

The Salafi Mystique: The Rise of Gender Segregation in 1970s Egypt

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Abstract

In this article, I trace the emergence of gender segregation within contemporary Salafism, focusing on Egypt as a case study to examine the interaction between textual hermeneutics, ideological cross-pollination and political competition. Drawing on two Egyptian Salafi magazines, alongside a variety of pamphlets and lay-oriented works by Salafi and non-Salafi authors alike, I challenge a majority view that claims gender segregation as a long-established religious principle and practice, while historically contextualizing a minority view that gender segregation arose out of contemporary political calculations. Specifically, although the core anxieties of women's presence in public were not new, the attempt to comprehensively regulate women's presence in state institutions and on mass transportation was a response to contemporary intellectual trends, particularly the project of State Feminism and leading Muslim Brotherhood thinkers during the Nasser period (1952–1970), and to political competition with the Brotherhood during the 1970s.

Keywords

Salafism–Egypt–gender–mass media–Islamic law – Middle East

In 1951, a luminary of contemporary Salafism,¹ Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (d. 1999), declared that women must cover their heads but are under no

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1 I follow Bernard Haykel in distinguishing between two genealogies of Salafism: an “enlight-

obligation to conceal their faces or hands as they move outside the home.² By the mid-1970s, however, this had become a minority position among Salafis,

- ened Salafism" (Salafiyya Tanwīriyya) pioneered by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā and a separate strand, based on the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, that defines its reformist project primarily through theology and secondarily through legal teachings, models of sociability and a narrow view of politics. See Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action" in Roel Meijr (ed.), *Global Salafism* (London: Hurst, 2009), 35–46. Though members of both strands cited Ibn Taymiyya, the former group rejected this medieval scholar's anti-rationalist and literalist theological views while the latter group adopted them. As Henri Lauzière shows, these two approaches have been conflated for semantic reasons (both call themselves Salafis) and due to the role of Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb's Salafiyya Bookstore in Cairo, which published material from both reformist projects. See Lauzière, "The Construction of Salafiyya: Reconsidering Salafism from the Perspective of Conceptual History," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 (2010): 369–89. The Muslim Brotherhood, in contrast to the Salafi groups examined in this article, belongs to the Salafiyya Tanwīriyya. Crucially, both Anṣār al-Sunna and the Jam'iyya Shar'iyya identify as Salafi through recourse to particular Salafi language. In the case of Anṣār al-Sunna, the back cover of *al-Tawḥīd* noted the organization's commitment to "pure monotheism (*al-tawḥīd al-khālīṣ*), cleansed of all impurities (*al-muṭaḥarra min al-shawā'ib*)." To do so, they rely on the Quran and the authentic Sunna (*al-Sunna al-Saḥīḥa*). For example, see *al-Tawḥīd*, Jumāda al-Ūlā 1399/March 1979, back cover. Along similar lines, the Jam'iyya Shar'iyya's Imam, 'Abd al-Laṭīf Muṣṭahīrī emphasizes the JS's commitment to the 'straight path of the Salaf' (*ṣirāṭ al-Salaf al-mustaqīm*) We work day and night to adhere to the principles of the monotheism (*Tawḥīd*). See "al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya wa Sum'atuhā fi al-Bilād al-'Arabiyya wa-l-Islāmiyya," *al-I'tisām*, Rajab 1398/June 1978, 41. Contemporary Arabic-language studies of Salafism also identify them as such, while clearly excluding Salafiyya Tanwīriyya groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood. For example, see Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan, *al-Salafiyyūn fi Miṣr* (Giza, Egypt: Awrāq li'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzī', 2012).
- 2 Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Ḥijāb al-Mar'a al-Muslima fi-l-Kitāb wa'l-Sunna* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1955), 21. There is good reason to believe that al-Albānī's ideas influenced Salafis in Egypt throughout the Nasser and Sadat periods. Though based first in Syria and then in Saudi Arabia, al-Albānī's alliance with al-Maktab al-Islāmī publishing house enabled him to publish widely, including in Egypt. On this alliance, see further Jacob Olidort, "In Defense of Tradition: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and the Salafi Method," unpublished dissertation, Princeton University, 2015, 112–14. As the bibliographic information of *Ḥijāb al-Mar'a al-Muslima* indicates, he also had access to the popular Salafi printing house al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya. This influence extended to the 1970s: the August 1976 issue of *al-Tawḥīd* recounts the visit of the "Ḥadīth expert of the Levant" (*Muḥaddith al-Shām*) to his Egyptian Salafi brethren, highlighting a stop at the Anṣār al-Sunna headquarters in Cairo, and branches of the AS in Alexandria, Tanta, Mansura and Damietta. This Salafi luminary also visited a Jam'iyya Shar'iyya affiliated mosque in the Shubra neighborhood of Cairo, al-Azhar university campuses in Cairo and 'Ayn Shams, and Islamic youth camps (*mu'askarāt*) in Heliopolis and Alexandria. See "Akhhār al-Jamā'a," *al-Tawḥīd*, Ramaḍān 1396/August 1976.

who argued that women not only must cover their head, face and hands but *also* must observe strict gender segregation in public.³ How did this drastic change occur and what implications did it have for the access of Salafi women to education and professional employment?⁴

Legal historians of Salafism, most prominently Khaled Abou el-Fadl and Adis Duderija, paint a historically static picture of the Salafi views of gender segregation by focusing on the relationship between textual methodology and gender practices.⁵ Similarly, anthropologists who study gender segregation assume this model of gender relations to be *sui generis*.⁶ More broadly, the

3 For an Egyptian example of this shift, see Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Muqaddam, *Adillat al-Hijāb: baḥth jāmi' li-faḍā'il al-ḥijāb wa-adillat wujūbihi wa'l-radd 'alā man abāha al-sufūr* (Cairo: Dār al-Īmān, 1989). For a Saudi example published in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere, see Ḥamūd b. 'Abd Allāh b. Ḥamūd al-Tuwayjri, *al-Ṣārim al-Mashhūr 'alā Ahl al-Tabarruj wa'l-Sufūr wa fihī al-radd 'alā Kitāb al-Hijāb li'l-Albānī* (Aleppo, Syria: Maktabat al-Hudā, 1974).

4 This is not to assume that all Salafi women seek education or employment, only to note that many do for reasons of personal edification, economic subsistence and power relations within their marriage.

5 Both Abou el-Fadl and Duderija focus on Saudi Salafi thinkers (or as Duderija terms them, “Neo-Traditional Salafis”) and their legal discourses of female modesty and gender segregation. Abou el-Fadl explains that his work is one of legal theory, not anthropology or sociology. See Khaled Abou el-Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oxford, England: One World, 2001), iv. Duderija takes a similar approach, focusing on Saudi Salafi scholars and examining their assumptions and methods of textual interpretation. See Adis Duderija, *Constructing a Religiously Ideal “Believer” and “Woman” in Islam: Neo-Traditional Salafis and Progressive Muslims’ Methods of Interpretation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 100–15. In both cases, the focus on textual interpretation and legal discourse obscures the processes of debate that underlay this end product; in the absence of any contextual factors, one is left to assume that the Salafi textual approach (*manhaj*) defines a Salafi social vision and that Saudi Salafis dominate these debates globally. The limitations of this approach are evident in Abou el-Fadl's treatment of 'Abd Allāh ibn Bāz's fatwas on female employment: he cites a 1987 collection of legal responsa (*fatāwā*), yet does not mention that the original setting of this *fatwa* was a series of articles in *al-Tawḥīd* magazine in the summer of 1978. See Abou el-Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name*, 287–96.

6 For example, Fadwa el-Guindi notes that “Islam condemns cross-sex exposure whether by unnecessary or taboo contact or through immodesty in dress and behavior.” See Fadwa el-Guindi, “Veiling Infitah with Muslim Ethic: Egypt's Contemporary Islamic Movement,” *Social Problems*, 28/4 (1981), 465–85, at 476. Similarly, Valerie Hoffman-Ladd describes “the modesty and segregation of women” as an “attempt to preserve traditional values ... perceived to be Islamic.” See Hoffman-Ladd, “Polemics on the Modesty and Segregation of Women in Contemporary Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19/1 (1987),

study of Salafism disproportionately centers on either elite questions of legal methodology⁷ and political participation,⁸ or on local ritual practice⁹ and ethical self-cultivation.¹⁰ An examination of the legal debates over women's public presence in Egypt during the twentieth century, by contrast, highlights the intersection of law, political competition and social practice in the formation of new models of gender relations.

