Ordinary Copts: Ecumenism, Activism and Belonging in North American Cities, 1954-1992

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in History, York University, Toronto, Ontario

July 2020

ABSTRACT

This dissertation takes the oral testimonies of immigrants as the point of departure and seeks to restore agency to modern Coptic Orthodox Christians as a heterogeneous group. It charts the everyday social relations, religious duties and occupational demands of immigrant families and rejects a culturally driven interpretation that sees Copts as indistinguishable from their religion. In this materialist approach, immigration and the process of ethnicization that followed were conditioned by socialization in Egypt, spatial-temporal settlement patterns, and the integration of family and church in diversifying Canadian and US cities. It proposes two distinct but complimentary arguments. First, Copts who left urban centers in Egypt following the 1952 Free Officers revolution did not form insular, hermetically sealed communities following immigration. Instead, Copts integrated in Toronto, Montreal, and the New York and New Jersey area in two distinct ways: either choosing a two-way process of acculturation or cautious adaptation which best preserved their ethno-religious particularity. Second, Copts arrived with two kinds of ethnic cultures: sacred and secular. Whether church activism, cultural commemoration, or later diasporic nationalism, their lay initiatives were not uprooted from Egyptian soil and replanted in North America nor wholly reinvented with western values. Rather, institutional development was an adaptive process which drew on past experience in modern Egypt and the demands of their new environments. The two arguments about the material and spiritual aspects are grounded in the social world of Copts and the notion that a transnational analysis which attends to the heteroglossia of competing narratives among migrating actors is how we understand and appreciate this history.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Iid wahda matsa'afš (one hand cannot clap) is a common saying in Egypt. This dissertation was as much a product of painstaking research and long writing sessions as it was of collaborative friendships and heartening encouragement. I owe a great debt to the edits, prodding and dedication of my supervisory committee without whom none of this would have been possible. I am eminently grateful to Dr. Roberto Perin, my supervisor and companion on this journey. He never wavered in his support and elevated my writing and argumentation to new heights. I am also deeply thankful to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Gabriele Scardellato and Dr. Paul Sedra. The care and patience with which they whipped me into shape greatly improved the quality of this study. I also thank my examining committee for taking the time to read my massive dissertation over their summer breaks.

I was fortunate and very blessed to meet many lovely, warm and caring individuals around the world who guided and sheltered me. In Cairo, I was received by H.G. Bishop Ermia and steered on the right path. He was instrumental in arranging my meeting with Dr. Kamal Mourice and Dr. Sinout Shenouda. I am extremely grateful for their unwavering support and for extending a great amount of assistance in locating files pertaining to the life and work of Bishop Samuel. A special thank you to Dr. Helene Moussa, volunteer curator of the Coptic Museum of Canada, who was instrumental in connecting me with many families in Toronto who confided their delightful stories. I also wish to thank Nabil AbdelMalek who dedicated a great deal of attention generously as I navigated Montreal and without whom I would still be lost. In New York and New Jersey, my success was made possible with the unparalleled knowledge of Dr.

Candace Lukasik, Essam Iskandar and father Kyrillos Antonius. I also extend my deepest gratitude to H.G. Bishop David who welcomed me into his diocese and gave me a place to stay.

Whether over an hour or several days, many people confided stories with humor, patience and frank honesty. I am deeply indebted to all who gave of their time freely. Special thanks to Nabil and Mona Bechai, Dr. Sami Boulos, Dr. Atef Mo'awad, father Marcos A. Marcos, Nadia Naguib, and tasoni Samia. I also wish to thank Dr. Elhamy Khalil whose help cannot be overestimated. It is to all the friends, acquaintances and mentors I made along the way that I credit the humanity of this dissertation.

This research was supported by several scholarships which allowed me to travel and dedicate time to writing. My sincere thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship Program, the Avie Bennett Historica Canada Chair in Canadian History, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Department of History at York University. The logistical support I received from all the staff, particularly Karen Dancy and Lisa Hoffmann, was crucial when navigating the bureaucracy that came with those scholarship applications. Many thanks also to Dr. Thabit Abdullah, Dr. Sakis Gekas, Dr. Marcel Martel, and Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections head archivist Michael Moir for their dedication in building the Coptic Canadian History Project. I am also extremely grateful to members of the Immigration Group in Toronto and a network of critical scholars in Coptic Studies who pushed me to exceed my limitations. I especially thank Amy Fallas, Mina Ibrahim and Miray Philips.

Last but certainly not least, I thank my family and friends who were unrelenting in their patience, care and faith in me. My parents put up with my crazed and wandering mind with love. My partner nourished my body and soul. My closest friends pulled me out of my fog regularly. To all those near and dear to my heart: thank you!

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I generally rely on the guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* for the transliteration of Arabic words. However, for streets and places I have used the common spelling in tourist guides and maps. In the spelling of names, I maintain the preferred spelling by interviewees and the authors of published texts.

Whether they yell or speak softly, they are expressing the realities of living history. Ever since I became a member of their company, the numerous conversations I've had there have been unforgettable.

Naguib Mahfouz, *Karnak Café*

Introduction
Understanding the Coptic Immigrant Experience

This is a work of historical revisionism which takes the oral testimonies of immigrants as the point of departure and seeks to restore agency to modern Coptic Orthodox Christians as a heterogeneous group. A minority in Egypt, this is the demographically largest Christian group in the Middle East. *Aqbāt al-mahjar* (Coptic émigrés) as a scholarly term, a category of analysis and an historical experience must be reconceptualized. With few valued exceptions, the limited scholarship on modern Copts presupposes a dichotomous framing of *Aqbāt al-mahjar*: the "good," pious Copts in the lands of emigration or the "bad" dissidents corrupted in diaspora.[1] Central to this stereotypical characterization is that you understand a Copt by understanding their Church and spiritual experience in Egypt, which is constant and monolithic. I reject this essentialism and instead put the accent on the material lives of ordinary Coptic *im*migrants and their integration in North American cities. Drawing on scholarship in Coptic Studies, Immigration and Ethnicity, Middle East Studies, oral history, and critical post-colonial theory, I primarily ask: how do we understand the Copts and their varied experiences as immigrants?

This dissertation proposes two distinct but complimentary arguments. First, Copts who left urban centers in Egypt following the 1952 Free Officers Revolution did not form insular, hermetically sealed communities in North America. Instead, Copts integrated in Toronto,

[1] This notion of a good or bad Copt is present in some form in all scholarship on immigrant Copts. However, it is most explicitly stated in Yvonne Haddad and Joshua Donovan, "Good Copt, Bad Copt: Competing Narratives on Coptic Identity in Egypt and the United States," *Studies in World Christianity* 19.3 (2013): 208-232. The exceptions to a dominantly essentialist literature include recent studies on the Egyptian context by: Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire*, (Princeton University Press, 2008); Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers, and Education in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (London: E.B. Tauris, 2011); Carolyn M. Ramzy, "Singing Heaven on Earth: Coptic Counter-Publics and Popular song at Egyptian Mulid Festivals," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 49.3 (2017): 375-394.

Montreal, and the New York and New Jersey area in two distinct ways: either choosing a two-way process of acculturation or cautious adaptation which best preserved their ethno-religious particularity. Integration followed familiar patterns for migrants who left multiethnic and cosmopolitan Egyptian cities in a modern nation. Copts were already urbanized and entered Canada and the United States at a somewhat higher level than the other new immigrants, who were mostly landless labourers or peasants.[2] As a new immigrant group seeking to make a place for themselves in pluralist US and Canadian cities, the Copts did not remain perpetual émigrés but instead entered the workforce, bought homes and participated in social and cultural celebrations with others from the Middle East. The immigrants' church that they established sought out support from North American religious leaders in order to flourish.

Second, Copts arrived with two kinds of ethnic cultures: sacred and secular. Whether church activism, cultural commemoration, or later diasporic nationalism, their lay initiatives were not uprooted from Egyptian soil and replanted in North America nor wholly reinvented with Western values. Rather, institutional development was an adaptive process which drew on past experience in modern Egypt and the demands of their new environments. Intra-communal debates in the US and Canada about clerical authority and the defense of persecuted Copts in Egypt produced multipolar discussions that challenge the presumed rupture of immigration and complicate assumptions that the Coptic experience is marginal to national histories. Coptic immigrants were a part of Egyptian history, Canadian history and US history. The Cold War period inaugurated changes to relations between the three nations, their immigration policies, public sentiments about diversity, and economic development which affected the lives of

[2] John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, (Indiana UP, 1985): 6-15. Bodnar recast the immigrant experience from an assimilationist model by showing that the immigrant had already encountered capitalism and its negative influences in the 'old world.' Families transplanted their accumulated knowledge and experience. Drawing inspiration from his work, I do not ignore religion's mediating force as he did.

migrating actors. The transnational character of their activities was neither complicit with nor complacent about the obligations of leaders in the Church, community, or nation.

The two arguments about the material and spiritual lives of Copts are grounded in their socialization in Egypt and the notion that a transnational analysis is necessary to understand their immigrant experience. In his seminal book, *The Uprooted*, noted immigration historian Oscar Handlin began by saying: I sought to write of the immigrant in America, and then I realized that the immigrant is American history.[3] Since then the field of Immigration and Ethnicity has embraced the idea that immigrants' lives do not remain perpetually bound to the country of origin nor begin anew in the country of adoption.[4] In thinking through Handlin's oft quoted introductory sentence, I realized that I sought to write the story of Coptic immigrants in Canada and the United States, but then found that immigrant Copts were also Egyptian history. This reorientation is important. Single, middle-class professionals and young families left behind economic hardships, political marginalization, or religious persecution. Their decisions to emigrate reveal as much about social, political and cultural change in Egypt as they do the changing nature of Canadian and US societies following the Second World War.

When I started this research six years ago, I knew that I wanted to tell a different story of the Copts. The existing literature rarely spoke to my experience or the stories I grew up with in my family. Filiopietism—an often excessive veneration of the community and its traditions—lent coherence to a collective narrative of survival and continuity within the Church and as a part of a cohesive faith community. This approach has significant power to define the parameters of belonging and to offer flat, moving images of people's otherwise complex lives. As I conducted

[3] Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted; the Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People,* Second ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1973).
[4] Roberto Perin, "National Histories and Ethnic History in Canada," *Cahiers de Recherche Sociologique* 20 (1993): 113-128.

archival research in Cairo and Alexandria and interviewed immigrants in North American cities, I discovered people who in living between cultures and across borders physically and emotionally grappled with the contradictions of belonging simultaneously to multiple geographies. In our many conversations, they expressed the realities of living history and the power of individuals to make a place for their autobiographies within established narratives.

My focus is on Coptic Orthodox Christians. I use the terms Copts and Coptic Christians for followers of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Generally speaking, all Christian churches in Egypt are modified by the term Coptic—as in the Roman Catholic Coptic Church, the Armenian Coptic Church, and so on. Yet in Egyptian political and historical discourse, Copts (*al-Aqbāt*) invariably refers to the adherents of Coptic Orthodox Christianity, hence my usage. When Catholic or Protestant Coptic Christians are discussed, the appropriate denominational modifier is added to the term Coptic in the text. I assess the experiences of Orthodox Copts alongside other Egyptian Christians because intermarriage was common and the distinctions between them in the cultural, ideological, communal, or political sense are porous at best. To understand the Orthodox Copts, I eschew essentialism and aim to frame their stories alongside other immigrants from Egypt: Protestant and Catholic Copts, Egyptian Muslims, Jews and European Christian groups such as Greeks and Italians whose last place of residence was Egypt.

To write in religious affiliation as a distinctive and distinguishing marker of identity is a politically charged debate in Egypt and its diasporas. I make religious categories that have long permeated Egyptian society evident by naming in the text the designation each interviewee adopted during the interview process. I believe that the transparency of religious categories when priority is given to the national affiliation of migrating actors is misleading, and contributes to the erasure of privilege often attached to membership within the dominant religious group in a

society historically configured by minority/majority claims.[5] Confessional diversity and shared folk practices mattered as much as the distinctive "devotional rites and spiritual culture which separated religious groups into Muslim believers and *dhimmī*s."[6] Legal and societal divisions configured sectarian identities—strong allegiance to one religious and/or political group. Religion mattered because it structured a group's material experience.

This study is entitled *Ordinary Copts: Ecumenism, Activism and Belonging in North American Cities* because I chart the everyday social relations, religious duties and occupational demands of immigrant families. I reject a culturally driven interpretation that sees Copts as indistinguishable from their religion. The historical works on Mennonite immigration came to the same conclusion: these groups changed over time in reaction to their environment. Similar to the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites of historian Royden Loewen's *Family, Church and Market*, this dissertation asserts that immigrant Copts' "behavior was characterized neither by unilinear cultural assimilation nor by static, unswerving persistence." Rather, the early arrivals sought to acculturate in such a way that the essentials of their past lives continued. These essentials included occupational success, cosmopolitan "social relationships and boundaries, and ascriptive values and perceptions." Copts "achieved a high degree of continuity" in their social activities and professional advancement.[7] The cautious adaptation which followed allowed for the reformulation of church programs usually to safeguard against the society, marketplace and political environments. My materialist approach views immigration and the process of ethnicization as conditioned by socialization in Egypt, spatial-temporal settlement patterns, and the integration of family and church in diversifying Canadian and US cities.

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[5] For my inspiration, see: Constance Backhouse, *Colour-coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950*, (University of Toronto Press, 1999): 9; Ussama Makdisi, *Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World*, (University of California Press, 2019): 34.
[6] Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt*, (New York: Oxford UP, 2011): 5.
[7] Royden Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930*, (University of Illinois Press, 1993): 262-269.

The experiences of Coptic immigrants cannot be captured by the prescriptive ideals of the Church or group studies which do not distinguish between individuals. Experiences varied by skin colour, gender, class, region, religious affiliation, generation, and place. People often emigrated for a variety of personal, religious and socio-economic reasons. Their everyday lives were particular, contingent and reflected multiple associations. By explicating the historical trajectory of social and cultural life in Egypt and its diasporas (a form of politicized ethnicity with a home-oriented gaze), this history is of particular relevance to all migrating populations that suffer under threat of persecution in the homeland, cast dissidents as disgruntled outliers and increasingly retreat to a defensible position of insularity reinforced by the expansion of spiritual leaders' power over lay initiative.

In the following seven chapters, I document the place of the Copts in modern Egypt, their rationale for emigrating, the structural limits set by immigration policies and sovereign borders, and the contested process of settlement, community building and institutionalization. Intra-communal conflict became in time a central element of relations with the Church in Egypt and between early and later arrivals in North American cities. This was a consequence of socio-economic differences, the timing of their immigration, and the stage of cultural development in both sending and receiving societies. Family, church and market were interrelated but by the mid-1970s religious ideology tempered relationships with other groups in North America. New immigrants arrived from a society in Egypt which had become increasingly polarized along confessional lines. One of the recurring themes in the latter chapters is the conflict between the clergy and the laity in immigrant churches in which the former emerged victorious. Whereas the clergy in many ways responded to the needs of the people, secular associations were unable to exert real leadership in the community in large part because executives were indifferent to these

needs. Cultural initiatives were committed to a vision for acculturation. Political activists sought to defend persecuted co-religionists in Egypt despite opposition from Church leadership. Ultimately, lay activists formed little, exclusive groups unable to establish lasting institutions.

The power and authority with which the Church and its clergy can today speak on behalf of *a* community is a product of clerical success. Yet this power is fragile. Debates continue between clergy and laity over control of the Church in Egypt and among Copts in immigrant communit*ies*. This historical present demands that we attend to competing narratives which have long coloured the Coptic immigrant experience. Existing scholarship on immigrant Copts has ignored this contested past, uncritically accepted the homogeneity of a single faith community, and as a consequence perpetuated a misleading myth of exceptionalism. The Coptic immigrant experience is a heteroglossia of varied and opposing voices as people brought with them particular experiences from the homeland and established themselves in new environments. This movement offered opportunities for immigrants to rebuild or reinvent their old life worlds. Assessing the material and spiritual aspects of Copts' experiences in transnational perspective is how we understand this historical trajectory and appreciate their agency in Canada and the US.

IMMIGRATION, ETHNICITY AND CRITICAL COPTIC STUDIES

This is the first book-length treatment of Coptic immigrants from a historical perspective. In order to understand the trajectory of immigrant integration, I place this group squarely within Egyptian history and Cold War North American societies to counter past condescension by Middle East scholars and simple dichotomies in Coptic Studies. By incorporating scholarship in Immigration and Ethnicity, I aim for a critical reorientation of the study of Egypt's Copts. Historians in Middle East Studies have often ignored this Christian faith community and

assessed their experiences through notions of a *dhimmī*, second-class minority population which is marginal to Egyptian national history.[8] Much of the scholarship in Coptic Studies has done little to correct that imbalance. Aside from historians Paul Sedra and Heather Sharkey who bridge the two fields and place the Copts within both Egyptian political developments and the colonial policies of Western Christian missionaries, the majority have privileged an approach which centres Church history and highlights insularity as the defacto reality of the Copts.[9] When immigrants are discussed, they are not studied as a part of their country of origin or new national contexts. Following emigration, Copts have been characterized as having reconstituted their devotion to the Church in seemingly empty environments. As a consequence of this presumed invisibility in Egypt and insularity in North America, a vocal numerical minority has been judged to be assimilated in the *mahjar* (emigrant lands).

Instead, I aim to capture the dynamic stories of a mobile population of 'transnationals.' As citizens of a particular nation, Copts participated in social, cultural, political, and economic developments in Egypt, Canada or the United States. As transnational migrants they extended and blended these experiences to form a distinct transitory culture. The result was a "mundane transnationalism" which combined religious and secular symbols, media consumption and the traffic in nostalgia commodities. This approach is a product of my sources which was refined through two important texts. I build on the theory of banal nationalism first proposed by Michael Billig in his 1995 book by the same name and employed in the Egyptian context by historian

[8] The majority of Middle East scholarship ignores the Copts, see for example: Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: UCP, 1991 edition [1988]); Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers in the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882 - 1954*, (American University in Cairo Press, 1998); Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminism, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt*, (American University in Cairo Press, 2011).

[9] For comprehensive assessments see Heather Sharkey and Paul Sedra cited above. Coptic Studies still privileges histories such as Jill Kamil, *Christianity in the Land of the Pharaohs: The Coptic Orthodox Church*, (London: Routledge, 2002). Divisive studies which highlight sectarianism include, Sana S. Hasan, *Christians Versus Muslims in Modern Egypt: The Century-Long Struggle for Coptic Equality*, (Oxford UP, 2003) and Samuel Tadros, *Motherland Lost: The Egyptian and Coptic Quest for Modernity* (Hoover Institution Press, 2013).

Ziad Fahmy as mundane nationalism.[10] My contribution is to widen the lens beyond national paradigms. I capture the possibility of multiple and relational loyalties that account for people's transnational and transcultural lives. Mundane transnationalism here refers to the ordinary and everyday representations of the nation and a shared sense of belonging expressed through the use of flags, expressions and phrases, sporting events, religious rituals, food, films, and television. What differentiates it from mundane nationalism is that the use of deictic words can simultaneously and genuinely refer to two distinct nation states or national symbols. Without a doubt, immigrants can and do distinguish between past and present, but the sense of belonging and rootedness persists and must be accounted for.

No immigrant group is one whole thing, complete in itself and unchanging. Nor is any society easily capable of assimilating an entire ethnic group as if it is null and void of particularity. In critiques throughout the 1990s, historians Rudolph Vecoli, Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and others warned of the dangers of reducing immigrants to any simplistic explanatory schema. As Iacovetta cautioned, "the immigrant experience, however, like human behaviour generally, is really many diverse experiences and responses; it is a social phenomenon shot through with such a multiplicity of meanings that it cannot adequately be captured by the dichotomy: agent versus victim."[11] In their constant motion, invention, intervention and negotiation, immigrants were actors navigating internal and external forces across multiple geographies. They sought out identities commensurate with their needs.[12]

Nothing encapsulates this more for me personally than the words of Coptic immigrant and church activist Fayek Ishak, former professor of English literature at Lakehead University.

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[10] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London: Sage Publications, 1995) and Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture*, (Stanford UP, 2011).
[11] Franca Iacovetta, "The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History," *The Canadian Historical Association, Canada's Ethnic Group Series* 22 (1997):13-14.
[12] Rudolph Vecoli, et al., "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12.1 (1992): 17.

In a 1983 article published with an Ontario Coptic community journal, he wrote that, "the world in which the Coptic immigrants are living and the social milieu in which they are gradually incorporated are neither purely Coptic nor purely North American ... Its roots are embedded in the ancient past, but its stems are budding in the new milieu. The old tradition keeps it lively ... The new setting adds a fresh perspective and the whole combination or the whole complex structure has its own uniqueness and attraction."[13] It is this movement, back and forth and in-between cultures that I seek to capture, one informed by the timing of Coptic immigration.

Few historians have studied immigration to North America in the second half of the twentieth century. Sean Mills' *A Place in the Sun* is one recent monograph on a non-white immigrant group in the age of anti-colonial revolutions which centers oral history in the study of Haitian immigration to Québec. Similar to many immigrants from the Third World, Copts were admitted in very small numbers from the late-1950s because of their training and education. They were like the South Asian, Iraqi, Iranian, Filipino, and Caribbean immigrants in this period. A greater number of people from formerly non-preferred countries arrived with the introduction of less restrictive immigration policies which led to the Points System in Canada and the Hart-Cellar Act in the United States.[14] Building on this growing literature and the concept of immigrant "brokers" outlined by Lisa Mar in her analysis of Chinese immigration, I reveal that clerical and lay leaders fostered transnational connections vital to the movement and integration

[13] Fayek Ishak, "Continental Study: Views and Reviews on the Copts in Canada and the USA (3)," Ed. Fayek Ishak, *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa* 4 (1983): 49.

[14] Hugh Johnston, "The Development of the Punjabi Community in Vancouver since 1961," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 20.2 (1988): 1-19; Ibrahim Hayani, "Arabs in Canada: Assimilation or Integration?" in *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, edited by Michael Suleiman (1999): 284-303; Glenda Tibe Bonifacio, "I Care for You, Who Cares for Me? Transitional Services for Filipino Live-in Caregivers in Canada," in Marlene Epp and Franca Iacovetta, *Sisters or Strangers: Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (University of Toronto Press, 2nd Edition, 2017): 252-70; Nadia Jones–Gailani, "Feminist Oral History and Assessing the Dueling Narratives of Iraqi Women in Diaspora," in Marlene Epp and Franca Iacovetta, *Sisters or Strangers: Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (University of Toronto Press, 2nd Edition, 2017).

of Copts in North American cities.[15] As mediators who shaped inter-ethnic networks of exchange and sociability, "brokers" produced what Dirk Hoerder called a "transcultural space" that he defined as a process of transculturation, "of individuals *and* of societies changing themselves by integration of diverse life-ways into a new dynamic whole. Subsequent interactions and transcultural lives will again change this new—and transitory—culture."[16] My study of Coptic immigrants (not émigrés) offers culture not as a template or set of given rules, because in this form it will fade. Rather, as Kathleen Conzen has argued, culture is a process formed out of "socially produced structures of meaning engendered by and expressed in public behaviors, languages, images, [and] institutions" which adapted and transformed a living culture.[17]

This analysis relies on and privileges the stories immigrants confided in oral interviews. As a consequence, their life worlds had a tremendous impact on my perspective. I prioritize the history and collective memory of 'ordinary' Coptic immigrants. To speak of the 'ordinary' is to adopt the perspective of social historians that ask us to look past the "great men of history" and seek the experiences of migrants, minorities, women, children, and the societies in which they live and act. Terms such as ordinary, everyday and mundane do not minimize the importance of people's lived experience. Rather, they force us to take social relations and everyday engagements seriously. It is in the realm of the mundane and everyday where ordinary people had to rework, reconstruct and transform the many meanings of identity and nation in ways meaningful to their local milieu.

Aqbāt al-mahjar as a term and a category hides people's presence and aspirations. From community studies such as Mariz Tadros' *Copts at the Crossroads* to expansive theoretical

[15] Lisa R. Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1885-1945*, (Oxford UP, 2010); Sean Mills, *A Place in the Sun: Haiti, Haitians, and the Remaking of Quebec*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2016).
[16] Dirk Hoerder, "Historians and Their Data: The Complex Shift from Nation-State Approaches to the Study of People's Transcultural Lives," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25.4 (2006): 91.
[17] Kathleen Conzen, "Mainstreams and Side Channels: The Localization of Immigrant Cultures," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11.1 (Fall, 1991): 12.

works such as Saba Mahmood's *Religious Difference in a Secular Age*, Copts have been characterized first and foremost as a faith community. By continuing to focus on their religion in Egypt as the persistent defining marker of identity, ordinary immigrant Copts have been cast as merely a secondary, single unit for analysis.[18] Yet religion was not their only reality. Religion mattered because it structured the group's material experience in Egypt and religious symbols survived because they served a community maintaining function. Where in Egypt their Christianity became a core aspect of their identity, it was flexible and following immigration to North America it could be compartmentalized and set as one of other identifiers. Religion's function and significance was never static but debated and contested over time. This is why I favour the concept of hetroglossia—of varied and opposing voices.

My methodology privileges the heteroglossia of competing narratives among ordinary transnationals. It aims to not reduce the varieties of experiences into a single unit, but rather to explore the ordering of relations that generate varieties of lived experience within a coordinated whole. Social historians are wary of theoretical absolutes and, as Dorothy Smith observed, we question the "very grounds of knowledge" and turn to the experience of the everyday. Migration, social activities and community relations were the achievements of people "whose coordinated and coordinating activities bring about the connectedness of statements about the world." This is a methodology which draws on a world "they index during that time, in that place, and among those who participate in the social act, and "always potentiates a world in common as ... known

[18] Mariz Tadros, *Copts at the Crossroads: The Challenges of Building Inclusive Democracy in Egypt*, (American University in Cairo Press: 2013); Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton UP, 2016).

in common."[19] I take the particular as a starting point and proceed to its meaning in light of a specific context mediated by a plurality of viewpoints.[20]

IN THEIR COMPANY: HETEROGLOSSIA AS METHODOLOGY

I prioritize the oral testimonies of 44 individuals gathered between 2016 and 2019 in northeastern cities in the United States (New Jersey and the New York Metropolitan area) and Canada (Quebec and Ontario). The writing of history has shifted from the Rankean notion of "how it actually happened" to assessing subjectivities, social constructs and cultural production. As oral historian Peter Burke has argued, the study of memory and the interpretation of oral testimony is a process of analyzing the narrative form and social dimension of remembering.[21] In assessing experiences and events through immigrants' recollections, we gain a deeper appreciation for how moments in Egypt's modern history—multi-ethnic cosmopolitanism, occupational exclusion, state nationalization and anti-colonial protests, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and visible expressions of Islamicization on university campuses—informed subsequent religious polarization that bear distinctive signatures which adhere in their repetition and configured how immigrants perceived and interpreted what happened in their time. Yet history produces a kind of writing whose rhetorical status is distinct from that produced in a novel. This dissertation is written in a spirit of critical questioning, introspection and puzzlement which articulates the dilemma of the immigrant, the ethnic scholar and the minority.

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[19] Dorothy E. Smith, *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations* (Toronto: UTP, 1999): 98, 126-127.
[20] Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory," in Peter Burke ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1992): 106-107. The subjectivity of storytelling, a perceived inability of narrative to penetrate underlying patterns in society, the idea that memory imposes a predetermined aesthetic pattern on the past, among other objections, have been used as arguments to critique qualitative analysis that takes as its core source of evidence the recollections of historical agents, whether textual or oral. I delve into these debates more fully in chapter 2. I insist that autobiography and oral testimony are vital to our understanding of historical events and the social details of life.
[21] Peter Burke, "Overture: The New Social History, the Past and the Future," in Peter Burke ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1992): 1-23.

Relying on a snowball technique for the collection of oral testimonies, I sat down with interviewees for conversations guided by a list of questions. However, the list served as a reference and I instead prioritized what the interviewee had to say. Adopting a life history approach, the conversations focused on central events in people's lives and my later critical interpretation of immigrants' testimonies. I conducted interviews with 31 men (of whom seven were clergymen) and 13 women. This sample is representative of two migratory waves. First, the majority were "early Copts" who arrived after the mid-1950s. Second, seven interviewees (four men, 1 woman and 2 clergy) were "new immigrants" who arrived after the mid-1970s. The first generation of Copts were single, male professionals, including graduate students, architects and engineers. They shared much in common, having completed graduate degrees in urban universities and emigrated in search of occupational success. Clergymen were selected to serve in North America from the same social strata and at times were immigrants themselves who returned temporarily to Egypt to be ordained. Female Copts arrived either independently or following marriage to join earlier arrivals. Early Copts formed emergent middle-class associations and church boards. After his investiture in 1971, Anwar Sadat began a process of *Infitah* (opening up) of the Egyptian economy and empowered Islamist elements in Egypt to counter Gamal Abdel Nasser's Arab socialist policies and its supporters. In time, this trajectory affected the character of immigrants arriving after 1975. Christian and Muslim families emigrated with less skills, education and heightened religious fervour. Applying at the Canadian and US embassies from among the working and lower-middle classes, they included small businessmen and engineers with university degrees but lacked proficiency in French or English.

Two problems of representation arose in the process of conducting and interpreting the oral histories. As a study of a patriarchal Orthodox ethno-religious group which venerates its

religious leaders, often it was the stories of clergy that Copts emphasized. First, both men and women tended to undervalue their own histories and experience. Second, women whose lives were missing in the archival sources, gave the narratives of men greater weight. These obstacles encouraged me to be reflexive and reflective about the gendered nature of immigrants' experiences. Men tended to craft personal ego stories, where vigor in occupations and public activities defined their leadership roles in the community. Women tended to be the keepers of family stories and to situate their experiences in networks of people, as contingent and relative to those of others. Drawing on feminist oral history methodologies, I learned to listen and interpret these often obscured voices in my writing. Women showed in their recollections an autonomy and brought me into their triple-work day as mothers, professionals and executive members of church committees or associations. By paying equal attention to men and women and situating the competing narratives of ordinary Copts alongside those of clergy, I sought to normalize the validity of a heteroglossia of immigrant voices.[22]

I asked immigrants to be vulnerable and to share their stories—often heartwarming, sometimes heartbreaking. Conversations and reminiscences revealed as much as they obscured, and allowed me to delve into the mental worlds of Copts who reshaped their lives in North America. I also read personal diaries, private correspondences and was invited into people's homes to view family photographs. As a part of this 'community of memory,' I was committed to taking Egyptians and their worldviews seriously. This research project remained grounded in the various settings of people, and sensitive to their perceptions, thought categories, language, and local idioms. Within such contexts, I present the stories of Copts, their memories and shared

[22] My insights fit within larger patterns observed by practitioners of oral history and critical feminist theory. See, Joan Sangster, "Telling our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," *Women's History Review* 3.1 (1994): 5-28; Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembryzycki and Franca Iacovetta eds., *Beyond Women's Words: Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Routledge, 2018).

experiences, in a way that respects their worldviews without prescribing a determinist framework that privileges religion, persecution, or assimilation.

Amid the competing narratives, certain patterns did emerge to help explain the contested process of Coptic immigrant integration and institutionalization. The majority of early middle-class professionals sought to acculturate on arrival in American or Canadian spaces of sociability. Following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, more families and poorer, less skilled immigrants arrived. They chose instead cautious adaptation: "a flexible concept that implies change but not necessarily complete conformity."[23] By drawing on the vernacular of group particularity in the "ethnic revival" United States and expanding on the language of a distinct Coptic Canadian contribution to multiculturalism, Coptic immigrants framed their activities through narratives steeped in a history of a minority's contribution to, and survival in, Egypt.[24] It was argued by lay and clerical elites that as a model minority in their homeland, the Copts could become a contributing force to North American markets and religious cultures. As historian Marlene Epp stated of Mennonite refugees who arrived in Canada following the Second World War, "the existence of a 'social memory' or a master narrative ... is particularly relevant for a society or ethnic group ... that imbues history with religious significance and for whom ... the memory of history is a religious duty."[25] Celebrating saints, martyrs and patriarchs, church activists and cultural events organizers could agree that their past experiences made them well-positioned to contribute to their new host societies as Copts *of* Egypt.

At the same time, a diasporic long-distance nationalism developed among the most vocal segment of the immigrant population following a drastic escalation in sectarian violence in Egypt

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[23] Marilyn Barber and Murray Watson, *Invisible Immigrants: The English in Canada Since 1945*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015): 100.
[24] Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006) and Matthew Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*, (Harvard UP, 2006).
[25] Marlene Epp, *Women without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*, (UTP, 1999): 14.

under President Anwar Sadat. In using the term "diaspora" I insist on the politicized nature of ethnic identity formation which is distinguished by a home-oriented gaze. At its root, the term recalls the Jewish, Armenian and African diasporas and denotes the trauma of dispersal and dislocation associated with persecution and exile. Building on studies by historians of Irish immigration Kevin Kenny and Donald Akenson, I frame diaspora not just as another term for population movements, but a shared understanding of the world migration creates. It is mobilized by forces acting in multipolar and transnational perspectives to make sense of a persistent sense of loss and concern for the homeland.[26]

Similar to Iraq's Assyrian or Chaldean Christians and Lebanon's Maronites, Coptic Christians emphasized their confessional identity over and above affiliation with an Arab identity. Copts identify as the true descendants of the Pharaohs and inheritors of an ancient and glorious civilization. In their writing, prominent immigrant activists laid claim to a fraternity with western Christians while insisting on an inherent cultural superiority that imbues descendants of this Christian group intrinsic civilizational capital in new environments. This connection was strengthened by the travels and sermons of bishops from Egypt who spoke of ambassadors to the Kingdom of God spreading the seed of Christ's word. Myths of ethnic election and mission, attachment to sacred territories, memories of golden ages and of heroes, saints and sages, and ideals of collective destiny through sacrifice all served to imbue immigration with religious significance.[27] Rising discrimination and austerity in the homeland strengthened a sense of duty for those now living in Canada and the United States. The diasporic

[26] Kevin Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford UP, 2013) and Donald Akenson, "The Historiography of English-Speaking Canada and the Concept of Diaspora: a Skeptical Appreciation," *Canadian Historical Review* 76.3 (1995): 377-409.
[27] Allon Gal, Athena Leoussi, and Anthony Smith eds., *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, past and Present*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

nationalism which developed unfolded within a unique context of intolerance, fear and anxiety. Activism in-between and across borders undermined a state narrative of national unity in Egypt.

I challenge a reductive and, in my mind, dangerous scholarly literature on the Coptic diaspora which has in recent years argued that the patriotic passions of diasporic organizations were marginal and lie outside the typical faithfulness of clergy and parishioners in Egypt and North America.[28] The dominant critique is that the human rights that this numerical minority espoused aligned with globalization projects in Western countries, with relative disregard for societal norms and the interests of co-religionists in Egypt. Seen as complicit in the slandering of Islam in the west, Coptic immigrant activists have since been discounted as antithetical to Egyptian unity and, in extreme cases, an excuse used by Islamist groups to enact further violence against Copts in the homeland. Yet the implication that diasporic activists are guilty of inciting foreign intervention, bringing harm to co-religionists in Egypt, or simply intellectually naïve has lost sight of the material concerns of the speakers. Rights discourses were sometimes the only viable option for the marginalized and oppressed to enter the political arena. My approach aims to reorient this nascent scholarship which has maligned the motivations of diasporic activists.

SOCIALIZATION IN EGYPT AND ITS IMPACT ON IMMIGRANT ACCULTURATION

To understand Coptic ecumenism, activism and belonging in North American cities, I examine the church activism of Sunday school leaders, the cosmopolitanism of cultural events organizers, and the diasporic long-distance nationalism of political activists. Among Copts, clerical figures were always present in accounts that were ideologically and theologically partial. The success of

[28] Paul Rowe, "Four Guys and a Fax Machine? Diasporas, new Information Technologies, and the Internationalization of Religion in Egypt," *Journal of Church and State* 43.1 (2001): 87; Haddad and Donovan, "Good Copt, Bad Copt," 208-232; Nadia Marzouki, "The U.S. Coptic Diaspora and the Limit of Polarization," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 14:3 (2016), 261-276.

what appears in retrospect as a unique brand of Egyptian Social Gospel thought by the 1930s created a distinctive globalized spirituality. Its later blending with ecumenical social action movements in the 1960s elevated social involvement and the promotion of Egypt's image abroad to a religious significance expressed in prayers, hymns, associational life, and publications. As the Nasserite Egyptian state fashioned its language and institutions around an increasingly secular political culture, proponents of socially-minded spiritual reform succeeded in expanding social services and gathering a popular base through impassioned prayer and religious education. Commitment to the Church and nation was maintained by a transnational print culture that linked an imagined community of the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt.

While church activists drew on their socialization in Sunday schools, many cultural events organizers instead sought to continue their cosmopolitan lives in Egypt following emigration. Copts who sought to recreate a past cosmopolitanism—class and ethnic dynamics of vernacular exchange between people and communities—among a diversity of multinational and multiethnic immigrants from Egypt, conceived of their integration not as a one-way assimilation but a two-way process of acculturation. Their Coptic distinctiveness could be maintained among other Egyptians in social and cultural spaces: the parish, social club and restaurants. Class was not just a matter of economic status or position of employment, but also the opportunities a privileged upbringing provided. Where you lived, who you associated with and the kind of education and training you received in Egypt all affected your social ranking. The manner of dress, attitude, demeanour, accessories, property, and 'value' in society—that is, a professional career, philanthropic activities, spending, among others—all operated in varying degrees to define and delimit belonging. Thus, the Coptic cosmopolitan middle-class executives of cultural associations sought to recreate their social lives in bustling urban centres. They collaborated with

Muslims, Jews and European Christians from Egypt who were likewise socialized in how to dress, act and respond in a way befitting their class status. Copts' cosmopolitan lives affected how this middle-class conceived of Coptic sacred and secular spaces after emigration.

Cosmopolitanism in Egypt is the subject of much interest and scholarly debate. Academic scholarship in the past two decades has been famously divided into two camps. These might be called "nostalgic cosmopolitanism" and "anti-nostalgic cosmopolitanism." Nostalgics include scholars such as Sahar Hamouda, Mohamed Awad, Michael Haag, and Robert Ilbert. Anti-nostalgics include scholars such as Khaled Fahmy, Hala Halim and Will Hanley. Of particular interest has been the cosmopolitan character of Alexandria. On the one hand, the discourse of cosmopolitism evokes nostalgia for the city of Lawrence Durrell, E.M. Forester and Constantine Cavafy, who wrote of "the spirit of a place" defined by bygone harmony and splendor, to counteract a sense of modern squalor.[29] The narrative of nostalgic cosmopolitism begins with the rise of Muhammad Ali, its slow decline with nationalism personified by Saad Zaghlul and decay in post-cosmopolitan squalor under Nasser and post-colonial nationalism. The Alexandria, and indeed Egypt, which remained was a 'victim' of Arabization and nationalization.

On the other hand, anti-nostalgic scholars have insisted on the necessity for a revisionist history. The supposedly modern golden age (1910 - 1950) ignored the material deprivations of the bulk of the Egyptian population under the veneer of a European (read colonial) splendor. Cosmopolitanism in historical writing valorized tolerance and peaceful coexistence while insisting that diverse ethnic groups were segregated with little interaction between them. For anti-nostalgics, missing was "the stench, filth and dirt ... the narrow, overcrowded, smelly streets

[29] Khaled Fahmy, "For Cavafy, with Love and Squalor: Some Critical Notes on the History and Historiography of Modern Alexandria," in *Alexandria, Real and Imagined*, Anthony Hirst and Michael Silk eds., (Hempshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2004): 269.

that westerners bemoan."[30] As Hala Halim argued, there has been an attendant lack of attention to the class and ethnic dynamics, since, designating cities such as Alexandria cosmopolitan "betrays the extent of the collusion of this cosmopolitanism with colonialism."[31]

I agree with the necessity for such a revisionist history. However, in anti-nostalgic critiques the 'other' to which cosmopolitan Alexandria is always in reference was not the native Copt. Like others, historian Khaled Fahmy discounted those Coptic "Alexandrians of Egyptian origin consistently absent from this 'Alexandria we have lost'."[32] Do Copts not exist in this dichotomy of European foreigner and Egyptian native? Or, do they rather complicate this easy divide? In her sweeping critique of cosmopolitanism scholarship, May Hawas observed that, "in a conservative city, academic cosmopolitanism doesn't translate well into 'cosmopolitanism of the street' because academic cosmopolitanism has no way to include the religiously conservative majority of the city."[33] Overt focus on the European and modern splendor has relegated the religious to the margins, and the revisionist history has since done little to correct that imbalance. Copts equally set boundaries for their physical space, marking connections and exposing tensions central to understanding Egypt's social and religious landscapes. This Coptic cosmopolitanism followed early immigrants to their new environments and affected social relations and class dynamics with new immigrants arriving from a confessional Egypt.

The third group discussed is a minority of Coptic immigrants who expressed diasporic sentiments which were commensurate with Coptic rights discourse in Egypt. Their motivations and activities were neither simply a product of immigration nor marginal to our understanding of competing narratives in Coptic immigrant communities. They carried ideas about the importance

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[30] Fahmy, "For Cavafy, with Love and Squalor," 271-2.
[31] Hala Halim, *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive* (NY: Fordham UP, 2013): 22.
[32] Fahmy, "For Cavafy, with Love and Squalor," 272.
[33] May Hawas, "How Not to Write on Cosmopolitan Alexandria," *Politics/Letters,* May 28, 2018.

of independent lay initiative and the defense of Coptic rights with them to their countries of adoption. They lived transnationally, supporting co-religionists in Egypt while working, studying and raising families in North American cities. Mobilizing after a major sectarian incident outside Cairo in 1972, they affected how the Coptic Orthodox Church and Egyptian state perceived immigrants. Up to the early 1970s, Egypt saw them as a population to be reclaimed and groomed for economic development. Afterwards, *Aqbāt al-mahjar* and the *mahjar* more generally were perceived as seditious until the early 1990s. By outlining the nature and scope of their activities, I explore the political, religious and cultural mainsprings of (and constraints on) lay initiative.

Fundamental to the self-image of Copts was the dual nature of their ethno-religious identity as both Coptic and Egyptian. Circumscribed by a broad consensus, independent lay initiative in the parish, and among cultural and political associations did coexist in delicate balance with the clergy's leadership. Conflict arose with diasporic activists over the support members of associations felt they ought to receive from the Church and community. As transnationals unbounded by the limits on political protest, activists across Canada and the United States often argued that "if émigrés don't raise their voice, who will?"[34] The majority of Coptic clergy and their lay supporters were suspicious of the middle-class activists and their insistence that their initiatives and publications remain free from clerical direction. The fact that such affirmations did not result in schism suggests that the relationship between lay initiative and clerical leadership was a good deal more complex and much closer than is usually recognized.[35] In time, the spiritual, social and even commercial role of the immigrants' church expanded.

[34] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, USA, August 1985 (video, 1hr).
[35] Historian Brian Clarke's study of Toronto's Irish Catholics in the late nineteenth century provided valuable parallels as I refined my approach. Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895*, (McGill-Queens UP, 1993).

Churches became the loci of communal activity while cultural and diasporic associations fragmented in part because they could no longer compete for communal support.

THE PROCESS OF COLLECTION, INTERPRETATION AND ORGANIZATION

A dissertation is one of the most autobiographical genres of writing. Despite being far removed from these events in time and across space, this time is mine yet not mine and older than me yet constitutes me in my subjectivity.[36] It is this double structure of time that lay at the heart of my ethical responsibility as a scholar. I am a Coptic immigrant of urban, middle-class upbringing from Egypt writing on dominantly urban, middle-class Coptic immigrants from Egypt. In articulating the conditions of the immigrant and elaborating the heteroglossia of competing narratives which colour that experience, I attend to the subjectivities created by the diasporic movement from the Third to the First World and the enduring reality of being a part of an ethno-religious minority.

I wrote this dissertation in the spirit of deep frustration and with a glimmer of hope for a group that I cherish. My frustration truly began when I uncovered misfiled documents in Library and Archives Canada (LAC) while writing on the first Coptic parish in Toronto for my Master's research project.[37] I had found evidence that Copts interacted with and benefited from relations with Anglican churches in Canada. Early immigrants built social networks with various ethnic groups and religious leaders. This led me to wonder: are the Copts actually insular following immigration? If this is a strong current today, how much was it a product of changing circumstances over time? I began my doctoral research with these questions in mind, which were

[36] Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (University of Illinois Press, 1988): 271-313; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, 1990). As Spivak and Butler have insisted, inclusion is an act of love. The mobility of Third World subjects who travelled to and engaged with ideas in the First World offers a vector for recognizing that the colonized may adopt, subvert and re-imagine aspects of a language constantly in flux.
[37] Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic], 1963-1971, MG55.9-No22.

later fuelled by roadblocks Coptic clergy, church activists and political lobbyists placed in my way. As I worked to gather sources and present my findings of exchange, sociability and cooperation, I was dismissed. The Church and community have persevered unchanged over the centuries, many insisted. Bishops in Egypt were adamant: the Copts are unified under the Church as a cohesive group in the face of sustained oppression. Despite my growing frustration and worry, I persisted because I knew there was more to uncover and to tell.

I became reflective: How can I be a part of a cohesive community supposedly insular from its surrounding environments while growing up deeply invested in Egypt and Canada? Why were our places of worship and cultural celebrations across North American cities noticeably fragmented by class, gender and regional affiliations? I do not deny the very real violence which abounds in Egypt and which has constrained Copts so viscerally and painfully. Yet at the same time I believe that reckoning with our diversity enriches our lives without challenging that Copts as a group have experienced oppression. It remains my hope that knowledge of this integrated and transnational story will produce a curiosity about emulating a past of rich possibilities for building inter-ethnic and inter-denominational bridges.

I did not initially consider doing an oral history. First, I went searching in Ontario and Quebec for evidence of the Copts in many institutional and government archives. I visited the Anglican and United Church diocesan archives, the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, the Canadian Council of Churches, and the Quebec national archives. These repositories bore much fruit, finding in them newspapers and magazines, photographs, the minutes of ecumenical meetings, or records of rent agreements for church buildings. The bulk of my textual resources were gathered at Library and Archives Canada, having gained access to confidential or restricted embassy records and correspondence between senior Canadian, American and Egyptian

government officials. I was able to do this through the Access to Information and Privacy Act (ATIP) as a Canadian citizen. Before visiting the United States, I decided to spend a summer in Egypt. This was when my approach changed. As historian Khaled Fahmy observed of knowledge production and attitudes toward preservation in Egypt, those responsible for maintaining such institutions have long adhered to a singular idea: "that knowledge is finite." In my dealings with archivists and office staff at *Dar al-Kutub*, these gatekeepers of knowledge viewed my reading as "potentially a suspicious activity." Fahmy observed that they "strive hard to protect and safeguard knowledge, but never to disseminate or produce it. Knowledge for them is thus akin to raw data, data that has to be protected, hoarded and preserved."[38]

I began my research after General Abdul Fatah al-Sisi was installed as president. The new regime cracked down on all knowledge production, including journalists, academics and rights activists. Al-Sisi set a political platform of exposing 'foreign agendas' to justify a hyper security state that closed off many resources for research. The lack of access, and the difficulty it created, was perhaps worse for younger academics such as myself who lacked the more established networks of experienced researchers. Unable to access the Egyptian state archive (*Dar al-Watha'iq*), I was also refused entry into the notoriously difficult to access Coptic Orthodox Patriarchal archives. The turn to immigrant collections and oral testimony followed, and served as the ultimate boon to my research. The majority of the textual sources on Egypt that I gathered were from immigrants in North America. In the United States, I focused immediately on collecting textual and audio-visual sources from immigrant families. Given my limited time and resources in Washington, New York and Los Angeles, as a non-resident I could only access unrestricted White House and US immigration service records. Nevertheless, these documents

[38] Khaled Fahmy, "The Production of Knowledge," *Egypt Independent*, 6 March 2012.

confirmed my suspicions that the US cared little for the equity of immigration policies in Egypt when compared to the wealth of records created and preserved by the Canadian government.[39]

Family collections often contained letters, pamphlets, magazines, and spiritual books. The sources were no different than what one may expect to find in a comprehensive archive. Yet being able to discuss the transmission of the documents with the producers or the children of the immigrants who had put pen to paper, I reassessed my relationship with primary sources. The means of preserving the documents is a filter through which we view the material. Often secretaries number and order files that are later transported to the archives so that archivists may classify and code volumes for researchers to examine. After ordering the material, I am presented with redacted and censored facsimiles upon which to base my analysis. All these layers of complexity informed my reading. The physicality and emotional weight of being in people's homes and viewing their collections made for a far more personal and direct experience.

My greatest find in Egypt was the full collection of letters and journal entries written by Bishop Samuel of the Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services. His nephew preserved the room in his father's home where the bishop stayed when in Cairo. From 1962 until his death in 1981, Bishop Samuel kept annual KLM planners which he filled with notes and scribbles during his many travels and ecumenical meetings. On my return from Egypt, this interaction with the texts and physical spaces of production led me to conduct oral interviews in North American cities among Coptic immigrants. However, I shied away from interviewing in

[39] Many of the qualitative sources for this study, including membership rolls in ethnic associations, parish treasurer books and the monthly reports of the Canadian embassy in Cairo were used to gather quantitative data and generate figures on population estimates, church attendance and membership in associations.

Cairo and Alexandria. After two attempts, my gut instinct told me to avoid it due to a post-revolutionary period that produced tense and politicized fears.[40]

The way I chose to bypass this dilemma was to turn to my own family history and personal collections. In a sense, my grandfather Farag Akladios spent endless hours speaking to me over the course of writing. I fell completely under the spell of his unique worldview. My first act on finishing my research in archives, across cities and among people was to read Farag's memoirs. Finding comfort in my grandfather's words, I sought to understand how he wrote his memoirs to better appreciate the autobiographies and self-published community histories of immigrant Copts I had uncovered. Long considered the domain of literary critics, social historians embraced memoirs for the attention autobiographies give to the social details of life. While autobiography is not a substitute for systematic historical reconstruction, as historian Paula Fass has argued, "the memoir illuminates subjectivity, how the social and political are processed ... [and] reminds us that people remain the fundamental unit of historical experience and they are sentient beings, not simply masses of faceless humanity."[41] Farag wrote from the perspective of an insider as outsider and he recorded a history of events chronologically, making reference to intra-communal tensions and confrontations with government authorities based on his personal presence as a church-builder in Alexandria and later reflections in old age.[42]

Farag wrote his memoir as a record for his children in the early 1990s in Alexandria prior to his passing. He was not self-indulgent. He did not pretend to be inclusive nor representative. He adopted the position of younger brother, referring always to the efforts of the older Charoubim first. As with novels, memoirs have the capacity for embellishment and half-truths

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[40] Lucie Ryzova, "New Asymmetries in the New Authoritarianism: Research in Egypt in the Age of Post-Revolution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49.3 (2017): 513.
[41] Paula S. Fass, "The Memoir Problem," *Reviews in American History* 34.1 (2006): 111.
[42] Farag Akladios, "Statement from Charoubim and Farag Akladios: Events Surrounding the Churches and Situations We Met During Construction," (Personal collection: Unpublished, 199?).

but the fiction writer cannot remember the past as the memoirist does. By giving voice to a historical experience that he cannot forget, the memoirist shows that "memory and history are thus at the root of this literary phenomenon."[43] In recording this narrative of success and obstacles, Farag Akladios told me that the integrity of this past mattered to him.[44] This commitment to the past was present in my many conversations with immigrants, and in US immigrant Sami Boulos' self-published history of the Coptic Association of America or the autobiography of Father Marcos A. Marcos in Toronto.[45]

Charoubim (1901-1991) and Farag (1905-1996) were the youngest of twelve children, born to a landowning Coptic family in Al Manshiah Al Kubra, Al Qusiya, Asyut. Their family villa was down the road from Deir al-Muharraq (the Monastery of the Virgin Mary), and their education was primarily at the hands of its monks. My family was *'ayla mirtaha* (a family living in comfort). Not necessarily well-to-do or affluent, they never reached the level of the "home du monde" of Mona Abaza's cotton plantation, who could afford to employ a number of servants and farm hands, send their children to private schools and universities in Europe, or vacation in the south of France.[46] Rather, the Akladios family could afford to offer their children a modest education locally, could open their doors to relatives in need, give alms to the poor, and donate goods and services to the nearby monastery. After completing their schooling, the brothers continued to practice their reading and writing in the monastery with a special focus on their spiritual education. As the wealthiest family in a poor village, their villa became a gathering

[43] Fass, "The Memoir Problem," 118-120.
[44] Jennifer Jensen Wallach, "Building a Bridge of Words: The Literary Autobiography as Historical Source Material," *Biography* 29.3 (2006): 448. Wallach details the uses and abuses of autobiography as a historical source and the intense debates between literary theorists and social historians over the utility of this genre for historical reconstruction since Georges Gusdorf's 1956 essay, "Conditions and limits of Autobiography."
[45] When publishing their autobiographies or community histories, ethnic leaders included collections of primary sources which generally made up a third of the published text. These facsimiles were often collected from among close friends and family and used as evidence to support their interpretation in the text. The originals are often discarded or destroyed, leaving me with the published facsimiles to rely on for analysis.
[46] Mona Abaza, *The Cotton Plantation Remembered: An Egyptian Family Story* (AUC Press, 2013): 66-67.

place, and their social capital made the head of the family a leader and mediator in dispute settlement. Their connection to the monastery further provided status and a reputation for piety.

Charoubim and Farag, like many youth of nearby villages, emigrated to the cities in search of employment and stability. Older by four years, Charoubim left for Alexandria after the war in 1918. Farag followed his brother two years later, in 1920. Upon arriving in Alexandria, Farag joined his brother in a rented apartment in Gheit al ‘Inab, a poor Coptic neighborhood to the south of Muharram Bey—then a dominantly affluent neighborhood. Charoubim leveraged his education to work as a bookkeeper in a local business. Farag instead chose to apprentice for an Italian contractor and learned the technicalities of this skilled trade. In the early 1930s, the brothers applied their combined skills to open a contracting firm where each played to his strength. Farag was the tradesman. Charoubim, always the more charismatic of the two, oversaw the finances and maintained successful relations with clients. Their largest client was the Coptic patriarchate and they communicated directly with the papal representative in St. Mark’s Cathedral in Alexandria. The contracting firm of Farag and Charoubim *al-Muqāwlūn* (the contractors) became synonymous with church building in Egypt. The brothers quickly developed a reputation as “fixers” of complicated church building projects. The experiences of Charoubim and Farag Akladios parallel those of many early Copts to North America whose families similarly migrated to growing urban centres or invested in new urban developments.

My family was part of Alexandrian cosmopolitanism and Charoubim and Farag represented a side of the Coptic experience that I outline in this dissertation. Education was important to both Charoubim and Farag *effandi* (a Turko-Circassian honorific denoting high social standing), sending their male children to the British Boys School or St. Mark’s French Boys School, and their female children to Sainte Jeanne-Antide French girls school. In that, they

adopted similar manners to middle-class Jewish Alexandrians or foreign nationals. Historian Will Hanley has spoken to the special character of cities such as Alexandria. In time, most of their population, not just the elites, had been intricately linked to the outside world, creating fluid lifestyles that combined aspects of different identities.[47]

Charoubim and Farag established their business in such an environment, and their social status was an important marker of their identity and a way to escape their rural roots. Both brothers wore a *tarbūsh* as a sign of their urbanite class and professions, since this flat-topped, brimless hat was a sign of wealth and privilege for professionals such as the *mḥāsbīn* (accountants) and the *nāẓr* (overseer).[48] They avoided the traditional *gallabiyya* and wore suits, choosing to carry themselves in the manner of effendi 'gentlemen.' As historian Lucie Ryzova has argued of the effendi habits and practices, this claim to a modern lifestyle was conflated with class position and defined against two contrastive others: the traditional sheikh in a *gallabiyya* and the westernized colonial elite. This effendi social category can possess both modernity and authentic roots and, as Cairene notables Taha Husayn and Zakariya Ahmed did for Ryzova, Charoubim and Farag "destabilize the conventional wisdom in writing the history of modern Egypt, in which the effendi is most commonly defined as the product of modern schooling."[49]

By mid-century, the brothers dropped the *tarbūsh*, like most urbanites under Nasser who sought to show allegiance with his brand of nationalism (though it is difficult to say if they had any true allegiance to the cause). Theirs was not merely an ideological choice but something vernacular, as they reacted to a different context in a way best suited to represent their social position and maximize their social empowerment. Farag, unlike his brother, exchanged his

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[47] Will Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 2017).
[48] Abaza, *The Cotton Plantation Remembered*, 154.
[49] Lucie Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya: Passages to Modernity in National-Colonial Egypt*, (Oxford University Press, 2014): 40-42.

tarbūsh for a *beret* (adopted from the Greek merchants and Italian contractors in the city). Farag's choice underscores his consummate claim to effendi status. At the same time, he is remembered to be a dedicated and deeply religious Copt. He was often found sketching churches while sitting in solitude listening to recorded *taratīl* (hymns) and sermons. He was *al-mi'adis* (the pious) Farag. His brother was the boisterous *khawaga* (foreigner) Charoubim who drank, partied and smoked.

My family's history aligns intimately with the history of Coptic communities in Egypt's twentieth century. That, I feel, is no coincidence. My story is interwoven with the stories of thousands who experienced the ebb and flow of monumental events locally and globally, from Church affairs to political and social turmoil, to emigration. Today, many in my extended family have emigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia, and a few to Western Europe (England, France and Germany). This kind of dispersion is common to international Egyptian migration. This is why I seek out diverse stories at the same time as a part of me remains fixed in that gleaming Mediterranean city—Durrell's "capital of memory"; a captivated child listening to stories of towering giants.[50]

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

This dissertation is divided into two parts. Part One begins with a historiographical argument that blends scholarship in Middle East and Coptic Studies to offer an integrated history of the "Coptic Question" in modern Egypt. I show how sectarian identities in the Middle East developed under Ottoman rule; were exasperated by imperial competition between Ottoman and European powers; came to inform affiliations and loyalties amid secular liberal politics at the turn if the twentieth century; sedimented within a confessionalizing Egyptian scene in progress from the

[50] Lawrence Durrell, *Justine* [First in the Alexandria Quartet], (London: Faber & Faber, 1957): 152.

agitations of the 1930s to the rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser's secular and anti-colonial regime and later the Islamist dint of Anwar Sadat's political ambitions in the 1970s. Chapter 2 then turns to a detailed assessment of my oral history methodology and the memories immigrants confided during our interviews. It takes seriously the everyday lives of migrating actors and shows that neither sectarian identities nor communal insularity were primordial features of the Coptic experience. Chapter 3 adopts a different perspective, assessing the declassified correspondence of US and Canadian ministers and ambassadors in Egypt to chart the gradual emigration from Egypt which was conditioned by orientalist and ethicized policies. Marginalization in Egyptian society led foreign nationals to emigrate first and paved the way for native Egyptians who were not the targets of senior immigration officials until the late 1960s.

With particular emphasis on the spatial-temporal settlement patterns and institutional activities of an emergent immigrant group, Part Two begins with the sustained church activism of leaders in Egypt's Sunday school movement through oral testimony and the personal collections of Bishop Samuel. The bishop instilled a devotion to service (*khidma*) among his followers, acted as the premier immigrant broker and oversaw the founding the Coptic Association of America in New York. Turning to the acculturation of Coptic immigrants in New York and New Jersey and Central Canada (Montreal and Toronto) in chapters 5 and 6 respectively, I explore the external and internal tensions of early institutional development and ecumenism in diversifying cities amid Cold War anxieties. Prospective émigrés sought to leave Nasser's Egypt because of excessive spending on anti-imperial wars, the nationalization of industries and dwindling job prospects. Professionals sought stability and security for their families in expanding North American job markets marked by growth in educational, engineering and medical sectors. While earlier immigrants encountered instances of racial, ethnic

and gender discrimination on the streets and in workplaces, they were often muted by proficiency in the language, professional skills and occupations. Sadat-era émigrés who were drawn from broader socio-economic segments of society had to contend with neoliberal austerity measures and felt the weight of escalating sectarian violence in Egypt. They encountered discrimination in society more broadly and within established Coptic communities based on class status and language proficiency on arrival.

The final chapter is a layered interrogation of Coptic diasporic long-distance nationalism as it relates to global humanitarian concerns, wider Arab associational life in North America and the political ramifications of US intervention in the Arab-Israeli conflict following the Yom Kippur War in 1973. By virtue of their mobility and transcultural experiences, immigrant Copts as a new ethno-religious group in North America necessarily engaged with local, national and international contexts. In this reality, church-affiliated and secular associations formed in North American cities and debates raged over ecclesiastical authorities' vested interest in their auxiliary position as members of a state institution. Persecution in Upper Egypt and a perceived government silence which followed mobilized vocal immigrants to outreach and engage western audiences. Executives of Coptic associations and magazines denounced a president then lauded as the titular peacemaker in the Middle East at a time of intense fervor for international human rights. The chapter shows that diasporic activists played a significant role in immigrant communities and were perceived as seditious by the Church and state. As transnational actors, immigrants had a vested interest in both their Church and nation. The Coptic immigrant experience was multifaceted, as much about 'routes' as it was about 'roots.'

Chapter 1
Modern Egyptian History and the "Coptic Question"

This chapter charts the formation of Egypt's modern nation-state in the nineteenth and twentieth century with particular emphasis on the Coptic experience prior to emigration. This is not a comprehensive analysis of modern Egyptian history but a selective reading foremost concerned with the "Coptic Question"—an expression indicating deficiencies in political, religious and social rights for Copts—and its place in Egypt's modernization project. Focusing on a rather long period, from the reign of Muhammad Ali and his descendents in the 1800s to the rampant securitization of the Egyptian state in the 1990s, this is a history of how nationalists, administrators and religious leaders sought to modernize, secularize and reinvent Egyptian society in the service of creating a national identity. Drawing on recent scholarship in Middle East and Coptic Studies, I document the historical trajectory of sectarian identities which were produced and mobilized by those in positions of power and did not emerge latently. This social history traces the articulation of a set of systems affecting migrating people's social world.[1]

Scholars of the Middle East routinely ignore Coptic Christians in political, social, or cultural studies of Egypt.[2] One need only open the index of the latest monograph to discover a cursory mention of a Coptic intellectual or politician, on a lone page half-way through the text. The Copts are nonetheless well documented by historians, sociologists and anthropologists with rich interdisciplinary studies of their community experiences. Yet monographs and articles in the broad, interdisciplinary field of Coptic Studies far too often approach the Church and community

[1] I will be using the terms Copts and Coptic Christians for followers of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Generally speaking, all Christian churches in Egypt are modified by the term Coptic—as in the Roman Catholic Coptic Church, the Armenian Coptic Church, and so on. Yet in Egyptian political and historical discourse, Copts (*al-Aqbāt*) invariably refers to the adherents of Coptic Orthodox Christianity, hence my usage.
[2] For a detailed assessment of this historiography, see: Paul Sedra, "Copts and the Millet Partnership: The Intra-Communal Dynamics Behind Egyptian Sectarianism," *Journal of Law and Religion* 29.3 (2014):491-509.

as if Coptic populations exist in a vacuum.[3] This imbalance is compounded by condescension in Middle East Studies: Coptic populations are 'left to' Coptic scholars and the topic of Eastern Christianity has long been the domain of scholars of ecclesiastical history and theology. I instead offer an integrated history that accounts for the political role of ecclesiastical leadership and counters past scholarly marginalization of more broadly Egyptian Christians' historical experiences. Writing the Copts into Egyptian history, this interdisciplinary synthesis allows for a holistic approach and a much longer time perspective, thereby bridging what has been framed as a sporadic and tangential Coptic experience to national histories. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century Coptic intellectuals, politicians, professionals, and religious leaders attempted to insert themselves into Egyptian politics. Developments within the Coptic Orthodox Church remain a microcosm of historical change in Egypt. Similar to how the Indigenous experience is vital to understanding Canadian history, Egyptian history will remain incomplete unless we account for the role of the Copts. The varying degrees of success or failure of Coptic participation and Egyptian development are outlined as part of an inseparable whole.

In this process, inter-religious conflict became a crucial component of national expression as Middle East states modernized and secularized.[4] I begin with the premise that Egypt underwent a process of modernization coterminous with the rise of modern nation-state systems

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[3] Coptic Studies focused on classical and ecclesiastical histories and neglected modern Copts, as noted in Paul Sedra, "Writing the History of the Modern Copts: From Victims and Symbols to Actors," *History Compass* 7.3 (2009): 1049-1063. However, I define Coptic Studies more broadly as literature that takes as its central focus Coptic Christians in Egypt and its diasporas. Recent interdisciplinary studies have sought to document modern Copts. In addition, several articles surfaced following the 2011 Egyptian revolution focusing particularly on diasporic activism. Examples include, Anthony Shenoda, "The Politics of Faith: On Faith, Skepticism, and Miracles among Coptic Christians in Egypt," *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 77.4 (2012): 477-495; Mariz Tadros, *Copts at the Crossroads: The Challenges of Building Inclusive Democracy in Egypt*, (American University in Cairo Press, 2013); Angie Heo, *The Political Lives of Saints: Christian-Muslim Mediation in Egypt*, (University of California Press, 2018); Yvonne Haddad and Joshua Donovan, "Good Copt, Bad Copt: Competing Narratives on Coptic Identity in Egypt and the United States," *Studies in World Christianity* 19.3 (2013): 208-232; Nadia Marzouki, "The U.S. Coptic Diaspora and the Limit of Polarization," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 14:3 (2016), 261-276.
[4] Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, (University of California Press, 2000): 169.

globally in the nineteenth century, and uniquely bounded by Egypt's majority/minority claims under Ottoman rule and the legacy of European colonialism. It is common to read in recent studies of Egypt's Copts the failure of the modern liberal project and the ascent of sectarianism under authoritarian rule.[5] As such, the secular dream of constitutionalists in the 1920s and later attempts by socialists in the 1950s died and sectarianism triumphed. This approach discounts that Egyptian modernity involved the articulation of sectarian identities through a process with a particular context. The colonial encounter and competition between Ottomans and Europeans that it engendered set the stage for later secular, liberal and Arab socialist projects. Religious institutions as invested partners responded to local demands and global pressures in distinct ways. Yet the success of colonialism has made Eurocentric notions that link progress and modernity in the social sciences only natural. Eastern societies were destined to fail because they could never replicate the "successful" experience of Western societies. This formula assumes Western experience is the gold standard to be emulated. This is a fallacy. Middle Eastern modernity had a trajectory of its own. In Egypt, that trajectory was destined to affect the Coptic Orthodox Church and all non-Muslim communities. In putting forth such a definition of Egypt—as historically fragmented yet wholly modern—I dispel the assumed essentialist binary of a primitive East and progressive West.

By charting the tumultuous history of Coptic participation in Egyptian politics and society, I offer the notion that sectarianism is not a primordial feature of Middle East states. This chapter sets the background for the two core arguments of this study: insularity was not the natural reality of the Copts and a heterogeneous group integrated both sacred and secular cultures

[5] This is a problem in recent literature that privileges sectarian frameworks in the study of inter-religious communal relations. For instance, see monographs by Mariz Tadros and Angie Heo (cited above) and S.S. Hasan, *Christians Versus Muslims in Modern Egypt: The Century-Long Struggle for Coptic Equality*, (Oxford UP, 2013).

following immigration. It argues that discrimination and harassment, and their eventual escalation to persistent persecution of numerical, linguistic, racial, and/or religious minorities by a dominant majority, was part of a process of claims-making in multiethnic societies which was variably institutionalized by the liberal secular political state. A clear understanding of the Copts in this integrated Egyptian history is paramount in order to appreciate the push and pull factors which motivated emigration, settlement patterns and associational life outside post-colonial Egypt. When church activists and diasporic nationalists later debated and contested minority rights and equal participation in Sadat's Egypt, they did so not to impose Western ethical values and beliefs as past scholarship has framed it.[6] Rather, immigrants continued to engage questions about the trajectory of Egyptian modernity and in discourse central to the formation of equal rights and citizenship under modern state governance to resolve the "Coptic Question" in Egypt. This chapter is on the Copts in the making of Egyptian modernity precisely because it provides a roadmap detailing the effects of institutional and societal marginalization on a national minority, its inter-communal relations with the Muslim majority, and later transnational connections affecting power dynamics between the state in Egypt, the Church and Coptic immigrant populations across North America.

MODERNITY IS NOT ONLY CONFIGURED SECULAR

I adhere to a simple, operational definition of 'modernity.' Modernity is a series of interlinked projects that certain people in power seek to achieve.[7] Two facets of modernity that are not disputed by most historians are: its institutional and its epistemological facets. The institutional facet entails the visible change in the character of major institutions, such as the state, the army,

[6] Yvonne Haddad, Joshua Donovan, and Nadia Marzouki (cited above) are emblematic of the problematic approaches in existing scholarship on Coptic diasporic activism.
[7] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford UP, 2003): 13.

the educational and legal system, and the family. These changes did not occur in isolation and changes in one institution invariably affected others. The epistemological facet entails changes in the way people perceive the world and their place in it. Epistemological changes are multifaceted and include redefining the meaning of religion, cosmology, music and dress, and new identity politics, such as a sense of imagined national community. Institutional and epistemological changes in Egypt occurred in sequence and in different phases.[8]

Yet the social sciences have tended to conflate modernity with secularism. The place of Quebec in Canadian historiography offers a valuable and familiar comparative example for such debates. English Canadian historians have argued that the role of the intellectual in Canadian public life grew out of the increasing needs of people to make sense of religion, reason and the role of the state in the mission of the 'Dominion of Canada.' English Canada emerged as a success story of a secular state that played a larger role in providing social welfare, at the same time that the social sciences and state intellectuals successfully professionalized state apparatus after the Second World War.[9] An overly fixed understanding of modernity as secular has blinded historiography to how Catholicism, and Catholic intellectuals, have seen no contradiction with religion and economic progress prior to the Quiet Revolution. Like their counterparts in English Canada, Quebec intellectuals saw that the only means to sustain the moral imperative of society and to keep faith and tradition preeminent, was to engage with economic and social progress and thereby restrain that progress. In short, the aim of what I call the intellectuals of 'the middle way' was to be modern without being American.[10] As with all modern liberal states, the growing role

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[8] Dror Ze'evi, "Back to Napoleon? Thoughts on the Beginning of the Modern Era in the Middle East," *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 19.1 (2004): 76.

[9] Doug Owram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State 1900-1945*, (University of Toronto Press, 1986).

[10] Marcel Fournier, *L'entrée dans la modernité. Science, culture et société au Québec*, (Montréal: Les Éditions coopératives Albert-Saint-Martin, 1986); Fernande Roy, *Progres, harmonie, liberté: le libéralisme des milieu d'affaires francophones de Montréal au tournant du siècle*, (Montréal: Boréal, 1988).

of the intellectual in Quebec state formation was both a product of nineteenth century challenges to religion and of the anxiety occasioned by modernity. Their answers were informed by a secular theology (progressivism) held in check by the sacred, and their plans achieved only limited success in a country undergoing uneven, yet combined, development.

In the historiography of the Middle East in general, and Egypt in particular, the legacy of colonialism made it only natural to see non-European modernity as a failure. Historian James Gelvin observed that the social sciences have defined 'modernity' and 'modern societies' as "those that duplicated the European experience ... European society was complex and dynamic, while 'traditional' society was simple and stagnant."[11] As anthropologist Talal Asad argued, to be 'traditional' is to maintain the status quo. Such actions are cast as always "resisting the future" and non-European societies are configured as "reactionary."[12] Orientalist historians and those motivated by filiopietistic communal histories fixated on the essential and primordial nature of religious identities. However, relations between East and West were enmeshed in domination through political power, economic exchange and social stratification which ensured a relationship of mutual dependency. The success of Western societies depended on the exploitation of Eastern societies in exchange for material support.

By the late-1970s and throughout the 1980s, social historians focused on differential social and economic developments amid the changes brought on by colonialism and global capitalism, sidelining ethnic, religious and cultural divergences. Recent post-modernist critiques in post-colonial and South Asian studies exposed the trap of grand narratives that produce

[11] James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, (Oxford UP, 2005): 69.
[12] Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1993).

particular forms of "history-making."[13] Works in subaltern studies confirmed that there is no single path to the "future." Secularism is not the successor to religion. Tradition is not unchanging, repetitive, or non-rational. Tradition is a dimension of social life and not just a stage of social development.[14] Thus notions of European superiority are a naive Eurocentrism or deliberate acts of denigration.

Sadly Orientalist depictions of a primordial, sectarian Middle East still guide much analysis of the region, its people and its political systems. Samuel Tadros, a Coptic scholar at the Hoover Institute and author of *Motherland Lost*, is very much an American Orientalist. He is representative of the media and political pundits in the United States today who, in order to shore up Evangelical notions of Christian sanctity, try to solve the plight of Middle East Christians. Their solution: a Muslim state needs to become secular because "Islam is incompatible with modernity."[15] The reifying of United States manifest destiny and intervention in the Middle East continues a pattern of writing dating back to French and British colonial regimes. However, the prominent role of religion in politics and political discourse in the Middle East does not mean these states are not modern. Nor does it mean that these states "subscribe to an alternative form of modernity," as James Gelvin has argued.[16] Rather, when combined, studies by Ussama Makdisi, Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, Paul Sedra, James Jankowski, among others, reveal that nineteenth and twentieth century Church reform and political secularism represented a modernizing and "a universalizing project that is often cast in civilizational terms."[17] To

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[13] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (University of Chicago Press, 2002).
[14] See Asad's introduction to *Formations of the Secular*.
[15] Tadros, *Motherland Lost*, 6. A DC political analyst, Tadros relied on older communal histories but his scholarship has tremendous reach inside Coptic immigrant communities across North America.
[16] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 144.
[17] Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton UP, 2016): 148. Saba Mahmood's argument builds directly on the work of Talal Asad and other proponents of Middle Eastern modernity.

paraphrase Talal Asad and Benedict Anderson, the modern nation was an imagined community mediated through constructed images of the ideal citizen in opposition to the foreign other.[18]

Arabic-language literature is representative in that regard. Dominantly nationalistic and filiopietistic in supporting nation-building, history served to congeal an imagined national unity. Recent reappraisals in the twenty-first century have been more open to exploring tensions, but only to prove sectarian violence was an alien threat to the nation emanating from the Gulf States.[19] A related strand is academic writing of the Middle East and Egypt in English. Well into the 1970s a framework based in the notion of colonial expansion as the locomotive for development presented modernization under Muhammad Ali (Ottoman governor of Egypt) as a European introduction and the liberal constitutional period as democratic splendor under the monarchy. All this was juxtaposed to the squalor under post-colonial rule, and often from an Orientalist and Eurocentric gaze. Scholars saw Gamal Abdel Nasser and anti-colonial tendencies eradicate such promise and Anwar Sadat's Islamicization sealed its fate. Thus, the central thesis was that authoritarianism undercut the failed promise of modernity. In this strand Bernard Lewis is the most famous Orientalist. Yet as Ussama Makdisi noted, "the 'sectarian' Middle East does not simply exist; it is imagined to exist, and then it is produced. It does not emerge latently."[20]

With a new social history informed by feminist and post-colonial theory, scholars turned to the study of minorities, women and the working-class. They focused on how people lived in and travelled between Middle Eastern societies. This perspective challenged notions of

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Although her approach is not unique and highly debated, I find it instructive when measured against the other scholars cited because it takes as its chief focus the Copts of Egypt.

[18] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 4; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (New York: Verso, 2006).

[19] Michael Gasper, "Sectarianism, Minorities, and the Secular State in the Middle East," (Review Article) *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 48.4 (2016), 768; Mahdi 'Amil, *Fi al-Dawla al-Ta'iffyya* (On the Sectarian State), (Beirut: Dar al-Furabi, 2015 [1986]).

[20] Ussama Makdisi, "Understanding Sectarianism in the Middle East," *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, July 12 2017, https://www.thecairoreview.com/tahrir-forum/understanding-sectarianism-in-the-middle-east/.

‘backwardness,’ yet left intact the overall framework of the nation’s failure to modernize. By the late-1980s and early 1990s the ‘cultural turn,’ with the work of Timothy Mitchell and Khaled Fahmy, began to chart the disciplinary power of colonial rule with insights from Michel Foucault. While Mitchell highlighted the processes of domination and exhibition, Fahmy presented moments of resistance as a challenge to colonial discourse and the fixity of identity, belonging, nationalism, and other social constructions.[21] They looked to performativity, gender, and contributed to a similar shift on the Copts in Egyptian history in the late-1990s that was exemplified by the work of Paul Sedra. His combined publications focused on the cultural markers of identity and how history shaped national discourse to the present. In this push to challenge the supposed “golden age” of liberal-democratic promise in Egypt, there was an insistence that the “Coptic Question” was present in one form or another and that equality never existed. Rather, the discourse of national unity belies and obfuscates sectarian conflict.[22]

Coterminous with these developments was the examination of the very meaning of ‘modernity’ by Middle East scholars. Following Peter Gran’s revisionist history, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism*, some proposed the notion of ‘alternative modernities’ to combat the assumed ‘backwardness’ of the Middle East, to destabilize fixed Western notions of secular, progressive modernity.[23] Side-stepping ethno-religious and cultural aspects in favour of socio-economic forces, the rise of sectarian political identities was framed as a parallel development to the rise of the nation-state. The notion of ‘alternative modernities’ was challenged for reifying difference as a defining factor of the relationship between East and West. Anthropologists Talal Asad and

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[21] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991 edition [1988]); Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha’s Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt*, (American University in Cairo Press, 1997).
[22] Paul Sedra, “Class Cleavages and Ethnic Conflict: Coptic Christian Communities in Modern Egyptian Politics,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10.2 (1999): 219-235.
[23] Originally published in 1979 and revised in Peter Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840*, (Syracuse University Press, 1998). Accounting for Egyptian development in global perspective, Gran argued that modern Egypt, much like Italy and Spain, emerged out of its own internal dynamic in the context of the world market.

Saba Mamood outlined in detailed theoretical studies that the universal process of modernity took contingent and local shape in Egypt as it did in the formation of modern nations globally.

New approaches to the study of politics, labour and society by Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski—which diverged from past holistic Marxian political economy perspectives that argued sectarianism obscures the reality of class struggle and the domination of bourgeois rule—had come to similar conclusions years earlier. Both sectarian and minority identities in the Middle East were rethought and linked to the elaboration and practice of collective religious political identities that intersected with class, gender, race/ethnicity, and others. Sectarian groups thus became both constituted and self-constituting, a political phenomenon with its own historical trajectory rather than an expression of essential cultural difference. Makdisi has argued that nothing is inevitable about sectarianism and because it was produced "it can be changed."[24]

Both Makdisi and Mahmood viewed sectarian identities as neither inherent nor immutable. However, unlike Mahmood, Makdisi eschewed a historical determinism which binds sectarianism to secular liberal nationalism and rejected the notion that the former was later exacerbated under authoritarian rule.[25] Rather, for Makdisi sectarianism was a process of negotiation and exchange conditioned by the trajectory of Ottoman imperial reform, the colonial encounter and local debates over liberal governance. Ultimately, modern political secularization heightened religious group loyalties in national discourse and civil society. Both Makdisi and Mahmood offer valuable insights but have their respective limitations.

In her anthropology of the secular, Saba Mahmood asserted that modern state intervention in the private sphere of family and faith, and its attendant tools of regulation,

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[24] Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 166.

[25] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 3-6. Rather than minimize the disparity between European imperial power and Ottoman rule and suggest the inevitability of liberal secularization as Mahmood did, I frame the marginalization of Coptic populations in light of the colonial encounter, local debates over liberal governance and later political secularization under authoritarian rule.

solidified and strengthened sectarian and minority identities in the service of nation-building. By the turn of the twentieth century, nationalists, the state and its attendant institutions subjected religious life to new forms of regulation and ultimately exacerbated religious difference.[26] Mahmood identified the distinct role of nationalists, state institutions and religious leaders who marshaled sectarian claims through the language of citizenship. However, as Makdisi has observed about the origins of sectarianism, binding sectarianism to nationalism misses the fact that this historical process has its roots in the Ottoman imperial reforms which sought not statehood but sovereignty, not citizens but subjects. Rather than reify the secular in a "liberal age," Makdisi cautioned that religion has long maintained "a strong public presence in the Middle East" and the forms of "coexistence" between Muslim, Christian, Jewish, among others "reflected contending anti-sectarian responses to the same set of problems involving sovereignty, citizenship, and equality."[27] Although Mahmood may laud the secular promise of a liberal age which ventriloquized the Eastern roots of a liberal project, Makdisi is not without fault. In eulogizing the irony and tragedy of the failed promise of anti-colonial secularity Makdisi reified the secular ideology of post-colonial revolutionary states. He never quite answered why, as much as Gamal Abdel Nasser "ideologically rejected and derided Islamists," Islam was maintained as the state religion and he empowered religious institutions as auxiliaries of the state.[28]

Drawing on both approaches, I chart the disparity between European imperial power and Ottoman rule, local debates over liberal governance and later political secularization under authoritarian regimes which have shaped the Coptic experience in modern Egypt. The latter, as historian Paul Sedra has observed, occurred in both the state and Church with the investiture of

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[26] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 63.
[27] Ussama Makdisi, *Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World*, (University of California Press, 2019): 8-15.
[28] Makdisi, *Age of Coexistence*, 206-207.

Gamal Abdel Nasser and the enthronement of Pope Kyrillos VI. These two figures rekindled a "millet partnership" that silenced the voices of lay professionals in communal affairs and set a pattern for inter-religious and intra-communal relations that persisted after emigration.[29]

COLONIALISM AND EGYPTIAN MODERNITY ARE RELATIONAL NOT CAUSAL

Muhammad Ali rose to power in 1805 and instigated extensive institutional modernization projects centered on reforming the military and introducing educational programs to create a new social strata of state servants and army officers.[30] Often framed in nationalist terms by scholars of Egypt, Muhammad Ali's reforms led dependency scholars such as Fouad Ajami and Charles Hill to deride Egyptian modernization when compared to European modernity.[31] Yet the expansion of the economy and separation from Ottoman control required a foundational state apparatus. In her biography of Muhammad Ali, Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot observed that he was a pragmatist of charismatic nature who capitalized on his naval, military and mercantile experience under Ottoman rule. He incorporated French technical advancements in a modernization project aimed at separating Egypt from other Ottoman domains.[32] The colonial context restricted the ability of this Ottoman governor to fashion an independent industrial and bureaucratic state without necessitating a defensive strategy of development. Institutional modernization hampered by colonial restrictions created a centralized state in Egypt. Competition between Ottoman and European colonial powers fostered the emergence of a new

[29] Sedra, "Class Cleavages and Ethnic Conflict," 225.
[30] Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, (Cambridge University Press,1984).
[31] This scholarship draws on dependency theory, a notion of Middle East states as peripheral to Europe and limited in their capacity for self-sustaining economic growth. In this notion, institutional developments and industrialization were a product of European capital and, at its most extreme incarnations, benign imperialism. See, Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers in the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882 - 1954*, (American University in Cairo Press, 1998): 9-11.
[32] Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 29-32.

strata of soldiers, intellectuals and bureaucrats educated in Western techniques who formed an integral part of nationalist movements.[33]

State servants who travelled to Europe under Muhammad Ali's educational programs from the 1820s to 1840s, "exposed new generations of Egyptians to a positivist view of history in which the rise and success of the Western nation-state was attributed to the private habits and customs of European rulers and citizens."[34] Egyptian intellectuals and state servants attempted to transform those arenas where Europeans found them wanting in order to achieve liberation. Christianity and science defined Western civilization, and so Islam and Islamic law defined its counterpart. Nineteenth century thinkers argued over the culture of the Middle East: did religion or science represent the true path to civilization and progress? One prominent response was a 'middle way' bridging the two. Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1873) of Egypt's Al-Azhar adopted the European fervor for ancient Egyptian civilization while in France and contributed to a nascent form of Egyptian national identity. Recognized as a major voice of the Egyptian *nahda* (revival), Al-Tahtawi viewed both Pharaonic heritage and the scientific contributions of Islamic civilization since the Middle Ages as defining features of the Egyptian nation. In congratulatory prose, he celebrated Muhammad Ali and his efforts to ensure that "all intellectual sciences and arts, as well as astounding justice and remarkable equity ... once again find a home in the lands of Islam and the territories subject to the law of the Prophet."[35] The evident role of religion in public life was central to this definition of a unique identity shaping material progress in Egypt in response to colonial competition.[36]

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[33] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 73.
[34] Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation: the Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt, 1805 - 1923* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2005): 12.
[35] Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz*, in Daniel L. Newman Trans., *An Imam in Paris: Account of a stay in France by an Egyptian Cleric (1826-1831)*, 2nd Edition (London: Saqi Books, 2011).
[36] Al-Tahtawi's concept of the modern nation lay in his belief that material progress was possible with the harmonious contributions of dedicated citizens and a functioning government, achieved with the aid of Western

When Muhammad Ali's son Muhammad Said became governor of Egypt in 1854, he embraced a process of emulating European manners, clothing and art as a means to further distinguish Egypt from other Ottoman domains. Such epistemological changes shaped societal stratification with the creation of a distinctly urban Egyptian professional elite. In addition, the Hatt-I Sharif of Gulhane (1839) and Islahat Fermani (1856) *Tanzimat* (reforms) were enacted to imbue subjects with loyalty, strengthen territorial sovereignty and create belonging among fractured groupings. As long as all non-Muslim groups recognized the primacy of Islam and their second-class status within it, then *ahl al-dhimma* were accorded state protection and could practise their religion, maintain places of worship and hold communal courts.

The Coptic Orthodox Church was very much tied to this wider project of defining modern identities. Anglican and Presbyterian missionaries arrived and considered Coptic Christians to be corrupted under Muslim dominion.[37] The missionary project in Egypt more broadly gained few converts. Yet it succeeded in inculcating and disseminating Protestant ideas about religion and education that resulted in higher levels of conversion among Copts to Protestantism. Promulgating a moral Christian ethic to elevate the spirit, if not always to convert, educational programs targeted youth who would introduce new domestic and hygienic practices into both Muslim and Christian households. Missionary efforts simultaneously produced significant reform within the Coptic Orthodox Church. Lay and clerical reformers adapted the Sunday school movement, schooling techniques, the printing of textbooks, and religious

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technologies. For a thorough recent appraisal of al-Tahtawi, see: Peter Gran, "Al-Tahtawi's Trip to Paris in Light of Recent Historical Analysis: Travel Literature or a Mirror for Princes?" in Mehrzad Boroujerdi eds. *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*, (Syracuse UP, 2013): 190-217.

