Article

Things Fall Apart: The Disintegration of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood

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Abstract: The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood has been accepted by the Hashemite monarchy throughout most of its seventy-five-year history. Today, however, it is illegal and a new, more pro-regime version exists, as well as several other groups that have their roots in the organization. Based on a close reading of the Arabic writings by Salim al-Falahat, a former leader and current critic of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as Jordanian media reports, this article seeks to explain how this falling apart of the organization happened. Many studies focus on fissures within the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. I argue that while these are important to explain the underlying divisions underpinning this breakdown, it was actually the reformist ZamZam initiative launched in 2012 and the organization's handling of its aftermath that caused the Muslim Brotherhood to fall apart in the ensuing years.

Keywords: Muslim Brotherhood; Jordan; Islamism; ZamZam initiative; Salim al-Falahat

1. Introduction

The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan used to be an exception in the Middle East, where local affiliates of the originally Egyptian organization were often repressed by the ruling regimes. Unlike in several other Arab countries, the early Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan was accepted as a legal organization by the country's regime in 1946 (Abu Rumman and Abu Haniyya 2012, pp. 65–67; Boulby 1999, pp. 46–48; Engelleder 2002, pp. 27–28; Gharayiba 1997, p. 47). It also frequently sided with the monarchy when the latter needed support in times of regional or local problems, which the kings of Jordan reciprocated by continuing to allow the Brotherhood to exist and even flourish, leading to a mutually beneficial relationship (Abu Rumman and Abu Haniyya 2012, pp. 67–72; Wagemakers 2021). Today, however, seventy-five years after the organization's official founding, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood is no longer legal (although its political affiliate, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) is) and has been replaced by a new and different Muslim Brotherhood that is recognized by the regime. Moreover, three other groups—the Islamic Center Party, the National Congress Party (which stems from the so-called ZamZam initiative) and the Partnership and Salvation Party—have split off from the original Muslim Brotherhood. What has happened?

To be sure—and beside the regional crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood since the so-called Arab Spring went awry in various countries in the 2010s—the relationship between the organization and the Jordanian regime had long deteriorated. This was especially the case since 1989, when the Muslim Brotherhood used the first Jordanian parliamentary elections since 1967 to translate its popularity into political influence, and even more so under King 'Abdallah II (r. 1999– . . .), who was less tolerant of Islamists than his father Husayn (r. 1953–1999), as has been amply described in the literature (Hamid 2014; Schwedler 2006; Rosefsky Wickham 2013; Wagemakers 2020b). Yet, while this might explain the *outlawing* of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, it does not explain its *disintegration* into several parts. The latter could, perhaps, be ascribed to the ideological divisions within the ranks of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, but these have existed

for decades, thereby failing to account for the organization's sudden and rapid implosion in the 2010s. How can this disintegration be explained and what precipitated it? This article argues that, building on decades of ideological divisions, a crucial factor in the organization's falling apart was the emergence of the reformist ZamZam initiative in 2012, which caused existing fissures to spin out of control, thereby leading to the splintering of the Muslim Brotherhood into several different organizations.

Based largely on primary sources in Arabic—including the highly critical writings of a former General Controller (*muraqib 'amm*) of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, Salim al-Falahat, as well as hundreds of Jordanian media reports,[1] especially from the Brotherhood-affiliated newspaper *Al-Sabil*—this article shows that while ideological divisions provided an important background to the organization's disintegration, that process was facilitated by organizational disarray since a leadership crisis in 2008. More importantly, the Muslim Brotherhood's disintegration was precipitated by the leadership's handling of the emergence of the ZamZam initiative in 2012. In what follows, this article will first deal with the literature on divisions within the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, followed by an analysis of the leadership crisis of 2008 and the impact this had. Finally, it concentrates on the ZamZam initiative and its aftermath, resulting in the problematic situation the Muslim Brotherhood finds itself in now. As such, this article shows that the ideological divisions distinguished in the literature so far, while real and important, did not directly cause the disintegration of the Muslim Brotherhood. Instead, it was ZamZam and the handling of this initiative by the organization's leadership that brought about the disastrous situation in which the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood finds itself today.

2. Divisions within the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood

Many authors working on the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood have pointed to the ways in which the organization is internally divided. Adopting words that are also frequently used in the Jordanian media, many authors label the members of the organization 'hawks' (*suqur*) and 'doves' (*hama'im*). These terms are used by scholars to distinguish, respectively, between the Brotherhood's more ideological and more pragmatic members (El-Said 1995, pp. 12–13; Tal 2005, pp. 191, 194, 197–201), between those less and more willing to compromise on Islamic issues (including participation in an 'un-Islamic' government) (Brown 2012, pp. 102–3), between Brothers who take a legalistic or reformist reading of religious texts (Clark 2012, p. 77; Harmsen 2008, p. 145) or between members who follow the writings of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) and those who do not (Abu Hanieh 2016, p. 142; Abu Rumman 2007, pp. 34–37; Abu Rumman and Bunduqji 2018, pp. 55–58; Escobar Stemman 2010, p. 61).