In order to bring Salafi legal interpretation of women's public status together with related political, social and economic shifts, I will focus on the negotiation of this question at one key site, Egypt.¹¹ Though frequently cast as a secondary participant in Salafi intellectual development, this regional religious and cultural heavyweight boasted two prominent Salafi organizations throughout much of the 20th century: al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya li'l-Āmilin b'il-Kitāb wa'l-Sunna (henceforth the Jam'iyya Shar'iyya) (f. 1912) and Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya (henceforth Anṣār al-Sunna), whose early members had belonged to the Jam'iyya Shar'iyya before leaving to found a separate organization in 1926.¹² Equally important, Egypt's population has long exceeded

23–50, at 43. By contrast, a minority view argues that gender segregation is a recent practice. In a recent study of Saudi Arabia, Amelie Le Renard traces the emergence of this practice in Saudi Arabia to the 1980s. See Le Renard, "Only For Women: Women, the State and Reform in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal* 62: 4 (2008), 610–29. On gender segregation in Saudi Arabia as a symbol of Islamic morality, see Eleanor Abdella Doumato, "Women and Work in Saudi Arabia: How Flexible are Islamic Margins?" *Middle East Journal* 53: 4 (Autumn 1999), 568–83. Neither of these latter two studies, however, explores the intellectual roots of this practice.

7 For example, see Bernard Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkāni* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

8 See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29/3 (2006), 207–39. Also see Ḥasan, *al-Salafīyyūn fī Miṣr*.

9 See Richard Gauvain, *Salafī Ritual Purity: In the Presence of God* (London: Routledge, 2013).

10 See Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia UP, 2006). Also see Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2011).

11 Anecdotaly, this period also witnessed a vast expansion in pamphlets and longer works published in Saudi Arabia inveighing against the dangers of gender mixing.

12 The historical relationship between Anṣār al-Sunna and the Jam'iyya Shar'iyya requires further research. One key tension between the two organizations revolves around the latter's Salafi credentials, particularly the training of the JS's founder, al-Subkī, within the Maliki *madhhab*. According to the Jam'iyya Shar'iyya, al-Subkī adopted a Salafi approach on matters of creed (*ʿaqīda*) and a Maliki approach on secondary questions (*al-furūʿ*). See Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Dāʿūd, *al-Jam'iyyāt al-Islāmīyya fī Miṣr wa Dawruhā fī Nashr al-Da'wa al-Islāmīyya* (Cairo: al-Zahrā' li'l-ʾIḥām al-ʿArabī, 1992), 140–1. A further source of tension arose in 1969, when Nasser forcibly merged the AS with the JS. The AS only

that of traditional Salafi centers such as Saudi Arabia and Syria,¹³ thus making it a key “prize” for competing ideological movements, religious and secular.

How can we capture the dynamism of Salafi legal change during the 1970s? Drawing on lay-oriented Salafi texts of this period distributed in Egypt, both periodicals and pamphlets, I examine attempts by religious elites to regulate female modesty and public presence. My primary focus is on two periodicals: *al-Itiṣām* (1969–1981)¹⁴ and *al-Tawḥīd* (1973–1981), the former published by leading figures within the Jam‘iyya Shar‘iyya and the latter the official mouthpiece of Anṣār al-Sunna.¹⁵ In order to contextualize these periodicals, I also draw on a variety of pamphlets and scholarly works by leading Salafi and Brotherhood thinkers, Egyptian and non-Egyptian, that were published in Egypt both prior to and during the 1970s.

Drawing on these underutilized sources, I show that changing laws of female modesty and comprehensive legislation of public space did not emerge out of preexisting interpretative differences *or* from changing hermeneutical approaches. Instead, the expansion of gender-segregation was a product of the

reemerged as an independent entity in 1973, when it returned to publishing *al-Tawḥīd*. See Ḥasan, *al-Salafīyyūn fī Miṣr*, 8.

- 13 Egypt’s population in 1976 was 36.6 million, while that of Saudi Arabia and Syria, respectively, hovered around eight million. For Egypt, see Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, *Population and Housing Census* (Cairo, Egypt: CAPMAS, 1976), 1: 26–7. Syria’s population was 9.2 million in 1981, while Saudi Arabia’s population numbered 7 million in 1974. See Bureau of the Census, *World Population 1983* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1983), 274, 281.
- 14 Key figures within the Jam‘iyya Shar‘iyya, most prominently Aḥmad ‘Īsā ‘Āshūr (d. 1990) and the organization’s Imam ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Muṣṭahīrī (d. 1995), wrote and edited *al-Itiṣām*. Also see Dā‘ūd, *al-Jam‘iyyāt al-Islāmiyya fī Miṣr wa Dawruhā fī Nashr al-Da‘wa al-Islāmiyya*, 139–46. For more on the JS’s shift to Islamism, see ‘Imād Ṣiyām, “al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya wa’l-Jam‘iyyāt al-Ahliyya fī Miṣr;” in ‘Abd al-Ghāfar Shukr (ed.), *al-Jam‘iyyāt al-Ahliyya al-Islāmiyya fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Amīn, 2006), 130. For an opposing view, see Gauvain, *Salafi Ritual Purity*, 37–8.
- 15 All citations from *al-Tawḥīd* magazine come from a digital version formatted for the “Shamela” Islamic text program as a .bok file. The authenticity of this reproduction of this period and the accuracy of page numbers has been verified to the extent possible through a comparison with original copies of the publication stretching from 1979 to 1981. The Anṣār al-Sunna website contains a link for this file: <<http://ansarsonna.com/pageother.php?catsmktba=222>>. Often, the Shamela version provides article-specific page numbers, but in some cases, it does not. In the latter instance, I cite the page of the article rather than its place within the magazine issue. The magazine also frequently provided the Ḥijrī month but not the Gregorian month. I also provide a speculative Gregorian date based on the assumption that the magazine was published on the first day of the Ḥijrī month.

intersection of increased female education and employment, intellectual cross-fertilization with both the Muslim Brotherhood and the Nasserist project of State Feminism,¹⁶ and post-1975 political competition with the Brotherhood. To trace these changes, I highlight the shifting bounds of the legal category of “flaunting” (*al-tabarruj*) and the growing prominence of the category of gender mixing (*ikhtilāṭ al-jinsayn*).

While the basic principles of gender mixing (and its opposite, gender segregation) are clear, those of flaunting are opaque. Our most detailed view comes from the cover of a 1980 pamphlet, published in Egypt, entitled *Flaunting and the Danger of Women Joining Men in the Their Workplace* (al-Tabarruj wa Khaṭar Mushāraḳat al-Mar’a li’l-Rajul fī Maydān ‘Amalih). The Saudi Salafi scholar ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Bāz (and his illustrator) sought to communicate the danger at hand: the “flaunting woman” was a brunette with flowing hair and a fraying blouse. While luscious locks covered her face, a tear in the fabric across her neckline, alongside a bottle and glass of wine, and a pile of cards, confirmed her moral depravity. Although Ibn Bāz would have liked for his readers to believe that his use of this category flowed directly and unequivocally from the Quran and Sunna, the story is significantly more complicated. How did Salafis come to adopt this particular conception of flaunting, why did they turn to gender segregation to prevent it, and how did this move constitute a rupture with a longer history of Islamic interpretation and practice?

Setting the Stage

Salafi debates over mapping public space in 1970s Egypt emerged out of the Islamic legal tradition even as they both contributed to and reflected a transformation of Islamic law in the twentieth century. Salafi jurists under Sadat certainly had a body of scholarship on which to draw: previous jurists had sought to minimize the danger of illicit sexual contact and temptation (*fitna*) that might yield social disorder by laying out clear rules of modesty and gender segregation. Yet, prior to the second half of the twentieth century, gender seg-

16 Laura Bier defines State Feminism “not just as a policy or series of policies, but as a constellation of normalizing discourses, practices, legal measures, and state-building programs aimed at making women into modern political subjects.” Crucially, this project positioned women as a central actor and object. See Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser’s Egypt* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2011), 7.

regation was a marginal legal question, with the exception of ritual spaces in which this division was observed.

Even in the abstract, jurists did not articulate a comprehensive vision of gender-segregation. Instead, their focus was on controlling particular modes of interaction (particularly illicit sexual relations) between men and women, rather than on controlling the public space as a male domain.¹⁷ Within the legal literature, the subject of a woman's pudendum (*'awra*) was traditionally addressed in either the section on prayer (*al-ṣalāt*) or ritual purity (*al-ṭahāra*).¹⁸ Indeed, Sunni jurists, though they discussed illicit sexual relations at length,¹⁹ did not seek to restrict women's access to public space more generally. Similarly, the eponym of Wahhabism, Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1206/1791), wrote little about this question: enjoining good and forbidding evil, the broader imperative under which the question of preventing gender mixing would have fallen, was a marginal element of this leader's quest to purify Arabia in the 18th century.²⁰

This is not to suggest, however, that jurists *accepted* gender mixing. Egyptian scholars often feared popular preachers and storytellers (*quṣṣāṣ*) because their audiences were rarely gender-segregated.²¹ Similarly, the Maliki Cairene jurist Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336–7) sought to restrict the circulation of Muslim women in public, particularly in settings in which they were likely to mix with unrelated men.²² Notwithstanding these key exceptions, these jurists were not focused on women's presence in public.