[37] I delve into this history further in chapter 4 on Coptic Church reform. For more on Coptic Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian churches in Egypt and the prevalent sense of competition, see: Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire*, (Princeton University Press, 2008).

pamphlets. Although this reform movement reached its zenith with Pope Kyrillos VI (1959-1971), it developed as a gradual process under his predecessors.[38]

Competition from Western missionaries engendered a response from educated Coptic Orthodox laymen who formed the *Majlis al-Milli* (lay council). Coptic reformers and Anglo-American missionary educators emphasized that literacy through standardized education was the only path to modernity. Subsequently, as Paul Sedra has argued, this spurred the destruction of earlier forms of knowledge and authority that prevailed among nineteenth century Coptic peasants. Reformers sought to eliminate oral culture and thereby "depersonalize authority," fostering "an abstract morality among Egyptians" by transferring authority from person to text and seeking to achieve "homogeneity in behaviour."[39] Despite their animosity, the Church and colonial school administrators agreed on the necessity of transmitting values of industry, discipline and order but disagreed on who was to undertake that process of transmission. By "textualizing the Coptic heritage," endeavouring to rid the countryside of superstitious habits around burial practices and the veiling of women, and suppressing excessive drinking, smoking and gambling, the upper strata of urban reformers sought an idealized 'moral' Coptic people who may best reflect the cultural distinctiveness of the "modern sons of the Pharaohs."[40]

This "invention of tradition," as Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger have argued, based modern political and cultural structures in the past as a means of achieving social cohesion through continuity with the present.[41] Under Pope Kyrillos V (1874-1927), the first Coptic theological seminary was established in November 1893 by Archdeacon Habib Girgis, who

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[38] Mounir Shoucri, "Cyril IV," in Aziz S. Atiya ed., *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan, 1991): 678.
[39] Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers, and Education in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (London: E.B. Tauris, 2011): 2-3.
[40] Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity*, 159-160.
[41] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

became its first dean.[42] Efforts to acculturate a Coptic piety among Orthodox Christians culminated in *harakat madaris al-ahad* (Sunday school movement) under Girgis, who proclaimed that Copts could through education become "more useful members of their nation."[43] The Clerical College and Sunday schools became key developments to combat Western missionaries by using their tools to develop, in the words of Egyptian journalist Muhammad H. Heikal, "a cultural renaissance with political overtones."[44] This required the privatization and domestication of religion, elevation of clerical authority, and the embedding of national "codes of morality."[45] Throughout, Egypt's modernization project became embroiled in sectarian and anti-sectarian nationalist sentiments.

COPTS AND MUSLIMS IN EGYPT'S CONTESTED POLITICAL NATIONALISM(S)

Nationalist, Islamic and Christian reform movements in the nineteenth century set the groundwork for an emergent sense of national identity that *increasingly* drew distinctions between Christians and Muslims.[46] British occupation, and later United States imperialism, transformed such movements to ferment religious particularity through vertical hierarchies. Although viable in demographic terms, categories of "minority" and "majority" as distinct markers of legal status and a sense of belonging were mobilized in service of defining community and delimiting its boundaries.

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[42] See the most recent biography of Habib Girgis: Bishop Suriel, *Habib Girgis: Coptic Orthodox Educator and a Light in the Darkness* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2017).
[43] Quoted in Carolyn Ramzy, "Singing Heaven on Earth: Coptic Counterpublics and Popular Song at Egyptian Mūlid Festivals," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49.3 (2017): 382. First as informal gatherings for religious instruction under the name 'the society of love,' the name 'Sunday schools' (*madaris al-ahad*) was adopted when the group held its first meeting in 1918.
[44] Muhammad H. Heikal, *Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat* (New York: Random House, 1983): 154.
[45] Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity*, 175.
[46] Makdisi, "Understanding Sectarianism in the Middle East."

Coptic lay elites and secular-minded nationalists formed the *Majlis al-Milli* (lay council) by Khedival degree in February 1874 and sought greater control in Church affairs and community life. Their efforts parallel the formation of a Jewish community council in 1854 and an Armenian council in 1864. Further, Protestant notions of emphasizing a personal relationship with God above clerical influence informed their ideas: personal piety should be freed from the influence of clerical or state power. Predominantly educated and wealthy civil servants, the lay council members saw themselves as a part of an urban middle-class in Egypt better able to govern community affairs than "ignorant" clergy from humble backgrounds. Pope Kyrillos V turned against the council and rejected their demands to curtail his authority (particularly over *waqfs*, or religious endowments). The pope and the council played tug of war over Church and communal affairs, cementing the pope's greater reliance on state authority to control the Coptic lay elite. In turn, this proved to the state that real power over communal affairs lay with the pope.

Khedive (viceroy) Ismail played a prominent role in communal debates and is also remembered for incurring debts which served as a pretext to European intervention, the rise of a landed bourgeoisie overseeing cotton and sugar cane production, and rapid urbanization leading to renewed religious reforms and political clashes. Historian Juan Cole has argued that the Egyptian revolution of 1882 which culminated in British intervention and occupation entailed both a conflict between social strata and a proto-nationalist struggle.[47] Capitulations to European authorities and dominance under Ottoman-Egyptian state institutions provoked rebellions, land invasions in the countryside and attacks on European property in the cities.[48] The 1882 occupation was not just a matter of political expediency and economic indebtedness as the

[47] Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's 'Urabi Movement*, (Princeton University Press, 1993): 268-270. The Revolution united elements of the intelligentsia, the urban guilds and the villagers against the dual elite of the Ottoman-Egyptians and the Europeans. Juan Cole provides a thorough treatment of this fascinating and complicated history which is beyond the scope of this chapter.
[48] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 77.

British framed it. It was also morally motivated and built upon prior ideas about Egyptian political infancy. As Pollard showed, "the politics of the veiled protectorate were thus likened to the politics of sound motherhood—of raising Egypt to a new level of development."[49] In response, the Egyptian press from the 1870s to 1914 sought to define "Egyptianness" and to contest and subvert colonial discourse.

Institutional and epistemological modernizing reforms, combined with Egypt's integration into the world economy, rapid urbanization and British administrative policies fostered notions of a broader political community. Western-educated intellectuals and politicians acted in opposition to the British occupation and in an even broader global context of colonial competition. Between the 1876-1878 constitutional revolution in the Ottoman Empire and the 1908 Young Turks revolution, the collapse of the Viennese stock market caused a global economic depression from 1873 to 1896. Constitutionalist movements took shape in Japan (1874), Russia (1905), Mexico (1910), and China (1911). Most importantly, the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905—when a European power was defeated by an Asiatic one—raised the question: was this due to the fact that Japan had a constitution and Russia did not? By 1913, most constitutionalist movements failed. Yet they succeeded in making the state the site of political contestation by emphasizing political representation, the idea of a citizen (not a subject), and a set ideology (not a dynasty) as the foundation of political legitimacy.[50]

In Egypt, antiquity was a defining feature in shaping national identity formation.[51] Where nationalists such as Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872-1963) sought to define a new Egypt with Pharaonic roots and a distinct 'spirit,' pan-Islamic royalists like Mustafa Kamel of the National Party

[49] Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*, 98.
[50] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 156.
[51] Donald Malcolm Reid, *Contesting Antiquity in Egypt: Archaeologies, Museums and the Struggle for Identities From World War I to Nasser*, (American University in Cairo Press, 2015).

(1874-1908) sought to unite and distinguish Egypt within a broader Islamic *umma* (nation). Seeking access to power, this new strata took the reins of nationalist movements. Yet both conceptions of an Egyptian nation could not answer the "Coptic Question": how did Christians fit in? National unity discourse belied an inherent contradiction: by both claiming Egypt as a homogeneous nation and proclaiming harmonious unity between two distinct and separate elements, the religious identity of the Copts was at once cemented as a defining factor of their national experience and cast as marginal to the national history of a single imagined community. The reduced identity this produced came to typify the Coptic experience in Egypt.

Under British occupation both Muslims and Copts resented English and Syrian occupational competition and the introduction of Mixed Courts favouring Europeans.[52] The British refused to show favoritism to Copts and elected to appoint some Muslims and much more Syrian Christians (whom they favoured) so as not to incite anger in Egypt toward a native minority. Nevertheless, Muslim *'Ulamā* (legal scholars) worried over the erosion of their power under a Christian hegemony. Coptic nationalist fervor and distrust of the British was inflamed as a result of their professional marginalization despite being well represented in government administrative positions in proportion to their overall population. Copts were gaining access to schools formerly closed to them, such as the school of medicine (1886), law (1887), teaching (1889), and engineering (1899).[53] Certain prominent Copts even achieved positions of power. Boutros Ghali Pasha became finance minister in 1893, then foreign minister and then prime minister from November 1908 to February 1910, when he was assassinated by Muslim nationalist Ibrahim al-Wardani.

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[52] Cole, *Colonialism and revolution in the Middle East*, 268.
[53] Charles D. Smith, "The Egyptian Copts: Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Definition of Identity for a Religious Minority," in Maya Shatzmiller ed., *Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies,* (Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 2005): 67.

Lay Church reformers and secular nationalists planned a Coptic conference that took on added importance after Ghali's assassination. It was held in Asyut on 6 March 1911. The conference called for equality in employment, education and taxation, and pressed the government to recognize Christian religious holidays and support community charities.[54] Coptic representation in government positions was on the decline from 1900 to 1907 which caused anxiety at the conference. Throughout the proceedings, Coptic politicians, community leaders and landed elites rejected their reduced identity and instead promoted a model minority narrative: describing Copts as the best educated citizens. Egyptian Muslim nationalists responded with the Egyptian conference on 29 April 1911. It included representatives from the National Party, the Reform Party and the Umma Party. They insisted that Coptic demands were unpatriotic, a ploy to ensure the continued interference of foreign powers. They cited Coptic success stories as only further proof of their domination.

These two conferences were particularly significant in framing the stakes for constitutional debates after the First World War. The first Coptic conference articulated demands in the name of *al-umma al-qibtiyya* (the Coptic nation). Their demands prompted criticism and attacks on the Coptic conference and its delegates. The Coptic-owned *Al-Watan* newspaper responded and asserted: "The Copts *are* the true Egyptians. They are the real masters of the country. All those who have set their foot on Egyptian soil, are nothing but invaders. The originators of this nation are the Copts."[55] This view drew on both the distinct place of the Copts in Egyptian antiquity and European race theory and eugenics popular in Egypt. It embraced the ideas of Egyptian secular nationalists like Taha Husayn and Salama Musa. It was claimed that as

[54] "The Coptic Congress: Held at Assiout, On March 6, 7, and 8, 1911. The Speeches, Literally Translated," [Egypt?]: [publisher not identified], [1911?]: 1-62.
[55] Quoted in Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 71.

an indigenous race deserving of equal rights and participation, Copts possessed a civilizational superiority premised on notions of their ancient roots in Pharaonic Egypt.[56]

Through the language of indigeneity, some Coptic nationalists claimed to be the original inhabitants of the land to distinguish themselves from Arabs and Bedouins. This claim to a category "beyond whiteness" linked religion, class and race to a status within the nation (and later among diasporic nationalists) which rested on "racist portrayals of their self-histories."[57] Such a racialization, as Serag Assi outlined, was rooted in British colonial expansion and scientific racism to establish a racial archetype on which Arabness itself was measured, codified and reproduced. Assi argued that, "three 'Arab races' were sorted out: the Bedouin, the Fellaheen [farmers], and the townspeople. Only the Bedouin, however, were labeled 'true Arabs.'"[58] European intellectuals and officials allocated to the Bedouin a position of primitive backwardness (the perfect other to European progress and civilization) and labelled nomads as intruders and wanderers—thereby dispossessing them of any ownership to the land. As a result, European notions of racial hierarchies were superimposed on the Ottoman millet system that devised community as organized primarily by religion and kinship ties. By the turn of the century, French and British "experts" had divergent views of the "Arab races." Yet they showed a "growing tendency to translate spatial categories into fixed racial hierarchies."[59] Intersectional categories became foundational to more expansive national and transnational conversations around Coptic rights in Egypt.

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[56] B.L. Carter, *The Copts in Egyptian Politics, 1918-1952* (American University in Cairo Press, 1988).
[57] Sanober Umar, "Beyond Whiteness: Rethinking Aryan Nationalisms in Multicultural Canada," *Active History*, December 14, 2017.
[58] Serag Assi, "The Original Arabs: the Invention of the 'Bedouin Race' in Ottoman Palestine," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 50.2 (2018): 214.
[59] Assi, "The Original Arabs," 229. See also: Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002).

THE TRIUMPH OF SYSTEMIC INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCRIMINATION

Britain declared Egypt a protectorate in December 1914. To encourage participation in the war effort, the British insinuated that the end of the First World War would lead to Egypt's independence. They managed to instead alienate all segments of Egyptian society during the war. The population experienced famine, wartime inflation and British control of cotton. United States president Woodrow Wilson's postwar declaration of the principles of self-determination encouraged nationalists to demonstrate to the British that they were "grown up" and ready to govern themselves.[60] A delegation under Saad Zaghlul (born into a family of agrarian petty bourgeois who later married the daughter of an Egyptian prime minister) was denied permission from the British high commissioner to go to the Paris peace conference in November 1918. As president of the Legislative Assembly, Zaghlul was detained and deported with prominent members of his party simply for their presumption. Rioting broke out in the spring of 1919 and lasted two months. When the revolution of 1919 ended, the British were forced to recognize Zaghlul's Wafd (delegation) party as Egypt's representatives. The Wafd in turn was most interested in the support of the *effendiyya* who upheld modernity, family and bourgeois values.[61]

The Wafd and their *effendiyya* base saw themselves in paternal terms as representing all Egyptians. However, they in fact represented the liberal ideals of secular middle-class reformers. This social strata—notables and their Western-educated sons, bureaucrats and professionals with degrees from state schools—was neither the agrarian bourgeoisie nor the industrial elite who relied on foreign capital. Drawn from doctors, lawyers and other professionals aiming for

[60] Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*, 167.
[61] Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*, 169. On notable Copts who played a seminal role in the rise of the Wafd, see: Sedra, "Copts and the Millet Partnership," 499-502.

independence, they were quite conservative on social issues.[62] Though the revolution was made of divergent group interests (divided by class, religion and gender), the Wafd and their supporters crafted through the press an imagined community of the "Egyptian nation" around the concept of one family.[63] The British set up the Milner commission and in 1922 granted Egypt 'conditional independence' and a constitution but maintained control over Egyptian defense and foreign policy, the Suez canal, shared governance of the Sudan, and safeguarded all capitulations. This hampered system of governance set the Wafd against the king and the British high commissioner (with whom ultimate authority remained), and political parties of all stripe.

Saad Zaghlul's Wafd diverged from former Umma Party colleagues like Lutfi al-Sayyid and Ali Sha'arawi. It was administratively controlled by both Muslims and Copts: Zaghlul, Mustafa Al Nahas, Wassef Boutros Ghali, and Sinot Hanna. Intense debates followed the Wafd's victory in the 1922 elections over the formulation of a constitution in 1923. The debate over proportional representation in particular included discussions about a proposal for minority language in *Majlis al-Nawab* (the legislative parliament): would appointments be through popular election or through executive, or legislative order? While both the Jewish and Bedouin communities took part in the debate, the Copts had the largest minority voice owing to their numbers as a percentage of the overall population (approximately eight per cent).[64]

Ideological diversity was as important as religious affiliations. Nationalists like the Copt Tawfiq Doss sought to include minority representation as a means to guard against colonial intervention—the British claiming their presence ensured equality for minorities under Muslim

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[62] On the socio-economic divisions in Egyptian society between workers, the landed classes, petty bourgeoisie, and professional middle-class *effendiyya* see: Beinin and Lockman, *Workers on the Nile*, 89.
[63] Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*, 178. In light of the substantial length of this chapter and its aims to sketch a foundational background for this immigration history, I limit my discussion of the 1919 revolution. The continued significance of this moment in Egypt's modern history will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.
[64] Ministry of Finance (Egypt), *Census Department, Population Census of Egypt, 1927*, (1931).

rule. Most Jewish, Anglican Copts and Orthodox *Majlis al-Milli* representatives on the Constitutional Committee agreed. Yet the majority of secular nationalists rejected such an imposition.[65] The latter obsessed over the composition of the nation. Zaghlul's declaration became the motto of the Wafd and a rallying cry: "Egypt belongs to Copts as well as Muslims. All have a right to the same freedom and the same privileges."[66] Minority language was unnecessary, declared nationalists like the Copt William Weesa: "Copts are not a minority because they belong to no other nation than Egypt, nor do they want a government that represents anyone but the Egyptian people, nor do they claim a language other than Arabic."[67] The Wafd then successfully killed minority representation in the 1923 constitution, and were vindicated when Copts won more seats than their share of the population in 1924 and 1928.

While the anti-colonial struggle and nationalist fervor mingled with the language of self-determination in these debates, other voices existed. Nationalists like Muslim Mahmoud Azmi argued that article 149, which declared Islam as the religion of the state, "secured a formal and enduring place for Islam." For him, "far from consecrating religious difference in politics, minority representation would combat the consequences of what was already an unfair system."[68] Secularists like the Copt Aziz Mirhim ascribed to a Lockean notion of religious individualism and political secularism, which would eventually win out and "the existence of majority and minority in Egypt, which are a product of history, will not survive for long and will disappear as was the case in Western countries."[69] Following such a positivist ideology, Taha Husayn dismissed article 149 ("Islam is the state religion") as a means to appease the masses and

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[65] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 75.
[66] Quoted in Edward Wakin, *A Lonely Minority: the Modern Story of Egypt's Copts*, (Lincoln, NE: An Author's Guild Backprint.com Revised Edition, 2000 [1963]): 17.
[67] Quoted in Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 77.
[68] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 77.
[69] Quoted in Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 78.

as merely symbolic and superficial. Secular nationalist Salama Musa concurred, writing years later in his preface to Michael Zugheib's 1950 book *Fariq Tasud* (Divide and Rule) that, "religion must be separated from the state" to ensure that Egyptians shed such superstition in favor of "learning and science."[70]

Yet this faith in a future pregnant with secular possibilities further inscribed religious difference in the language of national sovereignty. Article 4 of the constitution was meant to attack British claims to protect Egypt's minorities by guarantying the "same treatment and security." Together with Article 149, they cemented religious difference in the language of the state and the character of debates over minority representation.[71] The constitution of 1923 was followed by elections between the Wafd and the Umma Party (renamed *al-Ahrar al-Dostoriyuon*, the Free Constitutionalists). The Wafd was attacked in the press as constituted by majority Copts and allied with missionaries accused of targeting Muslim women and children for conversion. At the same time, King Fuad allied himself with al-Azhar as the protector of Islam to shore up his power amid turbulent debates.

Throughout the 1920s, religion, race, class, and gender were tools in an intense power struggle. At a time of rapid industrialization, urbanization and mass education, Coptic claims to civilizational superiority and declarations of Muslim glory were elaborated and notions of positivism failed to adequately respond to the challenge.[72] Over time the notion of a subjective minority identity became part of the lexicon of political representation: "a *political* term, [which] registers hierarchical difference (and not simply difference)."[73] In Egypt, the type of public

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[70] Salama Musa, "For the Sake of Our National Unity," Introduction to *Farriq Tasud* in *The Cry of Egypt's Copts: Documents on Christian Life in Egypt Today* (New York: Phoenicia Press, 1951): 6.
[71] Quoted in Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 74.
[72] For similar debates on religion and secular politics in Lebanon, see: Makdisi, *Age of Coexistence*, 134-138. In the Canadian context, see: Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (University of Toronto Press,1985) on the "supreme irony" of Christian social reform.
[73] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 54.

recognition sought by the most vocal among this minority group consisted either in their acknowledgement of their equal dignity and rights, or the recognition of their cultural uniqueness as legitimate grounds for special protections. If Copts had much leeway within these prejudicial systems, it was in deciding when to downplay their cultural distinctiveness to enjoy difference-blind treatment and status or to make their difference and distinctiveness salient. If the modern concept of nationalism regards linguistic, ethnic and cultural characteristics as the legitimate basis of sovereignty, the "Coptic Question" and claims for Christian distinction challenged the notion of a single unified Egyptian nation.[74]

Egypt did not experience the proliferation of religious minorities (as in Syria) or the fragmentation of regions by religious difference (as in Lebanon). Rather, Egypt has had a large Sunni majority and a numerically significant Coptic minority. The presence of favoured "foreign minorities" helped to feed resentment by native Egyptians (both Muslim and Christian) and created a weariness for the use of 'minority' language in demands for redress. The designation 'minority' became a double bind. To claim a minority status was to be set apart from the nation and accorded special protections. Egypt's minorities were conceived as a threat to the integrity of the nation's sovereignty, independence and unity (*al-wahda al-wataniyya*). By the 1930s, opportunities for Muslim-Christian political partnership narrowed and congealed around a conception of religious liberty as a collective right to be protected. Yet a balance had to be maintained between claims for minority rights against accusations of collusion with foreign powers. For the Coptic Orthodox Church leadership, the term 'minority' came to be derided where 'community' was a viable political unit exercising authority. In time, the Church emerged as the legitimate representative of a single Orthodox Christian community.

[74] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 52.

YOUNG NATIONALISTS AND THE NOT-SO-GOLDEN LIBERAL AGE

Dominant Egyptian nationalist parties led by agrarian and industrial elite or the urban *effendiyya* advocated for moderation until the mid-1930s.[75] It was in their interests to phase out British control and assume the vacated positions of power. By representing the interests of only a few, they failed "to encompass or even control the totality of the Egyptian public sphere."[76] As the Wafd's popularity waned, the British only allowed the party to take power when they needed to exploit their base; as the British did in 1936 (to negotiate an amicable Anglo-Egyptian treaty) and again in 1942 when Germany threatened the British in Egypt. A new generation of young nationalists emerged who questioned established parties.

Colonial Egypt, Syria and Iraq are often remembered as a liberal 'golden age' prior to achieving independence. The supposed decay of liberalization, however, ignores that these countries were liberal for only a few. Foreign minorities enjoyed privileges unavailable to native citizens, since segregation or exclusion from tramways, clubs and cafes was common. The trappings of democratic life masked deep underlying social divisions. Parliaments were unrepresentative and the franchise was limited, political organizations and trade unions restricted associational life at the whim of imperial authorities or local autocrats, newspapers were always subject to heavy censorship. Between the 1920s and 1940s, local governments were weak, unstable and at the mercy of imperial powers. Nationalist movements reflected the interests of the elites who dominated them.[77]

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[75] Whether motivated by a reliance on foreign capital as was the case with the Sa'dist Party or for the Wafd the pursuit of legal methods for securing independence, an older generation of nationalists initially did not advocate on social problems. Young Egypt is emblematic of radicalization among the younger generation in the 1930s. Beinin and Lockman, *Workers on the Nile*, 210.
[76] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 198.
[77] Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930 - 1945* (Cambridge UP, 1995).

Cairo and Alexandria together had a population of one-and-a-quarter million in 1917. By 1947, that population had reached three million. Educational opportunities and the proliferation of industries produced rising rural to urban migration, which meant a greater number of people available for mass mobilization. Local populations now saw state support as the 'obligation' of governments. The failure of established political parties to speak to such needs left the door open for competing movements. This agitation in the 1930s witnessed an initial shift in focus from Western democracies to the revival of a pan-Asian vision of regional world order in the East and attraction to totalitarian forms of governance exemplified by Fascism and Nazism. Informed by Japan's rise and a right-wing turn to Islamic authenticity, Hassan al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood and Ahmed Hussein's Young Egypt on the right sought to rival the Wafd. Young Egypt (adapting the language of Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Italy) looked to the Nile and to Pharaonic civilization for Egyptian authenticity.[78] Hassan al-Banna, relying on the counsel of Salifi thinkers, stressed the Islamic cultural component as integral to nationalism and saw himself as acting in the interests of the nation: he once told a British newspaper that, "[we are] neither politicians nor a political party but simply nationalists working for the welfare of Egypt and the restoration of usurped Egyptian rights."[79] By referencing Islam as its one principle, the Muslim Brotherhood crafted a form of nationalism authentic to a conservative tradition in Arab nationalism and speaking to layers of the population alienated by mainstream nationalist movements in their homes, coffee shops and mosques. As historian Beth Baron has argued,

[78] The Young Egypt Society was founded in 1933. It changed its name to the Young Egypt Party in 1936, the Islamic Nationalist Party in 1940, and the Socialist Party of Egypt in 1949. It was dissolved along with other parties after the Free Officers Revolution in 1952. Jankowski has argued that the party offered an alternative, although it suffered from a profound identity crisis and never attracted a mass following like the Muslim Brotherhood. James Jankowski, *Egypt's Young Rebels: "Young Egypt," 1933-1952* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1975).
[79] Quoted in Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 311.

"their success was due to al-Banna's magnetism, rhetorical skills, and organizational abilities as well as the readiness of young, urban Egyptians to respond to such a message."[80]

A young nationalist generation disgruntled with the old guard questioned established politics. General dissatisfaction festered: the parliamentary system was seen to be supporting a colonial regime which in turn supported elite nationalists. Those in power appeared to be apart from the reality of everyday life and the rule of law was being abused.[81] Rigged elections and laws refashioned to suit private ends led to a radicalization in the 1930s and 1940s. Young nationalists saw a state of society that offered many possibilities, constrained by the conditions of imperialism and of elite formation that had brought people to power in the 1910s and 1920s. There is no denying the dedication of past nationalists. Yet as they continued to promote national discourse in public debate, in the press and in school curricula on the one hand, on the other they did not want to relinquish any influence, prestige, or authority to this younger generation. In the context of growing insecurity and political turmoil, a radicalization took place: young people debated how to reform the polity, religion and the leadership of a few in society.

Egypt in the 1930s is typically defined as experiencing a "crisis of orientation" because a younger generation became attracted to more authoritarian, and presumably more efficient, political models. Disillusionment with partisan bickering initially led to a positive reception of rising Fascism and Nazism in Europe.[82] Yet the 1930s was not a 'regressive decade' in Egyptian history. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski have argued instead that liberal politics continued to be prominent in social and intellectual discourse. Infatuation with these forms of authoritarian rule was short-lived and more likely the exception and not the rule, even as Fascism was at its

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[80] Beth Baron, *Egypt as Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics*, (Univ. of California Press, 2005): 209-213.
[81] Giedre Sabaseviciute, "Sayyid Qutb and the Crisis of Culture in Late 1940s Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 50.1 (2018): 87-88.
[82] Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship versus Democracy in the 1930s* (Stanford University Press, 2010): 3.

ideological and political zenith in Europe and elsewhere.[83] Gershoni and Jankowski observed that instead "most Egyptian commentators sought to reform and improve, rather than to replace or destroy, the existing Egyptian parliamentary system." Muslim and Coptic nationalists' views of Fascism and Nazism contradict assumptions of an inherent "predisposition toward authoritarianism, totalitarianism, or 'Islamo-fascism.'"[84] Illustrative of such views are "the odd couple of the Fabian socialist Salama [Musa] and radical youth leader Ahmed [Hussein] of Young Egypt" who "despite substantial differences in their analysis of the ills of contemporary Egypt, it was the fervent conviction of both commentators that Egyptian society and politics required drastic transformation." Imperialism was the greatest threat to self-determination and such passionate and aggressive movements could be the road to modernity.[85] By the Second World War, as Gershoni and Jankowski described it, most had come to the conclusion that the imperial ambitions of Fascism and Nazism represented a more capricious threat than British imperialism to Egypt, the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The continued search for 'authentic' alternatives led to further fracturing of Egypt's anti-colonial movements along confessional lines. On one side were *Shebab Muhammad* (Muhammad's Youth) and the Muslim Brotherhood, whose motto was "the Quran is our constitution, Arabic our language, and death in the way of God our greatest hope." On the other was *Jama'at al-Ummah al-Qibtiyyah* (Society of the Coptic Nation), whose motto was "God is our king, Egypt our country, the Gospels our law and the Cross our badge, and death for the sake

[83] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt*, 6-10. "Reactionary" interpretations of Egyptian political and intellectual history have dominated in Middle East Studies. Both Orientalist condescension by Western scholars, and the Nasserite narrative developed in the 1960s, tied sympathy for Axis powers to a rejection of British colonialism. Thus Egyptian history has in large part been written in the past as a failed liberal attack on tradition in the constitutional period that culminated in a failure to breakdown reactionary primordial difference.
[84] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt*, 11-13.
[85] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt*, 269.

of Christ our greatest hope."[86] These movements blended secular nationalism with continued debates around the prominent role of religion in the public sphere. Both felt unrepresented by mainstream nationalists and the elitist Wafd. A lack of communal support continued and intensified as the British occupation persisted in social life.[87]

Under the League of Nations, the signing of the Montreux convention in 1937 ended special privileges protecting nationals with foreign citizenship in Egypt.[88] Yet the influence of confessional politics continued to marginalize Christians in the nation. In 1931, only the medical testimony of Muslim doctors was legally accepted. By 1934, new regulations for church building called the "Ten Conditions" were established that required, among other stipulations, royal approval and the support of local Muslim inhabitants. That same year, *Shari'a* laws were implemented in the formation and drafting of wills. Debates were ongoing over implementing similar rules in inheritance and divorce procedures until 1942, when they were cut short by the Second World War. Copts became increasingly excluded from politics, with 7.5 per cent of political representation in the 1930s, and only 3 per cent in the last Wafd parliament of 1950 despite an approximate Coptic population of 6.31 per cent by 1947.[89]

Mob attacks on Coptic places of worship took on a more organized form following the end of the Second World War. In 1947, churches in Zagazig, Alexandria and Jirga were set ablaze. In January 1952, a church in Suez was burned, purportedly by the Muslim Brotherhood, and three Copts died. In response, the *Majlis al-Milli* refused to accept Christmas congratulations from the government and declared three days of mourning. This form of direct opposition was one of the few avenues available to Coptic clerical leaders, a viable tactic which would be

[86] Quoted in Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 81.
[87] Baron, *Egypt as Woman*, 218-219.
[88] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 46.
[89] J.D. Pennington, "The Copts in Modern Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18.2 (1982): 158.

employed again following major sectarian incidents. Disillusionment with political parties and a perceived weakness of the Church hierarchy to respond led some Copts to channel their efforts through civil society. Organizations which began at the turn of the twentieth century reached their zenith in the 1940s, such as religious societies, women's organizations, orphanages, and charities. Coptic magazines established by Aziz Surial Atiya (1898-1988), Sami Gabra (1898-1979) and Murad Kamil (1908-1957) found wide readership. The Institute of Coptic Studies formed in 1954 to revive the Coptic language and theological history.

Well into the 1950s, there was a significant increase in the number and influence of benevolent and philanthropic societies. Coptic middle-class laity stepped in and collaborated with working-class Copts toward the creation of local churches and charities to support urban community developments. As Vivian Ibrahim noted, most executive boards were dominated by reformist leadership seeking to empower the lay community.[90] Rising migration from the countryside to cities incited a proliferation in church-building projects. Sebastian Elsässer is emblematic of an approach common to community scholarship which has often framed associational lie as the product of Coptic elite acting in a wider world of state politics under clerical oversight. However, middle-class and working-class Copts were far from 'acted upon' and benevolent societies did a great deal more than simply rely on the Church's "good personal relations with the governor and other key personnel in the administration ... to pursue construction projects in their diocese without much delay or bother."[91] Centre stage were local societies competing for land, demarcating urban space against Greeks, Armenians and Italians, and aligning with middle-class tradesmen to hurriedly build wooden structures without permits. Societies such as the Friends of the Bible (established in 1908) bought a small plots of land and

[90] Vivian Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt: Challenges of Modernisation and Identity*, (London: Tauris, 2011): 103-108.
[91] Sebastian Elsässer, *The Coptic Question in the Mubarak Era*, (Oxford UP, 2014): 94.

hired Coptic contractors for both the architectural design and construction. My grandfather, Farag Akladios, and his elder brother were prominent architects in Alexandria who documented their work-related activities constructing over 30 churches and restoring several monasteries.[92] Neither defined by harmonious inter-religious relations nor simply Church and state power, local initiative, sectarian anxieties, intra-communal and inter-ethnic tensions, and squabbles with priests defined this period of church-building.

At the same time, relations between the Church hierarchy and elite reformers on the community council deteriorated further over endowments from the reign of Pope Youannes XIX (r. 1928 - 1945) to Pope Yusab II (r. 1946 - 1956). The aged Yusab II was widely considered out of touch with administrative matters and corrupt. Control apparently lay with his valet, Malak Guirguis. The Society of the Coptic Nation was established in 1951, and on 25 July 1954 a group entered the patriarch's residence, forced the pope to sign papers announcing his abdication, and then took the pope to a nunnery in Wadi Natrun Valley. Appealing to young Copts from Fagallah, the Society was organized under the leadership of Ibrahim Hilal. This predominantly youth-led movement was active at a time when the least likely to organize for Coptic rights were the wealthy and established, those with the most to lose.[93] Pope Yusab returned to the papal throne with the support of the lay council soon after. However, the continued interference of his valet and clashes over corruption led to his forced abdication by the Holy Synod and lay elites in 1956. Debates around the obligations of the patriarch and the rights of Copts within the Church and nation did not erupt in a vacuum.

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[92] Farag Akladios, "Statement from Charoubim and Farag Akladios: Events Surrounding the Churches and Situations We Met During Construction," (Unpublished, 199?): 1. See the Introduction for more information.
[93] Wakin, *A Lonely Minority*, 95-98.

Image 1 Sunday School Retreat to Upper Egyptian Monasteries, Summer 1952. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

Political agitation and perceived clerical weakness to reform systemic corruption and fight marginalization led a new generation of lay Sunday school leaders to enter monasteries and work within the Church to regulate and expand social and spiritual services. Revivalist monks and their lay supporters saw a stagnant traditionalist hierarchy amid the revolutionary politics of the decade. Three revivalist monks, father Matta al-Miskeen, father Makary al-Suriani and father Anthony al-Suriani, and their followers nominated their mentor and once father confessor, father Mina al-Baramousi.[94] In May 1959 father Mina was consecrated Pope Kyrillos VI and approved by presidential decree. The enthronement of Pope Kyrillos and elevation of the three revivalist monks to positions of power and authority within the Church hierarchy required the pope to strike a tough balance between the traditionalists and revivalists, completely marginalizing lay reformers (detailed in chapter 4). Fathers Makary and Anthony were consecrated general bishops to integrate them into the Holy Synod on 30 September 1962. With Bishop Samuel holding the largest general bishopric, overseeing Public, Ecumenical and Social Services, Bishop Shenouda oversaw Religious Education, and Bishop Gregorious (consecrated 1967) took control of part of

[94] Wakin, *A Lonely Minority*, 110-111.

Shenouda's former mandate: Coptic Higher Studies. The Church-state relationship during Nasser's reign had a lasting effect on Copts in Egypt and beyond its borders.

EGYPTIAN CONFESSIONALIZATION CONTINUES UNDER ARAB SOCIALISM

The first military coup after the Second World War took place in Syria in 1948. However, it was the Free Officers revolution in Egypt in 1952 that set the standard and provided a model for other states in the region. New regimes in Egypt, Syria and Iraq in the 1950s introduced new economic planning boards, labor laws, and educational and welfare benefits for their citizens. In return, they expected compliance and support.[95] Such policies were produced by local circumstances and under pressure from the United States which replaced Britain and France as the dominant super power in the region, in competition with Soviet Russia in a Cold War context.

Image 2 Free Officers Gamal Abdel Nasser, Muhammad Naguib and 'Abd al-Hakīm 'Āmir outside Beni Suef, July 1952. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

[95] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 234.

The Free Officers revolution of July 1952 brought an end to British privilege in Egypt. The Free Officers began to mobilize in the wake of the 1948 Palestine War, a devastating military defeat to the new state of Israel. Army officers blamed the monarchy for the failure and denounced government corruption as the cause. Gamal Abdel Nasser, one of the most famous leaders of the movement, was born in 1918 near Alexandria to a postal clerk and rose to the rank of colonel in the military. The military command council first installed General Muhammad Naguib as president in 1952. Soon after, Nasser refused Naguib's calls for a free election and placed him under house arrest. Nasser took power in 1954 and began a series of Egyptianization projects, most famously the seizure of the Suez Canal. Britain, France and Israel launched their tripartite invasion to overthrow Nasser, who was also "supporting Algerian insurgents against French rule, obstructed Israeli sea lanes, and had just concluded an arms deal with Czechoslovakia that threatened to upset the regional balance of power."[96] However, international pressure forced them to withdraw and Nasser emerged as both the moral and political victor. The last British troops left after the 1956 Suez Crisis which set Egypt as the geopolitical leader in the region and propelled Nasser to the position of the head of Pan-Arabism.

Nasser's seizure of the Suez canal and subsequent consolidation of public and private wealth was part of a larger program: *tamsir al-iqtisad* (the Egyptianization of the economy). *Tamsir* was an economic policy used in his speeches and in legal and public discourse at the time. *Tamsir* saw the sequestering of British and French enterprises, and the "laws relevant to the Egyptianization of banks, insurance companies and import agencies [being] published on January 15 [1957]." *Tamsir* led to later nationalization programs. As historian Hala Halim

[96] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 287.

observed, they share some features but are not identical: nationalization was a more far-reaching process that peaked in the quasi-socialist turn of 1961-1962.[97]

Nasser's power and popularity allowed him to crack down on domestic reactionaries and foreign capitalists by seizing their properties to finance rapid economic and social development. His victory also inspired a political atmosphere which led to the revolution in Iraq in 1958 and inspired nationalists in Syria to demand unification with Egypt. The United Arab Republic (UAR) was formed in 1958 but lasted only three years. It was enough time for Egypt's development model to be exported wholesale to Syria. This included the dismantling of parliament, the courts and royal assets to break the power of industrialists backed by the monarchy and instead promote state-led industrial and land reform. The latter was a vital piece of post-independence economic development in the region, as smaller plots of land were now owned by farmers who worked in cooperatives under state management and economic support. This destroyed the agrarian bourgeois, who could threaten state authority and also devastated the productive capacity of agricultural lands. Pan-Arabism took shape after 1956, as Nasser increasingly saw the West in conspiracy with Israel hindering Arab unity.[98]

Sectarianism and the confessionalization of Egyptian politics continued under secular Arab socialist authoritarian rule, not in spite of it. There is no denying that there were more opportunities for open debate and Coptic public engagement prior to the revolution. Nasser's assent had the effect of closing all alternative avenues for Coptic political participation. Civil society organizations which expanded in the 1940s entered a state of atrophy. Political parties collapsed or were culled under state control. The government was composed of army officers

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[97] Hala Halim, "Alexandria – and its 'cosmopolitanism' – encore et toujours," *Politics/Letters*, September 17, 2018, http://politicsslashletters.org/alexandria-and-its-cosmopolitanism-encore-et-toujours/; 'Abd al-Salam 'Abd al-Halim 'Amir, *al-Ra'simaliyya al-Sina'iyya fi Misr min al-Tamsir ila al-Ta'mim* (Industrial Capitalism in Egypt from Egyptianization to Nationalization), (Cairo: National Egyptian Book Organization, 1993): 30-31.
[98] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 285.

and Coptic representation declined markedly in part because of minimal representation of Christians more broadly in the army. Those Copts Nasser appointed to administrative positions were technocrats, with no real authority in government and lacking the support and legitimacy afforded by both the Church and community. Nasser's nationalization projects targeted landowners and urban elites. Particularly affected were the Coptic Catholic landowners in Upper Egypt and the Delta. Nasser was not motivated by sectarian concerns, but rather by an Arab socialism aimed at strengthening the working-class, and more importantly, to solidify his power. Why then did Nasser crush the political party and the trade union but not the church or the mosque? As Makdisi observed, religion in the modern era was nationalized.[99]

Nasser aimed to resolve the "Coptic Question" in his own way. Opting for only one voice with which to resolve Coptic claims, he empowered the pope by confiscating *waqfs* (religious endowments) and abolishing religious courts in 1955, restoring power over the community to Church control. With the "entente" between Nasser and Kyrillos VI, as Mariz Tadros has argued, the lay council was effectively crushed and no new elections took place after 1961. The single party system sanctioned Nasser's authoritarian state apparatus and inaugurated similar developments in the Church and community.[100] The pope now held supreme authority over the spiritual and material affairs of the Copts and as the representative of Christian concerns more generally. Lay actors in the public sphere were all but silenced. Kyrillos' was the only voice Nasser tolerated. The pope was able to not only consolidate his control over religious, philanthropic and welfare programs, but also secure government funds and resources to build a monastery, cathedral and retroactively licence urban churches which were built in secret.

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[99] Makdisi, *Age of Coexistence*, 216.
[100] Mariz Tadros, "Vicissitudes in the Entente Between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the State in Egypt (1952–2007)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41.2 (2009): 269-287.

Edward Wakin provides one of the few contemporary observations of the pope's character. He noted that Pope Kyrillos was "impregnable in his piety, unassailable on his spiritual mountaintop … from this spiritual height, he has surprised, stunned and chagrined the lackadaisical, the indifferent and the militant."[101] This characterization persists in assessments of the pope which reflect on an imposing figure but overstate his spiritual side. Formerly an administrative secretary in Thomas Cook, a British hospitality and tourism company in Alexandria, he was fluent in English and a very pragmatic leader who chose to leave practical matters to select subordinates. Father Makary was his favored student, his spiritual disciple and his closest and most trusted advisor. The pair focused on rehabilitating and standardizing religious life and observances, returning monks to their monasteries, and ensuring the proper work of parish priests. Commenting on a response from the patriarchate to a series of questions he had sent, Wakin noted that the responses were delivered from the pope with collaboration by father Makary which made them far more accurate. The monk was so "intimately involved in policy-making for the Patriarch, any merging of the viewpoints of the two men re-enforces the validity of the answers." This is a very telling observation. As was the response which may be summed up: "what is the Church's greatest need? Spiritual revival and social unity."[102]

In 1962, father Makary became Bishop Samuel and father Anthony left the monastery to become Bishop Shenouda. Disagreements between bishops Samuel and Shenouda multiplied over the modern role of the Church in the nation. Bishop Samuel increasingly championed ecumenical unity of service—the notion that economic power through Western education and foreign religious charities was the only way to support the Church and community in Egypt. Copts in Egypt and a growing immigrant cohort were required to unite with stronger and

[101] Wakin, *A Lonely Minority*, 113.
[102] Quoted in Wakin, *A Lonely Minority*, 116.

wealthier forces and thereby make Christians indispensible to the needs of the ruling regime. However Bishop Shenouda's stance remained rooted in the fundamentalism of the St. Anthony school of thought—a dedicated asceticism and the defence of Orthodoxy against any perceived heresy or dilution of canonical practices—that informed Shenouda's profound distrust of the ecumenical movement that influenced and financed social work in Egypt. As general bishop of Religious Education, Shenouda educated a new generation of middle-class clergy and laity in the theology and traditions of the Church. His growing following saw ecumenicists like Bishop Samuel as 'crypto-protestants' because they were less concerned with Egyptian nationalism and a return to the Orthodoxy of the Church and more with social work and debates on poverty in the Third World that reflected evangelical preoccupations (detailed in chapter 4). The key doctrinal disagreement was over the value of offering spiritual sustenance or material assistance: to instil reverence for the Bible and Coptic pride *or* provide material aid for Copts to prosper in the world. Tradition and modernity were at all times dialectically related. Bishop Shenouda's vision also fostered a distinct Coptic ethno-religious identity to pursue engaged social, cultural and political activism and contest escalating discrimination of the Copts. A cohesive and entrenched communal identity, he thought, could serve as a base for political action.[103]

At the same time, the state took over entire sectors of the economy under a new middle-class. State planning and investment was expanded through national banks, insurance companies, textile mills, etc, under a holistic, state-led socialism model in the 1960s. In Egypt, and to some extent in Syria and Iraq, the new society recognized peasants, workers, intellectuals, 'good' capitalists, and the army as its building blocks. Nasser's programs were broadcast region-wide on Radio Cairo. Egypt pursued a policy of nonalignment, developing economic and military

[103] Pope Shenouda's preoccupation with the material world later led to intense public debates with father Matta al-Miskeen. Their disagreements over doctrinal matters were centre-stage after Bishop Samuel's death in 1981.

alliances with the USSR but nevertheless influenced by the United States and international institutions which pushed for state-led development. Economic nationalism served US interests in the region because these policies tied populations closer to the state and served to keep the economies of revolutionary regimes afloat. A neoliberal realignment would shape policy consideration after 1970, when such states ran out of properties to nationalize and a global economic crisis combined with a Cold War thaw led to reduced foreign investment and support. Even before then, Pan-Arabism had faded as a guiding policy.

For the United States, interest and power in the Middle East region grew after the 1956 Suez War, guided by four seemingly contradictory policy objectives in the Cold War era (1954-1989). The first was containment of the Soviet Union by promoting anti-imperialism, nationalism and economic development as a means to counter the threat of social revolution and communism. The second was ensuring Western access to oil. While the chief source of oil for the United States was Canada, the Middle East was a strategic region because economic recovery plans in Europe and Japan (to prevent social revolution) relied on cheap Middle Eastern oil. The third was a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict to maintain the regional balance of power. The fourth was the protection and preservation of the independent state of Israel. For the United States, Israel came to represent an ideological bastion of American-style democracy in the region, a strategic proxy in the war against Soviet influence and, domestically, the support of Israel ensured the votes of Jewish and Christian Evangelical groups.

For Soviet Russia, between 1955 and 1970 Egypt became an ally in the region which they supported through military and economic aid. Diplomatic cooperation and student exchange programs steadily increased following the Czechoslovakian-Egyptian arms deal of 1955. Egypt was of strategic importance to Russia because of its location on vital sea trade routes and its

cultural importance as a bastion of Arab nationalism in the Middle East region. Amid the contradictory policies of US containment and Russian interest in Egypt in a Cold War global system, Nasser readily welcomed Soviet aid but maintained a policy of nonalignment. As historian Laura Bier has argued, Nasser's Arab socialism functioned economically much more like "state-capitalism" and his secular nationalist modernity sought a "third way" between the "cultures of capitalism and communism that reflected the needs and specificities of Egypt."[104]

The 1967 Six Day War threatened to upset that balance. It began when Nasser ordered the closing of the entrance to the Red Sea to Israeli shipping, in solidarity with Syria. Israel, to restore its access, declared war on 5 June 1967. The war was a resounding defeat for Nasser. The Israeli army captured all of Jerusalem (divided between Israel and Jordan since 1948), the West Bank, the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. As James Gelvin noted, the war fundamentally changed the equation because, "before the war, the issue at stake for both Israelis and their Arab neighbors had been the existence of Israel. After the war, the issue at stake was ... the return of the territories occupied during the hostilities." The equation of 'land for peace' became the basis of future negotiations.[105] The Arab states met in Khartoum, Sudan, to negotiate a unified position: no negotiations with Israel, no peace and no recognition of Israel's right to Palestine. Instead, the Arab states turned to the superpowers to negotiate on their behalf. Since, by this point, Soviet Russia had broken relations with Israel, the United States became the relied upon negotiator in the region. Israel maintained the 'land for peace' equation and the US waited for desperate Arab states to capitulate in return for occupied territories.

With the death of Nasser in 1970, his vice-president Anwar Sadat took office and began the process of reversing all Nasserite policies to establish his own legacy, a neoliberalism

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[104] Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminism, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt*, (American University in Cairo Press, 2011): 52-57.
[105] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 285.

marked by his promotion of the Islamic character of Egypt which accelerated societal and political confessionalization. Sadat allied with Islamists to cement his control and weaken any opposition emanating from Nasserite and socialist circles. Detailed in chapter 7, the United States cared very little about Sadat's Islamism and instead celebrated him as a peacemaker and visionary for visiting the Knesset and signing a peace treaty with Israel.

Within the Church, bishops Samuel and Shenouda responded in different ways to a modern and increasingly hostile world. After the death of Pope Kyrillos in 1971, both were nominated for the papacy. While Bishop Samuel won the popular vote, he lost "God's" vote. According to tradition, a young child (representing the hand of God) drew Bishop Shenouda's name. After that, Bishop Samuel's vision for the Church slowly lost support. Pope Shenouda worked quickly to sideline his opposition. He took charge of the churches outside Egypt in 1972, which by then included Canada, the United States, England, Germany, and Australia. All had been established by Bishop Samuel. The pope also cut back on the responsibilities of Bishop Samuel's bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services. He began a series of mass ordinations of priests and bishops raised under his tutelage to minister to districts across Egypt and new diocese outside of it which he created. He established three new institutes for Biblical Studies, Hymnology and Coptic Language that reflect his vision for Coptic religious education.

As the state sought to re-engage the United States, Egypt initiated artillery duels and aerial dogfights across the Suez Canal in partnership with Syria, and launched a war against Israel in October 1973. The October War did get US attention but at the cost of heavy casualties on both sides, and was used by Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as an excuse to hike oil prices which brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear war. This show of power by the Arab states frightened US policy

makers and the new 'oil weapon' meant that the regional balance of power had shifted from the economic nationalist states in North Africa and the Levant to the oil-rich states in Arabia. Oil producing states relied on this single industry for economic, social and political development and oil-poor countries came to rely on aid from oil-rich states.[106]

In response, the United States, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund marginalized economic nationalists and forced Egypt and Syria to cut both the quality and the quantity of subsidies on basic commodities and education guarantees, and began to encourage private enterprise and foreign investment. However, this piecemeal liberalization did not work. Rather, it increased the gap between rich and poor. Governments, such as those in Egypt, Iraq and Syria, unwilling to completely let go of a revolutionary model central to their legitimacy employed "limited economic liberalization."[107] Again Egypt pioneered, and Sadat launched the *Infitah* (opening up) in 1973, which combined a strong state sector with incentives for foreign investment and private enterprise. However, this policy only served to open local markets to cheap foreign goods, and all government efforts to curtail spending by cutting welfare programs were blocked by the population. Egyptians began industrial strikes in 1975-1976 and bread riots in 1977. This opened the door for the expansion of Islamist movements (which for most of the twentieth century provided material aid at a grassroots level). Sadat's regime faced a weakened economy and collapsing regional influence by responding to any challenge to his power with repression and escalating state securitization.

As the state withdrew from welfare programs both Muslim and Christian alternative networks expanded to fill the gap, replacing the state in providing for the people. In Egypt, an increasingly centralized Coptic Church and fragmented Islamic organizations, chief among them

[106] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 287.
[107] Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 254.

the Muslim Brotherhood, were the only viable political and social representatives. Rather than inaugurate a socialist secular nationalism, Nasser's authoritarian politics had cemented unparalleled Church power over the Coptic community. After his death, Sadat broke the established Church-state entente. Sadat co-opted Islamic principles as a foundation for his political legitimacy and simultaneously marginalized the authority of religious institutions in political affairs. This brand of political secularism instrumentalized religion as a tool of state power and privileged the religious regulation of family and sexual relations. Religion was not only nationalized but also privatized. As Saba Mahmood summarized: "this is a consequence of secularism's foundational public-private divide that relegates sexuality and religion to the latter while at the same time making both consequential to the former."[108] The privatization of religion and its attendant regulation and securitization by the state maintained religious difference in the political language of the state through social welfare, morality and debauchery laws. The Coptic Orthodox Church and Al-Azhar were unequal auxiliary institutions of the state and increasingly cemented clerical control over the lives of citizens.

Copts' sense of public representation further diminished as the influence of Islamist movements spread throughout the country. Professionals, politicians and intellectuals now had to contend with lost social power and political voice in public discourse and an increasingly hegemonic Church as a result of the continued confessionalization of Egyptian politics under Sadat.[109] The Islamicization he empowered to counter Nasserists and leftist opposition made religion even more important to the language of the state. After that, Pope Shenouda consolidated his control over public programming in Coptic education, entertainment and religious life. A critical sectarian incident that occurred on 6 November 1972 set the terms for

[108] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 147.
[109] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 82.

the Church-state relationship under Sadat and Shenouda. A church, two shops and six Coptic houses were attacked in Khanka, twelve miles north-east of Cairo. The attack in Khanka led Pope Shenouda to order priests and bishops to march through the streets and say mass. This action was taken as provocation by Muslim inhabitants, who resorted to further violence. The events of Khanka, and the pope's response, were informed by the 1972 implementation of *Sha'ria* law in civil codes, a measure pushed by Sadat on 21 March. On 16 December 1976, the second Coptic conference was held in Alexandria to oppose the further implementation of *Sha'ria* and apostasy laws.[110] Unlike the first conference of 1911, this one was held in an urban centre, with the support of the Church hierarchy. Yet the demands for protection, an end to discrimination, and social equality remained consistent. Again, it was followed by a Muslim conference in July 1977. This one was not couched in nationalist terms and attendees clearly and unequivocally declared Muslim *Sha'ria* had to be implemented.

The violence in Khanka was doubly significant for mobilizing Shawki Karas, considered the father of Coptic activism in the diaspora. Permanent Coptic emigration from Egypt began in the mid-1950s under the direction of father Makary. By the mid-1970s, social and political change in Egypt was resonating in the character and activities of North American immigrant populations. Unlike the students and followers of Bishop Samuel, who immigrated to pursue graduate education and economic stability, Pope Shenouda's tense relationship with Sadat spoke to and inspired many immigrants to organize for Coptic rights. The activities of church activists, cultural events organizers and diasporic activists will be detailed in the following chapters, revealing their continued transnational engagements with the "Coptic question" in Egypt.

RELIGION IN THE MODERN ERA OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE

[110] Tadros, *Motherland Lost*, 186-187.

Pope Shenouda (r. 1971-2012) ruled for 40 years and his legacy has yet to fade. As "first among equals," he cautiously increased the number of general bishops, divided dioceses and consecrated bishops loyal to him to oversee newly created dioceses. He weakened the power of traditionalist bishops who could challenge him, expanded diaspora ordinations, re-established the lay council with virtually no authority in 1973, and renamed the Sunday School movement *Harakat al-Tarbiyya al-Kanasiyya* (the Church Upbringing Movement) which extended its services with hundreds of ordinations of post-graduate students. The pope restricted the ability of bishops to consecrate monks without his permission and inaugurated new laws governing both the age and required medical testing of women before marriage.[111] He succeeded in centring the lives of Orthodox Copts around the Church and creating sharper divides between formerly porous denominational affiliations among Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant members of the same extended family. His vision was simply put one of *tarbiyya kanasiyya* (a church upbringing).

He delivered weekly lectures and personally taught subjects in theological seminaries in Cairo and Alexandria. Editor of *Al-Kiraza* Magazine, his sermons and discussion sessions were televised. He succeeded in sidelining all opposition and gaining hegemonic control over Coptic life at the same time that detractors criticised him for popularizing theological issues by simplifying them for a mass audience. Shenouda was seen to weaken the foundations of Coptic theology. Yet such a "popularist" approach guaranteed his viewpoint on such issues reached and educated a wide audience. Modern institutions, technologies and the anxieties occasioned by modernity served to propagate conservative values. An invented timeless Coptic tradition, founded in a far biblical past, was a dimension of social life throughout the period and not just a stage of social development preceding modernity.

[111] Febe Armanios, "The 'Virtuous Woman:' Images of Gender in Modern Coptic Society," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38.1 (2002): 110-130.

Islamist movements likewise offered an alternative to a government marred by corruption, inefficiency and brutality. The attractiveness of this alternative operated on two levels. First, the slow decline of economic and social subsidies led populations to rely on Islamist movements financed by oil-rich states, like Saudi Arabia, which stepped in to provide medical, educational and welfare assistance. Organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt became particularly successful in promoting their message in poor neighborhoods and rural villages feeling the brunt of Sadat-era agricultural reforms that turned Upper Egypt into a renter state. Second, Islamist movements, as with most twentieth century mass movements, relied on modern, urban organizational and operational strategies that addressed expectations of social justice and social welfare as fundamental rights. Such movements worked to provide preschool education and local services, participate in elections and fight a war for national liberation. Even after assassinating President Anwar Sadat in 1981, the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood was of his betrayal to Islam *and* to the Egyptian nation by visiting the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and signing the Camp David Accord.

Sectarian tensions mounted throughout the later 1970s, particularly over *Sha'ria* law, church construction and mob violence toward worshippers. In 1979 a church was burnt in Cairo and several churches were bombed and priests attacked in Alexandria in January 1980. On 26 March 1980 Pope Shenouda delivered a speech in which he angrily denounced proposals that *Sha'ria* law should be the basis for legislation, claiming that Islam was being made the new form of nationalism. Sadat responded on 14 May 1980 in a speech to parliament accusing Shenouda of political pretentions, and, according to journalist and political commentator Muhammad Heikal, of plotting to "become the political as well as the religious leader of the Copts and set up a separatist Coptic state with Assiut as its capital." President Sadat was also furious that Pope

Shenouda did not restart pilgrimage retreats to Jerusalem that were stopped after the 1967 defeat to support Sadat's peace efforts with Israel. Fears began to mount with the proliferation of Islamic societies and Islamist pundits. Copts, it was argued, had to return to *dhimmī* status as tolerated second-class citizens. Public marginalization and acts of discrimination were hardly new but were exacerbated by the state. During his speech in May, Sadat famously said: "I am the Moslem President of a Moslem country."[112]

Altercations between the pious president and the militant pope came to a climax in June 1981. In three days 17 died and 54 were injured in clashes between Copts and Muslims in the Zawyat al-Hamra district in Cairo as a result of Muslim *fatwas* against Christian illegal church building. With little to no intervention from the government, the pope responded on 26 March 1981 by declaring a mourning period, refusing traditional government congratulations for Easter celebrations, and leaving for a period of seclusion with his bishops in St. Bishoy monastery, Wadi Natrun Valley. On 4 August 1981 yet another attack took place when the bombing of a church left three dead. During Sadat's visit to the United States that summer, immigrant Copts took out space in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* to condemn his actions and staged protests during his visit in spite of Bishop Samuel's timely visit to New York at the behest of the pope. Furious upon his return at the embarrassment, on 3 September 1981 Sadat ordered mass arrests of over 1500 state, religious and public figures in Egypt.[113] Among them were 170 bishops and priests. Two days later, on 5 September, the government positioned troops outside the St. Bishoy monastery, barricading the pope. On the same day, Sadat gave a speech suspending the pope and giving power over the Church and community to a patriarchal

[112] Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 219.
[113] Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 233.

committee of five bishops led by Bishop Samuel.[114] When Sadat and Bishop Samuel—attending as representative for the Church—were killed by Islamists during the commemoration of the October War on 6 October 1981, "for many Copts his fate [Bishop Samuel's death] was divine judgement for his having usurped the position which rightly belonged to another."[115]

Immigrants who formed such organizations as the Canadian and American Coptic Associations agreed. Diasporic activists cast Bishop Samuel as a power-hungry affiliate of the political regime and a man resentful of having been denied the papal throne. For Shawki Karas, president of the American Coptic Association, this was a clear sign of the bishop's collusion with the regime and his "ecclesiastical conspiracy...[through] many tactics of persuasion and the psychology of fear."[116] Following the assassination, Pope Shenouda's vision of a single Coptic ethno-religious identity nurtured in the church among a protected faith community was secured. Bishop Samuel's vision, which had offered an attractive alternative for ecumenical cooperation toward social and economic progress for individuals in the nation lay dormant. Instead, Coptic ecumenism was repurposed to suit Shenouda's needs.

After the death of Bishop Samuel, Pope Shenouda's forced hermitage in the monastery continued. His hard-line stance on political involvement softened. Instead, an emphasis on unity of social services with denominations in and outside Egypt to promote Coptic interests defined the rest of his papacy. Warm relations with Catholic and Protestant Churches offered a means to pragmatically raise the profile of the Coptic Church on the global stage and bring to Egypt material resources for institutional development. After his release on 3 January 1985, he opted for a new entente with President Hosni Mubarak, aligning himself with the state against the

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[114] The other bishops were Gregorious, Youannes, Athanasius, and Maximous.
[115] Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 238-239.
[116] Shawki Karas, *The Copts Since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, (New Jersey: American, Canadian and Australian Coptic Associations, 1986): 191-192.

escalating Islamist threat. As Carolyn Ramzy and others have argued, a more docile Pope Shenouda emerged from the monastery. The alliance with Mubarak promised "the community's allegiance in return for concessions such as church permits and security."[117] The pope could thus turn his energies to regulate and standardize worship, minimize superstitious folk elements, pursue a conservative modernization program to organize the internal laws of the Holy Synod, create a permanent secretariat, and establish committees dealing with various Church matters.

The 1990s then witnessed a spike in sectarian violence in Upper Egypt and Islamist attacks on government institutions and officials. Churches were burnt, villagers attacked and Copts died in Manfalout (1990), Imbaba (1991), Temma (1992), Asyut (1994), Kafr Dimiana (1996), and Abu Qurqas (1997), among others. Escalating attacks served as a ready excuse for further state securitization. Emergency laws were renewed (enacted under Law 162 of 1958 and in effect almost continuously since Sadat's assassination in 1981). Civilian offenders were regularly tried in military tribunals which also served the state in suppressing political dissent. As Mubarak (1981-2011) continued the privatization of the economy and militarization of the security state, the pope became "icon and savior" and the Church "the great incubator of national solidarity," enshrining the public role of the Church in this neo-liberal order.[118] Pope Shenouda became far more measured in his responses to inter-religious violence, encouraging Copts to support the government in ongoing efforts to stem Islamist fundamentalism as a national threat. Yet violence against Coptic populations was often met by local state inaction, under the veneer of protecting national security from exterior threats beyond the nation's borders. The Church was the only recourse for material support and spiritual uplift as the pope's hegemonic influence spread throughout the country.

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[117] Carolyn Ramzy, "Singing Heaven on Earth: Coptic Counterpublics and Popular Song at Egyptian Mūlid Festivals," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49.3 (2017): 383.
[118] Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 84.

Quite unlike the Coptic experience under Ottoman rule and until the post-colonial regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Coptic laity were no longer the community's premier leaders. Wealthy Copts, however, continued to fund the less fortunate, help choose local priests and supported the restoration of churches, monasteries, books, and artwork as they had done in the interwar period. The beneficiary of this order was the military, whose monopoly of state contracts allowed select generals to horde public wealth in private hands. By relying on the state for protection, Shenouda filled the void left by state welfare programs to consolidate civic and social control over the lives of Copts and in many ways to follow Bishop Samuel's vision (although with far more Orthodoxy). Institutional modernization and technological development allowed confessionalization to affect every aspect of civic life. Modern bureaucratic infrastructure, mass mobilization techniques and new technologies such as cassette recordings and televised sermons supported the propagation of clerical leaders' conservative and increasingly hegemonic values.

THE TRAJECTORY OF EGYPTIAN MODERNITY AND *AQBĀT AL-MAHJAR*

The success of Egyptian modernity reveals that sectarianism was not a primordial feature of Middle East states. Rather, discrimination and harassment, and their eventual escalation to persistent persecution of numerical, linguistic, racial, and/or religious minorities by a dominant majority, was part of a process of claims-making in multiethnic societies which was then variably institutionalized by the liberal secular political state. Religion remains a central feature of modern state-formation. Sectarianism as a form of discrimination in Egypt produced a reduced identity for the Copts in a similar fashion to racism toward indigenous and black communities in Canada and the United States. The "Coptic Question" has been part and parcel of modern Egyptian social, cultural and political life. Its elaboration occurred alongside a history of

Ottoman-European colonial competition, debates around nationalism(s) and state sovereignty, and the quest for post-colonial independence. By blending scholarship in Middle East and Coptic Studies, I rejected both notions of the secular promise of a golden liberal age or later Arab socialist regimes. Instead, this chapter sought out how 'traditional values' were rethought and reinvented through modern religious institutions as auxiliaries of the state. The Coptic Orthodox Church has since extended its reach as a consequence of the religious character of Egyptian secular politics. The bureaucratic expansion, technological innovation and epistemological notions of ethno-religious and cultural particularity which followed invariably though unevenly effected Copts prior to emigration and informed the activities of *Aqbāt al-mahjar*.

Coptic experience is central to understanding Egyptian history. Nationalism is unquestionably a product of a sense of peoplehood that developed from legal, military and market institutions which formed the bases for a modern nation-state system as Egypt achieved nominal independence from Ottoman rule.[119] A variety of nationalisms operated at particular times throughout the twentieth century as Copts employed liberal arguments in their appeals to fairness and equality before the law. Where first such arguments were against unfriendly reactions by British occupiers and the Muslim majority, they have been extended into the rhetoric of diasporic populations and not born anew in North America. Yet the ways in which scholars have prioritized the religious aspect of Coptic experience and set up a false equivalence between emigration and assimilation begs the question: "How do discursive interventions by [scholars] articulate the politics of difference in the spaces defined by the modern state?"[120]

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[119] Muhammad Ali's military and mercantile expansion established the institutions necessary for the projection and dissemination of a national consciousness among the Egyptian population. Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, (Cambridge University Press, 1984): 262. On the Egyptian military and the mobilization and reception of distinct flags, symbols and meanings see, Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*.
[120] Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 13.

By charting the tumultuous history of Coptic participation in Egyptian politics and society, this chapter set the background for the two core arguments of this study: insularity was not the natural reality of the Copts and a heterogeneous group integrated both sacred and secular cultures following immigration. Both spiritual and material aspects motivated the Copts in this integrated Egyptian history. Emigration, settlement patterns and associational life outside Egypt in the second-half of the twentieth century likewise will reveal that immigrants continued to engage questions about the trajectory of Egyptian modernity. The institutionalization of religion and societal marginalization of a national minority in Egypt affected the lives of migrating actors. In the next chapter I turn to immigrants' recollections of Egypt and their decisions for emigrating. Throughout that process, inter-communal relations with the Muslim majority and intra-communal debates on the power and authority of the clerical hierarchy reveal that to understand the Copts we must appreciate the interconnected material and spiritual aspects of the Coptic experience. Transnational connections affecting power dynamics between the state in Egypt, the Church and Coptic immigrants across North American cities discussed in later chapters cannot be understood nor appreciated unless framed in such broader contexts.

Chapter 2
"God Help You:" Orality, Memory and Historical Inquiry

Oral histories are not just mere ornaments to traditional written sources. Rather, when placed at the center of our historical writing the testimonies of people show diversity within ethnic groups who are not homogeneous but differentiated and fragmented.[1] As with all sources, oral testimony is a narrative construction. Although a multiplicity of interpretations of any series of events may be possible, these are not arbitrary products of the historical imagination, but can be tested as to their factual validity and coherence.[2] History in this methodology does not vary ad infinitum. By relying on hierarchies of power and markers of identity to contextualize and assess 'competing narratives,' historians can distinguish between 'facts,' 'myths' and 'propaganda.'[3] Historian Marlene Epp in *Women Without Men*—a rich oral history of Mennonites who arrived in Canada in the aftermath of famine, war and dislocation from their homes in the Soviet Union and uncertain years as refugees in postwar Germany—argued that we must "explore the creation of pattern and myths in the process of remembering." Often the ways people told their stories were mediated by social ties, communal or clerical censorship, and cultural scripts that beg the question of exactly "whose story they told."[4]

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[1] Alexander Freund, "Oral History and Ethnic History," *Canadian Historical Association* Booklet 32 (2014): 19.
[2] I take as a starting point the narrator's historical context and then at least a minimal agreement in available scholarship. White's semiological turn to historical narration in Metahistory contributed, among others, insights on the imaginative 'poetic acts' of narrative in history. However, Iggers has critiqued White's premise that histories and novels are indistinguishable from one another. History in contrast to literature requires a factual basis. Although different interpretations of historical events are possible and have explanatory value, they may be tested for factual coherence and validity. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The historical imagination of Nineteenth-Century Europe*, (Johns Hopkins UP, 1973); Georg G. Iggers, "Historiography between Scholarship and Poetry: Reflections on Hayden White's Approach to Historiography," *The Journal of Theory and Practice* 4.3 (2000): 373-390.
[3] Although doubts regarding self-reflection remain, recent scholarship shows greater acceptance of anthropological methods of self-critical analysis through a focus on subjectivity, positionality, and reflexivity. Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembryzycki and Franca Iacovetta, "Introduction," in Katrina Srigley et al. eds., *Beyond Women's Words: Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Routledge, 2018): 3-6.
[4] Marlene Epp, *Women without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*, (Toronto: UTP, 1999): 14.

In taking Epp's words seriously, I returned to one of the oldest oral histories in Canadian immigration studies for inspiration. Written not by an historian but by a journalist, Myrna Kostash's *All of Baba's Children* (1977) was an oral history with second-generation Ukrainian Canadians in which the author did not aim to find her place within this community. Rather, she sought to create a place by "demystifying the prevalent mythologies" and by writing against the "ethnic establishment" whom she blamed for the "romanticization of our history [and] trivialization of our culture."[5] Her criticism of the ethnic "intelligentsia … [who] collected, made intelligible and transmitted to the outside community the various elements of the immigrant mythology as a coherent mystique" was by no means unique to the experience of Ukrainian Canadians.[6] Although Kostash did homogenize the experiences of those second-generation like herself—and ended on a positive, reassuring note that Baba would be pleased (like much literature produced under Multiculturalism Policy)—her reflexive challenge to the prevalent mythologies of the intelligentsia in their efforts at self-defense offered necessary parallels to the experiences of many immigrant groups such as Copts from Egypt. Theirs were not just a collection of experiences, but of systems where "reality" is a set of stories that we tell ourselves about who we are, what our place in the world is, and what the rules we abide by are. Our laws are not physical laws, they are stories that we make up where our language and our rhetoric take their authority from constructions of belonging to a group, a religion, or a nation.

Michel Foucault has observed that power and knowledge are a multiplicity of immanent force relations that constitute their own organization. Power is omnipresent, reciprocal and defuse. I ascribe to this interpretation of power, not simply as a disciplinary force but also a field of resistance with a plurality of discourse which may be both an effect or instrument of power

[5] Myrna Kostash, *All of Baba's Children,* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1977): 3.
[6] Kostash, *All of Baba's Children,* 407.

and a point of resistance. A starting point for an opposing strategy is the recognition that although "discourse transmits and produces power ... [it] also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it."[7] My approach recalls the efforts of post-colonial scholar Edward Said, who sought to explicate the relations of power informing perceptions of the Middle East and its peoples. His scholarship revaluated experience as always socially situated. Like Said, I am not an unbiased observer. I am part of the population I study and party to a unique dynamic between researcher and researched.

I found that oral testimonies opened insights into a shared past and common humanity among myself and immigrants from Egypt. This methodology began to infect all other sources by shifting my research agenda. Restrictions on Church and state archives in Egypt and the near absence of records in Canadian or US archival collections prompted my use of family collections and oral testimony in North American immigrant communities. Conducting my fieldwork from 2014 to 2019, at the same time that researchers in Egypt faced government censure (after the 2013 uprising) and the near-insurmountable restrictions on access to local archives, I was also confronted by the dangers of exposing myself as an academic to state security forces after the murder of Italian Cambridge researcher Giulio Regeni in 2016. Growing censure proved ultimately to be a boon to my research, allowing me to chart the social worlds of ordinary Copts.

Past scholarship about the Copts has prioritized their spiritual experience and faith identity. In the first chapter I showed how Copts participated in the formation of the modern Egyptian nation. The secular political project exacerbated sectarianism and produced the eventual confessionalization of Egyptian society. Religion mattered because it structured the group's material experience in Egypt and religious symbols survived because they served a community maintaining function. Where in Egypt their Christianity was a badge and a core

[7] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Ed. Robert Hurley, (New York: Vintage, 1988): 92-101.

aspect of their identity, in North America it could be compartmentalized and set as one of other identifiers. The oral histories of 'ordinary' immigrants cast a light on the everyday lives of people. The ordinary, everyday and mundane forces on us an appreciation for social relations and material engagements. It is in this realm where ordinary people had to rework, reconstruct and transform the many meanings of identity and nation in ways meaningful to their local milieu.[8]

This chapter charts the socialization, religious practices and occupational demands of immigrants and rejects a culturally driven interpretation which viewed Copts as distinguishable by their religion alone. Immigrant Copts' behavior was characterized neither by unwavering persistence nor unilinear cultural assimilation. Rather, Copts "achieved a high degree of continuity" in their social activities and professional advancement.[9] Copts were concerned with the everyday of financial stability, family formation, spiritual fulfilment, and social gatherings in Canada and the United States. Although affected by the nostalgic sentimentality of a bygone Egypt, they were not invested in the wider national, federal, or provincial politics of the host country, or international developments that did not hold immediate concern for family, friends and colleagues. Prior to the 1970s, the majority of early Copts sought cosmopolitan connections with other immigrants from Egypt. Sectarian violence in a confessionalizing Egyptian scene and the increasingly hegemonic influence of religious institutions led new immigrants and clergy who arrived in the mid-1970s to elaborate a strong Coptic ethno-religious identity. Throughout, pragmatic people reflected on material engagements in both their homeland and new environments following immigration. Beyond the often prized collective communal narratives, 'ordinary' Copts integrated into the everyday of living.

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[8] Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture*, (Stanford UP, 2011).
[9] Royden Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930*, (University of Illinois Press, 1993): 262-269.

Middle East and Coptic Studies in general have privileged the voices of those who left behind texts for analysis and saw value in preserving them—ethnic elites, clergy, institutions, and political organizations—which has forestalled other research agendas. Most often the words of community leaders guided past studies toward a focus on institutional religion and collective communal narratives of enduring piety. Although this dissertation equally relies on the availability of such sources, I acknowledge that this state of affairs is as much a problem of sources as it is of polemics. By examining a shared past of social relations and work-related activities among both Egyptian Christians and Muslims, this chapter prioritizes oral history and self-reflection to show how some carved out a space for an autobiography within collective communal narratives. My methodology is a transnational and reflexive reading of the heteroglossia—overlapping chronologies differentiated by varied and opposing voices—of immigrant recollections to share their histor*ies*. This interdisciplinary approach charts a past that exists as representation of events and oral remembrance, which were differentiated by class, gender, generation, religious affiliation, region, and the timing of immigration. Oral history cannot be separated from the immigrant remembering, the positionality of the historian writing, and the methods of collection and interpretation.

Through self-reflexivity, I dispel the notion that academics are *the* legitimate authority on a particular community. This concept of the distant unbiased observer has long characterized knowledge as power and the domain of those in positions of power. My family history as recounted in the introduction anchors me to Alexandria and I am an immigrant caught between two worlds. Though not quite second generation, having arrived a young preteen I was raised in a North American environment where memory, imagination, collective acts of remembrance, and continuous self-reflexivity intervened. My research became a meditation on such phenomenon

and a product of personal experience reconciled by my scholarly training. Having exposed a broader, and for many unfamiliar, history of Egypt and its Copts in the first chapter, this intimate take on movement, migration and lay initiatives will serve to personalize an unfamiliar story, and make it familiar again. I detail the competing narratives of those immigrants affected by social, political and institutional change in Egypt across the twentieth century.

THE METHOD OF COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION

Born in Cairo in 1922, Coptic Orthodox immigrant Sami Boulos first arrived in the United States in March 1955 with a grant from the U.S. Office of Education.[10] He was 95-years-old when we sat together in his home in New Jersey. His memories were fluid, moving through time and space with ease as he shared stories in a stream-of-consciousness-style of speaking. His gaze rarely lingered on any one thing in the room. During our conversation, he brought up the book that he had written in 2006 on the history of the Coptic Association of American (CAA), which he co-founded in New York with fellow immigrant Copts in 1962. I inquired if any former members, mentioned in the book, would be willing to speak with me. He asked to see the book and I handed him my copy with highlighted passages and scribbled notes in the margins.[11] After flipping through it, book-in-hand (as if it were a site of memory) he listed off the names of those who were deceased and those still living across the United States. He offered me back the book and reflected:

> My entire life, I judged people. For instance, in Egypt I was the supervisor of elementary school teachers. So, I would go and judge them: this one is good, this one is bad and this one ... etc. This was the nature of my work. And then when I spoke with priests, they told me that there are people whose job it is to judge others. God does not hold them accountable for this. However, if you compared yourself against them and said I'm better than them: this is wrong. I told them [priests],

[10] I make religious categories that have long permeated Egyptian society evident by naming in the text the designation each interviewee adopted during the interview process.
[11] Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community in the USA (1955-1970)*, (New Jersey: Self-published, 2006).

> it's not easy for someone to place themselves in such a high position. [He then looked directly into my eyes] God help you. [I laughed nervously] Naturally.[12]

That moment remained with me. I feared that something in my writings in the margins of the book had offended him and had elicited this reflection. Hence my nervous laughter.

By their very nature, oral history interviews are interactive and cooperative. As historian Alessandro Portelli has argued, "communication always works both ways, the interviewee is always—though perhaps quietly—studying the interviewer as well as being studied."[13] The oral history is a dialogue created in partnership, what Ronald Grele has called a "conversational narrative."[14] Historian Pamela Sugiman has observed that archival documents exist whether or not we interact with them but that oral history exists as a source by our intervention and active engagement with those interviewed. I entered their lives, asked formulated questions, recorded and transcribed their words, and "without my shaping, the spoken narratives would assume a different form … I imposed my own agenda and sensibilities."[15] Party to its creation, I have learned to assume responsibility for its eventual transmission. I became part of the source and part of its analysis, since, at all times, the interviewee spoke *to*, *with* and *through* me.[16]

I cannot claim academic impartiality, neutrality, or distance in my study of Coptic immigrants in North America. I am a Coptic immigrant of urban, middle-class upbringing from Egypt writing on dominantly urban, middle-class Coptic immigrants from Egypt. In articulating the conditions of the immigrant and elaborating the heteroglossia of competing narratives which

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[12] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10, 2017 (translated from Arabic). Immigrants' past experiences were constituted by a form of acculturation typified by language. Most confided memories while implicitly shifting between English, Arabic, and French. I write their choices explicitly in the footnotes.
[13] Alessandro Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," *History Workshop* No. 12 (Autumn, 1981): 103-104. On the collaborative process of oral history, see: Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990).
[14] Ronald J. Grele, *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, 2nd Edition, (New York: Greenwood Pub., 1991).
[15] Pamela Sugiman, "Passing time, Moving Memories: Interpreting Wartime Narratives of Japanese Canadian Women," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 37.73 (2004): 68.
[16] Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 104-105.

colour that experience, I attend to the subjectivities created by the diasporic movement from the Third to the First World and the enduring reality of being part of an ethno-religious minority.[17] Every interview was a dialogue between a Coptic "youth" (because I am unmarried) and an elder. The result of each was a cooperative product arranged to reflect that reality, because when "oral interviews in book form are arranged in such a way as to exclude the researcher's voice, a subtle distortion takes place: the transcript gives the informant's answers, but not the questions they are answering, and therefore give the impression that a given speaker would *always* say the same things, no matter what the circumstances."[18] The stories Sami Boulos confided that day will likely not be shared in the same way again. Although he had perfected his narrative over years of retelling, he shaped it by the fact of my presence as an observer and, perhaps, his assessment of my role as that of a "judge."

I reflected on Sami Boulos' counsel: "God help you." I questioned: How do we understand the Copts? How may the historian incorporate the many stories gathered from among a heterogeneous immigrant group without reduction or judgement? Self-reflection became my attempt to take Egyptians and their worldviews seriously. Throughout, this research project remained grounded in the various settings of people, and sensitive to their perceptions, thought categories, language, and local idioms. Within such contexts, my turn to self-reflective writing represents an opportunity for generating knowledge about Coptic populations that can escape the traps of Western ethnocentrism and indigenous elitism. Far too often, Western 'outsiders' have conducted research where Copts are *written about*, *spoken of*, *studied*, and *debated*. Yet too rarely do Coptic populations *speak* for themselves. When they do, it is the lay elites and clerical

[17] On the challenges of being an insider as outsider, see: Stacey Zembrzycki, "Sharing Authority with Baba," in Kristina R. Llewellyn et al. eds., *The Canadian Oral History Reader*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2015): 53-72.
[18] Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 103-104.

hierarchy who produce and finance studies on the Copts that stress an ancient and glorious past filled with the stories of great heroes, saints and martyrs. Such narratives, and the larger-than-life figures who inhabit them, often discount the materiality of everyday life. This dissertation instead presents the stories of Copts in their own words and frames their experiences in Egyptian, US and Canadian histories and as embedded within the community.[19]

I conducted 44 oral interviews between 2016 and 2019 in northeastern cities in the United States (New Jersey and New York) and Canada (Montreal and Toronto) with 31 men (of whom seven were clergymen) and 13 women. The first generation of immigrants from Egypt were dominantly single male professionals, including graduate students, architects and engineers. They shared much in common, having completed their undergraduate degrees in urban universities and emigrated in search of occupational success. Coptic Clergymen were selected to serve in North America from the same social strata and at times were immigrants themselves who returned to Egypt to be ordained. Women arrived either independently or following marriage to join earlier arrivals. Copts formed the majority of native Egyptian immigrants and created middle-class associations and church boards.

Relying on a snowball technique, I began by reaching out to Orthodox Copts through contacts in Toronto churches. Immigrants interviewed introduced me to family and friends in Canada and the United States, including Coptic Catholics, Protestants, and Muslim Egyptians. I was invited to speak with their Jewish and Armenian relations from Egypt now living in Canada and the United States. However, I declined due in large part to my limited resources, finite research time, and the intended scope of the research project. The natural growth of the oral

[19] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*; Sheldon S. Wolin, "Max Weber: Legitimation, Method, and the Politics of Theory," *Political Theory* 9.3 (1981): 401-24.

history research reflected the cosmopolitan character of Egyptian immigrants' social relations—class and ethnic dynamics of vernacular exchange between people and communities.

When we met, I presented interviewees the consent form mandated by the tri-university ethics policy. Forms in general tend to put people on edge. For Egyptians who emigrated after the investiture of Gamal Abdul Nasser in particular this was doubly so, having grown up learning to fear signing their name to anything. When I explained their right to be removed from the study at any time and gave them the option of a pseudonym to guarantee their anonymity, many—though not all—visibly relaxed. Depending on past personal experience with the state apparatus in Egypt, that sense of ease was short-lived when the recording started. They knew and expected that our meeting was to be recorded. Yet there was a noticeable shift in posture as their back stiffened and their eyes drifted to the device sporadically. In time the device faded into the background, though it never quite disappeared.

I had set the method of collection, the nature of the discussion, and the eventual transmission and interpretation of the oral history. I relied on a list of guiding questions during the interview. Although the scope varied based on what the interviewee chose to highlight, in general conversations covered the immigrants' experience in Egypt, their journey to North America and motivations for emigrating, their early settlement in Toronto, Montreal, or New York, descriptions of neighbourhoods, work experience, religious, ethnic, and government institutions that they engaged with, family and community life, world views and motivations, and recent appraisals of Egypt and life in North America. Shared authority during the interview process allowed interviewees to direct the pace and to focus on key moments in their lives or omit others. I adopted this open interview style, with all its inherent complications, because adopting a rigid, question and answer style may create the possibility of excluding "elements

whose existence and relevance were previously unknown to the researcher and are not contemplated in the question schedule; therefore such interviews tend to confirm the historian's previous frame of reference."[20] Following a life history approach, I endeavoured to connect personal and collective narratives in order to appreciate similarities as opposed to differences among Egyptians. Interviews were semi-structured. Meetings varied from 30 minutes to four hours, over one or several sessions, and in the course of a day or several weeks.

Problems of representation arose in the process of conducting and interpreting the oral histories. Egyptians often venerate religious leaders and both male and female immigrants tended to undervalue their own histories and experience. Female immigrants whose lives were missing in the archival sources gave the narratives of men greater weight. These obstacles encouraged me to be reflexive and reflective about the gendered nature of immigrants' experiences. Men crafted personal ego stories, where vigor in occupations and public activities defined their leadership roles in the community. Women tended to be the keepers of family stories and to situate their experiences in networks of people, as contingent and relative to those of others. Drawing on similar insights by historian Joan Sangster and others, I learned to listen and interpret these often obscured voices in my writing. Women confided the intimate aspects of family life and showed in their recollections an autonomy which brought me into their triple-work day as mothers, professionals and executive members of church committees or associations. By paying equal attention to men and women and situating the competing narratives of ordinary Copts alongside those of clergy, I sought to normalize the validity of a heteroglossia of immigrants' voices.[21]

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[20] Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 103.
[21] Joan Sangster, "Telling our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," *Women's History Review* 3.1 (1994): 5-28; Joan Sangster, "Reflections on the Politics and Praxis of Working-class Oral Histories" in Kristina R. Llewellyn et al. eds., *The Canadian Oral History Reader*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2015): 119-140.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEMORY AND HISTORY

Oral history interviews were shaped by past and present circumstances and the interaction between interviewer and interviewee.[22] One dominant critique of the relationship between memory and history has been that memory is mutable, untrustworthy and subjective. Yet is history something distant that existed in the past, neatly packaged for consumption in the present? No. In fact, the business of history is subjective critical inquiry. In the very act of producing history, historians package events, facts and figures for consumption in the present. Historians craft an interpretation and make arguments based on questions that occur, and indeed are informed by, the present. For instance, would my work on Copts have differed if these communities were not facing violent attacks in Egypt?[23] Yes, the very act of interpretation and argumentation in the present brought a constructed order to accumulated knowledge of the past.

Remembering was also an act of ordering accumulated history, that was always necessarily shaped by the sum of past experiences and present realities. The interview happened in time. The time it occurred, the time that passed during the interview and the time between events and memories of those events was significant for the disposition of the interviewee.[24] Responses would have differed if Copts were not facing violent attacks in Egypt. If an attacker recently targeted a place of worship in Egypt, the memories of the past interviewees shared were in conversation with that present event. The timing of the interview was also significant because my accumulated knowledge of the subject matter changed in time. Just as the answers would likely not be the same twice, the kinds of follow-up questions that I asked were different in my first interview than they were years later in my last.

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[22] Luisa Passerini, "Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism," *History Workshop* 8.1 (1979): 82–108
[23] During my fieldwork violent attacks targeted Copts in Egypt, including the December 2016 bombing of the Coptic Cathedral in Cairo and the May 2017 killing of 28 Christian pilgrims on a bus in Minya, Upper Egypt.
[24] Sugiman, "Passing time, Moving Memories," 70.

Therefore, I define memory as accumulated history. Memory has a synchronic dimension because particular events located in the past were recalled in the present. Memory also has a diachronic dimension because such events were interpreted and reinterpreted in light of preceding and succeeding events and experiences that led up to the moment of narration. French philosopher Jacques Derrida has argued that, memory could not be the neutral retrieval of a self-contained past detached from the present. Memory did not "reconstruct the past as it was then, or be associated with the transmission of unchanging traditions through time." Rather, "memory is a continuous movement, 'in memory of' rather than 'memory' in itself ... there is no past independent of the present, as there is no present independent of the past."[25] In this way, as Anna Green has argued, "oral histories are works in progress, as individuals cognitively and emotionally grapple with the contradictions and complexities of their lives."[26]

My positionality as both a Copt and an historian rendered me an "insider" and an "outsider" during the interview process. Since at least the 1930s, with the establishment of the social sciences in North American university departments, writing on immigrants was conducted by "outsiders" focused on social problems, deviancy and assimilation. Since the 1970s, "insiders" stepped in to correct this unbalanced historiography and, as historian Alexander Freund noted, "insiders were fundamental to democratizing Canadian history."[27] Being an "insider" has its advantages and disadvantages. While sharing the culture of interviewees helped me to understand their stories, this also led to mistaken assumptions early in my fieldwork that shared knowledge meant that I understood their worldviews. I had to learn to question my basic knowledge about what Copts did on Sundays, where they gathered on holidays and the very

[25] Myrian Sepúlveda Santos, "Memory and Narrative in Social Theory: the Contributions of Jacques Derrida and Walter Benjamin," *Time & Society*, 10.2/3 (2001): 169-170.
[26] Anna Green, "Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory': Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates," *Oral History* 32.2 (2004): 41.
[27] Freund, "Oral History and Ethnic History," 21.

stories passed down in my family about daily life in Alexandria or Cairo. I did this to avoid reproducing "flat images that diminish migrating people's complex lives" which in past studies of the group offered "moving portraits of people's survival and endurance."[28] As a result of my positionality, I rendered myself visible as the historical narrator, "not out of self-indulgence but as a warning to the reader" that I am "not omniscient or impartial." Other interpretations of this history are possible and, as Peter Burke observed, historians do not reproduce 'what actually happened' neutrally, but present it from a particular point of view.[29]

Economic and social historians were once attracted to more determinist models of historical explanation, giving primacy to economy, to geography, or to Malthusian social change theory. Today the focus has turned to viewing human agency as negotiation within such structures, to collective psychology and to group dynamics that link debates on conscious and unconscious motivations.[30] Changes within the discipline of history have been particularly informed by the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his notion of 'habitus,' meaning the propensity of members of a social group to select responses from a particular cultural repertoire according to the demands of a particular situation or field.[31] Within such a 'habitus,' truth is a social act implicating more than one consciousness, as perceptions are coordinated in a world where what is known is known in common. As historian Dorothy Smith argued, "rather than undermining the very possibility of truth being told, it is precisely the multiplicity of experience and perspective among people that is a necessary condition of truth."[32] Historian Gwyn Prins showed how identity and culture are expressed in descriptions of physical boundaries and their

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[28] Freund, "Oral History and Ethnic History," 24.
[29] Peter Burke, "History of Events and the Revival of Narrative," in Peter Burke ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1992): 239.
[30] Peter Burke, "Overture: The New Social History, The Past and The Future," in Peter Burke eds, *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1992): 17.
[31] Burke, "Overture," 18.
[32] Dorothy E. Smith, *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations* (Toronto: UTP, 1999): 128.

persistence in the form of oral narratives bear witness to persistent cultural reproduction.[33] While everyone's story differs in myriad ways, there are certain overlaps in both form and content that allow for a coherent picture to emerge.[34]

Historians began to embrace oral history with all its inherent limitations and complexities with the turn to social history and the recording of stories of immigrants, women, refugees, and minorities. As Alexander Freund detailed, oral history began as a method, a source, a product/publication and as a social movement. In the 1970s, social historians realized how oral history allowed them to do history from below to rewrite traditional narratives with the "political goal of changing society" by letting people tell their stories in their "own words" to create more inclusive societies.[35] Canadian ethnic scholars emerged, often immigrants themselves or children of immigrants, motivated to uncover "insider" stories and supported by official multiculturalism funding. One such work was Baha Abu Laban's comprehensive study of Arab immigrants in Canada, the first of its kind.[36] Yet the weakness of this monograph, and many others like it, was in its intense valorization of immigrants and lack of careful assessment of their life narratives. Since its publication, Canadian historians have turned to work in the United States, England and Italy by scholars in the social sciences and in folklore, ethnography and feminist and post-colonial theory. Oral testimony, memory and subjectivity were re-evaluated through a focus on literary theory and notions of narrativity, including a turn to the work of cognitive psychologists as "oral historians argued that people's narratives were not a transparent window onto past realities, but rather constructions of identity that were embedded in social relations."[37]

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[33] Prins, "Oral History," 123.
[34] Green, "Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory'," 36.
[35] Freund, "Oral History and Ethnic History," 8.
[36] Baha Abu Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*, (McClelland & Stewart, 1980).
[37] Freund, "Oral History and Ethnic History," 9.