None of the distinctions mentioned above are incorrect, but they are somewhat crude in the sense that they focus only on a limited set of mostly religious criteria, while divisions within the organization actually run along several lines (Wagemakers 2020a, pp. 39–42; Wagemakers 2020b, pp. 116–18). One of these is the Muslim Brotherhood's identity, referring to the division between members who would prefer to focus on missionary activities (*da'wa*) and those who favored setting up a political party, although this dividing line is less present today (Hamid 2013, p. 545). A second source of division within the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood is that between Palestinian-Jordanians and East-Bank ones (Lynch 1999, pp. 113, 129; Patel 2018), which is sometimes expressed by a focus on the Palestinian issue or Jordanian affairs (Brown 2012, p. 103; Rosefsky Wickham 2013, p. 199) or by strong support for either the Palestinian Hamas or other, Jordanian actors (Abu Rumman and Abu Haniyya 2012, pp. 105–6; Bunzel and Schenker 2010; Hamid 2013, pp. 551–52). A third bone of contention within the organization is its openness to others, meaning whether the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood should focus on exclusive, Islamist solutions to problems or should take a more inclusive, broadly reformist approach (Moaddel 2002, p. 209; El-Said 1995, pp. 8–10; Wagemakers 2020a). A fourth source of division among Jordanian Muslim Brothers is found in their views of the regime and whether to argue for an Islamic state or to work and engage with the existing powers that be (Clark 2012, p. 77;

Moaddel 2002, pp. 108–9; see also Clark and Schwedler 2003, pp. 295–97). A fifth topic on which Jordanian Brothers are divided is that of electoral and parliamentary participation, sometimes rooted in the rejection or acceptance of democracy (Abu Rumman and Abu Haniyya 2012, p. 84; Abu Rumman and Bunduqji 2018, pp. 55–58; Harmsen 2008, p. 146) and expressed in the desire to boycott or the willingness to participate in elections (Brown 2012, pp. 99, 102, 155; Harmsen 2008, pp. 145–46; Moaddel 2002, pp. 134–35).

The latter division—about parliamentary participation—actually led to split-offs before, with some members leaving the Muslim Brotherhood after it had decided to boycott the 1997 elections. In 2001, this issue even led to the break-away of an entire party: the Islamic Center Party (Hizb al-Wasat al-Islami) (Abu Rumman and Abu Haniyya 2012, p. 89; Wagemakers 2020b, pp. 181–82), although disagreements over other issues may also have played a role (Rosefsky Wickham 2013, p. 215). This suggests that the split-offs in the past few years (the Association of the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood (Jam'iyyat Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin), founded in 2015; the National Congress Party (Hizb al-Mu'tamar al-Watani), founded in 2016; and the Partnership and Salvation Party (Hizb al-Sharaka wa-l-Inqadh), founded in 2017)) are also connected to the organization's divisions. Several authors have, indeed, connected the break-up of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 2010s with these divisions, yet without explaining how these fissures—which had existed for years—suddenly caused the disintegration of the organization (Abu Rumman and Bunduqji 2018, pp. 84–86; Milton-Edwards 2016, pp. 100–3; Ryan 2015).

While some scholars have pointed to more direct reasons for the disintegration, such as government pressure exploiting these divisions (Nusairat 2015) or the way the 'Arab Spring' exacerbated them (Abu Rumman and Bunduqji 2018, p. 87; Al-Naimat 2014; Wagemakers 2020a), few scholars have taken events that precipitated the break-ups into account and even they have done so only briefly (Schenker and Barnard 2015). Some (former) Muslim Brothers themselves, for their part, have also tied the split-offs to earlier divisions (Al-Kofahi 2018, pp. 146–47; Masalha and Hamid 2017; Al-Qudat 2018, pp. 153–55), with the exception of the aforementioned Salim al-Falahat, who has authored two books (al-Falahat 2017a, 2017b) dealing with internal criticism of Islamism and the Muslim Brotherhood, including one two-volume publication of which particularly the second volume deals with the precipitating factors of the organization's disintegration in great detail. Given that al-Falahat played an important role in the internal conflicts discussed below, his work is of great value, but should also be approached with some apprehension and be seen as his interpretation of events, rather than an objective account of the events themselves. It is nevertheless striking how much his account squares with the one found in media reports dealing with the issue. Based on these sources, this article will show that while existing divisions, government pressure and the Arab Spring were important background factors, the actual falling apart of the Muslim Brotherhood was caused by the ZamZam initiative and its handling by the organization's leadership. This initiative was preceded by organizational disarray that started in 2008, however, to which we must turn first.

3. The Muslim Brotherhood Leadership Crisis of 2008 and Its Aftermath

The leadership crisis within the Muslim Brotherhood had its roots in the decision by 'Abd al-Majid Dhunaybat, the organization's General Controller since 1994, not to run for re-election in 2006 (Al-Sabil 2006). He was succeeded by Salim al-Falahat, who ran for the position unopposed, in early March of the same year. Jamil Abu Bakr, another veteran Muslim Brother, became al-Falahat's deputy (Fadilat 2006). If, for the sake of brevity, we describe 'hawks' as those Brothers who mostly take the first position with regard to the five different divisions distinguished above and 'doves' as those who often prefer the second, all three men could be described as doves. This not only meant that al-Falahat represented continuity with the previous leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, but also that the organization had apparently not (yet) become much more recalcitrant in the face of

increasing regime repression, expressed in, for example, the restriction of Islamist activities in professional associations and mosques (Hamid 2014, pp. 133–34).

3.1. Salim Al-Falahat's Difficult Term as General Controller (2006–2008)

According to al-Falahat himself, the decision to elect him as the new General Controller in 2006, though unopposed, was not uncontroversial: he claims that two hawkish Muslim Brothers who had apparently long opposed Dhunaybat, Hammam Sa'id and Ahmad al-Zarqan, nevertheless tried to convince the departing leader to retain his position, presumably in an attempt to keep al-Falahat from attaining it (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, p. 5). This seems to show that hawks may have opposed doves in general, but still distinguished between them. While this alleged attempt to keep al-Falahat from power failed, his period as General Controller was nevertheless beset with problems for the Muslim Brotherhood. The first of these came in April 2006, when the regime claimed to have found a large cache of weapons allegedly belonging to Hamas, which the latter was supposedly planning to use in attacks within Jordan. Although the Muslim Brotherhood claimed that this entire incident had been fabricated by the regime, it did make the organization look more militant than it actually was, given its strong ties with Hamas (Clark 2012, p. 73).