The growing legal focus on modesty in the regulation of public morality arose in the late nineteenth century alongside a broader shift in the social role of Islamic law. Formerly a tool of the scholars in explicating God's intentions,

17 Judith Tucker, *Women, Family and Gender in Islamic Law* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2008), 175–99.

18 See Abou el Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name*, 233 and Gauvain, *Salafi Ritual Purity*, 189.

19 For example, see Elyse Semerdjian, *Off the Straight Path: Illicit Sex, Law, and Community in Ottoman Aleppo* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008). Also see Abdel-Karim Rafeq, "Public Morality in 18th Century Damascus," *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 55–56 (1990), 180–96.

20 See Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 168–9.

21 Jonathan Berkey, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 31.

22 Huda Lutfi, "Manners and Customs of Fourteenth-Century Cairene Women: Female Anarchy versus Male Shar'i Order in Muslim Prescriptive Treatises," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, ed. Nikki Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 99–121.

law also became a site for the contestation of identity. Legal and political changes – particularly the introduction of European legal codes to Egypt in the second half of the 19th century and the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 – produced a situation in which law became a bulwark against the erosion of Muslim particularism.²³ Though law could not be enforced, it could be utilized in defining the boundaries, internal and external, of the Islamic community.

In this setting, political elites negotiated communal boundaries through debates over the presence of women in public. Though female seclusion had been a regular practice within middle and upper class urban households in late 19th-early 20th century Egypt, early 20th century activists such as Qāsim Amīn and Huda al-Sha'rāwī drew on an Islamic modernist approach to argue that women, faces uncovered, were allowed take part in Egyptian public space. In parallel, al-Azhar's Fatwa Council declared in 1937 that the Ḥanafī School did not consider veiling of any sort to be obligatory.²⁴ In the face of this changing religious landscape, women acquired an increasingly prominent public role.²⁵

Notwithstanding both the increasing centrality of Islamic law to religious identity and the expansion of women's public presence, Egyptian Salafi scholars did not initially present a comprehensive blueprint for the gendering of public space. The peripheral status of this question in the early twentieth century is illustrated by the main work of Jam'īyya Shar'īyya founder Muḥammad Khaṭṭāb al-Subkī (d. 1933), *al-Dīn al-Khālīṣ: Irshād al-Khalq Ilā Dīn al-Ḥaqq* (The Pure Religion: Guiding People to the Religion of Truth). On the one hand, al-Subkī was no great proponent of female presence in public: in the section on alms (*al-zakāt*), he argued that Q 33:33 (“And abide in your houses and do not flaunt (*lā tabarrajna*) yourselves as [was] the flaunting of the former times of ignorance ...”) indicates that women should remain in their homes.²⁶

23 Muhammd Qasim Zaman has noted how Islamic law served as a boundary for communal identity in colonial India. See Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 22–32.

24 Tucker, *Women, Family and Gender in Islamic Law*, 201–2.

25 On the shift in textual interpretation, see Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam and the Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 92–3. On the broader social dynamics of this period and the popularization of “translucent veils,” see Beth Baron, “Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt: Practical and Symbolic Considerations,” *Middle East Studies*, 25: 3 (1989), 370–76, cited material on 375.

26 Maḥmūd Muḥammad Khaṭṭāb al-Subkī and Amīn Muḥammad Khaṭṭāb, *al-Dīn al-Khālīṣ: Irshād al-Khalq Ilā Dīn al-Ḥaqq*, 9 vols. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2007), 8: 406–7. The edition edited by Amīn Muḥammad Khaṭṭāb appeared in 1960.

On the other hand, al-Subkī showed little concern with the broader implications of female presence in public. This was not because women remained within the home during this period; instead, the early twentieth century was witness to women's participation in mass political demonstrations, most notably in 1919.²⁷ Nonetheless, though his nine-volume legal compendium enumerates the requirements of female modesty in the section on prayer (*bāb al-ṣalāt*),²⁸ he did not deal with flaunting (*al-tabarruj*) directly, even when commenting on Q 33:33. Similarly, al-Subkī's concern with gender mixing (*al-ikhtilāt*) centers on proper gender division during the circumambulation of the Ka'ba during the Ḥājj.²⁹ The question of female education, an elite pursuit in early twentieth century Egypt, is mentioned briefly in the section on funerals (*bāb al-janā'iz*) where al-Subkī reaffirms the right of women to literacy.³⁰ Though al-Subkī certainly did not support women circulating freely in public, *regulating* women's roles therein was not the relevant question at this time.

It was only during the 1950s and 1960s that Salafi thinkers began to devote greater interest to the public position of women as it related to modesty and interaction with men. Al-Albānī's 1951 book, *Ḥijāb al-Mar'a al-Muslima fi-l-Kitāb wa'l-Sunna* (The Muslim Woman's Hijab in the Quran and Sunna), laid out the laws that govern female public modesty in an effort to regulate the increasing presence of women within public space. Unlike al-Subkī, al-Albānī was concerned with women's presence outside of ritual contexts. In contrast to those who would subsequently cite his writings, however, he was not particularly concerned with gender mixing and did not attempt to draw a connection between immodest dress and social disorder. Instead, his focus was on the preservation of femininity and a woman's access to Paradise.³¹ Al-Albānī was not alone: former Anṣār al-Sunna President, 'Abd al-Razzāq 'Afifī (d. 1994), dealt at length with questions of female modesty and correct Islamic clothing without mentioning gender mixing.³² Though the focus on sartorial piety evinced by al-Albānī and al-'Afifī points to a greater emphasis on the role of

27 Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender and Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 107–134.

28 al-Subkī and Khaṭṭāb, *al-Dīn al-Khālīṣ*, 2: 77–9 and 3: 229.

29 *Ibid.*, 9: 76.

30 *Ibid.*, 7: 122–7.

31 For example, al-Albānī cites a popular narration stating that “scantly clad women” (*nisā' kāsīyāt 'arīyāt*) will not enter Paradise. See Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Ḥijāb al-Mar'a al-Muslima fi-l-Kitāb wa'l-Sunna* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1374 H), 34.

32 Muḥammad 'Īd al-'Abbāsī (ed.), *Fatāwā wa Rasā'il Samāḥat al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Razzāq al-'Afifī* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Faḍīla li'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzī', 1997), 217–8.

women in public space, it stopped well short of transforming female modesty into a collective social concern.

Indeed, many Salafi scholars paid little attention to the question of female modesty, even within these limited grounds. In his 1952 book *Da'wat al-Ḥaqq* (The Call of Truth), former Anṣār al-Sunna President, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Wakīl (d. 1971), focused on monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and the challenges of Sufism and grave visitation.³³ Abū al-Wafā' Muḥammad al-Darwīsh (d. 1963), who founded Anṣār al-Sunna's branch in the Upper Egyptian city of Sohag, echoed these concerns and silences in *Ṣayḥat al-Ḥaqq* (The Shout of Truth).³⁴ Female modesty, even narrowly defined, remained a secondary project for many Egyptian Salafi scholars.

The shift from secondary to central project and from individual legal question to social imperative, however, becomes evident in a 1960 edition of Muḥammad Khaṭṭāb al-Subkī's book, *al-Dīn al-Khālīṣ*, edited by his son, Amīn Muḥammad Khaṭṭāb (d. 1968). The younger Khaṭṭāb included a four-page footnote expanding on his father's support for female education, specifically within gender-segregated educational institutions (such as single-sex primary schools) or in fields such as medicine that require female practitioners to tend to women. At the same time, however, he rejected the presence of women in government offices or high political positions,³⁵ and described co-educational institutions as an "unlawful innovation" (*bid'a*).³⁶ Indeed, Khaṭṭāb has no doubt that, had the Prophet Muḥammad known the danger of gender mixing, he would have forbidden women from attending prayers at the mosque.³⁷ This expanded footnote showcased an increasing Salafi concern with responding to new sites of female mobility.

While Khaṭṭāb was not alone in these concerns, his companions were not fellow Salafis but rather Muslim Brothers. One key work from the 1960s later cited during the 1970s as a basis for gender segregation was *Fiqh al-Sunna*, a popular legal compendium by a Muslim Brother, al-Sayyid Sābiq (d. 1968), who had begun his life in the Jam'iyya Shar'iyya.³⁸ On the question of female

33 See 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Wakīl, *Da'wat al-Ḥaqq* (Cairo: N.P, 1952).

34 The initial publication date of this book is unclear, though it appears to have been sometime during the 1950s. See Abū al-Wafā' al-Darwīsh, *Ṣayḥat al-Ḥaqq* (Cairo: al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya Far' Ṣūhāj, 1969).