In his introductory essay to the anthology *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, historian Peter Burke outlined how the cultural relativism of this new history destabilized the notion of a Rankean history that was aimed at objectivity and 'how it actually happened,' by exposing how 'reality' is socially and culturally constructed. By instead focusing on history from below—on mentalities, memory, discourses, language, and representation—historians of ethnicity expanded historical inquiry and exposed how their writing was as much informed by context as by personal biases. Thus, historical writing "moved from the ideal of the Voice of History to that of heteroglossia, defined as 'varied and opposing voices'."[38] This history of everyday life then turned to the study of actions, attitudes, rituals—informed heavily by sociology and social anthropology—to relate to events and long term trends in history.

Memory and oral history are thus trustworthy sources because no source is more accurate or more unbiased, whether found in an archive or through oral testimony. In both instances, production, collection, translation, and transcription always involve a certain amount of invention, reduction, selection, and manipulation. The historians interpretation is not free from bias or framing to suit a particular argument.[39] The archive is not neutral. The archive is "what constitutes knowledge through power" and "what does not exist in itself." Therefore, what is archivable and what is achievable by the historian is a production "always codetermined by the structure that archives."[40] In fact, the very nature of oral sources may upset the assumed stability of historical inquiry and the neutrality attributed to archives, since "the unfinishedness, the

[38] Burke, "Overture," 5-6.
[39] As with all the oral historians cited, Hayden White has made the argument that no archive can be neutral. According to White, historians who use archives must make choices, selections about what they value. The process of selection, interpretation and argumentation which follows then falls into a genre (emplotment). The argument, modes and ideologies which frame the historian's narrative conform to their preference and are the way historians make a story intelligible and meaningful. See: Hayden White, *Metahistory*.
[40] Santos, "Memory and Narrative in Social Theory," 174.

partiality of oral sources infects all other sources."[41] Pamela Sugiman's combined work on Japanese Canadians has shown how "the role of subjectivity, of interpretation, and of the researcher" in constructing the past offers new challenges to the methodology of historical research and storytelling.[42] Oral histories challenge dominant narratives of the nation state, at the same time that they challenge the historian with the limitations of our scholarly practices.

People have the ability to reconstruct their past. Those in the 'life review' phase of old age can be remarkably precise as they "acquire an 'information pool' filled by personal relationships. It is circumscribed by their social context, obviously forms personal identity and has remarkable stability."[43] Sami Boulos, for instance, was quite frank that his time was nearing its end and with utmost sincerity confided spontaneously that "my life is now flowing before me, and this life is thanks to God who is merciful and very generous."[44] Boulos' awareness of his own past, his fluid way of storytelling which was filled with relationships and providence inspired me to reassess a wariness among historians of oral testimony as a source. Until at least the 1990s, testimony was commonly used in an ornamental fashion, to give studies based on written sources a more 'human touch.'[45] Part of this model was a lack of training in the use and interpretation of oral testimony. Some historians think—and most non-academics believe—that it is our job to authoritatively describe and perhaps explain what happened in the past. While a necessary exercise, for oral historians, historical continuity "requires more attention than change. Tradition is a process—it only lives as it is continually reproduced. It is effervescently vital in its apparent stillness."[46] Such an approach requires the researcher to contextualize speech and

[41] Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 104.
[42] Sugiman, "Passing time, Moving Memories," 68.
[43] Prins, "Oral History," 133.
[44] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10, 2017 (translated from Arabic).
[45] Freund, "Oral History and Ethnic History," 13.
[46] Prins, "Oral History," 137.

ground narrativity in notions of "invented traditions" and "usable histories," pioneered by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger, to explicate how individuals experience historical change.[47]

One success of oral history in Canada was in positioning the immigrant as agent. Following historian Paul Thompson's influential *Voices of the Past*, scholars saw oral history as a way to "empower" their subjects, giving people a voice to tell their stories.[48] Feminist historians were at the forefront throughout the mid-1980s and early 2000s, foregrounding oral testimonies and focusing on the interwar and immediate post-World War Two period.[49] Debating the influences of class, gender, and ethnic identities in larger conversation with immigrant integration in Canada, scholars mined oral histories to explicate the lived experiences of Lithuanians, Finns, Germans, Eastern European Jews, Italians, and others.

For instance, Mylda Danys' study of displaced persons offered a chronicle of the lives of immigrants based on massive oral history research to at once offer a history of the Lithuanian community of Canada and a history of the administration of Canada's refugee admission program in the late 1940s.[50] This work was soon followed, and enriched, by Varpu Lindstrom-Best's *Defiant Sisters*, Joy Parr's *The Gender of Breadwinners*, Ruth Frager's *Sweatshop Strife*, and Franca Iacovetta's *Such Hard Working People*. Such studies brought forth a multi-layered approach that accounted for class, sex and ethnicity, and the impact of acculturation on Canada's

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[47] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge UP, 1992); See also: Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *American Historical Review*, 102.5 (1997): 13-86; Natalie Z. Davis and Randolf Starn, "Introduction: Memory and Counter-Memory," *Representations* 26 (1989): 1-6; Anne-Marie Fortier, "Re-Membering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s)," *Theory, Culture & Society* 16. 2 (1999): 41-64; Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, (Oxford UP, 1999); Franca Iacovetta, "Post-Modern Ethnography, Historical Materialism, and Decentring the (Male) Authorial Voice: A Feminist Conversation," *Social History/Histoire Sociale* 32.64 (1999): 275-293; Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*, (Beacon Press, 1996); Susannah Radstone ed., *Memory and Methodology*, (Bloomsbury Academic, 2000); Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: the Dynamics of Collective Memory*, (Routledge, 2017).
[48] Paul Thompson, *Voices of the Past: Oral History*, Third Edition, (Oxford UP, 2000).
[49] Freund, "Oral History and Ethnic History," 15.
[50] Mylda Danys, *DP: Lithuanian Immigration to Canada after the Second World War*, (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986).

immigrant men and women. Each group adapted differently to Canadian society, based on dynamics arising from their homeland cultures, local work environments and external pressures from the host society. For both Finnish women who tried to elevate their own position as women, immigrants and workers by participating in socialist activities and for German immigrants in Hanover and Paris, whose occupations produced different domestic and political roles for men and women, class and gender identities were revealed to be a product of historical contexts.[51]

The politicization of immigrant identity then acquired special attention. Ruth Frager adopted the position that people can retain contradictory simultaneous identities by looking at how Jewish workers' organizations in Toronto's needle trades in the interwar period expressed ethnic rivalries that could at times undermine a united class struggle.[52] Franca Iacovetta instead re-emphasized the role of kinship networks in the immigration of Italians to Toronto and found gender and ethnicity as mediators of class experience, demonstrating how Italians from various villages banded together over shared class issues and the nativism of the Canadian organized labor movement.[53] Carmela Patrias' *Patriots and Proletarians* introduced a third approach by focusing on fracturing within the immigrant community and revealed that Hungarian political culture in interwar Canada resulted in two major identities as responses to their immigrant experience: patriots (acceptant of power structures in Hungary and Canada) and proletarians (supporters of the brief commune in Hungary; Communists).[54]

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[51] Varpu Lindstrom-Best, *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada*, (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1988); Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950*, (Toronto: UTP, 1990).
[52] Ruth Frager, *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Labour Movement of Toronto, 1900-1939*, Toronto: UTP, 1992).
[53] Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hard Working People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992).
[54] Carmela Patrias, *Patriots and Proletarians: Politicizing Hungarian Immigrants in Interwar Canada*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

Recent appraisals of the field have expanded and extended this literature by seeking not simply inclusion but the de-centering of dominant narratives. Notions of credible interpretations, the thinking and feeling subject rather than object of scientific research, and the shared authority of interviewee and interviewer have become mainstream. This reflexive and collaborative turn begs the question: is the process of sharing in a huge range of interpretations more important than a definition?[55] This interdisciplinary scholarship has shaped my interpretations of Egyptian immigrants' stories in its emphasis on intersectionality, on the power of external forces to mediate action, and on the internal fracturing within immigrant groups. Above all, I have sought to describe immigrants' motivations and material concerns in their own words and destabilize the assumed stability of a static, monolithic religious identity despite migration. My focus on socialization and material engagements across multiple geographies confirms what Paul Thompson has observed: the greatest potential of oral history is "in the chance which it gives us to recover for history both the common humanity and the relevance which it once held." People invite us to share in the impact of history on their lives in their own words.[56]

When I sat with father Macros A. Marcos, the first Coptic priest to minister in North America, I had read his extensive autobiography.[57] I knew about his ordination in 1964, his travels and his expansive ministry since. Yet there was never any doubt or hesitation in the text. That day, I learned why he maintained his distinctive balbo beard trim as opposed to the full beard often adopted by Coptic Orthodox priests. Father Marcos styled his beard in an extended goatee as a sign of rebellion. This insight was something which he considered inappropriate to

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[55] Katrina Srigley et al. eds., *Beyond Women's Words: Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Routledge, 2018); Kristina R. Llewellyn et al. eds., *The Canadian Oral History Reader*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2015).
[56] Paul Thompson, "Oral History and the Historian," *History Today*, 33.6 (June 1, 1983): 28.
[57] Father Marcos A. Marcos, *The History of the Coptic Orthodox Church in North America: The First 50 Years (1964-2014)*, (Toronto: St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, 2014).

put into a book. As was the fact that he did not initially want to be ordained a priest.[58] His story was deeply human and relevant to the experiences of other priests who, since the expansion of churches outside Egypt, were ordained (not always enthusiastically) and sent to serve in immigrant communities. Their doubts, although motivated by different personal experiences, were likewise perceived to be inappropriate to voice publicly. Immigrants' actions in this way revealed the intimate deliberations of individuals within larger collective narratives that reflect prescriptive ideals of faith and divine providence.

Image 3 Coptic Christians Celebrate Easter and Sham al-Nisim (Egyptian national holiday) with a Picnic in High Park, 25 April 1965. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF REMEMBERING

Oral history interviews were often a dialogue where stories took shape through the social act of remembering and telling. Both the historian and the content of the interview distorted the process. During my interview with Salah Allam, founder of the first Egyptian newspaper in Canada, my Christian faith played a significant role in our conversation. Born in Cairo in 1946 to

[58] Father Marcos A. Marcos, interviewed in Ontario, November 23, 2016 (partly translated from Arabic).

a Muslim family, Salah Allam immigrated to Montreal in June 1972. I asked him: "how old were you during the revolution in 1952? What do you recall?" After discussing how the revolution improved his educational opportunities and subsequent employment prospects, he segued with: "this might be interesting to you." My presence at this moment was central, as Salah Allam changed topics to express to a Copt how his upbringing taught him the importance of "good" Muslim-Christian relations:

> I learned from my father to be good to everybody [and to] respect other people and their religions [by] seeing him and his friends that are mixed. This is where I stand, and this is where I stand now. I believe that I am a moderate person [who offers] respect to others and respect to what they believe. And then I have friends and my friends are [Muslims and Christians], and all of them are wonderful people, and all of them are probably similar to me.[59]

This discussion was no doubt guided by my presence. Yet his story was no mere fabrication or exaggeration. Salah Allam recalled his childhood as he remembered it, and confided a memory that spoke to the ideals of social and religious equality with which he remains enamoured. In fact, successive interviews found participants sharing a story of their past at the same time as "they also presented an image of themselves in the present … partially, selectively."[60]

Interviewees often made assumptions about my positionality and level of knowledge on the subject matter. Over the course of several interviews, it became apparent that differences between us in age, generation, and religion were important, less important were inequalities based on class or education. We were most often bonded by a common identity, creating an understanding by virtue of my place in this "community of memory."[61] Oral testimonies were also necessarily an act of collective elaboration created through conversation. Many brought me

[59] Salah Allam, interviewed in Ontario, December 5, 2016 (partly translated from Arabic).
[60] Sugiman, "Passing time, Moving Memories," 76.
[61] Sugiman, "Passing time, Moving Memories," 69.

into the narrative with: "this may interest you," "you know," "you remember," or "you're too young, but can you believe?" I was asked to contribute and became part of the narration.[62]

Narratives were in this way often fluid, interactive and a more ambivalent dialogue. They ensured that all stories could not be reduced to the same one because one narrative alone may conceal diverse experiences shaped by age, region, timing of emigration, gender, religion, and class. Certain patterns became apparent over the course of several interviews. Stories were almost always constituted within "master frames" of Egyptian-ness, Coptic-ness, and life in North American cities. Frames, according to Martin Sokefeld, are ideas which informed belonging to an imagined transnational community that may be mobilized in the formation of diasporas.[63] Recollections did not necessarily form a coherent expression of collective memory, nor should we expect them to. They were often competing narratives as interviewees reconstructed past attitudes even when they no longer coincided with present ones.[64]

Nostalgia—or wistful sentimentality—was the most common form in which interviewees told their stories, partly accompanied by embellishment, reinvention and reimagining of spaces, but always with a sense of loss.[65] Drawing on a broad cultural repertoire, Egyptians in general confirmed the uniqueness of a national identity of 'Egyptian-ness'—that Egypt *was* the land of the pharaohs, of grand wonders and ancient treasures, and the modern Egyptian *was* as much a product of that heritage as of the heroes of the 1919 revolution, the interwar nationalist parties who fought for independence, the decolonization of the 1950s, and victory in the October 1973 War. Copts additionally conceived of Egypt as home to an ancient church first established by St. Mark the Apostle. Invocations of the contributions of early church fathers, the sacrifices of

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[62] Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 103-105.
[63] Martin Sokefeld, "Mobilizing in Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora," *Global Networks* 6.3 (2006): 266.
[64] Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 102-103.
[65] Mona Abaza, *The Cotton Plantation Remembered: An Egyptian Family Story* (New York: AUC Press, 2013): 19.

Coptic saints martyred under the Roman Empire, monks who spread monasticism and asceticism to Europe, and successive periods of persecution since the Arab conquest offered a sense of distinct and privileged civilizational identity. Immigrants integrated both sacred and secular cultures into their new environments. As Walter Benjamin said, "although every past and present is synchronic with certain moments in history, history itself is the diachronic dimension that allows the legibility of the moment … memory cannot retrieve the past, because the past is not an entity separated from the present."[66]

This past obfuscates beautiful old times associated with the ordered, clean, European spaces, in contradistinction to the disordered, oriental and now decaying city of crumbling minarets, chaotic bazaars and crowded labyrinths. Nimet Habachy was born in Cairo in 1944 to Saba Habachy, a prominent minister under King Farouk, and ordered her narrative in contrasts. Having arrived in New York with her family of five in December 1953, they were among the earliest permanent immigrants to the United States. Nimet defined herself as culturally (as opposed to spiritually) Coptic and confided that her childhood was quite "Idyllic":

> I was born in a villa … it had a garden, it fronted a very lovely street of the King, it went straight to the palace. If you went to the right [from the villa] it went up an ally, it was dirt path into a really poor area. And I used to know both very well, because I would walk the main street. And if you went to the right, there was a synagogue. And if you were very lucky there would be a wedding and they would give you *mälabis* [candied almonds] and they would kiss you roundly if you were a kid … But the alley was very poor, and very interesting. And kids really did run round the street chasing the innards of a tire, or a tire itself with a stick … And so you were constantly in danger [of] being run over [by] kids in bare feet. I had shoes and socks.[67]

In Egypt, Nimet Habachy's social class and education exposed her to the cosmopolitan colonial city. She distinguished in words and motions between her privileged upbringing and that of the majority of Egyptians. She observed that her current philanthropic work with the garbage

[66] Quoted in Santos, "Memory and Narrative in Social Theory," 181.
[67] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic and French).

collectors of Mokatam in Cairo reminded her daily that, "the poverty was terrible then and it's terrible now."[68]

The cosmopolitan city was only accessible to a few. Wealth and access to commodities coloured her narrative as much as the timing and nature of her family's emigration which shaped how the country was remembered. They were forced to flee because immediately following the Free Officers revolution her father feared targeting by the new military command council:

> He was going to be identified as pro-British … And he was an ancien régime minister, which was true, and we were Christian. That's a triple whammy. In 1956 that could have spelled disaster … We left officially Christmas of 1953 and did not return to Egypt for 18 years, during which we were blacklisted. And everything we were about was taken away or destroyed. Which truly includes everything about me, because I was the youngest and I have no baby pictures. Which is not bad. I was not that cute [a] kid. But I'd like to know what the hell I looked like.[69]

A palpable sense of loss was on her mind throughout our conversation. As were the cosmopolitan social circles which characterized her socialization in pre-revolution Egypt. Located across from the villa of a prominent Lebanese family, her home was recognizable in the then sparsely populated suburb. Distinctions between rich and poor and cosmopolitan or native were quite clear, and related to religious difference: "In those days ... if you had a western education or any kind of western existence you wore western clothing. And if not you wore a *gallabïyah* [long robe] and a woman wore a *miläya* [sheet]."[70] The subtle difference demarcated by religious groupings always operated in the background. Dress and social habits became embodied through head coverings and jewelry.

For Nimet Habachy, as for many nostalgic cosmopolitanists, the revolution changed the openness and opportunities for cultural diversity. Similar to Jewish, Greek, and Italian émigrés forced from Egypt, Nadine's departure was sudden and disorienting. "We left rather quietly," she

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[68] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (in English).
[69] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[70] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic and French).

recalled, and "to not attract any attention we left … as if we were coming home the next day. So, eventually everything got either taken or ruined or it disappeared … It was a rude ending to our Egypt life. I'm, you know, not weeping over it, but my mother did at one point."[71] Nimet repeatedly referred to Nasser's nationalization programs which followed the revolution as "sequestration." In a resigned, sad tone of voice she confided that, "I have absolutely not a stick that I can call my own in any way shape or form in [all of] Egypt. Neither in terms of lineage or home or hearth or anything … [the villa] is still there, but it is today indeed a school for deaf and dumb children. And that's just fine with me. I think, had we remained in Egypt, we would have probably done something like that, but we had no choice."[72]

Unlike the Habachys, young Coptic Orthodox professionals like Sami Boulos did not make their initial decision to leave Egypt to study abroad because the political transition directly impacted their safety or property. Rather, they left due to inequalities in educational and employment opportunities which Christians continued to face since the last decade of the monarchical regime. Sami Boulos' narrative followed similar patterns to contemporaries educated in Cairo universities in the 1940s and 1950s. This generation of young men may have been born in the city or migrated from Upper Egypt. Their stories exhibited generational similarities while also exposing differences based on class, region, and neighborhood. While the revolution and subsequent Islamicization in the 1970s led them to glorify pre-1952 royal splendor, they rarely chose to gloss over the existing economic and social inequalities.

Sitting with Sami Boulos in his living room, I could not miss the large-screen television on mute. He was watching Egyptian satellite news when I arrived. Born and raised in a working-

[71] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (in English).
[72] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic and French).

class neighbourhood in Cairo, his father was an employee for the British-owned rail company. Boulos prided himself on the fact that his father and grandfather were both religious and invested in Egyptian politics. He reflected on one of the many visits to his grandfather's home in Sabtiya when Father Sergius, a prominent Coptic cleric, joined them for tea. The priest spoke of the days when he was invited to Al Azhar Mosque at the height of agitation against the British. Following from these early memories of national unity, Boulos expressed history as an uninterrupted narrative where patterns primarily explained the present. He habitually shifted from the 1952 revolution to the present and even further back to the 1919 revolts:

> Sadly, what happened to Egypt now, Egypt is in the worst time in its modern history. Right now. Of course, I personally was not happy with the revolution of Gamal Abdul Nasser. Why? ... An officer named Muhammad Nagiub, he led the revolution and [was ousted by] Gamal Abdul Nasser … [Naguib] liked the Copts very much and [was not bigoted] He wanted a democracy. Importantly, Gamal Abdul Nasser disagreed with him and told the army to treat him like a dog. The president of Egypt! So I disliked Gamal Abdul Nasser. And when I said I wanted to leave Egypt, among the reasons, it wasn't just that I was discriminated against in Egypt, but that man [Nasser] I never liked him.[73]

Sami Boulos disliked Nasser because of a perceived affiliation with Islamists that lasted until an attempted assassination in Alexandria in 1954.[74] Boulos spoke in parallels between what he saw as the hijacking of the 2011 revolution and the 1952 revolution. Throughout, twentieth century mass youth movements caught between religious extremism defined these moments of national transition:

> The youth arose on January 20 [2011]. The youth. I see them on the television. And all the gatherings that took place in Tahrir Square. We never heard in that first revolution the words '*Allah wa Akbar* [God is

[73] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

[74] Most historians of modern Egypt agree that Nasser espoused a secular nationalism and that the Free Officers held a common commitment to national liberation and social reform which crossed party lines. Politically, their individual affiliations ran the gamut from Islamist to communist. Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminism, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt*, (New York: AUC Press, 2011): 50-51. Coptic immigrants often recalled their perception that Nasser was as a result aligned with Islamists. One prominent documented example was immigrant activist Shawki Karas, who argued that under Nasser Copts lost parliamentary positions and were targets of religiously-motivated discrimination. Shawki Karas, *The Copts Since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, (Jersey City: American, Canadian and Australian Coptic Associations, 1985).

great].' The youth are the ones who made it. Muslims and Copts together. And the friendships that were formed between the Copts and the Muslims made a new era. We were of course very happy with what happened. Who was waiting? The Muslim Brotherhood. They hijacked the revolution, as if they created it, and the youth were shunted aside. They have since 1928 [been] gathering themselves in Egypt and organizing their affairs, and fooling the Egyptian people.[75]

Alluding to the national unity symbolic of the 1919 revolts, Sami Boulos framed Copts as a part of a continuing national struggle which has been repeatedly sabotaged by the Muslim Brotherhood, the villains of Egyptian government propaganda for nearly a century. Conversations around discrimination pivoted from the broader institutional and political marginalization to the individual and localized social experiences.

Sami Boulos spoke at length of Christian exclusion in post-graduate education on university campuses. This was an experience he shared with many Coptic immigrants and one which played a major role in his decision to leave. He graduated with distinction in the Arts and sought a teaching assistantship in the department of Zoology. Yet, as he recalled, "the head of the department, yes a Copt, but he said you have no cause to come and see me. He wouldn't give me a teaching assistantship so that they don't say of him that you favour the Copts." Sami Boulos finished his undergraduate degree in 1941, he spent another 10 years navigating these troubled waters attempting to leave on a research trip abroad. He entered teachers' college for a two-year program. The head of the department was "very bigoted," confided Sami, and "he told me in all honesty that I was not going to be sent on a research trip because I am a Copt." Such individuals colour his memories, as do Muslims who were "good. Muslim, but not bigoted." Interview after interview, this was a common refrain.[76]

[75] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10 2017 (translated from Arabic).
[76] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10 2017 (translated from Arabic).

After Sami Boulos had found a teaching position in a reputable high school, Abdel Min'am al-Sayed was appointed the new Minister of Education. He had three openings for exchange students to the United States:

> He liked me very much. He asked me 'do you want to go to America? ... We have three openings for one year trips to America.' I told him 'of course I would go. Who are the other two? Why are you sending me?' He said, 'the head of the minister's office, the principle of the [highest ranked] school.' I said 'they are of course Muslim, why are you sending me?' He said 'I am not telling you.' I told him 'do you feel bad for me, doctor. Is that why?' He said, don't worry, you're good … it was because of my abilities.[77]

The dynamics of individual and localized discrimination were the more clear and direct. Boulos spoke of those who helped him along the way and those who obstructed his goals. His dissatisfaction with Nasser had as much to do with the state of affairs on university campuses as they did with his assessment of Muhammad Naguib and the timing and nature of his emigration.

At the same time that Sami Boulos made his decision to reside permanently in the United States, best friends Atef Mo'awad and Elhamy Khalil had arrived in New York City. Born in Beni Suef, Upper Egypt in 1935, Atef Mo'awad was from a middle-class family. His father was a manager in a British-owned textile company, and the family rented a two-storey house with a garden and small animal pen on the roof, close to the main church in the area. Clearly emphasized in his memories was the poor condition of rural life, where electricity came to their house only when he was nine, and he used to study by the light of kerosene lamps. Most of the streets were unpaved and no public transport ran through the town. Travel to the surrounding areas was normally with a donkey and cart, and a long trip to the city cost a sizable sum of five piaster while a short trip cost three. For Atef, his "very religious family" would enjoy "a special treat" on holidays by taking a car together to church.[78]

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[77] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10 2017 (translated from Arabic).
[78] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Illinois, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

Atef Mo'awad also emphasized the prominent role of Christian-Muslim relations in his social life. He recalled very little contact with 'foreigners,' though his father, like that of Sami Boulos, worked for British industrialists. As was common in cosmopolitan accounts of Egypt, there was a clear delineation between the native Muslim and Christian inhabitants and the foreigner (*Khawaga*). Atef recalled fondly his middle-class neighbourhood were there were "a lot of Greeks. They usually are merchants or [have] Greek bakeries … And there was one … Greek Orthodox church. This by the way, all this finished after Nasser came … all left Egypt."[79] Although a wistful sentimentality for cultural diversity remained, it was measured by the knowledge of persistent inequalities as a result of ethnic and national affiliations. Additionally, as others had, Atef Mo'awad turned to women's dress and bodies as symbols of social change: "And really at that time, I don't think there were veiled women in Egypt. [It was] very rare that we see them. The old ladies would wear shawls on their heads, but nothing else." Women embodied and reflected the Islamicization of social life. This lone example led Atef to reflect in the same breath: "Everybody was friendly. There was a subtle discrimination [against] the Copts. It has always been there." Always feeling "that we were a little less than others," he insisted that, "whoever tells you in the old days it was nothing, it's not true. It's just nothing so obvious and so acute like what's been there since I left Egypt."[80]

Unlike both Nimet Habachy whose family fled Egypt and Sami Boulos who had long pursued exchange programs to leave the country, Atef Mo'awad's emigration was one of many choices available and carefully considered. It was not a movement he actively sought initially. Looking back on the monarchical regime he admitted to rampant corruption in government under the king but praised the social services to the poor he considered lacking after the revolution: "Of

[79] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Illinois, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[80] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Illinois, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

course they were poor but at the same time they were able to eat, educate their kids, and they were alright. Not really lavish but it's fine." It was the corruption in government which Atef felt drove protests and demonstrations. Prior to leaving Beni Suef, he witnessed secondary school students and young adults who gathered to demonstrate against the British. "The British cannot occupy us," they shouted. He chose not to become politically active. From the vantage point of an affluent youth, demonstrations were a good way to "get out of school and … go and chew sugar cane by the Nile." Nevertheless, he blamed the corruption on parliament, the prime minister, and the king and grew equally disillusioned with youth activism: "The guy who start[ed] a demonstration ... would come the next day with a new suit to the school and we know that somebody give him that suit [laugh]. And so this was a continual thing."[81]

Atef Mo'awad was in university at a moment of tense political transition in Egypt. His cohort of Coptic medical students in Cairo did not join any social or political clubs on campus, and even chose to stay away from the Student Association, "because nothing really mattered … those silly things, we knew that it was all nonsense." That very same disillusionment with the political process persisted, and led him to prioritize religious gatherings to develop Sunday school programs in Upper Egyptian villages. Upon graduation, Atef knew that he could not get his top choices: obstetrics or gynecology. These and select branches of surgery were closed to Christians. Despite dedicated study and high grades, during the final examination:

> the examiner, first thing [he did was] take the folder and look at the name. He was not supposed to, you see … of course my name is Atef Hanna Mo'awad. I, as a Sunday school fanatic servant, extend my arm to him showing him my [wrist tattooed with a] cross. And it was downhill from that point on [laughter]. It was awful. And I came out of that exam [and] thought that I may have to go again. I didn't and I think mainly because of my written, and because God didn't want that. I … just passed.[82]

[81] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Illinois, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[82] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Illinois, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

Knowing that the chances of entering one of the coveted university posts was nearly impossible, both Atef and Elhamy "were resigned to work in the public [sector]." It was not the reason they chose to emigrate. Instead, "the reason we emigrated was actually very simple. ... Father Makary al-Suriani."[83] The priest encouraged many medical students to emigrate temporarily with the prospect of bringing back to Egypt new techniques, technologies, and professional connections. With his encouragement, they secured scholarships through a Cold War student exchange program and left by ship for New York during Christmas 1958.

They and young professionals like Sami Boulos formed the nucleus of the Coptic Association of America (CAA) when that emigration became permanent following Nasser's nationalization programs. Their diverse experiences and motivations coloured the social and spiritual priorities of an organization which remained staunchly non-political. At least for such "Sunday school fanatics" as Atef and Elhamy, their efforts were informed by the expansion of the Coptic Orthodox Church under a new generation of monks and bishops concerned with developing ecumenical and social services in the 1960s. As Elhamy Khalil recalled, "we were like the foot soldiers."[84] Discussed in chapter 5, such immigrants gathered in the home of Saba Habachy to create a sense of community, debating sacred and secular concerns. Their transnational engagements with Egypt were maintained alongside efforts at integration in New York and New Jersey.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE IN A POST-*NAKSA* WORLD

For the generation born in the later-1940s, narratives at times took the form of glorifying a past of post-colonial military glory under Nasser, not always in complete denial of its non-democratic rule. Where some like Muslim Egyptian Salah Allam highlighted the era of Arab socialism with

[83] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Illinois, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[84] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (in English).

its grandiose projects and the democratization of education, others like Coptic Catholic Hela Bihkit coloured their memories with *zowar al fagr* [the visitors of the dawn]—Nasser's secret police who kidnapped suspected dissidents from their homes.

Hela Bihkit was born and raised in Cairo, and placed herself as part of the generation of the revolution, many of whom immigrated to North American cities in the 1970s. Speaking in her home kitchen in Toronto, she offered a generational perspective on Nasser's Egypt:

> Conversations at home were always religion, politics, and social things. As young people … you push to the limit. You have to push to the limit. We were the generation of the revolution [laughter]. And we were very convinced with Nasser and the revolution, believe it or not. So that was again another debate at home. At home they were scared to say anything … We were not scared. We were all of us, believe it or not, pro-Nasser … We trusted him in everything. It's later on that we realized [that] with no governance you cannot govern a place that was beautiful, that has institutions, that has everything that's going correctly. We couldn't see that … And then 1967 came, and that was the big shock for our generation. I don't know if somebody else told you this or no, but [after] 1967 people started to think. Our generation … started to think of leaving. The 67. Wow. *Naksa* [setback].[85]

It is their narrative, their plot, and their subjectivity that make oral histories so rich, and reveals the speakers' relationship to a history they inhabited. She shared a textured personal narrative that brought to light the liminal spaces of familial and social tensions in everyday life, and she situated herself in a larger collective experience based on generational divides and not religious divisions.

The stories of a Coptic Catholic woman like Hela Bihkit overlapped somewhat with those of a self-proclaimed Nasserist such as Salah Allam, united as they were by age, class, and education. Both followed a generational cultural script that offered a similar vector for Egyptian economic social decline. However, where Salah Allam enjoyed the privilege of belonging to the male sex and Muslim majority, Hela readily admitted faults with Nasser well before his death because, among other factors, her family lost land in Upper Egypt under Nasser's nationalization programs (a history she shared with other Copts). This past added to her bitterness with the

[85] Hela Bihkit, interviewed in Ontario, October 30, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

national defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and informed the glorification of pre-1952 colonial splendor with which she had little direct experience followed.[86]

Yet both blamed succeeding President Anwar Sadat for the Islamicization of Egyptian society, for Salah Allam: "before [Sadat] it was perfect … it was the golden time."[87] He was committed to ideals of social and religious equality of *this* glorious bygone era:

> And by the way this is part of the Egyptian fabric ... In that time you don't have hate, and you don't have bias towards [a] certain religion, and nobody is putting bad ideas in [the] mind[s] of other people. You know [their religion] only if somebody passed away in their families and you went to pay respect and all this. This is Egypt, the old Egypt. And in Nasser's time discrimination was not part of their umbrellas … this is [a] government that doesn't look at religion as part of it ... All the people are the citizen[s] of the country. This is what I learn[ed] from Nasser's time.

Salah Allam saw his emigration to Montreal in June 1972 as a youthful exploration of a country he obsessively read about in books. Speaking in his office, which he adorned with photos of both Gamal Abdul Nasser and former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, he told a story of his youth and told it to speak to ideals that he still cherishes—which he continues to believe these two figures embody. His narrative pulled from his memories, as well as the language of Nasser's August 1961 speech in Syria denying discrimination in Egypt and Trudeau's October 1971 speech to the Ukrainian-Canadian Congress, in which Trudeau defined his new multiculturalism policy.[88]

Coptic Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox women who immigrated to Toronto in the 1970s to pursue graduate education were instrumental in founding and leading the Egyptian Canadian Club. Like Hela Bihkit, they similarly blamed Nasser for his economic and political "blunderings." Nevertheless, the conversation always returned to Sadat, who was held

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[86] Mona Abaza, "Memory Expurgation? Cairo: A Comment on Photographs," *Media Theory Journal* 2.1 (2018).
[87] Salah Allam, interviewed in Ontario, December 5, 2016 (partly translated from Arabic).
[88] In late August 1961, Nasser delivered a speech in Syria where he said: "We in our republic don't even acknowledge the existence of discrimination. We look at everyone in our society as a citizen having rights and duties. In proportion to his capacity, we give each citizen a chance to work and we do not distribute jobs on the basis of discrimination." Quoted in Edward Wakin, *A Lonely Minority: the Modern Story of Egypt's Copts*, (Lincoln, NE: An Author's Guild Backprint.com Revised Edition, 2000 [1963]): 70.

responsible for Egypt's religious polarization. Looking back on her university days, Hela spoke of Islamicization as a pivotal and visceral experience, offered a glimpse into the generational turbulence of social and familial relations, and placed at the forefront a gendered and class-based reflection on—quite literally—the changing face of Egyptian universities in the 1970s:

> In 1971 ... In the whole 'Ain Shams University, not only in my college, there wasn't a single veiled girl," she said. "You wouldn't believe it, but believe it because we went through it. Not a single veiled girl in all 'Ain Shams … and I don't know if somebody told you as well, in the beginning of [the] seventies, it was the fashion of the mini skirt in Egypt. Believe it or not, the girls were wearing mini skirt[s], whether you're Muslim or Christian. And nobody will do anything or bother you. Except the parents. Are you leaving like this? Is this the way you're gonna leave, like this? So again, the conflict was always with the parents; whether you're Muslim or Christian … When I left in '75, a third of my class in university were veiled.[89]

Generational differences were prominent in Hela Bihkit's narrative, as were distinctions between her middle-class social circle and the "lower classes" who were swayed by Islamist societies on campus to adopt markers of religious divisions. Of course this change was subjective. It reflected the continuity of embodying women as markers of social change and was additionally a reflection on the everyday lived experience of a professional woman who chose to emigrate alone to escape her family's restrictive influence. Yet French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs has shown that the retrieval of the past has a significant social dimension and "the most durable memories tended to be those ... memories which were 'in harmony' with those of others."[90] Yet individual remembering should not be dismissed as inherently contradictory and unconscious psyche because such a "functionalist" perspective may ignore conflicting memories and dissent. Individuals had the capacity to engage critically and constructively with inherited ideas and beliefs while framing their own distinct experiences

[89] Hela Bihkit, interviewed in Ontario, October 30, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic and French).
[90] Green, "Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory'," 38.

within collective narratives. As Derrida argued, "we do not make stories out of our memories, because memories exist only within our narratives."[91]

Amid the proliferation of Islamist societies on university campuses after the investiture of Anwar Sadat, this generation, both Christian and Muslim, recalled the increasing visibility of *hijäbs* on female students, growing beards on male faces, outward displays of devotion, and the changing language of the streets. These everyday markers coloured their remembrances far more than evolving state policy most often muted by distance to the needs of their immediate social lives. In recollections of leaving Egypt in the 1970s, or visiting since, Egyptian immigrants could not escape how the very language of everyday life became Islamicized. As Muslim Egyptian Mahmud lamented: "*sabah al-khair* [good morning/hello] became *as-salamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh* [May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be with you]."[92]

Disillusioned with Egypt's economic decline, and alienated by religious polarization, many middle-class Egyptian immigrants became far more concerned with immediate familial troubles and with creating community than with wider political developments following arrival.[93] In North American cities, surrounded by an increasingly sexually permissive urban counterculture and growing suburbanization, immigrants made choices to focus on occupational success while devoting their free time to religious activities, political groups, social clubs, or other outlets. Some acted transnationally in surprising ways. The nation-state and national ideologies have shaped people's lives in powerful ways and "to think in national terms often seems 'natural'." However, immigrants based their actions on a selective reading of national ideologies, which was most often expressed in choices to live their own kind of transcultural

[91] Santos, "Memory and Narrative in Social Theory," 175.
[92] Pseud. Mahmud, interviewed in Ontario, March 13, 2017 (translated from Arabic).
[93] Abaza, "Memory Expurgation?"

lives—"in, with, and across different cultures."[94] Studies that account for such mundane transnational influences are rare, revealing that 'home' was rarely anchored by geopolitical borders as by social relations.

Preserving an Egyptian cosmopolitanism was the motivation behind founding the Egyptian Canadian Club in the suburbs of Toronto. It began in the home of Coptic Orthodox Nabil Bichai and his wife Mona in Thorncliffe, near Don Mills and Eglinton (then a dominantly Middle Eastern neighbourhood). First, a few Egyptian families who lived in the same apartment building gathered regularly. Two years later in 1976, it was incorporated and its membership included Christians, Muslims and Jews. They met in a French recreational centre with multiculturalism funding and celebrated a shared middle-class cosmopolitan culture through parties and festive social gatherings. For Nabil, "we declared ourselves from day one that we have nothing to do with religion, nothing to do with politics … in those days the main church was Father Marcos and he had an open mind. His job was religion and our job was fun."[95] The confessionalization of Egyptian society reverberated beyond the nation. Immigrants who rejected such an imposition chose instead to celebrate a nostalgic cosmopolitanism they had little direct memory of. For them, perhaps, nostalgia became a form of resistance to a state they could not reform in Egypt and a mark of rootedness and distinctiveness in a changing Canadian multicultural landscape (detailed in chapter 6).

The narrative and plot of oral sources thus operate on two levels, that of collective form and of personal "truth."[96] As subjectivity and critical inquiry are the business of history, "what the informant believes is indeed a historical *fact* (that is, the *fact* that he or she believes it) just as

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[94] Alexander Freund, "Introduction," in Alexander Freund ed., *Beyond the Nation? Immigrants' Local Lives in Transnational Cultures*, (Toronto: UTP, 2012): 4-7.
[95] Nabil Bichai, interviewed in Ontario, September 25, 2017 (in English).
[96] Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 99.

much as what 'really' happened."[97] The historian's role is not to simply deny, contradict, or discredit that memory, but rather to look for where markers of identity, imagination, symbolism, and desire break in. We need to take seriously people's recollections and from that basis assess their remembrance and subjectivity. In crafting such a Geertzian 'thick description,' the ideal is to make "a narrative thick enough to deal not only with the sequence of events and the conscious intentions of the actors in these events, but also with structures—institutions, modes of thought, and so on."[98] We must allow the reader to feel how different people felt the pressures of the past and how past events which have congealed into structures act on people and social groups.

Religious identity was not their only reality. Rather, both sacred and secular cultures characterized Copts' historically contingent and socially situated choices which shifted and were expanded through immigration. In oral history testimony, immigrants' past experiences constitute and are constituted by a form of acculturation typified by language as most Egyptian immigrants in general express their memories by implicitly shifting between English, Arabic and French. As Liebscher and Schulze argued, "when immigrants mix up—intentionally and unintentionally—two or more languages, they create something new, which becomes part of and facilitates their new life and identity."[99] This form of language acculturation at times took the form of mixing discursive constructs from multiple environments. In conversation with Coptic Presbyterian Basma Shalaby, I asked her what Egypt meant to her now. Her response captured this dynamic best. Alluding to both Canada's national anthem and the discourse of Coptic indigeneity in Egypt, she declared: Canada is "my home ... and [Egypt] is my native land."[100]

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[97] Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 100.
[98] Burke, "History of Events and the Revival of Narrative," 240.
[99] Grit Liebscher and Mathias Schulze, "Language Acculturation: German Speakers in Kitchener-Waterloo," in Alexander Freund ed., *Beyond the Nation? Immigrants' Local Lives in Transnational Cultures*, (Toronto: UTP, 2012): 249-267.
[100] Basma Shalaby, interviewed in Ontario, November 1, 2017 (in English).

"GOD HELP YOU" INDEED, INTERPRETATION AND THE 'HIDDEN' IMMIGRANTS

The writing of history has shifted from the Rankean notion of "how it actually happened" to assessing subjectivities, social constructs and cultural production. So too must our approach, and our appreciation, for oral histories shift. The testimonies of Egyptian immigrants illustrated that socialization in Egypt prior to emigration was central to how immigrants remembered and ordered their narratives. Experiences and events, such as cosmopolitan neighbourhoods, occupational exclusion, Nasserite nationalization, war, and visible expressions of religious polarization, configured how certain immigrants perceived and interpreted what happened in their time.[101] Pragmatic and active agents, they made choices as immigrants to create a sense of community that fit their needs. As historian Dorothy Smith observed, we must know "the social as people actually bring it into being."[102] Religion, generation, class, gender, region, and timing of immigration mattered. Social experience and the time at which they left impact how stories were told in the present. Recollections at times highlighted religious divisions while at other times generational and class-based similarities among Copts and Muslims. The gendered division of recollections showed that women prioritized intimate stories of home and family while men instead emphasized leadership in the community and occupational success.

At the same time, my identity and my relation to the subjects of my inquiry mattered. Oral history, as any historical source, was produced through the collection, translation and transcription of words which always involved a certain amount of invention, reduction, selection, and manipulation. The study of memory and the interpretation of oral testimony is a process of analyzing the narrative form and social dimension of remembering. Memory is not history. Yet memory and history exist in a dialectical relationship, as recollections of the past take form in the

[101] Burke, "History of Events and the Revival of Narrative," 244.
[102] Dorothy Smith, *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations* (Toronto: UTP, 1999): 129.

present. Memory is both synchronic and diachronic, and the act of remembering is a negotiation between one's past experiences, present realities and social relations. It is more important to deduce "not that individuals draw upon contemporary cultural discourses to make sense of their lives, but *which* ones, and *why*."[103] Recollection and the reconstruction of past selves is a work in progress and a mutable category of analysis. It is the role of the historian to acknowledge the memories of interviewees and assess their subjectivities but not play excavator and simply pluck 'useful' memories from interviewees. Rather, one must examine the multitude of ways that people constructed their language and ordered their narratives. Cognizant of both the "cultural construction of life narrative" and of one's personal truth, scholars may then proceed with the knowledge that, while everyone's story differs in myriad ways, there are certain overlaps in both form and content that allow for a coherent picture to emerge.[104]

Immigrants from Egypt were pragmatic and active agents navigating material structures as Christians or Muslims. People indeed felt the pressures of the past. Yet past structures or events which have congealed into structures informed different choices to live within and beyond the nation. Salah Allam recalled that in 1970s Montreal:

> There was a movie called *Al 'Ard* [The Land] by Youssef Chahine, a prominent director in Egypt ... it was only projected in Loyola College ... We saw Egyptians, we never saw them before … I told the [organizers]: where did these Egyptians come from? People, we don't see them in the stores. Egyptians, but they're hidden. But they went in because [it was] Youssef Chahine … they wanted to see his film … There [were] Egyptians like this. You'll find them hidden, but I cannot say [that] they don't love Egypt. Why the hell are you gonna go to an Egyptian movie—even though it's by Youssef Chahine—unless you wanna see the movie?[105]

People indeed felt the pressures of the past. Yet past structures, or events which have congealed into structures, informed different choices to fashion transcultural lives. In the following chapters, I endeavour to account for the stories of those hidden immigrants whose material

[103] Green, "Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory'," 42.
[104] Green, "Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory'," 36.
[105] Salah Allam, interviewed in Ontario, December 5, 2016 (partly translated from Arabic and French).

experiences have been discounted in favour of the perceived uprooting of a static religious identity. As Walter Benjamin said, "it is the task of those who deal not only with chronicles, but with history, to study not just the mechanics of the material event, but the events of the remembering and of the telling—the patterns of the remembering, the forms of the telling—the conditions under which our 'historical materials' have been created. In this sense, though the event may be over, the telling of that event is 'boundless'."[106] It is a difficult though eminently worthwhile task to attend to the heteroglossia of the immigrant experience and thereby appreciate the complex transnational character of migrating actors' everyday lives. Given the huge range and the challenges that lie ahead, arriving at a definition would be unnecessarily limiting. God help us indeed.

[106] Quoted in Sugiman, "Passing time, Moving Memories," 77-78.

Chapter 3
"Significantly Better Immigrants Than Many ... From Europe": Egypt's Émigrés Through Western Eyes

The modern Copts are a migratory people, neither guided by a purely insular nor sedentary existence. As the first chapter outlined, the movement of people and ideas engaged the developing national community in a globalizing world. The nature of Egyptian modernity was a product of migrations as populations from across the Mediterranean brought new technologies and invigorated Egypt's industries, and colonial encounters engendered new ways of imagining belonging. Industrialization, urbanization and the erection of educational institutions followed interior migration from the countryside. Many of the early immigrants to Canada and the United States discussed in chapter 2 travelled abroad for a plethora of reasons, owing to their particular social, political and economic circumstances and commensurate with their needs.

Until the Free Officers revolution of 1952, Egypt was a receiving society that welcomed and benefited from continued international immigration. After the revolution, anti-colonial sentiment engendered discriminatory attitudes toward foreign communities and economic nationalization projects which forced out first the descendents of early Jewish, Greek, Italian, Armenian, Syrian, and Lebanese immigrants. This chapter outlines the beginnings of Canadian and US immigration programs in Cairo to service foreign minorities and how Egyptian nativism, deep-seated antipathy for internal foreign groups of various kinds (national, cultural, religious), was then extended to the last remaining minority group: the Copts. In the second half of the twentieth century, economic nationalization and an encroaching dictatorial regime motivated the emigration of native Coptic and Muslim professionals. Copts, however, had to contend with rising discrimination that led eventually to sectarian violence by the late twentieth century.

Egypt's population more than doubled between the end of the Second World War and the mid-1980s, from 20 to 50 million. The 1947 census reported approximately one-and-a half million Copts, the absolute majority of which lived in Upper Egyptian Governorates.[1] By November 1976, the census reported a total of 2,315,560 Copts, or 6.31 per cent of the total population of Egypt. Low census figures, however, were strongly contested by the Church and Coptic sources, who spoke of much higher numbers (between 12 and 15 per cent).[2] Low census figures have been attributed to willful deceit by bigoted government officials or accidental recording of Christians with names that 'pass' for Muslim. Urban Coptic populations were better represented in Cairo than in any other Egyptian city. Some government departments came to be dominated by Copts by the twentieth century (perhaps 45 per cent of all civil servants) until implicit hiring quotas negatively targeted Christians as early as the 1930s. Copts remain well-represented in the private sector, as owners of businesses, medical professionals and tradesmen.

Several factors inhibited the large-scale movement of Egyptian nationals until the mid-1960s. As this chapter argues, it would be the interaction of seemingly independent developments across multiple geographies (in the Middle East, Europe and North America) that facilitated new possibilities for Coptic emigration from Egypt. Interest in emigration on the part of native Egyptians coincided with changes to Canadian and United States immigration policies which produced a dramatic increase of applications after Egypt's defeat in the June 1967 war with Israel. Immigrants joined societies inhabited by diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. In large part their success was conditioned by less outwardly discriminatory immigration policies toward formerly non-preferred countries. Following the Second World War, easing immigration restrictions were affected by public sentiment, humanitarian concerns, transnational

[1] Nadia H. Wassef, "The Egyptians in Montreal: A New Colour in the Canadian Ethnic Mosaic," (M.A. Geography Thesis, McGill University, 1978): 42.
[2] J.D. Pennington, "The Copts in Modern Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18.2 (1982): 158.

and ecumenical charities, and political lobby groups fighting on behalf of displaced persons and refugees to develop more inclusive societies.

As historian Roberto Perin observed, immigrant history is not simply an extension of the history of the immigrants' country of origin, nor does it begin at the border of the country of adoption.[3] In order to bridge the gap between both geographies, I examined perspectives and policy changes affecting Egypt, Canada and the US in the twentieth century. Egyptian government archives are practically closed to researchers and I feared approaching senior officials with requests to access historical documents.[4] However, Canada and the United States kept detailed records on their activities in Egypt, and reports which document meetings, speeches and ceremonies shared with Egyptian officials provided rare insight into the evolution of Egyptian politics. As in the preceding chapter, the lack of access to Egyptian archives proved a boon to my analysis by forcing me to approach the topic from a unique vantage point. I explore the Middle East through the eyes of Western government officials and other observers.

In hundreds of secret, restricted, or confidential communications between the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration in Ottawa and the Canadian embassy in Cairo, Canadian officials stressed the need for a more proactive effort to recruit suitable immigrants from Egypt. Arnold Smith, Canadian ambassador to Cairo from 1958 to 1961 argued that Egypt offered "significantly better immigrants than many ... from Europe."[5] Immigration officers, ministers and their aids, and RCMP commissioners agreed, although the latter did so very guardedly. Foreign

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[3] Roberto Perin, "National Histories and Ethnic History in Canada," *Cahiers de Recherche Sociologique* 20 (1993): 113-128.

[4] The patriarchal archive, *Dar al Kutub* and *Dar al-Watha'iq* in Egypt are notoriously difficult to access reliably. With endless waiting lists and strict limitations on access to historical records, scholars affiliated with the Middle East Studies Association have held recurring workshops on alternative sources for research on Egypt.

[5] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Deputy Minister's Office, Confidential dispatch no. 562 from Arnold Smith, Canadian Ambassador in Cairo, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, "Proposal for Immigration Facilities for Christian Minorities from UAR to Canada," December 10, 1959, 1-3.

minorities fleeing Egypt presented both Canada and the US with an opportunity to take in qualified immigrants and maintain their quotas when the number of Italians, Greeks, Jews, and others of adequate qualifications were dwindling in Europe. At first, their interest did not include native Christian or Muslim populations, but rather "Jewish refugees" and the "foreign Christian minorities" feeling the brunt of Nasserite anti-imperialism and Arab nationalism. A growing openness to immigration from Egypt developed as a result, in competition with other receiving governments such as Australia and Brazil. This facilitated the eventual large-scale movement of native Egyptians to North America which was guided by a hierarchy of races, ethnicities and religious affiliations. Foreign Christian minorities were at the top; Armenian and Jewish immigrants were tolerated; Westernized Catholic and Protestant Copts became acceptable as the previous categories declined; and Orthodox Copts and Muslims were the last to be accepted.

This is the first study to employ and critically assess secret, restricted, or confidential correspondence between North American government bodies regarding Egypt, its émigré populations and Middle Eastern nationals. To date, there have been only two Canadian studies which document the demographic and settlement patterns of Middle Eastern immigrants: Baha Abu Laban's *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree* and Farid Ohan and Ibrahim Hayani's *The Arabs in Ontario*.[6] Both studies relied on published census records and statistics from the Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship. In the United States, monographs emerged in the 1990s out of post-colonial and whiteness studies that documented the experiences of Arabs in America. However, such studies were far more concerned with the reasons for emigration and what happened to the "not-quite-white" Middle Easterners after arrival, than the actual process of selection and codification of prospective immigrants on the part of immigration officers in the

[6] Baha Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980) and Ibrahim Hayani and Farid E. Ohan, *The Arabs in Ontario: A Misunderstood Community*, (Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada, 1993).

sending countries.[7] That said, I owe a great debt to the work of United States scholars who have exposed the impact of racialization in the United States on Arab immigrants. Indeed, the "Arab" may be the ultimate example of how race is a social construct: classified "Caucasian," configured "Asiatic" in immigration policy, at times lynched in the American South, and constrained in the North as the duplicitous Oriental whose only saving grace was the Christian faith. I frame the Copts in that history and extend the analysis to Canada, where relatively little critical scholarship exists to document the influence of race and discrimination on Canada's growing Arabic-speaking immigrant communities following the Second World War.

The myth of Canada as a raceless and secular society persists in the historiography of Canadian immigration, particularly since the introduction of significant immigration reforms in the 1960s. However, in their discussions of immigrants from Egypt senior Canadian officials continued to see people through a culturally driven, and negative, orientalist gaze. While it is true that by 1967 official policy sought to enact equitable and non-discriminatory assessment procedures, the attitudes of officials on the ground continued to be guided by tropes of the treacherous, duplicitous and prideful Egyptian. Their sentiments informed immigrant assessments and application screenings, and continue to affect public perceptions of immigrants from the Middle East who feel the brunt of nativist and xenophobic rhetoric in North America.

One facet of bilateral relations that this transnational history will expose is the highly unequal relationship between nation states. The Egyptian government sought to be rid of foreign minorities seen as favoured in history and antagonistic to Arab glory. Yet, on the one hand,

[7] For more, see: Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock eds., *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream,* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000); Gregory Orfalea, *The Arab Americans: A History*. (Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2006); Amarey Jamal and Nadine Naber eds., *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Nadine Naber, *Arab America: Gender, Cultural Politics, and Activism,* (New York University Press, 2012).

migration formed a comparatively small portion of prevailing political considerations between Egypt and the United States. On the other, it was the driving force behind Egyptian-Canadian bilateral relations well into the 1980s. In contrast to their US counterparts, Canadian officials spent an inordinate amount of time observing and detailing emigration figures and policies in Egypt. United States officials instead had more urgent considerations owing to their mediating role in the Arab-Israeli conflict and attempts to manage Cold War tensions with the USSR in the strategic Middle East region. The United States was not concerned with the equity of immigration procedures in Cairo. The reader will note this imbalance in the organization of the chapter. Much more attention is devoted to the analysis of Canadian correspondence on Egyptian populations which highlight the transnational nature of evolving immigration procedures.

Drawing predominantly on classified textual records, I read such communications against the grain to expose, through critical analysis, the perspectives and concerns of North American officials. As Barbara Roberts argued, to understand North American exclusionary policies, "it is necessary to go beyond what the [Immigration] Department told the public, and to examine what the officials said to each other when they were not under scrutiny."[8] Guided by an orientalist understanding of an ethnically-segmented cosmopolitan Egypt, high-ranking officials of western nations understood the society in which they worked and often measured change in Egyptian economic, social and political life in ways similar to Coptic immigrants I interviewed. The defining difference in their considerations was their understanding of inter-religious relations in post-colonial Egypt: western officials drew sharp divides between Christian and Muslim and did so in conversation with the changing needs of sovereign nations in a Cold War environment.

I rely on similar methodologies to decode textual documents as I did for oral history. No source is more transparent, authoritative, or factual than any other. The method of collection,

[8] Barbara Roberts, *Whence they Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935*, (Univ. of Ottawa Press, 1988): 52.

organization and preservation differed between oral histories and archival records. The latter existed apart from my active intervention. However, at the time of their production, the authors of a dispatch or memorandum drafted, edited and at times omitted details to suit the needs of their audience and the conventions of the time. The act of production happened in a wider discursive world, since prevailing considerations of Egypt and its emigrant populations were refined and corroborated during personal meetings and telephone conversations between representatives of multiple governments and local ethnic leaders.

Adopting a chronological approach, I show how discussions about immigration from Egypt began first in Canada, with local constituents and charitable organizations petitioning on behalf of would be émigrés. When Canada established an immigration program in Egypt, discussions continued but were concentrated in Cairo throughout the early 1960s. Following the 1967 war, growing numbers of Egyptian, particularly Coptic, immigrants once again brought discussions of immigration back to Canada and made North American cities, on the whole, the locus of activity on behalf of prospective émigrés. This chapter concludes by outlining particular features of the multicultural immigrant population from Egypt: its demographics, socio-economic profile and destinations. It centers the mediating role of the Church hierarchy with government bodies in support of Coptic immigrants whose continued immigration, settlement, varying levels of adaptation and diasporic sentiments will be discussed in the following chapters.

ECONOMIC SELF-INTEREST AND EXCLUSIONARY IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Economic self-interest and categories of race, religion and class configured how Canada and the US assessed prospective immigrants' ideology and culture.[9] The 1930s witnessed restrictions that effectively barred most non-European immigrant groups and indeed exclusion was the

[9] Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994*, (Toronto: M&S, 1995): 7.

cornerstone of Canadian and US immigration policy.[10] In the 1950s, local and international pressure combined with Cold War considerations led Canada to open new missions and facilities for local security screenings in the Middle East. In the wake of the Hungarian Refugee Crisis, Jewish and Christian European, Lebanese and Armenian residents in Muslim countries became a growing topic of conversation for senior Canadian officials. Canada repealed exclusionary policies in Egypt following the 1956 Suez Crisis which produced intense hostility on the part of Egyptian nationals toward Jewish residents and local foreign minority groups. However, the United States retained its national quotas until the 1965 Hart-Celler Immigration Act which inaugurated more equitable procedures by replacing national quotas with hemispheric limits and prioritized family reunification.[11] Canada likewise introduced non-discriminatory procedures in the 1967 Points System, placing the emphasis on skill and education rather than race or ethnic background. Though not quite so equitable in practice, the lead up to more lenient procedures intended to facilitate the movement of foreign minorities helped native Egyptians emigrate.

Prior to the Second World War, immigrants from the Middle East developed mutual aid around familial networks in tight-knit, yet spatially scattered communities. Turn of the century Toronto, Montreal and New York attracted often single, male Syrian and Lebanese immigrants who worked in factories, as peddlers in markets and on the streets, and as independent shop-owners. Nativist border restrictions in the interwar period limited their movement and made appeals for family reunification a more common means for gaining entry.[12] The peddling occupation became most visible and racially charged for politicians, journalists and health-care

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[10] Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948,* (University of Toronto Press, 1983).
[11] For more, see: David Gerber, *American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford UP, 2011).
[12] Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree*; May Ahdab-Yehia, "The Lebanese Maronites: Patterns of Continuity and Change," in Sameer Abraham and Nabeel Abraham eds., *Arabs in the New World: Studies on Arab-American Communities*, (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1983): 147-162.

experts who propagated stereotypes of the deceitful and unsanitary liar across the Americas.[13] Cultural and racial definitions of the "Arab" existed in social and national contexts where they were categorized as Caucasian on the census, Asiatic in immigration policy and ambiguous Christians in everyday life. The racial ambiguity of Arab whiteness, informed by competing conceptions of the Arab as not free, not male, not a person, and ironically therefore not white, often competed with an alternative identity by which Christian immigrants asserted belonging in North American cities.[14] Even then, as Isabel Kaprelian-Churchill outlined, Armenians' refugee status posed a double jeopardy. Caucasian, Christian and speaking an Indo-European language, they were nevertheless classified under Asiatic exclusionary policies owing to geography.[15]

Asiatic exclusions came to an official end in the United States and Canada in 1944 and 1946, respectively.[16] Yet, the legacy of Asiatic exclusion continued to impede immigration from the Middle East. Earlier Syrian, Lebanese and Armenian immigrants, now local constituents, wrote their mayors after the Second World War. In Canada, mayors wrote to the federal government on behalf of these families and urged Prime Minister St-Laurent to cancel or revise C.P. 695 and C.P. 2115, which restricted Asiatic immigration and classified the Middle and Near East under such restrictions. They warned of threats made by constituents to vote Conservative if no changes were made. Both the Immigration Branch and External Affairs were unwilling to consider any changes and tolerated exceptions only on a case-by-case basis and in light of

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[13] Alixa Naff, *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience*, (Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 128-160; Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree*, 82-127; Jeffrey Lesser, "(Re)Creating Ethnicity: Middle Eastern Immigration to Brazil," *The Americas*, 53.1 (1996): 45-65.

[14] Sarah M. A. Gualtieri, "Strange Fruit? Syrian Immigrants, Extralegal Violence, and Racial Formation in the United States" in Amarey Jamal and Nadine Naber eds., *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, (Syracuse University Press, 2008): 147-169; Suad Joseph, "Against the Grain of the Nation - The Arab" in Michael W. Suleiman ed, *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, (1999): 257-271; Helen Hatab Samhan, "Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab-American Experience" in Michael W. Suleiman ed, *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, (1999): 209-226.

[15] Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, "Armenian Refugees and Their Entry into Canada, 1919–30," *Canadian Historical Review* 71 (1990): 88.

[16] For more, see: David Goutor, *Guarding the Gates: The Canadian Labour Movement and Immigration, 1872-1934*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

growing humanitarian concerns (under pressure from the United Nations, the World Council of Churches and other international organizations). In their final assessments, exceptions depended on the utility of prospective immigrants for the needs of the Canadian economy.[17] Restrictions were geographic and made no exceptions for religious or ethnic affiliation. Self-interest and the need for immigrant labour following a postwar boom guided immigration and refugee policies, with little appreciation for the needs of the international community.[18]

Canada sought to facilitate the movement of only the right sort of immigrant. Recognizing the increasing demand for emigration, as of February 1950 prospective immigrants from the Middle East could finally be cleared locally by British authorities and the CIA and RCMP began to refine procedures for Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. By March 1951, new instructions were sent out to branch directors in Athens, Rome and Vienna and demands for special considerations began to arrive from both local constituents and prospective émigrés.[19] In January 1952 inquiries were made by affluent Greek citizens living in Cairo to ease procedures for the emigration of Greeks discriminated against due to their religion and nationality. Yet both Canadian and US officials in Cairo expressed a fear which haunted foreign nationals throughout the Cold War period: the right of return. Many were merely tolerated in Egypt and their re-admittance may be rejected should they prove to be 'unsuitable.'[20]

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[17] LAC, "Immigration - Asiatic - General, Office of the Prime Minister," MG26L, Volume 56, File I-20-14, 1948-1949. Mayors in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec sent requests directly to the Prime Minister's office for exceptions. Specifically at issue was Order-in- Council P.C. 2115 of September 1930, which included the Middle and Near East under Asiatic exclusions. Waivers were only allowed by special consideration.
[18] Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1977): 5.
[19] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 1, File 547-5-538, 1948-1962, Confidential Memorandum from R.A.S. MacNeil, Special Inspector to Commissioner of Department of Citizenship and Immigration, (Ottawa, March 8, 1951).
[20] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, Letter from Canadian Embassy in Athens to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, "Immigration of Greeks from Egypt to Canada," (Ottawa, January 23, 1952).

In the end, pressure from the British government won the day. Canada was forced to accept some Greeks, Cypriots and Maltese employed in the canal zone. The Ministry of External Affairs, however, saw no economic or social advantage in expanding the movement and refused to advertise it. The fact that these immigrants were "non-repatriable" outweighed any benefit they could offer. In their survey of Canadian immigration policy, Ninette Kelly and Michael Trebilcock concluded that the political process was an "implicit 'market' where the relevant actors … tend to be motivated by material self-interest. For their part, politicians will adopt a policy not because it is thought likely to promote the broader public interest or some objective social-welfare function but because it will maximize political support."[21] The Cold War (in)security state played no small part in official considerations. Until the 1970s, policies were administered in secret and based on an overwhelming fear of Communism and its influence.[22]

The true beginning of sustained emigration from Egypt to Canada, the United States, Australia, and Brazil came as a result of the Suez Crisis and the policy of Egyptianization under President Nasser. Inquiries and debates by constituents in the receiving countries and international organizations also had a significant role to play. Adequate medical and security (Stage B) screenings had to be formulated, and were applied first in Turkey in 1952 and adopted for Egypt in February 1953.[23] With escalating tensions in Israel/Palestine and the emigration of Jews and Arab Christians from the Levant and Turkey, there was greater demand for clarity regarding procedures in Egypt. In a Cold War climate, the Middle East proved to be a strategic region. Canada established an independent embassy in Cairo in January 1954 (the United States

[21] Ninette Kelley and M. J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, (University of Toronto Press, 1998): 9.
[22] Reg Whitaker, *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, (Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987): 8. Successive Acts since the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act and Canada's Immigration Act in 1952 maintained a focus on administrative discretion which alleviated public or parliamentary scrutiny.
[23] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 1, File 547-5-538, 1948-1962, Confidential Memorandum from G.R. Benoit, Director of External Affairs to RCMP Officer in Charge of Special Branch, (Ottawa, February 8, 1955).

having a legation there from 1922). As L.A. Delvoie argued, the embassy was an observation post "from which Canadian diplomats could report back to Ottawa on regional developments of interest to Canada in either a United Nations or a Cold War context."[24]

Initially, Canada continued to rely on British facilities and staff to screen the meager traffic of immigrant applications. Slowly, the presence of local Canadian officers led to a phasing out of British screenings and new policies that immigrants from "Arabia" were only to be processed where Canadian immigration officers were available to conduct processing themselves.[25] After the Suez Crisis, the British embassy was closed and retaliation against British and French nationals, and those of Jewish faith escalated. Many officials on the ground, and Jewish lobbyists in North America, began to draw comparisons to the Hungarian Crisis and demanded Canada and the United States adopt a humanitarian stance toward 'refugees' in Egypt. Still predominantly based on an ad-hoc screening process, Canadian policy had to adapt to increasing pressure from its political allies aimed at preserving NATO, at the same time as fear of British imperial aggression was alienating the United States. British, French and Belgian nationals and employees of foreign industry had to be cleared to leave. Canada adopted a stance which could only be viewed as congenial by the Egyptian government: decrying the invasion of Egypt, the government also sought to keep channels of communication open to serve as an intermediary between Paris, London and Washington.[26]

Political consideration notwithstanding, Foreign Affairs and the RCMP in Ottawa placed security considerations first. With Canadians no longer able to rely on British security screenings, emigration again was to be strictly on a case-by-case basis, and only for family

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[24] L. A. Delvoie, "Canada and Egypt: From Antagonism to Partnership," *International Journal* 52.4 (1997): 658.
[25] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 1, File 547-5-538, 1948-1962, Letter from Secretary of State for External Affairs to unnamed (confidential), (Ottawa, December 16, 1953): 1-2.
[26] Delvoie, "Canada and Egypt," 662.

reunification where stage B was waived if the sponsor had been resident in Canada for two or more years. Operational Memorandum 7-4 was issued and specified that prospective immigrants could only be a close relative or fiancé(e) who left Egypt since February 11, 1956 and resided in a country other than Israel. The memorandum was not revoked until March 1959. Until then Canada had to balance its meager immigration program with more urgent concerns after the Suez Crisis, because it maintained a UNEF contingent of between 800 and 1,100 troops on Egyptian-controlled territory. Henceforth, Canadian immigration policy with regards to Egypt was guided by pragmatic concern for maintaining good relations with the Egyptian government, assuaging the humanitarian concerns of local and transnational lobby groups, and most importantly recruiting suitable immigrants with available funds and professional skills. Even while the memorandum was still in effect, exceptions were made for foreign nationals of French or British extraction and Jews sponsored by families and agencies in Canada, such as the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society in Montreal.[27]

Egyptian government-imposed restrictions on the emigration of professionals, or the transfer of funds out of the country, exponentially complicated exit permits and frustrated Canadian officials and Egyptian émigrés in Cairo alike. In addition, the 1952 Immigration Act decreased the efficiency of immigration procedures because the unlimited discretionary powers granted to the minister meant that a personal decision was required on many individual cases. Policy makers and officials in Ottawa imposed screenings to weed out those deemed unsuitable by race, religion, or class background. All applications were further checked against local

[27] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Confidential letter from Chief of Operations Division to Director of Citizenship and Immigration, "Security Screening - Former Residents of Egypt," (Ottawa, December 22, 1958); Operations Memorandum to all Immigration Officers by Acting Director of Operations Division (Confidential) no. 7-4, (July 30, 1957): 1-2.

Egyptian Ministry of the Interior, United States CIA, British MI6, and Canadian RCMP files on individuals suspected of communist affiliations. This created a backlog of applications.

Prospective immigrants from Egypt were judged by cultural categories that reflect the legacy of colonial encounters and the intersection of race, religion, class, and nationality in determining belonging. Greeks and Italians were preferred, followed by Jews and Armenians (under pressure from an Egyptian regime seeking to be rid of Jews and the new USSR immigration mission targeting Armenians), Syro-Lebanese Christians, and Catholic or Protestant Copts. The least likely to emigrate according to the Canadian ambassador in Cairo were Orthodox Copts and Muslims, the latter the least preferred and the most discouraged from emigration to Canada until the late-1960s. Nevertheless, economic self-interest during a postwar boom ensured that Egyptians became the fastest growing Arabic group in North America.

TAKING JEWS BUT ATTRACTING FOREIGN CHRISTIAN MINORITIES FROM EGYPT

The United States government continued to rely on a strict quota system and familial or professional relations to process applicants from Egypt until the Hart-Celler Act. However, the Canadian government began to accept more immigrants than ever before after 1956. Canadian interest developed in a context of easing restrictions in the region, coloured by a dwindling supply of “suitable” immigrants from Europe. Continued nationalization under Nasser was raising anxiety and unease among local foreign-minority populations. Egypt was now an exporter of qualified migrants that Canada sought to capitalize on for economic gain. To ensure such a movement served the interests of Canadian foreign relations as a middling power political concerns were foremost geared toward balancing pressure from humanitarian agencies and appeasing Nasser. Only the most suitable immigrants were processed with haste.

Fears of political and religious persecution were mounting during Nasserite Egyptianization, a term used in both Egyptian political discourse and foreign government documents to define Nasser's nationalization of businesses and industry. Foreign nationals in Egypt and international government organizations applauded Canadian efforts to support the movement of refugees after the Hungarian Crisis and urged Canada to do likewise in Egypt. Despite appeals by Italian technicians and their families in Alexandria, Canada refused because it did not want to set a precedent that would open the gates to immigration from the Middle East.[28] When she took office, the new Minister of Immigration Ellen Fairclough was told that "strong pressure was exerted by the Jewish community in Canada on behalf of Egyptian nationals of Jewish origin."[29] Mr. Saul Hayes of the Canadian Jewish Congress was in talks with Canadian External Affairs and the Immigration Branch, the United Nations and the World Council of Churches regarding the expulsion of Jews from Egypt after the Suez Crisis. He was attempting to pressure Canadian officials to adopt a more supportive policy, once again referencing the Hungarian example. Yet the Canadian embassy in Cairo reported that Nasser's government seized their money and property in retaliation for Suez and not for ethnic or religious motives.

The situation quickly changed with reports that by December 1956 Jews were being forced to leave and to sign away residency permits. Egyptian officials were purportedly visiting their homes and threatening them.[30] Under pressure from the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society in Montreal, the Canadian government began accepting Jews as of January 1957. By February applications for emigration were being sent to posts in Europe due to

[28] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, Confidential letter, Ambassador in Cairo to C.E.S. Smith, Director of Immigration Branch, (Ottawa, May 26, 1956).
[29] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, Report from Immigration Administration Division for New Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Ellen Fairclough, "immigration from Egypt," (Ottawa, July, 1957): 1-2.
[30] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, Dispatch from Cairo to External Affairs, "Position of Jews in Egypt," (Ottawa, December 9, 1956): 1-3.

lack of facilities in Egypt and prospective émigrés were told to make their own way there. To justify this special movement to Cabinet, Fairclough argued that by taking in Jews Canada could alleviate the forced removal of Palestinians that was exacerbating the Arab-Israeli conflict. Ultimately, those accepted were professionals with skills and occupations needed in Canada, who could transfer funds immediately.[31] By March, 75 per cent of sponsored applications were coming from the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society. The Canadian Armenian Congress was also acting on behalf of sponsored applications from Egypt, though with much less success. They could neither get waivers for Stage B screenings nor assisted passage.

Relaxing restrictions for Jewish immigrants by Canada did not go unnoticed. Italian, Greek and Israeli consular officials wrote the embassy in Cairo on behalf of foreign minorities in Egypt and pushed Canada and the United States to accept refugees at United Nations and World Council of Churches meetings in Geneva and New York. Their own countries claimed that no more immigrants could be accepted due to over-population and the economic burden they posed. The Red Cross and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) then intervened with North American governments and pledged over $300,000 to support such a movement. International governments offered their office staff to help with the processing. The United States maintained its strict controls. Canada, continually bombarded by petitions from local ethnic groups, employed delay tactics and insisted that Egypt had a good record in treating minorities. No major action could be contemplated until Hungarian cases were dealt with.[32]

The end to this impasse came as a result of the ongoing emigration of Greeks from Egypt to Australia, which created competition for Canada that engendered genuine interest. Like both Canada and the United States, Australia was guided by self-interest and enacted discriminatory

[31] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, letter from Under-Secretary MacCullum to Deputy Minister of Immigration, (Ottawa, Feb 7, 1957): 1-3.
[32] LAC, "Jewish Residents in Egypt, Office of Prime Minister," MG26L, Volume 174, File D-12-13, 1956.

policies that prioritized professionals of European background.[33] After the British left Cairo following the Suez Crisis, Australia acted quickly to establish teams on the ground to take advantage of foreign minorities emigrating. The Australians were conducting home, work and neighbourhood visits. Canadian officials in Cairo grew anxious and complained of lack of funds or staff: the Australians were getting the best qualified. A prevalent threat reported to Ottawa was that Australians were 'going door-to-door' and actively recruiting suitable immigrants.

The Canadians needed to respond to Australian competition. They established temporary facilities for visiting processing teams. They prioritized getting the most qualified applicants without compromising national security, health concerns, or incurring undue expense for maintaining and staffing embassies abroad. The embassy in Cairo felt that Canada could benefit from the foreign minorities leaving Egypt. Still, Ottawa debated about whether to follow the Australian example and rely on Egyptian civil and religious organizations for references. The RCMP firmly rejected the proposal. Exceptions continued to be allowed however, notably in the case of affluent Jewish residents with relatives in Canada.[34] Prior to establishing Stage B procedures in Egypt in late-1959, Canadian officials sent prospective immigrants to Europe and often waived the two year residency requirement.[35]

The need to set up Stage B facilities mounted, particularly as more 'capital cases' of affluent foreign nationals began to be processed.[36] Nevertheless, there was a fear of upsetting Nasser and the Egyptian government by interfering in emigration matters thought too sensitive

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[33] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, Letter from T.H.E. Heyes, Secretary to G.K.A. Christodulo, Minister of Greece, "Emigration of Greeks in Egypt to Australia," (Ottawa, May 7, 1957): 2-3. Migrants were predominantly accepted as a family unit, except in the case of single women. Australia sought single women of marrying age, "European descent" and "good physical types."
[34] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 1, File 547-5-538, 1948-1962, Extract from Letter, R.M. MacDonnell, Canadian Ambassador to Cairo to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, "Emigration to Canada from Egypt," August 5, 1957).
[35] Based on aforementioned Operations Memorandum no. 7-4, July 30, 1957.
[36] LAC, "Immigration from Egypt," Deputy Minister's Office, RG26, Volume 131, File 3-33-38 Part 2.

for his nation-building policies. The final push to establish facilities, and the first glimpse that an immigration mission in Egypt would be successful came ironically from the Egyptians. In 1957, over 15 Israeli refugees arrived in Egypt and were accepted for propaganda purposes. Wishing to be rid of them, the authorities approached the United States, Australia and Canada. The United States refused, but Canada agreed to take six in exchange for easing restrictions on the proposed movement of foreign nationals from Egypt. The Israeli refugees became a ready bargaining chip to facilitate exit permits quickly and continue emigration operations unhindered.[37]

Still, the long-term viability of investing in offices and staff had to be proven. Therefore, in April 1957, the Canadian embassy in Cairo wrote to Ottawa of the wealth of available émigrés. Of the 50,000 Jewish residents, at least 50 per cent were 'stateless' and continued to pose a problem for their return. However, the rest were of Egyptian, Italian and other nationalities. Already 17,000 had left Egypt for Europe, and an estimated 12,500 were seeking to emigrate. Another significant population of prospective émigrés were Italians (excluding Jews) who were estimated at 50,000-60,000 and perhaps 5,000-7,000 of whom might come to North America. Finally, Greeks who numbered approximately 65,000 (excluding Jews) included as many as 10,000-15,000 who could emigrate to North America in the next 5 years.[38] The embassy in Cairo accordingly appealed to Ottawa to open an immigration program.

Embassy officials argued that this movement was for the sake of foreign communities in Egypt, who were closest to Canadians in background and upbringing. Much ink was spilled by senior Canadian officials in Cairo convincing Ottawa of a lack of interest among Orthodox Copts and Muslims. R.J. McGrath, director of a team visit conducted in January 1958, reported on their

[37] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Deputy Minister's Office, 1947-1967.
[38] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, Telegram by Heeney, Canadian Embassy in Cairo, to External Affairs, "Migration From Egypt," (Ottawa, April 9, 1957): 1-5.

tremendous success and applauded the high caliber of émigrés, adding "one must rid himself of the idea that the country is made up of camel drivers and beggars. Certainly Egypt has its share of both, but this is natural when you consider the percentage of the Egyptian Moslems living in Egypt … However, when we speak of emigration from Egypt in this case, we are thinking of the European element whose ancestors and the present generation have been primarily responsible for the development of the country."[39] McGrath cited both the Greek and Italian ambassadors who "frankly admitted" that the caliber in Egypt was far better than compatriots at home.[40]

Yet External Affairs and the RCMP were unwilling under any circumstances to bypass Stage B security clearances in Egypt. In a secret report, RCMP Deputy Commissioner C.E. Rivett-Carnac insisted that the highest priority had to be security screenings for communist affiliations. Of particular concern were Jewish and Armenian groups in Egypt, who had a long history of socialist cells. Emphasizing the role of Jews in founding Egyptian socialism, he concluded with a report by the Office of Research and Analysis of the US Department of State in January 1958 which outlined that only 4,000-5,000 members composed the Egyptian Communist Party and it was now dominated by urban middle and lower-middle class workers. He maintained that Communism contradicts Islam and therefore is rejected by the majority of Egyptians, an orientalist assessment popular in both political and academic reports.[41]

Ambassador R.M. MacDonnell insisted that foreign Christians in Egypt wanted to leave for fear of becoming like the Copts who "are represented by one cabinet minister only and by a correspondingly small number of deputies, senior army officers and government employees. This

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[39] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, "Report by Special Team on Emigration from Egypt," by Director R.J. McGrath, (Ottawa, January 7, 1958): 4.
[40] "Report by Special Team on Emigration from Egypt," by Director R.J. McGrath, 5.
[41] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Secret Report from RCMP Deputy Commissioner C.E. Rivett-Carnac to Deputy Minister of Immigration Colonel L. Fortier, "Security Screening of Non-Egyptian Immigrants from Egypt," (Ottawa, August 22, 1958) 1-14. As of 1957, both the United Egyptian Communist Party (PCEU) and the Egyptian Workers and Peasants Communist Party (POPCE) aligned and marginalized "foreign" elements.

situation does not encourage foreigners, who are for the greater part Christians, to acquire Egyptian nationality. They suspect that Muslims would never consider them as Egyptians but only as 'Egyptianized' second class citizens."[42] According to the embassy, Italians and Greeks were the ones to give least concern because they formed close-knit groups that rarely interacted with the native population. Their emigration to Canada was thought to be motivated by purely economic reasons. Yet care should be taken with Jews and Armenians, who may be "breeding-grounds for communism" because of past persecution that engenders appeal for the "so-called classless and international society."[43] Communism was banned in Nasser's Egypt. Canadians were concerned about Egypt using emigration to rid the nation of undesirables.

The most vocal supporter of establishing and maintaining an immigration program in Egypt was ambassador Arnold Smith. In confidential dispatches to Ottawa he repeatedly stressed the humanitarian importance of such a service to "fellow Christians of Western orientation and culture and (in most cases) Western origin," and insisted that it would be "in Canada's economic and social interest." These immigrants were knowledgeable in one or both of Canada's languages, "cosmopolitan" in outlook, and "many would have significant capital which they would hope to transfer to Canada."[44] Smith insisted that checking against files with British, American, and UAR governments should suffice to mitigate any risk of creating a flood of immigrants from the less desirable Egyptians and that "Egyptian Muslims in any case do not as a rule consider emigration" because the revolution was to their benefit. However, "we might wish

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[42] LAC, "Immigration From Egypt," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, volume 821, File 552-1-540, 1952-1958, Restricted letter from R.M. MacDonnell, Embassy in Cairo to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, "Foreign Minorities in Egypt," (Ottawa, January 3, 1958): 2.
[43] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Secret Report from RCMP Deputy Commissioner C.E. Rivett-Carnac to Deputy Minister of Immigration Colonel L. Fortier, "Security Screening of Non-Egyptian Immigrants from Egypt," (Ottawa, August 22, 1958) 7.
[44] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Confidential Dispatch from Arnold Smith, Ambassador in Cairo, to Secretary of State External Affairs, "Proposal for Immigration Facilities for Christian Minorities from UAR to Canada," (Ottawa, December 10, 1959): 1.

to consider accepting a small proportion of Egyptian-stock immigrants, but those who applied would likely be Catholic Copts who have already been Westernized in cultural orientation." Smith insisted that the Egyptian government would not interfere, but instead "probably be discreetly happy … since their overall policy is in the direction of assimilation and since these minorities are relatively indigestible."[45] Christians were not judged equally. Orthodox Copts were "gradually assimilated by the Muslims and very few of them would be likely to apply for immigration to Canada," Smith argued. Foreign minorities and westernized Copts were privileged, holding occupations alongside British and French managers and enjoying a lifestyle quite apart from native populations. Their linguistic, religious, or educational backgrounds made these Christian groups on the whole more "adaptable, hard-working, and enterprising."[46]

As the debate between Canadian officials in Cairo and Ottawa continued, many émigrés were unwilling to wait for new procedures to be adopted. They caused much consternation for Canadian posts in Europe by leaving Egypt secretly to escape restrictions in Cairo and applying from offices in Athens, Rome and Vienna. The ensuing outflow of European and Europeanized emigrants reinforced Smith's demand for a more elaborate and sustained immigration program in Egypt. Following his advice Ottawa decided to rely on British, United States and local Egyptian files for security screening. The RCMP insisted, however, that immigrants be checked rigorously, hardly succumbing to pressure from the Ministry of Immigration even regarding the tremendous delays posed by Egyptian processing of exit permits. To sidestep delays by Egyptian authorities, the Canadian embassy, in some cases, extended medical approvals for six months and allowed immigrants to travel to Europe for processing (despite opposition from the RCMP).

[45] Smith, "Proposal for Immigration Facilities for Christian Minorities from UAR to Canada," 2-3.
[46] Smith, "Proposal for Immigration Facilities for Christian Minorities from UAR to Canada," 5-7.

The union of Syria and Egypt under the United Arab Republic in 1958 delayed the immigration program in Cairo because Ottawa had no wish to encourage emigration from the Syrian territory.[47] Following the withdrawal of Syria from the UAR in 1961, movement resumed by Stage B screening of immigrants whose last place of residence was Egypt.[48] By the summer of 1961 officials in Cairo began "the 300 movement," the screening and processing of special cases exempt from national quotas as a testing ground for expanding Canada's immigration program in Egypt. Authorized by special Order-in-Council P.C. 1961-1000, minorities fleeing nationalist marginalization were dealt with under Section 20 (B), intended for Europe to allow the movement of desirable persons, with capital, skills, or for humanitarian grounds.[49]

This movement was more vital than ever for Canada. In a secret memorandum Deputy Minister of Immigration Davidson stressed that to keep the total immigrant flow at 100,000, "we will need this small number of Egyptians and any other small additions we can muster." The quality and quantity of European immigrants was on the decline, possibly "doing long-term damage to our reputation as an immigration country."[50] Self-interest and the fear that Canada's image as a preferred country for immigrants would suffer led first to the cautious acceptance of professional emigrants. The "300 movement" succeeded. The Cairo office was staffed fall 1962.

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[47] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 1, File 547-5-538, 1948-1962, Confidential Operations Memorandum from Acting Chief of Admissions Division to Staff, Admissions Division, "Immigration from United Arab Republic - Egypt," (Ottawa, March 24, 1961). Egypt was now governed by Section 20 (D), limiting emigration to husbands, wives, unmarried children, mothers, and fathers (P.C. 1957-1875). Emigration came to a near standstill for Canada. The United States however maintained established quotas and their figures appeared to increase because they were tabulated jointly for both Egypt and Syria (see figure 1).

[48] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Secret Memorandum from Deputy Minister George Davidson, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, to Director of Immigration, "Egypt Regulation 20 (c)," (Ottawa, October 1961).

[49] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 1, File 547-5-538, 1948-1962, Confidential Operations Memorandum to all Immigration Officers no. 61-14 (revised), "Admission of Immigrants from the United Arab Republic," (July 24, 1961): 1-2. After Syria left the UAR, Egypt returned to Regulation 20(C) which allowed unsponsored applications.

[50] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Secret Memorandum from Deputy Minister Davidson to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Ellen Fairclough, "Re-establishment of Immigration from the United Arab Republic," (Ottawa, January 30, 1961): 2.