A second incident that seemed to confirm the Brotherhood's supposedly militant intentions began with the assassination of Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi (1966–2006) in June 2006. Al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian from the city of al-Zarqa', had led Al-Qa'ida's Iraqi branch in the years before and was responsible—among other things—for the hotel bombings in Amman in 2015, which killed dozens of Jordanian civilians and wounded many more. After his death, four members of parliament for the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated IAF—as well as eleven non-Islamist parliamentarians—went to al-Zarqawi's wake, probably out of respect for their constituents, not because they sympathized with al-Qa'ida. This visit, nevertheless, led to much criticism of the four men, who—unlike the non-Islamist visitors to al-Zarqawi's wake—were arrested. Two of them were also fined and imprisoned (Wagemakers 2020b, pp. 106–7).

In July 2006, possibly in an attempt to exploit this moment of unpopularity for the Muslim Brotherhood, the regime essentially took over the Islamic Center Association (Jam'iyyat al-Markaz al-Islami), the central charity organization of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, by suspending its board and appointing a new temporary committee under the guise of corruption charges. Although these were dismissed by the organization itself and, later, also by a court, the new situation remained unchanged (Clark 2012, p. 73). Partly because of the Brotherhood's loss of popularity over the al-Zarqawi affair and its weakened position due to the regime's take-over of the Islamic Center Association, the IAF—as the organization's parliamentary representative—won just 6 seats (out of 110) in the national elections of 2007, its worst result since the 1950s (Abu Rumman and Abu Haniyya 2012, p. 110).

3.2. Contesting the Muslim Brotherhood's Leadership in 2008

Given the incidents in 2006 and 2007—not the least of which was the disappointing election result—it might not come as a surprise that some Muslim Brothers wanted to replace al-Falahat as General Controller before his four-year term had ended in 2010. According to al-Falahat himself—citing newspaper articles published at the time—these efforts were accompanied by an unprecedented smear campaign within the Muslim Brotherhood against him, which might be an indication that some Brothers were using this discussion on the leadership to manifest internal divisions. While al-Falahat's supporters—most prominently Ruhayyil Gharayiba, a long-time reformist dove—praised him, claimed that he should be given the chance to finish his term and should not be punished for having led the organization through a very difficult period, his opponents 'crossed all the Brotherhood's "red lines"' in their antipathy towards him, as one Jordanian journalist cited by al-Falahat states. The reason for this opposition to al-Falahat lay not so much in his supposed incompetence, this journalist continues, but in his insistence on seeking internal,

organizational punishment for some hawkish members of the Muslim Brotherhood who 'played a negative role in the [Muslim Brotherhood's] parliamentary election campaign [of 2007]' (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 7–9, 10–15). An example of this was Zaki Bani Irshid, a hawkish member of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Secretary General of the IAF, who had publicly opposed participation in the 2007 elections, despite his own party's participation in them (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, p. 67; Schwedler 2012, p. 25). This, again, seems to confirm the existence of divisions, particularly on the issue of electoral participation.

Against the wishes of al-Falahat and his supporters, the Consultation Council (*majlis al-shura*; the legislative body of the Muslim Brotherhood), dismissed the General Controller and voted to have Hammam Sa'id—who, as we saw above, was said to be one of the hawks against al-Falahat's leadership in the first place—succeed him in 2008 (Al-Sabil 2008). Gharayiba and three of his allies—Ahmad al-Kafawin, 'Abd al-Hamid al-Qudat and Mamduh al-Muhaysin—were unhappy about this situation and wrote to the General Guide (*al-murshid al-'amm*) of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, to ask for mediation in this dispute. In their letter in support of al-Falahat, they point out that according to the Muslim Brotherhood's own laws, a sitting General Controller can only be dismissed through a two-thirds majority of the Consultation Council. In the case of al-Falahat, however, there was merely a simple majority of only one vote of the members present, rather than the required supermajority of the entire Council, they state. They also point out in their letter to the General Guide that the presence of Sa'id as the new General Controller scuppered all aforementioned plans to have certain hawks internally punished for their behavior during the election campaign. Al-Falahat himself, meanwhile, also wrote a letter to the General Guide in Egypt, using similar arguments and adding that the Muslim Brothers do not just have an organizational responsibility, but are also answerable to God (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 22–26).

3.3. Internal Divisions under Hammam Sa'id's Leadership

The efforts to get the Egyptian General Guide involved in the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood's disputes confirmed the enduring importance of internal divisions, but brought no changes to the leadership. Yet the latter consisted not just of the General Controller, but of the entire Executive Bureau (*al-maktab al-tanfidhi*), the highest body within the organization, of which several dovish members–including the four Brothers who had written a letter to the General Guide in support of al-Falahat–were also part (Al-Sabil 2008). This meant that the leadership as a whole was deeply internally divided, which would come to the fore after 2008. The first sign of this was the resignation of 'Abd al-Hamid al-Qudat as Deputy General Controller of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2009. Echoing earlier claims that Sa'id and his allies did not adhere to the rules of the organization, al-Qudat claimed–among other things–that the new General Controller decided on issues together with supporters outside the Executive Bureau (rather than with the members of that body), acted in a lawless manner and appointed people on the basis of loyalty rather than competence (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 28–33).

A second incident, according to al-Falahat, involved a report written by four members of the Executive Bureau–the same ones who had written to the General Guide in Egypt– about the Muslim Brotherhood's policies in 2009. The report, however, was leaked to the press and while investigations on who was behind this were still ongoing, the rest of the Executive Bureau convened without the four authors present and stated that only Gharayiba–the most prominent reformer of the four–was solely responsible for the report. This led to all three remaining members (al-Qudat had already resigned) handing in their resignations from the Executive Bureau (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, p. 36). Several plans were drawn up to address the crisis within the Muslim Brotherhood and reform the organization, but none had the desired effect (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 209–25). Meanwhile, the IAF was going through a leadership crisis of its own in 2010, with 'Ali Abu l-Sukkar–one of the Brothers imprisoned for visiting al-Zarqawi's wake–being voted into the presidency of the party's Consultation Council in an election that the party's own legal council considered

invalid, although he was properly elected later (Al-Shubaki 2010a, 2010b). The election for the position of the IAF's Secretary General similarly led to discord, which ultimately led both the hawkish candidate–Zaki Bani Irshid–and the dovish one–al-Falahat–to withdraw in favor of Hamza Mansur, a compromise candidate (Schwedler 2012, pp. 24–25).