35 al-Subkī and Khaṭṭāb, *al-Dīn al-Khālīṣ*, 7: 125.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 7: 126. For a broader discussion of women's presence within the mosque throughout Islamic history, see Marion H. Katz, *Women in the Mosque: a history of legal thought and social practice* (New York: Columbia UP, 2014).

38 'Abd Allāh 'Uqayl, *Min A'lām al-Da'wa wa'l-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya al-Mu'āshira* (Amman, Jordan: Dār al-Bashīr, 2008), 299.

modesty, Sābiq moved beyond a focus on ritual purity to emphasize the broader social implications of female flaunting, namely the “corruption of morals and destruction of norms of comportment” (*inḥilāl al-akhlāq wa tadmīr al-ādāb*).³⁹ Along similar lines, key Brotherhood thinker al-Bahī al-Khūlī (d. 1977) wrote two books laying out guidelines to preserve female chastity (*al-ʿiffa*) and dignity (*al-karāma*) on public transportation and in educational and professional settings.⁴⁰ The question for these Brothers was not whether their sisters would move outside the home, but how.

Both the Brotherhood focus on public morality and the emergence of nascent Salafi claims to public space were shaped by Nasserist State Feminism, in which women were both objects and agents of development.⁴¹ The centrality of women to Egyptian nationalism was not new: the female body had served as a site of nationalist battles under the British occupation (1882–1923) and the Monarchy (1923–1952). Yet, the body was recruited to new ends under State Feminism. As Laura Bier notes, “[I]t was the unveiled and active presence of women in an outer sphere of progress that marked the Nasserist public sphere as modern, secular, and socialist.”⁴² Conversely, managing this female presence became the new challenge.

The challenge emerged because the entrance of Egyptian women into public life, particularly the work force, aroused male anxieties over professional and domestic authority. The extension of education to females led to a three-fold increase in primary school enrollment,⁴³ while expanded employment of women, particularly as primary and secondary educators and civil servants, challenged men’s economic centrality.⁴⁴ In both instances, this shift was largely urban; the presence of women in “public” workspaces – particularly agricultural fields – was a longstanding economic reality of rural life in Egypt.

These urban anxieties could only be assuaged through veiling. Though State Feminism rejected sartorial veiling as a form of “reactionary traditionalism,” it trumpeted the “veiling of conduct” to relieve the tensions of mixed work-

39 Al-Sayyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunna*, 9 vols. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1973), 2: 213.

40 For the first work, see al-Bahī al-Khūlī, *al-Marʾa Bayna al-Bayt waʾl-Mujtamaʿ* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1953), particularly 11–35. For the second work, see al-Khūlī, *al-Islām wa Qadāyā al-Marʾa al-Muʿāṣira* (Cairo: Dār al-Qalam, 1968), particularly 163–80, 223–45.

41 Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood*, 24–5.

42 Ibid., 62.

43 Bier notes the massive expansion of female education under Nasser: the number of girls studying in primary schools increased from 541,712 in 1952 to 1.4 million in 1969. Ibid., 51.

44 Ibid., 76.

spaces.⁴⁵ This approach to veiling as a “performative boundary”⁴⁶ preceded the public performances of piety that came to characterize the Islamic Revival of the 1970s, yet is tied to them, both spatially and ideologically. As the 1970s arrived, Salafi writers would seek to answer the tripartite challenge of the long-term entrance of women into Egyptian public life, Nasserist State Feminism and, finally, the political challenge of the Muslim Brotherhood, by articulating a gendered vision of public space that moved beyond existing legal precedents. In the process, these Salafi authors inaugurated a shift that would radically alter women’s legal position as public participants.

From Public Modesty to Political Competition

Ni‘mat Şidqī’s 1971 pamphlet, *al-Tabarruj*, inaugurated a decade of Salafi debates over the social implications of women in public. Şidqī, whose writings were read by women and men alike, particularly within Anşār al-Sunna, claimed that Egyptian women were exposing themselves on the beach, in the street and within public institutions. She argued that such female flaunting and male apathy to controlling it was the premier threat to public morality. In this “sea of forbidden pleasures” (*baħr al-ladhdhāt al-muħarrama*),⁴⁷ how could society remain Islamic? If Şidqī and Khattāb agreed that flaunting had produced a social crisis, the question of how to solve this crisis was unclear.

Such debates were relevant because of the new religious opportunities of the Sadat era (1970–1981). For the first time, Salafi men and women could explore what a project of public morality centered on female modesty might look like in practice. This shift in political policy dovetailed with popular outpourings of religiosity, Muslim and Christian alike, following the disappointment of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the euphoria of the early crossing of the Bar Lev line in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.⁴⁸ Salafi elites responded to and sought to define these popular practices.

These initial debates reproduced the prominence of women as a key site of cultural authenticity as envisioned by early twentieth century writers, scholars and laymen alike, even as they incorporated the paradoxical pairing of State Feminism in which the woman’s public role was both dangerous and central. It

45 Ibid., 92.

46 Ibid., 98.

47 Ni‘mat Şidqī, *al-Tabarruj* (Cairo: Dār al-İ‘tişām, 1975), 5–6.

48 For an ethnography of popular religiosity, in this period, see el-Guindi, “Veiling Infitah with Muslim Ethic”.

was in this context that law – or, more accurately, unenforceable legislative prescriptions – reemerged as a key site of Salafi activism. This was not, however, law as it had been envisioned by the al-Azhar Fatwa council, let alone by earlier jurists. Instead, the nascent legal architecture of gender segregation depended not on the state's coercive power, but on the ability of Salafi scholars to persuade their audience through magazines.

The solution offered for the crisis of public morality during the early 1970s was largely one of individual modesty. This can be read both as a continuation of earlier Salafi thought (most prominently that of al-Albānī) and as a reaction to State Feminism, which presented a feminine ideal of modesty *sans* sartorial veiling. Salafi scholars faced not only the challenge of State Feminism but also that of scholars within the state ranks who challenged their position. Most notably, Sheikh Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Baqūrī (d. 1985) argued that the obligation to veil in any form was specific to the Prophet's family (*bayt al-nabī*) and thus was not incumbent on Muslim women more broadly. Indeed, Islam permitted women not only to show their heads and limbs but also to travel independently outside the home.⁴⁹ Yet, if opposition to al-Baqūrī was unanimous among Salafi (and Brotherhood) writers of this period, this was where the consensus ended.

One internal division among Salafis was whether a woman's face should be classified as pudendum (*ʿawra*): al-Albānī⁵⁰ and al-Sayyid Sābiq⁵¹ rejected this claim, the latter citing the former in doing so.⁵² By contrast, Niʿmat Šidqī argued that both the face and the hands fall into this category.⁵³ *Al-Iʿtišām*'s mufti, Aḥmad ʿIsā ʿĀshūr (d. 1990), fell somewhere in between these two positions, arguing that the *niqāb* is situational: if a woman adorns her face and hands for her husband (presumably with makeup) and then wishes to leave the house, she must cover them, since she has rendered these otherwise publicly-permissible body parts a temptation (*fitna*) to other men.⁵⁴ Despite disagreements over the legal status of a woman's face, participants in these debates assumed individual modesty in public to be sufficient.

49 See *Majallat al-Arabi*, Shawwāl 1392, 169 quoted in “al-Baqūrī yusharriʿ fī dīn Allah wa yaqūl: al-ḥijāb khāṣṣ bi-bayt al-nabī,” *al-Iʿtišām* Shawwāl 1394/November 1974, 16–18.

50 al-Albānī, *Ḥijāb al-Marʾa al-Muslima fī al-Kitāb wa'l-Sunna*, 6.

51 Though Sābiq was a longtime member of the Muslim Brotherhood, he also wrote in *al-Tawḥīd*.

52 al-Sayyid Sābiq, “Min Qadāyā al-Mujtamaʿ,” *al-Tawḥīd*, Dhū al-Qaʿda 1396/October 1976, 24.

53 Šidqī, *al-Tabarruj*, 13.

54 Zaynab ʿAwaḍ Allāh Ḥasan, “Kayfa wa Li-man Tatazayyin al-Marʾa al-Muslima,” *al-Iʿtišām*, Rabīʿ al-Thānī-Jumādā al-Ūlā 1400/ March-April 1980, 36.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the question was not *whether* women would be in public but how they would preserve their modesty as they inevitably traversed heterosocial public space. Şidqī, while maintaining a position of stringency on the face veil, assumed that individual piety was sufficient protection for these women from the “corruption” (*fasād*) around them and that female mobility within these bounds represented no broader social threat.⁵⁵ A similar assumption was made in early discussions in *al-I’tiṣām*: a Jumādā al-Thāniyya 1390/August 1970 fatwa from Aḥmad ‘Īsā ‘Āshūr instructs a male reader that it is permissible to marry a woman who works so long as she is employed in a “profession that befits her” (*fī miḥna tunāsibuhā*), covers her body (excluding her face and hands) and is never alone with unrelated men.⁵⁶ The specter of men and women occupying the same professional space was not a central concern.