The “300 movement” additionally served to gauge Egyptian authorities’ reaction to a Canadian immigration program and local interest on the part of residents. Genuine interest did exist. In that regard, Ambassador Arnold Smith reported in a secret dispatch that “anxiety and declining morale” among “various minorities” and “Moslem Egyptians of Western education” prevailed.[51] Foreign groups in Egypt (not all Egyptian citizens per se) were anxious about marginalization in employment and the introduction of labour permits and quotas on foreign employees. As a result, “a sense of pessimism about the future” abounds and “most foreign residents emplyed [sic] in Cairo feel that their days here are numbered.” As well, the position of “the native Egyptian Coptic minority” has likewise deteriorated due to the loss of “white-collar” occupations. Indeed, “for some time now an unofficial 10 percent rule has applied to the civil service and large corporations designed to limit this minority to a proportion of jobs in various units equivalent to their relative position in the population as a whole.”[52]

Yet Orthodox Copts would not be quick to apply, Smith assured Ottawa. Instead nationalization by Nasser was more immediately targeting Jews and foreign Christian capitalists suffering from “nepotism and political patronage.” Military spending and Nasser’s ambitions in Africa and support of the Syrian economy continued to weaken Egypt’s pound. During this transition period, often “favoured Moslems” were displacing foreign businessmen and “operate[d] for the time being in partnership with Coptic businessmen who provide the commercial experience to make tidy profits.”[53] At the same time as opportunities for education and employment declined for foreign minorities, they were on the rise for the native Egyptian

[51] LAC, “Security Screenings UAR,” R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Secret Dispatch from Arnold Smith, Canadian Ambassador in Cairo, to Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Deputy Minister’s Office, “Domestic Morale,” (Ottawa, January 11, 1961): 1.
[52] Smith, “Domestic Morale,” 3.
[53] Smith, “Domestic Morale,” 5-6.

working-class, ensuring that the affluent foreign minorities would emigrate.[54] Workers were the base of support for Nasser and his regime. Nasser's ties to the USSR were fickle and guided by his own self-interest as leader in the region. Egypt posed no immediate communist threat to Canada and strict regulations would ensure that this continued to be the case.

A visiting team was formed to judge the feasibility of expanding the program and Ellen Fairclough went to the Cabinet seeking funding. The initial visiting team sent to Egypt was comprised of an immigration officer, a visa control officer and a medical doctor to examine select families and special cases of close relatives "on compassionate grounds."[55] By the spring, space was cleared in the embassy basement to handle applications that largely identified Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto, and Winnipeg as preferred destinations. Applicants remained predominantly Greeks, Italians and Armenians, with most Armenians holding UAR citizenship. Some were Lebanese and stateless Jews, and less than one per cent of the cases under consideration were native Egyptians. That small proportion of native Egyptians served as a tactical balancing act to ensure that the immigration program not alienate the native population desirous of leaving nor upset Nasser by processing Egyptians with valued skills and resources. Closely followed by Jewish and Armenian organizations in Canada, transnational charities and international consulates, this "special" movement led to the screening of an additional 700 individuals and 300 families. The six Israeli refugees were finally cleared for processing in Rome. New applications arrived daily. The movement eliminated quota restrictions in Egypt.[56]

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[54] Smith, "Domestic Morale," 10. Unlike Nasser who was motivated by anti-imperialist sentiments, Kamel Eddin Hussein (overseeing employment and unionism) was known to express socialist and nationalist sentiments that excluded Copts from Egyptian unity and instead conceived of the nation under one religion: Islam.
[55] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Confidential Memorandum from Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, to Cabinet, "Immigration from the United Arab Republic," (Ottawa, March 20, 1961): 1.
[56] LAC, "Immigration Medical Service," R227-152-7-E, RG29, Volume 3424 Part 1, File 854-3-25, 1953-1968, Confidential Letter from W.H. Frost, Chief Quarantine Immigration Medical and Sick Mariners Service, to Dr. J.E. Grant, Chief Medical Officer, London, England, "Examination of Students - Cairo," (September 15th, 1959).

Yet complications plagued the Canadian mission. Egyptian authorities were vague as to whether emigration was to be welcomed or not. Foreign minorities could leave, under special circumstances and only after meeting monetary regulations, though certain classes and occupations were discouraged from emigrating. On the Canadian side, stateless persons from Egypt posed a risk for Canada. They were often issued a laissez-passer by Egyptian authorities stamped with "not valid for return to Egypt" and thus their returnability was in question. Clarifying procedures occupied Canadian officials for years to come. However, for now, Canada had a defined immigration program. The economic self-interest of North American governments, humanitarian concerns and changing circumstances in post-colonial Egypt combined to ease the movement of minorities who could no longer continue to live comfortably and stably in Egypt.

AN EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES: EMIGRATION PATTERNS AFTER 1961

By the fall of 1961 both the quality of immigrants and the quantity of applications surprised and delighted local Canadian officials. Reports to Ottawa praised the European element and demanded more funding, staff and lenient procedures. A semi-permanent team was sent, procedures for security checks were reworked and, by the following summer, the office began processing applications with the help of local and visiting staff. The embassy now had an immigration attaché and local secretaries. Mr. C. Coutu, the new immigration attaché, complained of the lack of support while boasting that he had to turn away immigrants who would otherwise be acceptable in European countries, where facilities were more robust. The US, however, continued to be guided by a restrictive quota system. The Australians became less of a concern. Applicants were complaining that the country was too far. Canada was faced with an embarrassment of riches.

The embassy in Egypt was not the only one demanding more resources and refined procedures for formerly non-preferred countries. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Ellen Fairclough introduced new immigration regulations by February 1962 that eliminated overt racial discrimination from Canadian immigration policy through Order-in-Council P.C. 1962-86. Increased awareness and sensitivity to matters of racial discrimination was reflected in the introduction of the Bill of Rights in 1960, which rejected discrimination on the basis of race, colour, national origin, religion, or sex. The selection of immigrants based on such categories became difficult to justify. Ministry officials also hoped to encourage the immigration of workers with technical and professional skills.[57] Despite concerns about the growth of the sponsorship movement, the classes of sponsored immigrants were also expanded and all Canadian citizens or permanent residents, regardless of their country of origin, could sponsor a relative. However, the regulations did maintain an aspect of racial discrimination: only Canadians from preferred nations in Europe, the Americas and select countries in the Middle East (including Egypt) were permitted to sponsor relatives due to fears of an influx of unskilled immigrants from Asia.

With so much going right for the immigration program in Egypt, Coutu and his staff turned to fixing what was going wrong. Namely, the continued reliance on security checks with UAR authorities which, they complained, delayed processing inordinately and put would-be émigrés at risk of harassment. In May 1962, Coutu reported that lists for security checks should be sent to UAR authorities only for accepted cases. Contradicting RCMP-sanctioned procedures, he assured Ottawa that neither Australia or the United States took such a step.[58] He insisted that simply having a UAR passport should assuage RCMP concerns regarding criminal records

[57] Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1997*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1997): 152; Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 332.
[58] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 1, File 547-5-538, 1948-1962, Report from C. Coutu, Immigration attaché in Cairo to Chief, Operations Division "Immigration from U.A.R.," (Ottawa May 21, 1962): 1.

because UAR authorities had repeatedly confirmed in meetings between embassy officials and Egyptian ministers of Naturalization, the Interior and Labour, that "the U.A.R. was anxious to ensure that any of its citizens who moved abroad did not act in such a way as to discredit their country, and therefore assured itself that the criminal and security records of potential immigrants are satisfactory." For foreign residents, checking with the UAR was altogether useless, because he believed UAR authorities wished to be rid of them.[59]

Coutu proposed that by sending lists for exit permits as a last step, émigrés could thereby avoid any possible harassment or delays.[60] His updated procedures were in the interests of expediency for the now 300 cases processed per week, of which 90 per cent of applicants did not hold Egyptian passports.[61] More importantly, listed émigrés were often issued a laissez-passer and so compromised the ability of the Canadian government to return them to Egypt should they prove unfit. To assure Ottawa of the need for such changes, he added that the Egyptian government often used the lists to control émigrés by screening the names against Ministry of Labour files to collect back-taxes. This in turn had created innumerable delays for the embassy which is perceived by the Egyptian public as the responsibility of the embassy and the "effects of this on our local reputation are highly unfavourable."[62] By making this step superfluous, pressure was taken off the embassy and placed on immigrants and the UAR authorities. In his assessment, the only true benefit of continuing to send lists to UAR authorities was their sensitivity to insult, a reversal of current procedures might be interpreted as a lack of cooperation.

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[59] Coutu, "Immigration from U.A.R.," 1. Procedures in Egypt were: a paper screening followed by personal interviews, Stage B screenings, checks against US, British and Egyptian files, medical examinations. If accepted by Ottawa, the embassy issued a booking letter for the immigrant to make arrangements before issuing a visa.
[60] Coutu, "Immigration from U.A.R.," 2.
[61] LAC, "Immigration Medical Service," R227-152-7-E, RG29, Volume 3424 Part 1, File 854-3-25, 1953-1968, Confidential Report from Dr. F.F. Ramey, Rome, to Canadian Department of National Health and Welfare Director, London, "Team Examination Egypt," (February 13, 1962): 1-2.
[62] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 2, File 547-5-538, 1962-1966, Confidential Dispatch from Riddell, Cairo, to External Affairs, "Immig from UAR: Stage B Procedures," (Ottawa, July 9, 1962): 1-2.

The Ministry of Immigration agreed with Coutu's assessment. By June 1962, the Deputy Minister was reporting that the Israeli refugees still being processed in Rome continued to serve as a useful bargaining chip, for the moment, to expedite the processing of 430 cases considered acceptable (of 5,200 applicants). An additional 1,500 applications were then received in the spring; impressive in their "motivation, education, fluency in English and French, appearance and personal suitability." Applications were arriving from predominantly Italian, Greek, Armenian, Syrian, and Lebanese white-collar workers—bank officials, bank clerks, accountants, bookkeepers, office clerks, import-export specialists, shipping and forwarding agents, insurance and sales representatives, shop owners and administrators. Additionally, the immigration officers were not concerned that immigrants from Egypt would require financial support upon arrival. Residents in Egypt were allowed to transfer £500 pounds (or $1,250) which might take up to two years to process and in the meantime they could carry $50 per adult or $25 per child. Greeks and Italians, who then comprised the majority of applicants, were permitted £5,000 if they returned to their home country, and many eventually applied when they did go back.[63]

By July, Coutu was reporting that interest continued to grow in Egypt. Yet delays due to stringent controls caused by RCMP procedures led resourceful Egyptians to instead apply from other posts in the Middle East and Europe. Coutu reported that "strangely enough it is not difficult to get an exit permit to visit Beirut or Cyprus for holidays and I suspect that I may be transferring more files to Beirut as time goes by."[64] Native Egyptian doctors, engineers and highly qualified technicians were the least likely to be allowed to emigrate from the UAR and

[63] LAC, "Security Screenings UAR," R223-80-9E, RG26-A-1-C, Volume 168 Part 1, File 3-25-11-42, 1947-1967, Memorandum from Deputy Minister to Director of Immigration, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, "Movement of Immigrants from the United Arab Republic," (Ottawa, June 14, 1962): 2.
[64] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 2, File 547-5-538, 1962-1966, Confidential report from Mr. Coutu, Immigration attaché in Cairo, to Chief of Operations Division, "Emigration from UAR," (Ottawa, July 20, 1962): 1-2.

such cases might negatively affect relations with the UAR by bypassing their exit requirements. However, exceptions should continue to be allowed because these were "desirable" people with funds to transfer. When the attaché was aware of "acceptable immigrants leaving by subterfuge," he processed their files and informed immigration offices abroad. He insisted Ottawa acknowledge and support such movements because new applications were "of the same high calibre [sic] of immigrants as those we received for the 300 families scheme."[65]

The embassy in Cairo and the ministry finally stopped sending lists to UAR authorities in August 1962. The Egyptians did not seem to care. In fact, once the change was made, the UAR minister of the Interior informed the Canadian embassy that his government would rather not receive lists at all. Instead, they "would like us to send separate form-let to them for each immigrant, stating that immigrant visa had been issued [sic]." Egyptian authorities sought to assist Canadian operations, though only as long as national interests were not involved.[66] Unlike the embassy, the attaché and the ministry, the RCMP was not happy with such changes.

Tensions between RCMP commissioner C.W. Harvison and Deputy Minister of Immigration George Davidson mounted throughout the fall of 1962. In a tug of war over adopting more lenient procedures in Cairo, Harvison insisted that strict security screenings with the UAR had to be enforced because of the incompleteness of British and American checks and the undesirability of native Egyptians. He added "we would indeed be naïve in approving any applicant favoured with an exit permit on the assumption that these are issued to persons with no criminal and political records … because of 'traditional Egyptian devious approach to such

[65] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 2, File 547-5-538, 1962-1966, Confidential memorandum from Mr. Coutu, attaché in Cairo, to Visa Office in Vienna, "Stage B - Residence Rule in Lebanon," (March 22, 1963): 1-2.
[66] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 2, File 547-5-538, 1962-1966, Dispatch to External Affairs from Canadian Embassy in Cairo, "Immig Stage B," (Ottawa, August 7, 1962): 1-2.

matters.'"[67] The contradiction here is evident. Though he pushed for sending lists to UAR authorities, he concluded that the Egyptian assessment was not trustworthy. His solution: current procedures evolving in Egypt were "unsatisfactory" from a "security standpoint," and more stringent controls had to be adopted to force the UAR to enact appropriate security checks. Davidson responded in no uncertain terms that "the quality and type of immigrant has been far beyond our original expectations" and Canada cannot afford to lose the opportunity to Australia (once again a ready excuse).[68] By November 1963 Stage B was slowly being extended to other Middle East countries for which Cairo became the local processing office. The Ministry of Immigration moved forward with decentralizing operations.

Western officials continued to be either utterly indifferent to the Coptic Orthodox minority or to outright dismiss them as an unmigratory people. Many Copts instead were waiting until the option became less risky. Prospects for emigration appeared safer after Canada stopped sending lists to the UAR authorities and positive reports were received from successful émigrés. As the Canadian mission developed a reputation for ensuring the safety and security of applicants against UAR spies, more Copts began to apply. Not preferred émigrés by any means, they were still thought better than Muslims because of their religion and their financial and professional qualifications. G.G. Riddell, chargé d'affaires in Cairo, asserted that "in the space of a few months immigration has become one of the principle activities of this Embassy and one of the most important aspects of bilateral Canadian-UAR relations."[69] Local interest, already high,

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[67] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 2, File 547-5-538, 1962-1966, Confidential letter from Harvison, RCMP commissioner, to Davidson, Deputy Minister of Immigration, "Egypt Stage B," (Ottawa, October 2, 1962): 1.
[68] LAC, "Security Examinations," R1206-130-4-E, RG76-I-B, Volume 801 Part 2, File 547-5-538, 1962-1966, Confidential letter from Deputy Minister Davidson to Commissioner Harvison, "Egypt Stage B," (Ottawa, November 19, 1962): 1.
[69] LAC, "Immigration Medical Service," R227-152-7-E, RG29, Volume 3424 Part 1, File 854-3-25, 1953-1968, Confidential letter from G.G. Riddell, Charge d'Affaires in Cairo, to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, "Immigration from UAR," (Ottawa, September 4, 1962): 1.

was increasing and the type of applicant had begun to change. There was a noticeable "reduction in the size of the foreign communities" and, due to "continuing over-population here, the possibility of growing interest in immigration in the future among educated Copts and to a lesser extent Muslims." This change was no longer thought distressing, as it had been only a few years earlier, but now meant that Canada can expect to maintain an "office here indefinitely."[70]

The attaché boasted of rejecting nearly 5,000 applicants, "many people who would be readily acceptable if they applied in countries such as Britain and France." The flow of "capital cases" remained high but was expected to decline, with Jewish, Armenian, Syro-Lebanese, and Italian or Greek émigrés having reached their highest numbers during Canada's emigration scheme between 1957-1961. The attaché was now accepting "an occupational cross-section of applicants, both in light of employment conditions in Canada and in order that the UAR authorities may not become suspicious that we are interested only in the highly qualified technical people whom they so desperately need for their own development programs." Though Copts formed the majority of native Egyptian applications, office staff gave special consideration to Muslim applicants "to indicate clearly to the authorities and to the public the non-discriminatory nature of our scheme … [which] has had favourable effect."[71]

At the same time, Egyptian authorities focused on curbing interest among native Egyptian professionals. Riddell highlighted the inconsistency of UAR policy in this regard: on the one hand, the UAR was anxious to have "real Egyptians" settled abroad in order to "help to increase the public understanding in Canada of the Arab point of view." On the other hand, they seemed to make it rather more difficult for these "real Egyptians" to leave, particularly if they

[70] Riddell, "Immigration from UAR," 1-2.
[71] Riddell, "Immigration from UAR," 3-4.

had technical qualifications.[72] The Canadian immigration program had fully captured the attention and interest of native Egyptians.[73] Catholic and Protestant Copts came to replace European and Jewish elements now on the decline as the principle applicants. In October 1964, Jean de Capistran Aimé Cayer, Apostolic Vicar of Alexandria and a Canadian citizen, petitioned the embassy to ease the movement of discriminated Orthodox Christians from Egypt. He warned that the "well … must soon run dry" and then Copts would necessarily become the principal applicants. The embassy was not convinced, reporting that though Copts "rarely move about from job to job, are law-abiding, [and] conservative," they are "not overly energetic people, and seem to lack initiative."[74] Canadian officials stressed that Canada needs "the more active and successful business, professional and financial groups" to counterbalance declining foreign minority applications. Orthodox Copts were thought too closely assimilated by the Muslim majority and "show[ed] a great deal of individual variation" based on their social status. These factors differentiated them from foreign Christians and Catholic or Protestant Copts.[75]

WELCOMING THE QUALIFIED MIDDLE EASTERNER: POLICY CHANGES AFTER 1965

By the mid-1960s the conversation had firmly turned to the Coptic minority. In October 1966, applications were on the rise with the falling exchange rate and lack of job prospects in Egypt. Despite official state rhetoric that emigration was an unpatriotic act of treason, two articles in state-controlled *Al Ahram* newspaper and a UAR television program outlined for would-be émigrés where and how to apply. All this gave Canadian officials the impression that the

[72] Riddell, "Immigration from UAR," 5.
[73] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Confidential Report from K.L. Burke to Minister of Immigration, "Immigration from the U.A.R.," (Ottawa, October 1964): 1. Since opening in the summer of 1961, 28,000 applications had been received from all categories of would-be émigrés, 6,000 individuals were interviewed, and 4,700 were accepted (of which 2,000 in 1964 alone).
[74] Burke, "Immigration from the U.A.R.," 2.
[75] Burke, "Immigration from the U.A.R.," 3-4.

government was growing more accepting. It seemed that the desire to be rid of excess population and to inject the economy with needed funds from émigré remittances had won out. Alongside growing acceptance of emigration was increased transparency with the Egyptian public on the part of the Canadian government regarding regulations and procedures.

Clergy in Egypt and Canada began to intervene on behalf of prospective émigrés. In October 1966, Georges Coriaty, the priest in charge of the Melkite parish of St-Sauveur in Montreal, met with both the deputy minister and the director of the immigration division to implore officials to support native Egyptian emigration. Born in Brazil to Lebanese parents from Egypt, Coriaty led a 1300 family parish and an immigrant reception centre. He shared with the senior bureaucrats that native Egyptians now in Canada were being harassed and "claim[ed] to have been approached recently by representatives of the Egyptian Embassy in Ottawa for the purpose of using them to spy on newly arrived Egyptians and find out the amount of money they [might] have brought to Canada in violation of the Egyptian law."[76] Feeling the effects of Nasser's "squandering" of UAR money to foster anti-colonial sentiment in Africa and Yemen, native Egyptians were seeking to escape with their savings. At the time father Coriaty was making this appeal, the Egyptian authorities surveilled and restricted the movement of doctors and engineers, the sort of Egyptians Nasser wanted to remain in the country and yet the most likely to emigrate. In Cairo, Henry Ayrout, rector of Jesuit College, asked for support of the emigration of Catholic Copts, especially those over 40 years-of-age who were the least likely to be accepted in light of Canadian age restrictions.[77] A.V. Gordon, the attaché in Cairo, insisted he welcomed the emigration of anyone who does not consider themselves an "Arab" and emigration

[76] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Report to file by Director of Foreign Branch, "Immigration from Egypt and Lebanon," (October 21, 1966).
[77] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Letter from Rev. Henry Ayrout, Rector of Jesuit College of Cairo to M. Benoit Godbout, Director of Foreign Branch of Immigration Division, "Christian Emigration from Egypt," (Ottawa, November 14, 1966): 1-2.

figures were expected to reach new heights in 1967. To that end, "in terms of preferable immigrants to Canada, unquestionably our best source is—and I think will remain in the future—the minority groups." Where Muslims were described as "indolent," Catholics and Protestants were more industrious and assimilable than their "prideful" Coptic Orthodox coreligionists.[78]

For the Egyptian government, monetary considerations became more pronounced in the lead-up to the June 1967 war with Israel. The Egyptian Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade demanded that Egyptian nationals abroad remit portions of their income to Egypt: 25% for bachelors and 10% for married persons.[79] Failure to send remittances was punishable by three months to five years in prison or fines of £100 Egyptian pounds if apprehended. Canadian officials were wary, and also expressed fears that many students were bringing socialist and anti-Semitic attitudes to Canada. In that regard, Christians were considered preferable to Muslims due to a demonstrated disinterest in the "Arab" cause. By January 1967, various government departments began to compile reports on Egyptians in Canada. These reports indicated that Egyptians immigrated predominantly to Quebec and Ontario. Where those of the "European element" were less likely to rely on government assistance on arrival, there was growing concern about native Egyptians, now 25 per cent of almost 7,000 Egyptians in Canada, arriving as independent immigrants and abusing government assistance programs. Then reports fell silent. In the tense atmosphere just prior to the Six Day War there was a considerable decline in the processing of applications. In June the embassy destroyed its records, including all immigration files, and operations were temporarily suspended.[80] Until well after the war, family reunification

[78] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Attaché in Cairo to Director of Foreign Branch, "Monthly Operational Report," (Ottawa, December 30, 1966): 1-2.
[79] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Confidential Dispatch from Canadian Embassy in Cairo to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, "UAR Foreign Currency Control," (Ottawa, January 20, 1967): 1-2.
[80] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Operations Memorandum no. 149, "Suspension of Immigration Operations - Cairo," (June 27, 1967).

of Canadian citizens was the only ongoing operation and was handled by offices in Athens and Rome. No other requests were accepted.

Since the Canadian embassy did not re-staff its immigration offices after the war, ethnic leaders on both sides of the Atlantic responded to rumours that the immigration program was to remain closed. Visiting Toronto in July 1967, Bishop Samuel of the Coptic Orthodox Church and local priest father Marcos expressed concerns about delays affecting sponsored applications. They personally submitted three files for dependents of immigrants in Canada (both Toronto and Montreal) to be passed on to the minister in Ottawa and the attaché in Cairo.[81] In response, Canadian government officials claimed that since the war the UAR had suspended issuance of passports, which in either case meant prospective émigrés could not leave, and to appease Egypt and Israel the regional headquarters had been moved to Beirut.

Assessing the viability of resuming operations in Cairo, Ambassador J.K. Starnes wrote Ottawa a lengthy report in which he emphasized that Canada's refusal to acquiesce to Nasser's demands to withdraw the UNEF contingent from Gaza in May destroyed their past congenial relationship. Indeed, in the lead up to the June war, as L.A. Delvoie noted, "the Egyptian ambassador attacked Canada as an American stooge."[82] Starnes felt that "the presence in Canada of one of the more significant Jewish communities abroad, and by the pro-Israeli attitude of the Canadian press, radio and public" continued to aggravate matters.[83] In response, government-controlled media in Egypt made daily references to Canada's "unfriendly," "pro-Israeli and Anti-Arab" attitude, and to the "near identity of views with USA." However, Canada's middling

[81] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Memorandum from J.A. Hunter to Chief of Operations Services Division, "Representations by Bishop Samuel of the Coptic Orthodox Church," (Ottawa, July 21, 1967): 2.
[82] Delvoie, "Canada and Egypt," 666.
[83] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Confidential Dispatch no. 404 from J.K. Starnes, Canadian Ambassador in Cairo, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, "Relations Between Canada and the United Arab Republic," (Ottawa, September 21, 1967): 2.

status and lack of influence in the Arab-Israeli conflict proved to be a saving grace for prospective émigrés. Despite the tensions, the UAR did not cut diplomatic relations with Canada as it did with the United States, and Canada remained "a good place" to emigrate.[84]

The breaking of diplomatic relations did not have a significant impact on United States immigration policy regarding Egypt. Though the United States showed preference for affluent and educated migrants deemed assimilable by their cultural background, it was unwilling to compromise its strict quotas until the Hart-Celler Act went into effect in Egypt in June 1968. As such, most Egyptian nationals (of various religious or ethnic affiliations) arriving in the United States were affluent, educated and guaranteed professional occupations.[85] Equally motivated by economic self-interest as Canada, the US however displayed little humanitarian considerations in Cairo. White House officials did not debate immigration policy regarding Egypt at the height of Cold War tensions under the Johnson administration. Officials in Washington and on the ground in Cairo obsessed over the Arab-Israeli conflict, balanced this with prevailing considerations in Vietnam, with Russia, and through military and charitable aid in the region. United States aid and supplies served as a vital bargaining chip during Nasser's anti-imperialist activities in Yemen and Africa which reinforced US diplomats' sentiments of Arabs as duplicitous, cunning and aggressive.[86] Migration was neither a point of contention or consideration.

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[84] Starnes, "Relations Between Canada and the United Arab Republic," 3.

[85] When the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act sought again to limit immigration and included provisions to "get tough" on illegal immigration, attention had shifted to the southern border. The introduction of the Diversity Visa under the Immigration Act of 1990 allocated a separate 50,000 additional visas that increased opportunities for previously unqualified immigrants among high school graduates and low income families from Upper Egypt.

[86] National Archives Collection LBJ-WHCF: White House Central Files (Johnson Administration), 11/22/1963 - 1/20/1969, White House Subject Files on Countries, WHCF CO 304 United Arab Republic (142 pp.). In extensive correspondence, no mention was made of immigration policy regarding the UAR. Movement was not to be advertised and even the 1963 civil air transport agreement with United Arab Airlines was given no publicity.

Though activities had ceased since the June war, immigration remained for Canada the most significant aspect of bilateral relations.[87] Ever since the United States introduced the Hart-Celler Act in 1965 anticipation of increased emigration led more Egyptians to submit applications, especially those affluent professionals with connections to US industry. Continued delays in the reopening of offices in Cairo proved catastrophic to the Canadian immigration program, which witnessed a sharp decline in the quantity of applications from professional emigrants. Émigrés welcomed at the United States office operating out of the Spanish embassy (the US embassy having closed following the June war) were only limited by an Eastern hemispheric quota of 170,000 persons and a national limit of 20,000 applications (see figure 1). Although most of the foreign communities had already emigrated, often the wealthy and well-connected native Egyptians elected to go to the United States. Canada received foreign minorities and, more recently, young Coptic professionals and graduate students.

Immigration From Egypt to Canada and the United States by birth or place of last permanent residence, 1956 - 1976			
Year	Canada	United States	Developments
1956	194	272	Suez Crisis
1957	421	332	Humanitarian Pressure
1958	116	498	Egypt & Syria form UAR
1959	120	1177	
1960	58	854	
1961	31	452	Syria leaves UAR
1962	1322	384	CDN "300 Movement"
1963	1476	760	and establish Immig. Office
1964	1855	828	
1965	1378	1424	US Hart-Celler Act
1966	1854	1181	
1967	1728	1703	CDN Points System
1968	1915	2124	Post-Naksa Surge
1969	1429	3411	
1970	913	4937	Independent applicants
1971	730	3643	on the rise
1972	606	2512	
1973	905	3274	Yom Kippur War/Infitah
1974	928	1831	
1975	892	1707	
1976	728	1824	

Figure 1: Acceptance figures collected from the United States Annual Reports of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Statistics Canada Population Census (Series A1-247), 1956 - 1976.

[87] Starnes, "Relations Between Canada and the United Arab Republic," 4.

Immigration from Egypt to Canada, 1964 - 1966 figures		
Year	Received	Admitted
1964	7,467	1,855
1965	8,972	1,378
1966	12,095 1,017 sponsored 11,078 non-sponsored	1,854 836 sponsored 1,018 non-sponsored
Total	28,534	5,087

Figure 2: Dispatch no. 404 from Ambassador Starnes to External Affairs, "Relations Between Canada and the UAR": 6.

Between 1964 and 1966, the number of applications received rose considerably in the non-sponsored category. Yet Canada maintained acceptance figures of less than two thousand and a clear preference for sponsored immigrants (see figure 2). Most of those admitted were skilled persons of "non-Egyptian extraction," though by the end of 1966 more of the native "Egyptian bourgeoisie" than foreign minorities were emigrating. This increase led the Egyptian press to complain of a "brain drain" at the same time as Canadian officials complained of "a noticeable decline in the quality of the applicants" who more than ever are composed of a sizable Coptic representation and less so Muslims.[88] By 1968, US admittances and delays by the Canadian government to reopen their offices slowly eroded Canada's past monopoly.

Egypt lacked any cohesive emigration enforcement or oversight until after the June war. This created many inconsistencies and contradictory policies that confused senior western officials in Cairo. UAR authorities insisted that only patriotic "real Egyptians" emigrated, yet eased emigration procedures for undesirable foreign elements and imposed hefty fines and bureaucratic delays to discourage the emigration of qualified professionals, which frustrated Egyptian nationals. Nevertheless, UAR authorities somehow "consider[ed] that feelings of Arab solidarity in the end will prevail and that the presence in Canada of a growing community of

[88] Starnes, "Relations Between Canada and the United Arab Republic," 6. As of September 1967, previously sponsored category now "sponsored dependents" and "nominated relatives" classes respectively.

Arab origin is working to the UAR's advantage." How could Egyptian nationals who struggled to leave and foreign nationals who were pushed out of the country remain desirous of supporting Egypt's image abroad? In light of such ambivalence by the Egyptian government, Starnes concluded that closing the Canadian mission now would have little negative impact on bilateral relations. Yet the mission should remain, because pressure was now coming from "immigrants of Arab or Coptic origin in Canada" who resented the closing of an immigration program.[89]

The United States also notably shifted its approach to American-Egyptian relations after the June war. Nasser's ego, which was bruised by US support for Israel in the war, was sensitive to US officials' continued vocal concern over Soviet arms purchases. Nasser broke diplomatic relations and the United States embassy was closed in Cairo. The United States needed to save face and expected to break Arab solidarity. The White House adopted a harsh stance: no negotiations or concessions until the Arabs apologized and themselves made approaches to restore relations. Yet the Nasser regime was equally driven by a need to save face, and to return lost land to Egypt after the humiliation of defeat in June. UAR authorities discussed remittances to bring in funds from émigrés to Canada in Egyptian parliamentary discussions after the war. They pursued formal trade and financial aid deals with the United States to invigorate industry and development projects rather than chase US émigré remittances. For their part, the White House sought to manage the Arab-Israeli conflict and mitigate Soviet influence in the region. As such, they leveraged economic power in such negotiations to pressure Nasser to acquiesce. Until the mid-1970s, immigration policy was rarely if ever a point of consideration in American-Egyptian bilateral relations, the only discussion of which focused on educational and cultural exchange. Funding for foreign students or appointed scholars, renovation of historic sites in

[89] Starnes, "Relations Between Canada and the United Arab Republic," 6.

Egypt, and research scholarships were either granted or clawed back depending on US satisfaction with state rhetoric in Egypt.[90]

By the winter of 1967, senior Egyptian officials began instituting simplified procedures for prospective émigrés, who could now seek approval for an exit permit from a centralized agency and, unless they were part of a preferred professional group, their applications could be processed expeditiously. At the same time, the 1967 amendments to Canada's immigration policy gave local offices much more power and discretion. In November 1967, the new attaché in Cairo wrote the regional director that "resentment, disillusionment and anger" as a result of the June defeat and austerity measures which preceded it had resulted in "a marked increase in the number of people wishing to emigrate, to escape from what has become a humiliated country with few prospects for economic betterment in sight."[91] Migration from the countryside to the cities strained the crumbling urban infrastructure and over-population, heavy taxation and a weakening economy impacted most clearly the "prime group" for Canada: urban white-collar professionals. Yet the population was more homogenous than ever and the attaché warned that since foreign nationals had mostly disappeared from Egypt:

> one of the most disturbing features of potential Egyptian emigrants from the U.A.R. is their apparent lack of initiative, resourcefulness and adaptability. They tend to be stubborn, to be arrogant, to be prideful to a fault and lacking in energy and the desire to work hard … criticisms I have heard include having too high opinions of their abilities, being unprepared to start low and work up, being too prepared to accept handouts from us while refusing to accept employment offered, tending to be clannish in offices to the extent of disrupting office harmony of other employees, and being resentful at having their qualifications recognized on a par with Canadian qualifications.[92]

Canadian officials in Cairo still strictly reserved their praise for the "European element," whom they credited with building both Egypt's industry and infrastructure. Additionally, the

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[90] National Archives Collection LBJ-WHCF: White House Central Files (Johnson Administration), 11/22/1963 - 1/20/1969, White House Subject Files on Countries, WHCF CO 304 United Arab Republic (142 pp.).
[91] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Secret Memorandum from Attaché Visa Control, Cairo to Regional Director 'A' Coutu, "Cairo Office," (November 14, 1967): 1.
[92] Attaché, "Cairo Office," 2.

"Westernized" Catholic and Protestant Copts, as well as the Lebanese, Syrians and Armenians continued to be perceived as desirable. Orthodox Copts and Muslims were desirable only in certain exceptional "capital cases," and even then only if their applications demonstrated "initiative, resourcefulness, and adaptability." Canadian officials in Cairo suspected, however, that "many will rate low on these factors."[93] Nevertheless, the number of émigrés born and naturalized in Egypt rose significantly (figures 3 and 4). Ethnically Egyptian immigrants came to constitute the bulk of those admitted by 1967. Immigrants from the UAR to Canada came predominantly in family groups of working males and non-working females, with an overall high representation in professional and clerical positions (figure 5).[94]

STATISTICAL APPENDIX 1

IMMIGRATION TO CANADA BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS
1946-1966

YEAR	All Immigrants born in Egypt	All Immigrants with C.L.P.R. Egypt	All Immigrants of Egyptian ethnic origin	All Immigrants of Egyptian citizenship
1946-1961	1740	1008	133	417
1962	1325	1322	62	964
1963	1583	1476	241	1187
1964	1946	1855	380	1532
1965	1653	1378	427	1270
1966	2231	1854	649	1680
1967 (9 months)	N/A	1284	642	1327
TOTAL 1946-Sept.30 1967	10,478 +	10,177	2,534	8,377

Figure 3: Memorandum from Cairo Attaché to Regional Director 'A' Coutu, (November 14, 1967): Appendix **1.**

[93] Attaché, "Cairo Office," 2.
[94] Attaché, "Cairo Office," Appendices 1-3.

STATISTICAL "APPENDIX 2"

IMMIGRATION FROM EGYPT TO CANADA BY ETHNIC ORIGIN 1956-1966

ORIGIN	1956-61	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	Total	%
Arab	25	20	40	51	28	22	186	2%
Armenian	119	606	594	620	407	498	2844	32%
British	31	3	6	4	3	12	59	0%
Egyptian	80	53	227	354	311	508	1533	17%
French	15	5	3	4	5	7	39	0%
Greek	150	204	185	203	96	116	954	10%
Jewish	301	62	62	36	40	25	526	6%
Italian	68	47	40	45	45	50	295	3%
Lebanese	38	179	209	336	230	355	1347	15%
Syrian	15	79	46	124	130	160	554	6%
Turkish	17	16	19	30	33	18	133	1%
Others	81	48	45	48	50	83	355	4%
TOTAL	940	1322	1476	1855	1378	1854	8825	100%

Figure 4: Memorandum from Cairo Attaché to Regional Director 'A' Coutu, (November 14, 1967): Appendix 2.

STATISTICAL "APPENDIX 3"

EMIGRATION FROM THE U.A.R. TO CANADA BY INTENDED OCCUPATIONAL GROUP 1962-1966, inclusive

Occupational Group	Number	% of Total	% of Total Workers
Managerial	88	1%	2%
Professional & Technical	913	11%	25%
Clerical, sales, etc.	1705	21%	47%
Manufacturing & Mechanical	763	10%	21%
Other	192	2%	5%
Total Workers:	3661	47%	100%
Non-workers	4224	53%	
TOTAL:	7885	100%	

Figure 5: Memorandum from Cairo Attaché to Regional Director 'A' Coutu, (November 14, 1967): Appendix 3.

The Canadian immigration program was restored between May and November 1968. After an initial influx of applications, delays in re-staffing offices concerned prospective émigrés. Increasing acceptances to a United States not guided purely by racist numerical quotas led many to apply there. In Canada, regulations by Order-in Council PC 1967-1616 in 1967

established new standards for assessing potential immigrants and determining admissibility. Now independent immigrants were assigned points in the following nine categories: education and training; personal character; occupational demand; occupational skill; age; pre-arranged employment; knowledge of French and English; the presence of a relative in Canada; and employment opportunities in their area of destination. Individuals receiving 50 points or more out of a possible 100 were admitted as independent immigrants. This process of assessment improved the objectivity of admissions procedures but immigration officials retained some discretion in assessing personal character and approving or denying admission in special cases.

The new regulations created three different categories of immigrants: independent, nominated and sponsored. Immediate relatives of Canadian citizens and permanent residents qualified as sponsored immigrants and were not subject to the categories of assessment developed for independent applicants. However, more distant relatives now had to be nominated and undergo evaluation, to the detriment of Egyptian emigration to Canada which continued to decline. Although this policy significantly increased immigration from countries in Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa, in Egypt restrictions on family reunification inaugurated a dramatic decline in applications after 1969. Immigrants chose instead to either apply for the United States or travel as visitors and apply while already in Canada.

The Egyptian Ministry of Immigration was created in 1968. Headed by the Minister of Cultural Relations and Technical Assistance, it began in 1969 to make appeals to both Canada and the United States to accept working-class and unemployed youth.[95] Yet no such programs were being contemplated and Canada maintained its established preferences. The United States remained silent, a tactic senior officials employed until the warming of bilateral relations

[95] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Report of Meeting between Carter, Greaves, and Abdul Aziz Gamil, Director of Immigration Department, Ministry of UAR Foreign Affairs, "Emigration, June 1969," 3.

following the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Indeed, it was not until changing definitions of the 'refugee'—as represented by Canada's 1976 Immigration Act and America's 1980 Refugee Act—that truly non-discriminatory procedures inaugurated equitable screening of immigrant applications. In the meantime, between the end of 1967 and the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, hundreds of Egyptians flocked to embassies for emigration. "Mostly young men, crowd emigration offices each day," Toronto's *Globe and Mail* reported, and "every week, about 1,000 Egyptians request applications forms" to go to the United States and Canada. Mostly in their twenties and thirties, college graduates were looking for economic opportunities and "the harried, undermanned staff" issued hundreds of visas a month. Professionals continued to face delays from the UAR and followed established patterns of securing travel visas to leave the country as tourists and then apply at North American posts across the Middle East and Europe.[96]

In the 1950s, pressure from local constituents led Canada to contemplate opening a mission in the Middle East. Throughout the 1960s, intervention by foreign minority elites in Egypt and transnational charities shifted the focus to local petitions in Egypt. Canada's need to maintain positive bilateral relations and benefit from the professional skills, education and capital of foreign minorities made the mission vital to Canada's economic self-interest. After the June war, neither fears of antagonizing Nasser (and risk the closing of an embassy deemed vital to managing the threat of a Cold War) or petitions in Egypt on behalf of minorities informed Canadian decisions. Rather, it was a growing immigrant population in Canada who continued to make appeals. Since this procedural shift and until today, the pendulum had swung back to Canada as the locus of activity on behalf of prospective émigrés from Egypt.

The recently established Egyptian Ministry of Immigration could not oppose the equity of equivalency exams or the lack of job training in Canada. Concerned Egyptian emigrants from

[96] Ray Anderson, "UAR Official Encouragement Expands Trickle of Emigration," *Globe and Mail*, June 27, 1969.

among the less-skilled young graduates unable to find work in the cities often had little recourse. However, now emigration was squarely on the agenda for Egyptian senior officials in a way it had never been before.[97] US officials in Cairo refused their advances but Canadians were willing to meet and negotiate. Canada welcomed signs that Egypt was becoming more accepting of emigration.[98] Egypt viewed emigration as trade in manpower for foreign currency.[99]

The Coptic Orthodox Church hierarchy saw an opportunity to contribute to the national cause. Mr. Abdul Aziz Gamil was charged with directing the immigration department which was jointly administered by the Egyptian ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Youth. The collaboration of these separate ministries signaled to governments with immigration programs in Egypt (the US, Canada and Australia) Egypt's concern with finding a solution for out-of-work graduates and the intertwining of immigration with foreign policy. In a meeting with Canadian ambassador Carter in June 1969, senior Egyptian officials decried the difficulty Egyptian citizens met in having their professional qualifications recognized. Bishop Samuel had long viewed emigration as an important aspect of his relations with foreign governments, the World Council of Churches and its national affiliates. Relying on tactics pursued in the past by Greeks and Italians, Bishop Samuel and North American Coptic parishes lobbied transnational charities and his bishopric in Cairo became a hub for translating accreditation papers and letters of reference.

The activism of a minority Christian Church and its fragile relationship with the state played an important role in WCC considerations in this instance. The Coptic Church's mediating role brought attention to appeals decrying the economic hardship and high population density,

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[97] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Confidential from Cairo Attaché to Regional Director 'A' in Beirut, "Cairo Office," (February 8, 1968): 1-2.
[98] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Extract of letter, from Canadian Embassy in Cairo to External Affairs, "Relations between Canada and the UAR," (Ottawa, August 30, 1968): 3
[99] LAC, Wallace Bell to John B. Holt, "United Arab Republic - Emigration," November 24, 1967, CCC, MG28, I 327, Vol. 129, file 33, Emigration from Egypt, 1967-1968, Ottawa, Canada.

which otherwise gained little attention when posed by senior Egyptian officials. B. Ch. Sjellema, secretary for migration for WCC received inquiries from high-level Egyptian government officials about the possibility of WCC assistance in easing restrictions on prospective Egyptian emigrants. Sjellema wrote to R.M. Bennett, general secretary of the CCC of the importance of supporting the Coptic Orthodox Church "given the difficult position of a minority church which is trying to identify itself with the national cause."[100]

Despite repeated appeals from senior Egyptian officials, it was the Coptic Church relationship with both the WCC and CCC spearheaded by Bishop Samuel which served as the engine for success. During his meeting, Wallace Bell heard senior Egyptian officials express "great appreciation … of the Coptic Church's success in securing WCC assistance with medical supplies following the June war." Following his meeting, Bell went directly to Bishop Samuel to discuss the Coptic Church's view on Egyptian officials' requests for support in the emigration of Egyptian nationals. The bishop corroborated the need and "was strongly in favour of a wider [immigration] service that would be available, as an independent operation in which the Coptic Church would participate, to all UAR citizens irrespective of religion." Bell felt most strongly that the bishop pursued these negotiations "to avoid any suggestion of privilege for Christians, and also because it would greatly strengthen the position of the Coptic Church."[101]

The transnational character of such conversations cannot be overstated. Parishes in Toronto and Montreal served the interests of Bishop Samuel in furthering the Church's national agenda. Through his intermediary father Marcos, the bishop wrote repeatedly to Dr. T.E. Floyd

[100] LAC, B. Ch. Sjellema to Rev. R.M. Bennett, "Re: Emigration from Egypt," January 12, 1968, CCC, MG28, I 327, Vol. 129, file 33, Emigration from Egypt, 1967-1968, Ottawa.
[101] Bell to Holt, "United Arab Republic - Emigration."

Honey, general secretary of the CCC to press the case for Egyptian immigrants.[102] The clergy joined the Egyptian government in pursuing the matter of easing immigration restrictions in conversations with senior government officials in Canada. The Egyptian ministry of Foreign Affairs became increasingly concerned not only with the equity of employment for Egyptian immigrants, but also the "quality" of the Egyptian community to ensure that immigrants made a good impression on Canadians. Now former ambassador, Thomas Carter of the Bureau of African and Middle Eastern Affairs met with Bishop Samuel during his pastoral visit in September 1971. In attendance were Archbishop Antonius (interim patriarch), father Rafael of Montreal and an unnamed Egyptian senior embassy official. The group discussed immigration procedures and employment in Canada, and on the responsibility of Canadians to pressure Israel to resolve territorial disputes. Although the presence of the Egyptian official set the tone for the meeting, Carter's assessment following the meeting is indicative of the bishop's influence. The bureaucrat concluded that this matter should be considered seriously because of the relationship which Carter had with the bishop, who is "an articulate and persuasive person."[103]

Following the 1973 war, the Coptic Church became less vital to Egyptian relations with foreign agencies. Sadat's moral victory against Israel and alignment with US foreign policy ensured more open communication with the reopened US embassy in Cairo. In addition, the restoration of US aid and open lines of communication meant that Egyptian government officials no longer needed to rely on the Church's connections with transnational aid networks. As Egypt continued to ease restrictions on emigration, now allowing mid-level technicians to apply for exit

[102] LAC, Dr. T.E. Floyd Honey to Canon Wilkinson, "Re: Visit of Bishop Samuel to Canada," September 16, 1969, CCC, MG28, I 327, Vol 141 file 11, Coptic Orthodox Church, 1969-1970, Ottawa.
[103] LAC, "Selection and Processing," R1206-135-3-E, RG76-B-1-C, Volume 989, File 5850-3-642, 1965-1975, Report from Tom Carter, Bureau of African and Middle Eastern Affairs, Montreal, to External Affairs (cc'd Manpower and Cairo attaché), "Discussion with Representatives of the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church," (September 3, 1971): 1-2.

visas, Canada likewise altered its course. Following the war, the Canadian embassy in Cairo wrote to Ottawa signaling the industriousness of both Coptic and Muslim immigrants. In April 1974, senior Egyptian consulate officials made approaches to the Quebec government to visit with ministers in Egypt and better educate Egyptian citizens on how to immigrate to this Francophone province. Showing for the first time recognition that immigration to Canada was a joint responsibility under the British North America Act, between 1974 and 1975 Egyptian officials met with Canadians regularly in Cairo, Montreal and Ottawa to improve procedures and ask for more relaxed requirements. Egypt committed wholly to easing its restrictions and cancelled exit visa requirements but maintained restrictions on highly qualified professionals.[104]

At the same time, Anwar Sadat reversed many of the aggressive isolationist policies of his predecessor Nasser and strengthened ties with the United States and international aid bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Guiding Egypt in a direction that was amenable to US interests, most strikingly the recognition of the state of Israel, Sadat turned away from pan-Arabism and towards Egyptian nationalism. In doing so, he abandoned Nasser's socialist principles in economic management and opened up Egypt's trading system and welcomed not only foreign goods and services but also investment into the country.

As Canada and the United States more fully engaged in economic and political relationships with Anwar Sadat, the value of the Church's relationships with foreign institutions dwindled. This was compounded by Pope Shenouda's decision to divest Bishop Samuel of all authority and oversight over immigrant parishes on Easter 1972. By the mid-1970s sponsorship and appeals on behalf of prospective Coptic immigrants were being sent from churches and immigrant families in Toronto, Montreal, New York and New Jersey. At the same time, rising sectarian violence in Egypt at a time when North American governments' support was vital to

[104] Report from Ottawa Foreign Service, "Manpower and Immigration Operations in Egypt," 4.

the liberalization policies pursued by Sadat led diasporic Coptic activists to mobilize. Secular associations concerned themselves with supporting recent arrivals and pressuring senior government officials in their receiving societies on behalf of persecuted co-religionists in Egypt.

WHY CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES?

Timing is everything. Canada and the US developed policies owing to socio-political and economic developments in Egypt, in conversation with global humanitarian concerns, public policy and Cold War tensions. Charting this history chronologically, this chapter detailed how in Egypt nativism, deep-seated antipathy for internal foreign groups of various kinds (national, cultural, religious), encouraged the emigration of foreign minorities. Discriminatory hiring practices and prejudicial policies were then extended to the last remaining minority group: the Copts. In the second half of the twentieth century, Egyptian historiography bears out that economic nationalization and an encroaching dictatorial regime motivated the emigration of native Coptic and Muslim professionals. Coptic populations additionally had to contend with rising discrimination that led eventually to persistent persecution by the end of the century.

Native Egyptians benefited from more equitable immigration procedures and a growing emphasis on professional qualifications by North American governments. At the same time, would-be émigrés learned to emulate successful examples of surreptitious step-migration used by Egypt's foreign nationals who travelled through posts in Beirut, Vienna and Rome and depended on effective interventions by ethnic elites, international governments and transnational charities. Yet designations such as "Egyptian Muslim," "native Christian Copt," "foreign element," and "nationals of European extraction," adhered to the codification of belonging in Egypt and were used by Canadian and American immigration officials as markers of civilizational difference.

North American countries' immigration policies in this regard evolved to reflect the needs of sovereign nations, self-interest, racism and nativism, economic imperatives, Cold War security concerns, the ideals of humanitarianism, and openness to cultural pluralism. The upper and middle-class from Egypt was the most welcomed, and as foreign minorities declined in the 1960s native Egyptians were accepted increasingly regardless of religious and ethnic affiliation. Class interests made professionals the least likely security and cultural threat to the Canadian or American nation state and its labour interests.

The myth of Canada as a raceless and secular society persists in the historiography of Canadian immigration. However, in their discussions of immigrants from Egypt senior Canadian officials continued to see people through a culturally driven orientalist gaze. While it is true that by 1967 official policy sought to enact equitable and non-discriminatory assessment procedures, the attitudes of officials on the ground continued to be guided by tropes of the treacherous, duplicitous and prideful Egyptian. Such sentiments informed immigrant assessments and application screenings, and continue to affect immigrants from the Middle East experiencing nativist and xenophobic rhetoric in North American cities today.

By the time Anwar Sadat ascended to power, Egypt had established its first Ministry of Immigration and began actively supporting local émigré petitions. The Coptic Orthodox Church hierarchy joined in the national cause. Between 1969 and 1971, Israel and the Arab Middle East supplied 2.5 per cent of total immigration to North America and three-quarters arrived from the Arab Middle East. UAR authorities grew more desirous of facilitating the emigration of lower middle class university graduates and working class youth, whom the state could not employ. Cairo newspapers ran articles that universities were offering courses for English and French for would-be émigrés to North America in hopes of improving acceptance rates among those less

privileged in the population. Working-class and lower-middle-class applicants, rather than foreign nationals, now made up the bulk of applicants.

At the same time, the force of gravity for intervening on behalf of émigrés had shifted from Egypt to North American communities.[105] As of 1975, discussions were taking place in Canada and the United States. UAR embassies and consulates exercised their voice to petition on behalf of émigrés and to collect information for their own political ends. Local ethnic and religious leaders used their growing communities to sponsor and facilitate emigration. Offices in Cairo were processing a steady stream of applications and many locals had expanding kin networks relaying information about job prospects and offering destinations for would-be émigrés to find temporary homes upon arrival. A conversation that began in Canada after the Second World War, moved to Egypt after the Free Officers revolution and took on a more transnational scope immediately prior to and after the 1967 war, had now found itself rooted in major North American cities where immigrants established families and offered new hope for compatriots back home to escape economic and social decline.

From a few dozen immigrants in the 1950s, the population of Copts in the United States and Canada grew rapidly to several thousand by the 1970s, and perhaps tens of thousands by the mid-1980s.[106] I say perhaps because no concrete statistical data exists on the number of Copts in

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[105] In a profile of Coptic immigration to the United States Hany Takla et al. noted a special refugee movement through Lebanon with the help of the World Council of Churches in 1972. Yet according to WCC archivists in Geneva, no such movement existed. Most likely, the authors mistook Copts' emulation of tactics employed by past Greek, Italian and Armenian émigrés who left for Lebanon and other countries surreptitiously as a special movement. Hany N. Takla et al., "Egyptian Copts," in *American Immigrant Cultures: Builders of a Nation*, David Levinson and Melvin Ember ed., Vol. 1, (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1997): 246.

[106] In 1999, Coptic activist Majdi Khalil estimated the number of immigrant Copts at 700,000 in the United States, 200,000 in Canada and 400,000 in Australia. However, Sebastian Elsässer cited a study conducted by Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) in 2000, which estimated the number of Egyptians—regardless of religious affiliation—living in the United States at 318,000 and in Canada at 110,000. There may be greater consistency between CAPMAS numbers and United States census records. According to Hany N. Takla et al. Copts numbered approximately 265,000 by the mid-1990s based on a study of the fact books of the U.S. department of Justice, Immigration, and Naturalization. Ghada Botros, "Religious Identity as an Historical Narrative: Coptic Orthodox Immigrant Churches and the Representation of History," *Journal of Historical*

either the United States or Canada, outside of contested government statistics and estimates by community academics and news journalists. Considering wide discrepancies and the complications inherent to attempting to deduce religious and ethnic affiliations from census data, I find utility in numbers compiled by Gerasimos Tsourapas in his most recent monograph. He relied on 2012 numbers from the Migration Policy Centre and found that, of the approximately 1.7 million Egyptian émigrés, 776,000 were in the United States, 141,000 in Canada and 106,000 in Australia. However, host countries' figures accounted for far less: just over 200,000 in the United States, just over 41,000 in Canada and nearly 35,000 in Australia. These numbers gesture at the size of the Egyptian immigrant population, though we may never concretely deduce discrepancies resulting from the process of reporting, ethnic and/or national affiliations and step-migrations which colour the history of Egyptian migrations in the twentieth century.[107]

Nevertheless, the fact that more immigrants went to Canada than the United States until the late 1960s had a tremendous impact on the establishment of churches and the sending of priests who saw such changes, conditioned by changing national policies, international attitudes and developing migration flows, as providential support for Coptic immigration. Oral history forms the core of Part 2 which charts how ordinary Copts lived and acted within, and at times beyond, racialized and religious conceptions of their qualifications, making material decisions that suited their lives. The following two chapters will take up the stories of Copts in the United States and delve into their social worlds as they navigated both sacred and profane spaces from Giza to New York and New Jersey.

Sociology 19.2 (2006): 195; Majdi Khalil (1999) *Aqbat al-mahjar: dirasah maydaniyah hawla humum al-watan wa-al-muwatinah* (Immigrant Copts, a field study on the Concerns of the Citizens); Sebastian Elsässer, *The Coptic Question in the Mubarak Era*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014): 248; Takla et al., "Egyptian Copts," 244-47.

[107] Gerasimos Tsourapas, *The Politics of Migration in Modern Egypt: Strategies for Regime Survival in Autocracies*, (Cambridge UP, 2018).

Chapter 4
"I am a Church Activist, Not a Political Activist:" Church Activism in Multipolar Perspective

We travelled in twos to every village, from Giza to Aswan. This is a shared memory among the earliest Coptic Orthodox immigrants to the North Eastern United States. Predominantly Sunday school students and youth leaders, they benefited from, and contributed to the expansion of, religious education across Egypt. When I asked Elhamy Khalil or Atef Mo'awad about their social lives in Egypt, the former declared proudly "I am a church activist, not a political activist," while the latter maintained that he remains "a zealous Sunday school person."[1] They arrived in New York and New Jersey in the late 1950s in search of graduate education to improve future career opportunities, financial stability and their ability to marry. As they and other Coptic young professionals travelled throughout the US in search of material success, their associational activities showed a commitment to religious service (*khidma*) and a love for their mentor, father Makary al-Suriani (later Bishop Samuel of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services).[2]

This chapter foregrounds the spiritual experience of early Coptic Orthodox church activists in their own words and the continued presence of clerical figures in accounts that are ideologically and theologically partial. Orthodox Church leaders such as Archdeacon Habib Girgis, Pope Kyrillos VI, Bishop Samuel, Bishop Gregorious, and Bishop Shenouda (later Pope Shenouda III) were prominent in immigrants' memories of youthful friendships, correspondence, pastoral visits, and evolving policies directly impacting the social activities and power dynamics between clergy and professionals across North America. The Sunday school movement (*harakit*

[1] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic); Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[2] Bishop Samuel was increasingly marginalized within the Church after 1972. Active in promoting social services on a grassroots level, the bishop was later put in charge of the committee of five bishops selected to lead the Church when the Sadat government placed the pope under house arrest in September 1981. The bishop's rise to power was interpreted in the Coptic press, and among diasporic populations loyal to the pope, as an act of treason. The fallout of accusations against Bishop Samuel were prominent in narratives by former students and acquaintances who told me stories motivated in part by their explicit desire to preserve their interpretation of his legacy.

madaris al-ahad) was a vital aspect of their socialization in Egypt. It began to flourish in Cairo under Habib Girgis after the First World War. It achieved its greatest success with the zealous and committed youth of the 1930s and 1940s. Those among them who emigrated after the 1950s brought that commitment with them and maintained vital connections to contemporaries who entered monasteries in Egypt, became members of the Church hierarchy, and in turn vital brokers supporting immigration to, and institutionalization in, North American cities. Interest in both the homeland and the Church was then maintained and strengthened by a transnational print culture that linked a wider imagined community of the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt.[3]

The history of the Sunday school movement in Egypt and the generation that reinvigorated social services is detailed extensively by scholars in the field of Coptic Studies.[4] It is not my intention to retell that story. Yet these accounts have focused heavily on Church and community relations in Egypt (a fact which exemplifies the power of the nation-state in the stories we tell).[5] This chapter instead privileges the agency of migrating actors whose narratives reveal the continuity of inherited ideas from the homeland following emigration and contradict an easy separation between a supposedly progressive West and an inert, "primitive" Middle East. Mine is the first treatment of the Sunday school movement and its impact on Coptic life that

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[3] This expanding print culture, which had tremendous impact on the education of Coptic Sunday school youth in Egypt is part of a larger pattern of consumption marked by migrants' mundane transnationalism. Detailed in the next chapter, this concept builds on the theory of banal nationalism first proposed by Michael Billig in his 1995 book by the same name and employed in the Egyptian context by historian Ziad Fahmy as mundane nationalism in his 2011 book *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture*.

[4] See for instance, S.S. Hasan, *Christians Versus Muslims in Modern Egypt: The Century-Long Struggle for Coptic Equality*, (Oxford UP, 2003); Mariz Tadros, "Vicissitudes in the Entente between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the State in Egypt (1952–2007)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 41.2 (2009): 269-287; Vivian Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt: Challenges of Modernisation and Identity*, (London: Tauris, 2011); Samuel Tadros, *Motherland Lost: The Egyptian and Coptic Quest for Modernity* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2013).

[5] The presence of Middle Eastern peoples in the west has disturbed assumptions of an easy separation between "them" in the Third World and "us" in the First. Where once these spatial-cultural habits of mind seemed so natural and permanent, scholars now have to confront how the margin may hybridize their identity. Despite a long history of unequal confrontations, subordinates have managed to adopt, subvert and rearrange cultural elements within a new ensemble to suit their own purposes. Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg, "Introduction," in Smader Lavie and Ted Swedenburg eds., *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*, (Duke UP, 1996): 1-25.

elucidates both its transnational and ecumenical dimensions, and links local initiatives to Social Gospel thought. Historian Heather Sharkey detailed the causal connection between Anglo-American evangelizing and local Coptic reform in numerous studies. I build on her contributions about the localized reaction to Protestant, especially Presbyterian, attempts to inculcate an emphasis on scripture and bible study in Christian worship. I show that, though none of the missionaries used the phrase, in retrospect Social Gospel thought flourished in the Egyptian context and produced a zealous commitment to church activities among future immigrants.[6]

To understand how and why their commitment endured following emigration, I trace the historical trajectory of socially minded spiritual reform from Egypt to North American cities. As discussed in the first chapter, modernity in Egypt was a series of interlinked projects that certain people in power sought to achieve. It inaugurated changes to both institutional and epistemological facets of the state, religion, the family, and other systems affecting people's everyday lives. From the mid-nineteenth century, Anglo-American missionaries established schools and educational programs to proselytize in the countryside, particularly in the predominantly Coptic province of Asyut. They imported bibles from London, Lebanon and Russia, introduced the standardization of curriculums by age groups, and invested in social outreach programs to support literacy and apprenticeship.[7] This activity garnered limited success in Upper Egypt but nevertheless provoked a response on the part of both lay and clerical leaders

[6] Historian Heather Sharkey's prodigious publications on Protestant Evangelicalism in Egypt detail the activities of Protestant missionaries between the nineteenth and mid-twentieth century in studies that foreground the impact of Biblicism and Evangelization on Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church. Sharkey laid the groundwork for my attempt here to examine the long-term impact of Protestant influence on émigrés. Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire*, (Princeton University Press, 2008).

[7] Focusing on Biblicism—a particular regard for the bible—in Protestant evangelicalism as propagated by Anglo-American missionaries between 1856 and 1956, Sharkey showed how missionary success inspired Coptic reform in the Orthodox Church and the "evangelization of the Nile Valley." Promoting literacy and literary work, evangelicals succeeded in inculcating among both urban and rural Copts knowledge of and interest in the bible. Thus "laypeople became biblical experts, and this in turn, helped laypeople to exercise power as leaders in the church." Heather Sharkey, "American Missionaries, The Arabic Bible, and Coptic Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Egypt," in Mehmet Ali Dogan and Heather Sharkey eds., *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters*, (University of Utah Press, 2011): 237-257.

in the Coptic Orthodox Church. Consequently, Coptic Orthodox Sunday school programs spread throughout the country instructing youth to serve their Church and community, inculcating in them a brand of ethno-religious nationalism. A burning desire for activist defense of the Church resulted from these changes to Coptic communal life. The success of a unique brand of Egyptian Social Gospel thought created a distinctive globalized spirituality. Its later blending with ecumenical social action movements elevated social involvement and the promotion of Egypt's image abroad among church activists to a religious significance expressed in prayers, hymns, associational life, and publications.

North American scholarship on the history of religion defines the Social Gospel as an attempt to apply Christianity to the collective ills of an urbanizing and industrializing society and promote spiritual salvation through social reform. Begun in the 1890s, the movement faded as a blueprint for ethical social reform in Protestant North America by the 1940s as a result of state intervention and the rise of a professionalized social welfare apparatus. Unlike the North American experience guided by spiritually minded social reform to bring the church out to the people, in Egypt a socially minded spiritual reform movement to bring adherents back to the churches similarly arose in the 1890s. Middle-class reformers sought to enact social regeneration and spiritual uplift under pressure from Anglo-American missionaries and colonial schools. Conditioned by the unequal power relations characteristic of the colonial encounter, Coptic intellectuals and Church reformers witnessed and borrowed from western social thought and educational reform. Yet this should not be confused with simple copying of western knowledge. As anthropologist Talal Asad observed, the acquisition of new forms of language, "whether by forcible imposition, insidious insertion, or voluntary borrowing" made for "new possibilities of

action" where "the language in which the possibilities are formulated is increasingly shared by Western and non-Western societies."[8]

Building on insights from post-colonial theorists Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, I attend to the local origins of migrants language and perspectives.[9] The Copts have been caught up in two dominant forms of denigration which have since distorted the framing of their immigrant experience. First, as an oppressed minority in the Egyptian context their Christianity became a defining marker of their reduced identity. Second, the Copts are seen to be marginal to global Christian reform movements, reactive and subjected to the colonial imposition of western knowledge as Anglo-Americans sought to reform a stagnant ancient Church which existed on the margins.[10] As a consequence, subjugation and resistance to subjugation have characterized explanations for the group's religious activities in Egypt and their perceived insularity following emigration. Instead, I present a multipolar reading of the origination of immigrants ideas, values and life-worlds. Migration was neither a rupture nor an antagonistic process requiring the unsullied preservation of ancient traditions.[11]

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[8] Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 13.

[9] Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (University of Illinois Press, 1988): 271-313; Gayatri C. Spivak, *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, (Harvard UP, 1999); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (First Vintage Books Edition, 1994). The "subaltern" is deeply intertwined with Marxian theory which does not quite fit the experiences of the middle-class, educated and mobile Coptic professionals discussed. However, elements in this literature influenced my approach to this oppressed minority in Egypt and marginalized Oriental Orthodox Christian group. Said and Spivak's framing of the subaltern differs from Frantz Fanon's and how the latter incorporated Hegelian theory of the master/slave relationship. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (Francois Maspero, 1961). For Fanon, the master/slave relationship is antagonistic and there is no space for the abject subject in existing social bodies. However, Spivak desired inclusion, a means for the subaltern to speak and be heard. The mobility of Third World subjects who travelled to and engaged with ideas in the First World offers a vector for this inclusion and recognition in how the colonized may adopt, subvert and re-imagine aspects of a language constantly in flux. It is this process that I seek to explain.

[10] For detailed rebuttals to this passive characterization, see: Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers, and Education in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (London: E.B. Tauris, 2011) and Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire*, (Princeton UP, 2008).

[11] Emblematic of this framing is Ghada Botros, "Religious Identity as an Historical Narrative: Coptic Orthodox Immigrant Churches and the Representation of History," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 19.2 (2006): 174-201.

Coptic immigrants participated in reform initiatives and their ideas were nurtured in the Egyptian context. It was not a matter of the outside looking in, but an integral, if minor, aspect of a language of global ecumenical and religious development to retain the primacy of religion in modern societies. Drawing on interviews with early Orthodox Copts to North America and the writings of their premier immigrant broker, Bishop Samuel, I explore a shared past among church activists who debated about both religious social reform and enduring obligations to the nation. The reform of the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt was a conscious and effective response to local challenges posed by Islamic revival and conversion, western missionary evangelism and industrial modernization. It was also part of international conversations around ecumenical dialogue and the universalism of Christianity following the Second World War.

In reaction to Christianity's complicity in the colonial project, both Protestants and Catholics embraced arguments after the Second World War in favour of universalism, social justice and material uplift projects in the Third World. These ideas also inspired post-colonial populations actively working to reform their societies. In Egypt, lay Coptic professionals and young clergy sought to combat the loss of congregants, adapt to a modern world, and reform the Orthodox Church using a language that became increasingly shared with the west. Ecumenical conversations and Christian social activities, begun before emigration, continued in the New World as Egyptian Christian men (and later women) participated in inter-denominational and cross-cultural exchange and cooperation in the global 1960s.[12] Approaches to enacting wide-

[12] Historian Gaétan du Roy has likewise drawn the link between Coptic revivalism in Egypt and the work of foreign missionaries. His study of a Charismatic Cairene Coptic priest in the 1960s is a fascinating account of the impact of broader global movements informed by Charismatic Catholic religious practice in the United States and Latin America on Egypt. See, Gaétan du Roy, "Father Samaan and the Charismatic Trend Within the Coptic Church," in Nelly van Doorn-Harder eds., *Copts in Context: Negotiating Identity, Tradition, and Modernity*, (University of Southern Carolina Press, 2017): 66 - 79.

ranging reform circulated in part because Protestant missionaries had succeeded in stressing the importance of the Bible, literacy and Sunday school programming.

At the same time, the role of religious institutions in society followed a distinct trajectory in Egypt, largely due to its specific nation-state system. Socially minded spiritual reform occurred at a time when the Church and community were increasingly marginalized in Egyptian political and social life dominated by a predominantly Muslim majority. While the state fashioned its language and institutions around a secular political culture, after the 1930s Coptic proponents of reform expanded social services and gathered a popular base through mass revivalism. Youth conferences were held in towns and villages across Upper Egypt, lessons in hymnology and liturgical singing were dispensed, and young Copts were taught to promote fellowship and learning. In the face of a newly militarized state that was unwilling (and at times unable) to provide material services, reformers-turned-clergymen garnered unprecedented Church control throughout the 1950s. Revivalists such as fathers Makary and Salib Surial rejuvenated small communities, promoted health care, education, sanitation, temperance, child welfare, and instructed women and men in normative gender roles. They succeeded in encouraging adherents to attend church and frequent the sacraments more often. The exceptional growth of this reform ignited the passions of urban middle-class Copts and migrants from Upper Egypt attending Cairo universities.

By the 1960s, the ability of the Orthodox Church to offer social welfare services made this institution an arm of the Nasserite secular state, part of a process of societal confessionalization that cemented differences between Christians and Muslims.[13] Local reform

[13] In *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East*, Heather Sharkey explained how Islamic states until the end of the Ottoman Empire (where she ends the book) enshrined and emphasized religion as a category. Institutionalized religion remained important, and churches became and remained centres of social aid for Christians, because successive Islamic states insisted on organizing social affairs around religious communities.

in the Church and community additionally drew on and greatly benefited from ecumenical social action movements globally—cross-denominational cooperation in the service of transforming unjust social structures and promoting mission-oriented ministry. Able to funnel funds through ecumenical and charitable Christian organizations such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) into Egypt to rejuvenate social services, an increasingly transnational Coptic community under the leadership of Bishop Samuel (placed in charge of émigré parishes in 1962) emphasized the importance of a print culture that united this imagined community, shaping activities outside work and school. Early Orthodox Copts in North America continued to participate in religious associational life after their arrival and promoted their nation and Church abroad.

By the 1970s, the neoliberal dismantling of the welfare state imposed on Egypt by American interests, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund enshrined the social welfare role of religious institutions. Canadian historian Ramsay Cook maintained that the Social Gospel movement was essentially "a questioning of the role of the clergy and the Church in modern society."[14] For Egypt's Coptic populations, regardless of denomination, religious institutions became *the* recourse for social welfare services as churches acted to meet the challenges of a modern society at the same time that the state projected a secular veneer. When Pope Shenouda III assumed control of émigré parishes in 1972, he invested heavily in building the administrative infrastructure to tie Coptic immigrants to ever expanding Church services. For instance, as in Egypt, new North American parishes increasingly served as more than places of

[14] Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1985). Attempts to maintain the universal moral authority of traditional Christianity in Canada encouraged the collapse of the sacred and the secular into a single world view shorn of doctrine and based on an organic and progressive evolution of society. In Egypt, former Sunday school leaders who rose through the clerical hierarchy instead managed to preserve the sentimental idealism of the monastic world view. This path proved to be unsuccessful in North America according to Brian McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* (McGill-Queens University Press, 1979). Scholars of religious history have long debated the supposed irony of secularization brought on by social gospelers popularizing faith only to have it stripped of Christian moral ethics. Coptic reform offers us a chance to ask: What if state intervention took a different form and Christian moral ethics continued to inform social action in the community?

worship and fellowship. Churches printed and sold religious writings; opened recreational centres, sports and academic clubs; registered nurseries and daycares; and hosted film and theatrical screenings. The expansion of religious services deeply affected the material lives of Copts which will be detailed in the following chapters.

THE MEANING OF '*KHIDMA*' IN THE COPTIC SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

Religious revivalism in Egypt covers a broad array of projects enacted by people in power from the mid-nineteenth century in response to conversion, colonial competition, nation-building, and the activities of Anglo-American missionaries.[15] The term "revival" is used by scholars of modern Egypt in relation to two religious movements. First, it refers to the early twentieth century ideologies of the "Coptic nation" and "Islamic nation" personified by such figures as Pope Kyrillos IV and Archdeacon Habib Girgis on one hand, and Jamāl al-Afghānī and Muhammad 'Abduh on the other. Second, the term covers a broad range of mass revivals facilitated by technological innovations in the 1970s, which have been examined as a relation between religion and everyday social formation through the prism of an "authentic habituated piety." Scholars of religious activities in Egypt have relied on sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' to stress the holistic impact of the Islamic and Coptic revivals in the Egyptian context across the twentieth century.

In the field of Coptic Studies, historians Paul Sedra and Heather Sharkey have examined the early twentieth-century revival as renewed religious fervor among clerical leaders and intellectuals who promoted a return to education as the only means of drawing adherents back to

[15] The term "revival" has been used to denote increased spiritual interest and renewal in the life of the church congregation and society in the context of Coptic and Islamic revivals from the mid-nineteenth to the late-twentieth century. See publications by Paul Sedra and Heather Sharkey (cited above), Saba Mahmood's *The politics of Piety* (a study of Muslim women's activities within Islamic movements) and chapters in Nelly van Doorn-Harder ed., *Copts in Context: Negotiating Identity, Tradition, and Modernity*, (University of Southern Carolina Press, 2017).

the churches. More recently, Coptic ethnomusicologist Carolyn Ramzy and anthropologists of Islam Saba Mahmood and Charles Hirschkind have conducted fieldwork with members of revival movements and as a result defined "piety" as both internal religious devotion *and* enduring obligation and fidelity as expressed externally in service to the faith. As Ramzy has noted, a habituated piety is the moral subject formation of virtues and habits acquired and developed through a coordination of outward behaviours (fasting, prayer and study) and inward dispositions (to be as Christ).[16] For the Orthodox Copts, the standardization of the mass, the veneration of holy figures, festivals, social services, and everyday acts of devotion such as fasting and singing created a form of religiosity marking the "embodied" adherents to the faith. I am concerned with the process of religious subject formation *internally* and its implications for the *external* actions of church activists. A youth-led Sunday school movement inspired distinct schools of thought in the Giza and Shubra districts of Cairo in the interwar period which continued to influence the religious activities of Coptic immigrants. The socially minded Giza reformers and the nationalistic Shubra were two related, though at times antagonistic, tendencies in the Sunday school movement.

In the late-nineteenth century, Egypt was colonial, cosmopolitan, and host to both diverse ethnic groups and Protestant and Catholic missionaries. Tied to a wider world of ideas responding to the nation-state system and the challenges of modernity, a Social Gospel ethos informed the actions of Coptic Orthodox lay and clerical leaders. In its beginnings in the 1890s, Sunday school programs were used by reformers such as Habib Girgis (1876-1951) to combat conversion and illiteracy. As he opined in 1938, an embrace of religious education would

[16] Carolyn M. Ramzy, "Singing Heaven on Earth: Coptic Counter-Publics and Popular song at Egyptian Mulid Festivals," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 49.3 (2017): 375-394.

enhance "a strong moral spirit … toward the reform of the state of the people."[17] His biographer, Bishop Suriel, noted that Girgis "believed that an enlightened priesthood and an educated laity could work together in harmony to preserve Coptic faith and culture."[18] Socially minded spiritual reform took distinct shape first in Cairo between the 1890s and the 1940s, drawing on Presbyterian, especially evangelical notions of promoting religious nationalism to enact social regeneration—bringing the *light* of Christ to those living in *darkness*. By 1938, 85 Sunday school branches in Cairo and its provinces served new youth programs. A library and publishing house in Giza produced leaflets and pamphlets for distribution across the country. Between 1935 and 1942, the Sunday school movement grew rapidly with guarded patriarchal support and developed a hierarchical bureaucracy to meet the material needs of Coptic populations. At the close of the 1940s, a print culture was administered by a Central Committee that developed standardized curriculums, reports and budgets, communication networks, and organized missions to villages from Giza to Aswan.[19] Spiritual education was an effort by people in power to restore the primacy of the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt in opposition to external influences.

Habib Girgis, and his contemporaries, learned from and began to promulgate lofty ideals and tenets of European programs that inspired his interest in social progress, philosophical idealism, theological renewal, and the resurrection of the Coptic language and liturgical melodies. His Sunday school students, who later entered the new Clerical College in Mehmesha, Cairo under his tutelage, internalized his zeal and adapted part of his wide-reaching mission; gravitating to one of his objectives and seeking to realize their own brand of revival. Two prominent opposing conceptions of *Khidma* (service) emerged. The first was championed by

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[17] Habib Girgis quoted in Bishop Suriel, *Habib Girgis: Coptic Orthodox Educator and a Light in the Darkness* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2017): 25.
[18] Bishop Suriel, *Habib Girgis*, 31.
[19] Bishop Suriel, *Habib Girgis*, 68-69.

Saad Aziz (later Bishop Samuel) in Giza, who promoted an a priori conscientious *Khidma Maskuniyya* (social services). He was supported by contemporaries such as Yassa Hanna, Wahib Surial (later father Salib Surial) and Zarif Abdallah (later Father Boulos Boulos of Damanhour).[20] The second in Shubra looked to promote *Khidma Ruhiyya* (spiritual revival) under the leadership of Nazeer Gayed (later Bishop Shenouda) and his mentor Youssef Iskander (later father Matta al-Miskeen).[21] The two rival factions reflected the views of their leaders and Saad Aziz and Nazeer Gayed in particular embodied opposing sides in a struggle to define the role of the Church and community in Egyptian modernity.

A new generation of Egyptians in the 1930s challenged systemic parliamentary corruption and the power and authority of the monarchy. In reaction to an inflexible traditionalist clerical hierarchy, as historian Vivian Ibrahim detailed, *Al Ahram* and *Misr* newspapers routinely ran exposés in the interwar period on the backroom dealings of bishops under ineffectual and aged popes.[22] For many young Copts the revolutionary spirit in the public sphere continued following the Second World War and found its fullest expression in their churches. The Sunday school movement began first at St. Mary's church in the Fagallah district of Cairo in 1918. Its success served to channel youth activities away from political parties toward addressing a perceived neglect of social and spiritual services. Distinct approaches emerged from reform factions operating under increasingly divergent conceptions of *khidma* (service) in St. Mark's

[20] Youssef Iskander was born in 1919, supported Sunday school students with proceeds and stock from his family pharmacy after 1939, and graduated from the faculty of pharmacy in 1944. In 1948, he sold the pharmacy and took the name father Matta al-Miskeen (Matthew the Poor), becoming the pope's representative in Alexandria in 1956 and two years later he established a house for consecrated laymen in Helwan. In 1969, Pope Kyrillos VI sent them to the abandoned St. Mecarious monastery to restore it. Matta rejected both social work or political involvement in favour of theological revival to restore academic study and stem a perceived spiritual degradation in the Church.
[21] Close friend of Saad Aziz, father Salib Surial became a priest in Giza in 1948 and later established the Deacon's House in 1956 to train the next generation of leaders and servants. Ideas born in Cairo travelled to Alexandria with young clergy such as father Bishoi Kamel, who became a priest in 1960 in Alexandria and focused on the Shubra view of spiritual revival and political activism. His St. George's church in Sporting became a literary centre of spiritual learning. These revivalists established both grass roots support and communal participation to build their success, unlike the *Majli al-Milli* reformers discussed in chapter 1.
[22] Vivian Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt: The Challenges of Modernisation and Identity,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

church, Giza, and St. Anthony's church, Shubra. The success of reformers in mentoring and nurturing young Copts tied new generations of Sunday school students to their churches and produced a deep internal devotion marked by regular attendance at mass, Sunday school lessons, bible study groups, spiritual retreats, and the daily recitation of hymns and bible verses.

Egyptian cities witnessed the proliferation of benevolent societies and surreptitious church-building throughout the interwar period and, after a brief pause, following the Second World War. In Giza, a distinctly service-oriented ministry developed under Saad Aziz which elevated social involvement to a religious significance as expressed in prayers, hymns and publications on social awakening. Championing an optimistic view of human nature and high prospects for social reform, with its library and publishing house, Giza became a hub of pamphlet theology that took on civic engagement as a unifying principle. Shubra's Nazeer Gayed instead emphasized spiritual growth and moral enlightenment reflecting the idealism of the monastic world view now refashioned to promote a Christian Egyptian identity in the nation.[23]

The socialization of Aziz, Gayed and their contemporaries was equally shaped by their socio-economic status, exposure to global and local trends, and lived experience in distinct districts in Cairo. Saad Aziz was born in 1920 in the district of Giza. At the age of 19, he graduated from law school in Fouad First University. Unable to practice due to his young age, he studied at the American University in Cairo and the Clerical College before leaving as a Sunday school teacher in 1944 for Ethiopia. Upon his return in 1946, he was deeply influenced by his experiences as a missionary and made the decision to take monastic orders in 1948. In the mid-1950s his travels took him to a graduate program at Princeton University and to ecumenical

[23] Father Matta al-Miskeen's theological idealism reflected a third conception of *Khidma* '*lmiyya* (academic service), emphasizing the restoration of language and theology through ecumenical and intercultural exchange. Outside the focus of the current study, it must be noted that after the death of Bishop Samuel in 1981 competition between father Matta and Pope Shenouda dominated Church politics.

councils in the Americas, Europe and Asia. He was exposed to ideas derived from Protestant social justice, Catholic responses to the legacy of colonialism informed by liberation theology, and arguments for Christian universalism to challenge the negative impact of nationalism.[24]

By contrast, Nazeer Gayed was born in Asyut, Upper Egypt in 1923. His widowed mother died in childbirth and he was sent to live with a distant aunt in Shubra. He studied history in university, wrote poetry and served in the army as a conscript in the 1948 Palestine War. Involved in Egyptian politics most of his life, he also earned a degree from the Clerical College in 1949 and became editor of the *Sunday School Magazine* calling for reform within the Church. After taking monastic orders in 1954, he remained in a desert hermitage until he was consecrated as bishop in 1962 alongside Saad Aziz. His attitudes and insights were grounded in both the monastic ideal and Egyptian anti-colonial movements. From the 1930s to the 1980s, both men opposed one another as Sunday school leaders, bishops debating ecumenism and political activism and rivals for the papacy.

Nazeer Gayed's Shubra was a predominantly Coptic district and most of the students who met in St. Anthony's church grew up nearby. Saad Aziz's Giza was instead home to new immigrants to Cairo arriving for university from the Upper Egyptian governorates of Sohag, Beni Suef and Minya. Sunday school education at St. Mark's church was fashioned to allow for an accelerated program that saw them go on to be teachers and youth leaders. Aziz's Giza sought to oppose Presbyterian proselytizing precisely by adapting their methods. He championed social regeneration and spiritual uplift as the only path to Christ. An accelerated program of religious

[24] From 1962 until his death in 1981, Bishop Samuel kept annual KLM planners he gathered during flights which he filled with notes and scribbles during his many travels. Preserved in his brother's home, Bishop Samuel recorded the names and addresses of all immigrant Copts he visited and included summaries of ecumenical meetings. Words like "social justice," the "people's church," "liberation from poverty," and the "universal body of Christ" indicate the influence of such ideas on his conception of social welfare in both Egypt and Coptic immigrant communities. Currently in the possession of Kamal Maurice (the bishop's nephew) in Cairo, the files were retrieved by close friends and colleagues from the Bishopric of Public, Social and Ecumenical Services when Bishop Samuel died.

education allowed students new to the city to go forth in pairs and establish Sunday school classes in poor villages, often lacking either a priest or church. They hosted lessons for different age groups, impromptu liturgies through the use of a "portable altar" and provided pamphlets (on Coptic history, ritual and dogma) to educate the young, poor and illiterate—those ill-informed and ill-served and therefore most susceptible to missionaries.[25] The use of this simplified pamphlet theology offered a means to draw rural Coptic populations to the Church and strengthen the body of Christ through sound spiritual education with the concurrent hope of social services alleviating their material conditions. He saw a future where the material success of Copts would elevate them within the nation and offer leverage to establish equal relations with other denominations toward a unity of social services.

Immigrant Sami Boulos grew up with Saad Aziz. He recalled their meeting as pre-teens, after they entered the same secondary school in Shubra: "we found ourselves the youngest in the incoming class ... and [we were] Christians, so we gathered together and became inseparable. We remained friends until the end." Their religious and group loyalties as a unifying factor, he credited Saad Aziz with bringing him "closer to God" by inviting him to Sunday school meetings in the church. He joined contemporaries who rarely interacted with those of the Shubra church. A sense of "competition" pervaded Sami Boulos's memories of those days. Where Shubra saw its mission inside the church conducting meetings for bible study and promoting spiritual revival as the path to a distinct Coptic identity, "Giza would send people to serve in small villages … myself and three or four friends established several Sunday schools ... and this work is what made us look back on Egypt and say 'blessed are Egypt's people'."[26] Indeed, the system they built more than simply affected their life stories: a sense of ownership and pride at establishing

[25] A "portable altar" was fashioned out of wood and thin, light brass for father Makary and carried by youth travelling through Upper Egyptian villages in a case, along with liturgical tools and vestments.
[26] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10, 2017 (translated from Arabic).

the material infrastructure of Sunday schools in immigrants' internal narratives bound them to churches, friends and mentors. Now living in the United States, Sami Boulos and others treasured shared memories, preserved photographs and publications, and recited scripture from memory as markers of belonging to this group of church activists.

Image 4 Sunday School Students including Elhamy and Atef Mo'awad building Deacon's House in Giza, Cairo in 1956. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTION NURTURED COPTIC PIETY

In Egypt, Sunday school classes began quite simply at a grass-roots level to meet immediate needs. The obstacles youth met were material and at times frustrating. Immigrant Atef Mo'awad treasured stories his oldest brother Yassa Hanna shared of the early days, when four or five youth began meeting in Giza. Those "early pioneers," his brother and friends Saad Aziz, Wahib Surial and Zarif Abdullah, each had his own degree to pursue, whether law, engineering, or medicine. Yet "they started teaching themselves about the bible," he recalled.[27] Never an actual witness to

[27] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

those meetings, he felt personally connected to this history as much as to what he would later experience as a Sunday school youth leader because the death of his brother left him as a kind of caretaker of their stories. It all began modestly, and often behind the backs of priests who prayed "on Sunday and that's it." Giza students arranged Thursday meetings for bible study and planned social activities in the churches on Fridays. Parishes were poor, and it cost money when a building consumed gasoline, candle wax and electricity. In response to the clergy's objections, the group began raising funds independently to support their activities, "because they need [the priest] and need the church. This is the first nucleus for a Sunday school in Giza."[28]

This sense of ownership and responsibility developed further with an increasingly bureaucratic organizational structure and later informed university students' investment in spiritual education, fashioning a zeal for nurturing both their internal piety and that of others. As the administration of classes in the 1940s fell increasingly under the control of a Sunday School Central Committee operating out of the Clerical College, what continued to differentiate Giza youth from those in other districts in Cairo was the connection to Upper Egypt through the flow of immigrants from the countryside. During meetings, stories circulated about conversion at the hands of Muslim preachers, Protestant schools and Catholic missionaries in southern villages.[29] The concept of service took on a more social and proselytizing aspect, as youth leaders from Giza went to villages on Fridays after the liturgy. Pamphlets and books circulated throughout

[28] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[29] As early as 1941, a promotion movement in Cairo organized campaigns to establish Sunday schools in every church, town and village. Conventions and conferences were held and parents were urged to send their children frequently. Urban Copts conceived of the rural "peasant " as "naive, simple, ha[s] a deep belief in God. But he also suffers ignorance, poverty, and fanatic attitudes and superstitions." It was thus the responsibility of Sunday school leaders to bring to villages sound education and modern learning techniques. Father Makary al-Suriany [sic.], "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." Master's thesis in Religious Education, (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1955): 150-169.

Egypt, written by Habib Girgis and published by the Church. Now living in Chicago, Mo‘awad preserved “his books, because growing up these were the books [required] ... to be a servant.”[30]

As teenagers, Mo‘awad and Elhamy Khalil both joined Sunday school programs in Beni Suef and began preparatory courses to become youth leaders. “By the time I was in secondary school,” Atef Mo‘awad remembered, “every Friday after church we [took] the bus ... and the kids would be waiting at the bus stop and [cheering] and clapping. It was a very good experience … the Sunday school movement grew so fast and the Giza way of doing things started spreading in the country.”[31] In order to enact sustained change in the Church, revivalists entered monasteries to gain influence over Church affairs.

However, Shubra’s “different philosophy” for Mo‘awad inspired “a lot of debates” that to both he and Elhamy Khalil were striking and at times comedic. He confided with mirth that Shubra students often exclaimed in general conferences that “you cannot serve unless you are almost perfect [laughs]. [It] takes so many years to prepare you. In Giza ... we are all imperfect, the more we see the need the more we serve and the Lord will perfect us. And so we must work, we cannot wait.” In Atef Mo‘awad’s memories, “that was not good enough for Nazeer Gayed [laughs] ... as they were all young and enthusiastic they thought ... that his way is the only way ... and we used to be amused by it and enthusiastic about Giza versus Shubra.” Competition inspired active participation and “a great comradeship,” and involvement in the building of a strong Coptic piety dominated the free time of students who spent evenings and weekends in “prayer meetings, service meetings, picnics, [and] going on trips with the Sunday school.”[32] Their investment inculcated attentiveness to socially minded spiritual reform which became a part of their daily activities, producing a vested interest in a system they helped to create.