It is clear that the conflicts mentioned above sometimes ran along the hawk-dove dividing lines discerned in the literature. Yet, while it may appear as if some people (al-Falahat, Gharayiba) were singled out as targets by more hawkish Brothers, it should be borne in mind that the fact that hawks were ascendent within the organization in the first place was perhaps only natural given that the regime had taken an increasingly confrontational approach towards the Brotherhood, especially since 2006, as we saw above. Given this approach and the growing unwillingness of the organization to engage with a regime responsible for such a policy, the Brotherhood decided to boycott the elections of 2010 (Lust and Hourani 2011, p. 119). Although there was internal disagreement over this decision, it was remarkable how united the Muslim Brotherhood seemed to be in its view that boycotting the elections—at least under the current circumstances—would be better than participating in them. In fact, hawks such as Sa'id (Al-Sabil 2010) and Bani Irshid (Al-'Utum 2010, p. 5) as well as doves such as president of the Brotherhood's Consultation Council 'Abd al-Latif 'Arabiyyat (Al-Shubaki 2010c), Mansur (Al-Khawalida 2010) and Gharayiba (Gharayiba 2010) all justified the decision. As such, the internal division on parliamentary participation distinguished in the literature does not seem to have played much of a role here.

Still, the mostly united position among Muslim Brothers on the election boycott could not hide the existing fissures within the organization. In 2012, this reached the surface again when several members began to label the existing power base around General Controller Sa'id as 'an organization within the organization' (*tanzim dakhil al-tanzim*). Interestingly, the person who initiated this discussion was Muhammad Abu Faris (1938–2015), a Palestinian-Jordanian religious scholar and one of the most hawkish members of the entire Muslim Brotherhood at the time (Wagemakers 2020b). The fact that Abu Faris sided with many doves on the issue of organizational disarray was an indication that the troubles plaguing the Muslim Brotherhood were not simply about the ideological divisions discerned in the existing literature, but also about the decision-making processes within the organization. A council that included Abu Faris was formed to investigate this claim and papers on the subject were presented, including by Gharayiba. The latter wrote a scathing critique of the Muslim Brotherhood's internal structure, stating that it was suffering from various 'illnesses', confirming the existence of 'an organization within the organization' that he claimed was rooted in decades-old divisions, identifying multiple forms of internal corruption and accusing some members of clannishness. Gharayiba's solutions were equally clear. They included the suggestions that the 'organization within the organization' should be dismantled, that the Brotherhood should write a new charter, that the IAF should be rebuilt and that the organization should make a clearer distinction between its charitable and its political activities, thereby echoing the first division distinguished in the literature mentioned above. This paper as well as others were presented to the Consultation Council, but without reaching agreement on them (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 225–40).

Just like earlier internal divisions were temporarily hidden by a unified stance on the 2010 election boycott, so were these fissures papered over by the advent of the so-called Arab Spring and the united position this brought about among Jordanian Muslim Brothers. The revolts in the Arab world that started in late 2010 and continued in the next few years initially enjoyed widespread support among Muslim Brothers of widely differing persuasions, precisely because the call for reform of the regime was broadly shared and because many felt that this moment—when regimes were under great popular pressure throughout the region—was the time to push for changes. Yet, as the tide began to turn— regimes became increasingly anti-Brotherhood and the revolts did not yield the desired outcomes—some members of the organization began to grow wary of pushing for reform too much, preferring to seek a broader, more inclusive basis for reform in cooperation

with other political actors and through the parliamentary system, rather than through protests in the streets. It was in this context of the 'Arab Spring', against the background of long-held divisions and more recent organizational disarray, that the ZamZam initiative was launched (Wagemakers 2020a, pp. 47–57).

4. The ZamZam Initiative and Its Impact

The National Initiative for Building (*al-mubadara al-wataniyya li-l-bina'*), better known as the ZamZam initiative because it was drawn up at the ZamZam Towers Hotel in Amman, was announced in November 2012. Under the leadership of reformist Muslim Brother Ruhayyil Gharayiba and supported by many others, both from within the organization as well as from other groups, this initiative called for broad-based, inclusive, peaceful and gradual reform, stressing unity, tolerance, respect and fighting corruption, none of which was opposed to the goals of the Muslim Brotherhood (Wagemakers 2020b, pp. 111–12). Apart from the specific context of the 'Arab Spring', the Muslim Brothers involved in ZamZam—especially Gharayiba—were probably frustrated over the lack of reform within the Muslim Brotherhood and will likely have seen this new initiative as a platform from which to launch this reform through other means. As such, ZamZam—in line with the literature on the organization's internal divisions—was an inclusive response to what seemed to be an increasingly exclusive Brotherhood leadership. Yet ZamZam was explicitly not a new party or an organizational alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood: in a press statement, Gharayiba declared that ZamZam was part of a broader reform movement that 'does not represent a separation movement (*harakat inshiqaq*) from any trend, nor does it aim to trouble any group (*la yahdufu ila munakafa ayy majmu'a*)' (Rumman 2012). Nabil al-Kufahi, a Muslim Brother, local politician from the north of Jordan and prominent ZamZam member, stated similarly that 'we are still Muslim Brothers and we will remain Muslim Brothers. We do not practice any separation movement' (Al-Dustur 2012).