That individual modesty was sufficient to maintain public morality does not mean that Salafi writers gave free rein to female participation in public institutions and ritual spaces. As explained by Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥamīd (d. 1402/1982), President of the High Judicial Council of Saudi Arabia in the Rabī‘ al-Awwal/March 1976 issue of *al-Tawḥīd*, women are unfit to serve as judges or to lead men in prayer; the issue, in both cases, is that these positions would grant women undeserved authority (*wilāya*) over men.⁵⁷ Within these restrictions, women might traverse public space with the accompaniment of a male relative (*dhū mahram*).⁵⁸ While such strictures did not facilitate female mobility, neither did they cast such mobility as a threat.

What changed during the second half of the 1970s and how was public space redefined? The 1970s certainly witnessed further congestion of public space. Between 1947 and 1976, Egypt’s population had grown from 18.8 million to 36.6 million and this growth was primarily urban: the percentage of the Egyptian population living in cities rose from 33 to 44 percent, and the number of urban inhabitants from 6.2 million to 16.1 million.⁵⁹ The number of students enrolled in higher education grew even more rapidly, increasing from one to four million between 1951 and 1976, of which 30.4 percent were women.⁶⁰ Crucially,

55 Sidqī, *al-Tabarruj*, 13.

56 Aḥmad ‘Īsā ‘Āshūr, “al-Muftī Yujīb,” *al-I’tiṣām*, Jumādā al-Thāniyya 1390/August 1970, 14.

57 “Ma’ Samāḥat al-Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh bin Ḥamīd,” *al-Tawḥīd*, Rabī‘ al-Awwal 1396/March 1976, 13.

58 *Ibid.*, 14.

59 Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *Egypt, Islam and Democracy: Twelve Critical Essays* (Cairo: AUC Press, 1996), 99.

60 Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, *1976 Population and Housing Census* (Cairo: Central Agency for Publication Mobilization and Statistics, 1980), 1: 29.

these shifts occurred without a proportional expansion of infrastructure. In the university setting, the result was overcrowded lecture halls and classrooms that often were filled by several times capacity.⁶¹ On mass transportation, men and women were in increasing proximity to each other, a challenge highlighted by Salafi writers. In an article entitled, “Do Not Oppress Women,” Muḥammad Kamāl al-Fiqqī, noted the social danger of men and women mixing on trains, subways and buses.⁶² As personal space in public decreased, the threat of physical contact increased.

But these shifts were not unique to the 1970s and Salafi calls for the expansion of public modesty beyond individual sartorial practice cannot be explained solely or even primarily by increasingly crowded public transportation or classrooms.⁶³ A much more plausible explanation for the call to don the *niqāb* and to separate men and women is the political competition between Salafis (of both Anṣār al-Sunna and the Jam‘iyya Shar‘iyya) and the Muslim Brotherhood.⁶⁴

As noted, the 1970s did not constitute the beginning of Salafi-Brotherhood intellectual interaction or political competition; rather, ties that had developed in the 1960s expanded over the following decade. Under Nasser (r. 1952–1970), rank and file Brothers and Salafis found themselves in closer contact as mosques served as crucial sites of cross-fertilization. Student activist and later Brotherhood leader ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Abū’l-Futūḥ noted in a recent memoir that he frequently attended mosques affiliated with both the Jam‘iyya Shar‘iyya and Anṣār al-Sunna, in which he also saw key Brotherhood thinkers such as Second General Guide Ḥasan al-Hudaybī and Muḥammad al-Ghazālī.⁶⁵

61 Egyptian universities enrolled approximately four times their capacity, with Arts, Law and Commerce faculties particularly suffering in this regard. See Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, *The Political Economy of Nasserism: A Study in Employment and Income Distribution Policies in Urban Egypt, 1952–72* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 354–55.

62 Muḥammad Kamāl al-Fiqqī, “Lā Tazlum al-Mar’a,” *al-I’tisām*, Rabī‘ al-Thānī 1396/April 1976, 15.

63 This statement must be qualified by the acknowledgment that university expansion in the 1970s occurred disproportionately in provincial (and presumably more conservative) areas of Egypt. See Kirk Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 113.

64 Anṣār al-Sunna’s greater emphasis on this issue is also reflected in its publishing preferences: During the 1969–1981 period, *al-Tawḥīd* included 19 articles that concerned flaunting and gender mixing while *al-I’tisām* published only 11 despite an additional three years of publishing activity.

65 See ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Abū’l-Futūḥ, Husām Tammām, *‘Abd al-Mun‘im Abū’l-Futūḥ: Shāhid ‘ala Tārikh al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya fī Miṣr, 1970–1984* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2012), 35–6.

Neither was intellectual transmission limited to mosque settings: in the 1970s, writers such as ʿĪsā ʿAbduh (d. 1980), Jābir Rizq (d. 1988), ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm ʿUways (d. 2012), ʿAlī Juraysha (d. 2011) and Muṣṭafā Kamāl Waṣṣī (n.d.) straddled the division between Brotherhood and Salafi periodicals by writing in multiple publications; for example, ʿAbduh and Waṣṣī wrote in the Brotherhood's *al-Daʿwa*, as well as in *al-Iʿtiṣām* and *al-Tawḥīd*. This contact had real implications for the Jamʿiyya Sharʿiyya in particular: In 1979, the organization's most prominent preacher, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Muṣṭahīrī (d. 1995), published *This is Our Call* (Hādhihi Daʿwatunā), in which he echoed Brotherhood slogans by declaring that Islam is “religion and state, judiciary and politics, Quran and sword, this life and the world to come.”⁶⁶ While Muslim Brothers had both influenced and been influenced by their Salafi counterparts in the course of mosque-based cross-fertilization, the Brotherhood's reemergence in the mid-1970s, signaled by the return of *al-Daʿwa* to publication, pushed writers in both *al-Tawḥīd* and *al-Iʿtiṣām* to redefine their vision of public morality so as to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

As Salafis and Brothers sought to lay claim to the mantle of religious authority, they faced a regime that claimed to be pursuing top-down Islamization⁶⁷ while simultaneously pursuing an open-door economic policy that occasioned despair over the moral decline of Egyptian society in the face of foreign consumer culture.⁶⁸ The Brotherhood's advantage as a popular force lay in its religiously-based political program; through the reformation of state and society, everyday life could be rendered “Islamic.” By contrast, quietist Salafis (the leading constituency within Anṣār al-Sunna) did not have a political program, yet had to compete with an organization that promised not merely ethical and ritual rectitude but also sociopolitical change. A growing Islamist faction within the Jamʿiyya Sharʿiyya found itself doubly torn: because the Muslim Brotherhood was the unquestioned premier claimant to Islamism, a successful Salafi claim to Islamism would necessitate a self-differentiation that did not burn bridges with the Salafi commitment to ritual and theological precision. In addition, neither Salafis nor Brothers wanted to challenge Sadat directly at this

66 ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Muṣṭahīrī, *Hādhihi Daʿwatunā* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Iʿtiṣām, 1979), 309.

67 The 1971 Constitution defined the Islamic Shariʿa as a “principle source of legislation” and a 1980 amendment called it “*the* principle source” (italics added). See Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State* (New York: Brill, 1997), 199–200.

68 See Relli Shechter, “From effendi to infitahi? Consumerism and Its Malcontents in the Emergence of Egyptian Market Society,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36/1 (2009), 21–35.

time; their interests were best served through ostensibly “apolitical” claims and practice.

Public morality represented an opportunity for safe yet powerful protest, promising a public reward of authenticity with minimal threat of repression. The basic difficulty for Salafis, however, was that their position on flaunting (*tabarruj*) and unveiled dress (*sufūr*) did not distinguish them from the Brotherhood. Rather, the Brotherhood’s position on female sartorial piety – that a woman’s pudendum (*ʿawra*) does not include her face and hands⁶⁹ – would have placed them comfortably within the Salafi mainstream. Though individual Salafi thinkers such as Niʿmat Šidqī may have argued that the face and hands are *ʿawra* and Aḥmad ʿĪsā ʿĀshūr defined the status of these two body parts contextually, there was little difference between al-Albānī’s position and that of the Brotherhood. The price of public piety was about to rise as Salafis and Brothers alike sought to lay sole claim to this key marker of authenticity over the second half of the 1970s.⁷⁰

Law and Public Order

How did Salafi writers seek to compete with the Brotherhood’s claim to protect female modesty and on what basis did they justify this shift? As noted, these claims could not emerge out of a set body of precedent. These writers also had to respond to socio-educational inertia: by 1976, there were roughly 1.4 million female university students. Education was both a right bequeathed by the Nasserist social contract and an increasingly broad reality under Sadat.⁷¹ For near-

69 “Bāb al-Iftāʾ,” *al-Daʿwa*, Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1397/February 1977, 49.