[30] Atef Mo‘awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[31] Atef Mo‘awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[32] Atef Mo‘awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

University education, early careers, Sunday school activities, and the odd social gathering encapsulate memories shared in common, both in Egypt and then later in North American cities in the late-1950s and 1960s. These were not just a collection of experiences but stories told through oral histories where "reality" was expressed in a language and rhetoric taking its authority from constructions of belonging to a group, a religion, or a nation. Personal stories and agency revealed the desires of the individual, greatly shaped by institutions and events around them.[33] Lay revivalists were mentors and friends, spiritual guides and individuals Sunday school youth could turn to for material support. That Aziz and Gayed rarely saw eye-to-eye had a profound impact on the memories shared with me. For Sami Boulos, "they weren't friends. They didn't like one another much. There was a bit of jealousy between them."[34] Such a tumultuous relationship between these two prominent figures became more heated throughout their clerical careers which produced intra-communal debates in North American Coptic communities.

While Mo'awad, Khalil, and other future immigrants participated in Sunday school activities in Egypt, revivalists entered monasteries in the late-1940s and 1950s. They were nurtured, supported and managed by father Mina (later Pope Kyrillos VI). Born Azer Youssef Atta in 1902, after finishing high school he worked as an accountant and customs officer for a British company in Alexandria. He left for the Baramous monastery and was consecrated father Mina al-Baramousi in 1928. Drawn to a life of contemplation and seeking solace and order away from material distractions, in 1933 he left the monastery because of disagreements with a traditionalist and authoritarian abbot. Father Mina moved into an abandoned windmill, earning the name father Mina al-Baramousi *al Motawahid bil Tahouna* (solitary in the Windmill). His pious reputation attracted Sunday school students and together they built the church of St. Mina

[33] Oral histories offer a window into the impact of events on people's lives. Such a shared history calls on the historian to aim for thick description which captures a rich tapestry of human action.
[34] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10, 2017 (translated from Arabic).

in old Cairo and "in a settlement house adjacent to the church, he trained students for the monastic life."[35] When he became abbot of the abandoned St. Samuel monastery in Minya, he sent Saad Aziz and Youssef Iskander to live there and renovate it. However, it was not recognized by the Coptic Church as a canonical monastery. [36] Though Saad Aziz was consecrated father Makary al-Samueli, the patriarchate feared the influence of young revivalists and ordered the monastery closed.[37] Fathers Matta and Makary turned to the Syrian Monastery in Wadi al-Natroun and were accepted by its abbot, Bishop Theophilus.[38]

At the time, Gayed was finishing his course at the Clerical College and pursuing a career as a journalist. His attitude toward a distinctly Coptic Orthodox Church was mirrored by his stringent nationalism as he continued to champion the cause of Christian Egyptians as both distinctly Coptic and uniquely Egyptian. In 1954, he joined his father confessor Matta al-Miskeen in the Syrian monastery and was consecrated father Anthony al-Suriani. Father Anthony later left with father Matta in 1956 for the desert, but they clashed and father Anthony returned to a desert cell near the monastery. He chose the life of a hermit and secluded himself in pursuit of spiritual meditation and contemplation.

In 1954 Pope Yusab II was invited to send representatives to the second meeting of the World Council of Churches. He was ready to ignore the invitation as he had in 1948 for the inaugural meeting. However, the pope was convinced by fathers Makary and Salib Surial to send

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[35] Wakin, *A Lonely Minority*, 111.

[36] The monastery of St. Samuel the Confessor (*Deir al-Qalamun*) was abandoned in the seventeenth century. After it was re-inhabited by father Isac al-Baramousi and ten monks who left al-Baramous monastery in 1896, Metropolitan Athanasius of Beni Suef installed father Mina Al-Baramousi as abbot in 1944. Teddawos Ava Mina and Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "Life of Pope Cyril VI (Kyrillos VI)," in Gawdat Gabra and Hany Takla eds., *Christianity and Monasticism in Northern Egypt: Beni Suef, Giza, Cairo, and the Delta*, (Oxford UP, 2017): 178.

[37] Letter from father Mina to father Makary, Cairo, November, 10, 1954 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California). Rumors and "attacks" against father Mina and his students were circulating, decrying the monastery and the monks of this new generation.

[38] On consecration, a monk is given the name of a saint and his last name becomes that of his monastery. When consecrated a bishop, yet another name is chosen.

them as representatives.[39] They were joined by scholars Iris Habib al-Masry and Aziz Surial Atiya (who later emigrated to Utah) and travelled to Evanston, Illinois. While at the assembly, the delegation met with and led a few Coptic immigrants in worship, mostly visiting university students and lecturers. Father Makary was invited to stay in the United States and given a scholarship to complete a Masters in Religious Education at Princeton. In his 1955 thesis, he warned that the Coptic Church was at a crossroads and "to meet the needs of the changing world" it must adapt its programs for Christian education "to share in solving the ethical and social problems of the surrounding environment." Yet adaptation at no point meant stripping the Church of its doctrine or tradition, rather the path lay in the success of his Sunday school "contemporary program [which] by its varieties shows how the Church could admit all progressive methods of education because the basis and principles are rooted in its teachings and encouraged by its traditions."[40] While in the United States, father Makary travelled, celebrating mass in rented churches and visited established associations, such as the Organization of Arab Students in the United States, to learn of their organizational structure.[41]

He became the central immigrant "broker," an ethnic leader who acted as intermediary between Egyptians and governments, institutions, or organizations in Canada and the United States.[42] His influence only grew after his designation as bishop, charged with responsibility for

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[39] Often maligned in historical accounts, Iris Habib al-Masry joined the delegation to Evanston as the only female delegate of the Coptic Church and was subsequently appointed liaison officer to the WCC, and the only woman on the committee. Former lecturer in history at the Coptic Seminary and the Institute of Coptic Studies, she was born 1918 to a wealthy Coptic family and received a bachelor's in Education from Maria Grey College, London in 1938 and encouraged to write her *History of the Coptic Orthodox Church* by father Makary (later Bishop Samuel). She pursued her studies for the multi-volume project at Dropsie College, Philadelphia in the 1950s.

[40] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt," 178-179. In his introduction, father Makary outlined that he aimed "to correct" our understanding of the Copts and their role in forming "the nation" by writing from an insider perspective often "misunderstood by western writers ... 'alien in race or hostile in creed.'" Attesting to a belief in the civilizational superiority of the Copts, his background chapters rely on European scholarship to make the argument that Egyptians are "white men of the Mediterranean race" and "are considered from the same origin as the European races" with "no evidence of Negro blood."

[41] Iris Habib al-Masry, *Bishop Samuel of Public and Social Services* (al-Mehaba Bookstore, Cairo: 1986): 115-122.

[42] Lisa R. Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1885-1945*, (Oxford UP, 2010).

immigrant communities in North America, Australia and Europe between 1962 and 1972. As a youth leader, his attraction to the monastic life and hopes for socially minded spiritual reform within the Church and community were part of the same overarching goal of empowering "social teaching" to support "a subject race."[43] For father Makary, the Coptic Church was "indigenous, an integral part of the Egyptian life" and Copts must endeavour "to preserve their suffering church ... which comes today out of its shell of pains unchanged, unmodified, as a hidden pearl or a living museum of genuine Christianity."[44] Such heritage and tradition may be enhanced and not diluted by sound religious education and services in "every church activity, even ritual or social."[45] Echoing the language of Christian reform and decolonized Christian universalism, whereby the faith may be extended to all persons without exception, he challenged orientalist assumptions of the East. "Modern science," he argued, cannot be divorced from religion or look upon faith as "retardness [sic.] ... practiced by the ignorant." Instead, the sound "oriental" adapted their "heritage without feeling severe conflicts between religion and the modern life."[46]

Writing in a self-reflective narrative style, father Makary regularly looked back to his leadership in the Sunday school movement and his own "earnest" missionary efforts in Ethiopia. His commitment to a localized missionary church shaped his approach to the immigrants' church, which came to privilege adapting services for immigrants depending on to local needs. Yet this adaptation was geared toward the service of a "nationalistic movement" to define and extend "the Church of Egypt."[47] As a missionary and evangelical body, the church had to adapt to its environment, and Egyptian Copts had to maintain "loyalty to their church and their country." Father Makary argued that as "zealous church members," it was the enduring

[43] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." 15.
[44] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." 53.
[45] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." 75.
[46] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." 116-117.
[47] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." 44.

responsibility of community leaders to restrain and structure modernity through sound spiritual education and the eminence of faith in everyday life. His vision promoted a "campaign" of social programming which included training centres for the diaconate, apprenticeship, skilled trades, and young mothers that met needs vital to the changing daily lives of its adherents.[48]

A social, egalitarian and collectivist Christianity emerges in father Makary's writing. Fellowship came not only through singing hymns, rote learning and bible study, but also "the meeting of the congregation [which] gives a practical lesson in the equality of classes and races, when the poor stand beside the rich, and when white and black worship together." His church is indeed familiar, it is based in the language of inclusion and civic responsibility common to analogous developments in major ecumenical debates across North America and Europe. Religion could not be "isolated from everyday life," argued father Makary (an idea later championed by his students). Rather, "it is life in the society. It is our daily relation with God and with the community."[49] The Church and its educated, active clergy and laity had to do the work formerly left to benevolent societies and reach into the home, gathering the faithful, meeting their everyday needs by supporting the "traditional" Coptic family as it developed in the world. The Sunday school curriculum at the heart of this approach included plays, hymns and rhymes, biographies and hagiographies, lectures, discussions, and audio-visual aids such as diagrams, posters, images, and film. Social activities were to be educational so adherents immersed themselves in the faith and became as Christ. In that manner, no matter how far they travelled, Copts remained invested in "the Coptic Church of Egypt."[50]

Before he could pursue doctoral studies at Princeton, father Makary was called back to teach in the Clerical College in Cairo. He took the opportunity, in both his classes and in newly

[48] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." 128.
[49] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." 130.
[50] Makary al-Suriany, "Ancient and Contemporary Christian Education in the Coptic Church of Egypt." 156-158.

established Sunday schools, to turn the results of his ruminations into reality. In order to offer material services and tie Copts closer to their Church, he sought to broaden their horizons and connections and rejuvenate the Coptic hospital and Coptic schools. He encouraged Sunday school leaders to pursue graduate education in the United States and Canada. In this way, young and highly educated physicians and teachers may return to Egypt with knowledge of new technologies and techniques, and funnel money from foreign charities into medical projects in Egypt through their extended social and intellectual circles.

In 1957, new papal elections resulted in the young revivalist monks, fathers Matta al-Miskeen, Makary al-Suriani and Anthony al-Suriani coming in first, second and third place. Their influence over Coptic youth through Sunday schools, speeches and publications was evident. The Holy Synod and lay council were shocked and scrambled to change the rules of nomination. By government decree on 3 November 1957 they limited the number of voters, stipulated candidates must be at least 40 years old, and must have spent 15 years as a monk. Deep anger over this move led the monks and their followers to nominate their once father confessor Mina al-Baramousi.[51] In January 1958, the government permitted another election in support of the Holy Synod.[52] Sunday school youth such as Elhamy Khalil and Atef Mo‘awad travelled throughout the country circulating petitions and encouraging those eligible to vote in elections to support their candidate. In May 1959 father Mina was consecrated Pope Kyrillos VI who then proceeded to strike a tough balance between traditionalists and revivalists. Detail-oriented and seeking to surround himself with dedicated and capable advisors, the pope first

[51] Traditionally, the Holy Synod and Lay Council nominate candidates in papal elections. Those deemed unqualified are dismissed, until five to seven candidates remain, who are then brought to a vote by eligible members. A mass is held to designate the final three, whose names are placed in a glass chalice and a child (hand of God) selects a name.
[52] Wakin, *A Lonely Minority*, 110-111.

elected father Makary as his secretary, and on 30 September 1962 consecrated fathers Makary and Anthony as general bishops to integrate them into the Holy Synod.

Throughout his ministry, Bishop Samuel opened vocational training centers, distributed vaccinations in isolated villages and provided medical aid and literacy classes to the needy. Bishop Shenouda established *al-Kiraza* Magazine. Arguing that the Church could not be isolated from politics, he fought for the collective rights of Copts. In reaction Pope Kyrillos consecrated Bishop Gregorious in 1967 in an attempt to reduce Shenouda's power and influence which threatened the tenuous peace between Church and state.[53] Bishop Samuel held the largest general bishopric, overseeing Public, Ecumenical and Social Services, Bishop Shenouda oversaw Religious Education, and Bishop Gregorius took control of part of Shenouda's former mandate: Coptic Higher Studies. As their Sunday school leaders climbed the ranks of the clerical hierarchy, Coptic immigrants began associational activities in New York that concurrently bore the mark of sacred and secular cultures nurtured in Egypt.

In our conversations, Elhamy Khalil and Atef Mo'awad were quick to point out that their experiences and activities in the United States were very much informed by socialization in the Giza Sunday school. Even after emigration, looking back on his twenties, Mo'awad exclaimed: "I am a Giza guy."[54] Gayed's Shubra faction asserted loudly and often, through the *Sunday School Magazine* and in speeches, that thoughtful reflection meant preserving a pure and distinct Coptic Orthodox identity. Accelerated education, a focus on mission work, emigration, and openness to external models, Gayed insisted, would only corrupt the Church further. As a consequence of differing philosophies toward religious and social services, many of the earliest

[53] Bishop Gregorious was born Wahib Attalah in 1919 and, after high school, went directly to the theological seminary in 1936. He was part of the Shubra Sunday school, though after leaving the theological seminary in 1944, he received a Master's in Egyptian antiquities in 1952 and a PhD. in Coptic linguistics in 1955 from the University of Manchester, and his thoughts came to align with Giza Sunday school leaders.
[54] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

professional immigrants and Coptic clergy to the United States were not aligned with the Shubra school. Based on oral history interviews, records of correspondence and membership in voluntary associations, early Copts spoke little of Nazeer Gayed prior to his consecration as bishop. Only by the early 1970s, did new immigrants who felt his influence first as bishop and then later as pope, alter the orientation of parishes outside Egypt (discussed in chapter 5). Societal marginalization and continued economic decline in Egypt following the death of Nasser led Copts to emigrate in greater numbers and the rhetoric of a reluctant higher clergy consequently softened considerably on the topic of emigration.

FROM GIZA TO MANHATTAN: EMIGRATION FOR THE COPTIC CHURCH OF EGYPT

Immigrants shared stories of Bishop Samuel that reflect both his influence on their religious education and the many interconnections between family and friends who helped lay the groundwork for a movement that affected every aspect of their social worlds. Atef Mo‘awad was born in 1935 and grew up in Beni Suef, Upper Egypt. He remembers village life from the perspective of someone who went to university in urban Cairo and travelled through New York, New Jersey and other North American cities, before settling in Chicago as a prominent gynecologist and university professor. Beni Suef, in his childhood, consisted of unpaved streets where folklore troops visited weekly to fill evening soundscapes with music and dance. For students, the initial rural to urban migration to attend university was far more of a surprise than later emigration to the United States. When he arrived in Cairo in 1951, to attend Fouad First University with Elhamy Khalil, Atef Mo‘awad was filled with a sense of pride and youthful adventure. In fact, “we were proud because everyone in Beni Suef call[ed] us doctor and we were not even 16 years old yet [laughter].” They joined his brothers in Giza, renting a three-room

apartment where they divided household tasks amongst themselves. For seven years they made friends and explored this new urban metropolis, a far cry from their rural upbringing:

> there was a tram. We don't have trams in Beni Suef. There [were] public buses. We don't have public buses in Beni Suef. Some of the kids in school in Beni Suef used to come on a donkey, and park the donkey by the side of the school [laughter]. And there [were] neon signs, electrical signs and shops and all that, especially in the centre of Cairo. [We took] the tram number 15 from Giza and go to the centre of Cairo and walk in the street where there is this neon sign. This was a big thing for us coming from the countryside [laugh].[55]

That sense of wonder and exploration was accompanied by a rigorous class schedule and involvement in local Sunday school activities. Yet for Atef Mo'awad, as for his immediate relations, the social impact of the Free Officers revolution deeply affected their views on politics. As discussed in preceding chapters, the revolution ushered in military control of government, a surveillance state under Nasser and his secret police, and Egyptianization programs coupled with support for regional anti-colonial movements that led to a state of austerity. This was reflected in the kinds of associations available on university campuses. Prior to the attempted assassination of Nasser by the Muslim Brotherhood in spring 1954, Mo'awad recalls how "the Muslim Brothers were actually very popular between [sic] the students. And there were a lot of speeches, demonstrations, all that kind of stuff." Other associations were either "outlawed" or small and ineffectual, such as "the Nationalist Front [*al gabha al watania*], meaningless of course." When the Muslim Brotherhood was also outlawed in 1954, "that was done with ... let's put it this way: during Nasser's time there was really no democracy of any kind, it was plain dictatorship." Coptic university students experienced continued government corruption under the military regime and little opportunity for political participation. Echoing sentiments shared by other

[55] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

church activists, Mo‘awad confided that “patriotic” demonstrations rarely garnered attention among classmates.[56] Instead, Coptic students channeled their activities toward church services.

While Sami Boulos was in New York as part of a government exchange program, Elhamy Khalil and Atef Mo‘awad were finishing medical school in December 1957 and starting internships in Cairo University hospital. Mo‘awad wanted to go into gynecology, a field which no Copt could enter in Egypt because it was forbidden by law for a Christian to examine a Muslim woman. As a result, staying in Cairo meant that he had to resign himself to a career in another field or as a general practitioner. In his final year, father Makary invited Mo‘awad to his office and encouraged both he and Elhamy Khalil to emigrate: “we were both Sunday school teachers in Giza … so he came to me and Elhamy and said, ‘how about you go to the United States?’”[57] Thereafter, father Makary worked diligently through his contacts in the World Council of Churches and its national affiliates to procure scholarships for Coptic university students. Many of the earliest immigrants to the US credit him with their scholarships from the Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG).

Education was a means to a better life, but not an end in itself. Early Coptic immigrants left with the hope of returning to Egypt. Atef Mo‘awad and Elhamy Khalil had personal reasons for travelling to the United States. Where Mo‘awad dreamt of entering the field of gynecology, with his sights set on pediatrics, Khalil knew it would be difficult to continue in Cairo given that “the professor was a Muslim Brotherhood person.” He confided that it was common for many to “go to England, and I would have probably gone to England too if my father had money to send me.” With expanding opportunities in the United States as a result of the economic boom

[56] Atef Mo‘awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[57] Atef Mo‘awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

following the Second World War, university hospitals opened their doors to foreign graduates.[58] This created the atmosphere that allowed foreign graduates to apply for an equivalency exam after 1957. Father Makary's promise of a job upon their return to Egypt meant the move was temporary. Few seriously planned to stay in the United States.

Stringent controls on securing exit visas from Egypt frustrated Elhamy Khalil and Atef Mo'awad. They expressed sentiments shared by other immigrants and outlined in reports by senior North American government officials that exit visas required approval from the army, Egyptian revenue services and the department of national security, among others. Additionally, Elhamy Khalil recalled that university professors hesitated to write letters of recommendation to US universities lest they be accused of treason or espionage as a result of tense relations between the United States and Egypt. Consequently, he searched out a "Coptic physician willing to write the letter, even though I had never been taught by her." A national security officer came and interviewed him in his apartment. The officer pressed him: "why do you want to go to America, the land of the enemy?" Father Makary had given him slides of the pyramids and historic sites in advance. Elhamy Khalil pulled them out and, "I told him, I am going to America to advertise the greatness of Egypt. He said, 'good, good, good' [laughs]." In our conversation, Khalil's tone shifted and where once his voice was filled with a long-past trepidation he became almost sardonic recalling how the security officer then asked "if I had any medical samples from pharmaceutical companies" for his own needs.[59] Khalil's clearance was secured, and his memory of Egypt—as a land of both securitization and corruption—colour his recollections to this day.

In more than a dozen profiles of Coptic immigrants received and published by Sami Boulos in his *The History of the Early Coptic Community in the USA* (2006), similar frustrations

[58] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[59] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

accompany a repeated pattern of step-migration, signifying that movement was a fact of life for many Coptic professionals. They were all highly active and pragmatic migrants who were tied together by the goal of finding better career opportunities and a commitment to maintaining their religious activities. For instance, Dr. Haroun Mahrous completed his PhD in Switzerland in 1951. Returning briefly to work in Egypt, he secured a position as associate professor in New York in 1954. Many such as Dr. Wadie Mikhail arrived after 1957 on Egyptian-American exchange missions to the United States for doctoral degrees. His decision to stay at IBM in 1960 resulted in threats of imprisonment and his being sued by the Egyptian government for failing to return. He paid the fine, remained, and married an American woman. Similarly, Dr. Maher Kamel, a graduate of Fouad First university and recipient of research scholarships in France and Switzerland, arrived in Jersey City in 1958 to lecture at the state university. Kamel not only paid the required fines for failing to return, but also struggled for two years to bring his wife Leila and their son to join him. Early immigrants were supported materially or emotionally (through exchanging letters of comfort) by father Makary and later formed the nucleus of the Coptic Association of America (CAA).

Coptic immigrants who settled in North American cities reflect the changing composition, orientation and dynamics of international Egyptian migration following the Second World War. Young professionals realized that in order to build financial security and stability they had to emigrate, and decisions to relocate abroad were rarely unidirectional. Attending to their material needs, teaching opportunities and graduate education drew single, middle-class professionals such as Dr. Amal Boctor. He arrived to begin a PhD at MIT in 1962 and subsequently stayed on to lecture in New York. He joined Dr. Fouad Zaki who completed his PhD in Egypt in 1949, left for a research position in Germany, then moved to the United States

on a Fulbright scholarship in 1956, and finally settled in New York by 1960 after a brief stint teaching in Egypt. Examples of such step-migration abound, as do the requisite connections to US business and academia which allowed for immigration to the United States. A job or acceptance in a graduate program opened doors for such migrants as Dr. Fakhry Gurigis. On arrival they either met in an immigrant's home for bible study or worshiped in St. Nicholas Syrian Orthodox Church in Brooklyn. Often newly arrived single male immigrants and young families were drawn into this emergent Coptic immigrant community through past connections made in Egypt's Sunday schools and on church outings.

Elhamy Khalil and Atef Mo'awad arrived in New York City on 4 June 1959 aboard the S.S. Columbus. With a medical equivalency exam weighing on them upon arrival, they chose to travel by boat in order to accommodate their 80-pound suitcases filled with textbooks. Their excitement was attenuated by the distress expressed by parents at their departure. Elhamy Khalil's parents cried because they did not know if they would see him again.[60] Seeing emigration as a temporary adventure, Wafik Habib who joined them six months later, confided that his mother cried: "*Allah yīta' Columbus we sinyyn Columbus* (God cut down Columbus and his age)."[61]

Immigrants initially expressed every intention of returning. The J1 Visa they secured was intended for a maximum of five years of study. Elhamy Khalil saw the excursion as a wondrous adventure of visiting a country he had read of in books and seen glimpses of in movies in Cairo cinemas. Their journey by boat was filled with excitement, from the Lebanese and Jordanian bunkmates to the socializing on deck. The voyage as a temporary adventure filled with discovery. While the majority of those interviewed traveled by plane and only a few stopped

[60] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[61] Wafik and Mona Habib, interviewed in New Jersey, August 20, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

along the way in London or Paris, Mo‘awad and Khalil recall a transition from austerity to abundance aboard ship. They were surprised to learn from the waiter that nothing was off limits, not even steak. Indeed, Khalil confided with jovial merriment: “I said steak for the morning!?” Though they spent most of their time studying, conversations on deck livened up their travels as they met other students whose final destinations were North American or European cities for summer internships. Nearing the docks, “everybody went on the deck of the ship and clapped when we saw the Statue of Liberty.” Elhamy Khalil cried when he recalled this particularly poignant memory. For him, “it was the beginning of an adventure. It was amazing!” Long lines and customs checks figured little in our conversation because he felt welcomed as an immigrant to the United States and his emotion at sharing such an experience was palpable.[62]

They were met by Wagdi Elias Abdel Messiah (later father Marcos A. Marcos), then completing his Masters in ethnomusicology in Connecticut with a scholarship facilitated by father Makary. He had asked for his *oud* (short-necked lute), a piece of home that Mo‘awad and Khalil dutifully carried with them from Egypt. Abdel Messiah drove them to accommodations at Sloan’s House, a YMCA hostel on 34th Street near Times Square, and returned to his studies. Having left Egypt with $60 USD, they now had to survive on the $32 that remained. Both on the voyage and after arrival in New York, Khalil took charge of budgeting expenses. The YMCA room at two dollars a night was the best they could afford. Though interviewed separately, both men laughed when recalling Mo‘awad’s excessive spending. In those first few weeks after leaving the port of Alexandria, as in their rented apartment in Cairo, their’s was a homosocial relationship of mutual dependency.

[62] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

Image 5 Elhamy and Atef Mo'awad touring New York, 1959. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

Mundane exchange calculations, discoveries they shared, and basic survival occupied their minds. How could they make their money last? Deli sandwiches were too expensive at 70 cents each. Instead, as they walked through the streets they discovered a rotisserie and bought a whole chicken for 99 cents. That and a baguette, they reasoned, could feed them for a day. Yet they had been warned by management when they checked in: no food allowed in the rooms. Khalil fondly recalled their ingenuity at finding a *New York Times* newspaper and wrapping the chicken inside. They snuck up to their room, locked the door behind them and:

> shortly thereafter we had the *New York Times* paper on the floor and the chicken in pieces. The cleaning lady came and knocked on the door, and I said 'oh my God ... she's gonna find us!' So we didn't say anything ... And that was the wrong thing, because [laughs] when she figured we are not here she opened the door to clean the room. She was in shock! Two boys sitting on the floor eating and breaking pieces of a chicken with their hands over a newspaper [laughs]. She closed the door right away and left.[63]

Personal and intimate stories such as these provide a window on what emigration could have meant to young Copts. New York City was new, exciting and at times shocking. It was not the busy streets, tall buildings, or latest fashions that caught their eye. Such a bustling metropolis

[63] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

was to them much like the Cairo they left behind.[64] Instead, it was the often routine "culture shocks" of everyday life that affected Egyptian migrants practiced in navigating metropolitan cities. For instance, Elhamy Khalil couldn't believe the YMCA showers were communal. The idea of taking your clothes off in front of other people seemed so "foreign" and he insisted on only showering when no one else was around. They learned to adjust to New York, relying on familiar strategies to comprehend new experiences. Navigating the subway system was a challenge, but to make their limited budget last walking was preferable to the 10 cents for a ticket. They visited museums and saw the sites, and Elhamy Khalil confided that, "Radio City was the best." For a dollar they enjoyed a full day of shows, a justifiable expense.[65] It was the first time either saw snow fall, the "beautiful white powder" they had only witnessed "in American movies years earlier." The street-corner preachers were a strange sight, which prompted admiration for US "courage and freedom of expression."[66] Money was however running out, and their travels took them to old friends and new experiences according to a schedule planned by the monk who encouraged their emigration and later involvement in Coptic associational life in North America.

FORMING ETHNO-RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS DESPITE GEOGRAPHIC DISPERSION

Endeavouring to strengthen the ecumenical relations of the Coptic Orthodox Church, father Makary instructed the pair to travel to Chicago to attend the Medical Missionaries in Africa conference as representatives for the Coptic Orthodox Church to the National Council of the

[64] The Copts were already urbanized, similar to Jewish immigrants, and entered the US and Canada at a somewhat higher level than other new immigrants, who were mostly labourers or agriculturalists. Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: the Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," in Herbert Gans, *Making Sense of America: Sociological Analyses and Essays*, (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999): 168-169.
[65] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[66] Elhamy Khalil, *Out of Egypt Volume II, An Immigrant's Odyssey in North America*, (self-published, 2019).

Churches of Christ in the USA. They delivered a joint paper on Coptic contributions to universal Christianity and were invited to the home of Dr. Youssef Abdou (a migrant who later made the decision to return and be ordained father Abdou of Zamalek, Cairo).[67] Atef Mo'awad and Elhamy Khalil contacted over a dozen immigrants under the direction of father Makary, many of whom arrived to begin professional occupations with connections to US industry and academia. While several likewise secured a J1 Visa under the Cold War ECFMG, both support from local clergy in Egypt and ongoing cultural exchange programs facilitated the movement until the late-1960s.[68] For instance, the Fullbright educational exchange program operating in Egypt served United States interests in promoting and promulgating US perspectives and local sympathies. In the 1950s, US President Eisenhower had opposed congressional cuts and fought to protect the program which ran well into the 1960s and was supported by the Office of Information and Cultural Affairs, the Library of Congress and Princeton University.[69]

When their residencies began in July 1959, Elhamy Khalil moved to Newark and Atef Mo'awad to Elizabeth, New Jersey. Six months later, Wafik Habib arrived and joined Mo'awad in Elizabeth as a urology intern. At that time, each lived in residency at the hospital and were on-call. In the first few years, they went "where your bread and butter is," Khalil confided, and work consumed most of their time. Successful immigrants scattered to various towns and cities upon arrival, to live near the hospitals and universities where they studied and worked. Informal ethnic association was spearheaded by local members of the group, binding professional Copts engaged

[67] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[68] An examination of alumni records at the American University in Cairo (AUC) Special Collections reveals a transnational student body. Many graduates left to work in the United States, England, Canada, and several states in the Middle East such as Iraq, Syria and Jordan. This is supported by oral history interviews conducted by the head archivist with alumni for a digital oral history project accessible through the AUC Library online portal.
[69] J. Vaughan, *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1954-1957,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): 77.

in demanding occupations to an ethno-religious consciousness that converged in understandings of their place in US society and their role as members of the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt.

From the beginning, their quality of life was noticeably different. Recalling his internship in Cairo, Elhamy Khalil stated that in Egypt a young physician could not express an opinion or argue with the professor, or anyone older. To explain to me the rules by which this patriarchal and hierarchical society operated, he referred to an old Arabic saying: "Do not argue with your superiors. If you argue with your parents, they threaten you with a beating. If you argue with government officials, they threaten you with prison. If you argue with the clergy, they threaten you with the fires of hell [laughs]." Evoking the "liberty," "equality" and "opportunity" in US hospitals, Elhamy Khalil celebrated the fact that "everybody is a mister. The janitor is a mister and the head of the hospital is a mister. That was kind of illuminating to me. But I missed my family."[70] Road trips, letters home and socializing helped to attenuate that longing. Khalil bought a camera with what remained of his first pay cheque and used it to send colour pictures back to family in Egypt. Recalling the photographic explorations of an adventurous youth, he asserted that his letters home brought comfort to parents and siblings who "sent letters regularly. At that time it would take six days ... so every two weeks there was a letter coming or going."[71] The pictures he sent back, of road trips to Niagara Falls and farms in upstate New York, were shared with pride among friends.

On weekends, when they were not on-call, Mo'awad, Khalil and Habib paid a 15 cent bus fare to New York City and explored the museums and sites. In time, their network grew and East Coast social gatherings for bible study were regular features in their lives, sometimes held in the

[70] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic). This insight by Elhamy Khalil and others interviewed support arguments by Charles Taylor on "the politics of recognition." Identity and the sense of first-class citizenship were affected by equal recognition and dignity in democratic societies. Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," 25-28.
[71] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

home of Maher Kamel in Jersey City—the first to buy a house. Dr. Maher Kamel, twice their age and a married professor in Jersey City State College, invited them to events such as the "Day of Egypt," which he organized on campus in 1960 with the assistance of an Egyptian delegation to the United Nations. Importing Egyptian industrial products, he planned an evening filled with food, films and music for 200 attendees and moderated speeches by members of the Egyptian immigrant community. Activities such as this, which Sami Boulos compared to "an ambassadorial mission in service of the homeland" intertwined both Church and nation as a part of feeling a sense of belonging within US ethnic particularity.[72] The religious pull of the Coptic Orthodox Church underscored both their activism and social education. The power of ethnic self-identification in US cities amplified the continuities in their transnational existence. Living and working in US cities, both Coptic heritage and Egyptian national belonging as publicly celebrated in conferences and commemorative events lent coherence and a comprehensible trajectory to their paths and commitments.

Image 6 Arabic music performance for "Day of Egypt" at Jersey City State College, 1960. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

[72] Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 26.

The story at the core of Coptic theology is of survival and perseverance. Thus their's was a response to a call to perform their tasks conscientiously as religious subjects whose obligation was to persist in their faith.[73] The habituated piety of socially minded spiritual reform inculcated in Egypt remained a mainstay of their everyday lives. All three young men joined the International Christian Student Society and travelled across the United States to be hosted in the homes of Anglo-Americans. They were invited to give sermons and led Sunday school classes. In at least a dozen Protestant churches, Khalil spoke of Egyptian Christianity and its Pharaonic heritage. Letters to clergy in the homeland brought news of the latest outreach to Anglo-American Christians. By the later 1950s, neoconservative understandings of the United States as a land of welcome and opportunity informed the readiness of Americans to embrace an Egyptian Christianity which they might credit themselves for allowing to flourish outside the land of bondage. As historian Matthew Frye Jacobson argued, "the immigrant saga has had a profound influence on American conservatism" and "supplied the normative version of the family" by which ethnic "incorporation and advancement" could be used to measure the failings of those deemed lacking and inassimilable.[74] Copts elaborated on their identity and made a place among other denominations, insisting on their ancient *and* living tradition. Socialization occurred without the structure of a cohesive neighbourhood, but rather followed familiar patterns around strong networks sustained through participation in church activities. In letters shared among new immigrants to the United States, quotations from the bible were passed on as comforting messages. In time the publication and distribution of newsletters, magazines and cassette tapes

[73] I rely in this instance on Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation, which describes the process by which ideology as embodied in major social and political institutions constituted the very nature of individual subjects' identities through "hailing" in social interactions. This call and response dynamic is detailed in Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," (1970) in Ben Brewster trans., *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, (New York: Monthly Review, 2002): 127-186.
[74] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 204.

(with recordings of sermons, liturgical chants and hymns) tied Cairo and Alexandria to developing communities across North American cities.

Problems with the Egyptian government—both the obstacles when leaving and struggling to get family out—left a mark on the ways immigrants remembered and talked about Egypt in the United States. They chose to stay most often for upward mobility, and grew increasingly disillusioned with the Egyptian government because lawsuits were filed against them for failing to return after the term of their exchange ended. Nevertheless, the continued influence of mentors in Egypt habituated church activists to respond to a call to promote the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt. Their successful professional lives were complemented by dedication to worship and establishing local church services to meet their needs. These grew more pressing after 1968 when the Hart-Celler act inaugurated a shift to non-sponsored immigration that resulted in a surge of Egyptian immigrants to New York and New Jersey. Dr. Khairy Malek and Ramses Awadallah and his wife exemplify these changing patterns of immigration, leaving Cairo where they were born and raised to begin their own pharmacies or consulting businesses.[75] As the US relaxed its immigration policy to movement from Middle Eastern countries, migration from Egypt directly to the United States increasingly became commonplace and accessible.

CONTINUED *KHIDMA* AND THE CHURCH ACTIVISM OF EARLY IMMIGRANTS

In 1962, Bishops Samuel and Shenouda were consecrated and disagreements between the two multiplied over the role of the Church in the nation. Bishop Samuel increasingly championed ecumenical unity of service—the notion that economic power through western education, technologies and relations with foreign religious charities was the only way to support the Church and community in Egypt. Copts were required to unite with stronger and wealthier forces

[75] Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 11-25.

and thereby make Christians indispensible to the needs of the ruling regime. Bishop Shenouda's stance remained rooted in the fundamentalism of the St. Anthony school of thought, including a profound distrust of the ecumenical movement that influenced and financed social work in Egypt. As general bishop of Religious Education, Shenouda continued his focus on raising a new generation of middle-class clergy and laity in the theology and traditions of the Church. His growing following saw ecumenicists like Bishop Samuel as 'crypto-protestants,' because they were less concerned with Egyptian nationalism and preserving the Orthodoxy of the Coptic Church and more with social work and debates on poverty in the Third World that reflected evangelical preoccupations.[76]

Bishop Samuel oversaw immigrant populations, engaged young professionals with the task of establishing associational activities and promoting religious education, and supported the development of parishes not only in North America, but also in Australia and across Europe. Pope Shenouda divested bishop Samuel of these responsibilities in 1972, less than a year after ascending the papal throne. In response, Samuel's followers refused to accept his marginalization and sought to preserve his role in their churches. Bishop Samuel had influenced the character of church activism in Canada as much as the United States. Letters were sent from immigrant parishes to friends and mentors in Egypt. In one such letter to Yassa Hanna, sent from Toronto in 1974, Yohanna al-Raheb who had begun publishing a magazine out of a newly established library and bookstore in St. Mark's parish acknowledged Bishop Samuel "by whose tireless efforts we have come to these lands." He argued that the loss of the bishop threatened the "good work" of North American parishes and "we pray that those in charge will recognize the wrong

[76] Throughout his ecumenical travels, Bishop Samuel was influenced by discussions of the practical applications of Christianity in a changing world. Innumerable references to social justice, the liberating force of Christ in the world, and the solution to nationalisms being the wholeness in Christ of the universal Church dot his files. His participation, dictation and choice to preserve these documents affirm his internationalist belief in a universal Christianity united by a social Christian message (Kamal Maurice collection, Cairo).

situation today and return Bishop Samuel to oversee the seed he planted by his effort, sweat and tears for 20 years ... [to] provide services from his deep spiritual love to continue [the Church's] mission."[77] Bishop Samuel's influence was indeed far-reaching, and his continued brokering on behalf of immigrants until his death in October 1981 is evident throughout this study.

Adopting a multipolar approach to ideas about religious reform and church activism, I have argued that a deep internal piety and external organizational activities were born of responses by Coptic clergy and laity in Egypt to challenges posed by decolonization, urbanization and anxieties occasioned by modernity, as well as larger conversations around the Islamic revival and universalism of Christianity. Though Anglo-American missionaries did not use the phrase, the localized reaction to Protestant, especially Presbyterian, attempts to inculcate a literate emphasis on Christian worship led Social Gospel thought to flourish in the Egyptian context. Yet the colonial encounter did not simply inspire emulation of the west. Ideas in circulation were adapted by active local populations with movements in Cairo and Alexandria. Egypt's modern nation-state system challenged religious institutions in distinct ways. The Social Gospel movement documented in North American religious history did not materialize in Egypt. Instead, it has succeeded in the Egyptian context by contending with the challenges of modern living in order to retain Coptic adherents amid political and economic turmoil.

As the Egyptian state fashioned its language and institutions around an increasingly secular political culture, Coptic proponents of socially minded spiritual reform succeeded in expanding social services and gathering a popular base through impassioned prayer and religious education. Coptic Sunday School classes proliferated and youth were tied to a sense of belonging to a group, that was cemented by an expanding print culture and persisted following emigration. Bishop Samuel's religious education in Egypt and then in the United States engaged him and his

[77] Yohanna al-Raheb to Yassa Hanna, Cairo, 26 June 1974. (Kamal Maurice collection, Cairo).

students in a wider world of ideas about Christian universalism and social reform. This analysis confirms Carolyn Ramzy's notion of a "Coptic habituated piety" as expressed in moral virtues and habits acquired and developed through fasting, prayer, study and inward dispositions (to be as Christ), which equally saturate the memories and histories of church activists interviewed for this study.[78] Transnational links to a wider imagined community were maintained and indeed cemented by the successful establishment of a print culture where a distinctive globalized spirituality elevated social involvement to a religious significance as expressed in prayers, hymns, associational life, and publications. By the 1970s, the neoliberal dismantling of the welfare state imposed on Egypt by US interests and the free-market economy enshrined the public role of religious institutions. To fully capture this history, future studies may choose to build on these insights and interrogate the Coptic Sunday School movement through transnational sources, a rich field for inquiry.

For Orthodox Copts raised under the tutelage of Sunday school revivalists, religion was more than superstition stripped away by modern life in North American cities or simply a uniting force for immigrants feeling a sense of alienation in a new environment and looking to hold on to some vestige of the familiar. Despite emigrating for different and personal reasons, their continued emphasis on maintaining strong spiritual ties, and their daily correspondence with clergy in Egypt, reflected an authentic attachment to the faith and continuity with their social lives in Egypt. There was a sequence and a hierarchy of progression. Their education in Sunday schools and their knowledge and familiarity with structuring a system of committees and service-oriented spirituality re-emerged in North American cities, mirroring many of the same activities and producing familiar tensions between laity and clergy within the parish. The rise of the first

[78] See, Ramzy, "Singing Heaven on Earth," 375-394.

transnational organization uniting Copts in North America—the Coptic Association of America (CAA)—and the effects of changing US immigration policy is the subject of the next chapter.

Not all immigrants, however, regularly attended Sunday school in Egypt or maintained relations with Coptic clergy. Therefore, to fully capture the heteroglossia of their recollections the next chapter will follow immigrants' material lives in New York and New Jersey and distinguish between three kinds of responses to being Coptic in the United States: 1) those for whom a habituated piety was inextricably linked to their transnational lives; 2) those for whom being Coptic was a cultural identity to be celebrated socially; 3) those for whom Coptic culture and religion must be protected and remain integral to a globalized political activism. The third response grew particularly distinct and developed around demands for Coptic rights in the mid-1970s, in response to escalating sectarian violence in Egypt that engendered a diasporic long-distance nationalism to which chapter 7 is dedicated.

Chapter 5
"We Were Like the Foot Soldiers:" The Transnationalism of the Coptic Association of America

Young Coptic Orthodox professionals arrived in the United States through connections to American industry or Cold War cultural exchange programs, which predate more lenient immigration policies under the Hart-Celler Act (in effect in Egypt by June 1968). This distinguished the character of Coptic community development in the US. Ethno-religious identity formation occurred among a small group of middle-class church activists at a time of ethnic revival in the US. Their associational activities were grounded in a religious centre and national periphery. They officially founded the Coptic Association of America (CAA) in Manhattan in September 1963. It was the first such transnational body serving both the material and spiritual needs of its growing membership and tying them to Church leaders in Egypt such as Bishop Samuel. In the words of one of its founders, Elhamy Khalil, "we were like the foot soldiers, they tell us what to do and we do it."[1] This chapter foregrounds Coptic settlement and institutionalization in New York and New Jersey and the continued prominence of the Church and the homeland, which came to define a kind of mundane transnationalism—the ordinary and everyday representations of the nation and a shared sense of belonging expressed through the use of flags, expressions and phrases, sporting events, rituals, food, and media consumption—marked by a print culture common among many Coptic immigrants.[2]

The success of Egyptian Social Gospel thought and its later blending with ecumenical social action movements created a distinctive globalized spirituality which elevated social

[1] In conversation with Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (in English).
[2] In using the concept mundane transnationalism, I build on the theory of banal nationalism first proposed by Michael Billig in his 1995 book by the same name and employed in the Egyptian context by historian Ziad Fahmy as mundane nationalism in his 2011 book *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture*. Mundane transnationalism accounts for the possibility of multipolar and relational loyalties in migrants transcultural lives (on the latter concept see studies by Dirk Hoerder and Kathleen Conzen). Mundane transnationalism is different from mundane nationalism because the use of deictic words can simultaneously and genuinely refer to two distinct nation states or national symbols. Without a doubt, interviewees can (and did) distinguish between past and present, but the sense of belonging and rootedness persists and must be accounted for.

involvement to a religious significance expressed in prayers, hymns, associational life, and publications. However, a history of religion in and outside Egypt can only capture part of the story. This has been the case in past studies of the Copts that routinely presented flat images of Coptic piety which occlude divergent material interests and motivations. To understand the tremendous impact of the Sunday school movement on immigrant acculturation in the United States, this chapter details the lives of not only those Copts raised to embody Orthodox Christian virtue but also those with little to no memory of participating in such activities who often considered being Coptic a cultural identifier or a politicized form of ethnicity.

To illuminate the heteroglossia of competing voices, I chart the experiences of single male migrants and new immigrant families. Proceeding from the first social gatherings in the home of Saba Habachy Pasha in Manhattan, I rely on both textual records and oral histories, gathered in Egypt and the United States, to outline immigrant Copts' associational lives. Here again a modern, cosmopolitan Egypt informed how early Copts engaged with North American society and culture. Egyptians were experienced with urban life and not the wide-eyed, Third World wanderer encountering 'modern' cityscapes for the first time. Their synoptic representations of the city highlight the active role space and place played in immigrant acculturation. As new immigrants arrived, age, gender, region of origin, education, piety, and cultural orientation affected their experiences and the kinds of organizations with which they sought to engage. Put simply, a single male graduate student from Cairo experienced New York quite differently from a young family from an Upper Egyptian village.

In the lead up to the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, conceptions of 'whiteness' and the value of immigrants to the nation was in flux at the historical moment of Coptic immigration. As historian Matthew Frye Jacobson has argued, in reaction to the Civil Rights movement an "ethnic revival

... heightened whites' consciousness of their skin privilege, rendering it not only visible but uncomfortable" and inspired the emergence of a return to ethnic identity and attention to ethnic particularity.[3] In this period of ethnic revivalism following the 1960s, "to seize and celebrate the hyphen" did not diminish a groups' "Americanism" but rather, was a means to show their US nationalism.[4] Paying due attention to the US context in which Coptic immigrants were received is yet another vital layer in this analysis to challenge the notion of Coptic insularity. US liberalism up to the early Cold War "cherished the notion that individual liberties reside at the very core of the nation's political culture and values, and that appeals to *group* rights and protections were profoundly un-American." By the mid-1960s, the "dominant discourse of national civic life acknowledged the salience of group experience and standing."[5]

Such fracturing of what it means to be "American" as a result of emerging group identities and loyalties was expressed by second-wave feminists, Black, Red, and Yellow Power movements, and ethnic activists. This added to the post-colonial malaise in ecumenical debates

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[3] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*, (Harvard UP, 2006): 2. "Ethnic revival" in the 1960s and 1970s succeeded the "old melting pot" dominant in the United States following the Second World War and was superseded by what Vecoli called "the new melting pot" in the 1980s. For one of the first treatments of this discourse around ethnic incorporation in the US, see: Rudolph Vecoli, "Return to the Melting Pot: Ethnicity in the United States in the Eighties," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 5.1 (1985): 7-20.

[4] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 16. Scholars of immigration and ethnicity in the US have long debated this notion of ethnic revival. In a seminal 1979 article, Herbert Gans questioned its intensity and instead argued that the children of ethnic Americans turned to a symbolic ethnicity: "an ethnicity of last resort, which could, nevertheless, persist for generations." Consequently, the change may be one of form and not function and "what appears to be an ethnic revival may therefore be only a more visible form of long-standing phenomena, or of a new stage of acculturation and assimilation." Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," in Herbert Gans, *Making Sense of America: Sociological Analyses and Essays*, (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999): 167. However, I do not argue that the Copts as recent arrivals participated in "ethnic revival." Rather, they arrived at a time when the visible expression of ethnic difference and the recognition of difference in US society had particular resonance. Both Jacobson and Gans agree that visible ethnic persistence were a manifestation of this shift in North American pluralism. Charles Taylor has added that the politics of recognition reinforced the increased visibility of ethnic politics, arguments which were continued in debates by John Stone and Kelsey Harris, among others. Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in Amy Gutman ed., *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, (Princeton UP, 1992): 25-73; Herbert Gans, "Another look at symbolic ethnicity," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40.9 (2017):1410-1417; John Stone and Kelsey Harris, "Symbolic Ethnicity and Herbert Gans: Race, Religion, and Politics in the Twenty-First Century," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40.9 (2017): 1397-1409.

[5] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 19-20. Taylor has argued that what changed was not that we recognized difference in pluralist societies but that we acknowledged a group's worth. Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," 64.

over the universalism of Christianity. How do we make religion a relevant force to unite disparate groups affected both by the legacy of colonial subjugation and the negative force of nationalism which incited two world wars? Where a near consensus on universalism had dominated in the United States between the Second World War and the 1960s, it persisted in the form of Christian universalism in ecumenical debates to counter new impulses for ethnic and national particularity in the era of global and cultural decolonization. Copts in the United States found themselves at a crossroads that no doubt many immigrant groups encountered: "Should they stake their claim to civic participation on the basis of being the same as those already inhabiting the sphere of 'we the people'? Or should they embrace their sense of 'difference' and assert that it would enrich the republic?"[6]

Surely not mutually exclusive, for Coptic immigrants from Egypt choosing sameness while asserting a positive difference served their interests as newcomers to the United States. Copts pursued a form of acculturation that promoted a Christian universalism invigorated by collaboration with transnational Christian organizations such as the World Council of Churches to show commonality with the dominant culture of their receiving society. They also engaged in the promotion of their particular ethnic and cultural contributions. Just as established Italian, Irish and Jewish groups in the United States did, new immigrants from Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean engaged in "ethnic hyphenation," which certainly was "not neutral" but nevertheless "has at least become a natural idiom of national belonging in this nation of immigrants."[7] Coptic history and heritage were packaged by community leaders to assert their unique contributions as Coptic Christian and Egyptian -Americans.

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[6] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 269.
[7] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 10.

This notion of balancing both national unity and group distinctiveness was neither new nor contradictory to Orthodox Copts who were raised to embody Christian virtue and Egyptian patriotism to contest their minority status in Egypt. The more Egyptian officials and the clerical hierarchy in the Coptic Orthodox Church insisted that it was the duty of the immigrant to promote both their Church and nation, the more Copts found themselves engaged in the visible expression of ethnic particularity in the US, and in turn the new US nationalism. Insistence on ethnic particularity was not simply nostalgic longing for the homeland, though that did exist. It was "organic in the sense that the logic and mythology of ethnic cultures often positioned immigrants and their descendents as 'exiled' members of the homeland, uniquely placed to serve its cause."[8] In interviews, memories of promoting their Coptic and Egyptian distinctiveness were matched by positive assessments of the values of "equality," "opportunity" and "fraternity" vital to US conservatism since the 1960s, which "celebrated the nation's varied roots in such a way as to exalt the hospitalities of U.S. political culture right alongside the fortitude of its myriad adoptees, and to occlude the history of conflict, inequality, and violence that had attended the convergence of the world's peoples at this global crossroads."[9]

The narratives Copts fashioned in the United States reflect both lingering memories of discrimination and inequality in Egyptian society and United States hospitality as "a nation of immigrants," respectively conditioned by religious and group loyalties. Today Egyptians in the United States engage with US politics in ways habituated by their homeland experience, religious and group loyalties, and the timing of their immigration. Presbyterian Copts educated in US missionary schools in Egypt lean toward the ideals of egalitarianism and social equity of Democrats in the United States. Muslim Egyptians show a variety of affiliations. While early

[8] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 26.
[9] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 56. Jacobson did not make the argument but US imperialism displaced that history on the Third World and positioned the Middle East as the perfect "other" and centre of hostility ripe for intervention.

immigrants influenced by Nasser's secular Arab socialism gravitate toward US liberal appeals for minority rights, recent immigrants' heightened religious fervour as a result of Egyptian confessionalization are responsive to appeals for hetero-normative marriage and suspicious of sexual education in schools. This brief account paints a picture but occludes divergent interests and motivations that deserve deeper analysis in future research.

Focusing predominantly on early Coptic Orthodox immigrants in this chapter, I show how many have come to support Republican social-conservative values grounded in Christian tradition. New immigrants who arrived after the mid-1970s felt the intensification of societal confessionalization in Egypt, Coptic marginalization in Egyptian political secularism, and attacks on places of worship by Islamist organizations, particularly in Upper Egypt. Consequently, they tended to focus on preserving their Coptic particularity and debate local zoning bylaws or educational policies affecting their children and less on wider federal elections. In recent years, youth born in the United States challenged the conservatism of past generations. On the East Coast, in particular, young voters align with the social democracy agenda of politicians such as senator Bernie Sanders and New York U.S. representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

The appeal of US conservatism had much to do with the timing of Coptic immigration and the language of group rights and protection in the period of ethnic particularity. As exchange students, lecturers and residents at university hospitals, Copts established themselves in professional occupations, started families, moved to the suburbs, and look back on their lives as the quintessential US success story. Strikingly, experiences with racism and the prevalence of segregation disrupt the stability of such a narrative. Whiteness was reconfigured but it was the *European* immigrant who could marshal this new language. In the stories that immigrants told, Copts occupied a liminal space as a non-European group which could never quite measure up as

contributors to this nation of immigrants. Copts never found common cause with African Americans, Asians and Latinos to publicly contest their "foreign" status in the nation. However, to affirm their belonging Coptic immigrants privately asserted religious and cultural commonality with Anglo-Americans in everyday interactions. Unlike the "the hardworking and knowledgeable" German, the Pole's "dogged aspirations," or the "intellectual talents" of Jewish immigrants, the Egyptian more broadly had to navigate their affiliation with the familiar imagery of the deceitful and dangerous Arab.[10]

Coptic immigrants were ambiguous about their treatment in the United States in part because it chafed against US conservative narratives of hospitality with regard to new arrivals. Yet the ambiguity was not theirs alone. At all times religion and race were conflated in Anglo-American assessments of these immigrants from Egypt. As Christians, Copts positioned themselves as part of the dominant society more readily than non-Christians, their capacity for the English language and professional occupations helped to hide their difference and could claim legal 'whiteness' as Middle Eastern and North African populations (after 1944). Nevertheless, they had to contend with their perpetual "foreignness" as immigrants from a Middle Eastern country (read Islamic and Arab), whose skin tone could vary from the 'exotic Mediterranean' to the 'brown Muslim.'[11] By insisting in their everyday interactions that they shared a common Christian culture, they fashioned a place for their heritage within the new ethnic particularity of US nationalism without challenging stereotypes of Arabs in the US.

This chapter details the stories of Orthodox Copts Atef Mo'awad and Elhamy Khalil, who arrived in their twenties as residents in university hospitals to find a small social network among the dozen Copts scattered across the continent. I then follow the perspective of cultural

[10] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 315, 351.
[11] Indeed one of the first hate crimes to take place after 9/11 was the murder of Adel Karas, a Coptic Christian shop owner of San Gabriel, California.

Copt Nimet Habachy, who was eighteen years old when recently arrived immigrants gathered in her parents' apartment seeking to socialize and share in a little bit of home. Over time, the gatherings turned to promoting the organization of spiritual services. Men and women like Orthodox Copts Maher Kamel and his wife Leila, Sami Boulos, Wafik Habib, and Eva Habib al-Masry communicated with priests and bishops in Cairo, engaging in debates over the establishment of a church with a priest to minister to their needs. The late1960s and 1970s witnessed a surge in Coptic immigration and the arrival of fathers Marcos, Rofael, Mina, and Ghobrial, to name a few. Their service instigated tensions over who exactly governed the immigrants' church: the priest or the congregation? Issues like "trusteeism" proliferated in churches across the continent.[12] Concluding with a discussion of symbols of ordinary Copts' transnational lives I explore recollections of Egypt and the US among established immigrants. In stark contrast to early Coptic Orthodox immigrants, raised in a Presbyterian Coptic home Nimet Habachy's present-day charitable activities in support of Egypt's *Zabaleen* (garbage collectors) points to the varying levels of affection for the Church and homeland in Coptic communit(ies).[13]

The immigrant experience is marked by heteroglossia. To capture that variety, where possible I adopt a narrative approach that privileges how people organically told their stories and the multitude of ways that they constructed their language and ordered their narratives. Yet as an historian attempting to tell a cohesive story, I have imposed a chronological structure to this history to allow for the greatest number of voices to be heard. The order I have imposed is a cyclical style of storytelling, which emphasizes connections and interactions in New York.

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[12] In United States Catholic history, trusteeism is a form of contestation where lay parish boards and trustees, on the basis of civil law, claim sole administrative powers and even the right to dismiss priests. According to the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt, ultimate authority in the church rests with the priest. However, Copts in North America relied on the example of Protestant churches to argue for lay control over administration and budgeting, and turned to legal precedents established by earlier immigrant Italian Catholic and Greek and Russian Orthodox churches.
[13] Although her father was Orthodox, her mother's family was Presbyterian. Nimet Habachy defined herself as "culturally Coptic," blending both her mother's religious practice and her father's Orthodoxy.

COPTIC GRADUATE STUDENTS REMEMBER A MULTIETHNIC NEW YORK

Elhamy Khalil left New Jersey for a year after his residency ended, to practice in a university hospital in Richmond, Virginia. Far from friends, in the South he experienced a different side of the United States and he was not alone in this. Highly mobile professional immigrant Copts observed stark contrasts between a multiethnic and bustling large urban centre such as New York and smaller less diverse cities in the Mid-west and Southern States. Khalil's experience in Virginia offers rare insight into the racialization of Egyptian immigrants in the 1960s, who otherwise were often rendered invisible in multiethnic cities by their English-language abilities, Christian faith and professional occupations.[14] As in Egypt, in North American cities religious and racial social constructions converged as markers of identity and constrained a group's ability to integrate into the dominant majority.[15] However, racial and not religious categories in the United States, unlike Egypt, played a greater role to confine and limit a group's social standing and rights before the law.[16] Coptic immigrants arrived with a conception of themselves as white by virtue of perceived civilizational superiority as descendents of Pharaohs preserving an ancient Christian heritage. This hold on whiteness was, however, tenuous at best. In their stories immigrants reveal the ambiguity of their position within US ethnic incorporation because their Egyptian national origin tied them to conceptions of the 'Arab.'

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[14] To be clear, the experiences of "early Copts" contrast with those arriving after the 1980s who lacked fluency in English or French and the privilege of professional occupations.

[15] For a similar argument see the study of Iranian Aryan racial identity by Neda Maghbouleh in *The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race*, (Stanford University Press, 2017). Such a line of inquiry opens further questions on both anti-black prejudice in Egypt and shade-ism prevalent in the Coptic community, often used to demarcate class and belonging which deserves a full-length treatment in a separate study.

[16] Helen H. Samhan, "Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab-American Experience" in Michael Suleiman ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, (1999): 209-226; Suad Joseph, "Against the Grain of the Nation-The Arab" in Suleiman ed., *Arabs in America*, 257-271; Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History* 89.1 (2002): 154-173.

Being a Middle Eastern immigrant in the United States provoked ambiguity among Anglo-Americans.[17] Although racism was more difficult for Coptic immigrants to understand, it was no less apparent to them because of the interpenetration of their faith and ethnicity. It was seen in the social, regional and national context where specific individuals experienced discrimination. As a resident in New Jersey Elhamy Khalil was one of thirty exchange students of Middle Eastern, Asian and Latin American background. In Virginia, he was one of two. While there, he witnessed first-hand segregation in waiting rooms and bathrooms, and discrimination in the treatment of patients. Immersed in his studies, he chose not to join fellow residents and nurses on "happy hour" because of the workload, and also because he felt that "they looked at the foreigners as neither black nor white, almost like a non-entity. These people are coming for training and going back. I don't think I was invited to their house for lunch or dinner or anything like that. I was maybe isolated, but I didn't care. I had many things to do." Witness to the interpersonal and sexual relations between residents, doctors and nurses in the hospital, Khalil nevertheless felt as an outsider. He was not comfortable, both with the visible signs of segregation and racialized atmosphere of the hospital, and the sense of perpetual foreignness with which he was treated: "it's not that they didn't treat me with respect, they just didn't look at me as an equal or as a friend. I am just a long-term visitor."[18]

For many professional immigrants, life in the United States was an experience in stark contrasts. Like Elhamy Khalil, Nezeeh Habachy, who arrived with his parents in 1953, spoke of a collegial and multiethnic atmosphere with a diverse student body while pursuing university

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[17] Gualtieri's analysis of anti-Arab racism in the Jim Crow South through the 1929 case of the lynching of N.G. Romey, who was reported in the news as a "white man," showed how race and ethnicity came together in the mob's decision to kill Romey and his wife, one out of two Syrian families in Lake City, Florida. Sarah Gualtieri, "Strange Fruit? Syrian Immigrants, Extralegal Violence, and Racial Formation in the United States," in Amarey Jamal and Nadine Naber eds., *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, (Syracuse University Press, 2008): 147-169.

[18] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

education in Boston and New York in the 1950s and 1960s. As Egyptian and Christian, he confided, "you were maybe a matter of interest coming from a much older historical religion." However he never felt isolated or different among Anglo-Protestants or Palestinian, Lebanese and Egyptian friends. It was later, working in the legal department for Trans World Airlines that "although it was an international company, you were aware of it." Feeling "not mainstream," in the mid-1970s he was passed over to speak on behalf of the company for a presentation in the Mid-west. "Let's just say I was the logical one" to make the presentation, he reflected, but he was "deliberately left out in favour of the local man who knew nothing about it." Nazeeh Habachy saw this rejection as an explicit statement as to his status both within the company and in US society at large: "we don't want a foreigner to stand up and do this."[19] At the same time, there was a persistent sense that such differentiation could "work the other way," when you "were a novelty." At times, colleagues and acquaintances went "out of their way to include me" socially, because "you are a foreigner" and a Christian so "they have more of an interest in you than" a longtime friend who was "very conscious of being Muslim."

This sense that Anglo-Americans just didn't know what to do with Egyptian Christians persisted in successive interviews. Nimet Habachy felt drawn to the Arts, and after finishing drama school and a degree in Fine Arts at Columbia University, she worked in theatre and danced in cabarets in New York, before a brief tour with the New York City Opera. In 1980, a call went out that WQXR was looking for women and minorities to host their New York at Night radio program. "They really were looking for someone African-American," she recalled. And, for them "at least, I was not blonde and blue eyed. So, I sort of qualified." Yet that was not how she saw herself: "I don't think of Egyptians as being [African]," but "if that's what they wanted to think, it was fine by me." She failed her first interview because she "sounded British." A

[19] Nimet and Nazeeh Habachy, interviewed in New York, August 19, 2017 (in English).

second interview, and some suggestions on her accent secured her the position. She never personally experienced racism, "not even a hint of one," but witnessed it: "God knows it was around me." The reason the station was looking to diversify was to mollify outrage over an ongoing lawsuit of racial discrimination. On her first day in the office, Nimet Habachy could not help but notice that the secretarial staff was only comprised of African-American women.[20]

Being outside, but witness to, white-black racism in the United States coexisted with a persistent duality of being a perpetual foreigner and "novelty" in the eyes of Anglo-Americans. Context was a vital contributing factor. Whereas New York was visibly diverse, in the Mid-West one was "made to standout," Nazeeh Habachy insisted. At the same time that the "novelty" of being an Egyptian Christian drew the attention of "American friends," he felt a persistent push to assimilate and "be like us."[21] Both siblings agreed when Nimet Habachy confided that "I have felt myself at times wanting you to know that I am a Copt and not a Muslim." Throughout her years in the United States, and particularly since the 1980s, there was the nagging sensation that an "ignorant American" might think: "oh, Egyptian. I wonder if she's a terrorist?" Explicitly declaring a Coptic identity became an impulse, to "put that out here."[22] Contending with a perpetual "foreignness" and insisting in everyday interactions that Copts shared a Christian culture was part of fashioning a place for their a heritage within the new ethnic particularity of US nationalism, without challenging negative stereotypes of Arabs as a threat to the nation.

"WE HAVE TO STAY:" THE BIRTH OF THE COPTIC ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

For early Copts, religion was neither an old world superstition stripped away by modern life in North American cities nor a uniting force for immigrants feeling a sense of alienation in a new

[20] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (in English).
[21] Nimet and Nazeeh Habachy, interviewed in New York, August 19, 2017 (in English).
[22] Nimet and Nazeeh Habachy, interviewed in New York, August 19, 2017 (in English).

environment and looking to hold on to some vestige of the familiar. Not all immigrants had regularly attended Sunday school in Egypt nor maintained continued relations with Coptic clergy. To fully capture the heteroglossia of immigrant recollections I distinguish three kinds of responses to being Coptic in the United States: 1) as concern for the faith inextricably linked to their transnational lives; 2) a Coptic cultural identity to be celebrated socially; 3) or a unique Coptic culture and religion to be protected and integral to a globalized political activism.[23] Strong emphasis on maintaining communal ties with other immigrant Copts and daily correspondence with friends and clergy in Egypt seeking advice on occupational and settlement choices provided continuity with their social lives in Egypt.

Soon after immigrants began to meet in the home of Maher Kamel, they learned of Saba Habachy Pasha in Manhattan. His youngest daughter Nimet confided how distraught her mother Jamela was when they arrived in 1953. They had left friends and family to live in a city where, to their knowledge, they were the only Egyptians. Saba immediately became legal counsel for a US oil company (which he had dealings with as minister of commerce in Egypt). Through his connections, he secured mid-term admission for Nimet in the all-girls Upper East Side Spence private school and an acceptance at Harvard University for his son Nazeeh. His eldest daughter Suzie was already a law student at Columbia University. The Habachys had left Egypt fearing reprisals from the Free Officers. Yet they held on to the possibility of returning and only acquired United States citizenship in 1962. “We really had no choice,” Nimet Habachy recalled, “we had to stay. We had to make a go of it.” By the early 1960s, Egypt was experiencing

[23] I build on similar insights about the relation between religion and everyday social formation in Saba Mahmood’s *The politics of Piety*, a study of Muslim women’s activities within Islamic movements.

continued economic decline and, “in a way, he [Nasser] did us a favour.” In her view, citizenship in the US was a turning point for her parents, who truly began to accept this life and “to cope.”[24]

Sami Boulos and Maher Kamel gravitated to Orthodox Copt Saba Habachy for support and guidance in establishing a network and creating fraternity. As the “senior member of the community” he welcomed young professionals into his home and supported their activities. For Nimet Habachy in particular, hearing *Sa’adi* (the Upper Egyptian dialect), transported her “immediately ... home, it’s my mother’s Arabic.” The meetings started in their apartment on the Upper East Side:

> Just to have a kind of, holding on to each other as Copts, Christians, or as Egyptians alone needing each other. Pure and simple. And to help young students coming into the city. That was the beginning. And everybody knew, somehow everybody knew my father was in town and sometimes young men would arrive with letters of introduction: ‘I recommend this young man coming to study, and if you could keep an eye on him or help’ ... That was quite common ... in a funny kind of way we were pioneers I suppose.[25]

Image 7 CAA members in the Habachy home, including Saba, Jamela, Suzie, and Nimet Habachy, Elhamy, Wafik Habib, and Leila Kamel, 1962. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

Once a month, the group gathered in their living room. Food and lively conversation were the highlights of the evening as they discussed everyday problems of navigating the city, finding

[24] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (in English).
[25] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (in English).

a mechanic for a broken-down car, raising rowdy children, and where to buy herbs and spices reminiscent of home. Most prominent in Nimet Habachy's memories were Shawki and Leila Karas and their two young children, who had recently arrived after Shawki Karas won a government cultural exchange scholarship. Enjoying pound cakes and tea on a particularly memorable visit, "Shawki told tales of his confusion and tremendous dilemma as a father, because his son once said … 'shut up.' Shawki was beside himself." Her mother became somewhat of a caregiver: "I remember her sitting on the phone for hours" because the Karases and other couples needed advice to translate the names of Egyptian herbs. As "surrogate parents in America ... those simple parties with a little tea and a little cake were a bit of home. I really think so ... the entire event would be conducted in Arabic ... so it must have meant a lot to people ... there was prayer and socializing." Yet conversations always turned to the lack of a church, and "the group was adamant" about having a priest. Her parents never became involved directly in the logistics. They were happy to offer their home, listen to the bible reading and reminisce about Egypt but not join "the young families pushing" to organize church services.[26]

The establishment of a church in North America became a reality with the support of Bishop Samuel, who had been consecrated in 1962. By that time Nasser had nationalized numerous foreign and Coptic institutions. As with all state-controlled bodies, preference was given to those educated under state-sponsored programs. Bishop Samuel reassessed his plans to supply immigrant Copts with jobs back in Egypt. He encouraged them to remain abroad instead. After leaving Virginia in 1961, Elhamy Khalil began his residency in Philadelphia and joined both Atef Mo'awad and Wafik Habib, who were at a nearby university hospital. Their education in Sunday school and their knowledge and familiarity with structuring a system of committees made them ideal candidates to begin an organization in the United States, mirroring many of the

[26] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (in English).

same religious activities in Egypt. An executive committee was established in the home of Saba Habachy, declared honorary president of the Coptic Association of America. His son Nazeeh, then a law student, reviewed their bylaws and offered legal advice but never joined their activities, preferring Egyptian and Arab associations on campus (detailed in chapter 7). The CAA was registered with the state of New York, and the name seemed a natural choice for Sami Boulos, reflecting "our pride in our Coptic heritage and our adopted country."[27] With 15 members in New York and New Jersey, the organization was dedicated to promoting a Christian life, social fellowship and to helping newcomers.

Dwindling job prospects in Egypt, the falling value of the Egyptian pound, and the escalating corruption and inequality which marked Nasser's regime encouraged continued emigration. The United States provided opportunities for upward mobility. Elhamy Khalil grew more convinced in those first few years that "they treat you based on your abilities."[28] Their only reservation was what Copts such as Khalil perceived to be the rampant immorality in a youth culture dominated by sex in cars, "happy hour" and cursing. A postwar counterculture and immigration from previously non-preferred countries meant that "standards of sexual custom and morality became yet another of the ways—alongside race, ethnicity, religion, or class—that people might define one another as being" different and "'difference,' not sameness, gradually became a more common baseline assumption."[29]

In response to letters from immigrants Bishop Samuel arrived in the summer of 1963 to meet with the newly established Coptic Association of America. He led a liturgy and inaugural membership meeting held on 7 September 1963 in the Riverside church inside the National Council of Churches building. Ever the scrupulous documentarian, Elhamy Khalil kept detailed

[27] Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 30.
[28] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[29] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 152.

notes and photographs of the event. The visit was planned in advance by close friends Khalil, Mo'awad, Habib, and Maher and Leila Kamel. A women's committee was established to prepare food and arrange childcare. With 70 people in attendance, Sami Boulos reminded them that "we, as Copts and as Egyptians, have a heritage to be proud of. Our children should reflect this heritage, so their lives preserve the Coptic faith, identity, and values. But, also mix with the new culture to enhance and enrich our lives. We can also contribute to this society by our behaviour and our deeds." Immigrant Copts were encouraged to acculturate to their surroundings, support the Church and homeland through financial tithes and medical equipment, and to ensure that as "this association helps members to live a Christian life, preserve Coptic heritage, [and] help newcomers."[30] The CAA was created by and for Coptic immigrants and the majority were Orthodox Copts seeking to maintain strong communal ties.

Image 8 Bishop Samuel with the CAA executive and their families in Manhattan, August 1963. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

Bishop Samuel, for his part, reiterated that they were "the sons of the martyrs which means witness, we shall be witnesses of our faith in the new land." He warned that "self-

[30] "Notes by Elhamy Khalil," CAA inaugural meeting, September 7, 1963: 3 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).

sufficiency is dangerous" and "when we forget our shortcomings" the "temptation in a modern society" lies in wait at every turn. Highlighting the bishop's emphasis on social work and contribution to fighting poverty in the Third World was the presence of Dr. Espe, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the United States (NCC). He gave a short speech on the promise of ecumenical dialogue and insisted that positive relations between churches would ensure Christian social and spiritual education continue to serve the needs of a collective society susceptible to the ills of modernity. The NCC, he insisted, was desirous of helping new immigrants such as the Copts and was now fighting for "desegregation in our churches, though some churches still resist it." Copts encountering racism and nativism in Civil Rights America should feel welcome in Protestant churches until they could establish their own services without fear of discrimination based on "race, color, or national origin."[31]

Bishop Samuel then departed on a continental pastoral visit with the goal of raising funds through subscriptions to the Coptic Association of America. He managed to raise $400 USD for flights and accommodations for his pastoral trip and ensured questionnaires were distributed in every city. Membership was set at $5 annually per individual (or $10 per family). In meetings held in Coptic homes, rented churches and the facilities of local universities, he encouraged Copts to continue the *khidma* (service) through meetings and donations. According to the results of the survey, tabulated by Khalil and Mo'awad when Bishop Samuel returned to New York in October, 150 heads of households responded, including 33 single and 42 married, with 22 native Egyptian wives and 20 American-born. Of the total, 41 were employed, 43 held graduate scholarships, and all were in professional occupations. As a result, the presence of Anglo-American wives and young children informed the CAA's decision to ask Bishop Samuel to send

[31] "Notes by Elhamy Khalil," 4-5.

a Coptic priest familiar with the "American mentality."[32] They in fact had a candidate in mind and requested Wagdi Elias Abdel Messiah, who had returned to Cairo following his graduate education. Until then, they were told to pray in two Syrian Orthodox Churches, one in New Jersey and the other in Brooklyn. The latter hosted the first Coptic wedding in 1963. By December, over a hundred paying members had joined the CAA. Those in the New York and New Jersey area organized academic and spiritual lectures and gathered donations for the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches and Coptic villages in Egypt. Newcomers were also given financial assistance and lodging in the home of one of the executive members as needed or advice on finding jobs and housing.

Simultaneously the Bishopric of Social, Ecumenical and Public Services offices in the patriarchate in Cairo became a sort of émigré hub. It was a common sight to find would-be émigrés seated in the waiting room and standing along the walls waiting for a meeting with the bishop. Notarized letters, translated certificates and money flowed to and from Egypt through Copts travelling abroad or visiting family in the homeland. In addition, the emphasis on religious education and on donations to ecumenical bodies made the CAA an arm of the bishopric in New York. Bishop Samuel encouraged Copts to establish CAA branches in every state and province he visited. By 1964 there were branches in Massachusetts, California, Minnesota, and Ontario. In New York, the CAA made financial donations to ecumenical bodies such as the WCC, when the transfer of funds out of Egypt was forbidden.[33] Funds to Egypt flowed through the association, whether from immigrants or the WCC and NCC, bringing much-needed help to the bishopric as it launched irrigation projects, homes for the poor and the disabled, schools, and skilled trades

[32] "Notes by Elhamy Khalil," 6.
[33] Letter from Frank Northam, WCC department of Finances and Administration in Geneva to Maher Kamel, President of CAA, October 31, 1963, document 22 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 150. The last third of the book is a collection of numbered, chronologically arranged primary documents.

training programs. Such networks allowed Bishop Samuel to engage the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and set himself up as a leader in the Near East Christian Council (NECC), which in 1974 evolved into the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), and in which he promoted peace in the region and solidarity with refugees.

THE FLYING PRIEST, THE PIOUS POPE AND THE BREAKING OF AN ASSOCIATION

After Bishop Samuel's pastoral visit, two successive appeals for a priest were published in the Coptic newspaper *Watani* (my homeland) in Egypt. The first, by the editor and co-founder Antoun Sidhom, outlined the national importance of supporting émigrés whose spiritual care would only help to promote Egypt's image abroad.[34] The second, published in January 1964 and written by Los Angeles immigrant Mahfouz Doss, as North American correspondent to *Watani*, emphasized that "the children of the Coptic Church in America request a Coptic priest to shepherd their religious needs."[35] As attempts were being made in Cairo to locate a suitable priest, Bishop Samuel was in constant contact with Elhamy Khalil, his "foot soldier" keeping the bishop informed of the latest developments and circulating letters sent to "our sons in America."

Acting in a similar role as Elhamy Khalil, Dr. Youssef Salama in Toronto was charged with budgeting donations received in support of funding clerical visits to immigrants and social services in Upper Egypt. Sums of money given to the bishop for performing weddings, baptisms and christenings during pastoral visits were deposited into a church fund.[36] At this stage, the bishop and early immigrants in the United States and Canada prioritized raising money for a priest. In successive letters to Khalil, in the spring and summer of 1964, the bishop pressed for

[34] Antoun Sidhom, "The Pope Cares for the Egyptian Church's Children Abroad," *Watani,* November 24, 1963.
[35] Mahfouz Doss, "The Children of the Coptic Church in America Request a Coptic Priest to Shepherd their Religious Needs," *Watani,* January 5, 1964.
[36] Letter from Bishop Samuel, New York to Elhamy Khalil, September 10, 1963 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).

finding suitable accommodations for a priest and informed the Coptic Association of America of 800 letters the bishopric had sent to families across the United States and Canada.[37] The bishopric prepared Easter calendars for distribution as a gift to paying members of the association. In Los Angeles, Mahfouz Doss was tasked with preparing *The Bulletin*, a continentally circulated publication arranged and printed by the bishopric in Cairo that included articles and news authored by both servants of the patriarchate and established immigrants.[38] The CAA also prepared a newsletter which began publication in January 1964 and included greetings from prominent Copts such as Saba Habachy, Eva Habib al-Masry and Maher Kamel. Jointly produced, publications created a bridge between home and abroad and reinforced a series of intertwined messages: the continued attentiveness of the Church in Egypt, Coptic contribution to universal Christianity, and the work of Bishop Samuel with transnational Christian charities.[39]

At the same time that the CAA was preparing for a priest, many had to navigate border restrictions while figuring out how they were to stay in the United States. Their exchange visas were about to expire and no temporary migrant could apply for citizenship while residing in the country. Yet for many returning to Egypt was not an option. To leave Egypt again required another exit visa which was given at the whim of Egyptian authorities. Copts in the US were anxious at the prospect. At social gatherings Maher Kamel and Sami Boulos often recounted the challenges they had faced paying fines to the government and securing exit visas for their wives and children. Atef Mo'awad was not able to visit his ill father and had no choice but to meet his mother and sister in Jerusalem while his father, unable to travel, stayed in Cairo. It was only after the June 1967 War that the newly established Egyptian ministry of Immigration relaxed border

[37] Letter from Bishop Samuel, Cairo to Elhamy Khalil, April 10, 1964 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[38] Letter from Bishop Samuel, Cairo to Elhamy Khalil, May 10, 1964 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[39] Coptic Association of America Newsletter, Issue 1, January 1964 (Mikhail Mikhail collection, Philadelphia).

restrictions for prospective émigrés and only following the investiture of Sadat could those with landed immigrant visas in another country apply for exit visas as soon as they arrived in Egypt.[40]

To contend with the border restrictions of sovereign nation-states, some such as Elhamy Khalil, Atef Mo'awad and Wafik Habib, went to Canada for a time. In late 1964 Khalil planned a trip to Scotland in advance of preparing paperwork to accept a position in a university hospital in Saskatoon, for which he could neither apply from the US nor inside Canada. Other immigrants, as Khalil observed, chose instead to marry US citizens to "get a green card" which altered the composition of the growing Coptic immigrant community. To accommodate the increasing number of Anglo-American wives, English became far more common in meetings and ecumenically-minded Protestant pastors from the city were routinely invited to attend. Eva Habib al-Masry received copies of the English translation of St. Basil's liturgy compiled by her sister Iris, and bible study was accompanied by singing hymns in English, Arabic and Coptic.[41]

Pervasive border restrictions complicated an already unfair system. Under the Nasser regime, all communications entering Egypt were censored and Bishop Samuel had to correspond with immigrants through intermediaries in North America or in Holland or Geneva while he attended ecumenical meetings.[42] To ease fears among early Copts, the bishop insisted that he and the pope were working to convince a reluctant Wagdi Elias Abdel Messiah, who had by then begun teaching in the Clerical College in Cairo, to marry and be ordained to serve families in North America. Though no less difficult, the emigration of Egyptian nationals was on the rise, and cognizant of escalating disillusionment with the Nasser regime Bishop Samuel wished to ensure that a dedicated group of former Sunday school students were established across North America and able to support incoming priests.

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[40] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[41] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[42] Letter from Bishop Samuel, Holland to Elhamy Khalil, June 23, 1964, 1-2 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).

In August 1964 Bishop Samuel sent a letter which was distributed to CAA members across North America. The bishop reported that Wagdi Elias Abdel Messiah was chosen as their priest and that "He received a Masters from American universities and spent four years there, and also his wife is a recipient of a bachelors."[43] Their educational qualifications were highlighted specifically because the executive of the CAA had insisted on searching "for an educated Coptic priest who understands the American mentality and appreciates the needs abroad." Bishop Samuel outlined the priest's duties: "His house shall be a Coptic centre where he may be on call at any time and where we may be gathered around him and feel the unity that makes us one in the body Christ. This centre shall be a headquarters for those in these countries to learn of the Church and the nation, and strengthen relations between all Churches." This service would require a financial commitment. In an entire page, the bishop pressed upon immigrants their financial duty:

> No doubt we cannot hide such from God because He will take it from us by other means. For that reason, in the loving spirit that unites us and with fatherly pleading, I write to you asking that you offer and send just half your total tithes for the year all together (or at least a portion every three months) so that we may furnish a home, pay rent, and offer the priest a salary to provide for his pastoral trips, commuting, mailing, phone calls, and otherwise. The Coptic Church in Egypt has provided the payment for his flight and also for his wife to America ... the prayer tools and vestments, books, and otherwise.[44]

In October, newly ordained father Marcos was sent to Rome as a part of the Coptic Orthodox Church delegation to the Second Vatican Council, in order to bypass stringent Egyptian exit restrictions. While in Rome, he applied for residence in both the United States and Canada and waited to secure safe passage for his wife to join him. Though the Coptic Association of America made the initial request, and though they were assured in successive letters that the priest would be headquartered in New York (for which they were making plans to

[43] Letter from Bishop Samuel to "dear blessed sons," New York, August 18, 1964, 1 (Father Marcos A. Marcos collection, Toronto).
[44] Letter from Bishop Samuel to "dear blessed sons," 2.

locate a suitable apartment), correspondence between the bishop and Elhamy Khalil suggests that the patriarchate in Cairo was considering a Canadian destination. It is fair to say that Bishop Samuel was hedging his bets. Aware of the tense political atmosphere between Egypt and the United States and that US immigration policy continued to privilege wealthy, established and connected émigrés, Bishop Samuel made unsuccessful appeals for support to the World Council of Churches. He also knew that the number of Copts in Toronto and Montreal was doubling due to Canada's ongoing monopoly over immigrant applications (see chapter 3 for figures). Favouring Toronto, Bishop Samuel was in that city making arrangements for both a board of trustees and official registration of a church. Yet the bishop was equally aware that New York Copts would be upset, having raised a substantial sum in anticipation of the priest's ministry.[45]

The reaction to father Marcos' appointment to Toronto was heated. The CAA executive was divided. Members responded in a variety of ways: pity for the needs of Canadian Copts, resentment, and understanding that services needed to be shared. Resentment mounted when the CAA was told to carry the bulk of an annual stipend of $2600 for all travels and standing committees in Toronto, Montreal, and the New York and New Jersey area.[46] The bishop justified his position: "the group in Toronto is very tightly-knit and among them are a large number of youth, and the number increases very unexpectedly." The bishop seemed to think that a young and inexperienced priest would have an easier time in Toronto than New York, where Copts were demanding that the priest keep them apprised and "present his travel plans periodically."[47]

The bishop did not explicitly state that father Marcos was to be headquartered in Toronto. Perhaps he was unsure whether Canada would accept the priest's application and therefore New

[45] Letter From Bishop Samuel, Toronto to Elhamy Khalil, October 5, 1964, 1-4 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[46] Notes by Elhamy Khalil on CAA meeting held October 1964 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[47] Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community in the USA (1955-1970)*, self-published, 2006: 47.

York Copts were still under the impression that the CAA had to make preparations and be prepared to receive the priest.[48] In November, father Marcos' application was accepted by the Canadian, not the United States, embassy in Rome and he left for Toronto. Under the impression (which Bishop Samuel left unchallenged to placate the CAA) that if the US embassy had not rejected the application father Marcos would have gone to New York, the CAA continued to appeal the decision with Immigration Services. When a temporary visa was finally secured in January 1965, granting father Marcos the right to work and travel through the US for five years, he agreed to minister across the continent but insisted that his headquarters be in Toronto.

Several members of the CAA executive were outraged. The financial strain taxed the commitment of the CAA and its membership. While in Saskatoon, Khalil received letters from friends in New York upset that they were "paying for the priest while the people in Toronto get the service." When the priest elected to visit distant Coptic families scattered across the continent rather than perform a service in New York, they responded "no, we're paying your salary. You do what we tell you."[49] In February, the CAA convened a board meeting and made the decision to cut ties with father Marcos because of his refusal to cooperate and their meager ability to generate financial contributions outside the New York and New Jersey area. By May, father Marcos and the association cut all financial ties, particularly because he remained committed to the ideal that as the shepherd of the flock he had final say over church finances. The CAA transferred the entire sum of its church fund to Toronto and reoriented its focus strictly to social services to newcomers without consulting the priest.[50]

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[48] Letter from Bishop Samuel to Elhamy Khalil, October 15, 1964 in response to a letter from Elhamy to the bishop on October 11, 1964, 1-2 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[49] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[50] CAA report to membership, document 90 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 190-191.

Father Marcos was indignant at their presumption, insisting that "a step like this could not be taken except in the presence of either Bishop Samuel or myself."[51] In his account of the priest's response, Sami Boulos was adamant that the CAA's action was in keeping with its mandate and "what it sees in the best interest of the Coptic community." Though Bishop Samuel tried to stabilize the situation, father Marcos' ministry to the East Coast declined markedly. Shawki Karas, whose outspokenness marked his tenure with the CAA, was incensed by the whole situation and quite heated in his denunciation of both Bishop Samuel and father Marcos. He was forced to resign by the members, later starting his own American Coptic Association (ACA) to fight for Coptic rights in Egypt (detailed in chapter 7).[52] CAA president Maher Kamel refused to continue his term, and treasurer Youssef Sidhom insisted that the CAA should keep all funds in New York and prepare to receive their own priest.[53] Deep "frustration" mounted and several members insisted that father Marcos "cultivated disunity" and "that he is not the kind of father who is capable of fulfilling the responsibilities he ought to undertake."[54]

As a result, Bishop Samuel visited Toronto in September 1965 to speak to father Marcos and to make suitable arrangements for his continued ministry. In an open letter sent to Coptic families across the continent, the bishop detailed "the good work" of father Marcos that demands his many travels, for which he should be pitied as the strain taxed him daily. Father Marcos, the bishop continued, provided outreach to surrounding communities and constant communication with all Copts on the continent as immigrants had asked at the inaugural CAA meeting. Indeed, it was because of the priest's service that "new comers, new immigrants, and all immigrants feel

[51] Letter from Father Marcos to CAA executive, mid-May, 1965, document 103 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 193.
[52] Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 55-56.
[53] Letter from Nabil Ibrahim to Elhamy Khalil, Philadelphia, June 26, 1965 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[54] Letter from unknown member of CAA to Elhamy Khalil, September 7, 1965 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).

safe ... therefore, I feel it is my duty to remind you of the responsibilities and burdens that your church now assumes in its constitutional role." Tensions with the CAA resulted in a sharp decline in donations. The bishop reminded the faithful to pay their subscriptions and "assume responsibility collectively" for "God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:6)."[55] Yet problems mounted, and Sami Boulos, Maher Kamel and Youssef Sidhom continued to voice concerns.

Image 9 CAA executive in the Kamel backyard. Maher Kamel, Youssef Sidhom, Eva Habib al-Masry, Sami Boulos, and Elhamy, 1964. Elhamy Khalil Collection.