4.1. The Muslim Brotherhood's Response to the ZamZam Initiative

The Muslim Brotherhood remained skeptical of the inclusive ZamZam initiative, despite assurances from its leaders that theirs was not an effort to divide the Muslim Brotherhood or to split off from that organization, and generally took an exclusivist approach to the matter. The organization's Consultation Council, for example, rejected the initiative as an attempt to divide the Muslim Brotherhood, but it left open the possibility that the organization's Executive Bureau might find a way to keep the Brothers involved in ZamZam in the organization (Karasina 2012b; 'Unayzat 2012). The impression that ZamZam was an attempt by doves to split off from the Muslim Brotherhood was also regularly expressed in the media (Al-'Abbadi 2012; Haddad 2012; Karasina 2012a), which may have reinforced the Brotherhood's leadership's belief that this was, indeed, the case, particularly since the desire among some dovish Brothers to break with the supposedly intolerant and closed decision-making structure mentioned above was also referred to (Al-'Abbadi 2013a). This became especially clear when, in October 2013, ZamZam was officially launched (Al-'Abbadi 2013c).

After the official launch of the ZamZam initiative, the Muslim Brotherhood initially refrained from commenting on the matter (Al-'Abbadi 2013d), but it quickly became clear that even those not involved with ZamZam were divided on how to respond. Some Islamists described it as an effort to break ranks with the Muslim Brotherhood (Al-'Utum 2013), while others were positive about the goals of the initiative but criticized the presence of so many regime officials at ZamZam's launch ('Ayasira 2013; see also Gharayiba 2013a). Still others did not object to ZamZam's reformist goals either, but did feel that launching this initiative was not the right way to achieve them and would rather have seen these efforts take place within the confines of the Muslim Brotherhood (Nasir 2013; Shalhub 2013). It was to this latter group that many of the so-called 'wise men' (*hukama'*) belonged: Brothers who—like Gharayiba—were in favor of reforming the decision-making structure of the Muslim Brotherhood and had been frustrated with the developments over the past few

years, but who—unlike Gharayiba—were still willing to try to change the Brotherhood from within, rather than starting new initiatives (Mahasina 2014b; 'Unayzat 2014a). These varying views on ZamZam show that while the exclusivist-inclusivist dimension of internal divisions mentioned above clearly exists within the Brotherhood, it does not divide the organization in absolute opposites, but leads to a range of opinions.

The 'wise men' had tried to mediate between the organization's leadership and the Brothers behind the ZamZam initiative since the latter was first announced and drew up a document in which they stated their demand to end what they referred to as bribes, organizational meddling, regional clannishness, causing reputational damage to other members and the decline of norms within the Brotherhood. That these efforts to reform the Muslim Brotherhood's internal decision-making structure were not just about the ideological divisions mentioned above could not only be glanced from the demands themselves, but—again—also from the fact that the 'wise men' included veteran doves such as 'Arabiyyat and Mansur as well as ideological hawks like Abu Faris (Al-Rawashida 2012). Another prominent dovish 'wise man' involved with the attempts to reform the Brotherhood from within was the aforementioned former General Controller 'Abd al-Majid Dhunaybat (Al-'Abbadi 2013b). He similarly lamented what he labelled the 'continuing regression' (*taraju' mustamirr*) within the Muslim Brotherhood, emphasized the need for revisionism and—more in line with the ideological divisions we saw earlier—advocated cooperation with non-Islamists as well as parliamentary participation rather than election boycotts (Ammon News 2014a).

The leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood—still headed by Sa'id—took yet another position with regard to ZamZam by referring the matter to the organization's internal court for investigation, apparently without letting prominent supporters of the initiative themselves, such as Gharayiba, know about this or why this course of action had been chosen (Al-'Abbadi 2013d; 'Unayzat 2013a, 2013b). The referral of the matter to the Brotherhood's internal court also caused Gharayiba to explain the goals of ZamZam once again and to emphasize that the ideas expressed in the initiative sprang from Islam and reflected 'the essence of the correct idea (*al-fikra al-sahiha*) of the Islamic movement and the Muslim Brotherhood' (Gharayiba 2013b, p. 8). Several of the most prominent ZamZam supporters from the Brotherhood, including the president of the Islamic Center Association, Jamil Duhaysat, therefore, decided not to show up at the internal trial (Al-'Abbadi 2013e; 'Unayzat 2013c), which led to their being tried by the court in absentia (Al-Dustur 2014a; Mahasina 2014a). The verdict came in April 2014, when three Brothers with prominent roles in ZamZam—Gharayiba, al-Kufahi and Duhaysat—were dismissed from the organization. This decision, according to a Brotherhood statement published on April 22, 2014, was based on the fact that ZamZam had been initiated without coordinating it with the organization's leadership and on their refusal to stop supporting the initiative after multiple requests to do so (Al-Sabil 2014).

According to al-Falahat—who was less exclusivist than the Brotherhood's leadership, but also less inclusivist than ZamZam's supporters—this was not the way it was supposed to have happened. Together with al-Qudat, al-Falahat had written a paper prior to the decision to dismiss the three ZamZam-supporting Brothers, on behalf of a reconciliation council that included several 'wise men' and that had been tasked with healing the rifts between ZamZam and the Executive Bureau. The paper emphasized that the ZamZam initiative was not an organization in and of itself, was acting in the spirit of the Muslim Brotherhood, did not constitute a violation of the Brotherhood's rules, had the potential to reach a lot of people, was reformist in nature, could be cooperated with and should be handled wisely. As such, the reconciliation council agreed to ask the Executive Bureau to postpone the verdict on ZamZam, but before a meeting had been held to discuss this, the decision to dismiss the three men had already been taken and had been reported by the media (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 322–25). The response from Duhaysat and al-Kufahi was swift, using terms such as 'character assassination' ('Unayzat 2014b) and 'organizational execution' (Mahasina 2014c). Gharayiba dug deeper and ascribed the

dismissal to some of the ideological divisions distinguished above (Gharayiba 2014a), but also pointed to the 'true, secret organization' within the Muslim Brotherhood that, according to him, uses money and smear tactics to gain majorities and, as such, is 'no less important' than ideological factors (Gharayiba 2014c, p. 16). This showed once again that, as the secondary literature states, internal divisions mattered, but that things did not escalate until the launch of and response to the ZamZam initiative.