70 Gregory Starrett has described this process of upwards bidding with reference to state/Islamist battles. See Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: education, politics and religious transformation* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 198), 209. Similarly, in the specific context of media, Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori observe that the proliferation of participants in religious debate can lead to the “intensification of dispute and contest...[in which] the ‘price’ of Islamism may be pushed upwards.” See Eickelman and Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 131.

71 Higher education expanded even more rapidly under Sadat than under Nasser; between the 1968–1969 and 1975–1976 academic years, the number of university students increased from 142,875 to over 400,000, reaching 563,750 by the 1980–1981 academic year. A qualification, however, is in order: this expansion did not lead to the level of overcrowding suggested by these figures as these students were also absorbed into seven new universities across Egypt. See Haggai Erlich, *Students and University in 20th Century Egyptian Politics* (London: Cass, 1989), 200.

ly two decades, Anṣār al-Sunna and the Jamʿiyya Sharʿiyya had spread their call to return to Islam's foundational sources despite political restrictions, whether in mosques or in print. By contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood had no comparative opportunity: its leadership had been jailed, its members had been arrested en masse, and its magazine was shut down beginning in 1954.⁷² With the Brotherhood's return to the national stage and access to independent mosques, Salafis faced a new challenge.

As Salafis turned to questions of public morality through gender segregation, internal divisions emerged. The issue at hand was not a disagreement over the fundamental question of women's presence in public; rather, it was the extent to which gender segregation could be transformed into a discrete and legally binding project: While Anṣār al-Sunna spearheaded an aggressive legalistic campaign to return women to the home, leading figures within the Jamʿiyya Sharʿiyya largely limited themselves to non-binding recommendations.⁷³

For reasons both textual and practical, none of the writers who participated in this debate argued against the right of women to education. On the textual front, several hadith reports relating to female education were widely accepted by Salafis.⁷⁴ Just as importantly, the Salafi vision of motherhood necessitated that mothers be educated so that they could successfully raise their children, both scientifically and morally. As with State Feminism, female education lay at the core of the Salafi initiative even as female presence in public engendered anxiety.

72 See Barbara Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology* (New York: Taylor and Francis E-Library, 2007), 36–48.

73 One can only speculate as to the basis of this strategy. One possibility lays in the increasing ties between the JS and the Muslim Brotherhood; during the Nasser period, the JS had sheltered Brotherhood members and the 1970s witnessed increased contacts and, allegedly, ideological sympathy between the two groups. For this claim, see Ṣiyām, “al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya wa'l-Jamʿiyyāt al-Ahliyya fi Miṣr,” 130–1. It is thus possible that the JS elites held off from challenging the Brotherhood to the extent that they might have. The continuation of ideological competition and clashes between the Brotherhood and JS, however, also suggest that, *pace* Ṣiyām, the former had not infiltrated the latter. For an example of one such conflict over the Brotherhood's approach to Islamic law, see Muḥammad Fahmī Abū Zayd, “Itāb ilā al-Akh ʿUmar al-Tilmisānī: a-Daʿwā al-Jāhiliyya ʿalā Ṣafaḥāt al-Daʿwa,” *al-Iʿtishām*, November 1976/Dhū al-Qaʿda 1396, 20. For the Brotherhood's response, see Najīb ʿImāra, “Umūr Yajib an Tattaḍīḥ,” *al-Daʿwa*, August 1976/Shāʿbān 1396, 34.

74 For example, see ʿIsā ʿAbduḥ, “Tashghīl al-Nisāʾ,” *al-Iʿtishām*, Ramaḍān 1396/September 1976, 12.

Instead of arguing against women's education, writers in *al-I'tiṣām* sought a distance-learning model for women. In an article published in Jumādā al-Ūlā 1397/May 1977, 'Īsā 'Abduh proposed a "home university" (*jāmi'at al-dār*), facilitated by television and radio broadcasts, through which a woman could reach a "scientific level" while remaining in her "religious stronghold."⁷⁵ These discussions, however, were short-lived and nothing came of this program. Similarly, in the Ramaḍān 1397/August 1977 issue of *al-Tawhīd*, Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl (sic), while upholding the right of women to university education, argued that such education should occur in a private setting in order to avoid gender mixing.⁷⁶ The question of education was merely the beginning of a Salafi shift towards (re)mapping public space.

Though Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl had echoed 'Īsā 'Abduh's proposal for distance learning, he and his colleagues within Anṣār al-Sunna also trained their eyes on working women as they sought to distinguish themselves from the Muslim Brotherhood. In a three-part series in the summer of 1977, entitled "The Necessity of Women Returning to the Home," Hilāl argued against female employment on social, economic and moral grounds. He began with a social argument: women are needed in the home to educate their children, thus protecting not only the welfare of the family, but also, more broadly, the moral and intellectual health of society.⁷⁷ In August 1977, Hilāl followed up with an economic critique, arguing that female employment in the bureaucracy depresses male wages, thus making it necessary for both men and women to work. He proposed that women withdraw from state employment and, in exchange, the state would raise men's salaries by 50 to 60 percent.⁷⁸

The issue was not merely social or economic but also moral. As Hilāl argued in September 1977, female employment destabilizes gender relations not only by facilitating illicit sexual contact, but also by placing women under the authority of men other than their husbands.⁷⁹ This deplorable state of affairs was compounded by the challenge of transportation: Hilāl expressed his concern for "the woman who toils in offices and on mass transit" (*al-mar'a al-kādiḥa fi-*

75 'Īsā 'Abduh, "Unsha'u Jāmi'at al-Dār," *al-I'tiṣām*, Jumādā al-Ūlā 1397/May 1977, 17.

76 Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl, "Ḍarūrat 'Awdat al-Mar'a Ilā al-Bayt," *al-Tawhīd*, Ramaḍān 1397/August 1977, 144–5.

77 Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl, "Ḍarūrat 'Awdat al-Mar'a Ilā al-Bayt," *al-Tawhīd*, Sha'bān 1397/July 1977, 87.

78 Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl, "Ḍarūrat 'Awdat al-Mar'a Ilā al-Bayt," *al-Tawhīd*, Ramaḍān 1397/August 1977, 144–5.

79 Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl, "Ḍarūrat 'Awdat al-Mar'a Ilā al-Bayt," *al-Tawhīd*, Shawwāl 1397/September 1977, 40–1.

l-dawāwīn wa'l- muwāṣalāt).⁸⁰ Though these arguments were an extension of previous concerns relating to male/female contact and male social authority, the anxiety had expanded: gender mixing threatened not only husbands but also the broader gendered socioeconomic and moral order, both inside and outside the home.

The arguments made by Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl in *al-Tawḥīd* were in large part echoed by ʿĪsā ʿAbduh in *al-Iʿtiṣām*. As in the case of distance learning, however, ʿAbduh offered a recommendation rather than a legal prescription. Specifically, ʿAbduh argued that the employment of women to make ends meet within the home harmed both men and women insofar as it limited the ability of women to fully perform their domestic roles while also depressing men's wages.⁸¹ The contrast between Anṣār al-Sunna and the Jamʿiyya Sharʿiyya was even starker when it came to the latter's female participants. Most notably, Zaynab ʿAwaḍ Allāh Ḥasan, who edited the magazine's "Muslim Woman's Corner" (Rukn al-Marʿa al-Muslima), argued that female employment as teachers and nurses "brought only good to society" (*mā yaʿūd ʿalā al-mujtamaʿ illā bi'l-khayr*). But this was hardly a *carte blanche* justification for female employment: Ḥasan conditioned such work on limited domestic responsibilities (whether due to not having children or having relatives who could help care for these children) and adherence to "limits" (*ḥudūd*) of modesty while in public.⁸² In the latter respect, Ḥasan upheld Ṣidqī's legacy, yet she was a minority voice, in both gender and substance. Notwithstanding this vulnerability, Ḥasan had one advantage: many women who were already employed derived both personal satisfaction and a measure of economic independence from their activities.⁸³

The case for segregation soon moved forward, propelled not only by Egyptian Salafis but also by a Saudi scholar, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Bāz, writing in *al-Tawḥīd*. Perched at the top of the Saudi Arabian religious hierarchy, far from the economic challenges of working-class Egyptians, Ibn Bāz showed little sensitivity to the practical obstacles that his proposal might face. He likely was sensitive, however, to the religious tensions of his home country: the Saudi religious establishment and the royal family had struck a deal in the early 1960s to provide

80 Ibid., 42.

81 ʿĪsā ʿAbduh, "Tashghil al-Nisāʾ," *al-Iʿtiṣām*, Ramaḍān 1396/September 1976, 12.

82 Zaynab ʿAwaḍ Allāh Ḥasan, "Ḥukm al-Islām fi ʿAmal al-Marʿa wa-Taʿlīm al-Fatāʾ," *al-Iʿtiṣām*, Shaʿbān 1400/June 1980, 40.

