in the process of nation-state building given sufficient capital for local investment. Private capital facilitated formalization of property rights and maintained the cohesion of the camp. In the case of the West Bank in the last decade, similar processes are leading to the erosion of national will, a lack of unity amongst the middle class, and widespread political pacification, according to Rabie. It would be interesting to read the two studies in dialogue and understand why these two contexts, despite both being Palestinian communities, arrive at such different outcomes.

This book is about Palestine, specifically the West Bank, the Ramallah bubble, and the ways in which national politics has collapsed into narrower relationships. But, the questions raised and the practices described in the study go much further, beyond the scope of this particular case. *Palestine Is Throwing a Party* can contribute to a wide range of literatures and, as mentioned previously, across disciplines. It should prove crucial reading to all those interested in the future of Palestine, modern manifestations of the state as a “node in the global political economy” (19), as well as political economy approaches more broadly.

doi:10.1017/S0020743821001306

## The Muslim Brothers in Society: Everyday Politics, Social Action, and Islamism in Mubarak's Egypt. Marie Vannetzel (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2021). Pp. 328. \$49.95 cloth. ISBN: 9789774169625

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In *The Muslim Brothers in Society: Everyday Politics, Social Action, and Islamism in Mubarak's Egypt*, Marie Vannetzel examines the everyday lives and activities of Brotherhood members in the decade that preceded the movement's rise and fall from power in 2011–13, with the aim to understand the challenges that it faced during its time in government and to identify the reasons behind its failure to meet

them. She examines the question of how its short political success was linked to the social roots of the movement, investigating the Brotherhood's everyday politics and social activities during Hosni Mubarak's era. By doing so, Vannetzel makes a ground-breaking contribution to the study of Islamists' political rise in Arab states, going beyond the established discourses that attribute successful politicization to their extensive social services networks. Further, the book digs deeper into these dynamics and examines two different sides of the Brotherhood's social activities: the political effects of the movement's social actions and the roots of this activism within the movement's internal dynamics.

Vannetzel relies on extensive fieldwork among grassroots networks and on numerous interviews with Brotherhood MPs, beneficiaries, and deputies in three districts of greater Cairo (Madinat Nasr, Helwan, and 15 Mayo), providing a cutting-edge ethnography of the movement's reliance on social networks for the purposes of its politicization. The book's major contribution on these ongoing debates is what Vannetzel calls "the politics of goodness," based on the examination of how the Brotherhood operated in society and Islamist action in everyday life, tracing how the movement relied on unique mobilization tactics to appeal to a variety of social groups. Applying "the politics of goodness" as a conceptual framework, Vannetzel shows that there was no such thing as a parallel Islamist sector on the ground but that the reality of the Brotherhood's social activities was much more fluid and intersectional. She demonstrates that the movement and its members successfully distinguished themselves from the competitors through what she calls "the politics of disinterestedness," promoting individual and collective forms of behavior broadly perceived as ethical conduct. It was this behavior that, in the decade preceding the 2011 uprisings, allowed for the informal social embedding of the Brotherhood into Egyptian society, being the means through which the Brothers portrayed themselves as "virtuous neighbours" without making their identity obvious, while also exhibiting traits that could potentially make them identifiable as members of the movement. This subtle "politics of goodness," Vannetzel argues, led to judgments being made about the overall "virtue" of the Brotherhood and provides an explanation as to how affective and ethical bonds with their constituencies were built. The Brotherhood's virtuous behavior made it attractive to several societal groups that would go on to constitute its main popular base, be it the supporters and associates that were in turn instrumental to social services provision on the ground.

Vannetzel then turns toward the inner workings of the movement itself, examining its internal rule and religious ideology. Through its impressive ethnographic sources, the book shows that the ethical conduct that the Brotherhood displayed publicly was not a spontaneously adopted code of behavior, but rather it was the result of rigorous internal training. Through the movement's impressive indoctrination machine, Brothers were trained to serve as an exemplary model for other Muslims with the aim of bringing about a moral transformation of society according to its vision of Islam. Yet, while these dynamics were key to the Brotherhood's popularity under Mubarak, they also showed repeated contradictions between theory and practice and further entrenched internal hierarchy and discipline at the cost of the specialization of skills and disciplines. In particular, the book traces how these dynamics of social embedding and ethical conduct led to significant tensions within the movement, leading to the opposition and disengagement of some members and the increasing discontent of others. From this, Vannetzel shows that the 2011 uprisings and the Brotherhood's consequent quick politicization brought these internal conflicts to the fore, leading to the collapse of the consensus built around "the politics of goodness." Hence, Vannetzel shows how the fragile balance on which the Brotherhood's political and social actions rested was disrupted after 2011, providing a theoretically sound and empirically rich alternative way of understanding the movement's historical failure in 2013.