Like al-Falahat, other members of the Muslim Brotherhood not part of the central leadership nor of those supporting ZamZam were unhappy about the decision to expel the three men (Mahasina 2014d, 2014f) and some called for containment of the crisis, dialogue and reconciliation (Al-'Arab al-Yawm 2014a; Mahasina 2014e; Marqa 2014). For a while, it looked like these efforts might bear fruit, with the IAF's Consultation Council stressing that the dismissal was not definitive (Al-Dustur 2014b) and the Brotherhood's decision to temporarily reverse the dismissal ('Unayzat 2014c). The organization's own Consultation Council, meanwhile, set out to form a higher court within the Brotherhood to rule on the issue, which annulled the earlier ruling in August 2014 ('Unayzat 2014d, 2014e) and also acknowledged that ZamZam was, as its initiators had said all along, not at odds with the Brotherhood's principles (Al-Haj 2015a).

This was not the end of the matter, however. General Controller Hammam Sa'id had, in the meantime, started his own reconciliation initiative in late 2014, which included several concessions from his side, such as early elections for both the Consultation Council and the Executive Bureau (Al-'Arab al-Yawm 2014b), but also required the three men to be present at the new trial in the higher court. Because Gharayiba, Duhaysat and al-Kufahi believed Sa'id was consciously circumventing other reconciliation initiatives, because they did not feel his concessions went far enough—they wanted the Executive Bureau to be dissolved entirely—and because they believed Sa'id was again trying to get them to appear in court, they refused to show up (Mahasina 2014j).

In early 2015, a new effort to make peace between the three men and the Executive Bureau was made when a council led by 'wise man' 'Abd al-Latif 'Arabiyyat asked them to sign a document of reconciliation. While the ZamZam-supporting Brothers were willing to do so (and did), they refused to sign it in front of Sa'id because they felt it would make the ceremony look like a renewed pledge of fealty (*bay'a*) to the General Controller, which they rejected (Al-'Abbadi 2015; Mahasina 2015a). According to al-Falahat, Sa'id had, indeed, intended the signing to act as a renewed oath of loyalty to him (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, p. 242). Since signing the document in front of Sa'id was a necessary condition for accepting the three Brothers back into the fold, this effort at reconciliation eventually came to naught, too ('Unayzat 2015a; Zad al-Urdunn al-Akhbari 2015), thereby consolidating the internal division between the exclusivist Brotherhood's Executive Bureau and the inclusivist ZamZam-supporting Brothers.

4.2. The 'Permitted' Muslim Brotherhood

From the start of the internal crisis precipitated by the launch of ZamZam, reconciliation efforts had been undertaken by various individuals and groups who sympathized with the initiative but were not part of it, especially the 'wise men'. While this continued throughout 2015, as we will see below, for some of these mediators, the dismissal of Gharayiba, Duhaysat and al-Kufahi in the Spring of 2014 was the final straw that took them on a path that would eventually lead them to found an entirely new Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. In the forefront of this development was the man whose resignation in 2006 had led to the leadership crisis in 2008 that we saw above: 'Abd al-Majid Dhunaybat. The discussions held under his guidance, which were attended by some 50 people (including Gharayiba, Duhaysat and al-Kufahi) initially focused on complaints about the alleged exclusivist and closed mindset of the Brotherhood's leadership, the dismissal of the three ZamZam-supporting Brothers, clannishness inside the organization and others like the ones expressed before (Ammon News 2014b).

The discussions among doves unwilling to accept the hawks' electoral dominance within the Brotherhood quickly developed into the organization of a conference in the north of Jordan in early June, with plans to hold a second one soon (Luck 2014; Mahasina 2014g). Gharayiba portrayed the first conference as an effort to reform the Muslim Brotherhood and strengthen its legal position, among other things by seeking 'approval (*taswib*) of the legal position of the [Muslim Brotherhood] society' so that it could maintain 'its legitimacy (*shar'iyyataha*) and its continuation as an independent foundation' (Gharayiba 2014b, p. 20). Still, the conference attendees clearly took a somewhat confrontational approach, giving the Brotherhood's Consultation Council one month to answer their demands (Al-'Abbadi 2014a). Towards the second conference, in Amman in September 2014, the organizers referred to their group as the Brotherhood's Highest Council for Internal Reform (Al-Lajna al-'Ulya li-l-Islah al-Dakhili), suggesting they identified with and were intent on staying within the organization, and were actively trying to get other 'wise men', such as 'Arabiyyat and al-Falahat, to join them (Al-Dustur 2014d). As such, all of these efforts could still be seen as extensions of ZamZam in the sense that they represented more inclusive initiatives to oppose the more exclusivist Executive Bureau.

The response by the rest of the Muslim Brotherhood to the reformist conferences was, as was to be expected, divided. Hawkish Brothers such as Bani Irshid dismissed them and appeared to mock their small number of attendees, stating that 'they can transport themselves in two buses to Ma'an, then to al-Karak [both in the south of Jordan] and then to Mecca to drink water from [the] ZamZam [well]', in what seemed to be a reference to the ZamZam initiative (Mahasina 2014h). Yet others were not so dismissive. 'Wise men' not involved in the conferences, such as 'Arabiyyat, tried to mediate between the two sides while another, al-Falahat, stressed the need for reform while also respecting the organizational framework of the Brotherhood (Ghabbun 2014). Given this attitude, it was not surprising that both men did not join Dhunaybat and his allies to attend the second conference, which called for the dismissal of the Executive Bureau, the formation of a leadership in coordination with the Highest Council for Internal Reform and the legalization of the Brotherhood according to Jordanian law (Mahasina 2014i).