In the midst of such tensions, many immigrants viewed the arrival of a priest anywhere on the continent as a great boon. Several desired to be married within the Coptic rite. Letters circulated among male graduate students and university lecturers decrying the loneliness of single life and the need to find a suitable wife.[56] Priests and bishops in Egypt became matchmakers, encouraging immigrants to either visit Egypt to meet a suitable woman inside the church, or travel and meet new single female immigrants arriving in North American cities in greater numbers. Elhamy Khalil was advised to visit "the Egyptians gathered in Toronto and Montreal to see the Coptic girls." For the clergy, endogamy was the preferred route for

[55] Letter from Bishop Samuel, Toronto to Elhamy Khalil for distribution to Copts in North America, September 20, 1965 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[56] Letter from Bishop Samuel, Montreal to Elhamy Khalil, October 10, 1965 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).

immigrants to tie them closer to the Church and ensure children remain rooted in the culture.[57] With the arrival of a priest and more consistent visits from the bishop, returning to Egypt, arranging to meet in Beirut or Jerusalem, or traveling to other North American cities in search of a suitable bride became more common. Concerned about the wellbeing of now permanent immigrants, clergy used their influence and connections to arrange speedy courtships.[58]

As an organization, the CAA continued to bring Copts together in the homes of Saba Habachy and Maher Kamel or rented churches and lecture halls after separating financially from the church in Toronto. When father Rofael, a graduate of the Sorbonne, arrived in Montréal in 1967, Canada had two priests. The CAA executive felt once again that the patriarchate was not prioritizing their needs. However, father Rofael's arrival did provide them with an opportunity to refuse father Marcos' visits. Families in New York asked that only father Rofael visit them to conduct the liturgy. With father Rofael now their travelling priest, the association focused on establishing a committee to oversee an educational fund financed by Saba Habachy, supervised an expanding library of spiritual books, and hosted public lectures "to facilitate and improve the communication skills that Egyptians, especially the new comers crucially needed." This path of integration was meant to ensure that Copts "not remain secluded from the society we are living in." The CAA successfully attracted newly arrived families in the city.[59]

A constitution crafted by father Marcos and approved by both Bishop Samuel and Pope Kyrillos VI in 1969 infuriated the CAA executive. It stipulated that the Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of North America was to be governed by the priest, under the authority of Bishop Samuel, and all parish board positions would have to meet with the priest's final approval. The

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[57] Letter from Bishop Samuel, Cairo to Elhamy Khalil, December 16, 1966 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[58] This pattern of travel was facilitated through charters arranged by the Church and phone calls by priests and bishops familiar with the suitors to hurry along both initial meetings and a formal engagement.
[59] Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 65-66.

CAA executive perceived this as an attempt to sideline lay authority further. Committed to maintaining their separation from the church in Toronto, executive members chose to react not as an associational body but as individual Coptic immigrants. Youssef Sidhom, a former lawyer in Cairo, decried the veto power now accorded clergy in the constitution. He saw it as a weakening of the authority of the congregation, prized in the American Protestantism upon which the constitution was modeled. It was instead continuing an Egyptian system that subordinated the needs of lay councils to an intractable clerical hierarchy, explicitly referencing the collapse of the *Majlis al-Milli* (lay council) in Egypt at the hands of the patriarchate.[60]

The tense atmosphere in New York worried Bishop Samuel and the pope. The bishop assured Elhamy Khalil that despite New York Copts letting "problems overshadow other responsibilities," another priest was soon to be sent as well as a new one each year until there were at least four on the continent. Characterizing dissention as objectively evil, the bishop insisted that pessimism and infighting could not be "used by Satan to block His work."[61] Resentment mounted among the CAA executive, amplified by rising immigration after the Canadian embassy in Cairo closed and the United States put the Hart-Celler Act into effect in June 1968. More Coptic immigrants than ever were arriving to the United States, particularly New York and Los Angeles.

Nevertheless, the regular visits of father Rofael were appreciated. In Sami Boulos' opinion, the priest was a "humble and service oriented person ... [who] was a good shepherd to God's flock, which suffered long, because of the lack of adequate spiritual services."[62] In early 1969, father Mankarious Awadallah arrived from Cairo to visit two children pursuing degrees in

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[60] Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 71-72.
[61] Letter from Bishop Samuel, Salt Lake City to Elhamy Khalil, May 20, 1966 (Elhamy Khalil collection, California).
[62] Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 76.

local universities. He spent time with the CAA and offered his services, wishing to stay and become their priest. Now president of the CAA, Eva Habib al-Masry refused because he was an older clergyman with a large family, lacking a graduate education. The association insisted that they sought a young priest with a small family, educated and knowledgeable about life in America.[63] The negative response from the association angered not only father Mankarious, but also Copts in the New York and New Jersey area who began to meet in secret and plan an opposition to the CAA. They sent several letters to the pope denouncing the rejection, which Eva Habib al-Masry immediately addressed. Blaming the priest for encouraging people to support him, she affirmed the CAA's constitutional right to send nominations to the patriarchate.[64]

Anxious about the turmoil, she sent another letter to Bishop Samuel requesting that father Rofael be brought to New York permanently, adding "this is only a suggestion, because we here feel that we know him, and are comfortable with him. Another reason is that he himself mentioned more than once that he and his wife find it difficult to tolerate the cold weather in Montreal."[65] It is unclear how involved father Rofael was in the request, though he was in the midst of a confrontation with congregants in Montreal (discussed in chapter 6). Two more letters followed, one to her sister Iris Habib al-Masry requesting that she visit Bishop Samuel in person, and one to Bishop Gregorious on June 15 to intervene with the pope. The latter employed delay tactics that would mark the downfall of the association. He assured the CAA that the pope would "pray about it," and while waiting the executive should "evaluate the relationship" calmly with whichever priest would be sent.[66]

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[63] Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 82-83.
[64] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA to Pope Kyrillos, Cairo, March 28, 1969, document 142 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 215-216.
[65] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA to Bishop Samuel, Cairo, March 30, 1969, document 143 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 217-218.
[66] Letter from Bishop Gregorious to Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA, June 15, 1969, document 144 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 219-220.

Father Mina Yanni came to New York not to minister but to see his wife, then completing her Master's in Nursing at Rutgers University. Arriving in May 1969, the priest agreed to lead immigrants in weekly prayers. After Bishop Samuel failed to respond to a second letter asking once again for his intervention in the case of father Mankarious, Eva Habib el-Masry changed course.[67] She wrote to Bishop Gregorious in July asking for father Mina to be their new priest.[68] The speed with which these letters were produced reflects a sense of urgency and a fear of losing control. The organization took the additional step of registering a church but discovered that following the disagreements over father Mankarious, a rival group had already registered themselves as "St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church" in secret.[69] Letters to bishops Samuel and Gregorious received no response which I suggest was a tactic by the clergy to break the power and influence of the CAA. Eva Habib el-Masry blamed father Mankarious for the dissention.[70] Growing more isolated, and concerned about the actions of the rival group, the CAA appealed to Pope Kyrillos.[71] CAA executive members expressed shock that, to mark the Coptic New Year on 11 September 1969, father Mina announced that "a new organization [had] been formed ... for the purpose of building a church ... and that your Holiness [was] interested in the project."[72] The new group now had official Church sanction before the community.

Their fears were now realized and the only thing left to do was contest this course of action. The CAA executive insisted the competing group was using the pope to endorse their

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[67] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA to Bishop Samuel, Cairo, May 14, 1969, document 145 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 221-223.
[68] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA to Bishop Gregorious, July 14, 1969, document 146 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 224-225.
[69] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA to membership, July 18, 1969, document 147 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 226-228.
[70] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA, to Bishop Samuel, Cairo, August 1 1969, document 149 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 233-234. In the mid-1970s, Father Mankarious Awadallah finally received a ministry in North America as priest for Ottawa.
[71] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA to Pope Kyrillos, Cairo, August 7, 1969, document 150 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 235-236.
[72] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of CAA, to Pope Kyrillos, September 11, 1969, document 151 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 237-240.

activities and divide the community, which "destroyed our unity and affected our ability to serve." For the first time, the CAA members felt the need to justify their existence and outline their accomplishments. The problem as they saw it was not their lack of commitment or attentiveness to social and spiritual services. They insisted that the call to father Mina had been genuine, but it was he who "declined our invitation to stay in that apartment, for fear that this may brand him as favouring one group over the other."[73] Nevertheless, debates raged within the immigrant community at large and among the executive members of the CAA—insults were hurled in church basements and parking lots after liturgy. In October, father Rofael visited New York and created a unified parish board, made up of CAA members, representatives of the new group and unaffiliated lay parishioners to find a suitable compromise. It is unclear who in the patriarchate directed father Rofael to do so because all this was cut short in December by a letter sent by the pope to both the CAA and the St. Mark's group.

Kyrillos VI divested immigrant Copts of all power and authority over church matters, pointing out that the constitution established by father Marcos was absolute and had the pope's approval. He emphasized that "for the Coptic churches in North America to function properly, there should be one law that guides them." The pope was dismissive of the laity's right to govern and insisted immigrants join together as "our children who are sojourners in foreign lands."[74] The patriarchate finally made explicit its approval of the new church group. Though the CAA attempted to find an alternative, by March 1970 they had no choice but to accept the pope's directive and disband. That month a new corporation was registered under the name "the Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of New York." All funds were transferred to its control, and the CAA

[73] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry to Pope Kyrillos, September 11, 1969. In our interview, father Mina did not mention fearing to take sides. Instead, he stated: "They told me to stay and I said 'No, I have my church in Egypt.' I never thought to stay ... Even if I wished to stay, the pope would never approve."
[74] Letter from Pope Kyrillos, Cairo to CAA, December 3, 1969, document 153 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 241.

executive agreed to put the debates and infighting behind them, joining a community now numbering a few thousand in respecting the wishes of the pope. The new corporation purchased a Methodist church on Westside Avenue, Jersey City and moved in summer 1970.[75]

BUILDING CHURCHES AND CONFRONTING CLERICAL SUPERVISION

In September of 1970, father Ghobrial Amin—an ecumenically-minded priest with graduate degrees in History and Theology in the US prior to his ordination—arrived to minister to the new parish in Jersey City. Meanwhile in Los Angeles, father Bishoi Kamel, who visited the city in November 1969 under papal directive, gathered together a community, created a church fund, and by September 1970 bought a Baptist church building. He remained in Los Angeles until father Tadros Malaty (his disciple and a fellow priest from St. George church, Alexandria) took over in 1971.[76] California proved attractive to post-1968 immigrants because of both its welcoming climate and job opportunities in engineering and medicine.[77] With four permanent priests on the continent, Bishop Samuel's vision of a unified service under clerical supervision could finally be achieved. However, it was cut short by the enthronement of Pope Shenouda III.

Fathers Marcos in Toronto, Rofael in Montreal, Ghobrial in Jersey City, and Tadros in Los Angeles met in the Russian Orthodox Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Jordanville, New

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[75] Letter from Eva Habib al-Masry, President of the CAA to membership, March 1970, document 154 in Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community*, 242-243.

[76] Father Tadros Malaty, interviewed in New Jersey, May 9, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic). Father Tadros is a deeply spiritual individual. In our interview, he refused to comment on intra-communal tensions or Church-state relations in Egypt. Instead he maintained that: "I believe every Christian is born in the lord, and my country is heaven itself." Born in Esna, near Luxor, he completed a bachelor's degree in commerce in Alexandria. After graduating in 1957, he continued to serve in Alexandria and promoted Sunday school activities with his mentor, Sami Kamel (later father Bishoi Kamel). He grew up committed to his "spiritual edification" and dreaming of traveling, translating the writings of early church fathers from English to Arabic and summarizing them for the youth. Like his contemporaries, he was a committed church activist who travelled to nearby villages to host "bible study for the farmers and their wives." He and father Bishoi both felt the influence of Giza and Shubra, attenuated by the evolving print culture that brought books to nearby bookstores.

[77] Elhamy Khalil, *The Making of a Diocese: The Early Years of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Los Angeles, Southern California, and Hawaii* (Southern Diocese, California: 2008).

York, affiliated to the conservative Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. Each priest was accompanied by their head deacon. Under orders from the patriarchate to divide their service, they decided to split the continent into quarters, each overseeing select cities where Coptic families lived and worked. Their newly established churches would independently administer finances, and any donations gathered during pastoral visits, through a parish board under their control. Each priest was responsible for ensuring the distribution of Sunday school books by age group, the proceeds of which went toward supplementing the costs of their service. Additionally, monthly magazines and newsletters were to be circulated across the continent.[78]

With the patriarch's death in March 1971, many Copts in North America wanted a say in the election of the new pope. Of the five candidates, Samuel and Shenouda were thought to be the most likely successors. Bishop Samuel visited in August accompanied by interim patriarch Archbishop Antonious in a campaign to secure the support of immigrants who had felt his influence prior to, and since their departure from Egypt. Bishop Samuel won the popular vote, but it was Shenouda whose name was picked out of a glass chalice.[79] Though disappointed, North American Copts accepted the divine choice, grounded as it was in the traditions and dogma of the Coptic Orthodox Church. In short order Bishop Samuel's vision for the Church slowly lost support. Pope Shenouda worked quickly to sideline his opponent. He took charge of the churches outside Egypt in 1972, which by then included Canada, the United States, England, Germany, and Australia. All had been established under the supervision of Bishop Samuel.[80]

Under Pope Shenouda, clergy began arriving in North America in rapid succession. Though some immigrated permanently, initially most arrived temporarily like father Tadros

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[78] Elhamy Khalil, *Orthodox News* series, Volume 17, Issues 349-350, December 2016-January 2017.
[79] Elhamy Khalil, *Orthodox News* series, Volume 17, Issues 349-350, December 2016-January 2017.
[80] Church activists told me in interviews that sometime in late 1972 Bishop Samuel's name was no longer being recited during liturgy (commonly as a blessing to the service of the bishop overseeing the diocese). When they pressed priests for why this was, they were be met with vague and dismissive responses.

Malaty, who served not only in Los Angeles, but also Alexandria, Egypt, and New York and New Jersey.[81] Not all wanted to remain and some elected to return to Egypt (after much debate with bishops), and in the 1980s were replaced by newly ordained priests from among the immigrant population. While at first the sending of priests and the formation of parish boards seemed to be quite ad hoc, institutional development was now guided by the patriarch in Cairo who placed a high premium on clerical supervision. Although the choice of which priest to send, and where, was planned in advance, newly arrived priests often relied on the presence of dedicated lay professionals in North American cities.

Almost immediately tensions between the laity and clergy over control of church finances and services developed once again. When father Mina Yanni returned officially to New York and began his permanent service in September 1972, he settled into both St. Mary and St. Antonious church, Queens, and St. George and St. Shenouda church, Brooklyn—former Protestant churches rented to the Copts. In need of their own priest, the Queens parish received father Yohanna Tadros in March 1973. After the arrival of fathers Mina and Yohanna, Queens and Brooklyn became focal points as more Coptic immigrants settled in proximity to the newly established parishes and the grocers who operated across the street. Parish boards demanded reports on expenditures from newly arrived priests and challenged efforts to introduce English translations into the liturgy for younger generations. They complained to the higher clergy in Egypt to no avail. The patriarchate sided with and empowered priests in immigrant parishes.[82]

Clergy sent by the patriarchate to North America were often either reluctant to emigrate or initially opposed to ordination. There is no denying the deep spirituality of clergymen who

[81] The service on the East Coast in particular grew rapidly in the early 1970s. A second priest (father Antonious Baki) was sent to the newly rented St. Mary and St. Antonious church in Queens. He arrived March 1972, but two months later died of a heart attack and father Tadros Malaty was sent from LA until father Yohanna arrived.
[82] Father Mina Yanni, interviewed in New York, May 11, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

chose to dedicate their lives to the priesthood. Nevertheless, they were selected from among lay professionals at the insistence of rational calculators such as bishops Samuel and Shenouda who judged both the demographics and characteristics of the parish and sought to weed out mercenary individuals. "Any priest who wanted to go to America wouldn't work out," reflected father Mina, "that's what pope Shenouda would say." The pope did not send a priest who requested to emigrate, only one who "doesn't want to go, but is succeeding in his service [in Egypt]."[83] As emigration became increasingly an attractive alternative to continued socio-economic decline in Egypt, the patriarchate moulded parishes abroad by selecting the type of priests sent to serve them. Father Mina's reflections mirrored those of other clerics destined for immigrant communities who repeatedly confided that they hesitated. Most interviewed had not even contemplated ordination prior to being approached by bishops who pressured them to accept.

Tasoni (my sister, a title given to the wife of a priest) Samia Girgis told me such a story of her husband, Father Yuhanna.[84] In his youth the priest had been a student in the Shubra Sunday school. Although he completed a degree in the 1940s at the Clerical College, he had consciously avoided serving in churches and had no intention of continuing down that path. Samia and he were married in 1961 in Cairo, while he worked for a sugar company handling international money transfers. As the Nasser regime imposed greater restrictions on foreign transfers, rumors circulated of colleagues disappearing for interrogation at the hands of the secret police. Tasoni Samia was anxious to leave as young men in the families and in their social circle began emigrating. Aware that they could not get into the United States, the couple first applied to

[83] Father Mina Yanni, interviewed in New York, May 11, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[84] 95-years-old, Father Yuhanna excused himself to sleep following the liturgy and so left his wife to do the talking. Their home was filled with furnishings they brought from Egypt. Connected by a pathway to the church proper, congregants came and went asking questions, dropping off supplies, or picking up food. Tasoni Samia was unperturbed by this, shifting from our conversation to welcoming visitors seamlessly. Their home is a place of hospitality, love and a hub of activity. Filled with icons and the smell of incense, it is an extension of the church.

Canada in 1963. “But they asked for sponsorship,” remembered tasoni Samia, and “it’s cold, so I don’t want to go.” Instead, “I encouraged him” to apply to Australia where they were accepted in 1965. They left a year later. The couple did not remain in Australia for long, feeling “as if at the end of the world.”[85] At the insistence of their father confessor and father Yohanna’s older brother, one of the Sunday school students who used to stay with Pope Kyrillos in Old Cairo, they visited the pope to receive his blessing. The pope looked at father Yohanna and said: “we’ll ordain you a priest.” This provoked laughter initially.

As with all Coptic Orthodox priests ordained for parishes in Egypt and abroad, father Yohanna and tasoni Samia had no say about where the pope would send them. In 1970 they joined father Yohanna’s brother who had settled in Houston. On a visit to Cairo to see family in December 1972, father Yohanna was encouraged by fathers Bishoi and Tadros to visit pope Shenouda. The pope was adamant: father Yohanna had to be ordained for service in the United States. Taking time to think it over, he reluctantly acquiesced. However, it was not an easy decision. Tasoni Samia confided that her husband had told her: “I know it’s a big responsibility, so I’ve been running away from the priesthood.” She in particular did not want it when pope Shenouda told them they were going to New York. “I saw how crowded, how busy” it was, she recalled and at the time cried out: “No. Your Holiness, not New York.” It was to no avail. They were sent to the parish in Queens because nearly 400 Coptic families were in New York.[86]

The clergy and their wives actively avoided any mention of internal tensions and political activism within the church and community in conversations, emphasizing the faithfulness of parishioners. Father Mina felt an immediate sense of familiarity with those early immigrants in New York who requested his service because the religious education they shared in common.

[85] Tasoni Samia, interviewed in New York, August 18, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[86] Tasoni Samia, interviewed in New York, August 18, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

Born in Giza in 1933, he actively participated in St. Mark's Sunday school program under fathers Makary and Salib Surial. In 1969, he identified about 100 families in New York and New Jersey. On his return in 1972, the number was closer to 800 due to continued immigration and family formation, with many located in apartments close to the subway line (making $400 monthly and spending maybe half that sum on living expenses). Yet the longing for home was palpable. Rather than save money, parishioners sent remittances to Egypt and visited the country on charter flights organized by St. Mark's church in Jersey City, taking medicines, gifts and foodstuffs to family because imported goods were either heavily taxed or unavailable. Quite quickly, particularly as family and friends joined them in North America, congregants travelled less on charters and bought homes in East Brunswick and the suburbs of New Jersey. Parishioners told the priest after mass that "the loan [to purchase a house] was less than the rent of an apartment" in Brooklyn and Queens, and their homes were at least twice the size. As immigrants travelled less to Egypt they began to "think about their future here."[87]

The Queens parish, which began in a rented United Methodist church, moved into Ebenezer Baptist church in Flushing in November 1973 until they bought a former Baptist church in Queens five years later. Tasoni Samia worked fulltime for 25 years in secretarial positions to supplement the family income while balancing homecare and responsibilities to the parish.[88] It was not easy. Pushed into the service, priests and their wives entered an established community and had to adapt to a new city while managing an entire congregation. Though Pope Shenouda assumed administrative control of immigrant parishes, Bishop Samuel continued his brokering of émigrés and financed relief projects in Egypt without consulting the pope, creating tensions between the two who rarely spoke to each other. When he arrived in New York, father

[87] Father Mina Yanni, interviewed in New York, May 11, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[88] Tasoni Samia, interviewed in New York, August 18, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

Yohanna received instructions from Bishop Samuel to sponsor new immigrants to the city. "We never had an empty house," tasoni Samia recalled, "we always had people staying with us."[89] Continued correspondence with bishops in Egypt provided tasoni Samia welcome, but limited, support. During their pastoral travels, bishops brought news from Egypt and advised clergy and their wives about arriving parishioners, information that in tasoni Samia's memories fostered deeper interpersonal bonds between herself and families in the parish.

IDENTIFYING THE MUNDANE TRANSNATIONALISM OF THE HYPHEN NATION

Interpersonal bonds and relationships in churches served as a bridge between home and host land to many new immigrants. For those early Orthodox Copts raised to embody Christian virtue through their Sunday school education, ethnic identity evolved as an internal geography of religious centre and national periphery, where a deeply embedded nationalist mythos informed—but was rarely more important than—religious codes of enduring obligation.[90] After supporting the CAA as an active member in New York, Atef Mo'awad moved to a university hospital in Chicago where he helped to establish the first Coptic church. His efforts to ensure the success of spiritual services in the United States reveal continued faith in the Church, if not in Egypt as a nation suffering decline since his emigration. Atef Mo'awad detailed this contrast simply: Egypt is "everything to me," he confided, "but I see it now ruined ... It is very crowded. Very ugly. Very dirty. Chaos. Bribery. A lot of *hijabs* and *niqabs*. Ideology that was never really there." The enduring religious discrimination in Egypt (again marked on women's bodies) was never acceptable but once restrained, "subtle," "individual," "and not really systematic or violent."

[89] Tasoni Samia, interviewed in New York, August 18, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[90] Though the Coptic case follows its own historical trajectory, varying levels of attachment to nationalist mythos and codes of enduring religious obligation apply equally to Jewish, Greek, Polish, and Irish immigrants as detailed by Jacobson in *Roots Too* and Gans, "Another look at symbolic ethnicity."

Today it is ever-present, vicious and worrisome. This bleak appraisal was quickly followed by a definitive statement: "I love my Church." More than that, he said, "I love the monasteries, I love the spiritual heritage, and I will die for it. But not for the country as it is now."[91] Although Egypt as a bounded national community is troubled, in the imagined geography Atef Mo'awad described the holy sites and enduring religious culture bound him to the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt.[92] As scholars of ethnicity have argued, immigrants often arrived with two kinds of ethnic cultures: the sacred and the secular. In this instance, the sacred outlasted the secular and survived because it served a community maintaining function. Despite his connection to a secular past and an enduring national identity, he did not feel a similar obligation to retain or renew his Egyptian citizenship. Instead, Mo'awad displayed a ready fluidity in switching between Egyptian, American, or Canadian, "whatever you want [laughs]."[93]

I have stressed that heteroglossia is how we understand the Coptic immigrant experience. Varied and opposing voices of Copts in the US conceptualized national belonging and the sense of religious obligation differently. Nevertheless, patterns emerged that show commonalities between their life stories. The concept which has guided my understanding of these experiences is mundane transnationalism, an approach wherein home is referential and expressed in contrasts about obligations to the Church and nation. It is reflected in self-identification, home furnishings and choices about what media programs to watch. This contested sense of belonging became intertwined with the power of the "hyphen nation" in the US context to promote a pluralistic understanding of immigrants in American life. Early Copts consciously made visible their self-identification. For instance, reflecting on her 47 years in New York tasoni Samia defined herself, as others did, as Christian "Egyptian-Americans." Diverse opinions and perspectives coloured

[91] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[92] Gans, "Another look at symbolic ethnicity," 1411-1413.
[93] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

immigrants' personal narratives, but were always rooted in contrasts between religious centre and national periphery and expressed in often mundane choices which ranged from home decor to media consumption.

Elhamy Khalil arrived with Atef Mo'awad in 1959. From his arrival he worked diligently with the CAA, supported father Marcos when travelling through Canada, and helped to establish new churches in California when he moved there in the late-1970s. Centred by his religious identity, Elhamy Khalil insisted that "I will always be an Egyptian." Similarly, he detailed the decline in both Egyptian governance and in "the Egyptians," whom he blamed for selfishly spending "half their time drinking tea and eating falafel sandwiches" rather than supporting the nation. For him, as for Atef Mo'awad, "it is the Mother Church and it is the faith that I follow." Both men spoke positively of the United States and their material lives there, using US progress to bemoan Egyptian socio-economic and political decline.

At times, however, Egypt was the model against which the United States was measured and found wanting. Raised in urban Cairo, Sami Boulos has been in the United States since visiting in 1955. Yet he remains very deeply connected to both sacred and secular aspects. He confessed that "I have great faith that [President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi] came by a miracle." Sami Boulos recited from memory a passage from the book of Isaiah in Arabic: "'And there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the Lands of Egypt. And the Egyptians will know the Lord and there will be unto Him a people and to them a God ... and there will be in Egypt a fierce king, and will persecute the Christians, and the Christians will turn to the Lord and He will send them a savior.' This is what happened in Egypt." A deeply religious man, for Boulos faith in Egypt is a spiritual act to oppose a great evil: the Muslim Brotherhood. He was not worried about Egypt but about secularism in the United States. "America rejected God from everything," he insisted,

and "there is nothing called God ... This is weakness ... This country is perverse now. God is holding it together a little, because there are still a few good people." Boulos maintains his connection through satellite television and regular visits to Egypt. As a result, he was insistent that "I am Egyptian. I've never changed."[94] Even though the United States offered material progress, the holy sites and rich culture kept his faith in Egypt's hopeful regeneration.

Devotion to the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt and measured appraisals of the homeland and early immigrants' obligation to it were expressed not only through conversation but also in choices about what television shows to watch or how to decorate their homes. Sami Boulos watched the Coptic Agapy channel or state-run Nile News International, as well as commentary from late-night programs such as Amr Adeeb's *Cairo Today* or the now cancelled *Here is the Capital* starring Lamis al-Hadeedy. He adorned his home with photos of bishops and religious icons in comfortable balance with his US flag on the lawn and graduate certificates and accolades in the office. Elhamy Khalil, for his part, has a sparsely decorated home with familiar Egyptian furniture but the television is rarely tuned to Arabic programming or satellite television. He stated explicitly that this was a conscious choice, though he "reads *Al Ahram* and *Watani* everyday on the internet, just to be up to date on what is happening in Egypt."[95]

Yet not all early immigrants to the United States remain attached to the Church or to Egypt in similar ways. In 1970, Suzie Habachy visited Egypt as legal counsel for a United Nations mission, but could not gain entry. Her family was still suspect in Nasser's Egypt. After the president's death, her younger siblings Nimet and Nazeeh "test[ed] the waters" again in 1972. They made it past customs. "It was a dream come true," Nimet Habachy told me, "we used to do things like wait for Arabic movies to come to Brooklyn ... the nostalgia was just killing us."

[94] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10, 2017 (translated from Arabic).
[95] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

The following year her parents followed and her father was contemplating returning. Her mother refused, despite having "spent ten years weeping over Egypt." When asked why, she told her children that people in Egypt "haven't been reading the *New York Times* for the past 20 years." Nimet Habachy explained: "we simply don't live the same lives anymore ... Egypt had drawn into itself and become very limited." She still cared for Egypt, "but I am not part of it." This assessment had as much to do with the timing as it did the nature of her family's flight from Egypt. For Nimet Habachy, being Coptic was "as much a lineage as it is a faith." Never rooted in the Church or its social activities, yet culturally tied to a Coptic heritage, she confided that it is "where I come from. I find it fascinating to learn about myself. But I am learning about it, I don't consider myself of it."[96] Despite her Orthodox father's influence, Nimet Habachy did not look to the Coptic Church *of* Egypt or the religious topography as a source of connection and obligation. Rather, using her wealth and social position among Manhattan's Upper East Side families she raises money for poor Coptic communities such as the *Zabaleen* (garbage collectors). Her "American" identity was enriched by reclaiming a Coptic heritage. Her expansive apartment was decorated with oriental rugs and Pharaonic or folkloric tapestries. Her travels back and forth between the US and Egypt since the mid-1970s, part ethnic tourism and part philanthropic, have strengthened a secular attachment but absent were any religious icons or portraits of the saints.[97]

At the same time that differences of opinion and practices existed between immigrants who arrived within close proximity to one another, early Copts equally disapproved of a confessional Egyptian society and new immigrants occupying the churches and social institutions created by the "pioneers." For instance, Wafik Habib, who returned to Cairo in the

[96] Nimet Habachy, interviewed in New York, May 12, 2017 (in English).
[97] On the relationship between ease of travel and ethnic identity retention among immigrant groups see, Peter Kivisto, "The Long Goodbye?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37.5 (2014): 774–777 and Werner Sollors, "What Might Take the Place of Late-Generation European American Ethnicity?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37.5 (2014): 778–780.

early 1970s and after a speedy engagement married Mona Habib, visited Egypt every few years. By the 1980s, both he and his wife felt out of place in the crowded streets and expressed shock that working-class Egyptians now "cooked on the beach," displaying disregard for what in their opinion were once elegant and pristine spaces. It was this Egypt to which they no longer belonged. This appraisal of Egyptian socio-economic decline combined with negative assessments of working-class Coptic immigrants who had arrived since the mid-1970s, and especially more recent Upper Egyptians arriving in the 1990s. Wafik and Mona Habib framed their experience in contrast to new immigrants as a two-way process of acculturation where "we live life like Americans, but adapt it to what we want." Mona celebrated their ability to become "integrated in this society." She critiqued new immigrants who did not embrace what it meant to be Egyptian-American but instead have chosen to insulate themselves.[98]

Early Copts and clergy derided newly arrived immigrants of more modest means and education, assessments replete with class overtones. Comparisons between the early generation and new immigrants figured prominently in my conversation with father Mina. In contrast to his parish in Brooklyn, he described the Coptic church in Bergen, New Jersey (founded in 1974) as home to working-class Copts and more recently Upper Egyptians arriving through the US Diversity Visa program. Also known as the green card lottery, this program allowed for permanent residence and was established under the Immigration Act of 1990. It made available approximately 50,000 immigrant visas annually and aimed to diversify the immigrant population in the United States whose professional skills, capital and national background were not the main criteria of selection.[99] To father Mina, the church in Bergen is filled with Copts who "cannot

[98] Wafik and Mona Habib, interviewed in New Jersey, August 20, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[99] Candace Lukasik, an Anthropology PhD at UC Berkeley explores the heterogeneity of Coptic immigrants' responses to US empire following 1992. Her dissertation, *Transnational Anxieties: Coptic Christians as Martyrs and Migrants* contextualizes the current wave of Coptic immigration to the US from Upper Egypt.

write their name" and unlike the "highly qualified" early immigrants who built a strong Coptic community in the US they are threatening a Church in the US that "began very strong."[100]

Timing of immigration, social class, and perceptions of belonging to the dominant US culture informed early Copts' assessments. The timing of their immigration coincided with ethnic revival and reflects the continued relevance of a narrative among conservative Egyptian-Americans, as for other self-identifying white-ethnics, of the "heroic central figure" of the "downtrodden but determined greenhorn" against whom those deemed undeserving were measured. The negative views expressed by several interviewees toward new immigrants were summed up by Elhamy Khalil: "They don't want to work. The first thing they say when they come here is how do I get welfare? How do we get food stamps? You know, right away. Not how to find a job?" A now internalized US Republican conservatism that characterized incorporation and advancement as a benchmark by which those deemed lacking and inassimilable remain outside the normative construction of the group. This informed appraisals of "ignorant" working-class Egyptians both in Egypt and those who arrived in the US.[101]

In the process of identifying the mundane transnationalism of Coptic immigrants, who arrived in Civil Rights America as it confronted new configurations of the hyphen nation, several commonalities became evident. For early Coptic Orthodox immigrants God remains in Egypt and the Church united and strengthened the Coptic transnational community in their imagined geography. The case of Nimet Habachy and her siblings showed how self-identified Copts may wrestle with their identities and make different choices to celebrate a culture, support a people, but not necessarily maintain attachment to the institutional Church or nation. In the United States, tensions between early Copts and new immigrants were configured by class assessments

[100] Father Mina Yanni, interviewed in New York, May 11, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[101] Elhamy Khalil, interviewed in California, June 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

and were later directed at those arriving through the Diversity Visa Program. For early Copts, 'America the bad' was welcoming new immigrants perceived to be carrying 'Egypt the bad,' mixing within a material society lacking the old values of hard work, moral ethics and a "by the bootstraps" immigrant fulfilling the lauded American dream.

WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE NEW YORK: THE CAA'S CONTESTED PAST

The formal establishment of the Coptic Association of America marked Coptic immigrants' acceptance of permanent settlement in the United States. The organization benefited from the tremendous impact of Bishop Samuel. Former Sunday school students in Egypt now in the United States remained in contact with him and welcomed his direction in their activities in the New York and New Jersey area. The first such transnational body, the CAA served the material and spiritual needs of its growing membership tying them to Church leaders in Egypt. Bishop Samuel's influence was notable in the CAA's emphasis on religious education, ecumenical cooperation, and donations to missions in Africa. Through his many travels, the bishop encouraged immigrant Copts to register and helped to increase donations to the association. Concurrently, the devotion and zeal of immigrants who developed an authentic habituated piety through their religious education supported an emergent immigrant group seeking integration.

The financial split with the church in Toronto, and disagreements with father Marcos, left CAA executives frustrated at their efforts coming to naught. As more confrontations followed, worry mounted about the patriarchate's negative reactions and the actions of other immigrants across the continent, unaware of the details of the controversies but equally motivated to find a priest. What is clear from the voluminous correspondence and plethora of publications since then is not only the pragmatism of such immigrants seeking professional occupations and social

fraternity but also the depth of faith. The loss of the CAA was clearly a defeat for lay leadership. Yet because they felt loyalty to the Church and its clergy, church activists decided to stay rather than leave and risk a schism (unlike other notable examples of trusteeism among Mennonite, Ukrainian and Catholic parishes). Nevertheless, conflicting perspectives on the power which should be accorded a priest within the community and role of social fraternity and cultural celebration shed light on the reality of competing voices within an immigrant group. Such complexity enriches this history. Their social relations and transnational ties capture a rich tapestry of ordinary Copts navigating between Egypt and the United States.

In time, disagreements and tensions between bishops Samuel and Shenouda travelled with immigrants to North America. Yet the majority of Copts interviewed for this study repeated a common refrain: "go speak to Bishop Samuel, he'll listen and he'll solve it."[102] Though the Coptic Association of America was marginalized and its executive disbanded in 1970, as new priests arrived and churches were established, many of the bishop's students chose to remain active in new ways, hosting weekly gatherings and supporting new parish boards across the United States and Canada. Always tied to Church concerns in Egypt, immigrants who operated in new environments became involved with multiethnic religious organizations while always cognizant of their place in a growing transnational Coptic community.

The timing of Coptic immigration to the United States further allowed for a celebration of ethnic particularity and sense of exceptionalism as Christian Egyptian-Americans that would have been far more difficult before the 1950s. That immigrants perceived no contradiction in being both "Egyptian" and "American" may be attributed to the changing cultural understanding of US nationalism emblematic of the "hyphen nation." Copts promoted a Christian universalism invigorated by collaboration with transnational Christian charities such as the NCC and WCC to

[102] Nimet and Nazeeh Habachy, interviewed in New York, August 19, 2017 (in English).

show commonality with the dominant culture of their receiving society, while also engaging in the promotion of their particular national and cultural difference. Indeed, Copts were affected by the emergence of the "hyphen nation." The often ordinary and routine use of possessive pronouns, local stories of Egyptian or United States folk practices, foodways, and habits exemplify the myriad ways migrants navigate nation-state systems and engage with dominant cultures in their cities on their own terms. Memories of promoting their Coptic heritage and Egyptian roots were matched by positive assessments of the values of "equality," "opportunity" and "fraternity" vital to US conservatism since the 1960s. Celebration of history and heritage, a big part of the visible expressions of ethnicity, offered a space for Copts to express a particular identity that was now not at odds with Americanization, and to debate and contest both the secularism of US society and the perceived decline of Egyptian public life. Today Coptic Orthodox populations in North America are predominantly politically and socially conservative. The transnational and transcultural lives of immigrant Copts shed light on this trajectory and call our attention to past socialization in the homeland and both group recognition and persistence in postwar North American contexts. Future scholarship may continue this line of inquiry rather than persist in studying the Copts in isolation.

As Jacobson articulated it, "historiography, we know, is a presentist pursuit, the biggest game it is after is never simply 'the past' but a *usable* past."[103] Former members of the first Coptic association on the continent recalled their fellowship with nostalgic pride. They built the foundations of Coptic communities that have come to number hundreds of thousands and include every major city on either side of the 49th parallel. To them, that work was not theirs alone but an act in service of God's will, exemplifying their devotion to the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt and their new environment. The mundane transnationalism they embody in their everyday

[103] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 10.

lives, a banal, often routine realm of social interactions and habits most strikingly displays how migrants often carry multiple identifications. The sacred and secular cultures they carried were often expressed in different ways: commitment to a Church that connected them to God, reflections on an Egypt they were at once disillusioned with yet bound to, or a United States that offered opportunities for success while challenging their very moral conservatism.

In the early 2000s, both father Marcos and Sami Boulos produced monographs recounting the history of the Copts in North America. Father Marcos's biography was published, first in Arabic in 2004, as a testament to his service. The surviving members of the CAA met in the home of Dr. Maher Kamel and responded with theirs in English in 2006. In 2014, an English translation of father Marcos' biography appeared with slight alterations to now reach a wider, and presumably younger Coptic readership.[104] Historical memory is a battlefield where competing narratives seek to become the official one. Yet in recounting this history my aim was not to judge which was more accurate or whose efforts deserve greater recognition. Rather, I outlined a history of contestation and community development that configured the everyday lives of immigrants whose material engagements reflect the diverse ways people made sense of their surroundings and attempted to build community. The challenges they faced continue, in the form of new priests, new tensions over trusteeism, and new intergenerational debates as immigrants from Upper Egypt demand services to meet their needs and American-born generations seek to define a Coptic identity without Egypt. Throughout, national experiences and the power of religious obligations configure the language and actions of migrants whose expanding rhetorical repertoire draws on mundane moments of transnationalism. It is through this exchange and fluidity that we may understand the historical Coptic immigrant experience, and not insularity.

[104] Father Marcos A. Marcos, *The History of the Coptic Orthodox Church in North America: The First 50 Years (1964-2014)*, English ed., (Toronto: St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, 2014).

Migration was a choice rationally considered and actively taken. Migrants were not simply at the whim of authoritarianism pushing them out and US or Canadian free markets pulling them in. Rather, they were pragmatic and rational calculators accounting for both the push and pull of their environment, and of their future material and spiritual needs to build security and stability. Once they became more established, individuals made choices commensurate with their needs, whether to demand a church, connect with like-minded acquaintances seeking purely social and cultural fraternity, or develop political activism for Coptic rights in the homeland. Neither insular nor isolated, Copts participated in a transnational world marking their modern ways of being, fashioning a language both deeply Egyptian and American. The ways Coptic immigrants chose to integrate in Montreal and Toronto and their particular tensions between early "pioneers" and new "interlopers" is the subject of chapters 6.

Chapter 6
"Pioneers" and "Interlopers:" Copts' Material and Spiritual Lives in Montreal and Toronto

This chapter is concerned with two aspects of Copts' immigrant experience. First, I discuss their material lives in Montreal and Toronto: their settlement, social and commercial relations, and the varying levels of gender, racial and ethnic discrimination that they encountered. This aspect is ignored in past scholarship in favour of their religion, long prioritized as the core of a static monolithic identity. I instead turn to their religious experience second. The immigrants' church slowly developed spiritual, social, cultural, and even commercial services for an emergent immigrant group. Intra-communal conflict intervened in that contested process. Priests, laity and the executives of cultural associations debated independent lay initiative and whether to pursue acculturation or maintain distinctiveness amid fears of assimilation in Canada. Two distinct but not separate groups formed: early Copts who conceived of themselves as "pioneers" and new immigrants who arrived after the mid-1970s and were perceived as "interlopers" by earlier arrivals. With support from church activists in Canada and the patriarchate in Egypt, priests marginalized independent initiatives and secured the preeminent position as community leaders.

The activities of early Copts in cultural associations failed to garner broader support within the community. In time, social clubs and restaurants which had emerged as gathering sites became marginal. The middle-class professionals who oversaw independent initiatives were unable to respond to the needs of new arrivals. Immigrants were increasingly divided by their socio-economic status, proficiency in English or French, and objectively different experiences in a confessionalizing Egyptian scene. Clergy and lay elites in the churches established comprehensive services and elaborated on a Coptic ethno-religious identity expressed by the majority. Those same elites then marshalled a public narrative of a distinctly Coptic (and not more broadly Egyptian) cultural heritage in Canadian multiculturalism in the 1980s.

Coptic immigrants were not, as scholars have long framed them to be, insular and disengaged from cultures, ideas, or peoples outside their group experience. Early Copts sought to recreate a past cosmopolitanism—class and ethnic dynamics of vernacular exchange between people and communities—among a diversity of multinational and multiethnic immigrants from Egypt. They conceived of their integration not as a one-way assimilation but a two-way process of acculturation where their Egyptian cultural distinctiveness could be maintained in Canadian spaces: the parish, social club and restaurants. Those among them who feared assimilation did not initially have the institutional infrastructure to isolate themselves from Canadian society or other immigrant groups. However, this changed when established churches could host a range of activities under the direction of church boards supervised by clergy. As more Copts arrived in the mid-1970s, they favoured cautious adaptation: a flexibility which implies "change but not necessarily complete conformity."[1] Concerned by the assimilative pressures of work and school related activities, they sought to maintain through their church a bastion upholding distinctive principles, attitudes and cultural practices. The elaboration of a strong Coptic ethno-religious identity followed. A distinction was made between Copts and other Egyptians or Middle Eastern immigrants in Canada. In their press, media appearances, the building of a cultural centre and plans for a Coptic museum, clergy and lay elites established in the 1980s the framework for a Coptic Canadian community. As much as Copts were a part of the Egyptian fabric, they would become productive members of Canada and part of the fabric of its mosaic.[2]

I assess external discrimination and intra-communal conflict in this chapter by first framing the particular spatial-temporal dimension in Montreal and Toronto. Although the Copts

[1] Marilyn Barber and Murray Watson, *Invisible Immigrants: The English in Canada since 1945*, (University of Manitoba Press, 2015): 100.
[2] I adopt a materialist approach akin to historian Royden Loewen, seeing immigration and the process of ethnicization that followed as conditioned by settlement patterns and the integration of family and church in new markets and political environments. Royden Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930*, (University of Illinois Press, 1993).

and Canadian society have been treated as two separate worlds that do not brush up against one another, these histories happened simultaneously and in the same place. Immigrant settlement in Canadian cities after the 1960s was no longer typified by the creation of visible ethnic enclaves but by the spatial dispersion of professional urban immigrant groups.[3] This dispersion had notable consequences on the trajectory of Copts' integration and later ethnic cohesion in Canadian cities. I situate Copts in the social and religious history of Montreal and Toronto. I consider their experience in tandem with religious polarization in Egypt, the responses of Protestant and Catholic churches in Canada to declining attendance, rising immigration and debates around pluralism set to the backdrop of Cold War anxieties.

This chapter not only contributes to scholarship on the Copts but also the equally sparse literature on Middle Eastern immigrants in Canada. Aside from Baha Abu Laban's pioneering 1980 study *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree*, there are only two monographs: Houda Asal's *Se Dire Arabe au Canada* and Paul Eid's *Being Arab*.[4] While Asal's book was a 2016 successor to Laban's overview of Arab immigration to Canada, Eid's 2007 ethnographic study detailed the experiences of Arab Canadian-born youth in Montreal and compared English- and French-Canadian Arab communities.[5] Eid argued that Muslim Arabs integrated into an ideally multicultural, yet functionally racist and orientalist Quebec society. Yet Middle East Christians in general, and Copts in particular, receive only minimal coverage in this literature. In addition, none of the aforementioned studies examined the particular spatial integration of immigrants from the Middle East within broader postwar immigration to Canada. This chapter addresses the

[3] Currently few studies examine immigration to Canada in the 1960s. For a rigorously detailed analysis, see: Sean Mills, *A Place in the Sun: Haiti, Haitians, and the Remaking of Quebec*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 2016).
[4] Baha Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980); Paul Eid, *Being Arab: Ethnic and Religious Identity Building among Second Generation Youth in Montreal*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007); Houda Asal, *Se Dire Arabe au Canada: un Siecle d'Histoire Migratoire*, (University of Montreal Press, 2016).
[5] Eid, *Being Arab*, 189.

material lives of Copts on university campuses and in the neighbourhoods, workplaces and religious spaces of diversifying Montreal and Toronto.

In that process, urban space was not merely a stage upon which historical developments played out. It was an active agent in shaping those developments. Therefore, in the first half of the chapter I show how in Montreal clustering characterized a high degree of ethnic and commercial exchange among Middle Eastern immigrants. This had the consequence of rendering Copts invisible as part of a larger group. In Toronto, spatial dispersion characterized by greater emphasis on occupational and residential choice made Copts visible newcomers. This dispersion also created the conditions for a more modest associational life among multiethnic immigrants from Egypt and limited opportunities for gathering in rented churches and people's homes. Developing transportation and media technologies, church services and professional networks became instrumental in time, allowing for Coptic ethno-religious cohesion in both cities.[6]

Opportunities for collaboration, exchange, or confrontation were a part of Copts' material engagement with Canadian cities. Past framing of their new environments as empty spaces where church-goers reconstituted a static community to the backdrop of an idyllic multiculturalism discounts this reality.[7] Copts arrived in diversifying cities welcoming of their professional skills and education in a period of economic boom. Copts also faced discrimination predicated on their being ethnic immigrants, Egyptian nationals and, in the case of females, women in predominantly male professions. As Laura Madokoro and Francine McKenzie argued, categories

[6] In this analysis, I distinguish between relations with Anglo and Franco-Canadians, Middle Eastern immigrants of diverse national origins, multiethnic immigrants from Egypt, and Copts. "Native Egyptian" and "Egyptian" signifies both Muslim and Coptic immigrants from Egypt. The term "Copts" denotes adherents of the Orthodox Church and where relevant the appropriate modifier is used for Catholic and Presbyterian Copts.

[7] Ghada Botros, "Competing for the Future: Adaptation and the Accommodation of Difference in Coptic Immigrant Churches" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2005); Rachel Loewen, "The Coptic Orthodox Church in the Greater Toronto Area: The Second Generation, Converts and Gender" (Master's thesis, McMaster University, 2008); Pishoy Salama, "Of All Nations: Exploring Intercultural Marriages in the Coptic Orthodox Church of the GTA" (D.Min diss., St. Michael's College and University of Toronto, 2012).

such as race, religion and gender allowed for the arbitrary inclusion and exclusion of "others." Sovereignty debates in Quebec and the extension of whiteness to other European immigrants in English Canada led to the marginal inclusion of the not-quite-white but Christian Copts.[8]

The second half of the chapter is devoted to the spiritual lives of Coptic immigrants in a Canada experiencing uneven yet combined secularization and suburbanization. As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, early Copts in the North Eastern United States relied on contacts in Egypt and created transnational and ecumenical networks across North American cities. The church activism of early Copts continued to inform their activities equally in Canada. In time, an expanding print culture, the brokering of Bishop Samuel and the mundane transnationalism of correspondence, prayer, food, and media consumption facilitated continued immigration, social networking and united Coptic communities. The Coptic Orthodox Church mediated disputes between "pioneers" and "interlopers" and provided immigrants community and a sense of continuity. As in New York and New Jersey, the successful development of social and spiritual services in Montreal and Toronto was a product of initial multi-ethnic collaboration and ecumenical relations, and then later the church activism of clerical and lay elites who marginalized independent associations. This trajectory differed slightly in Canada and followed from the character and timing of Coptic immigration. An initial wave of diverse multilingual, middle-class professionals and young families from Egypt was followed by new working-class native Egyptians with less material and cultural resources at their disposal. The latter were received by established elites who supported their integration under clerical oversight.

[8] Laura Madokoro and Francine McKenzie, "Introduction: Writing Race into Canada's International History," in *Dominion of Race* (University of British Columbia Press, 2017). See also, Jose E. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, (University of British Columbia Press, 2006); Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s* (University of Toronto Press, 2009); Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour* (University of Toronto Press, 2010).

As clergy of different faith groups had done, the Orthodox priest served a vital function and officiated at life-cycle events such as births, marriages and deaths. Immigrants sought his help in resolving spiritual, familial, marital, and social problems, or to mediate in commercial or legal dealings. Religious practices and the commemoration of Coptic culture provided legal proof of an individual's status and reinforced a sense of permanence and belonging in Canada. I reflect on father Marcos' own migration history and his intermediary role amongst competing visions of institutional life as the first Orthodox priest of a new immigrant community. His autobiography and interviews I conducted with him and his wife, tasoni Susan depict work-related activities. In discussing the spiritual lives of Copts through immigrants' oral testimonies, I show that this growing professional community provided a springboard for father Marcos' active ecumenical networking with religious leaders in English Canada.

As historian Aya Fujiwara has shown for the Japanese, Ukrainians and Scots, elites who were relative unknowns in the homeland "found their new role" as self-appointed representatives of their ethnic communities in Canada through politics, religion, media, and personal networks.[9] Priests, press editors and cultural event organizers were several actors who negotiated the boundaries between Canadians and their "in-between" ethnic peoples. Drawing on evidence of intra-communal conflict, I demonstrate the divergent integrative ambitions of clergy and church activists and those of the leaders of cultural associations. Once established, father Marcos and his church intervened at a critical moment in Copts' early history by sidelining independent initiatives in both Montreal and Toronto and supporting new priests in cementing their authority.

In concluding the chapter, I reflect on how Copts were tied by mobility, exchange and sociability to other immigrants from Egypt but increasingly developed distinct networks for

[9] Aya Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity: Japanese, Ukrainians, and Scots, 1919-1971,* (University of Manitoba Press, 2012): 4.

cultural commemoration and mutual support. As in Egypt, distinctions between Christians and Muslims became more prominent by the 1980s. This is exemplified by the fracturing along confessional lines of the Egyptian Canadian Club in Toronto which became a predominantly Coptic association after 1987. I then outline the clergy's success in elaborating a particular image of the Coptic immigrant amid the developing language of ethnic contribution to Canada. I offer the notion that cautious adaptation to Canadian multiculturalism allowed the clergy to relegate a past of internal conflict to the margins in favour of a cohesive filiopietistic narrative of ethno-religious group identity. As life in Egypt became more hostile to Copts, new immigrants and many early arrivals became defensive of their faith and sought recognition of their distinct historical experience. Through the immigrants' church they could raise children attentive to the faith and integrate their Coptic particularity without contradicting civic inclusion in a Canadian polity. This trajectory set the terms for uniting a heterogeneous community and solidified the intermediary role of clergy and lay elites with Canadian society. The debates between clergy, church activists and diasporic associations about homeland politics was an element of this disputed trajectory which I treat separately in the final chapter.

WHO IMMIGRATED? WHERE DID THEY SETTLE?

The first half of the chapter explores the spatial and demographic patterns of Coptic settlement, relations with more broadly Egyptian and Middle Eastern immigrants, and subsequent integration in Canadian spaces of work and sociability.[10] Middle-class professionals from Egypt

[10] Aiming to deepen understanding of historical spatial-temporal patterns, I shift the focus from the static residential spaces to the more dynamic domains of worship, cultural activities and occupational mobility characteristic of dispersed urban (and later suburban) postwar immigrants. I adopt this approach here and not in the preceding chapter because of the nature of the sources I accessed in the Canadian context: an array of ethnic magazines and associational pamphlets produced by multinational immigrants whose last place of residence was Egypt. This comparative spatial-temporal analysis is rare in Canadian immigration historiography. For my inspiration, see: Kathleen Conzen et al., "The Invention of Ethnicity," 14.

did not settle in ethnic enclaves nor form "ghettos." Rather, independent professionals dispersed as part of larger urban populations, following employment or services facilitated by increased access to city transit, highways and automobiles. The extent of their geographic dispersion had a distinct impact on ethnicization. The spatial proximity in a "segregated city" such as Montreal produced greater occupational and social mingling between Middle Eastern immigrants who gathered in predominantly public spaces—churches, clubs and cafes. The dispersed 'empty spaces' in a rapidly diversifying and suburbanizing Toronto created the conditions for a more modest fraternity among Copts who worshiped alongside Anglo-Protestants in downtown churches. Outside the churches, multiethnic immigrants from Egypt held social gatherings and celebrated a cosmopolitan culture in homes and then later in the only Egyptian Canadian Club.

Egyptian immigration to Canada was characteristic of broader immigration patterns and of life in urban centres following the Second World War.[11] The majority of Egyptians came from Cairo and Alexandria and settled in Central Canada. They were highly concentrated in Montreal, Toronto, Waterloo, Ottawa, and Windsor. Egyptians joined a large influx of postwar immigration that had raised the country's population from 11.5 million to 18.5 million between 1941 and 1962.[12] After Canada opened its doors to Egypt's foreign nationals in 1956, Protestant and Catholic Copts followed. In contrast, Orthodox Copts were accepted in greater numbers in the years leading to the introduction of the 1967 Points System and Muslim Egyptians followed.

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[11] Ralph R. Sell, "International Migration Among Egyptian Elites: Where They've Been; Where They're Going?" *Journal of Arab Affairs* 9.2 (October 1990): 147. In a survey of less than a thousand Egyptian university students, Sell found a high rate of migration among one or both parents, with students showing a willingness to emigrate after graduation. Students in Cairo of middle-class background were more likely to choose North America over Europe or a Middle Eastern destination because their parents had either studied there or returned to Egypt after emigrating.

[12] Ninette Kelley and M. J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (University of Toronto Press, 1998): 311. While early immigrants formed the nucleus for future institutions, Middle Eastern immigrants hardly factored into academic studies of postwar Canadian immigration. For Kelley and Trebilcock, as for many others, Arabic speakers only became important after reaching significant numbers in 1981.

This hierarchy is reflected in the statistics. In Egypt, native Egyptians (individuals of Egyptian descent who do not hold passports from other nations) fluctuated between three to 19 per cent of emigrants in the 1950s, growing to as high as 27 per cent by 1966. Between 1945 and 1975, 18,939 immigrants in Canada listed Egypt as their country of last permanent residence, 17,633 carried Egyptian citizenship, and 23,696 were Egyptian by birth.[13] Lacking any concrete figures, it is difficult to deduce discrepancies resulting from the process of reporting, ethnic and/or national affiliations and step-migrations. Up to the early 1970s foreign nationals and Copts formed the majority and two-thirds of Egyptian immigrants settled in Quebec.[14] By 1976, 19,599 individuals reported Egypt as their country of last permanent residence, with nearly half in Ontario and a greater proportion of Muslims.[15]

Coptic immigrants settled initially along Montreal's St-Laurent borough and Lachine Canal and around Toronto (from Bathurst Street to the Don River, south of Rosedale Valley). The majority of native Egyptians who arrived in Canada intended to stay permanently and were later joined by immediate family. Uncertain about their job prospects and concerned over continued nationalization under the Nasser regime, native Egyptian professionals saw Canada as one of many possibilities. Expanding graduate programs, newly established universities and opportunities in medicine, engineering, architecture, and teaching (particularly in French-language programs) attracted some young families and many single migrants. Coptic engineers, teachers and bankers followed earlier Jewish, Syrian and Lebanese immigrants to Montreal. In

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[13] Fouad Assaad, "Egyptians," in Paul R. Magocsi ed., *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, (University of Toronto, 1999): 457.

[14] Nadia H. Wassef, "The Egyptians in Montreal: A New Colour in the Canadian Ethnic Mosaic", (M.A. Geography Thesis, McGill University, 1978): 3; Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree*, 64–67. The only relevant religious identification for Coptic Orthodox Christians on the Canadian census up to 1981 was the very broad category of "Orthodox—Other." The views of senior Canadian officials in Cairo are detailed in chapter 4.

[15] K.G. Basavarajappa and Bali Ram, *Immigration to Canada by Country of Last Permanent Residence, 1956 to 1976*, Statistics Canada Series no. A385-416, Ottawa, Ontario, 1999: 32. This figure does not account for ethnic or religious background, population growth rates, or return migrations. In 2001 82.2 per cent of Middle Eastern immigrants as of the census were concentrated in Ontario and Quebec.

Toronto, medical and engineering graduate students joined the University of Toronto and architects entered a thriving private sector. After 1964, oil engineers began to arrive in Toronto with their families when Shell's interests were nationalized by the Nasser regime.[16] Egyptians attended Greek Orthodox, Melkite or Maronite churches or inter-ethnic mosques; opened groceries and restaurants; later rented and then purchased places of worship; and established organizations that often acted apart from other Middle Eastern immigrants.

Although more opportunities for women in graduate education existed under Nasser's Arab socialist regime, women chose to emigrate most often in order to improve their job prospects. Hela Bihkit for instance had completed her pedagogical training in the French embassy in Cairo and taught for a time at Saint-Georges Catholic French school. Having been forced to teach in government schools for two years and with the prospect of being assigned a position in an Upper Egyptian village, she sought to emigrate permanently. On a visit to her cousin Mona Bechai in Toronto late in 1974 Hela secured immediate employment at both the Montessori school and at a private language school. Debates over bilingualism and Quebec sovereignty had created a demand for French teachers in Ontario. The Francophone community in Toronto sought linguistic and cultural persistence in an Anglophone city. Both schools petitioned for her residency because she started and oversaw their French program curriculum.[17]

After the mid-1970s the nature of Egyptian immigration changed. In general, there was a marked increase in poorer and less-skilled immigrants with fewer cultural and material resources at their disposal. The death of Nasser in 1970 and the investiture of Anwar Sadat, while ensuring a continuity in the mechanisms of state repression, also paved the way for increased foreign investment in the country. This gradual transition helped accelerate migration from the rural

[16] Mathew (pseud.), interviewed in Ontario, January 24, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic). This development encouraged Mathew and his family to emigrate because his wife was a Shell employee.
[17] Hela Bikhit, interviewed in Ontario, October 30, 2017 (partially translated from French and Arabic).

countryside to the city. By then many Copts had emigrated, now joined by an increasing number of Muslim middle-class professionals and Sadat's piecemeal liberalization scheme only added to the precarious position of those remaining in Egypt. He opened local markets to cheap foreign goods and opened the doors for Islamist movements, which in time turned implicit marginalization into explicit discrimination and political exclusion.[18] Continued political repression, urban overcrowding and economic misery therefore led tens of thousands to leave for Australia, Europe and the United States and Canada. Many of these immigrants spoke only Arabic, or spoke English and French with great difficulty. The majority were young families, drawn by employment and eager to send money to parents in Egypt.[19] Recent arrivals carried a heightened confessional identity and faced considerable challenges, both with early "pioneers" and in society in general manly as a consequence of class and linguistic difference.

Social class and language proficiency also played a role in where immigrants chose to settle. Egyptians conformed to a general pattern of linguistic segregation in Montreal: English speakers lived in the west and French speakers in the east.[20] Their immigration coincided with a demand for French-educated teachers and many of the early immigrants were hired in schools and universities because of their education in Egypt's Sacré-Cœur, Lycée Français and St. Mark's Catholic schools. As Italians moved out of Ville St-Laurent, new Lebanese, Syrian and Armenian immigrants established parishes, groceries and restaurants there. Native Egyptians found rooming houses and apartments in Ville St-Laurent on arrival. They were attracted by a

[18] The changing nature of discrimination toward Copts in Egypt was a recurring theme in every interview that I conducted from December 2016 to November 2019 in northeastern cities in the United States and Central Canada.
[19] The 2019 Census estimated that the proportion of Arabic speakers in Canada is projected to increase 200 per cent by 2036. Indeed, Egyptian emigration has increased exponentially since the 2011 uprising.
[20] Marc Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press): 68. Italians and Jews were the highest immigrant population until immigration reforms following the Second World War created greater heterogeneity. As a result, 20 per cent of the population of non-French or British ethnic stock outnumbered British Montrealers, and the Anglophone community became more multicultural, including Greeks and Portuguese. From 1941 to 1971, modest suburbanization saw the inner-city population drop from 79.2 per cent of the metropolitan area to 44.2 per cent.

common language, cultural traditions and ease of access to the city's transport system. The majority of Egyptians in Montreal into the 1980s could be found in the west-end Pointe St-Charles, east-end around Rue Frontenac, or the suburb of Lachine. Feeling the overall economic decline in the city they suburbanized less than their Toronto counterparts, many buying homes in the West Island and viewed proximity to the city centre as a mark of their class distinction.[21]

Single graduate students accepted temporary accommodations as part of a transient period in their lives and couples prioritized renting apartments and buying a car before later purchasing homes. In Toronto, Egyptians moved north or west following the city's expansion and suburbanization in search of large, affordable housing in the Greater Toronto Area. Single graduate students initially settled in the Annex (along Bloor Street, between Bathurst and Avenue road). Engineers and architects entered the city's thriving private sector and began renting apartments for their families in the first planned "corporate suburb" in the Don Mills area, home to many postwar immigrants from the Middle East.[22] Later, professionals often bought their first home in Thornhill or near newly established churches in Scarborough (east along Steeles Avenue to Victoria Park), west to Mississauga and Kitchener, or north along Yonge Street to Markham and Richmond Hill. Egyptians' accelerated suburbanization in Toronto may be attributed in part to the timing of their immigration. Their arrival coincided with the slowing of Montreal's urban development and inversely Toronto's rapid expansion.[23]

Overall, Egyptian settlement was tied to occupational and educational choices and they did not form any single ethnic enclave. Historian John Zucchi has questioned the utility of classic

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[21] There is a lack of literature on immigrant integration in Montreal following the Second World War. Studies of Montreal seem to end with the interwar period, with a meager few that document Jewish and Italian interwar immigrants. This is a problem in both the Anglophone and Francophone historiography.
[22] Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada became Suburban, 1900–1960* (Toronto: UTP, 2004): 138.
[23] Residential concentration as measured by ethnic origin in Canadian Studies remains problematic due to changes in the reporting of Census data after 1971 and in counting ethnic origin after 1981. Individual Census responses remain fraught with inconsistency. Brian Ray, "Plural Geographies in Canadian Cities: Interpreting Immigrant Residential Spaces in Toronto and Montreal," *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, XXII: 1,2 (Spring 1999): 65-86.

ethnic enclaves as a framework for analyzing immigrant ethnicization in the second half of the twentieth century. The thrust of much of urban historical scholarship on immigrant settlement has focused on how clustering in ethnic neighbourhoods encouraged economic support and independence necessary for integration and social mobility. Yet as Zucchi anticipated in his analysis, "perhaps the new pattern in multicultural, post-modern Canada, is integration and ethnic persistence in varying degrees in a more complex community."[24]

MIDDLE EASTERN FRATERNITY AMID QUEBEC NATIONALISM

Nativistic prejudice engendered a process of ethnicization in Montreal where Copts developed closer relations with other Arabic speakers, especially Jewish, Syrian and Lebanese immigrants. Egyptian immigrants felt a general welcome in Toronto but those in Montreal recalled minimal and strained relations with Francophone Montrealers. Preconceived notions of Egyptians as "camel riders," backward and lazy were common. As a result of external discrimination, Copts developed their own stereotypes of Canadiens. Owing to past education in French schools and graduate work in Paris, Copts, much like Haitian and Belgian immigrants, looked down upon the Quebecois as less worldly and cosmopolitan. As early Copt Nadia Naguib confided, the "old" Canadiens were seen as "behind both in business acumen and in French higher education." Comparisons to Copts' rapid success in Francophone educational and banking sectors or the wealth of Levantine friends able to navigate local trades were common.[25]

Montreal became an important centre of Coptic immigration and a crucial site of intellectual thought and cultural life. The arrival of professional Copts—doctors, technicians,

[24] John Zucchi, "A History of Ethnic Enclaves in Canada," *Canadian Historical Association* (2007): 1-23. See also, Mary Anne Poutanen and Jason Gilliland, "Mapping Work in Early Twentieth-Century Montreal: A Rabbi, a Neighbourhood, and a Community," *Urban History Review* 45.2 (2017): 7-24.
[25] In conversation with Nadia Naguib, Quebec, November 10, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).

professors, and teachers—occurred at a time when the province was undergoing the changes associated with the Quiet Revolution. The first wave of immigrants, highly educated and possessing skills that were very much in demand joined a rapidly transforming Quebec public sector in need of qualified personnel.[26] In certain cases, Egyptians would go on to play central roles in Quebec's expanding universities, legal professions and language programs.

More broadly, until the Second World War, Montreal was Canada's economic capital. It has often been described by urban historians as a diverse, segregated and cosmopolitan city. Western European and US immigrants were followed by Eastern European Jews, Italians and Greeks. Increasingly, Portuguese, Haitian, Caribbean, and Middle Eastern immigrants arrived in the wake of relaxing federal immigration policies in the 1960s. Ville St-Laurent, a magnet for Middle Eastern immigrants, became a booming centre as a result of factories established there during the war. Although Montreal's service sector was the largest in the country, by the 1970s the city had lost many corporate offices to Toronto. This loss of commercial influence was compounded by deindustrialization along the Lachine Canal. Although large reinvigoration projects in downtown Montreal and the opening of a rapid transit line in the lead up to the 1967 World Exposition helped to forestall this decline somewhat, urban development put a halt to gentrification until the mid-1980s.[27]

At the same time as new arrivals were diversifying the character of Montreal, the Quiet Revolution affected the social, political and institutional makeup of the province. Rising immigration after the 1950s worried French Canadians. Fears of the federal government attempting to eradicate Canadien culture were compounded by the falling birthrate and the control of the Québec economy by the English elite that led to the creation of a Francophone

[26] Paul-Andre Linteau et al., *Quebec Since 1930*, translated by Robert Chodos and Ellen Garmaise, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company: 1991): 35.
[27] Linteau et al., *Quebec Since 1930*, 392-402.

state apparatus. This nationalism made the integration of new immigrants difficult and Francophones displayed minimal interest in relations with newcomers. Heated debates over French language laws in education followed.[28]

Egyptians arrived in a Montreal that was already home to Syrian and Lebanese groups since the turn of the century. In *Quebec Since 1930*, historian Paul-Andre Linteau highlighted specifically the great number of Egyptian teachers in Francophone schools, working alongside Belgian and French immigrants.[29] Indeed early arrivals in Montreal recalled the high demand for their skills which grew as a result of the provinces' push for French language education following successive language laws. It greatly helped that earlier Lebanese immigrants were represented on Catholic school boards.[30] Georges Coriaty, the priest in charge of the Melkite Greek Catholic parish of St-Sauveur was born to Lebanese parents from Egypt and often connected Copts with Lebanese teachers from his parish. Between the Arabic churches, restaurants and social clubs, Montreal was slowly beginning to reflect immigrants' cosmopolitan lives in Egypt. Early Copts sustained interethnic bonds, entered the workforce and made choices to live their own kind of transcultural lives. Often, immigrants from Egypt lived in boarding houses in Ville St-Laurent with Lebanese and Jordanian recent arrivals, frequented the Armenian bakery and Syrian or Greek churches, and worked in administrative positions at factories along the Lachine Canal among immigrants debating sports or the best way to make falafel.

This sociability and level of integration was evident in the lives of Nadia Naguib, husband Selim and brother Alfons Khelada. Alfons landed in Montreal in 1963, a year prior to his mother and two sisters. He sought to find a job and suitable accommodations in preparation

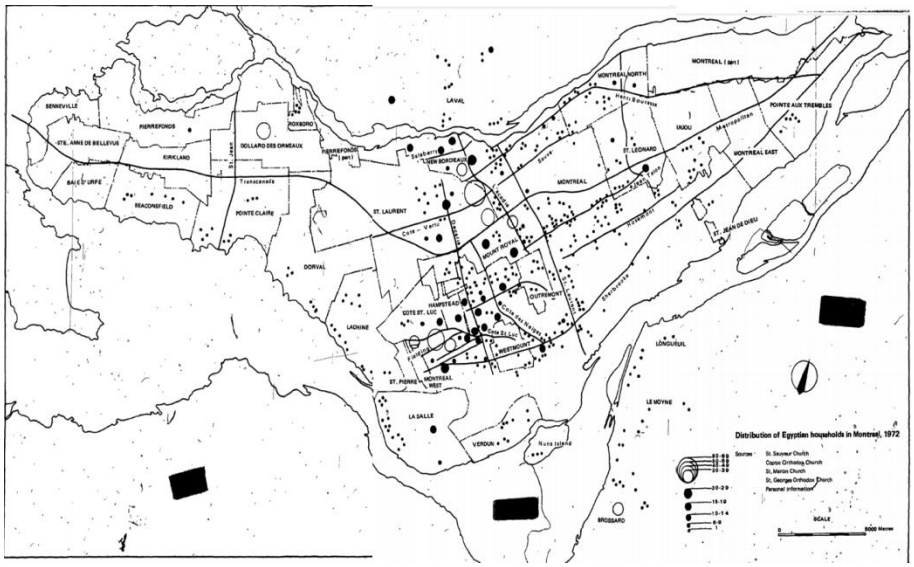
[28] Linteau et al., *Quebec Since 1930*, 160-161.
[29] Linteau et al., *Quebec Since 1930*, 427-430. Egyptians accounted for 4,990 individuals in 1981 in Quebec. This figure was based on a survey of 20 per cent of the population and excluded multinational immigrants from Egypt.
[30] Baha Abu Laban, Paul Eid, and Houda Asal recognized that this is the least studied group as a whole, and even then often with little regard for ethnic, national and religious heterogeneity. Yet the three studies nevertheless made little mention of Christians who were the largest percentage of early arrivals from Egypt.

for their arrival. Nasser's nationalization of Khelada's engineering firm while he was on exchange to Switzerland served as the impetus for their emigration. In short order, the family sold their belongings. Khelada quickly found employment as an engineer for Dominion Textile along the Lachine Canal. He left a rooming house in Ville St-Laurent and rented a home in affluent Cote Saint-Luc. The neighbourhood was thought more suitable for young families. With the support of his co-workers, he secured Nadia a secretarial position at Dominion Textile. Their youngest sister began working as a French teacher for the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal. Khelada and his sister worked for Dominion Textile until it closed in 1966, after which they both taught French for a time. As Nadia Naguib confided, everywhere in the schools "was a gaggle of Egyptians" who gathered together and with other Arabic speakers.[31]

Sociability with other Middle Eastern immigrants was also how Nadia met her husband Selim Naguib in Montreal. Selim Naguib's sister had just recently married a Lebanese merchant and a prominent Jewish family of jewelers from Alexandria, close to the families, introduced Nadia and Selim Naguib. Their courtship and early married life was a time of excitement. There was an abundance of job opportunities and the city was in the midst of renovation for the World Exposition. The metro system opened just before the Expo inauguration in 1967 and they visited all the pavilions, went to theaters with friends and felt a freedom in exploring the city. Ville St-Laurent was "little Lebanon," with streets lined with restaurants, cafés and grocers.[32] Married in October 1967, Selim began to practice Law in Quebec and Nadia secured a position at the Bank of Montreal. Despite not quite feeling accepted by Canadien co-workers, their social and professional lives were booming.

[31] In conversation with Nadia Naguib, Quebec, November 10, 2019 (Partially translated from Arabic and French).
[32] In conversation with Nadia Naguib, Quebec, November 10, 2019 (Partially translated from Arabic and French).

Rarely did Coptic immigrants in Montreal speak of the Catholic Church, its hierarchy or close relations with Canadiens. Among early Copts, there was a closeness and camaraderie as these new arrivals termed themselves the immigrant "pioneers." Prior to the arrival of a priest, this group met regularly, hosted social gatherings with multiethnic immigrants from Egypt and felt that a shared experience of cosmopolitanism united them. This small group of early Copts co-founded the Canadian Coptic Association (CCA) and gathered in the Ali Baba Lebanese restaurant on Stanley Street or in cafés along Ville St-Laurent to listen to music or watch Arabic films with other Middle Eastern immigrants.[33] The Canadian Coptic Association was one of a number of social and cultural clubs intended to unite early Copts and would become an alternative voice within the parish after the first priest arrived in the city. Intra-communal tensions became far more heated in Montreal than Toronto. This was in part a product of the differing patterns of ethnic concentration and sociability among immigrants in these cities.



Map 1 "Distribution of Egyptian Households in Montreal, 1972." Nadia H. Wassef, "The Egyptians in Montreal: A New Colour in the Canadian Ethnic Mosaic." Master's thesis, McGill University, 1978.

[33] Wassef, "The Egyptians in Montreal," 186-187. In 1978, historical geographer Nadia Wassef produced a geo-spatial map of residential dispersion showing this spatial-temporal concentration in Montreal. Copts vastly outnumbered Muslim immigrants until 1981 when the balance shifted to a one-to-one ratio. Since 1991 it tipped in favour of Muslim immigrants. For more, see Paul Eid, *Being Arab*, 17.

EXTERNAL DIFFERENTIATION AND THE LIMITS OF INCLUSION IN TORONTO

Discrimination toward new immigrant groups was one consequence of heightened Quebec nationalism which led to greater fraternity among Christians, Muslims and Jews from the Middle East. In Toronto, broader acceptance led to less frequent social mingling and less need for maintaining defined ethnic boundaries. As Kathleen Konzen et al. have argued, the varying patterns of physical settlement greatly affected the process of ethnicization and those in 'empty spaces' "were less subject to assimilative pressures, nativistic prejudice, and conflict with other ethnic groups."[34] Although Copts often initially congregated near other Arabic-speakers in both cities, quite quickly they dispersed in search of large, affordable housing following occupational success mainly in Toronto. Higher levels of dispersion in Toronto and not Montreal affected the process of ethnicization and early associational life.

The vast majority of new arrivals in Toronto simultaneously recall with appreciation the wide range of job opportunities while recognizing Canada as an intrinsically white and Christian country. Early Copts were welcomed by Anglican and United churches but experienced differentiation in society more generally. As historian Franca Iacovetta noted of immigrant reception in English Canada during the Cold War, prevalent Cold War attitudes and attempts at creating a progressive, tolerant and civilized citizenry affected the reception of recent arrivals.[35] Promoting ethnic pluralism developed as a dynamic process which was encouraged by a society seeking a national identity against the backdrop of Cold War anxieties.[36] Although this inclusive atmosphere opened doors to recent Copts, differentiation based on race, ethnicity and gender persisted in everyday spaces of school, work and neighbourhood grocers.

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[34] Konzen et al., "The invention of Ethnicity," 14.
[35] Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers*, 59.
[36] Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers*, 101.

In their personal and professional lives, early Copts did not initially have the institutional infrastructure necessary to ease their transition. They relied on available social services in their efforts to find housing, work and establish professional networks. Organizations such as Friendly Relations with Overseas Students (FROS), as Daniel Poitras has argued, served vital functions on university campuses. Seeking to integrate foreign students, they promoted intercultural connections to change people's worldviews and self-conceptions by abolishing ethnic prejudice in a democratic society. As a result, both colleagues and professors worked to guide early Copts and mould their understanding of an inclusive Canada. The university's international student centre helped close friends Peter and Paul find housing when they arrived in fall 1966 to begin their Master's in the University of Toronto school of engineering. They joined intercultural colleagues for dinners and music performances and the landlords treated them as members of the family. Both men confided that the elderly couple invited students to view a classical music program nightly on television and later participate in Christmas celebrations.[37]

Coptic graduate students only occasionally attended the joint social events and dances. Yet this atmosphere of collegiality produced a sense of community on campus and among international students from India, Greece, Switzerland, and elsewhere. Students went for dinners off campus, created study groups and provided emotional support to one another. The active efforts by Anglo-Canadian organizers instilled a positive image of Canada.[38] This hospitable atmosphere laid a foundation for new arrivals to feel that this initial settlement period was, as Peter described it, "an amazing time for Canada ... people were optimistic about the future."[39]

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[37] Paul (pseud.), interviewed in Ontario, September 28, 2017 (in English).
[38] Daniel Poitras, "Welcoming International and Foreign Students in Canada: Friendly Relations with Overseas Students (FROS) at the University of Toronto, 1951-1968," *Canadian Historical Review* 100.1 (March 2019): 24-30. Set to the backdrop of Cold War anxieties, such activities parallel the stories of US exchange students who encountered a Christian universalism and cultural exchange on university campuses as in the preceding chapter.
[39] Peter (pseud.), interviewed in Ontario, June 12, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic).

Once they completed their Master's they moved from the Annex to rented apartments in the Don Mills area. Several of them either married in Canada or returned to Egypt to marry and prepare the necessary paperwork for their spouses. Quite quickly more particularistic friendships among Egyptian graduate students developed. The odd social function brought together a tightly-knit group of Coptic and Muslim Egyptian couples from universities in Toronto and Waterloo. They searched out places to find familiar food, such as Ararat Bakery on Avenue Road, and maintained a community without sacrificing material resources needed for occupational success.

Early professional Coptic immigrants generally felt welcome. Career opportunities were plentiful. Yet recollections were marred by the odd glances and persistent sense of exotic otherness. Often finding a job within a few days of starting their search, teachers, engineers and architects joined Canada's growing labour market and made a place for themselves in predominantly white, Anglo-Canadian offices. Sporadic instances of discrimination intruded. Presbyterian Copt Basma Shalaby became acutely aware in Toronto that "we had brown skin." The engineering company where she worked employed mostly "white wasps ... [and] I am coloured, I am not Canadian. So, they look at you with interest, they look at you when you go to the washroom and [whisper]."[40] Erika Abdel Messiah, the Austrian bride of Orthodox Copt Alfie spoke of similar experiences of racialization when searching out housing. The couple married in December 1962 in Stuttgart and immigrated to Toronto five years later. In recalling their apartment hunting on Lakeshore, Erika vividly described prospective landlords who were unnerved "because he was dark and I was a foreigner."[41] Racialization and a general disregard for new immigrants confirm that markers of difference became points of discrimination.

[40] Basma Shalaby, interviewed in Ontario, November 1, 2017 (in English).
[41] Alfie and Erika Abdel Massiah, interviewed in Ontario, November 25, 2016 (in English). Alfie was an engineer and Erika started in a secretarial position for a pharmaceutical company.

Another result of spatial dispersion in Toronto was the heightened visibility of Arabic speakers as "audible immigrants." That marker became a point of discrimination, especially for women engaged in family and community life and uninsulated by workplace rules of conduct.[42] Their shifting from English to Arabic and manner of speech made Egyptians visible immigrants on city streets. Persistent ethnic tensions in the 1960s affected relations with Jewish groups in the city. New arrivals Mathew, his wife and their three children lived in a rented apartment near Eglinton and Lawrence in a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood. Mathew was hired by the architectural firm of Mathers and Haldenby to design the Robarts Library. At the end of his contract, he then joined another prestigious firm, Raymond Moriyama to design the Toronto Metropolitan Reference Library. His wife choosing to remain in the home, she and her Egyptian friends in the building were harassed on the street when speaking Arabic. On the window of a busy street-corner deli was a sign: "today's special, Nasser Sandwich. No brain and [a long] tongue." Mathew confided that for a few years following Egypt's defeat in the Six Days War, Jewish Torontonians "bombarded" Egyptians with insults. Mathew shared a common joke at the time: "'how do you find an Egyptian? [It is] the guy running by fast on Bathurst street!'"[43]

Female immigrants encountered discrimination at higher levels. Recounting their challenges of adaptation, Coptic women pointed to their vulnerability on the streets and the domination of their professions by Anglo-Canadian men. They were marked as doubly different. Several of them spoke of the "backwardness" of the Canadian scene. When Mona Bechai began a Master's of engineering at the University of Ottawa in 1972, her graduate supervisor called her into his office and insisted she take a special exam that none of her male colleagues had to. As his first female student and the only Egyptian he wanted to assess her capabilities. She also noted

[42] Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 108.
[43] Mathew (pseud.), interviewed in Ontario, January 24, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic).

a gender disparity in the laboratories. Where over a third of her class were women in Egypt, this was not the case here where there were a handful.[44] This persistent sense of difference as both Egyptian and a woman continued after entering the job market. Females had to prove themselves in predominantly male work environments. Basma Shalaby completed her Master's in engineering at the University of Waterloo and relocated to Toronto in 1973 with her husband. On securing a job at an engineering firm, she noted that women in the workplace were treated as an "experiment." Unlike in Egypt, in Canada "the secretaries would ask me: 'how do you feel being the only girl in the lab?' I [felt] nothing."[45]

THE COSMOPOLITAN LIVES OF EARLY COPTS IN MONTREAL AND TORONTO

Spatial concentration and external differentiation by French Canadians created opportunities for sustaining Middle Eastern fraternity in Montreal. In Toronto, spatial distance from other Middle Eastern immigrants made such sociability difficult to maintain. Common to both cities were the efforts of middle-class, bilingual Copts to celebrate a shared cosmopolitan identity. This sense of a world shared in common informed the cultural commemoration activities of early Copts.

As in the North Eastern United States, the first Coptic associations to form in the 1960s were intended to fundraise, finance the building of churches and request the sending of a priest from Egypt. The early community in Toronto received a priest in 1964 before any formal association was formed. In Montreal, the Canadian Coptic Association (CCA) was established that same year, well before the arrival of Father Rofael Nakhla in summer 1967. The CCA tended to the needs of early Copts for cultural preservation and social gathering. It hosted soccer games, potluck dinners, dramatic performances and dances. There was also a philanthropic

[44] Mona Bechai, interviewed in Ontario, September 28, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic and French).
[45] Basma Shalaby, interviewed in Ontario, November 1, 2017 (in English).

component for needy families in Upper Egypt. The CCA was affiliated with the parish for a time, often collaborating with Egyptian and more broadly Middle Eastern immigrants. The executive registered with the province as an independent corporation in 1968 to maintain their autonomy.

In the 1970s, Muslim professionals immigrated to Canada in greater numbers. Several initiatives and organizations were started to serve the wider Egyptian community in Montreal. The Nile Egyptian Cultural Centre was founded in 1974. It developed Arabic courses for a number of years, and a range of cultural, social and recreational activities. New associations, cultural centres and the Egyptian consulate began hosting social events. None garnered widespread support from the Egyptian community as a whole. For Egyptians however, there was one place to avoid: the consulate. Opened in 1972, only 2000 persons had registered their status by 1978 and about one-third of them lived in Toronto. Nevertheless, these spaces served as vital gathering sites to engage in cultural activities and learn the latest news about Egypt. Newspapers and music records were imported, such as the semi-official Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram*. Screenings of Egyptian movies were organized by the various clubs twice a year. Particularly popular were the films by acclaimed director Youssef Chahine. Folk dance performances and movie screenings garnered an average attendance of approximately 300 people.[46]

Industrious new immigrants from Egypt established record labels and imported music to create a transnational space and provide immigrants a place to belong. One such immigrant was Salah Allam who began his *Arabic Record Club* (ARC) Journal in 1974, two years after arriving in Montreal. The only Egyptian publication, by December 1975 it had an average total distribution of 2600 copies.[47] During his regular visits to the clubs or the Ali Baba restaurant, Allam mined the latest news of Canada and Egypt. Every issue included hand-drawn cartoon

[46] Wassef, "The Egyptians in Montreal," 188-191.
[47] Wassef, "The Egyptians in Montreal," 194.

sketches of a nameless Egyptian immigrant exploring the city with wonder. Columns reflected on contemporary debates, from changes to immigration policies to daily adaptation in manners and dress codes to homeland politics.[48] Negotiating the boundaries between Canadians and Egyptians, the editorial board in Montreal and later in Toronto was comprised of both Muslims and Copts living in Canada, the United States and Egypt.

Early Copts did not actively participate in debates on language, drug use, the Vietnam war, or weapons manufacturing in Toronto.[49] Indeed, many chose Canada over the US because, those fleeing conscription knew very well the price of war. They chose not to become involved in political protests. Recent arrivals instead focused on career success and social gatherings on weekends. In Toronto, places of worship, grocers and private apartments were the main meeting points and loci of communal activity. The most famous was Ararat Bakery, opened by an Armenian-Egyptian in 1969. It attracted students such as Mahmud and his recently arrived bride who drove from Waterloo every Sunday. They bought bags of bread and pastries for the week and then met Nabil Bechai and his wife Mona in their apartment in Don Mills. Recent arrivals turned to Ararat Bakery or Jewish stores on Spadina Street for Middle Eastern food, such as traditional bread, spiced Kalamata olives and Domiati (white) cheese. Although the son of an Alexandrian restaurateur opened a restaurant in 1968 (later the Stone Cottage Inn) on Kingston Road, it was too far to become a regular site of sociability and closed by 1978. It was not politics but food and socializing that united immigrants seeking to build community.

The growth of social networks and the frequency of cultural activities was in part conditioned by residential settlement patterns. On securing a career, Copts in Montreal

[48] When Salah Allam arrived in Montreal as a young engineer, he had held an administrative position in Egypt's state television network but left as a professional in search of new, more exciting opportunities. Unlike many Copts, Muslim Egyptians spoke of emigration as a time of youthful exploration rather than a response to marginalization in the homeland. Record labels and imported music helped new immigrants to maintain emotional links between their new homes and the country of origin.
[49] Pseud. Peter, interviewed in Ontario, June 12, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic).

prioritized renting homes in the city centre near metro stations, with the intention of later purchasing property above car ownership or luxury items. Copts in Toronto however chose to buy cars while renting outside the city centre and lacked easy access to spaces of sociability. Most often they congregated in rental apartments or socialized at church. Young Orthodox Coptic families such as the Mathew's developed social relations while in the Don Mills area most often by making friends at supermarkets and clothing stores nearby. They simply approached any couple they overheard speaking Arabic. In time, as their networks grew, get-togethers on weekends and holidays were hosted in people's homes. Mathew fondly remembered those gatherings as a festive reminder that "we brought the Middle East here with us."[50]

In the mid-1970s a single Egyptian Canadian Club was started in Toronto in celebration of a cosmopolitan French and Arabic culture. When Hela Bihkit joined Mona and Nabil Bichai in Don Mills, they had discovered many Egyptians living in the area. An informal social club formed around the building's swimming pool, their gatherings accompanied by food, dancing and guitar music. In time, this became the nucleus of the Egyptian Canadian Club, a non-religious and non-political cultural initiative. They soon learned of an orchestra organized by Franco-Egyptian immigrants Shahir Azer, Ida Azer, Magda Salib and Samir Barsoum. In 1976, the two groups merged to form La Cercle Franco-Egyptien with the support of Le Centre Francophone de Toronto. The first concert was held that year to provide what one pamphlet called a "Franco-Italo-Hispano-Egyptienne" ambiance.[51]

The club was renamed the Egyptian Canadian Club (Cercle des Canadiens d'Egypte) in 1979. New members of English education were changing its linguistic character and priorities. By the 1980s, ECC members were hosting nostalgic celebrations of Egyptian music and films

[50] Mathew (pseud.), interviewed in Ontario, January 24, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic).
[51] CTASC, Coptic Canadian History Project collection, "The Egyptian Canadian Club/*Cercle des Canadiens d'Egypte*/*el Nadi el Masri el Kanadi*," 20th anniversary pamphlet, (Toronto: self-published, 1996): non-paginated.

from their youth. Records by Umm Kulthum and film screenings of Naguib al-Rihani's *Ghazal al Banat* blended with soft rock and disco dance parties. became a means to celebrate a nostalgic cosmopolitanism and peasant folk culture. Their bi-weekly meetings also included displays of Pharaonic artifacts and lectures from Egyptologists. In their many celebrations there was an insistence on commemorating a cosmopolitan past of promise and idyllic splendor and a present of cultural integration. In the context of neoliberal economic policies in Egypt and the rise of Islamist movements they sought commemoration of a bygone Egypt free of confessional divides. ECC members had no intention of returning to Egypt. Instead, they promoted an Egyptian cosmopolitan culture, sought to pass it on to their children and participated in the developing language of cultural pluralism (later dubbed multiculturalism).[52]

University-educated, multilingual young professionals in the ECC fought for a collective identity as Egyptians in Canada. By 1981, the Club secured a non-profit status from the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. At its height, the Club had 500 members and an array of festive activities in collaboration with Armenian- and Greek-Egyptian social clubs in the city. The governing board invited the El Shark theatrical group from Montreal to perform the Egyptian play *Halet Hob* (State of Love) at Midland Collegiate in 1983, beginning an annual tradition which later included performances by the Heliopolis group from Montreal and the Horus group in Toronto.[53] The first president of the Egyptian Canadian Club, Hela Bihkit,

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[52] Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), 96. On the shift to multiculturalism, see Franca Iacovetta, "Public Spectacles of Multiculturalism: Toronto before Trudeau," Podcast, *2013 History Matters Lecture Series*, February 28, 2013, http://activehistory.ca/2013/03/podcast-public-spectacles-of-multiculturalism-toronto-before-trudeau-by-franca-iacovetta/.