83 Though not a sufficient explanation, economic motives can play a role in the public piety of working and middle-class women. See Arlene Macleod, *Accommodating Protest: working women, the new veiling, and change in Cairo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 4–5.

a religious sanction for new technologies (radio and television) and female education in exchange for greater say regarding female sartorial practice and gender relations.⁸⁴ Ibn Bāz would soon push this bargain further in a distinctly new context.⁸⁵

As Ibn Bāz advocated domestic confinement, he faced interpretative challenges, foremost among which was the absence of clear proof texts in the Quran and Sunna that forbid gender mixing in public space. What was needed was an interpretative move that elevated the principle of absolute gender segregation (through domestic confinement) above the claim that modest comportment and dress are a sufficient protection against illicit contact and broader social disorder.⁸⁶ Instead of merely stressing the important role that the Muslim woman play domestically, Ibn Bāz insisted, based on Q 33:33 (*wa-qarna fi buyūtikuna*), that the Quran demands that women remain at home (*al-qarār fi-baytihā*). Ibn Bāz emphasized that this injunction was inseparable from the warning to avoid flaunting.⁸⁷ Based on this interpretation, the issue at

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- 84 See Nabil Mouline (auth.), Muḥammad al-Ḥājj Sālim (trans.), *‘Ulamā’ al-Islām: tārīkh wa bunyat al-mu’assasa al-dīniyya fi al-Sa’ūdiyya bayna al-qarnayn al-thāmin ‘ashar wa’-hādī wa’-‘ishrīn* (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Shabka al-‘Arabiyya li’-abḥāth wa’-nashr, 2011), 320–1.
- 85 Though Saudi influence on Egypt—whether specifically on Salafi groups or more generally, on public religiosity—is a common trope, this is not an instance of wholesale “Saudification” of an “Egyptian” debate. Instead, it is a case of a prominent Saudi participating in a debate that was centered in Egypt and largely shaped by Egyptian scholars. Indeed, in this instance, Ibn Bāz may have been exploring the implications of gender segregation in Egypt prior to arguing for this policy within his home country: I was able to locate multiple fatwas that responded to this question in Saudi Arabia during the 1980s and 1990s, but I found no evidence of earlier intervention on this question in Saudi Arabia.
- 86 Curiously, Ibn Bāz did not adopt an approach, later used by fellow Saudi scholars, which banned gender mixing in public space based on the prohibition of gender mixing during prayer. For a contemporary Saudi example, see Sulīmān bin Šāliḥ al-Jarbū’, *al-Ikhtilāf bayna al-Jinsayn Ḥaqā’iq wa Tanbihāt* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Qaṣṣām, 2009/1429), 13. Instead, his argument pivots on the legal principle of “blocking the means” (*sadd al-dharī‘āt*), and states: “Mixing is one of the greatest means of fornication (*zinā*), which destroys a society’s values and morals (*qiyamah wa-akhlāqahu*). See Ibn Bāz, “Khaṭar Mushāraḳat al-Mar’a li’l-Rajul fi Maydān ‘Amalih,” *al-Tawḥīd*, Ramadan 1399/July 1979, 14.
- 87 Al-Subkī, by contrast, had not even focused on this verse regarding the question of flaunting. In a changed social context, Ni‘mat Šidqī chose to cite an alternative verse less amenable to the connection between a (newly defined) flaunting and domestic confinement. Instead of Q 33:33, Šidqī cited Q 24:30–1 as the Quranic basis for the prohibition of sartorial and behavioral flaunting. The verse reads: “Tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion] of their head

hand was not merely men and women being alone in an office environment or women dressing immodestly in public. Rather, in order to eliminate the possibility of gender mixing in *any* context, women must remain at home.

Perhaps sensing the limited socio-religious appeal of this argument – after all, lower- and middle-class women in Egypt had long traveled outside the home, whether to work in the fields or to purchase food in cities – Ibn Bāz sought to document the harm of gender mixing. As “one of the greatest paths to illicit sexual relations” (*min aʿẓam wasā'il al-zinā*), it would destroy a society and its ethical values.⁸⁸ This argument, however, was insufficient in Egypt, where women's public presence had increased steadily for half a century due to expanded education and employment. Consequently, this Saudi scholar sought to bolster his case by providing a novel interpretation of the injunction against flaunting in Q 33:33. For Ibn Bāz, “do not flaunt” (*lā tabarrajna*) referred *not* to female dress and comportment (as assumed by all the other authors who participated in this debate) but to gender mixing for reasons of work, commerce or travel.⁸⁹ This vision of domestic confinement, however, had clear limitations.

Ibn Bāz's challenge was not merely the precedent of women working; it was also that these prescriptions for female confinement were economically elitist. As Ibn Bāz, Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl and ʿĪsā ʿAbduh turned against female employment in the mid-1970s, they ignored the relationship between class and modesty. On the one hand, they sympathized with women who traversed the increasingly long distance between home and work by train, trolley or bus. They also called for women to be removed from educational or professional environments that might threaten their chastity or modesty; this was an effort, all suggested, to protect the Muslim woman in the face of manifold threats. Yet, some of the social developments that these writers found so odious – especially gender mixing on public transportation – were hardly an issue for those women who could afford private transportation. Other topics of criticism – particularly female employment – were again no issue for women of means, yet had concrete consequences for women (and families) outside the Egyptian

covers over their chests and not expose their adornment and let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment ...” See Şidqī, *al-Tabarruj*, 13–7. While this verse explicitly assumes the presence of women in public—and thus was of limited use for Ibn Bāz's argument for domestic confinement—Q 33:33 provides more fruitful grounds for arguing for the connection between women remaining domestically-grounded and the injunction against flaunting.

88 ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Bāz, “Khaṭar Mushārahāt al-Marʾa li'l-Rajul fi Maydān ʿAmalih,” *al-Tawhīd*, Ramaḍān 1398/August 1978, 14.

89 *Ibid.*, 15.

elite. Finally, the vision of a domestically confined woman – one who not only does not work but also does not leave the house for regular errands – was only possible with the help of domestic servants.

Ibn Bāz's claim to redefine flaunting was also undercut by Muslim Brotherhood efforts to provide practical solutions for women's presence in public space over the course of 1978, in cooperation with the Islamic Student Movement, al-Jamā'a al-Islāmiyya (JI). Together, these organizations had secured gender-segregated seating on a set number of train routes, particularly between Cairo and Alexandria, beginning in February 1978, thus protecting female students and workers of limited income who relied on public transportation.⁹⁰ Similar challenges related to gender mixing awaited university students inside and outside the classroom, and the Brotherhood, again in cooperation with the JI, negotiated with the administration of Cairo University to provide separate spaces for men and women for university events hosted in the university's outdoor stadium.⁹¹ The goal of separation was also extended to the classroom: *al-Da'wa* boasted that the Faculty of Agriculture at Cairo University now provided separate seating in lecture halls for male and female students and, in the near future, the lectures themselves would be separate.⁹² These socio-economic realities and political challenges necessitated a Salafi response.

To Retreat or Press Forward?

The call for Salafi women to return to the home clashed with local realities and with the competing programmatic appeal of the Muslim Brotherhood to provide gender segregation in public spaces. In turn, the tensions that arose from this competition played out not merely in the lives of individual women but also on the pages of *al-Tawhīd*. A prominent Egyptian Salafi voice on this topic, Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl, led this shift away from domestic confinement. Following a three-part series of articles in late 1978 on the necessity of women

90 "Tajriba Yajib an Tu'ummam," *al-Da'wa*, Jumādā al-Thāniyya 1398/ May 1978, 44–6. It is unclear whether this program was put into broad practice on public transportation or whether it was another proposal that led to the creation of women-only sections on trains and subway cars in Egypt. Outside of a women-only subway car, however, gender segregation remained a minority trend and was never instituted on public buses.

91 "Faṣl al-Ṭullāb 'an al-Ṭālibāt fī Tijārat al-Qāhira," *al-Da'wa*, Jumādā al-Thāniyya 1401/April 1981, 60.

92 "Akhbār al-Shabāb wa'l-Jāmi'āt," *al-Da'wa*, Sha'bān 1397/June 1977, 45–6. It does not appear that classroom gender segregation was implemented prior to the end of Sadat's rule.

returning to domestic space, Hilāl took a more nuanced position in Ṣafar 1399/December 1979, qualifying his previous opposition to female education outside the home as a reaction to public pressures on women to dress “unveiled and in immodest dress” (*sāfira ghayr muḥtashima*). If women were free to dress modestly, their public presence would not threaten social order.⁹³ Whereas Hilāl sought to return to an emphasis on sartorial modesty even as he moved away from the subsequent extension of this claim to female domestic seclusion, Ibn Bāz’s position became stricter. In his 1980 work, *Flaunting and the Danger of Women Joining Men in the Their Workplace*, Ibn Bāz reiterated his opposition to all forms of female employment, albeit without directly addressing the question of female education.⁹⁴

Why did an elite-centric vision of social restriction fail to catch on? There are two possibilities, one elite-centered, the other society-centered. As Hilāl noted, Islam places a high value on knowledge (*‘ilm*) for both men and women, as it distinguishes Muslims from their pre-Islamic predecessors.⁹⁵ Indeed, such knowledge and education represent Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*), as contrasted with Falsehood (*al-Bāṭil*), as manifested in unveiled dress and self-display (*al-sufūr wa’l-tabarruj*).⁹⁶ Female education had exposed a contradiction in the Salafi vision of public morality: Women had to be educated, both to fulfill their domestic role and to realize their textually-grounded right to education. At the same time, however, changing definitions of public space – and the technological challenges of a distance-learning, beginning in 1977 – had made female presence in public not merely a luxury but a necessity.