The Brotherhood's Executive Council, led by Sa'id, did not acquiesce to the demands expressed by the Highest Council for Internal Reform, but the General Controller did present his own compromise proposal, as mentioned above, which was meant to address both the ZamZam initiative and the reformist conferences. Just like the Brothers dismissed because of their involvement in ZamZam, the Highest Council for Internal Reform rejected Sa'id's proposal in late 2014, however (Al-'Abbadi 2014b; Al-Dustur 2014e). In February the following year, the Muslim Brotherhood announced that it had dismissed ten leaders of the organization—including Gharayiba, Duhaysat and al-Kufahi, whose earlier dismissal had apparently not been finalized yet—because of their efforts to collect signatures in order to ask the regime for renewed legal permission for the Muslim Brotherhood to exist (Al-Sabil 2015a; 'Unayzat 2015b). The most prominent among the ten leaders was, of course, Dhunaybat (Mahasina 2015b; Al-Sabil 2015b; 'Unayzat 2015d).

Those dismissed criticized the decision to expel them from the Muslim Brotherhood, claimed it was illegitimate (Petra 2015a; 'Unayzat 2015c, 2015e, 2015f) and vowed to continue their efforts (Petra 2015b; al-'Unayzat 2015c). One of those efforts included, as mentioned several times, the attempt to renew the Brotherhood's legality in Jordan. For some members of the organization, cementing the Brotherhood's legal position made sense in a region in which the 'Arab Spring' was increasingly turning out to be a disappointment and the Muslim Brotherhood was being outlawed in several countries (Al-Haj 2015b, 2015c), just like seeking cooperation with others (the 'inclusivist' approach) was thought to make the Brotherhood less vulnerable to a crackdown than on its own, as we saw earlier. After the organization's decision to dismiss Dhunaybat and his allies, however, the latter's attempts to renew legal permission were now no longer geared towards saving the Brotherhood, but setting up a new version of the organization instead of the old one and using the regime to do this. While the organization's General Controller Hammam

Sa'id assured people that the Brotherhood did not need renewed permission because it had received it already in the 1940s and again in the 1950s, the group surrounding Dhunaybat appeared to have given up renewing the organization and now seemed intent on setting up a new Brotherhood altogether (Al-Amir and al-Da'ma 2015; Al-Jazeera 2015).

The Association of the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood—or the 'Permitted (*murakhkhasa*) Muslim Brotherhood', as the new group became known—quickly set up a temporary leadership to act as an alternative to the old organization (Al-Haj 2015b; 'Unayzat 2015g, 2015h) and received permission from the government, in early March 2015, to act as the new and officially recognized Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan ('Unayzat 2015i). The Permitted Brotherhood took this course of action because of its frustration over how the original organization was run (particularly 'the sickness of the secret organizations'). Yet it also claimed that it acted this way because it had found out that the Muslim Brotherhood had not been a legal organization since 1965, when a new Jordanian law on associations was introduced without the organization having officially re-registered. When it had the chance to do so again when a law on political parties was introduced in 1992, it refrained from doing so once more and founded the IAF instead. Under normal circumstances, this would not have been a problem, but with countries like Egypt outlawing the Muslim Brotherhood altogether in the context of the declining 'Arab Spring', the Permitted Brotherhood claimed that it was safer to cut ties with the mother organization in Cairo and continue as a newly legal and strictly Jordanian group (Al-Haj 2015c). The original Brotherhood's leadership objected to this 'coup' and stated that this undermined its own legitimacy (Qandil 2015; Al-Sabil 2015c). It was certainly correct about the latter part: the decision to recognize the Permitted Brotherhood allowed this new group to use the power of the state to take over the assets of the original Brotherhood (its headquarters in Amman, its buildings and its land) and caused the regime—which likely saw this as an easy way to get rid of the critical Muslim Brotherhood—to prohibit its activities and effectively render it illegal. As a consequence, when Sa'id's term as General Controller ended in 2016, he was not replaced by a new leader (Wagemakers 2020b, pp. 115–16).

4.3. Partnership and Salvation: The Remnant of the 'Wise Men'

Throughout the period of internal turmoil, a group of 'wise men' had tried to mediate between the various sides, trying to keep the Muslim Brotherhood together. In fact, almost a dozen initiatives had been presented by various actors involved to achieve this goal (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 260–300; Ghabbun 2015). So far, however, the main members supporting ZamZam had been dismissed, as had those who had joined the Permitted Brotherhood, including some 'wise men', like Dhunaybat himself. Still, while the Brotherhood was periodically losing members to ZamZam and to the new organization, a remnant of 'wise men' remained who refused to give up on the Muslim Brotherhood and its hawkish leadership, including doves like al-Falahat, Mansur, 'Arabiyyat and Abu Bakr. Even after the Permitted Brotherhood came to the fore, they continued to try to salvage what was left of the old Brotherhood by pursuing reforms within the organization, rather than outside of it. They were, however, keenly aware of the fact that the Permitted Brotherhood, legally supported by the state, held all the cards and that the old organization needed to make concessions in order to survive. As such, in September 2015, the 'wise men' launched a final initiative called Al-Sharaka wa-l-Inqadh (Partnership and Salvation) to heal the rifts within the Muslim Brotherhood (Al-'Unayzat 2015j, 2015k).

The new initiative was supported by almost thirty leaders from the Consultation Councils of both the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood. The reason the IAF was also involved in this initiative was not just because it had organizational problems of its own, as we saw above, but probably also because the meeting to elect a new Secretary General in 2014 was marred by procedural irregularities, causing al-Falahat and Mansur to walk out and leading to the election of the hawkish Muhammad al-Zuyud (Al-Dustur 2014c; Kara'in 2014). The initiative made several proposals pertaining to internal decision-making processes and the organizational structure of the IAF and the Brotherhood, calling for the

renewed formation of the Executive Bureaus of both the party and the organization 'on the basis of true partnership (*sharaka haqiqiyya*) and the General Controller's staying on for the period of a whole year', after which elections would be held. In response to this, the Executive Bureau sent the 'wise men' a positive reply, stating that it had studied and accepted the proposal (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 287–93). This gave the impression that internal divisions on how the organization should be run could, perhaps, be overcome.