[53] CTASC, Coptic Canadian History Project collection, *The Egyptian Canadian Club 25th Anniversary, 1976-2001*, (Toronto: Self-published, 2001): non-paginated. The ECC organized an annual Easter picnic and sports competition with the Hellenes of Egypt Club and the Armenian Egyptian association. CTASC, Greek Canadian History Project collection, George K. Kontogiannis, General Secretary, Canadian Association of the Hellenes of Egypt, "Notes of the Greek Egyptian," (October 31, 1970, Toronto): 3 [Translated by Dr. Christopher Grafos]. For this club, as the president said in an address: "[Egypt], particularly its memories of the way of life there, constitutes the common point of reference and communication of thousands of Greek-Egyptians."

expressed frustration with both religion and politics when recalling their executive committee deliberations.[54] The terms "church," "Christians," or "Muslims" were not in their constitution or promotional materials. The ECC had "no political or religious affiliations."[55]

Despite providing a range of activities, the club lost its sway over an emergent and fracturing immigrant group. Aiming to assist new immigrants find housing and employment, the ECC proved increasingly ill-suited to the needs of new arrivals. Confessional divides in Egypt and the elaboration of a Coptic ethno-religious identity by clergy and lay elites in the churches intruded. By 1987, the club fractured along confessional lines. This period also saw the loss of joint social and cultural sociability among Copts and other Middle Eastern immigrants in both cities. In the second half of the chapter, I detail the religious component of immigrant ethnicization. The trajectory of Coptic integration in Toronto and Montreal, from acculturation to cautious adaptation, owed a great deal to debates on independent initiative and the efforts of church leaders to fashion a distinctly Coptic community under their supervision.

THE PROMISE OF ECUMENISM AS COPTS NAVIGATE TORONTO'S SACRED SPACES

The Coptic clergy's ecumenical relations in Canada contributed much to the institutional development of church services. Most importantly, new priests were able to negotiate renting and later purchasing places of worship at minimal expense. This institutionalization allowed the clergy and lay elites to bind the faithful ever closer to social, cultural, spiritual and even commercial activities in churches under clerical supervision by the 1980s. The process of ethnic incorporation was in part configured by ecumenical partnerships with religious leaders in Canada and intra-communal confrontations between the "pioneers" and "interlopers." Church services,

[54] Hela Bikhit, interviewed in Ontario, October 30, 2017 (partially translated from French and Arabic).
[55] CTASC, Coptic Canadian History Project collection, "1981 Bylaws of the Constitution," Le Cercle Des Canadiens d'Egypte (Toronto).

minimal at first, introduced Copts to the broader Canadian religious scene and allowed priests to craft in time a unified sense of community centred around the immigrants' church.

Already by the mid-1960s, Toronto was in the process of becoming the Canadian metropolis, the centre of financial, commercial and cultural activity as baby boomers entered an expanding post-secondary educational sector. In the midst of a sexual and cultural revolution, social spaces in the city served as sites for "intentional communities, and alternative cultural life." For cultural historian David Churchill, both sacred and profane "alternative spaces" offered "sites for people to meet, share gossip, and exchange information on where to stay, find work, and debate politics."[56] Just outside the downtown churches of Holy Trinity, Trinity Square, and St. Matthias' was a growing sex industry on Yonge Street, rising crime rates, and the spectre of escalating drug use.[57] Yet these spaces were also where Coptic immigrants held spiritual services, communal activities and learned of available social services.

Catholicism was so successful that a city which was 80 per cent Protestant in 1941 had become 40 per cent Roman Catholic by 1971.[58] At the same time that Catholicism in downtown Toronto became more prevalent, attendance in Protestant churches was on the decline as the number of attendees for Sunday service fell from 60 per cent in 1946 to only 33 per cent by 1965. In contrast, Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau have argued that the Catholic Church "remained a vital community institution for the huge influx of European immigrants ... and its activities transcended the purely spiritual and moral to encompass immigrant advocacy, language

[56] David S. Churchill, "American Expatriates and the Building of Alternative Social Space in Toronto, 1965–1977," *Urban History Review* 39.1 (Fall 2010): 32-40.
[57] Daniel Ross, "Sex on Yonge: Examining the decade when Yonge Street was the city's sin strip," *Spacing Magazine* (Fall 2014): 24–27.
[58] Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and their Peoples, 1840–1965: A Social History of Religion in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2010), 181–182.

training, child care, leisure, and financial assistance." By 1975, Catholic attendance was also on the decline but dropped to 61 per cent, whereas for Protestants attendance fell to 25 per cent.[59]

St. Mark's parish in Toronto received father Marcos in November 1964. Born in Sohag, Upper Egypt as Wagdi Elias Abdel Massieh, his youth was one punctuated by movement and migration. He was one of many Copts who benefited from the establishment of village Sunday schools. On immigrating to Cairo in the 1950s to attend university, he joined the Giza church and travelled across the country as a youth leader for Sunday school programming. With the support of his confessor father Makary al-Suriani, he received an exchange scholarship in 1958 to attend Princeton's undergraduate ethnomusicology program. He then completed a Bachelor of Divinity and a Master's degree in Religious Education at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut before joining Iliff School of Theology as a special student in Denver, Colorado. Wagdi befriended and prayed with Coptic immigrants scattered across US cities. On his return to Cairo in 1962, he was appointed as a teacher in the Clerical College under the newly ordained Bishop Shenouda. Bishop Samuel (formerly father Makary)—who had just returned in November 1963 from the inaugural meeting of the Coptic Association of America—approached Wagdi and told him that he was the candidate selected by the Church and the CAA to be ordained for immigrants demanding a priest. As many priests ordained for North America would do, he repeatedly declined the offer, citing his ailing father and his family's financial needs. Despite protestations, Bishop Samuel was insistent and following the pope's directive Wagdi could not refuse.[60]

Once ordained in August 1964, father Marcos was unable to leave Egypt. Coptic priests were not granted exit visas to permanently emigrate under the Nasser regime. Consequently,

[59] Christie and Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and their Peoples,* 180-181. These questions were introduced by Roberto Perin in "Churches and Immigrant Integration in Toronto, 1947-65," in Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert eds., *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth Century Canada,* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2006): 274-291. The topic is dealt with at length in Roberto Perin, *The Many Rooms of this House: Diversity in Toronto's Places of Worship since 1840,* (University of Toronto Press, 2017).
[60] Father Marcos and tasoni Susan, interviewed in Ontario, December 1, 2016 (partially translated from Arabic).

Bishop Samuel arranged for father Marcos to join the delegation sent by the Coptic Orthodox Church to the Second Vatican Council. While in Rome, Father Marcos submitted applications to both the United States and Canadian embassies. He also befriended the Egyptian ambassador.[61] Father Marcos asked the ambassador to help his new bride Susan to emigrate. She arrived in October, flying with the ambassador's wife returning from Cairo.

From 1964 to 1967, father Marcos was the only priest serving a three-point parish dispersed along Toronto, Montreal and the New York/New Jersey area. In addition to his regular duties ministering to the three centres, he undertook two annual continental trips visiting any known families along the way. Further, he conducted emergency visits throughout the continent when any congregant fell ill or was in dire need of spiritual guidance. Serving as both the spiritual leader and spokesperson of the community, he opened his home to newly arrived immigrants and was on call at all hours to respond to the needs of any who reached out to him. Often his pastoral visits coincided with ecumenical lectures or conferences being held in Canada or the United States which included events organized by Copts residing in those cities.

Developing stronger ecumenical ties was of deep personal import to Bishop Samuel and a necessary vehicle for establishing the Coptic faith community in North America. He had sent father Marcos to Rome to attend the session of the Second Vatican Council where ecumenism was the order of business and the Oriental Orthodox Churches were recognized as "distinct brethren," rather than "separated brethren."[62] Bishop Samuel remarked that, "this council [is] historic, evidence of the growth of Catholic thought and a step towards the unity of the

[61] The ambassador helped father Marcos because the priest condemned *Nostra Aetate*—a declaration passed on the third day of the meeting, absolving Jews of the death of Christ and declaring Judaism to be the root of Christianity.
[62] Marcos, *The Coptic Orthodox Church*, 85.

Church."[63] To counterbalance the global threat of nationalism and xenophobia, as well as falling church attendance and growing secularization, a vibrant ecumenical movement peaked in this period. It sought to bring ecclesiastical bodies of varying denominations into closer communion and unite social and spiritual services. Prior to the 1960s, the ecumenical movement was deeply Protestant in both its leadership and membership. With the introduction of liberalizing reforms at Vatican II, and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches' growing contributions to ecumenical dialogue, the president of the Canadian Council of Churches said in a 1969 Triennial meeting in Toronto that ecumenism possessed a "revolutionary quality" to challenge the "status quo."[64] The term "revolutionary" was, of course, an overstatement, but it reflects anxieties surrounding the perceived negative impact of ongoing social and cultural change in the city.

Two weeks after arriving in Toronto, Father Marcos was invited to lunch by Rev. Dr. Ernest Howse, the Moderator of the United Church. In attendance were Bishop Henry Hunt of the Anglican Church of Canada; a representative of the Catholic Archbishop of Toronto; Bishop Sotirios of the Greek Orthodox Church; the heads of the Armenian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, and Polish Catholic Churches; and the general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches. This banquet was one of many events organized to bring the Anglican and United Churches into closer communion, with the intention of eventual union. In addition, serious attempts were being made to include Orthodox Churches in a predominantly Protestant ecumenical movement. In need of larger accommodations for his growing parish, father Marcos networked with those present. He later contacted Bishop Henry Hunt and Rev. James Fisk of Holy Trinity, who invited the Coptic parish to use the church's upper chapel. The congregation often shared the space with

[63] LAC, from Bishop Samuel to "Dear children of the Church," November 1964, New York, Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic], 1963-1971, MG55.9-No22, Ottawa, Canada.
[64] LAC, Canadian Council of Churches fonds, MG28 I327, Vol. 2, file 1, Rev. Reginald S. Dunn, "Resume of the Address by the President," *First Triennial Assembly (Seventeenth Meeting) Record of Proceedings*, November 24–28, 1969, Ottawa, Canada.

hippies, leftists, draft dodgers and social activists.[65] Peter, then an engineering doctoral student at the University of Toronto, recalled the protests on campus and in the streets. He and many other Copts were sympathetic to but disengaged from civil rights and anti-Vietnam activism.[66]

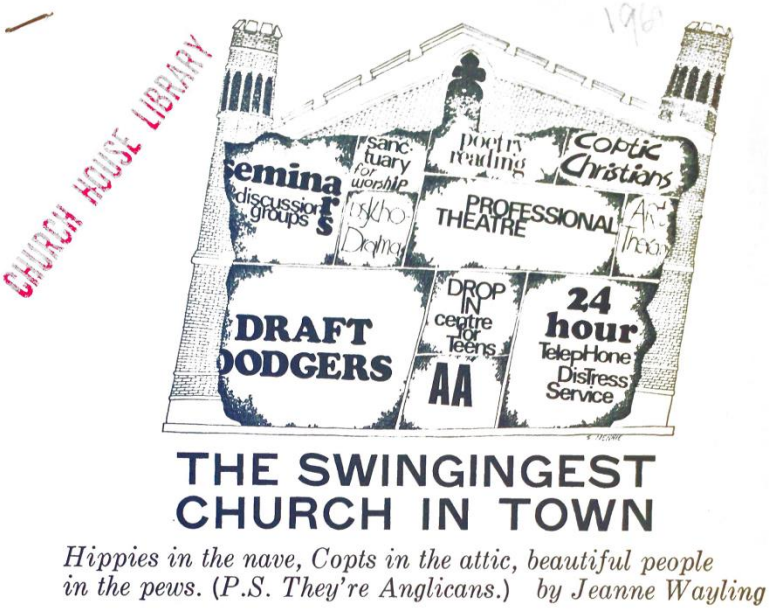

Image 10 Sketch of services at Holy Trinity by S. Mennie for *The Observer*, June 1969. Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, Holy Trinity, Trinity Square parish history file.

Protestant clergymen sought to shore up dwindling congregations in response to perceived Catholic dominance and a sexually permissive counterculture.[67] They found an exotic appeal in an Oriental Orthodox group situated outside the history of religious competition in the city. They turned to this immigrants' church—with its elaborate rituals and ancient traditions—to revitalize their congregations. Father Marcos was routinely invited to deliver sermons at Holy Trinity and explain how his 'ancient church' upheld its traditions and survived under threat of

[65] Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, Holy Trinity, Trinity Square parish history file, Jeanne Wayling, "The Swingingest Church in Town: Hippies in the nave, Copts in the Attic, Beautiful People in the Pews. (P.S. They're Anglicans.)," *The Observer*, June 1969: 18–20.
[66] Peter (pseud.) interviewed in Ontario, 26 April 2017 (in English).
[67] Christie and Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and their Peoples*, 182.

persecution. Furthermore, Anglican and Coptic parishes engaged in joint social activities in the church and on excursions to Centre Island.[68]

Underlining the contemporary importance of ecumenical Christian relations, CBC radio aired an episode of *Christian Frontiers* on the Coptic church in Canada.[69] During his interviews of Bishop Samuel, head deacon Edward Habib, Father Marcos and his wife Susan, host Bill McNeil focused on introducing this new community to Canadian audiences. He highlighted the character of Coptic church history, language, services, the marriage of priests, the role of deacons, and the differences between life in Cairo and Toronto. The interview was conducted after a Sunday service, during the pastoral visit of Bishop Samuel in the upstairs chapel of Holy Trinity. McNeil addressed the audience as both liturgies played simultaneously in the background and declared with excitement: "Well, this surely must be ecumenical dialogue!"[70] It is no overstatement to say that the subject of ecumenism was being followed closely in Canada.

Ecumenism served the needs of this new immigrant parish to find accommodations, allowing recent arrivals to build mutual aid networks and engage in modest fraternity with Protestant groups. At Holy Trinity, Coptic families began a cooperative managed by a Coptic grocery manager at the Independent Grocers Alliance (IGA). One of the first parishioners to buy a house, he purchased groceries at wholesale prices and stored them in his basement. New arrivals often called, after learning of the initiative from congregants in the church. Goods were sold and delivered at reduced costs. Mathew recalled that this service, which lasted for only the few short years the parish occupied Holy Trinity succeeded in bringing families together and making the church a veritable hub of activity.

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[68] Marcos, *The Coptic Orthodox Church*, 189–210. Copies of letters and invitations were placed in the book.
[69] "Canada's Copts," *CBC Times: Jan. 1966-July 1966*, vol. 18, no. 27-52 (Toronto: CBC, 1966): 4. *Christian Frontiers* was produced by Reid Forsee, its series organizer was Helen O'Brien, and its host was Bill McNeil. Episodes in the series reveal an international focus on diverse places of worship from Canada, the US and England.
[70] LAC, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation fonds. "Christian Frontiers: The Coptic Church in Canada." 18 January 1966. Accession 1981-0111, item 176827, audio, 30 minutes. Consultation copy 176827-1981-0111-113.mp3.

At Holy Trinity early Copts celebrated life-cycle events as "one family" and together walked to nearby diners for breakfast after mass.[71] Father Marcos registered the Coptic Orthodox Church in Toronto as an Egyptian organization in Canada with the Department of Immigration. New Egyptians in the city were often informed at the airport reception desk of his pastoral service. Regardless of religious affiliation, recent arrivals from Egypt were often seen waiting for friends and former colleagues on the steps of Holy Trinity on Sundays. Unlike single, male graduate students whose scholarships and starting salaries allowed them to live comfortably and still send home remittances, young families often struggled to maintain a living wage during the initial period of settlement. Mutual support in the parish met vital needs.

The priest took the leadership role and supported new arrivals, directing Copts travelling to and from Egypt to visit Bishop Samuel and ferry letters, liturgical implements, or vestments and incense. Father Marcos created the position of usher unknown to the Coptic Church in Egypt. It soon became a common volunteer position transplanted to new churches in the 1970s and 1980s meant to provide a modest introduction to Canadian society. The priest also mediated disputes and called on the entire parish to care for disadvantaged families. When a young, abused wife ran to the priest's house for protection, she was received and looked after by tasoni Susan. Mathew (as the first church usher) was tasked with keeping the husband out of the church building during mass. The church bound together a spatially dispersed population.

While the Copts were worshipping at Holy Trinity, things were not going well at St. Matthias parish. Reverend Moore Smith's eighteen-year-old legal ward, Katherine Globe, died of meningitis and a ruptured brain abscess in the rectory of the church. An ecclesiastical inquisition determined that Katherine's death was linked to a faith-healing group in the church. This incident coincided with the rise of a new charismatic movement in mainstream Canadian

[71] Mathew (pseud.), interviewed in Ontario, January 24, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic).

churches, which was yet another attempt to counter declining Sunday attendance.[72] In the summer of 1968, Rev. Ronald Palmer took over St. Matthias' parish's services and pastoral work. In June 1969, a reporter for *The Anglican* wrote an article on the Copts in Holy Trinity, asking, "in the changes that lie ahead in the inner city and elsewhere, is there by any chance a church building that could be offered to the Copts?"[73] This article followed up on a series of print and radio interviews in the *Toronto Star* and on the CBC with father Marcos and Bishop Samuel. Rev. Palmer had already encouraged recent Barbadian immigrants to join and contribute to the parish.[74] After reading Turner's article, he invited the Copts to rent the church.

Image 11 Fr. Marcos, Rev. Roberts, Dr. Nasr Shenouda, Mr. J.A. Whittaker, and Rev. Palmer. Photo by Micklethwaite for *The Anglican*, September 1969. Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives.

[72] For more on this history and Copts in Toronto, see: Michael Akladios, "Navigating Sacred Spaces: Coptic Immigrants in 1960s Toronto," *Left History* 21.1 (Fall/Winter 2018): 109-122. On this charismatic movement, see: Perin, *The Many Rooms of this House*, 217.
[73] Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, Holy Trinity, Trinity Square parish history file, Warren Turner, "Visit to Fr. Marcos," *The Anglican* [Toronto] June 1969: A7.
[74] After 1962 formerly non-preferred Caribbean populations similarly arrived. As Frances Henry noted, the Anglican Church was "going out of its way to become multicultural." Frances Henry, *The Caribbean Diaspora in Toronto: Learning to Live with Racism* (Toronto: UTP, 1994): 148-156.

Father Marcos and tasoni Susan were still dealing with the loss of their monthly stipend following the recent separation from the CAA. As a result of the added financial strain on the Toronto parish, the couple had sacrificed their apartment and were living temporarily in the homes of different congregants week-to-week. Tasoni Susan had found a nursery for her son and worked in an administrative position with IBM, while at night supporting the priest in his editing and mailing of the *Monthly Message*, a parish newsletter. They readily accepted the offer.[75]

Four developments came to characterize church services while at St. Matthias'. First, in reaction to parishioners leaving to have breakfast in nearby diners the priest began hosting potluck communal (*agapy*) meals following the liturgy. Second, recognizing the limited financial abilities of new immigrants, an anonymous donation box was used to gather collections rather than a plate passed around publicly during mass. Third, all services provided by the church were free of charge—that is engagement ceremonies, weddings, unction of the sick, home blessings, funerals, memorials, baptisms, among others. Fourth, the distribution of the *Korban* (baked bread with the seal of the cross sold after the service) was distributed free of charge. Once put into practice, the free services became expected and have continued to this day.

Father Marcos championed the cause of the Church in Egypt. He represented the Church with Canadian and United States journalists, radio personalities and ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches and its national affiliates. Mona Bechai spoke with appreciation of his outreach which made him "well respected by the politicians of the day and by newspapers."[76] The priest also encouraged university professors and medical doctors to host social events to educate colleagues about their faith community. Yet intra-communal tensions and debates over the power and authority of an immigrant priest followed.

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[75] LAC, Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic.], 1963–1971, MG55.9-No22, "Special Day of the Month," Sunday November 22, 1970, Ottawa, Canada.
[76] Mona Bechai, interviewed in Ontario, September 28, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic and French).

Orthodox Copts had the support of Syrian and Greek churches but not the dominant Catholic hierarchy in Montreal. In terms of religious diversity, by mid-century Montreal remained overwhelmingly (86 per cent) Roman Catholic, while 11 per cent of the population was Protestant and a mere 2 per cent Jewish. The lay challenge to clerical authority and debates over sexuality, family formation and social services, contributed to the Quiet Revolution, a political, institutional, cultural and social reform under the Liberal government of Premier Jean Lesage (1960-1966). It called for liberalization and modernization to accelerate the development of the welfare state and define a social-linguistic nationalism in opposition to the authority of the Church. The Quiet Revolution inaugurated what Michael Gauvreau called "a cultural process replete with multiple currents."[77] At least one of those currents saw the Francophone majority becoming rapidly secularized. Unlike Toronto, secularization in Montreal was marked less by declining religious self-identification as by "the collapse of religious practice" and loss of church buildings.[78] Church closures eventually provided Copts buildings to purchase.

Copts felt accepted as Christians and free to practice their faith. Nadia Naguib recognized Canada as "a Christian country, [where] you go to church on Sunday and everyone asks after you." The early parish in Montreal was "like a family."[79] Montreal's Copts initially joined St. Nicholas Syrian Orthodox parish (est. 1905) or the Melkite Greek Orthodox parish of St-Sauveur (est. 1924). Father Marcos visited on a bi-weekly basis. When he could not, Coptic deacons read from scripture in church halls and led parishioners in the singing of hymns. Coptic women such as Nadia Naguib's mother and sister baked cakes and pies for everyone to share in a leisurely

[77] Linteau et al., *Quebec Since 1930*, 307; Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2005).
[78] Linteau et al., *Quebec Since 1930*, 476.
[79] In conversation with Nadia Naguib, Quebec, November 10, 2019 (Partially translated from Arabic and French).

meal following prayers. The Canadian Coptic Association (CCA) began with the support of these early families. Following the arrival of father Rofael Nakhla in 1967, infighting, often heated, developed over parish finances and the nature of spiritual and social activities.[80]

The most prominent and persistent debate concerned the right trajectory immigrants should follow for their integration and the authority which should be accorded the priest in that process.[81] The most extreme response to the conflict was that several families returned to St-Sauveur. It was more common for parishioners to identify with one of two distinct groups that emerged amid the debates. The traditionalist members of the parish supported the power and authority of father Rofael. Progressives defended the executive of the CCA. The latter sought to host cultural activities alongside other Egyptian and Lebanese groups organized through independent initiative. As debates raged between the priest, church board members and the Canadian Coptic Association, the patriarchate in Cairo supported the priest. Father Rofael's education at the Sorbonne and French language skills made him the most suitable candidate to serve in a Francophone city. As in Toronto and across the United States, Egyptian bishops defended their chosen candidate and upheld clerical authority in distant immigrant communities.

Recent immigrants and well-established traditionalist Copts contested the CCA members' social and cultural gatherings. A freshly arrived Makram Hanna complained that the church was being "controlled" by some men on the board who discounted activities "suitable for the church and community," unless they led and authorized them. He accused the CCA of holding a "social ideology of modern civilization, not [in accordance] with Christianity." Altercations in the

[80] One debate over whether to buy an abandoned Catholic church or purchase land to erect one in the Coptic tradition became so contentious that father Rofael threatened not to marry Nadia and Selim Naguib. Renting churches since the priest's arrival, the parish later purchased an abandoned Catholic church in 1975, near Jean Talon street on the corner of Everett and Garnier. In conversation with Nadia Naguib, Quebec, November 10, 2019 (Partially translated from Arabic and French).

[81] In a study of early twentieth century Orthodox Jewish synagogues in Toronto, Stephen Speisman argued similarly that debates often pivoted around how a congregation can seek acculturation amidst fears of assimilation. Stephen Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987).

church and in parking lots were frequent. “Disrespectful” insults such as “ignorant or incompetent” were hurled at all who disagreed with the CCA. Hanna denounced the elitism of Association leaders, Alfons Khelada, Selim Naguib and Saleh Tawfik, who referred to themselves as “pioneers” and therefore “builders” of the church in Canada.[82]

Hanna warned Bishop Samuel that the CCA was threatening the power of the priest and by extension the spiritual authority of the patriarchate. Forcing members of the congregation to support Association leaders in church board elections, they spread “false statements” about Father Rofael who was “honest in serving the church and community.”[83]At one point following Sunday mass the priest refused these men’s re-election to the church board. Shouting could be heard throughout the church. Hanna implored the patriarchate to act on behalf of many families who were leaving the parish “to protect their children.” Other letters followed which were written by board members in support of Father Rofael. Youssef Tahan decried the verbal attacks because any priest representing “you [the bishop] shall be holy and respected, especially as we are in a foreign country.” He argued that the CCA was plotting to take control and make the church a social club. He reproached CCA wives and daughters of committing “immoral acts,” such as dancing in the church hall. The activities of CAA members were framed as inviting indecent relations among the youth and succumbing to “this foreign country’s traditions.”[84]

Church board members loyal to the CCA responded. Philip Girgis denounced the domineering attitudes of the priest. He framed the altercation the previous Sunday as a “reasonable” response to unfounded claims that some nominees to the church board had not paid their dues. Girgis accused the priest of “being greedy for money.”[85] One unnamed congregant

[82] Letter from Makram Hanna to Bishop Samuel, Montreal, 4 October 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).
[83] Letter from Makram Hanna to Bishop Samuel, Montreal, 4 October 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).
[84] Letter from Youssef Tahan to Bishop Samuel, Montreal, 7 October 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).
[85] Letter from Philip Girgis to Bishop Samuel, Montreal, 5 October 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).

claimed that the priest arranged flights to Cairo with parish money and that his intention was to leave Montreal.[86] Rumors were circulating that the cause of the conflict were not the social activities in the church hall but that the priest was trying either to be "transferred to the United States" or to "usurp power from the church board."[87]

The debate was being reframed by both sides. Traditionalists argued that the contest between acculturation or assimilation was not the root cause but rather it was members' obligations to a legal corporation. Following a pastoral visit by Bishop Samuel in August 1971, several youth leaders in the parish formed a group calling itself Coptic New Generation. They wrote the bishop in opposition to the social and cultural emphasis of the Canadian Coptic Association and in contravention of the 1969 bylaws which Father Marcos had drafted and both Bishop Samuel and Pope Kyrillos approved. Specifically, they noted that by establishing an independent association these individuals were not abiding by an article which stated that, "no church board member shall be a member of another organization having the same activity." This perceived dual loyalty was compounded by claims that CCA members did not pay subscription fees nor attend church regularly. At the same time, Coptic New Generation announced that it had established a cultural committee, started a library in the church and hosted get-togethers and bible study. Their efforts thus eliminated the need for any CCA presence in the parish.[88]

A dozen letters were sent to Cairo in the span of a few weeks, pivoting around lay initiative in the parish and the sanctity of the church community. The central issue had become

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[86] Although father Rofael's intentions are difficult to deduce, tensions in the parish occurred at the same time as Eva Habib al-Masry was informing Cairo that father Rofael wished to assume the ministry in New York. Attached to the anonymous letter is a petition signed by many families requesting Father Rofael be sent to Latin America. Letter from unnamed to Bishop Samuel, Montreal, 6 October 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).

[87] Letter from unnamed to Bishop Samuel, Montreal, 6 October 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo). He further accuses father Rafael of aligning with 12 individuals who went to the Quebec parliament after the passing of Bill C-186 in 1970 (a reform agency instructed to oversee changes in provincial law) to dissolve the existing church board and hire a Canadian lawyer to challenge the association's participation on the board.

[88] Letter to Bishop Samuel from "youth of the Coptic church in Montreal, Coptic New Generation," Montreal, 13 October 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).

one of control: who is authorized to oversee the finances, activities and board nominations. The bishop responded in similar fashion as the patriarchate had done in the conflict between the CAA in New York and the broader Coptic community that same year. The bishop reiterated that the constitution approved by Pope Kyrillos would ultimately be upheld, effectively siding with the priest against the dissident laity.[89] Unlike early Copts in New York who accepted the patriarchate's final authority, the CCA did not cease their independent activities. In response, father Rofael singled out the CCA executive members whom he accused of attending only "the last 15 minutes [of mass] to molest people and quarrel." Bishop Samuel was asked to write directly to the CCA, insist that they cease their interference in church board elections and "order" them to accept the priest's authority on all church matters.[90]

Co-founders Selim Naguib and Alfons Khelada, and executive members George Habashy and Saleh Tawfik rejected the accusations. In a joint response, they insisted that all protests had ceased following the bishop's letter of instruction. Further, the debate had less to do with the spiritual authority of clergy and more with separating father Rofael's spiritual authority from the administrative tasks of the church board. It was their contention that independent lay initiative was meant to guard against abuse of power. The CCA refused to pay for any services provided by father Rofael, offering to finance visits from fathers Marcos or Ghobrial (New Jersey).[91]

In the event, father Marcos was called on by the patriarchate to mediate. The 1969 bylaws were upheld and members of the CCA executive were removed from their posts on the church board. Father Rofael solidified his position as the spiritual leader of Montreal's Orthodox Copts. His authority and the preference for cautious adaptation only grew with the support of

[89] Letter from Bishop Samuel to "Dear blessed sons," Cairo, 21 October 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).
[90] Letter from father Rafael to Bishop Samuel, Montreal, 2 November 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).
[91] Letter to Bishop Samuel from Dr. Salim Naguib (vice-president of the church board), Alfons Khelada (secretary of the church board), George Habashy (CCA executive), and Saleh Tawfik (CCA vice-president), Montreal, 29 November 1971 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo).

new immigrants who arrived in greater numbers throughout the 1970s. Although marginalized within the parish, the CCA continued to host social and cultural activities outside of it. The formation of the American Coptic Association (ACA) by Shawki Karas in the Northeastern United States—in response to a major sectarian incident in Egypt—led the CCA to promote both acculturation *and* political engagement with Egyptian concerns. Relations between the CCA and the traditionalist members of the parish remained tense. Yet, as in the United States, conflict within the Church did not lead to schism.

In the 1970s and 1980s the fragile relationship between church activists, clergy and political activists was tested. Nevertheless, early Copts retained a veneration for their Church and its clerical hierarchy. Lay challenges to clerical authority were constant and their arguments well-founded. However, the clergy established a strong institutional structure responsive to the needs of the majority. All the while, Associations were unwilling to compromise with a broader community becoming increasingly diversified by social class, education and their experiences in Egypt prior to emigration. Divisions between "pioneers" and "interlopers" developed in this context and affected relations both within immigrant parishes and outside of them.

REGULATING LAY INITIATIVE IN TORONTO'S ST. MARK'S CHURCH

The Toronto church continued to develop social and cultural services under the direction of father Marcos. As in Montreal, the church board sought to meet the needs of parishioners and marginalized independent lay initiative. St. Mark's became a model for future churches. With the patriarchate's support, the priest set the terms for lay initiative and ensured his preeminent role as the representative of a distinctly ethno-religious immigrant community in the making.

Although father Marcos' early arrival in Toronto ensured that no formal opposition challenged his authority, similar debates to those occurring in Montreal were recorded in his reports to the patriarchate. Following an agreement with Dr. Robert McClure, then the Moderator of the United Church, St. Mark's parish moved into the former Prospect Park United Church in April 1971.[92] The parish now numbered over 250 persons and this church on Innes and Caledonia was home to the Copts for seven years.[93] In reports, the priest complained about an independent group causing trouble for parish activities. Several members had drifted "far from the church," he wrote to the pope, and "confuse the thinking of your children in the church." While unnamed, this group created tensions by securing positions on both the church board and the deaconate committee. Father Marcos insisted that since their election, "the service has suffered and the committee is divided and fights have arisen ... Several continue to not attend liturgy, vespers, bible study, or servant meetings." In frustration, the priest added that these individuals were also not attending other parishes being established under father Marcos' oversight in Hamilton and London.[94] As a consequence, he had assumed control of the committees, authored himself the Sunday school curriculum and opened a library.

The priest's actions were guided by his involvement in the Montreal debates. Father Marcos pre-empted any possible negative assessments of his character, insisting that "there is confusion in thinking [which is] driven by members on the church board that [I] decide

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[92] Marcos, *The Coptic Orthodox Church*, 194-195; Letter from Pope Kyrillos, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark to "Blessed son, Presbyter Marcos E. Abdel Messiah," August 14, 1970, Cairo, Egypt.

[93] Toronto United Church Archives, Prospect Park United Church, Accession # 1982.001C, Box 156, File 2, Meeting Minutes at United Church House, "For the purpose of learning of the needs of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Toronto for a worship centre," December 2, 1970, Toronto, Ontario: 1. Founded in 1905 as McRoberts Methodist Church, this "church on the hill" became Prospect Park United Church in the 1925. In 1971, the congregation amalgamated with Silverthorn United Church.

[94] Letter from father Marcos to Bishop Samuel, Toronto, June 1974 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo). Includes an update on church services and an extract from his report to Pope Shenouda. Parishes began in Hamilton under deacons Yohanna el Raheb and Adel Iskander (later Father Athanasius Iskander) and London under deacons Adham Ramzy and Mahfouz Awad (later Father Rueiss Awad).

everything." He framed these actions not as a priest usurping lay initiative but instead as forced on him by unresponsive parishioners who have added to his responsibilities. Father Marcos attached a job description to the bylaws which explicitly stated that any prospective board member must be a "a regular attendant of church services and meetings ... [receiving] confession and communion in the church."[95] Through this addendum, he removed all oppositional members. Following the conflict, he expanded the number of elected church board positions and created new service committees under his direct oversight.

Taking positions on the new church board, Alfie and his wife Erika Abdel Messiah recall that all their activities became centred in the parish under the leadership of clergy.[96] Church committees formed a formal charity and started donation drives. Whenever there was an incident in Egypt, whether natural disaster, war, or violent attack, all immigrants donated resources for needy families. All native Egyptians, regardless of religious affiliation, were invited to contribute financially. Through their interfaith contacts and support from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the church had been named an Egyptian institution in Canada. The Egyptian embassy in Ottawa directed all immigrants to the parish, which connected recent arrivals with established parishioners. The clergy ensured that the institutional church became well organized and recognized by the society as the representative of Copts in Canada.

In time, institutional completeness allowed for a cohesive vision of the community to flourish under clerical supervision. In 1975, Father Marcos contacted a real estate developer known to the United Church as a supporter of church building. William McClintock and his son Robert gave the Coptic parish one acre of land in Scarborough for one dollar. Plans were drawn up and approved by Pope Shenouda III in Cairo. On Friday April 29, 1977, during the Pope's

[95] Letter from father Marcos to Bishop Samuel, Toronto, June 1974 (Sinout Shenouda Collection, Cairo). Along with the letter is a donation of $2,300 from the congregation to churches in Suez, Egypt.
[96] Alfie and Erika Abdel Massiah, interviewed in Ontario, November 25, 2016 (in English).

pastoral visit to Toronto, he laid the cornerstone of St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church at 41 Glendinning Ave., Agincourt.[97] The church was built in eight months and held its first liturgy the following year on Easter Sunday, April 23, 1978. Newly arrived families rented homes near the church and the building underwent several renovations and extensions, a cultural centre and a museum were added. Members of St. Mark's parish, the first in Canada, dispersed as Copts—seeking the security of purchasing a home—began to suburbanize and move to Mississauga, Kitchener, Waterloo, and elsewhere in Ontario in search of larger, more affordable housing. By the early 1980s, St. Mary and St. Athanasius church was established in Mississauga, St. Mary's church in Kitchener, and new priests were ordained from among the community or brought from Egypt. Following the precedent set by earlier debates, oppositional voices on new church boards were quickly quashed. The existing bylaws were redrawn several times but always aimed to ensure clerical authority. In time, technological developments, whether in the form of cars, telephones, or transit expansion or more recently, satellite television and the internet, have supported the persistence of an ethno-religious identity despite spatial dispersion.

PIONEERS AND INTERLOPERS: ACCULTURATION TO CAUTIOUS ADAPTATION

After the mid-1970s there was a marked increase in poorer and less-skilled migrants with fewer cultural and material resources at their disposal. Early "pioneers" considered new arrivals lacking in both social status and education and a notion developed of "interlopers" intruding on the cosmopolitan lives of Copts in Canada. Class distinctions, limited proficiency in French or English and heightened religious fervour learned in a confessionalizing Egypt became markers of difference. New immigrants also faced considerable discrimination in the workplace and society

[97] Marcos A. Marcos, "The Copts of Canada: A Shining Star in a Galaxy of Diversified Celestial Bodies," *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa*, 1 (1981): 71.

in general, mainly as a consequence of class and linguistic difference. This new wave were received by established clergy and traditionalist elites inside churches that played a vital role in supporting their integration. Expressing a strong ethno-religious identity, Coptic immigrants in this period sought a cautious adaptation to Canadian society and their needs were fulfilled in churches and developed through community publications. The narrative produced was one of an insulated Coptic culture contributing to Canadian multiculturalism. The cosmopolitanism of early associations, inclusive of multiethnic immigrants from Egypt, was slowly supplanted by a more particularistic Coptic Christian commemoration.

As Paul Eid has argued, immigration to Canada and the United States from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, among others, became increasingly marked by strong religious overtones as "a by-product of [the] post-1970s Islamic revival."[98] Many Egyptians brought with them a deep religious fervour denoting strong divisions between Coptic and Muslim. Sadat's neoliberal policies in time widened the gap between rich and poor and exacerbated religious divides. Rising Islamist movements threatened the safety of Copts and their ability to publicly celebrate their faith. In response, the Church enacted distinctive social welfare programs and parish services in Egypt had multiplied. Churches hosted sports events, theatrical performances and a range of afterschool programs. New modes of transmitting to the Copts in Egypt Orthodox teachings under Pope Shenouda created the conditions for the ethnicization of religious identity. One result for immigrants in Canada was a sharper division between early Copts and the new arrivals on the trajectory of integration. As cohesive church boards responded to the needs of a growing immigrant group, the continued ethnicization of religious identity became part of the vocabulary of a distinctly Coptic identity and its unique contribution to Canadian multiculturalism.

[98] Eid, *Being Arab*, 9-10.

The significance of the parish church as a locus of social, cultural and spiritual activities was central to this process. Father Rofael in Montreal had consolidated his preeminent position in the community and the Canadian Coptic Association organized activities apart from the parish. New immigrant Talaat Attallah, a graduate in mechanical engineering, arrived in 1975 after serving as an active combatant in the 1973 October War. Unlike earlier arrivals influenced by the ecumenism of Bishop Samuel, Attallah's vision of the church in Copts' lives was shaped by political developments in Egypt and Pope Shenouda's views on Coptic Orthodoxy. According to Attallah, Copts are a church-going people guarded and attended to by the pope. Shenouda was the one who "took responsibility for spreading churches in the diaspora."[99] Attallah celebrated the pope's undisputed authority in providing vital services for all immigrants inside churches.

Attallah and others had met severe obstacles in Egypt. Rising urban populations, poor job prospects and heightened Islamicization became the concerns when contemplating work, marriage and raising children. After completing his required military service, Attallah worked as a railroad engineer but all the while applied repeatedly to the Canadian embassy. He struggled to receive an acceptance because of poor language proficiency. An uncle teaching with the Catholic School Commission sponsored him. Initially living with his uncle on the West Island, he enrolled in publicly-funded English and French courses. After some time he secured a job and moved into a shared apartment in Ville St-Laurent with three other engineers he had met at church.

Arriving a few weeks after Attallah, Michel Samaan who was also a sponsored engineer then living in Ville St-Laurent with fellow Egyptians expressed the integrative role of the parish in their lives.[100] Young men joined roommates in or around the church for prayer, socializing and on trips or playing sports. Following mass every Sunday, Copts read the latest editions of *Al*

[99] Talaat Attallah, interviewed in Quebec, September 19, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).
[100] In conversation with Michel Samaan, Quebec, November 7, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).

Ahram newspaper, the Coptic *Watani* and local ethnic newsletters on sale in the churches. Early Copt George Saad, a travel agent and producer of Arabic language public programming hosted a one-hour television program called *Arabic Voice*. Sports competitions and picnics were held in public parks. Seeking to increase the range of services available in the parish, the clergy established afterschool and evening programs targeted at single migrants and young families.[101]

In both cities mothers were tasked with overseeing the social and educational committees. Mona Bechai recalled that in addition to the many cultural celebrations and recreational activities on church grounds, father Marcos started "a heritage school" in the early 1980s and recruited her to oversee it. Following new policies set by the Ministry of Education in 1977, Heritage Language programs for publicly funded afterschool instruction were meant as a vehicle to educate new generations of their ethnic groups' particular history and heritage. Mona Bechai assembled the children for Sunday school, joined all women's groups and helped to supervise sports events under the oversight of the clergy. Involving the whole family was, as Mona Bechai confided, a means to ensure the clergy "had a captive audience."[102]

New immigrants' recollections convey the distance between Copts and Canadian society. Outside of the workplace and schools, Attallah noted a ubiquitous disregard for non-French speaking immigrants in the society and confided: "I didn't have friendships with any Canadiens."[103] This differentiation became more prevalent amid language debates in the 1970s. As Marcel Martel and Martin Paquet argued, the question of Quebec sovereignty was

[101] Multiculturalism at the federal level was firmly established in 1971 and acknowledged cultural pluralism as fundamental to Canadian identity. The Ontario Ministry of Education responded to the federal initiatives by establishing multicultural committees to set specific policies and practices. In 1975, the Ministry released a new curriculum policy for Grades 1 to 6 to ensure that all children be given the opportunity to develop and retain the historical roots of their culture and appreciate other ethnic and cultural groups. In 1977, it created the Heritage Languages program for publicly funded after-school language instruction in Toronto and North York. Helen Harper, "Difference and Diversity in Ontario Schooling," Canadian Journal of Education 22.2 (1997): 192-206.
[102] Mona Bechai, interviewed in Ontario, September 28, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic and French).
[103] Talaat Attallah, interviewed in Quebec, September 19, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).

exasperated by international migrations and the growing visibility of ethno-linguistic groups in the 1970s under the Parti Quebecois government. In July 1974, Bill 22 declared French the official language in Quebec workplaces and schools. Children could only attend English schools by passing English admissions exams. Any ambiguity was removed with the passing of Bill 101 in April 1977. Dubbed the Charter of the French Language, it made French the language of work, instruction, communication, commerce, and business. While the 'Quebec clause' allowed children of parents who attended English schools in Quebec to be eligible for English instruction, it nevertheless barred the children of new immigrants from English education. The aim was to protect the French language from rising immigration and a declining birthrate among Franco-Quebecers. [104] Egyptians did not join minority contestation of the bill, spearheaded by people of Italian origin. However, what Attallah called a "francisization of the province" engendered "inferiority [toward] people who don't speak French."[105] This accentuated the divide between English and French speakers in the province, and among Egyptian immigrants.

The social and cultural activities of early Copts slowly faded away. They continued modest fraternity with other immigrants from Egypt but even this was to decline following heightened inter-religious violence in Egypt. In Quebec, early Copts accepted the requirement for French education readily, having enrolled their children in French schools as a matter of preference. New immigrants disapproved of Bill 101, seeing it an unfair imposition since new immigrants could not provide proof of past English education. Factory engineers and bank employees complained of challenges to their professional advancement because "language became a priority" above expertise.[106] Close ties among immigrants grew stronger in the church.

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[104] Marcel Martel and Martin Paquet, *Speaking Up: a History of Language and Politics in Canada and Quebec*, translated by Patricia Dumas, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2012): 161-169.
[105] Talaat Attallah, interviewed in Quebec, September 19, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).
[106] Talaat Attallah, interviewed in Quebec, September 19, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).

New immigrants in Toronto had trouble 'fitting in' as audible immigrants with heavy accents but not to the same level as in Montreal. Recent arrivals were predominantly young working-class families. Children entered schools and parents the workforce at a time of increasing diversity and rising immigration of racial minorities. Ethnic and racial discrimination was muted as Copts became less visible newcomers in the city. They relied on parish services and not social or cultural initiatives outside of it. Copts increasingly became divided between the "pioneers" and "interlopers." Gathering the faithful and instilling pride and obedience through sermons, Sunday school classes and a plethora of educational activities, the church became a second home.[107] The power and authority of the clergy increased. Broader national and linguistic loyalties among Egyptians became somewhat muted. The social clubs lost members or had trouble recruiting new ones. Even Egyptian groceries and baked goods were regularly sold in the church with few visiting Ararat bakery or Middle Eastern shops.[108]

Throughout the 1970s religious loyalties in both cities became far more prominent. As in Egypt, Coptic distinctiveness and worries over maintaining this faith community were ascendant in Canada. Not only was the parish providing a range of events, but a bookstore and memorabilia shop sold items from Egypt and families gathered for theatrical performances in the cultural centre. This attentiveness to the needs of new immigrants created a vibrant space not just on Sundays. Every day there was a new activity. At the same time that social clubs and restaurants were becoming marginal, heightened sectarian tensions in Egypt created suspicion of the Egyptian embassy and consulate. Ethno-religious markers of identity altered the nature of communal activities. In their recollections, Copts who arrived following the mid-1970s did not highlight work-related activities in their oral testimony but church services. Sectarian incidents

[107] Mathew (pseud.), interviewed in Ontario, January 24, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic).
[108] Mona Bechai, interviewed in Ontario, September 28, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic and French).

in Egypt were beginning to equally effect some early Copts. The church increasingly became the centre of their activities. All this was creating divides between Egyptian immigrants and moulding a narrative of what it meant to be Coptic Canadian.

ELABORATING A COPTIC CULTURE IN CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM

Church activists—clergy, intellectuals and press editors—worked to unite fellow immigrant Copts and strongly embraced the ideals of multiculturalism, "a permanent feature of the Canadian political landscape."[109] Following internal tensions, such elites elaborated a notion of Coptic ethno-religious particularity distinct from the broader Egyptian immigrant group in Canada. Outside the church, father Marcos appeared on the pages of *The Toronto Star* or in CBC documentaries promoting the distinctive character of Copts in Canada.[110] This vision of Coptic contribution to a Canadian national identity was elaborated particularly in the pages of church magazines and a new academic publication *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa* that was produced with multiculturalism funding.[111]

Historian Robert Harney noted that inherent in multiculturalism is the persistence of a notion that "ethnic Canadians" are distinguished by their cultures of origin.[112] The celebration of their heritage within the church and apart from other Egyptians became that distinguishing marker. As for Mennonites in Canada, this tactic of group persistence was expressed as a Coptic

[109] Robert F. Harney, "'So Great a Heritage as Ours': Immigration and the Survival of the Canadian Polity," *Daedalus* 117.4 (1988): 65-66. I am concerned in these pages with the type of discourse Coptic elites crafted in Canada. However, it should be noted that Harney approached the topic of Canadian multiculturalism as a many-headed conundrum. It could be 1) a device to integrate new, diverse immigrant groups arriving in the aftermath of a devastating world war; 2) an innovative and altruistic civic philosophy of democratic pluralism; 3) a strategy to minimize the uniqueness of French Canada; 4) a tactic to control new ethnic and immigrant voting blocs. Canadian scholars such as Franca Iacovetta have since proposed that multiculturalism served as a means to constrain and dilute immigrant cultures for the sake of nation-building, a valuable topic for future research.
[110] See for instance "Meeting Place: Canadians at Worship," hosted by Donald Henderson, CBC Television Network, April 1980, Toronto (St. Mark's Coptic Museum collection).
[111] Detailed in the next chapter, *Coptologia* started with funding provided under federal multiculturalism policy and under the direction of professor Fayek Ishak. It focused on addressing the cultural heritage of Copts.
[112] Harney, "'So Great a Heritage as Ours'," 68.

distinctiveness within the Canadian polity. Their communities were centered around a metaphorical understanding of 'home' which united them culturally.[113] Clergy and lay elites were instrumental in that process and provided a transnational space for immigrants from their country of origin to belong.[114] In this context they were not solely seeking social and political power, but "seeking the best ways by which their ethnic peoples could maintain their in-between identity and comfortably live in Canada."[115] Predominantly male professionals, these intermediaries truly believed in the vision they sought to mobilize. Simultaneously, they trafficked in goods and services necessary for new immigrants, such as books, music, films and religious memorabilia which became consumer items and markers of one's heritage. When a cultural centre was established in the Toronto church, father Marcos invited parishioners to donate artifacts from Egypt such as paintings, iconography and liturgical tools. This collection became the nucleus of the St. Mark's Coptic Museum.[116]

Both in physical spaces and community publications a Coptic Canadian narrative developed. In 1981, the first issue of *Coptologia* included an article by father Marcos entitled: "The Copts of Canada: A Shining Star in a Galaxy of Diversified Celestial Bodies." He identified the Copts as a distinct "ethnic group" in Canada with a rich history in Egypt. Father Marcos listed their "tremendous accomplishments," including a services held in 1967 to welcome Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia to North Bay, Ontario. By their contributions to Canadian society, he concluded that Copts had become "a newly transplanted member of this

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[113] Royden Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside: Two Mennonite Communities and Mid-Century Rural Disjuncture*, (University of Illinois Press, 2006): 5. See also, Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market* and Marlene Epp, *Women Without Men*.
[114] Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity*, 5. See also, Franca Iacovetta, "Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics: Writing about Immigrants in Canadian Historical Scholarship," *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995).
[115] Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity*, 5.
[116] Marcos, *The Coptic Orthodox Church*, 429-433. It was approved in 1989 by Pope Shenouda and opened in 1996.

body ... Canada."[117] University professor and noted community author Fayek Ishak wrote in 1986 that, "the Canadian identity is [comprised of] a main division between English and French on the one hand and another division among ethnic groups that are neither Anglo-Saxon nor French on the other hand."[118] Ishak wrote the Copts into a broader ethnic "third force" in Canada. In this "pluralism of pluralisms" as Harney called it, Coptic distinctiveness in multiculturalism was intended to highlight a distinct ethno-religious identity.

In contrast to Copts, Muslim Egyptians often did not have such tangible institutions. They joined interethnic mosques and the Egyptian government was ambiguous as to the question of émigré nationals perceived as merely a source of remittances. After moving to Toronto and renaming his newspaper *Arab News International*, Salah Allam cemented his role as the premier immigrant broker among Ontario and Quebec's growing Muslim Egyptian immigrants. He not only produced a well-read newspaper tying Canada, the US and Egypt but his office provided notarial and translation services. In 1987 Salah Allam published two lengthy guides for prospective émigrés. The books were written and published in Toronto, reprinted in Cairo and distributed in these and a host of Canadian and US cities. His *How to Emigrate to Canada* and *How to Emigrate to America* targeted urban working-class Egyptians and included sample interview questions and outlined new procedures from the Ministry of Immigration.[119]

Allam and a plethora of small business owners or professionals who exhibited leadership skills in speaking, writing and organizing, solidified their mediating role in the community. Despite the efforts of early Copts in the Egyptian Canadian Club to promote activities around

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[117] Marcos, "The Copts of Canada," 65–75. [sic.]
[118] Fayek M. Ishak, "The Coptic Immigrants: Views and Reviews on the Copts in Canada and the USA (4)," *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa* 7 (1986): 83.
[119] Salah Allam, *How to Emigrate to Canada* (Toronto: Allam Publishers, 1987); Salah Allam, *How to Emigrate to America*, (New York: Allam Publishers, 1987). Similar in format and content, the two books include forms, detailed instructions and listed available franchises or Arab businesses. He also warned against language in applications that might disqualify applicants as public charges requiring government assistance, criminals, or terrorists.

their vision of cosmopolitanism, executive members witnessed the effects of notions of Coptic distinctiveness amid heightened inter-religious difference. New immigrants showed weariness of Muslim Egyptians on the executive. An incident in 1987 split the club along confessional lines. Hela Bihkit confided that during the executive elections of 1987, "all the board members who were Muslim … lost their bid." She was struck by the fact that many of the Copts in attendance had rarely attended previously. That day, there were young families with strollers and even "someone who just came out of the hospital." Bihkit was perturbed at the actions of these "interlopers."[120] Basma Shalaby lamented the fact that "we became a defacto Christian club."[121] The Muslim members began their own Nile Club months later.

"Pioneers" had sustained a cosmopolitan culture and differentiated themselves from new immigrant "interlopers" arriving from a confessionalizing Egyptian scene. However, heightened confessional loyalties thinned the ranks of the ECC and ensured that the church increasingly became the centre of gravity for Copts in Canada and most new arrivals. The founders of the ECC blamed the division on the lower socio-economic status of new immigrants. People who "grew up in this segregation" in Egypt, Basma Shalaby confided, increasingly became "religiously driven" and as a result cast out "our type of friends … from the Heliopolis club, the Sacre Coeur."[122] Most executive members have remained quite active in the ECC. However, they grieved that communal activities had become church-centred and organizing the domain of the clergy. Despite this, they joined in many activities in the churches because this was a vehicle for keeping children close to their heritage and faith. Religion more than nation in time came to define an ethno-religious identity for Coptic Canadians by the late-1980s.

[120] Hela Bikhit, interviewed in Ontario, October 30, 2017 (partially translated from French and Arabic).
[121] Basma Shalaby, interviewed in Ontario, November 1, 2017 (in English).
[122] Basma Shalaby, interviewed in Ontario, November 1, 2017 (in English).

"A GALAXY OF DIVERSIFIED CELESTIAL BODIES"

This chapter offered a means to contextualize Coptic experiences within the history of Canadian immigration and the social and religious histories of Montreal and Toronto. It focused on two aspects of their distinct experience: the material and the spiritual. In the first half, I detailed that middle-class, urban and university-educated Copts left political, economic and social instability in Egypt. They were lured by expanding post-secondary education and employment opportunities. Relaxing immigration policies and the turn toward cultural pluralism in Canada provided an environment for their immigration and eventual integration. The second half of the chapter showed that Copts' success in navigating Toronto and Montreal in the 1960s and 1970s also reflects cities in the midst of tremendous change. Declining attendance in Catholic, Anglican and United churches, and a thriving language of ecumenism created opportunities for Copts to develop vital spiritual services to meet their needs. I rejected a thesis of persistent Coptic insularity propagated in past academic studies of the group's immigrant experience. Instead, I detailed that, as in New York and New Jersey, the successful development of vital social and spiritual services in Toronto and Montreal was a product of collaboration and exchange following from the unique character and timing of Coptic immigration.

Time and space conditioned the process of ethnicization. The timing of their immigration promised positive reception as a result of Canada's stage of cultural, social and economic development. The friendly though indifferent attitudes of Canadian gatekeepers combined with a growing disillusionment with conditions in the country of origin to affect "their definition by 'others' as well as by themselves."[123] In that process, race, ethnicity and gender became markers of difference for an emergent immigrant group. Despite notable instances of discrimination, ethnic cohesion among multinational and multiethnic immigrants from Egypt engendered a two-

[123] Konzen et al., "The Invention of Ethnicity," 12.

way process of acculturation in Canadian spaces. As new immigrants arrived from a confessional Egyptian scene and the church reached institutional completeness in Canadian cities, intra-communal debates were inflamed. The central question became: should the Copts seek acculturation through independent lay initiative or guard against assimilation under clerical supervision? New immigrants sought a cautious adaptation and priests and lay elites cemented their vision for Coptic integration. The notion of a distinctive Coptic ethno-religious identity was elaborated in this context as a celebration of Coptic Canadians.

Father Marcos' 1981 allegory is the title of this conclusion because it serves as an equally valuable reminder of the heteroglossia of Coptic perspectives. Their historical trajectory was neither natural nor predetermined. It was part of a long and contested process. The quest for independent initiative and the authority of clergy to speak on behalf of a heterogeneous community remain contested today. In his biography, father Marcos wrote of the faithful immigrant's success in building spiritual services under Canadian multiculturalism. This narrative has since been adopted by academic scholarship, filiopietistic portrayals which ignore the wider society and intra-communal conflict. This chapter reflects on that history critically and on the galaxy of diversified celestial bodies that were the opinions, perspectives and experiences which coloured an immigrant experience marked by opportunities as well as challenges.

Egyptian immigrants more broadly fit into a larger pattern of skilled professionals arriving in the wake of decolonization in their countries of origin. They saw Canadian cities as familiar urban landscapes. As historian Sean Mills has argued for Haitian immigrants to 1960s Quebec, I maintain that Egyptians in Canada operated between the social worlds of their earlier colonial and post-colonial lives in Egypt and "adapted these ideas and reshaped them in their

new environment."[124] Similar to the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites of historian Royden Loewen's *Family, Church and Market*, the early Copts sought to acculturate in such a way that the essentials of their past lives continued. These essentials included cosmopolitan "social relationships and boundaries, and ascriptive values and perceptions." Early Copts "achieved a high degree of continuity" in their social activities and professional advancement. Following marriage, the household was usually composed of a nuclear family that was intricately tied to wider networks.[125] New immigrant families instead saw the church as "the articulator of strict social boundaries, communitarian values, and a simple life-style."[126] The cautious adaptation they followed allowed for the reformulation of church programs usually to safeguard against the society, marketplace and political environments. Throughout this process "the real cohesion of the migration was the family" and it was worry over children that kept many early Copts in churches increasingly divorced from a past cosmopolitanism they still cherished.

This and chapter 5 focused on the material and spiritual experiences of Copts in the United States and Canada. Much like the Coptic Association of America, the Coptic Canadian Association was marginalized by the clergy. It ceased to be an alternative voice for acculturation within the parish. Unlike other instances in the broad history of trusteeism which led to schism, Coptic immigrants decided to remain attentive to their Church and its leaders. Heightened inter-religious tensions in Egypt and a sense of their Church under threat played a role. Unlike the CAA which dissolved itself, the CCA persisted as an independent corporation and continued modest social activities. Its wider membership retained their loyalty to the Church, turning to diasporic activism alongside its sister organization, the American Coptic Association (ACA).

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[124] Mills, *A Place in the Sun*, 7.
[125] Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market*, 262-269.
[126] Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market*, 4.

Chapter 7
"Politics is a Dirty Word:" Diasporic Activism in Multipolar Perspective

This chapter is concerned with the role of diasporic long-distance nationalism in Coptic immigrant communities.[1] Recent scholarship on the Coptic diaspora has framed their activism as the business of a marginal group assimilated by western ethical values antithetical to the majority's assumed acquiescence to Church authority and the Egyptian state.[2] Instead, I argue that in their motivations and activities, a numerical minority of Coptic immigrants expressed diasporic sentiments which were commensurate with Coptic rights discourse in Egypt. Their actions are not marginal to our understanding of competing narratives among Coptic immigrants. They carried ideas about the importance of independent initiative with them to their countries of adoption. They lived transnationally, supporting co-religionists in Egypt while working, studying and raising families in North American cities. They did not have a significant impact on Canadian and US foreign policy or Egypt's treatment of Christians as past scholarship has asserted. However, they did intervene at a critical moment in Egyptian international relations. Mobilizing after a major sectarian incident outside Cairo in 1972, activists affected how the Coptic Orthodox Church and Egyptian state perceived émigrés. Up to the early 1970s, Egypt saw them as a population to be reclaimed and groomed for economic development. Afterwards, *Aqbāt al-mahjar* (émigré Copts) and the *mahjar* (emigrant lands) more generally were perceived as seditious by both the state and Church until at least the early 1990s.

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[1] Diaspora is not just another term for population movement. It is a politicized form of ethnic identity formation which is distinguished by a home-oriented gaze. I define diasporic long-distance nationalism as a shared understanding of past trauma which is then mobilized by forces acting in multipolar and transnational perspectives to engage politically with the homeland. See, Donald Akenson, "The Historiography of English-Speaking Canada and the Concept of Diaspora: a Skeptical Appreciation," *Canadian Historical Review* 76.3 (1995): 377-409; Allon Gal, Athena Leoussi and Anthony Smith eds., *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Kevin Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford UP, 2013).

[2] For instance, see: Paul Rowe, "Four Guys and a Fax Machine? Diasporas, new Information Technologies, and the Internationalization of Religion in Egypt," *Journal of Church and State* 43.1 (2001): 87; Yvonne Haddad and Joshua Donovan, "Good Copt, Bad Copt: Competing Narratives on Coptic Identity in Egypt and the United States," *Studies in World Christianity* 19.3 (2013): 208-232; Nadia Marzouki, "The U.S. Coptic Diaspora and the Limit of Polarization," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 14:3 (2016), 261-276.

By outlining the nature and scope of diasporic activism in Central Canada and the North Eastern United States, I explore the political, religious and cultural mainsprings of (and constraints on) lay initiative. The defense of Coptic rights among diasporic organizations has deep roots in colonial Egyptian politics and was at times shared by many of the laity and clergy. Yet it was within the constraints of the post-colonial religious institutional structure that friction developed. The patriarch had assumed absolute authority to speak on behalf of the community with the state. The Canadian and American Coptic Associations, for their part, contested restrictions on church-building, job discrimination and the failings of the Egyptian state to respond to sectarian violence in Upper Egypt. In his dealings with the clerical hierarchy, political activist and founder of the American Coptic Association (ACA) Shawki Karas expressed his frustration with the Church publicly discrediting ACA activities while seemingly encouraging their actions in private. Association leaders such as Karas insisted that it was the duty of all faithful *and* patriotic Copts to denounce "religious suppression, injustice and discrimination."[3]

Fundamental to the self-image of diasporic activists was the dual nature of their ethno-religious identity as both Coptic and Egyptian. Circumscribed by a broad consensus, independent initiative did coexist in delicate balance with the clergy's leadership. Conflict arose over the support members of associations felt they ought to receive from the Church and community. As nationals living in diaspora, unbounded by the limits on political protest, activists across Canada and the United States often argued that "if émigrés don't raise their voice, who will?"[4] The majority of Coptic clergy and their lay supporters were suspicious of the middle-class activists and their insistence that their initiatives and publications remain free from clerical direction. The

[3] Shawki Karas, *The Copts Since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land* (American, Canadian and Australian Coptic Associations: New Jersey, 1985), forward [non-paginated].
[4] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, USA, August 1985 (video, 1hr).

fact that such affirmations did not result in schism suggests that the relationship between the two groups was a good deal more complex and much closer than is usually recognized.[5]

First, many Coptic immigrants did not participate in associational life as a matter of preference, as a consequence of work and family obligations, or simply because membership in all voluntary associations is a form of leisure that required time and money. Contextualizing Coptic diasporic activism within more broadly Middle Eastern associational life, I show that past emphasis on their marginality discounts the fact that politically oriented Middle Eastern associations rarely had appeal for the majority of immigrants. Having served on executive committees for a range of Arab associations in Ontario, Lebanese activist Houda Hayani confided that for the majority of Middle Eastern immigrants, "to us politics is a dirty word. It's family … job, education, a better future. Those were [immigrants'] choice words."[6]

Second, as transnational organizations that operate in specific localities, Coptic diasporic associations offer a vantage point from which to observe an immigrant community's external and internal social dynamics. I detail the presence of lay initiative in associations affiliated with the Coptic Church and political organizations, which also has important implications for our understanding of Coptic ethno-religious identity. Unlike church-affiliated organizations that celebrated a national Church and a distinct Coptic heritage, political associations rallied around notions of persecuted Middle East Christian immigrants as *la communauté Chrétienne du proche Orient* (the Christian community of the Near East). These ideological boundaries came to represent the fundamental structure of associational life for the next five decades.

Third, diasporic activists were interpreted by the Church as a dangerous oppositional voice during a precarious period in Church-state relations. Although the clergy sought to end

[5] For my inspiration, see: Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1993).
[6] Ibrahim and Houda Hayani, interviewed in Ontario, September 27, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic).

independent lay initiative, an accommodation between the diasporic activists and the churches was possible. In September 1981, Sadat imprisoned approximately 1,500 religious leaders, politicians and journalists, and placed Pope Shenouda in forced hermitage in St. Bishoy monastery, Wadi Natrun Valley. This action instigated a temporary alliance between political and church activists in the *mahjar*. Loyalty to the patriarch and a belief in a common Christian obligation to serve (*khidma*) allowed for cooperation and collaboration. Following the release of the pope from his desert hermitage in 1985, diasporic long-distance nationalism was on the decline. Cooperation withered, clerical influence grew with mass ordinations under the pope, and legitimacy within the community was increasingly only possible with the clergy's oversight and approval. As the spiritual, social and even commercial role of the immigrants' church continued to expand, diasporic nationalist organizations could no longer compete for communal support.

This chapter concludes in the early 1990s, when another transition saw the Church and state re-engage émigré nationals as a useful population for economic development. By 1992 Islamist violence against Egyptian government officials and a post-Cold War consensus around the US as guarantor of the efficacy of the United Nations altered immigrants' engagement with Egypt, the Church and their new homes. The CCA and the ACA lost their monopoly on political activism in North America. Diverse globalist approaches calling on international governments to defend universal human rights and invest in material aid to the vulnerable were on the rise.

TRAVELLING THEORIES: THE DEFENSE OF COPTS IN EGYPT AND ITS DIASPORAS

The dominant critique in scholarship on the Coptic diaspora is that the human rights that this numerical minority espoused aligned with globalization projects in western countries, with

relative disregard for societal norms and the interests of co-religionists in Egypt.[7] Yet the implication that activists are guilty of inciting foreign intervention, bringing harm to co-religionists in Egypt, or simply intellectually naïve has lost sight of the material concerns of the speakers. Rights discourses are sometimes the only viable option for the marginalized and oppressed to enter the political arena. The defense of Coptic rights has deep historical roots in the colonial Egyptian press and was not divorced from the Egyptian context. Diasporic activists saw themselves as liberal nationalists upholding the values of past intellectuals and political figures in Egypt while living in western democracies. They sought to contest state oppression which inhibited minority voices in post-colonial Egypt. As a result, a multifaceted immigrant press developed in North American cities. Ideas and theories travelled along transnational migration routes and became altered, taking on new meanings.

In proposing this alternative reading of political mobilization among Coptic immigrants, I draw on the concept of 'travel theory' first proposed by cultural theorist Edward Said and employed in the Egyptian context by sociologist Hoda Elsadda.[8] In his 1982 essay, Said argued that through travel ideas moved from person to person, situation to situation and one time period to another. Through their circulation, they took new shape which bears both the traces of their historical and cultural conditions of production and the contexts distinct from their origin. People imbued ideas with political significance for their lives. In her feminist, anti-imperialist critique, Elsadda observed that the assumption of the western origins of women's rights in Egypt

[7] Marzouki, "The U.S. Coptic Diaspora," 275-6. Nadia Marzouki has argued that in their political participation Coptic diasporic associations contributed to Islamaphobia in western nations. However, Marzouki disregards their history and their pain. Political associations did not condemn minority Muslim populations in North America where the notion of Islamaphobia has particular salience but instead defended the victims of sectarian violence in Egypt.
[8] Edward Said, "Traveling Theory," in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1983): 226-47; Edward Said, "Traveling Theory Reconsidered," in *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays*, (London: Granta Books, 2001): 436-52; Hoda Elsadda, "Travelling Critique: Anti-Imperialism, Gender and Rights Discourses," *Feminist Dissent* 3 (2018): 89-91.

disregarded "the personal narratives of struggle and accommodation, or what would constitute the fragments of history that are necessary for a holistic understanding of historical moments."[9]

The "Coptic Question" was a central aspect of modern Egyptian history. Debates over religion were a part of a contested process in liberal secular politics (detailed in chapter 1). Following Egypt's nominal independence under the British in 1921, Copts participated actively in constitutional debates in the Wafd government. In response to escalating confessional tensions throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Coptic-owned newspapers such as *Misr* and *al-Manarat* ran editorials and opinion pieces contesting the marginalization of Copts in Egypt. Community academics took on the challenge of documenting sectarian violence and defended Coptic rights through appeals to universal human rights. Michael Zugheib's *Farriq Tasud* (Divide and Rule), a seminal text for inspiring diasporic activists, denounced British colonial policies fomenting confessional divides, detailed instances of personal conflicts and property damage and called on Muslims to "refrain from persecuting the Christian Copts."[10]

Within a colonial context, secular intellectuals argued that national unity without religious prejudice was the path to a post-colonial future. In his introduction to *Farriq Tasud*, Egyptian nationalist Salama Musa wrote of his deeply held belief that if Copts and Muslims "have not freed themselves from injurious old traditions ... extreme bitterness takes hold of the Copts and outweighs their national spirit. That way lies destruction for us all." Musa reflected on the symbol of that national unity: the 1919 revolution. As all Egyptians gathered to protest British occupation, he "heard learned men from Al-Azhar speaking in the churches and …

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[9] Elsadda, "Travelling Critique," 112-113.

[10] The book was outlawed in Egypt and neighbouring Arab states after its release. Zugheib's home in the town of Abu-Girga was attacked, bullets were fired into the house and neighboring homes were burnt while Zugheib's family were away. President of the CCA, Selim Naguib called *Divide and Rule* "a vigorous and courageous book … intended to be an indictment against the discrimination and under-representation suffered by the Copts, systematically reduced to the status of second-class citizens." Selim Naguib, *Les Coptes Dans L'Égypte D'aujourd'hui: Angoisses et Espoirs D'Une Minorité aux Abois*, (Solidarite-Orient: Bruxelles, 1996): 65-66.

priests greeted by Al-Azhar." The marginalization of Copts as Muslims won administrative positions and instituted compulsory education in the Quran was for him a product of British manipulation and foreign policy. To move past these old colonial injuries Musa urged the readers to recognize the importance of separating religion and state to "keep us united, well knit together, far from division and dismemberment."[11]

The content of Musa's call paralleled editorials and opinion pieces published in Coptic newspapers. Relying on references to the caste system in India, the Jewish holocaust under the Third Reich and Civil Rights campaigns in the United States, several articles in Coptic newspapers argued that divisions based on religion or race were detrimental to common values of national unity and humanitarianism. Such references were not meant to draw historical parallels as much as insist on Copts' plight and offer a context in which to understand citizenship rights in Egypt. In posing the question "are all Egyptians equal?" Ramses Jibraoui for *al-Manarat* documented how religion was woven into the Egyptian constitution, with Articles both stating that the religion of the state is Islam while guarantying freedom of faith. Recounting stories of persistent discrimination, the author argued: "whenever a Christian in this country is the victim of pressure, coercion, persecution, and deprivation on account of his religion, he is told in justification for this state of things: 'Have you forgotten that the state is religious, and that the privileged persons are those belonging to a particular religion?'"[12]

In defending Coptic rights, nationalists argued that divisive religious loyalties threatened the unity of the Egyptian nation and the people's ability to contest colonial oppression. As a consequence of the Second World War, their rhetoric increasingly became enmeshed in

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[11] Salama Musa, "For the Sake of Our National Unity," Introduction to *Farriq Tasud* (Cairo, 1950): 5-8. See also Masaad Sadeq, "Discrimination in Politics," *Misr*, March 23, 1951 and "The Copts and the Council of State," *Misr*, February 17, 1951.
[12] Ramses Jibraoui, "Are All Egyptians Equal?" *Al Manarat Al-Misriyat*, March 5, 1951.

internationalist humanitarian discourse. Equal citizenship in the nation was vital to national unity. This understanding among Copts lived on through the post-colonial Arab nationalism of Gamal Abdul Nasser. A consummate reader of Thomas Carlyle, Mohandas Gandhi, Charles Dickens and Voltaire, among others, Nasser was essentially a student of the liberal and secular ideal—of fighting not cosmopolitanism but imperialism and the extraterritorial privileges that imperialism bestowed. Yet in doing so he expanded the authoritarian rule of the state at the same time as he created opportunities for women and workers to receive post-secondary education. He fought foreign intervention while censoring the press and created an atmosphere of fear and anxiety using the secret police and military tribunals. In pursuing an anti-imperialist agenda, Nasser worked toward a pan-Arab socialist state where religion was cast out of the public sphere. Religion instead became inscribed in Egyptian civil society and remained at the core of its constitution. As a consequence of this agenda, an implicit entente between Nasser and Pope Kyrillos guaranteed that the Church became the sole voice representing the societal and political interests of Copts, subverting lay initiative.[13]

Following Nasser's death, President Anwar Sadat was able to manipulate ambiguities in Egypt's constitution and marshal the awesome power of the state to serve his political ambitions. Unlike Nasser, Sadat pursued peace with Israel to ensure the success of an economic liberalization project tied to US and international aid organizations. As a consequence, he alienated surrounding Arab states and enacted debilitating austerity measures on Egyptian workers. Rampant unemployment, bread riots and protests in urban centres combined with escalating sectarian conflict in the mid-1970s. In response, religious institutions expanded their services to meet local demands and global pressures. The Coptic Orthodox Church's welfare functions multiplied and it offered employment services, subsidized food and donation drives.

[13] See Paul Sedra's "Class Cleavages" and Mariz Tadros' "Vicissitudes in the Entente."

The Muslim Brotherhood, no longer outlawed under Sadat's administration, opened new offices and supplied families in Upper Egypt with food and financial aid. Religious loyalties increasingly became central to the survival of the most vulnerable.

When *Aqbāt al-mahjar* became the target of mainstream Egyptian media in the 1970s because of their criticism of the Egyptian government, their immigrant condition was used as justification by the Church for their activities. Church leaders feared that immigrant activities would be interpreted by the state as Copts seeking foreign intervention in Egyptian affairs. The Church had long defended against accusations of conspiring against the Muslim majority with British Christian administrators or Anglo-American missionaries. In addition, community publications by the clerical hierarchy and their lay supporters promoted a filiopietism reflecting ongoing debates over the dangers of heterodox ideas entering the Church through close association with western Christians.[14] They sought to distance themselves from activism, increasingly anxious that such challenges threatened the distinctive Orthodoxy of the Church and its position as the political intermediary for persecuted Christians in Egypt.[15] Diasporic activists were cast as a renegade minority.

After the death of President Sadat, former editor of *Al Ahram* and consummate Nasserist Mohammed Heikal noted in his *Autumn of Fury*, a book-length diatribe denouncing the mistakes of the "television president," that "elements among the Copts, with their new international links, were finding a new focus of loyalty beyond Egyptian nationalism."[16] The threat posed by a politicized diaspora was detailed in the Egyptian press and popular literature. This set the

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[14] Debates between clergy, intellectuals and prominent Sunday school teachers in Egypt played out in the pages of *Majallat Madaris al-Ahad* (The Sunday School magazine) and *Majallat al-Kiraza* (The Preaching magazine). Nazeer Gayed (later Pope Shenouda) was a regular contributor to the former and the chief editor of the latter.
[15] I do not claim that the Church has a natural role as a mediator between Copts and the state. Rather, the relationship fostered between Nasser and Pope Kyrillos VI elevated the Church to an auxiliary position as a state institution. Mariz Tadros, "Vicissitudes in the Entente between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the State in Egypt (1952-2007)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 2 (2009): 271–272.
[16] Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 219.

normative framework for describing these actors. In "With Friends like these: Coptic Activism in the Diaspora," Michael Wahid Hanna cast *Aqbāt al-mahjar* as "a veritable fifth column" in Egyptian politics which the state employed "as a counterpoint to Islamist militants and as a means of creating a false equivalence of blame and extremism."[17] Such a characterization is dominant in the interdisciplinary fields of Middle East and Coptic Studies: the "bad" political Copts were the opposite of the "good," pious and non-political Copts.[18] The latter served two purposes in this scholarship. They could be either the ideal "symbols" of faithful devotion living in harmony with fellow Egyptians or a persecuted Christian minority which remain "quiescent" and accepting of "a position of communal subordination in exchange for peaceful coexistence."[19] This framing is simplistic and dangerous.

Coptic individuals, groups and institutions grappled with their in-between status in Egypt and North America to define a place for themselves. In this context, national unity worked as a theme for a time, in a particular historical moment of colonial contestation in Egypt. The discourse increasingly became enmeshed in humanitarian concerns following the Second World War and was later muted under Nasser's alliance with Pope Kyrillos. The activities of diasporic associations provide a unique perspective because of both their socialization in Egypt and their distance from the confines of authoritarian rule and the pressure it exerts. In response to escalating violence in the 1970s, immigrant activists sought to expose the failings of a notion of national unity. This too worked for a time, informed by another historical context. Immigrants expressed their Coptic and Egyptian particularity in their independent ethnic press and interviews with western news outlets. At the same time, in their defense of Egypt's Copts activists found

[17] Michael Wahid Hanna, "With Friends like these: Coptic Activism in the Diaspora," *Middle East Report* 267 (2013): 28-31. See also, Elizabeth Iskander, "The 'Mediation' of Muslim-Christian Relations in Egypt: The Strategies and Discourses of the Official Egyptian Press during Mubarak's Presidency," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 23.1 (2012): 31-44.
[18] Yvonne Haddad and Joshua Donovan's "Good Copt, Bad Copt" is this dichotomy made manifest.
[19] This framing is nowhere more apparent than in Rowe, "Four Guys and a Fax Machine?" 87-91.

common cause among Armenian, Melkite and Maronite immigrants while choosing to be separate from a more broadly Arab associational life.

I insist on a transnational and integrated approach to the study of Coptic activism(s) across a range of Egyptian and North American cities to understand this history. As Nadia Naguib eulogized following her husband's death, the "trio Copts in diaspora" of Canada's Selim Naguib and Alfonse Kelada and Shawki Karas in the US conceived of themselves as inheritors of a legacy born in the liberal and secular ideals of mid-century Coptic feminist Ester A. Fanous and the Wafd nationalists.[20] Their diasporic activism was multipolar and served as a means to persevere in modern Egyptian liberal ideals. The intra-communal conflict that followed in immigrant communities affected relations between diasporic activists, the Church and lay supporters, and the Egyptian state. Despite geographic distance, diasporic Copts retained an attachment to their homeland and their story was in part a story of the Copts *in* Egyptian history. Their migration and institutionalization was a product of 'routes' as much as it was 'roots.'

THE LIMITS OF COLLABORATION AMONG MIDDLE EASTERN IMMIGRANTS

Political engagement had a divisive role in both Coptic and more broadly Middle Eastern immigrant communities. Although cultural commemoration could at times be a unifying force, national, religious and ethnic loyalties created obstacles to collaboration and the exchange of ideas.[21] The long-distance diasporic nationalism of Coptic and Arab activists had different goals. On the one hand, the politics of Coptic activism were focused on supporting co-religionists in Egypt and a broader narrative of Christian persecution in the Middle East. On the other hand,

[20] Nadia Naguib Kelada, "Introduction," *The Coptic Awakening: Dr. Selim Naguib (1933-2014)*, (Montreal: self-published, 2015): 7. In this commemorative book, Nadia Naguib gathered eulogies from across Egypt and its diasporas and a lengthy collection of articles, opinion pieces and letters written by Selim Naguib.
[21] Houda Asal, "The Canadian Arab Press as Historical Source and Object of Study, from the late 19th century to the 1970s," *Canadian Journal of Media Studies* 10 (2012): 11-12. Sociologist Houda Asal confirms that Egyptians were rarely involved in the Arab organizations and publications of this era which focused on political questions.

Arab associations sought a unified ethnic identity and rallied around Nasser's brand of Pan-Arabism. They defended the state of Palestine and condemned anti-Arab discrimination in western media.[22] Only in the realm of cultural commemoration did immigrants from Egypt participate when time permitted.[23] Diasporic Coptic activists have been discounted as marginal. The proof used is that they have failed to excite communal support. When the role of political engagement in Middle Eastern communities is put into context, it is evident that political activism generally involved a dedicated numerical minority. Their activities and sentiments are significant to our understanding of competing narratives.

A distinctly "Arab" associational life in North American cities coalesced following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. It was marked by a deeply held belief among its advocates in Arab nationalism and the defense of Arab sovereignty against Zionist aggression.[24] Arab Friendship Societies with chapters in Toronto, London, Ottawa, Detroit, and New York included a cross-section of groups, but the list was dominated by Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians, and later Iraqis and Jordanians. Their activities included education, conventions and publishing ethnic newspapers. Association leaders championed (and vigorously defended) the notion of a single Arab ethnic community unified by a common language, cultural traditions and cuisine. This theme did not resonate with the majority of diverse immigrants from the Middle East region.

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[22] This line of inquiry required that I search beyond strictly Coptic sources—the focal point of past studies. To that end, I examined volumes of textual and photographic records at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) belonging to James Peters. Born Jameel Botros Qahwash in 1917 to Lebanese parents in Toronto, James Peters was a professor of linguistics at Ryerson University, a public speaker, broadcaster and author. He helped to establish the earliest Syro-Lebanese associations; was the co-founder and president of the Canadian Arab Friendship Society of Toronto; served on the executive of the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF); and co-founded the Arab Community Centre of Toronto. He was the editor of *The Arab Dawn*, *The Arab Community Centre News*, and a contributor to many others.
[23] The tensions at play for Egyptian immigrants more broadly have parallels in how Italian, Hungarian, Portuguese and other immigrant groups negotiated their regional identities and national loyalties between home and host societies, and political divides in immigrant communities. See, Carmela Patrias, *Patriots and Proletarians: Politicizing Hungarian Immigrants in Interwar Canada*, (McGill-Queens UP, 1994); Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada*, (Between the Lines, 2006); Gilberto Fernandes, *The Pilgrim Nation: The Making of the Portuguese Diaspora in Postwar North America*, (University of Toronto Press, 2020).
[24] Once dominantly Syro-Lebanese, the character of Arab associational life changed with the influx of new immigrants following the Second World War, greater diversity demanded a larger and more unifying identity.

Happy to participate in cultural events, "Arabs" were rarely, if ever, politically unified. Political engagement was the most divisive element of communal life.

Editorials in the Arab immigrant press and community publications often denounced the lack of cohesion of the "Arabs." In Canada, widespread disinterest in Arab associational activities prompted executive members to deprecate the "invisible community."[25] In the United States, Syrian-American sociologist Philip Kayal considered the community to be "Americanized to the point of extinction" as a result of exogamy, the gradual erosion of religion, the adoption of anglicized names, and the loss of Arabic fluency.[26] As national, religious and ethnic loyalties eroded an Arab identity, the associational press fought for Arab nationalism. Publications ran articles and announcements regarding Egypt's necessary role in the Middle East crisis; writers expressed unabashed support for Gamal Abdel Nasser's leadership; and such news organs promoted the growth of Egyptian immigration.[27]

Egyptian immigrants, regardless of religious affiliation, chose to create their own clubs rather than join Arab associations. The *Naksa*, Egypt's defeat in 1967, did not galvanize immigrants from Egypt as it did North American Arab associations.[28] The Canadian Coptic Association and the Coptic Association of America were more concerned with preparing for the influx of new immigrants. Following the relaxing of immigration restrictions, they developed mutual aid services, hosted lectures to promote language education and acculturation, made

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[25] LAC, James Peters fonds, MG30 D201, Vol. 2, file 18, CAFs Newsletters V1-3 - 1968-71, S.H. Abu-Sitta, "Canadians, Arabs, Lebanese or Nothing," *The Arab Dawn*, 1.5 (July 1969): 8.

[26] Kenneth D. Wald, "Homeland Interests, Host land Politics: Politicized Ethnic Identity among Middle Eastern Heritage Groups in the United States," *International Migration Review*, 42.2 (2008): 273-301.

[27] After Nasser's death, Ibrahim Hayani wrote a heartfelt obituary in which he stated that "the untimely death of Gamal Abdel Nasser deprived the Arab nation of a great leader who had dedicated his life to his people and their just cause … he lived, fought and died with one great hope in his heart: to establish an honorable position for the Arab people under the sun." LAC, James Peters fonds, MG30 D201, Vol. 2, file 2-18, CAFs Newsletters V1-3 - 1968-71, Ibrahim Hayani, "A Tribute to our Great Leader," *The Arab Dawn*, 3.2 (Oct 1970): 1.

[28] On the lasting impact of the Six Days War see, Vivian Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt: Challenges of Modernisation and Identity* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011); Elizabeth Iskander, *Sectarian Conflict in Egypt: Coptic Media, Identity and Representation* (Routledge, 2012); Paul Sedra, "Class Cleavages and Ethnic Conflict," 219–235.

demands for priests, and called on the patriarchate to send spiritual books and liturgical supplies. As early as 1970, parish festivals in cities such as Toronto included arts and crafts, food and sweets, cultural displays of Pharaonic hieroglyphs and imagery of the Nile and pyramids which stressed a sanitized "oriental" past as Middle East Christians.[29]

University campuses did create the conditions for some Copts to attend lectures and engage with the activities of Arab Associations. Early immigrant Nazeeh Habachy joined Arab student associations in 1960s Boston and later New York. He was attracted to the figure of Edward Said. Habachy's university days were formative. Said introduced students to the colonial legacy of the Arab-Israeli conflict and "the Palestinian side" of the narrative ignited their critical consciousness. Siblings Nazeeh and Nimet Habachy attended events hosted by the Arab American University Graduates (AAUG). They remained quite active throughout its evolution into the multinational Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee. However, they both admitted that it was the social and cultural activities which kept their interest. For Nimet, gatherings and stage performances with hundreds of attendees present were a signal that "we had arrived as an émigré society."[30] The pro-Nasser Pan-Arab nationalism of Arab associational politics were less attractive. Immigrants from Egypt could not reconcile the Arab students' views with their own, predominantly effected by the seizure of family agricultural lands or businesses and the detrimental impact of military spending on the Egyptian economy.

Some joint cultural activities did take place. During a New Year's eve pageant held in Toronto's Church of the Messiah in December 1967, Copts performed a rendition of the play "Hassan, Marcos and Cohen." The play was performed in English and the plot followed three co-

[29] LAC, Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic], 1963-1971, MG55.9-No22, "Oriental Bazaar," Saturday September 12, 1970, Ottawa, Canada.
[30] Nimet and Nazeeh Habachy, interviewed in New York, August 19, 2017 (in English). Nazeeh Habachy's family had long been acquainted with Edward Said's and the two men maintained a close bond throughout their lives.

owners of a supermarket—a Muslim, a Christian and a Jew—and their scheme to rob their luckless employee after he came into a large inheritance. It culminates in the main protagonists reconciling with each other after falling out over money and reaffirming their brotherhood.[31] This play was an explicit celebration of Egypt's cosmopolitan past where diversity and peaceful coexistence were valued. Arab association executives approached father Marcos in the early 1970s asking if his parish would perform the play for their membership. Ibrahim and Houda Hayani recalled a few instances where the church in Toronto put on a joint screening of the play, and this collaboration encouraged momentary solidarity in 1975 when members of Egypt's REDA folklore troupe visited Toronto. Lacking a venue, the priest approached Syrian immigrant activist Ibrahim Hayani who asserted that "we were able to find space at the Royal York, and we were instrumental in selling tickets." This moment of collaboration was short-lived, Hayani lamented that "they [Copts] really wanted to keep for [sic] themselves."[32]

Cultural commemoration was often the only realm for collaboration and Coptic clergy and the leaders of secular associations learned from attending the initiatives of Arab associations. Self-appointed representatives of these ethnic communities—Egyptian, Lebanese and Syrian—created opportunities for organizing the sale of home country goods such as films, newspapers and folklore music. Churches learned how to arrange venues and finance events through emulation. Charter flights to Egypt were organized, theatrical performances and the sale of home country goods took place in cultural centres on Sundays following the liturgy. Although

[31] LAC, Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic], 1963-1971, MG55.9-No22, "Programme of the Christmas Theatrical show presenting Hassan, Marcos and Cohen, A farce by the late Naguib el Rihany," December 30, 1967, Ottawa, Canada. The play was written and performed in the late 1940s by Naguib el Rihany, known as the father of comedy in Egypt (d. 1949). The play was performed again in the early 1950s, adapted into a movie in 1954, performed live and recorded in 1966, and has since been rebooted as a film in 2008.