Female education was not just an elite issue and women were in no hurry to give up their mobility outside the home. From his position as president of the Administration for Scientific Studies, Ifta, Da’wa and Guidance within the Saudi Arabian religious hierarchy, Ibn Bāz probably did not appreciate the grass-roots realities of 1970s Egypt. Similarly, ‘Abduh, who was born in Egypt but was by this time a resident of Saudi Arabia, was more concerned with elite level questions of Islamic finance.⁹⁷ By contrast, Hilāl, an active member of Anṣār

93 Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Hilāl, “al-Ta’līm wa’l-Tabarruj,” *al-Tawḥīd*, Ṣafar 1399/December 1978, 4.

94 See ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Baz, *al-Tabarruj wa Khaṭar Mushārah al-Mar’a li’l-Rajul fī Maydān ‘Amalīh* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Salām, 1980). This loophole, however, was short-lived: By 1992, Bin Bāz rejected mixed-gendered educational environments and insisted that women remain in the home for fear of *Fitna*. See ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Bāz, *al-Tabarruj wa Khaṭaruh* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1992), 43–5.

95 Hilāl, “al-Ta’līm wa’l-Tabarruj,” 2.

96 *Ibid.*, 5.

97 ‘Abd Allah al-‘Uqayl, *Min A’lām al-Da’wa wa’l-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya al-Mu’āsira*, (Amman, Jordan: Dār al-Bashīr, 2008), 1: 679.

al-Sunna and a Professor of Islamic Studies at Ayn Shams University's Women's Faculty (*Kulliyat al-Banāt*),⁹⁸ likely witnessed the on-the-ground challenges faced by pious women from the Anṣār al-Sunna's network of mosques and charitable associations, on the one hand, and activism of the JI, on the other.⁹⁹

Indeed, the prominence of women within the JI's activities underscores the ways in which Salafi women within this group regarded the performance of female modesty as not only a right but also a distinct contribution. As in State Feminism, women were both objects and agents of transformation; what was non-negotiable was their presence in public space. Within the JI, some women held Muslim Brotherhood sympathies while others supported a wide array of Salafi organizations. All had taken on pious garb – and in the case of many Salafi women, a stringent interpretation of modesty that included covering the face with the *niqāb* – and used sartorial choice to challenge the claims of the Egyptian state to define the feminine body and public life. In light of previous efforts by male Salafi scholars to restrict women's appearance in public, however, it appears that it was not only the Sadat regime that these women challenged but also Salafi elites.

It is perhaps for this reason that, by the early 1980s, the discussion of female modesty came to resemble Niʿmat Ṣidqī's original call to Egyptian women to abide by Salafi gender norms, albeit with a greater emphasis on avoiding gender mixing. In a November 1981 article, *al-Tawḥīd*'s Ṭahā Nāṣir returned to discussing requirements of women's clothing, almost as though female seclusion was off the agenda.¹⁰⁰ A crucial change, however, had occurred: gender segregation *within* public space was now broadly acknowledged as a key means of facilitating public morality. At the same time, though, exceptions abounded. Most notably, *al-Itiṣām* frequently justified particular instances of gender mixing under the principle of the “Common Good” (*al-maṣlaḥa al-ʿamma*): as longtime mufti Aḥmad ʿIsā ʿAshūr explained, this principle made licit an act that otherwise would be forbidden in order to safeguard the interests of Mus-

98 See the introductory note in a book by Muḥammad Amān al-Jāmī about the history of Islam in Africa. Muḥammad Amān al-Jāmī, *al-Islām fi Ifrīqiya ʿAbr al-Tārīkh. Shāmela*. Shamela, n.d. Web. 31 Dec. 2013 <<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-8734/page-9>>.

99 The precise number of such mosques is unknown, but Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan confirms the centrality of mosques and charitable societies to the activities of Anṣār al-Sunna. See Ḥaṣan, *al-Salafīyyūn*, 9. As of 1988, Anṣār al-Sunna had 120 branches across Egypt with 1500 affiliated mosques. See Shukr, *al-Jamʿīyyāt al-Ahliyya al-Islāmiyya fi Miṣr*, 129.

100 Ṭahā Nāṣir, “al-Tahdhīr min Fitnat al-Azwāj waʿl-Awḷād,” *al-Tawḥīd*, Ṣafar 1402/November 1981, 5.

lims (*maṣāliḥ al-muslimīn*).¹⁰¹ Accordingly, it was licit for a man to look at an unrelated woman in “situations of necessity or pressing need” (*fi ḥālāt al-darūra aw al-ḥāja al-muliḥḥa*), such as medical treatment, court testimony or financial transactions.¹⁰² Similarly, another mufti in *al-I’tiṣām*, Aḥmad Najīb al-Mutīī, cited the same principle to justify a male doctor looking at a female’s body.¹⁰³ The magazine did not counsel a return to the home, even in cases of sexual harassment: the Rabīʿ al-Awwal/February 1980 issue of *al-I’tiṣām* featured the story of a female student who had turned to Islamic dress – whether she wore the *ḥijāb* or *niqāb* is not specified – to escape sexual harassment and found that “she felt comfort and calm in the university and in the street and on public transportation ... people began to respect her and treat her politely.”¹⁰⁴ Women were in public to stay and, if Salafi elites were to successfully compete with the Muslim Brotherhood for a popular audience, they had to adapt to this reality.

Conclusion

The commitment of leading Salafis in Egypt to gender segregation in public emerged in the 1970s due to the long-term entrance of women into public life, intended and unintended cross-fertilization with both Nasserist State Feminism and the Muslim Brotherhood and, finally, political competition between Salafis, quietist and Islamist alike, and the Muslim Brotherhood during the second half of the 1970s. Salafi notions of gender relations, far from representing the natural extension of a particular textual approach or the continuation of previous practices of piety and gender segregation, emerged out of the efforts of elites, particularly members of Anṣār al-Sunna, to compete with the Muslim Brotherhood for the mantle of religious authenticity and public piety in Sadat’s Egypt. This shift was no flash in the pan; instead, the Salafi project of public gender segregation continues to distinguish it from the Muslim Brotherhood’s support for female candidates and grassroots female activism. By casting light on the political, social and economic factors that both stimulated and chal-

101 On the ambiguities arising out of usage of necessity (*darūra*) and the common good (*maṣlaḥa* or *al-maṣlaḥa al-ʿamma*), see Ahmad Dallal, “Appropriating the Past: Twentieth-Century Reconstructions of Pre-Modern Islamic Thought,” *Islamic Law and Society*, 7/1 (2000), 325–58.

102 “Raʿī al-Dīn,” *al-I’tiṣām*, Ramaḍān 1398/September 1978, 42.

103 “Suʿāl al-Shahr,” *al-I’tiṣām*, Jumādā al-Ūlā wa Jumādā al-Thāniyya 1401/April-May 1981, 35.

104 Muhammad Shuʿayr, “Maḥmūd Jadīd li-Ayat al-Ḥijāb,” *al-I’tiṣām*, Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1400/February 1980, 28.

lenged Salafi claims to define female modesty and gender relations during the 1970s, I have shown that context played as important a role as text (or textual method) in this key characteristic of contemporary Salafism. At the intersection of sacred texts, everyday life and political competition, innovation cloaked itself in tradition.

Equally important, the negotiation of textual interpretation and social change in Salafi periodicals suggests new pathways for the study of contemporary Salafism through mass media. In contrast to previous studies that analyze legal continuity and change in fatwa collections that have been edited to provide a clear guide to religious practice, this article shows how periodicals provide a dynamic lens through which to observe both intra-elite negotiation and the performance of everything from prayer to the cultivation of a Salafi beard. Indeed, these texts are the tip of the iceberg: contemporary Salafi scholars use satellite television channels and websites to communicate with a transnational community of followers and to compete for influence with their fellow scholars, Salafi and non-Salafi. As with Salafi periodicals and pamphlets, these sources provide new opportunities to observe the intellectual and social ferment of contemporary Salafism as the intersection of text, scholarly competition and local practice.