Vannetzel's book contributes to several strands of literature on the Brotherhood as a comprehensive social movement. It addresses the question of how the Brotherhood politicized and achieved electoral success in 2011–12, specifically focusing on how it gained prominence and electoral support, aligning with and expanding on the works of Masoud, Brooke, and Wickham. Expanding on existing debates, she shows that the key to the political success of the Brotherhood's social activities rested in their depoliticization. Vannetzel uses the term "politics of goodness" to indicate the non-political nature of *khadamāt* (social services) and *khayr* (goodness, charity), which allowed the Brotherhood to appeal to both the middle and lower classes without having an explicit Islamist sector on the ground, hence gaining the strong popular base that allowed it to raise to power.

More importantly, Vannetzel contributes to a new strand of literature on the Brotherhood that emerged after 2013, specifically focusing on the movement's internal structures rather than on its relationship with the regime and the Egyptian population. Following the works of Kandil, al-Anani, Willi, and Ardovini and Biagini, the book focuses on the social dimension of the movement showing that indoctrination is not only crucial to maintain the strong collective identity the Brotherhood rested on, but also it created the public image of a "virtuous" Brother that made the movement attractive to sympathizers. It is these sympathizers, Vannetzel argues, that were key to the Brotherhood's provision of social services without being active members of the organization.

Vannetzel relies on an impressive ethnographic sample, but the book's contribution could have been expanded further by widening the scope of analysis beyond the three Cairo districts that she focuses on. Moreover, while her sources and interlocutors vary across the movement's ranks, it would have been interesting to see a greater focus on lower-ranking members rather than Brotherhood MPs. Nevertheless, the book makes a ground-breaking contribution to the study of the Brotherhood's external and internal dynamics and provides an invaluable platform for other scholars to build on. Hence, Vannetzel's book is a seminal reading for anyone interested in the Brotherhood and also for those looking to understand the complicated balance between Islamist groups' politicization and their social networks on the ground.

doi:10.1017/S0020743821001240

**Bread and Freedom: Egypt's Revolutionary Situation. Mona El-Ghobashy (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2021). Pp. 392. \$90.00 cloth, \$28.00 paper. ISBN: 9781503601765**

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In *Bread and Freedom*, Mona El-Ghobashy offers a lucid, detailed, and deeply informed analysis of Egypt's revolutionary situation of 2011–14, along with an insightful treatment of the periods before and after the interregnum. This is essential reading for specialists of Egyptian politics and theorists of revolution, as well as scholars of authoritarianism, contentious politics, and regime transition.

*Bread and Freedom* pushes against summary judgments that would fault one faction or another for a failed democratic transition. Rather than holding court over who is to blame, judging the period against the benchmark of a "real" revolution, or assessing the outcome against the expectations of democratization theory, El-Ghobashy examines how the exigencies of extreme uncertainty shaped political outcomes. The analytical frame of "revolutionary situation"—a circumstance wherein a breakdown of authority ushers in a scramble among social forces with competing claims to sovereignty—serves her purpose well. The framework trains our eyes on the radical contingency of each juncture and it illuminates how uncertainty shaped the decision-making calculus of central players within the state and society.

The book is sure to ruffle feathers because it questions many familiar narratives of the period, particularly those that would blame Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood for squandering the revolution. El-Ghobashy does not whitewash the missteps and overreach of Morsi and his Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), but she seeks to understand the decisions of all key actors in the politics of the moment. Her deeply contextual treatment illuminates pivotal events, such as the FJP decision to field a candidate in the 2012 Presidential elections (despite prior assurances to the contrary) and the infamous "Constitutional Declaration" that Morsi issued to shield the Constituent Assembly and his executive decrees from judicial review.

In a similar vein, El-Ghobashy probes why the opposition found it easier to align with like-minded judicial organs, and ultimately the military, rather than work with the FJP. In her account, escalation