The Executive Bureau's response to the Partnership and Salvation proposal, positive though it was, was not followed up by concrete action. By mid-November, Mansur— though explicit in his refusal to join the Permitted Brotherhood—openly expressed his frustration about the lack of progress the initiative of the 'wise men' was making in reforming the old organization (Al-Haj 2015d). A letter written to the 'wise men' by Sa'id in early December (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. II, pp. 307–9) and a subsequent meeting with the General Controller did not meet their demands. They were also unhappy about the fact that the meeting took place months after Partnership and Salvation had been launched, particularly considering the limited amount of time the initiative gave the General Controller to stay on. This, as well as the realization that the Muslim Brotherhood was in an increasingly precarious situation given its legal position, led the 'wise men' to openly express their desire to set up what they referred to as a 'new trend' (*tayyar jadid*) in the second half of December (Al-Haj 2015e; 'Unayzat 2015l).

On 31 December 2015, some 400 members of the IAF—including many prominent ones like Abu Bakr, al-Falahat, Mansur and al-Qudat—underlined the seriousness of their concerns by resigning from the party. In a justification of their decision, the group explained that they would remain members of the Muslim Brotherhood, but believed they could no longer function in a political party that was so closely aligned with an organization whose practices 'are rejected by our norms (*qiyamuna*) and our upbringing (*tarbiyatuna*) in the Islamic movement and that have come to the fore recently'. Another reason was 'the method followed in the treatment of the internal crisis and its collapse and in the administration of the matters of the party and the [Brotherhood] society, which have increased the damage extensively and have aggravated and complicated the crisis' (al-Falahat 2017b, vol. I, p. 195).

Thus, the Partnership and Salvation initiative was the third and final split-off from the Islamist movement in Jordan directly related to the issues raised by the announcement and launch of ZamZam in 2012. Ironically, considering that the leaders of the latter had always claimed that theirs was a broad and non-partisan initiative, ZamZam ended up founding the National Congress Party in 2016. The Partnership and Salvation initiative was turned into a political party in 2017. As such, the Islamist movement had split up into six different groups: the now defunct Muslim Brotherhood, its political party (the IAF), the 2001 split-off (the Islamic Center Party), the Permitted Muslim Brotherhood, the National Congress Party and the Partnership and Salvation Party, with the latter three having left over a period of just a few years. From the Muslim Brotherhood's point of view, it was perhaps bittersweet to hear the recent news of a possible merger between the Islamic Center Party and the National Congress Party (Petra 2021), because it appeared to show that the sought-after unity was apparently only possible between split-offs, not with the organization itself.

5. Conclusions

The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood went through a tumultuous time under the reign of King 'Abdallah II, during which the organization suffered unprecedented repression. At the same time, the Brotherhood had long been ideologically divided on a number of issues, which the common call for reform during the 'Arab Spring' seemed to hide for a while but which was eventually exacerbated by it. Given the attention paid to the Brotherhood's internal divisions in the existing secondary literature, it is, perhaps, tempting to ascribe the recent disintegration of the organization to these divisions, too. Indeed, these fissures did not disappear in the 2010s and clearly underpinned some of the internal conflicts within

the Muslim Brotherhood in that period. Admittedly, some of the above-mentioned issues on which the Brotherhood is divided, such as its identity and its Islamist ideology, hardly seemed to have played a role in the Brotherhood's most recent internal conflicts. Similarly, the group's division between Palestinian-Jordanians and East-Jordanians was implicitly present at best. (While ZamZam leaders from the Brotherhood were all East-Jordanians, for example, those not involved with the initiative were mixed.) Yet the organization's divisions on political participation and its openness did matter. Regarding the former, this was clear from the divisions over parliamentary participation in 2007, although shared support for an electoral boycott also proved a source of unity in 2010.

The Brotherhood's openness was a more prominent source of division among the organization's members in the period dealt with in this article. While the Executive Bureau under the guidance of Hammam Sa'id seems to have taken a more exclusivist approach by limiting the leadership to loyalists, insisting on preconditions when dealing with reconciliation efforts and rejecting the external ZamZam initiative, others took a more inclusivist approach. Interestingly, however, the latter group, while insisting on their inclusion in the leadership and being less demanding with regard to reconciliation initiatives, also included ideological hawks like Muhammad Abu Faris, thereby underlining that Islamist ideology was not the issue at stake here.

Still, the Brotherhood seemed able to continue functioning with these divisions, as it had done before, for years to come. Even the leadership crisis of 2008 did not cause the chief victim of this—Salim al-Falahat—or any other members to leave the organization. The crucial and direct cause of the relatively sudden disintegration of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood was therefore not regime repression, internal divisions or the 'Arab Spring', although these were all important background factors, but the launch of the ZamZam initiative in 2012 and the Brotherhood's response to it. This initiative was a strongly inclusivist attempt to strive for reform, which set in motion a chain of events that eventually forced everyone in the Muslim Brotherhood to take a side, leading to the falling apart of the organization. To be sure, this process of disintegration would not have gone so quickly in the absence of regime pressure, internal divisions and the 'Arab Spring', but it was ZamZam—not any of these other factors—that pushed the Brotherhood over the edge into a new, illegal and scattered existence.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Note

[1] These media reports were collected at the newspaper archive of the University of Jordan in Amman in 2013 or downloaded from the Internet. Because many of the online sources are not available anymore (because URLs no longer work or websites have been taken down), I have only relied on sources whose print edition I consulted or on those that are still available online.

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