[32] Ibrahim and Houda Hayani, interviewed in Ontario, September 27, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic). Active members since soon after arriving in 1969, Ibrahim and Houda Hayani joined CAF, the Canadian Arab Friendship Society of Toronto and co-founded the Arab Community Centre in 1972. They were editors for *The Arab Dawn*, *The Arab Community Centre News* and co-organizers of several Toronto Caravan exhibitions.

Egyptians were glaringly absent from the membership records of Arab associations, many "hidden" Egyptians (as Salah Allam called them) could be found at film screenings and festivals.

Arab associations too were more successful in mutual aid initiatives. The Arab Canadian Centre in Toronto, a forcibly non-political organization relying on multiculturalism funding had the greatest success. Federal funding ensured that the Centre in Toronto could only devote a small percentage of resources (less than 10 per cent) to political activity. Forced depoliticization allowed for greater engagement by Middle Eastern groups in the province. The Centre's volunteers received new immigrants at the airport, located appropriate housing and provided financial subsidies.[33] However, Copts turned to their clubs and churches for social activities and professional Egyptian immigrants did not rely on mutual aid through Arab associations.

With rising confessionalization in Egypt and Sadat's peace negotiations with Israel, the divide between Copts and Arab associations grew. The executives of the latter across Canada and the US sought out new sources of motivation to persist in Arab nationalism, from Syrian Ba'athism to later Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Coptic cultural clubs and the churches hosted commemorations without cross-ethnic collaboration. Even when some graduate students attempted to question prevailing interpretations of Nasser as a hero in the Middle East they were dismissed by Arab students. With peace between Egypt and Israel and the ensuing civil war in Lebanon, by the early 1980s Coptic students of Edward Said rejected the politics of Arab associational life. Instead they sought to continue their cultural commemoration and volunteered their time at heritage festivals in Coptic, Armenian and Maronite churches in the North Eastern United States.[34]

[33] Ibrahim and Houda Hayani, interviewed in Ontario, September 27, 2017 (partially translated from Arabic).
[34] Nimet and Nazeeh Habachy, interviewed in New York, August 19, 2017 (in English).

EGYPT'S ÉMIGRÉS: FROM PROMISING FRONTIER TO A SEDITIOUS DIASPORA

Political mobilization among Middle Eastern immigrants was divisive but important for understanding competing narratives that colour the immigrant experience. Coptic organizations presented a specific set of obstacles for Egypt and the Church. However, the origins and transnational entanglements of these individuals and groups remain murky in histories focused primarily on a period of decline and infighting following the 1990s. Drawing on new bodies of oral testimony, archival materials and on personal documents written by Coptic activists, this chapter uncovers brand-new means of understanding the influence of immigration on Coptic cultural and political associational life and questions past arguments of Copts as either good, pious and faithful or bad, assimilated and seditious.

Egypt and the Church had not always seen emigrants as dangerous. Following the investiture of Gamal Abdul Nasser, the Egyptian regime conceived of emigration as an unpatriotic act and continued to do so until the mid-1960s. Nasser's financial support of anti-imperialist protests across Africa slowly exhausted the Egyptian economy. In the years leading to the June 1967 war, the state began to enquire after emigrant nationals and demanded that they send back remittances. This need for foreign currency grew markedly following the war. The state sought to re-establish ties with its nationals abroad. Dual citizenship was granted for the first time and the *mahjar* was seen as a trade route: an exchange of manpower for currency.

For a time, nationals abroad represented an overseas frontier, a source of economic development, and a useful population to be groomed and reclaimed through diplomacy.[35] The Ministry of Immigration established under Nasser in 1968 and the reopening of the Egyptian consulate in Montreal in 1972 by Sadat were a manifestation of that mission. Unlike his

[35] For my inspiration for this framing, see: Stacy D. Fahrenthold, *Between the Ottomans and the Entente: The First World War in the Syrian and Lebanese Diaspora, 1908-1925*, (Oxford University Press, 2019).

predecessor, Anwar Sadat rejected all Soviet influence and sought to restructure the economy with US aid. Part of this process was a turn to immigrant communities as not only a source of income through remittances but as affluent expatriates who could invest in Egypt's private businesses and public industry. The Church was asked to support the nation in that cause and immigrants were told that they had a role to play by the Church hierarchy. The pastoral trip of Archbishop Antonius and Bishop Samuel in August 1971 served multiple purposes: first, to inquire after the wellbeing of immigrants; second, to promote Bishop Samuel's candidacy for the papal throne; third, to update immigrants on changes in Egypt following new policies under Sadat. In reports of the visit in *Watani*, Egypt's largest Coptic newspaper, and the continent-wide church bulletin, the *Monthly Message*, the theme of immigrants' continued responsibility to support Church and nation was at the forefront. The reports detailed successive meetings with religious leaders in Canada and the United States, and pledges to support prospective Egyptian émigrés. In their published agenda, the bishops charted a path for Coptic immigrants to make a good impression on North American society and pay back a nation defending their interests.

Immigrant Copts from across Central Canada and the North Eastern United States gathered in Toronto to meet the bishops. In his sermon following the liturgy, Bishop Samuel said, "your fathers built pyramids out of stone which have withstood the test of time, and it's up to you to build pyramids out of our spiritual ideals." The immigrant was asked to become an "ambassador" to the west because "as life in North America offers you technological and material gain so should you offer up your heritage and the spirit of your Church in exchange." Archbishop Antonius then reiterated: "you are our ambassadors for the nation and the Church."[36] Intertwining both sacred and secular cultures, the clergy spoke in a familiar language and

[36] LAC, Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic], 1963-1971, MG55.9-No22, "Acting Pontiff and Bishop Samuel Visit Congregation in North America," *Monthly Message*, September 1971.

indicative of the Church's goals. It was argued that since the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt prioritized the wellbeing of its adherents, the immigrant had a duty to both integrate into the host society and return to Egypt with knowledge and finances as loyal Copts and Egyptians.

Following the bishops' return to Cairo, father Marcos authored another issue of the *Monthly Message* in Arabic. The bishops' 15-point agenda encouraged "those with advanced degrees to visit Egypt to hold conferences and educate their compatriots at home." Coptic business owners and older immigrants who had established themselves were asked to invest, open businesses and bring new technologies. In order to facilitate this renewed economic relationship between the immigrant and the homeland, the Church offered to take a more proactive role in supplying immigrants with issues of the *Watani* newspaper, to dispel fears of sectarian tensions in Egypt and to keep them better informed of investment opportunities.[37]

This change of course during the *Infitah* years did not last long. Diasporic activists organized following sectarian violence in 1972. By 1975 their calls grew louder and their publications and opinion pieces in mainstream North American media outlets intensified with every visit of Sadat to the US. Under the shifting politics of Sadat and Pope Shenouda's ardent defense of Coptic rights at home, the state's view of émigré's changed. This oppositional force in the *mahjar* was framed in Egypt as an ideological threat and a party to foreign influences seeking to destabilize Egyptian society and its economy. There was little room for nuance in the Egyptian media. *Aqbāt al-mahjar* were a threat to the national cause, no longer partners in it.

This diaspora became a site of seditious opposition to Sadat's rule and his political ambitions, especially when the argument was made that Sadat was complicit in Islamist violence in Egypt. Sadat became the media darling of US foreign policy because of his peace talks with

[37] LAC, Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic], 1963-1971, MG55.9-No22, "Special Issue," *Monthly Message*, November 1971.

Israel. This good repute was vital for ensuring that Egypt continued to receive international aid and foreign investment during its liberalization project. Sadat was furious at diasporic associations which organized and produced pamphlets, newsletters and contributed editorials to Canadian and US media outlets. This agitation persisted until émigrés were once again perceived as a source of economic development under President Mubarak in the 1990s.

IN DEFENSE OF EGYPT'S COPTS: DIASPORIC ACTIVITES IN THE *MAHJAR*

Often characterized as naïve reactionaries, activists were attuned, pragmatic and aware of the consequences of the positions they took. In 1972 the offices of a Christian society in Khanka (twelve miles north east of Cairo) were set ablaze because it was being used as an unofficial church due to the difficulties in gaining building permits. In response, Sadat sent the army to quarantine the village and promised to conduct an investigation. Pope Shenouda, dissatisfied with the tepid response, sent 100 priests and monks to protest this incident and pray on the site. The situation escalated when local Muslims interrupted and attacked the procession. Communal tensions continued to rise in successive acts of violence, and were inflamed in 1977 when the government attempted to introduce Shari'a (Islamic) law into the legal system. The violence that erupted in Khanka galvanized Copts across Canada and the United States to lobby the international community for support. They used their transnational press to counter portrayals of sectarian violence in Egypt and challenge western interpretations of Sadat as a peace-maker. As a consequence, *Aqbāt al-mahjar* became villains in the pages of *Al Ahram* and *Akhbar Al-Yom*.

During the revival (*nahda*) period in Egypt, the Coptic Orthodox Church had set new standards for religious behavior. Not only were Orthodox Copts expected to discharge their canonical duties, such as attendance at Sunday mass and the reception of the sacraments, but

they were also encouraged since the 1930s to perform a wide variety of actions, including devotions, Sunday school service, educational outreach to neighbouring villages, and short liturgical rituals that could be practiced publicly in the parish church or privately at home. This form of piety became so central to the religious life of the laity that within a generation the Church effected nothing less than a devotional revival. In Egypt, the renewal of the Orthodox Church marked such a profound change in the religious practice and sensibilities of the laity that by the 1970s under Pope Shenouda faith and devotion became the touchstone for their communal identity and sense of unity. Pope Shenouda disagreed with Kyrillos and Bishop Samuel, seeing the fight for Coptic rights in Egypt as part and parcel of his brand of Egyptian nationalism.

Pope Kyrillos died soon after Sadat's investiture in 1970. Following the election of Pope Shenouda, Sadat issued his 1971 presidential decree recognizing him as the leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Formal recognition of a Coptic patriarch by the Egyptian president is a post-colonial phenomenon that began with Nasser's 1957 decree which marked the beginnings of the contemporary Egyptian state-patriarch relationship. When Pope Kyrillos was enthroned in 1959 Nasser duly approved his appointment and their relationship was a point of pride for many Copts. In both the Egyptian media and images displayed in homes and churches, Nasser and Pope Kyrillos were commonly depicted embracing one another. This provided a sense of alliance and respect, which was made manifest in 1968 when Nasser used half a million pounds of government funds to support building the new cathedral in Abassya, Cairo. Yet what Mariz Tadros called the "entente" between Nasser and Pope Kyrillos—premised on Nasser's inhibition of Copts' voices in civil society and Kyrillos' efforts to support the state and develop a singular and undisputed voice representing the Coptic community—broke with their deaths.[38]

[38] Tadros, "Vicissitudes in the Entente,", 269-272.

Since entering office, Sadat solidified Egypt's bond with the US and initiated a liberalization economic policy that altered Egypt's foundational political strategies. However, this came at the expense of Egyptian manufacturers and agriculturalists, leading to widespread bread riots and demonstrations on university campuses across the country between 1975 and 1977. Severe reactions by the state to such protests, and the alignment of Egyptian foreign policy with US interests not only galvanized grassroots support for Islamist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, but also turned Arab states against Egypt for recognizing Israel. All this made Sadat more reliant on his relationship with the US, and proud to have won US sympathy and international renown with the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize for brokering peace with Israel.

Amid increasing violence, the government amended the constitution to acknowledge Shari'a law as the principal source of legislation. Coptic anxieties began to reflect the increasing strength of the Islamic right in Egypt, and the particularly Islamic stamp Copts felt Sadat had given his regime as the self-declared "Muslim President." Tensions centered on the government's toleration of Islamist groups in the universities, and its willingness to toy with proposals from the religious right in the People's Assembly for the more widespread application of Shari'a law. The trouble had as its immediate cause the progress of draft legislation in the People's Assembly for application of Shari'a to cases of libel, theft and apostasy. It was argued that the protected status of persons belonging to other Semitic religions was guaranteed in Shari'a and Copts therefore had no cause for concern. Church leaders and public intellectuals however were almost totally united in seeing such moves as a threat to the equality accorded by Egypt's largely French-based legal system. If Shari'a was applied literally it would result in, for example, the denial of evidence presented by a Christian against a Muslim in a court of law or

the public dismissal of a Christian from a government post purely on religious grounds.[39] The national consensus binding a community irrespective of religion was threatened.

Diasporic organizations responded to activism in the Egyptian context. In Egypt, the clergy and community council met in December 1976 at a conference demanding fair and equal rights for Copts under the law. In February 1977 the Holy Synod presented a joint statement denouncing the implementation of Shari'a in civil law and in August the Bishopric of Assiut presented a memorandum documenting various attacks on Coptic churches, criticized police inaction and contested forced conversion of Christians.[40] *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* was a prominent diasporic magazine that recorded recent attacks against Christians. It listed those who were murdered along with their occupations (priest, rug merchant, farmers). It often included a dramatic retelling of events, such as how one Coptic man was killed in front of his family by an Egyptian police officer. "Churches Which Were Burned or Smashed" listed the date, time, location and circumstances surrounding the attacks against churches.[41] In the years leading to the internment of the patriarch, Sadat feared a repeat of the 1979 Iranian revolution in Egypt.

By counteracting the Egyptian state's intentional dismissal of sectarian violence, Coptic activists emphasized the religious motives of these crimes. Aware of the tepid government response to the violence in Khanka, Shawki Karas and his wife Leila created the American Coptic Association (ACA) to denounce Sadat's political ambitions in Egypt and raise awareness about discrimination against Copts among US policy makers.[42] Through their contacts in New

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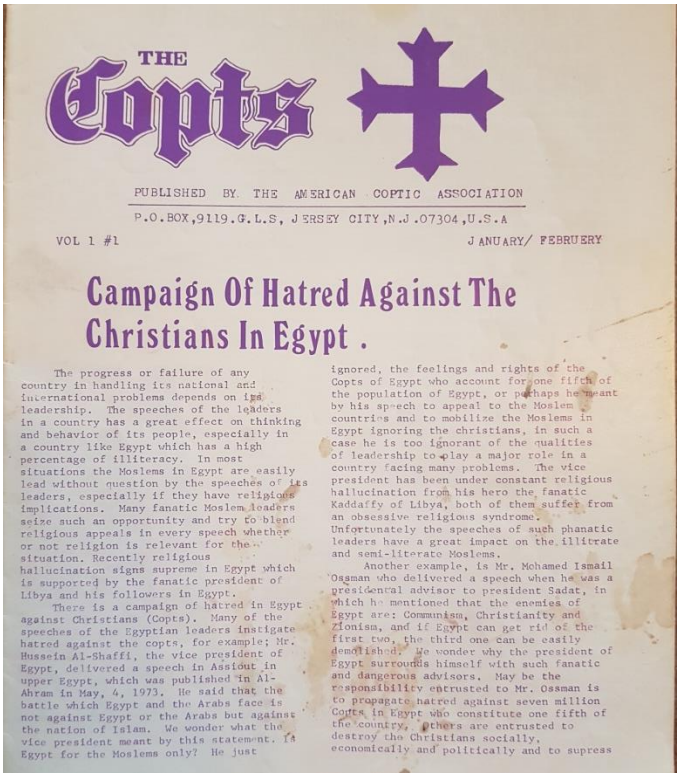
[39] J. D. Pennington, "The Copts in Modern Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18.2 (1982): 171.
[40] Naguib, *Les Coptes Dans L'Égypte D'aujourd'hui*, 66-67.
[41] "Egypt Now Says 10 Died in Moslem-Christian Clashes: Orders to 'Shoot on Sight'," *New York Times*, June 21, 1981: 4; "Churches Which Were Burned or Smashed," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* 8.3 (1981), 3; "The Persecution of the Christians in Egypt, Violation of the U.N. Resolution 36/55 Approved on November 15,1981," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt*, .2 (1982).
[42] Karas (1928–2003) immigrated as part of a student exchange mission in 1959 with his wife and two children. Choosing to remain in Princeton, New Jersey, the family moved to New Haven, CT in 1967 when he secured a position as a professor of mathematics at the Southern Connecticut University. Originally from the province of

Jersey, they secured an office and gathered together a group of Coptic professionals, including engineers, entrepreneurs and teachers. Although the Canadian Coptic Association was established earlier by chemist Alfonse Kelada and lawyer Selim Naguib, the brothers-in-law focused their attentions on cultural celebrations until also driven to action by the events in Khanka. Nadia Naguib recalled that the three men became acquainted because of their mutual efforts and were motivated by their experiences in Egypt. Each carried his own bitter experience with verbal abuse, job discrimination or Egypt's secret police. The Coptic press in the United States and Canada represented for these immigrants their freedom of expression.[43]



THE Copts

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN COPTIC ASSOCIATION

P.O.BOX,9119.G.L.S, JERSEY CITY,N.J.07304,U.S.A

VOL 1 #1 JANUARY/ FEBRUERY

Campaign Of Hatred Against The Christians In Egypt .

The progress or failure of any country in handling its national and international problems depends on its leadership. The speeches of the leaders in a country has a great effect on thinking and behavior of its people, especially in a country like Egypt which has a high percentage of illiteracy. In most situations the Moslems in Egypt are easily lead without question by the speeches of its leaders, especially if they have religious implications. Many fanatic Moslem leaders seize such an opportunity and try to blend religious appeals in every speech whether or not religion is relevant for the situation. Recently religious hallucination signs supreme in Egypt which is supported by the fanatic president of Libya and his followers in Egypt.

There is a campaign of hatred in Egypt against Christians (Copts). Many of the speeches of the Egyptian leaders instigate hatred against the copts, for example; Mr. Hussein Al-Shaffi, the vice president of Egypt, delivered a speech in Assiout in upper Egypt, which was published in Al-Ahram in May, 4, 1973. He said that the battle which Egypt and the Arabs face is not against Egypt or the Arabs but against the nation of Islam. We wonder what the vice president meant by this statement. Is Egypt for the Moslems only? He just ignored, the feelings and rights of the Copts of Egypt who account for one fifth of the population of Egypt, or perhaps he meant by his speech to appeal to the Moslem countries and to mobilize the Moslems in Egypt ignoring the christians, in such a case he is too ignorant of the qualities of leadership to play a major role in a country facing many problems. The vice president has been under constant religious hallucination from his hero the fanatic Kaddaffy of Libya, both of them suffer from an obsessive religious syndrome. Unfortunately the speeches of such phanatic leaders have a great impact on the illitrate and semi-literate Moslems.

Another example, is Mr. Mohamed Ismail Ossman who delivered a speech when he was a presidental advisor to president Sadat, in which he mentioned that the enemies of Egypt are: Communism, Christianity and Zionism, and if Egypt can get rid of the first two, the third one can be easily demolished. We wonder why the president of Egypt surrounds himself with such fanatic and dangerous advisors. May be the responsibility entrusted to Mr. Ossman is to propagate hatred against seven million Copts in Egypt who constitute one fifth of the country, others are entrusted to destroy the Christians socially, economically and politically and to supress

Image 12 Cover. Premier Issue of *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* 1.1 (New Jersey: The American Coptic Association, January 1974).

Sohag, Shawki and Leila Karas witnessed the discrimination and verbal assaults on co-religionists, and Shawki felt ostracized by the preferential treatment Muslim graduate students received. Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, USA, August 1985 (video, 1hr); in conversation with Elhamy Khalil, California, June 15, 2017 (translated from Arabic).

[43] In every issue, the ACA put forth its mission: "maintaining contacts among Americans who believe that friendship with Copts of Egypt is essential to world freedom, who would contribute to this goal by spreading understanding of the history, culture and religious suppression against the Copts, and who would—in this context—press for greater fairness, consistency and integrity in world opinion towards that questions."

The Copts: Christians of Egypt began in 1974 as the chief news organ of the American and Canadian Coptic Associations.[44] Featuring articles, case reports and analyses on the Coptic situation in Egypt by immigrants and correspondents in Egypt, it included excerpts from Sadat's speeches to the People's Assembly and detailed changes in Egyptian state policy. Appealing to the UN Declaration of Human Rights and humanitarian concerns, the magazine provided detailed analyses on specific human rights violations by the Egyptian government. With articles by scholars, mainstream newspapers and Middle East aid organizations, coverage was equally divided between English and Arabic designed for both western audiences and those Coptic immigrants who could advocate on behalf of their co-religionists. By including international news articles depicting human rights violations against Middle East Christians more broadly, it emphasized Islamist fundamentalism as a global threat.

The magazine aimed to bring attention to the fear and anxiety plaguing not only Egypt's Christians, but also their co-religionists in North America. Relying on the shock factor of sensational titles and sub-headings, contributors denounced "the fundamentalism of Islamic foreign policy." They questioned the unity of the three Abrahamic religions in "Can Islam Live in Peace with Christianity and Judaism," and detailed sectarian violence to recount how "Arab Christians [are] Often Persecuted in Homelands." Contesting notions of national unity, articles ranged from sweeping critiques in "Campaign of Hatred Against the Christians of Egypt" to legal treatments on "The Suppression of the Religious Freedom of the Copts in Egypt."[45] The magazine displayed a unique hybridity: on the one hand, coverage of the civilizational struggle of Middle East Christians in Muslim countries then prominent in the mainstream North American press; on the other, long-established treatments of legal discrimination and societal

[44] Shawki Karas began publishing *The Voice of the Copts* in 1973, but changed the name a year later to *The Copts: Christians of Egypt*.
[45] *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* 1.1 (January 1974) and *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* 1.3/4 (August 1974).

marginalization common in the Coptic press. *The Copts* magazine became so well-known in immigrant communities that members of both the ACA and the CCA are often remembered by immigrants simply as "The Copts."

Activists were constantly weighing the risks involved in taking a stand. "Do you speak out or have the ability to go home again?"[46] Their photos were circulated among Egyptian officials and on display at the Egyptian embassy.[47] Yet they persisted. Diasporic activists were keenly aware that their challenge to Sadat had to be powerful enough to move the Egyptian state to act on Coptic rights. Egypt's economic liberalization was a risky maneuver that was certainly jeopardized by their actions. Sadat warned Copts: "if Article 2 is the reason for all this, then I tell my Coptic sons, who are hearing me now, and tell you and our people that since I assumed power in Egypt, I have been ruling as a Muslim president of a Muslim country."[48] In the *New York Times*, Sadat quoted directly criticism by diasporic activists and "denied the charges of persecution and called their dissemination by Coptic leaders an act of conspiracy."[49] As his stature grew, the agitation of Coptic immigrants irritated him even more.[50] Activists pragmatically capitalized on their unique position. Had they sought to defend Coptic rights under Nasser's leadership, they would have had very little leverage. Sadat's political ambitions were a perfect target. In order to retain his legitimacy and solidify his power, Sadat had to balance his staunch Egyptian nationalism with his international appeal, denouncing diasporic organizations.

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[46] In conversation with Nadia Naguib, Quebec, November 10, 2019 (Partially translated from Arabic and French). Reflecting this anxiety, I was asked if writing on this topic was worth the prospect of never returning to Egypt.
[47] Maged Atiya, interviewed in New York, August 25, 2017 (in English). Nephew of scholar Aziz S. Atiya, Maged grew up in Cairo and immigrated with his family in 1969 to Salt Lake City, Utah. At a rally outside the Egyptian embassy in Washington in the 1980s, Maged recalled officials photographing protesters with Polaroid cameras.
[48] "Anwar al-Sadat, May 14, 1980 Presidential Speech," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* 8.3 (1981): 11.
[49] Henry Tanner, "Sadat Agrees, After a Carter Chat, To Revive Palestinian Self-Rule Talks," *New York Times*, May 15, 1980: 1.
[50] Thomas w. Lippman, "Anwar Sadat: 1918-1981," *The Washington Post*, October 7,1981. Reading this eulogy, many Egyptians might have been hard-pressed to recognize Sadat. In lavish praise (balanced with a penchant for racist stereotypes and melodrama), Lippman glorified him: "As a soldier, conspirator, political leader and world figure, Sadat was always the consummate nationalist. He was a son of the fertile Egyptian soil, and the honor and independence of Egypt were the purpose of his life."

In new locales their stories and arguments for Christian human rights at times took on different and unanticipated meanings for North American audiences. In defending Egypt's Christians, Coptic political activists became engaged in a civilizational struggle with Islam in a Christian North American context. By the early 1970s, the United States was witnessing a growing rift between blacks and whites exacerbated by diverging Jewish and African-American interpretations of events in the Middle East.[51] Pro-Israeli lobbies garnered the attention of conservative Evangelical Christian policy makers. Post-colonial and anti-racism campaigns brought African-Americans and Arab scholars together. Prominent activists in Arab associations such as Edward Said were gaining traction in academic circles among the new feminist, de-centered and ethnic studies departments across major university campuses.

Rejecting the political orientation of Arab Associations in North America, the principal goal of Copts in fighting discrimination based on Arab ancestry was to achieve fuller integration in the US and Canada. In Montreal, Copts joined in the identity discourses developed by the Oriental churches as expressed in *Trait d'union*, the newsletter of the Melkite church in Montreal. It was interested in unifying the Christians of the Orient across national origin. The newspaper emphasized religious unity and described immigrants as "people from the Near Orient (*Proches Orientaux*)." Unity was to be found in a broad region of origin and the Oriental Christian rite.[52] In his *Les Coptes Dans L'Égypte D'aujourd'hui*, Selim Naguib wrote Coptic Christians into this particularity, but emphasized their uniqueness as the largest Christian community in *le proche Orient*.[53] In North America activists of all backgrounds began to

[51] Matthew F. Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*, (Harvard UP, 2006): 222.
[52] *Trait d'union* 3.4 (Montreal: St. Sauveur Church, 1966); Houda Asal, "The Canadian Arab Press," 13-14.
[53] Naguib, *Les Coptes Dans L'Égypte D'aujourd'hui.* Selim completed two law degrees in Cairo in 1956, a PhD at the University of Leon in France in 1958 and, after arriving in Montreal in 1965, began the CCA in 1968. A lawyer in Quebec, he served on the editorial board of *The Copts.* Later leaving for France for a second PhD following the pope's release, he defended his dissertation in 1992 at the University of Paris II and published it.

organize around identity and heritage and a given people's "*particular* legacies of struggle."[54] What distinguished the Coptic alignment was a rejection of the left and an affirmation of the Conservative emancipatory promise of Christian democracy. The ideas that emerged built on past struggles in Egypt steeped in difference and hierarchy, while now recognizing persecution not as "prejudice" as a matter of individual bigotries and erroneous "attitudes" overcome by education *but* as the "racism" inscribed in institutional *power*.[55]

In his 1985 interview, Shawki Karas called the oft glorified motto of the Wafd party, "religion is for God and the nation is for the people" a fantasy, a fallacy oft repeated but utterly hollow. He insisted that the state was responsible for the "cleavage" between Christians and Muslims. When Elhamy Khalil challenged Karas: "they [the Egyptian government] say that you [ACA] degrade Egypt's reputation and are traitors," Karas replied: "if exposing the actions of the Egyptian government [is] degrading Egypt, then why does the Egyptian government continue to act in such a manner? … why speak of national unity? What national unity? Who is in charge of national unity?" The Copts, he maintained, were maligned and it was the responsibility of the state to serve and protect all its citizens *equally*.[56]

Members of the Canadian and American Coptic Associations lobbied state authorities and staged protests in Ottawa, in Washington, and at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Several protests during President Sadat's official visit with President Jimmy Carter after 1975 resulted in the former accusing Pope Shenouda of the demonstrations and criticizing ACA and CAA leaders. Nadia Naguib recalled that in one of his speeches Sadat derided "'the failed lawyer in Montreal' because of how much [Selim] burned him."[57] Sadat acknowledged the

[54] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 225.
[55] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 180.
[56] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, August 1985 (video, 1hr).
[57] In conversation with Nadia Naguib, Quebec, November 10, 2019 (Partially translated from Arabic and French).

growing voice of diasporic activists and their threat to his international image when, immediately before departing for the US in April 1980, he stated in an interview: "the Coptic Church leadership tried to embarrass me before my friend President Carter" and that certain pamphlets said "'Tell your representatives in Congress to know with whom they were dealing.'"[58] Sadat conflated Church authority with lay initiative which concerned the clergy. Yet Shawki Karas and Selim Naguib were roused by Sadat's recognition of their activism.

Unable to restrain political activists nor pressure the Church to publicly denounce their actions, Sadat's government relied on state-controlled Egyptian media to defame and marginalize *Aqbāt al-mahjar*, claiming immigrants were inherently less loyal to Egypt for choosing to leave. Newspapers espoused this narrative. *Akhbar Al-Yom*, one of the largest, frequently characterized *Aqbāt al-mahjar* as "fanatics," "extremists" and un-patriotic zealots. The chief editor accused Copts of "slandering the country they have left and the Egyptian Muslim people who love them and regard them as brothers having common interests with them." He continued, "What do the fanatics want? Do they want to start a conflagration in the country in which they were brought up and educated and which they have now left in order to take up residence in the United States, and with which, as a result, they have lost their ties?"[59]

Following an attack in Cairo's Zawyat al-Hamra in June 1981, where approximately 17 died and 54 were injured, the Egyptian press downplayed the violence and damage to property as the actions of crazed individuals. The diasporic press on the other hand repeatedly demonstrated state complicity in hate crimes against Coptic Christians.[60] *The Copts* magazine detailed a series of cases under the Sadat regime where there were no prosecutions for the perpetrators of violent attacks. Yet fearing reprisals against Copts in Egypt, the patriarch wrote letters to calm the

[58] Anwar Sadat, *Le Figaro*, September 26, 1981.
[59] Ibrahim Sa'dah, "Copts in the United States," *Akhbar Al-Yom*, April 12, 1980: 8.
[60] Elsässer, *The Coptic Question in the Mubarak Era*, 84.

protesters and sent bishops on repeated visits to parishes in New York, Toronto and Montreal. In anticipation of Sadat's scheduled talks in the US in August 1981 priests across Canada and the United States bought a full-page advertisement, stating that the Coptic community was praying "for the success of his peace mission for the Middle East."[61] Diasporic organizations, for their part, purchased a full-page advertisement in the *Washington Post* that affirmed: "We, the Egyptians of the United States and Canada" accuse the President of lacking "courage in handling the systematic assaults launched by Muslim fanatics against the Christians of Egypt." They called on him to put an end to "state-sponsored fundamentalism."[62]

Immigrant churches denounced the activists and supported the state. They bought a full-page advertisement of their own in *The New York Times* to deny that the these associations spoke for Coptic immigrants. Included was a message from Pope Shenouda in which he explained: "'The Coptic Orthodox Church was harmed by the behavior that took place … [and] strongly objects to the behavior, writings and harassment by this Association against our nation.'" "The Copts are united," the statement added, "with their Moslem brothers for the security, peace, welfare and progress of Egypt."[63] Sadat was not appeased. On his return to Cairo, he enacted a country-wide crackdown in September which unified church and political activists in the *mahjar*.

THE CHURCH'S VISION FOR LAY INITIATIVE IN "THE LANDS OF EMIGRATION"

Coptic lay initiative in the Church and immigrant communities was part of a consistently contentious process. Pope Shenouda had conducted a pastoral visit to North American parishes in April 1977, the first time a Coptic pope visited the continent. His sermons were aimed to undermine political engagement in the name of Egyptian unity and emphasized the Church's

[61] "Welcome President Sadat to the United States of America," *The New York Times*, August 3, 1981: B3.
[62] "Open letter to President Sadat of Egypt," *The Washington Post*, August 5, 1981: A20.
[63] "The Christian Orthodox Church," *New York Times*, August 8, 1981: A12.

view on both homeland concerns and societal integration in immigrant parishes. Established church activists arranged the schedule and through their contacts provided a platform for the pope at a time when the state in Egypt, and its embassies, sought to limit his exposure to North American senior officials. The expansion of clerical control over Coptic institutions followed, leading to further tensions between local clergy and laity in North America, particularly political organizations such as the Canadian and American Coptic Associations.

Pope Shenouda's papacy was defined by his commitment to the dual nature of Copts in Egypt, as Coptic Orthodox Christians and Egyptians. The pope was a nationalist and a staunch defender of Coptic rights and demands for equal participation in the nation. Since his days as a Sunday school leader in Shubra and throughout his monastic career the pope maintained that Orthodoxy could only be preserved through a pure Coptic faith divorced from what he perceived to be interference by western Protestantism and its influences. In the same vein, he championed the loyalty of Christian Egyptians as part of the national fabric and defenders of its sovereignty.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Shenouda established colleges and institutes across Egypt, inaugurated new classes and bible study groups across the country, and most importantly personally took on the Church's ecumenical outreach. Continuing in his predecessor's efforts to strengthen ties with Rome, Shenouda visited the Vatican in 1973, leaving Bishop Samuel to maintain relations with Orthodox and Protestant denominations. As a theologian and historian, the pope wrote extensively on theology, history, philosophy, heritage, and family values, publishing nearly twenty books by 1985. He produced television and audio recordings and established a standardized Thursday youth meeting in the patriarchate under his personal care.[64]

[64] Father Ghobrial Amin Abdel-Saed, *The Visit of Pope Shenouda III to North America*, (Cairo: anba Rewiess publication, 1985).

Having divested Bishop Samuel of his position as bishop charged with parishes outside Egypt in 1972, the pope took control of the "lands of emigration" in order to shape the service to his vision for the Church. The pope's 40-day visit to North American parishes was a continuation of these efforts, marked by an emphasis not on an "ambassador" motif of independent outreach but on restraining church boards. Intra-communal debates, once prominent under Pope Kyrillos' reign, were to be remedied. Focused on building churches and assigning priests to minister according to the Church hierarchical model in Egypt, Pope Shenouda sought to structure a viable planning and communication model where he as the head of the Church could manage the affairs of all parishes globally.[65] To serve that end, the pope brought with him Bishop Samuel, Bishop Yuanis (who administered ecclesiastical tribunals on matters of familial affairs and divorce), Bishop Pakhomous (who oversaw media relations), Bishop Antonius Marcos (charged with Coptic African missions and establishing new churches), and Bishop Tadros (to mediate intra-communal debates and oversee youth meetings).

Image 13 Coptic Papal Delegation at John F. Kennedy Airport, April 1977. In Father Ghobrial Amin Abdel-Saed, *The Visit of Pope Shenouda III to North America.*

[65] Letter from Pope Shenouda to "My children and priests in North America," Cairo, January 14, 1977, in Ghobrial, *The Visit of Pope Shenouda III*, 20-21.

Arriving first at the New York airport, the papal delegation was met with crowds, fanfare and the singing of hymns which transformed the terminal into a Coptic church hall—with the melodic chants and aromatic incense. Amid stunned onlookers the procession led the delegation out to a cavalcade which moved through the city to St. Mark's church in Jersey City, where for two hours following mass the pope sat to answer parishioners' questions. Immigrants were starved for news of Egypt, whether political tensions between Shenouda and Sadat, the declining economic conditions, or immigration procedures to sponsor their families. The pope's Easter sermons, from St. Mark's to St. Mary's in East Brunswick, St. George and St. Shenouda church in Jersey City, and St. Mark's Coptic Centre in Long Island, focused on parallels between the resurrection and Christians' obligations to service (*khidma*) and mutual respect and cooperation. The pope framed any dissent from clerical authority as an act against God's will. Copts had to focus their energies on building churches and raising the new generation.[66]

Coverage on national press outlets however focused on wholly different issues, revealing a greater interest in the Church's international affairs.[67] Where North American newspapers highlighted the ecumenical and government visits of a spiritual leader, Egyptian outlets emphasized the political significance of Pope Shenouda and ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal's visit with President Carter.[68] In successive interviews and first-hand accounts of his visit with President Carter, the UN Human Rights commissioner and Congress, the pope adopted a pro-Palestinian stance, emphasizing that Christians, not the Israelites, are God's chosen children. The pope then travelled to Canada (Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto), and back to the US (starting on the west coast heading east). Insisting that all religions are one in God during a speech at the

[66] Paula Herbut, "Coptic Christian Pope Leads Phila. Service," *The Bulletin*, April 1977, in Ghobrial, *The Visit of Pope Shenouda III*, 47. . In Philadelphia, he told the congregation that they should own their own church and "that it was 'a shame' that they still rented" a Syrian Orthodox church.
[67] See issues of the *Globe and Mail* and *Washington Post* in North America and *Al-Gomhoriya*, *Al-Akhbar* and *Al-Ahram* in Egypt for April, 1977.
[68] Father Ghobrial, *The Visit of Pope Shenouda III*, 36-40.

Islamic Centre in Ottawa, the pope nevertheless held no meetings with Jewish organizations. These actions were a subversion of Sadat's vision for peace with Israel.

On his return to Egypt, the pope found an increasingly erratic Sadat who accused him of fermenting opposition among his adherents in North America. When the government formally recognized Shari'a law in 1979, the pope cancelled the 1980 Easter celebrations and retired with members of the holy synod to a desert monastery in a clear sign of opposition. He refused to repeal an edict forbidding Copts from visiting the Holy Land, announced under his predecessor following the 1967 defeat. Shenouda contested Sadat's efforts in the People's Assembly to make Shari'a the legal framework for the nation at every turn. When clashes broke out in Zawyat al-Hamra, immigrant Copts took Pope Shenouda's oppositional tactics as license to stage protests outside the White House and the Parliament in Ottawa. The ACA and the CCA applauded the patriarch in their publications. Unable to directly interfere with diasporic activism, Sadat responded by launching a crackdown on all opposition in Egypt.

In an unprecedented move, Sadat revoked the presidential decree approving Shenouda as pope and supported the creation of a council of five bishops to lead the Church in his absence, under the direction of Bishop Samuel.[69] This sparked visceral outrage among the faithful globally. The revocation was part of a widespread government crackdown on clerics, journalists, professors, and politicians for "sectarian sedition."[70] Pope Shenouda under constant police surveillance, was banned from any outside contact with the patriarchate without government authorization and prevented from fully exercising his religious duties.[71] For immigrant Copts,

[69] Fiona McCallum, "The Political Role of the Patriarch in the Contemporary Middle East," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43.6 (2007): 930-931.
[70] William E. Farrell, "Egypt Will Assume Direct Regulation of 40,000 Mosques," *The New York Times*, September 8, 1981, 1.
[71] Sadat also ordered two Coptic papers closed, and thereby showing his power to the Church and community. In total, six publications were closed in Egypt: two Coptic, two Islamic, a Muslim Brotherhood journal, and a Socialist

Pope Shenouda remained the leader of the Church and through his writings in *al Kiraza*, an official Church magazine, he demonstrated his authority despite internment.

COMPETING NARRATIVES ABOUT POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE DIASPORA

With their patriarch interned, church-affiliated journals joined with political activist magazines to defend his authority and printed excerpts of Shenouda's writing. Both groups insisted on the papal elections' ecclesiastical authority, thereby delegitimizing Sadat's interference and, in the case of political activists, the committee of five bishops established to oversee the Church.[72] The two forms of activism remained divided on the issue of the governing committee. Church activists generally accepted it as a temporary measure. Political activists denied the committee's authority and depicted its member bishops as conspirators with the state.

With the pope's encouragement, two prominent publications were conceived and began publishing in 1980: Ontario's *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa* and New Jersey's the *Coptic Church Review*. Composed of transnational editorial boards, writers and fundraisers were bishops from Cairo, parish priests in Toronto, Montreal and New York, and community academics Fayek Ishak (Ontario), Rudolf Yanni (East Brunswick) and Aziz Atiya (Utah). The journals focused on addressing the cultural heritage of Coptic Egypt and theological differences between the oriental and western Christian traditions. *Coptologia* and the *Coptic Church Review* represented a concerted effort at outreach to surrounding communities and, as Yanni wrote in the premier issue of the *Review* were dedicated to "the English speaking Coptic youth."[73]

Labor Party newspaper. William E. Farrell, "Cairo Police Use Tear Gas to End Protests on Arrests of Sadat Foes," *The New York Times*, September 5, 1981, 1.

[72] Rudolph Yanni, *Al-Awda'a al-Kanasiyya al-Hadira 'ala du' taklid al-Kanisa* (New Jersey: self-published, 1982). In 1968, Yanni immigrated with his family to the US where he worked in Internal Medicine and Cardiology. He was the founder and chief editor of the *Coptic Church Review* and *al Rasala* magazine. Both publications ran until 2006.

[73] Rudolph Yanni, "Why a New Journal?"*Coptic Church Review* 1.1 (Spring 1980): 5. Where the *Review* was funded privately by its board, *Coptologia* received multiculturalism grants from the ministry of Culture and

Differences in how the committee was perceived heightened divisions in immigrant communities. The privately funded *Coptic Church Review* wrote in defense of the pope as early as its second volume, chief editor Rudolph Yanni stating "the late President of Egypt [Sadat] issued several decrees that aimed at crippling the Coptic Church, humiliating its hierarchy, silencing its voice of truth, and creating a puppet leadership under his direct control and through which he could interfere in the Church affairs."[74] Egyptian bishops and Canadian academics on the *Coptic Church Review* editorial board contested Yanni's interpretation. He was called out for using the journal as a platform to defame the committee. As a consequence, he began *al Rasala* in 1982, an Arabic magazine intended to document what he perceived to be the detrimental consequence of the governing committee on Church affairs. In an open letter to President Hosni Mubarak in the premiere issue, Yanni called on him to reverse the country's course. Terming Sadat's actions an "Islamist attack" on the Church, he demanded the release of Pope Shenouda. In successive issues, Yanni accused the clergy who supported the council in North America of exercising illegitimate clerical control of church boards to stem lay initiative.[75]

Revealing the shared loyalty of diasporic Copts, church-affiliated journals were not wholly separate from the political messaging of the ACA or CCA. The *Coptic Church Review* continued in its cultural mission while *al Rasala* pursued an activist agenda. Yanni remained the chief editor of both organs. *Coptologia* did not spawn alternative journals. Although similarly

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Recreation and the Wintario Program. Clara Thomas Archives Special Collections, *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa, A Research Publication in Coptic Orthodox Studies* 1.1 (Winter 1981): 8.

[74] Rodolph Yanni, "The Coptic Church Under a New Persecution," *Coptic Church Review* 2.4 (1981): 139.

[75] Rudolph Yanni, "Open Letter to President Hosni Mubarak," *al Rasala*, 1.1 January, 1982: 1-2. This magazine was published under the newly formed Association for Coptic Studies based in Brunswick, New Jersey. Intra-communal divisions were also inflamed among the clergy. In *al Rasala*'s sixth issue of June 1982 a photocopied letter sent from Bishop Gregorious to the Egyptian embassy in Washington outlined that three clergymen (two in Los Angeles and one in Huston) had been defrocked for denying the committee's authority and fomenting opposition in their parishes. The bishop added that these three men had lost their Church sponsorship as immigrant workers and that the Egyptian government might freely detain and return them to Cairo. Yanni was outraged at this and described the priests as "consummate defenders of the pope."

run by an editorial board comprised of bishops and lay academics, it displayed a unique balance between cultural promotion and the defense of the Church. Subversive ideas were communicated through allegory. Its first issue included an article by father Marcos identifying the Copts as a distinct "ethnic group." The priest defended the common national character of all Egyptians while simultaneously emphasizing that Copts possessed a distinct religious heritage within that commonality.[76] The second volume defended the interned pope by drawing comparisons between him and his patron saint, St. Anthony in a biographical account of the latter's martyrdom. Half the second issue was devoted to Bishop Gregorious who had succeeded Samuel as the head of the governing committee following the latter's assassination.[77] Unlike its US counterparts, this journal was unique in supporting a broader message of immigrant integration, while also defending the Church hierarchy.

Between 1980 and 1985, both *The Copts* and the church-affiliated journals sought to defend the interned pope and raise awareness of Copts' history and heritage. They were joined by new initiatives which were responding to state sanctions on Coptic civil society in Egypt. Hany Takla in Los Angeles opened the St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Centre to preserve Coptic art and ancient manuscripts in 1981. Aziz Atiya began the *Coptic Encyclopedia*, a monumental project out of Salt Lake City, Utah that was only completed after Atiya's death in 1991. Shawki Karas invited these community organizers to publish opinion pieces in *The Copts*. The American and Canadian Coptic associations expanded their services and entered the realm

[76] Father Marcos, "The Copts of Canada: A Shining Star in a Galaxy of Diversified Celestial Bodies," *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa*, 1 (1981): 65–75.

[77] Part of the limitations on speaking out on political matters was provincial and federal multiculturalism funding. Restrictions on the use of government funding emerged following the First World War Income War Tax Act of 1917 and expanded under the War Charities Act during the Great Depression, leading to the Income Tax Act of 1948. Between the 1960s and 1980s efforts continued to regulate and restrict funding allowances. Publications and Centres registered as not for profit associations were reliant on provincial funding and multiculturalism programs which ultimately helped the government save on poverty relief, immigrant support and educational programs. Without divisive political agendas, organizational activities meet with broad-based support.

of cultural commemoration. They raised funds for a Coptic library and research centre to be headquartered in Jersey City, although it never materialized.[78]

Following the pope's release, church-affiliated journals broke with the political activism of *The Copts*. Although neither side had any desire to become entrenched in adversarial positions, the ACA and the CCA's denouncements of the higher clergy were troubling for church activists. Indeed, Shawki Karas reserved his most virulent criticism of the clergy for Bishop Samuel. In the Egyptian press, Bishop Samuel was framed to be siding with Sadat. For instance, the editor of *Akhar Al-Yom* rebuked immigrant Copts and called on Bishop Samuel to explain "the seriousness of their actions, their extremism and their fanaticism and the consequences of this to the country they love at a distance." The Bishop had to convince immigrants "that the impression they have about the present and future of the Coptic minority is wrong."[79] Although the effort to send a bishop to calm immigrants was common practice by the Church, the involvement of a state that denounced the patriarch backfired at the cost of Samuel's reputation.

Coverage in the US press created further doubts as to Samuel's intentions. Bishop Samuel spoke to *The Washington Post* and, although insisting upon the ecclesiastical authority of Pope Shenouda, he generally had high praise for Sadat. Bishop Samuel called the crackdown on religious and political dissenters a "very courageous act" that "will help the Christians of Egypt and all Egyptians." In the same article the president accused the pope of wishing to become a "political leader" to "achieve certain personal objectives."[80] For Shawki Karas this was a clear

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[78] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, August 1985 (video, 1hr). Karas also participated in intra-communal debates over acculturation and religious, cultural and social production in North American cities. By 1985, the CCA and ACA had together funded 20 Master's and doctoral theses globally.
[79] Ibrahim Sa'dah, "Copts in the United States," *Akhbar Al-Yom*, April 12, 1980: 8. In Nadia Naguib's *The Coptic Awakening*, letters to Ibrahim Sa'dah from Selim Naguib contested Egyptian press coverage of the Church and *aqbāt al-mahjar*. This defense prompted Montreal's Farid Zamokhol to produce *al Resalah* (not to be confused with Rudolph Yanni's magazine) under the auspices of the Canadian Coptic Association. Their magazine documented state injustice and provided alternative interpretations of diasporic responses to events in Egypt.
[80] David B. Ottaway, "Egyptian Copts Support Ousted Patriarch," *The Washington Post*, September 7, 1981: A39.

sign of the bishop's collusion with the regime which he called in his 1985 book an "'ecclesiastical conspiracy ... [through] many tactics of pursuation [sic] and the psychology of fear'."[81] Karas blamed the pope's internment on Bishop Samuel and members of the Holy Synod who supported the bishop, who through "treason … emboldened Sadat in his actions."[82]

However, many early Copts had a wholly different vision of Bishop Samuel, who encouraged and supported their emigration. Political and church activists had come to blows on several occasions in New York and New Jersey as a consequence of their divergent views. When Bishops Samuel and Yuanis arrived in New York in advance of Sadat's visit in March 1979 to insist on calm, Sami Boulos witnessed an altercation in St. Mark's church, Jersey City:

> I saw a few members of the congregation begin to attack him saying: 'you are a tool of the government.' Father Ghobriel stopped to admonish them … we were among the congregation and couldn't do anything. God sent the youth leaders of Sunday school, every two of them carried away one of the protesters and took them downstairs. After the mass finished and the church was let out, we went downstairs and he told them: 'if you're going to do this again, don't come to this church, go to a different church.'[83]

Verbal assaults against the Bishops on church grounds sparked physical confrontations. Wafik Habib denounced "political Copts" as "not very spiritual" and his wife Mona criticized the ACA for disrespecting the higher clergy. Many early Copts defended Samuel's memory.[84]

Yet Bishop Samuel's perceived alignment with the state only gained traction as laity and clergy mobilized throughout Egypt and its diasporas. The ACA and CCA spawned more than twenty sister branches. The attendance and participation of clergy from Upper Egypt at joint conferences indicated to association leaders such as Selim Naguib that diasporic activism was at least "tolerable for the Coptic Church." Clergy had joined the ACA and CCA in denouncing sectarian violence in Egypt at conferences in New Jersey in May 1978, Montreal in December 1978 (on the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration for Human Rights) and October 1979 to

[81] Karas, *The Copts Since the Arab Invasion*, 195.
[82] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, August 1985 (video, 1hr).
[83] Sami Boulos, interviewed in New Jersey, May 10, 2017 (translated from Arabic).
[84] Wafik and Mona Habib, interviewed in New Jersey, August 20, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

denounce church burnings in Egypt.[85] When Pope Shenouda cancelled Easter celebrations in April 1980, Bishop Samuel was again dispatched to calm immigrant Copts in the summer of 1980. As he spoke about muting immigrant challenges to Shari'a legislation in Egypt, members of the ACA in the congregation became agitated precisely because they had other examples of defiant clergy to draw upon. When Bishop Samuel said, "'think of your poor brother in the field … you are aggravating here and he will be pressured and will suffer,'" responses ranged from dismissive scoffs to accusations of government collusion, and once again Sunday school leaders escorted the protesters from the church.[86]

Tense scenes in Jersey City were followed by further agitation in the Queens parish in August 1981, when during his final visit in anticipation of Sadat's scheduled talks Bishop Samuel was nearly assaulted. During the sermon, tasoni Samia and Sunday school youth leaders escorted protesters from the church and outside the main entrance, barring them from returning inside.[87] During one of their final conversations, Atef Mo'awad had asked Samuel why he was always the bishop that Pope Shenouda sent, rather than one ordained under the pope's tutelage. In response, the bishop insisted that the pope "'didn't think anybody else can quiet people and I am willing to do that no matter what happens to me for the sake of the Copts in Egypt'." Mo'awad reflected: "Maybe he was wrong, maybe he was right. I don't know. But this is him."[88]

When Bishop Samuel traveled to North America he always did so with letters from the pope stating that he was backed by papal authority. In July and August of 1981 two letters raised the ire of ACA and CCA members. Bishops Samuel and Yuanis read aloud Pope Shenouda's message urging "peace, faith, and love in receiving President Sadat generously." The letter

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[85] Naguib, *Les Coptes Dans L'Égypte D'aujourd'hui*, 71-72. Branches were founded in Hamburg, Germany under Economist Youssef Farag, Paris under Law professor Magdi Zaki, and Australia under lawyer Ramses Ghabrawy.
[86] Wafik and Mona Habib, interviewed in New Jersey, August 20, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[87] Tasoni Samia, interviewed in New York, August 18, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).
[88] Atef Mo'awad, interviewed in Chicago, May 15, 2017 (partly translated from Arabic).

warned that "disobeying the Church is disobeying Christianity itself, as the Church is the righteous cornerstone." Yet Karas and the leaders of Coptic associations immediately rejected this statement, questioned its authenticity and insisted that the letters did not speak for the pope.[89] The association of Bishop Samuel with the government persisted among political activists and attacks on bishop Gregorious who succeeded him as head of the committee made the clergy in North America increasingly opposed to lay involvement.[90] In time the contrast between political activists and church activists supportive of clerical direction of community affairs sharpened distinctions between the two groups.

Yet Shawki Karas refused to back down and insisted on the spiritual loyalty and deep devotion of Coptic associations. In his interview with church activist Elhamy Khalil, Karas expressed his (and the ACA's) viewpoint on the turmoil in Egypt and its diasporas.[91] Months before the release of his book, *Copts Since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in the Land*, Karas insisted that the duty of all immigrant Copts was to raise their voice, oppose discrimination by the Muslim majority and inaction by the state.[92] Karas' book was a spiritual successor of Zugheib's *Divide and Rule*. It drew on the language of political secularism and championed a rights discourse suited to contest the Egyptian state's failure to defend and protect all citizens equally.[93] For Karas, Sadat's inflammatory remarks were a test that the Church failed. Intra-

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[89] Two letters from bishops Samuel and Yuanis to "our dear children," New York, July 24 and August 4, 1981, in Iris Habib al-Masry, *Bishop Samuel of Public and Social Services* (Cairo: Mehaba Bookstore, 1986): 68-69.
[90] Letter from Pope Shenouda to "dear priests and people," St. Bishoy Monastery, Wadi Natrun, September 7, 1981, in Iris Habib Al-Masry, *Bishop Samuel of Public and Social Services*, 68-69.
[91] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, August 1985 (video, 1hr). Despite never agreeing with what he perceived to be exaggerated claims of the ACA, Khalil kept regular contact with Karas and preserved the entirety of *The Copts* magazine in his home. Karas' famous temperament shows through repeatedly. The two most notable features of his that made Karas so divisive for many were his temperament and pride in his Upper Egyptian (*Sa'adi*) accent.
[92] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, August 1985 (video, 1hr).
[93] Karas book *The Copts Since the Arab Conquest*: *Strangers in the Land* began as an article in the premiere issue of *The Copts: Christians of Egypt*. Karas argued state persecution and inaction has only spread to the populace, magnified by religious fundamentalism in Mosques and Islamic centres to enact the "annihilation" and "eradication"

communal tensions, he emphasized, should be dealt with internally, not allowed to be exploited by the state and president for their own gain because.[94]

Karas was frustrated that ACA activities were dismissed and derided by the Church and many parishes in North America. The ACA met with opposition when lobbying religious and political leaders in New York and Washington because their claims about persecution were rarely corroborated by the Church hierarchy in North American cities. The associations wrote to international and ecumenical organizations, visited Congress, spoke with representatives of the US Department of State, and pressed for letters to be written to Hosni Mubarak. Without corroboration by the Church, western religious and government officials hesitated to support the associations' cause to defend a persecuted Coptic minority.

Having broken with church-affiliated organizations, in practiced prose Karas justified the CCA and ACA position theologically. Saints and martyrs were the exemplars of opposition to injustice. Perseverance in the faith defined the Coptic identity. He insisted that Pope Shenouda defended Coptic rights while upholding a Christian humility. He charged the clergy in North America with interpreting humility to mean an acceptance of defeat: "I tell our fathers the priests and bishops, stay away from the Egyptian embassies and consulates … Here, we are Americans or Canadians … At the same time, spiritually we follow the pope of Alexandria and fight against the interference of the Egyptian government." The CCA and ACA grew quite defensive in their fight for Coptic rights. Arguing that political activism was a reflection of deep denominational loyalty and respect of the will of the patriarch in Egypt, Karas characterized the clergy as human, flawed and not above reproach. He exclaimed: "we don't exist as a Church only. We are people, we are functioning people in society ... we have our own tradition, our own culture, our own

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of Copts on the brink of "Extinction." See, Shawki Karas, "Strangers in the Land," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* 1.1, January/February 1974 and Karas, *The Copts Since the Arab Invasion*, 3-6.

[94] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, August 1985 (video, 1hr).

history that we should take care of." Coptic associations, he maintained, did "not only support building churches … [but] the revival of a whole people."[95]

FROM SEDITIOUS DIASPORA TO EGYPTIAN NATIONALS ABROAD

When Coptic associational life lost cohesion following a moment of collaboration, a cacophony of voices demanding national unity, decrying national unity and others insisting on Canadian or US immigrant success clashed, leaving the Church to project a single unified message to adherents. The fragmentation in North America came to be affected by economic liberalization in Egypt imposed by international institutions. Sadat had opened the door to foreign investment, eased currency restrictions and established a free trade zone. The USAID (United States Agency for International Development) began sending aid to Egypt in 1975. Sadat secured $720 million USD from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in June 1978 in exchange for ending state subsidies. He cultivated a new class of local capitalists who served as important patrons of Egypt's NGO sector. He fostered divisions among religious and international organizations forced to register independently as formal NGOs. Following his investiture in 1981, President Hosni Mubarak sought to maintain the status quo.

Learning from the brash gambles both Nasser and Sadat took during their time in office which led to their respective decline, throughout his over thirty years in office Mubarak eschewed aggressive statesmanship. He adopted instead a defensive posture as a guardian of Egyptian national unity from foreign intervention and Islamist fundamentalism. Mubarak installed a system of crony capitalism and the NGO sector grew exponentially. When the IMF proposed restructuring its loan to Egypt which was struggling to pay back debts incurred under Anwar Sadat, Mubarak agreed to a reformed agreement in 1987. The IMF stipulated that Egypt

[95] Shawki and Leila Karas, interviewed by Elhamy Khalil, New Haven, CT, August 1985 (video, 1hr).

had to float its currency, cut the budget deficit and by the 1990s implement a swathe of privatization deals including privatizing nearly a hundred national companies. In 1991, Mubarak's reliance on foreign aid grew under a structural adjustment program with the World Bank and the extension of the IMF agreement. The Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP) reflected the hegemony of the US and its aims for neoliberal economic reform in non-western countries, requiring Egypt to reduce government spending, lift price controls, freeze wages, and impose new taxes and liberalize the private sector and foreign trade.

In response, Coptic associations broadened their appeal by increasingly taking up the cause of human rights for all Middle East Christians and pragmatically aligning themselves with the US discourse premised on George W.H. Bush's "new world order." Bush's globalist turn to curb US military spending under Ronald Reagan initiated a brief period of US hegemony following the Malta conference in 1991. It was characterized by a belief in international courts, universal human rights and free trade. This new liberal order, protected by US power as the dominant player in geopolitical affairs emphasized the idea that legal institutions would be the major source of global organization. Renewed hopes for the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Security Council to function effectively were ascendant. Although it rejected their authority, the US saw itself as the defender of international justice. This was the height of optimism about international law and the efficacy of the United Nations, with US backing to defend universal human rights. Commitment to a global system of checks and balances on arbitrary persecution and violence abetted by state regimes were buoyed by the two ad hoc tribunals for atrocities committed during the Balkan wars and the Rwanda genocide.

This system operated on the one hand through pressure exerted by NGOs which exposed the human rights violations of non-western countries and on the other under fear of western

nations depriving aid, investment, technical cooperation for violators, including extreme measures of sanctions and military force. The collapse of the USSR and the promotion of a free market economy contributed to a single superpower and a single economic model enforced by IMF and World Bank aid. Egypt cut more welfare subsidies. The vacuum in civil society was filled by NGOs, whose numbers by 1996 reached 22,000, of which 40 per cent were religious and less than 10 per cent of that number Christian.[96]

Having witnessed the riots in response to Sadat's rapid austerity measures, Mubarak adopted liberalization reforms slowly, episodically and cautiously, thereby increasing the gap between rich and poor. The middle class withered away to be replaced by a class of business elites that dominated the country's economy, chief among them the Egyptian military. Loyalty to the government became the entry point to private contracts, preferential access, exemptions from duties and fees and in extreme cases immunity from prosecution. Mubarak looked to the NGO sector to offset state withdrawal from welfare services and the sector, "rather than operate as a force for economic justice and democratic political reform, [instead] served as a tool for maintaining the regime's power." The government enhanced divisions and fractured organizational efficacy to serve a client state.[97] In the realm of international relations, Mubarak struck a moderate note, neither backing away from peace with Israel nor loosening ties with the US. Despite tensions over the war in Lebanon (1982-1985) Egypt was able to balance a tenuous peace with Israel and restore its membership in the Arab League in 1987. Mubarak's emphasis on Islamic terror projected the spectre of an external threat to justify authoritarian rule.

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[96] Andrea Zaki Stephanous, *Political Islam, Citizenship, and Minorities: The Future of Arab Christians in the Islamic Middle East*, (Lanham, MD: UP of America, 2010): 182-186.
[97] Catherine Herrold, *Delta Democracy: Pathways to incremental Civic revolution in Egypt and Beyond*, (Oxford University Press, 2020): 31-33.

Warmer relations between the pope and the president signaled a return to a peaceable entente. Indeed, Pope Shenouda was far more measured in his responses to sectarian violence between 1985 and his death in 2012, encouraging Copts to support the government in ongoing efforts to stem Islamist fundamentalism as a national threat. Diasporic activists saw the pope's shift in tone and were aware of Egypt's growing dependency on US aid and escalating Islamist attacks on government officials between 1991-1995. All of this created the conditions for the possibility of defending Copts with support from the Church and state in Egypt.

In April 1992, fourteen Coptic Christians were shot in Upper Egypt and the Jihad Organization and *Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya* resurfaced after their assassination of Anwar Sadat and Bishop Samuel.[98] Two months later noted writer and defender of human rights Farag Foda was assassinated. Islamists then launched a series of attacks against the Egyptian government that peaked in February and March of 1994 with almost 600 deaths and an estimated one and a half billion dollars in lost revenue from tourism. Following three assassination attempts on top government officials and one on President Mubarak, the government initiated a mass crack down, arresting or killing suspected fundamentalists, that only abated by April 1994.[99]

Farag Foda was particularly prized among members of the ACA and CCA as a champion not only of human rights in Egypt, but the cause of Coptic Christians in particular. These developments in Egypt and the ascendency of international law and faith in UN Human Rights under US hegemony deeply affected diasporic long-distance nationalism. As Selim Naguib wrote in his *Les Coptes dans l'Égypte d'aujourd'hui*, the implementation of human rights protocols and respect for a system based on universal moral values became the only means "to develop in the

[98] During the 1992 earthquake in Cairo, where 50,000 people were made homeless, the government was ineffective where the Muslim Brotherhood and Christian NGOs supported by foreign aid from, among others, Coptic immigrants supplied the victims with food, blankets and medical supplies.
[99] Abouali Farmanfarmaian, "Fear of the Beard: Excavating the Future in Cairo," *Transition* 67 (1995): 53

individual an awareness of the means by which human rights can be translated into social and political power at both the national and international levels," insisting that "economic sanctions are the natural instrument of this policy."[100]

Members of Coptic associations began to balance their critiques of state responses to sectarian violence with the defense of Mubarak's policies against Islamist fundamentalism. In the US context, Islamists were becoming a global threat to US sovereignty in the mainstream media. *The Copts* magazine responded to both contexts. In collaboration with the World Organization, UN human rights campaigns, the Middle East Christian Committee, and Assyrian National Congress, Coptic activists reported on Christian persecution in the Middle East with particular emphasis on Copts as the quintessential persecuted minority. International coverage in *The Copts* throughout the 1990s included articles from a broad array of journals and dailies such as the *Jerusalem Post*. The magazine turned against the PLO and Hamas, focusing instead on Christian Arabs and their persecution first in the Middle East and North Africa, and later as refugees in Europe. Seeking to align the interests of US policy makers with the Coptic cause, ACA and CCA members insisted that western policy makers had to defend the "persecuted Church" before Islamist fundamentalism found its way into North American political cultures.[101]

In Montreal, the CCA worked in concert with the ACA. However, several members felt that continued criticism of the Egyptian state was ill-advised and left to begin their own rights-based organizations. The Coptic Aid Foundation (with its mirror image Coptic Orphans in the US) and the Canadian Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (CEOHR) appealed to this new world order by petitioning Ottawa and Washington to defend the rights of Copts in the United Nations. They created charitable links with businesses and NGOs in Egypt. That such splinter

[100] Naguib, *Les Coptes Dans L'Egypte D'aujourd'hui*, 101-102.
[101] Elizabeth A. Castelli, "Praying for the Persecuted Church: US Activism in the Global Arena," *Journal of Human Rights* 4.3 (2005): 321-351.

organizations were formed in 1992 is no coincidence. It speaks to the tremendous influence of renewed faith in the United Nations principles and hope in finding common cause with an Egyptian state under attack. Several executive members argued that diasporic activism should appeal to the Egyptian state. Nabil Abdelmalek, having joined the CCA soon after arriving in 1977, partnered with businessmen in Egypt to create the CEOHR following heated disagreements with Shawki Karas.

Unlike the ACA and CCA, the CEOHR intentionally "tried to stay away from the word Copt … I have to do this as an Egyptian," Abdelmalek insisted. New organizations in the 1990s similarly adhered to a notion that success was now possible in the Egyptian context and to achieve it their rights appeals had to be separated from religion. The CEOHR began in 1992 with the support of Farag Foda and sought to align its cause with "the government to oppose Islamist extremism" and highlight that "we [the Copts] were in the crossfire between the two."[102] Abdelmalek's meetings throughout the 1990s with Egyptian officials and the consul general in Quebec stressed a national unity discourse resurgent among immigrant Copts amid escalating Islamist violence in Egypt. Working with prominent businessmen such as Antoine Sidhom, founder of *Watani* and in conversation with the UN commissioner, the CEOHR contributed to the National Council for Human Rights established in Cairo by Botros Botros Ghali.

However, this diasporic promotion of national unity discourse was rejected outright by Karas who insisted on the systemic and state-abetted character of sectarian violence. Nevertheless, all could and did agree that "the laymen have a role to play in the diaspora, independently but in cooperation with the Church."[103] More CCA members left to organize independent professional and community associations. Nabil Fanous' Canadian Institute of

[102] Nabil Abdelmalek, interviewed in Quebec, November 8, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).
[103] Nabil Abdelmalek, interviewed in Quebec, November 8, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).

Cosmetic Surgery is one example of new professional Coptic associations founded in this period. Adel Iskander's cultural magazines *al Masry* and *al Mahrousa* reflect this growing diversity, balancing coverage of current events in Egypt with news on film and television. Copts no longer simply avoided the Egyptian embassy and consulate but organized cultural events in concert.

At the same time, the ECC in Toronto changed tactics. Once a committed non-political social club, in 1992 it took on new initiatives in charitable services. The Club acted as "a liaison between the Egyptian embassy in Ottawa, the consulate in Montreal and the Egyptians in Toronto" by lobbying to provide consular services for Egyptian immigrants. The ECC also raised nearly $100,000 toward relief efforts following the 1992 earthquake in Egypt, supported the Egyptian basketball team during the world championship in Toronto in 1994 by subsidising ticket sales, and that same year raised funds to fly a young cancer patient from Egypt to receive treatment at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.[104] Following the expansion of Egypt's NGO sector and growing church services in North American cities, such political and charitable activities by the ECC reflect its efforts to remain relevant.

Despite the holistic programme Karas had once envisioned for the ACA, the surge of divergent associations dispelled his hopes of collaboration. The group of diasporic activists which condemned Islamist fundamentalism but remained antagonistic to the Egyptian state shrank. Straddling the line between political and church activism, Rudolph Yanni in the United States and Nabil Abdelmalek and Adel Iskandar in Canada displayed varied aims beyond the well-worn antagonism. A range of other social and cultural organizations also developed which increasingly fell under clerical supervision.[105] The transnational character of Coptic activism

[104] CTASC, Coptic Canadian History Project collection, *The Egyptian Canadian Club 25th Anniversary, 1976-2001*, (Toronto: Self-published, non-paginated).
[105] In conversation with Nadia Naguib, Quebec, November 10, 2019 (partially translated from Arabic and French).

persisted, increasingly coloured by a cacophony of fractured associations where the Church could project a single cohesive message about the faith and devotion of the Copts.

AQBĀT AL-MAHJAR: A HETEROGLOSSIA OF COMPETING NARRATIVES

Scholarship on the Coptic diaspora has caricatured this demographic minority's vocal activism and dismissed their significance to intra-communal debates and relations with the Church and state in Egypt. This chapter has instead attended to the competing narratives around political engagement in Coptic communities across Central Canada and the North Eastern United States. It has argued that activists were not naïve reactionaries but rather both material concerns and spiritual beliefs motivated the activities of pragmatic immigrants. It linked politics and activism with heightened confessional polarization in Egypt, warming US-Egyptian international relations, and diasporic nationalists who believed that this historical moment represented an ideal time to contest discrimination and marginalization of co-religionists in Egypt. Denying the assumed marginality of diasporic Copts, it outlined the contested role of political engagement in Middle Eastern immigrant communities more broadly. In the final analysis, the chapter showed through newly uncovered oral and textual sources that diasporic activists played a significant role in immigrant communities, although perceived as seditious by the Church and state.

Immigrants who fled a post-colonial regime operated between the interconnected histories of their receiving societies and country of origin. They perceived it a duty to capitalize on their position in North America and incite change through their associational life. When Pope Shenouda was placed under house arrest, immigrant Coptic publication, cultural initiatives and churches multiplied. As the Coptic presence in North America became permanent, travel back and forth between Canada, the US and Egypt brought with it renewed possibilities for

participating in the country's political and social life. A diasporic sense of themselves developed amongst Copts who lived a form of transnationalism that tied them to Egypt while living fully in Canada and the US. Rarely finding common cause with Arab immigrants more broadly or appealing to the church activism of the majority in immigrant parishes, political activists nevertheless became a galvanizing force of international human rights appeals up to the 1990s.

It is paramount to recognize that immigrant activists felt and grieved for co-religionists, and worked to defend *al-huq* (right, plural *huquq*) in Egypt. They sought initially to contest not Islam as a religion but as a proposed legal framework and state-governing code.[106] During the 1980s, Shenouda increasingly aligned with a moderate Mubarak. Between 1972 and 1989, the core debates and demands of Coptic activists centred on equal citizenship, human rights and fair treatment within the context of political change. The fight for Coptic rights continued from Egypt to Canada and the United States, increasingly aggravated by confessional divides and the sectarian politics of a "Muslim president." As ideas evolved in Egypt and in traveling took new shape in North America, the shifts were gradual, subtle and contextual. For the Coptic reader, the views expressed by *The Copts* had appeal initially because they were familiar: limits on church building, job discrimination and the defense of equal rights for all citizens of a modern nation-state. In time, such views mixed with the mainstream North American press, becoming increasingly expressed in opposition to the clerical hierarchy and in civilizational terms to reach western audiences and remain relevant to the political arena. As the Church and local priests alienated political associations, the alignment with a broader defense of Middle East Christian rights corresponded with aggravated intra-communal divides. By mapping the historical

[106] Elsadda, "Travelling Critique," 93-103. Elsadda noted that in Arabic the word for 'right' is *al-haq* (plural *huquq*) which bares powerful connotations. In addition to usage comparable to its English equivalent, *al-haq* is also one of the names of God in Islam. Moreover, the Faculty of Law in Egypt is literally called *kuliyyat al-huquq* (Faculty of Rights), a consolidation of the link between law and rights. The fact that the language of rights as used in local contexts can be appropriated and abused in global contexts should not result in silencing activists who engage critically with their societies and cultures.

experiences affecting individuals involved in these debates, it is clear that Egyptian political values and the migration of ideas, as much as integration into western societies brought Coptic activism to its globalist era in the 1990s.

This chapter concluded with a significant period of transition in relations between immigrants, the Church and state in Egypt; fertile ground for future research. Yet this research must eschew past scholarship's focus on difference—between Copts in Egypt and North America, faithful and dissident, Egyptian values and western ethical beliefs. The state, Church and diasporic actors were not monolithic, but a heteroglossia of competing narratives when viewed in multipolar perspective. As transnational actors, immigrants had a vested interest in both their Church and nation and their appeal to human rights granted them entry into North American political arenas. To say otherwise is to reify national borders, misconstrue immigrant's everyday lives and deny that ideas migrate with people. The Coptic immigrant experience was as much about 'routes' as it was about 'roots.' To understand their lives we must be attentive to both the material and spiritual aspects and appreciate the impact of local, global and transnational forces.

Conclusion
An Integrated and Transnational History

Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt and across Canada and the United States have long been characterized simply as a marginal and insular faith community. This dissertation instead began by placing Coptic immigrants squarely within modern Egyptian history. Copts contributed to modern national developments from the heyday of interwar liberal politics to the struggle with Nasserite nationalization and later neoliberal reforms under Sadat in post-revolutionary Egypt. Although relatively small in numbers, Coptic actors were regularly at the center of social, cultural and political change and participants in international migrations that affected the course of twentieth century history. Middle-class, urban and university-educated Copts made choices to leave political, economic and social instability in Egypt. Lured by expanding post-secondary education and employment opportunities in North American cities, they were followed by working and lower middle-class Copts. An emergent immigrant group, their stories shed light on immigration to North America from the Middle East following the Second World War. As recent arrivals from previously non-preferred countries, relaxing immigration policies and the turn toward cultural pluralism in Canada and the United States provided an environment for their migration, settlement and eventual integration. Eschewing both essentialism and filiopietism, I argued that material and spiritual concerns were a part of the contested historical process to establish vital services in new environments. Multipolar connections were maintained among Copts and North American religious leaders or other immigrants from Egypt. In this context, celebrations of ethnic particularity in spaces of sociability and among religious cultures were a continuation of their past lives which were formative and adaptable to new environments. In short, the Coptic immigrant experience was as much a product of ‘routes’ as it was of ‘roots.’

In order to address this history, I have undertaken a number of novel approaches in regard to Egyptian history, modern Copts and the study of North American Immigration and Religion. By taking a transnational lens, it is the first immigration history of modern Copts and the first to place individuals and their stories at the heart of the narrative. Instead of examining ordinary Copts as pawns or victims in the machinations of the Egyptian state, the Orthodox Church, or other great powers, this dissertation told a reflexive story which prioritized the oral testimonies of migrants and their agency in resisting and accommodating to their surrounding environments. It also told an uniquely integrated history of modern Copts that is sorely missing from the literature. Instead of understanding the Coptic immigrant experience as a series of unconnected events erupting seemingly outside a marginal Coptic faith community, this narrative offered a chronologically cohesive history that demonstrated the relationship between migrants and their contexts across multiple geographies. Local actors responded to colonial competition and religious oppression in their country of origin. Later, immigration and intra-communal debates about the process of integration affected Copts' activism and sense of belonging.

In discussing these new immigrants to postwar Canada and the US, successive chapters explored the spatial-temporal settlement patterns and opportunities for cultural promotion which produced debates within an Orthodox Christian group. The field of Immigration and Ethnicity has only recently begun to embrace the study of immigrant groups arriving in the second half of the twentieth century. This dissertation contributes to that emerging literature by focusing our attention on an ethno-religious group which engaged North American ecumenism. Drawing on an oral history methodology to bring the heteroglossia of competing Coptic narratives into dialogue, it highlighted the fluidity of material, spiritual and political concerns. In the process, it also showed the importance of *Aqbāt al-mahjar* in international relations between Egypt, the

Church and diasporic populations. The dynamics of socialization, ethnicization and integration proved that Copts were not marginal and distinguished by their faith alone. Finally, by placing their material experience in historical context I attended to how they were participants in the socio-economic and political realities of their societies.

I am indebted to the work of scholars in Middle East and Coptic Studies, particularly Paul Sedra, Heather Sharkey, Saba Mahmoud, and Ussama Makdisi. This dissertation makes two other contributions to this literature. First, including Sunday School leaders and their students in the discussion of Egyptian socially minded spiritual reform broadens the scope of the field by addressing the agency of lay actors traditionally viewed as secondary to the clerical hierarchy and marginal to ecumenical debates among Protestant and Catholic Christians. In fact, Coptic church activists not only pursued their own material success in the world but at times impacted the trajectory of Church policies and parish boards in the *mahjar*. Second, the extended chronology highlights the fact that Coptic Orthodox Christians were invested in both their Church and nation in Egypt and brought with them their religious commitments and past experience with cosmopolitanism to North American contexts. Socialization in Egypt occurred at a time of institutional modernization and debates about equal citizenship which were formative for church activists, cultural events organizers and diasporic nationalists in Canada and the United States. This is highlighted by the stories of Sami Boulos, Elhamy Khalil, Selim Naguib, Shawki Karas, and others, who maintained contact with clergy in Egypt and created networks among immigrants to aid the Copts in becoming established in the following decades.

By expanding the chronology of the narrative and examining modern Copts through a transnational lens, this dissertation provides insights into not only Egypt's history, but also

the broader narratives of the United States and Canada in the global Cold War. Building on studies by Roberto Perin, Franca Iacovetta, Lisa Mar, Sean Mills, Herbert Gans, among others, it demonstrated that memories migrate across multiple geographies. Immigrants had the ability to recognize and enter debates in their receiving societies about cultural commemoration, ethnic particularity and to reform their identities in ways commensurate with their needs. Copts exercised considerable agency on the global stage, with both church activists and diasporic nationalists pursuing policies independent of larger regional or international players. Those involved in the churches relied on personal relationships and ecumenical charities to navigate sacred spaces in North American cities undergoing uneven though combined secularization. In their mundane transnationalism, secular associations trafficked in nostalgia commodities and constructed their international networks of aid and support. In turning to diasporic long-distance nationalism, this dissertation concluded with the impact of human rights appeals and the power of grassroots movements in that process. They also called on friends and family abroad to aid them in their struggle. Taken as a whole, it reveals the paucity of national boundaries where both people and ideas moved from country to country.

The older scholarship on the Copts is in part right to insist that religion mattered a great deal. Copts valued their spiritual lives in the churches and were attentive to the words of the higher clergy. They grieved when sectarian violence targeted co-religionists in Egypt and became enraged at the internment of their pope. Their political involvement was deeply intertwined with their religion. However, this was also conditioned by their religious leaders becoming auxiliaries of the state. What is missed by exclusively focusing on the spiritual aspect is that the material success of Copts and their political engagements were as important as their religion. Narratives of exceptionalism have obscured the historical reality of ordinary Copts in

neighborhoods, workplaces and public spaces of sociability. My materialist approach filled in this gap. Through newly uncovered textual sources and oral testimonies I detailed a multifaceted Coptic experience shot through with inter-religious collaboration and contestation, intra-communal tensions and inter-ethnic exchange as an emergent immigrant group sought a means to integrate in the changing cultural landscape of New York, New Jersey, Montreal, and Toronto.

First, the Coptic Orthodox Church extended its reach in the twentieth century as a consequence of the religious character of Egyptian secular politics. The bureaucratic expansion, technological innovation and epistemological notions of ethno-religious and cultural particularity which followed invariably though unevenly effected Copts prior to emigration and informed their activities in the *mahjar*. The testimonies of immigrants illustrated most strongly that socialization in Egypt prior to emigration was central to how immigrants remembered and ordered their narratives. Experiences and events, such as cosmopolitan neighbourhoods, occupational exclusion, Nasserite nationalization and the seizure of property, national wars, visible expressions of Islamicization on university campuses, and subsequent moments of religious polarization, configured how certain immigrants perceived and interpreted what happened in their time. Immigrants were pragmatic and active agents navigating such structures as they chose to live their lives and create a sense of community that fit their needs.

Second, in their decisions to leave for North America, whether on temporary exchange or permanently, Copts became a part of changing international relations and immigration policies between Egypt, Canada and the US. Such policies evolved to reflect the needs of sovereign nations, self-interest, racism and nativism, economic imperatives, Cold War security concerns, the ideals of humanitarianism, and debates over multiculturalism. In Egypt nativism, deep-seated antipathy for internal foreign groups of various kinds (national, cultural, religious), encouraged

the emigration of foreign minorities. Discriminatory hiring practices and prejudicial policies were then extended to the last remaining minority group: the Copts. In the second half of the twentieth century, native Christians had to contend with rising discrimination that led eventually to persecution by the end of the century. The upper and middle-class from Egypt was the most welcomed, and as foreign minorities declined in the 1960s native Egyptians were accepted by Canadian or American senior immigration officials. Following the introduction of Canada's Points System and the Hart-Cellar Act in the US, Egyptians were accepted increasingly regardless of religious and ethnic affiliation. However, throughout this process policies privileged class interests and conceived of professionals as the least likely security and cultural threat to both countries and their labour interests. By the time Anwar Sadat ascended to power, Egypt had established its first Ministry of Immigration and began actively supporting local émigré petitions to western nations. The Coptic Orthodox Church hierarchy joined in the national cause. After 1975, Egyptian embassies, consulates and religious leaders relied on established immigrants to petition on behalf of prospective émigrés from among a broader socio-economic spectrum in Egyptian society.

Third, religious reform and church activism in Egypt affected Copts in North America and contributes to our understanding of postwar religious history. In Egypt, this Orthodox group responded to challenges posed by decolonization, urbanization and anxieties occasioned by modernity, as well as larger conversations around the Islamic revival and universalism of Christianity. Social Gospel thought flourished but the colonial encounter did not simply inspire emulation of the west. Ideas in circulation were adapted by active local populations with movements in Cairo and Alexandria. As the Egyptian state fashioned its language and institutions around an increasingly secular political culture, Coptic proponents of socially minded

spiritual reform succeeded in expanding social services and gathering a popular base through impassioned prayer and religious education. Few studies exist on the postwar period and little has been written from a historical perspective on Orthodoxy. Copts promoted a Christian universalism invigorated by collaboration with transnational Christian charities such as the NCC and WCC to show commonality with the dominant culture of their receiving society. Bishop Samuel's religious education in Egypt and then in the United States engaged him and his students in a wider world of ideas about Christian universalism and social reform. By the 1970s, the neoliberal dismantling of the welfare state imposed on Egypt by US interests and the free-market economy enshrined the public role of religious institutions. Transnational links to a wider imagined community were maintained and indeed cemented by the successful establishment of a print culture where a distinctive globalized spirituality elevated social involvement to a religious significance as expressed in prayers, hymns, associational life, and publications. Despite moments of intra-communal tensions in immigrant parishes over the power and authority which should be granted the clergy, a common consensus kept these debates from leading to schism.

Fourth, the timing of Coptic immigration to the United States and Canada allowed for a celebration of ethnic particularity and sense of exceptionalism as Coptic and Egyptian Americans or Canadians that would have been far more difficult before the 1950s. Copts engaged in the promotion of their particular national and cultural difference. Memories of celebrating their Coptic heritage and Egyptian roots were matched by positive assessments of the values of "equality," "opportunity" and "fraternity" vital to US conservatism since the 1960s. Within the social and religious histories of Montreal and Toronto, declining attendance in Catholic, Anglican and United churches, and a thriving language of ecumenism created opportunities for Copts to develop vital spiritual services to meet their needs in Canada. As in New York and New

Jersey, the successful development of churches and cultural centres in Toronto and Montreal was a product of collaboration and exchange. The timing of their immigration promised positive reception as a result of both countries' stage of cultural, social and economic development. Early Copts pursued ethnic cohesion among multinational and multiethnic immigrants mainly of Egyptian origin which engendered a two-way process of acculturation. As new immigrants arrived from a confessional Egyptian scene in the mid-1970s and churches were established, new immigrants sought a cautious adaptation and priests and lay elites cemented their vision for Coptic integration. The notion of a distinctive Coptic ethno-religious identity was elaborated in this context. Yet individuals made choices commensurate with their needs, whether to demand a church, connect with like-minded acquaintances seeking purely social and cultural fraternity, or develop political activism for Coptic rights in the homeland.

Finally, diasporic activism among immigrant Copts can no longer be dismissed because of the significance of this demographic minority's impact on intra-communal debates and relations with the Church and state in Egypt. Both material concerns and spiritual beliefs motivated the activities of diasporic organizations. Local actors believed that Sadat's political ambitions following the Yom Kippur war represented an ideal time to contest discrimination and marginalization of co-religionists in Egypt. These immigrants who fled a post-colonial regime operated between the interconnected histories of their receiving societies and country of origin. They perceived it a duty to capitalize on their position in North America and incite change through their associational life. When Pope Shenouda was interned, immigrant Coptic publications, cultural initiatives and churches multiplied. As the Coptic presence in North America became permanent, travel back and forth between Canada, the US and Egypt brought with it renewed possibilities for participating in the country's political and social life. A

diasporic sense of themselves developed amongst Copts who lived a form of transnationalism that tied them to Egypt while living fully in Canada and the US.

The transnational history of Coptic immigrants breaks down conceptual and physical boundaries in the study of twentieth century international migrations. Conceptually, the idea of shared experiences in Egypt proved alluring to cultural events organizers and, combined with a shared language and cultural background, undermined a strict sense of insularity. Among church activists, the idea of the Coptic Orthodox Church *of* Egypt proved a central tenant of their convictions which they employed as Orthodox contributors to ecumenical dialogue in North America. A shared Egyptian culture among multiethnic immigrants was a large component of intra-communal struggles over acculturation. Because of this, many of the secular associations clashed with clergy and church activists, and particularly new immigrants who arrived after the mid-1970s. The latter arrived from a confessional Egypt and promoted a distinct Coptic heritage excluding foreign members. Besides proving conceptually weak, in actuality, group boundaries proved quite fluid, facilitating the rise of differing ideas about integration and attentiveness to Egyptian concerns following emigration. Diasporic organizations operated in networks of social relations, often moving in-between and among cultural markers of identity to engage the language of human rights for persecuted Christians in the Middle East. Those in power in the Church were, therefore, forced to deal with not only the societies and religious cultures that housed them, but also the intra-communal debates about ethnic incorporation and clerical authority. The age-old issue of trusteeism resurfaced in a new form with the Copts but they avoided schism in trying to resolve it. The shared concern for co-religionists in Egypt and a common loyalty to their patriarch united an otherwise fragmented array of associations. Even

these debates were transnational in nature, as oppositional movements often operated from multiple cities at the same time, making their history almost exclusively transnational.

In reflecting on this contested history of a heterogeneous immigrant group, this dissertation invites scholars of Egypt and its diasporas to take seriously the competing narratives among ordinary Copts who cannot remain passive objects of study. Their stories were not marginal but rather a part of a living culture. As pragmatic actors engaged in the everyday of living, Copts can be elevated to partners in the nation and not instruments for the ambitions of others. The Church hierarchy privileges mythic stories of saints, sages and heroes. Diasporic activists denounce Islamist fundamentalism and defend against the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. Church activists and cultural events organizers seek to preserve and commemorate their heritage and cultural practices, though they may disagree on whether to highlight a Coptic particularity or shared Egyptian-ness. By blending these perspectives and eschewing essentialism or filiopietism, the question that remains is: how do we elevate the socio-economic and political realities of Copts in and outside Egypt to recognize their voices as equal partners in the formation of modern national histories?

I began this dissertation out of a sense of frustration and now conclude it with hope. Future research on modern Copts may build on my findings and, perhaps more importantly, Canadian and US born Copts may thus learn about their group's history in North America. First, I ask for more critical interrogations of the internal and external pressures affecting the characterization of the Copts. Internally, religious and ethnic identity narratives are continually submitted to the majority in the group for social validation, and it is their public recognition or dismissal which sets the parameters for the rightness of such narratives. The "good" and the "bad" Copt are a product of this validation or lack thereof from among the clergy and

intellectuals. Externally, in Egypt the type of public recognition sought by the most vocal among this minority group consists either in their acknowledgement of their equal dignity and rights, or the recognition of their cultural uniqueness as legitimate grounds for special protections. If Copts have much leeway within the prejudice and discrimination of the majority group, it is in deciding when to downplay their cultural distinctiveness to enjoy difference-blind treatment and status or to make their difference and distinctiveness salient. The intra-communal conflicts and debates over trusteeism and political activism which confronted immigrants and the clergy were often about who gets to decide when either narrative is employed and to what extent may it be publicly expressed and debated in Egypt or with Canadian and US political and religious leaders.

Second, I call on researchers in Middle East Studies to expand the notion of "Egyptian," both within the national context and across immigrants' host societies while simultaneously paying due attention to the multipolar relations between these communities. Copts are not marginal and to continue to discount their experiences and their contributions does a disservice to the field. Possible questions following such a line of enquiry include: what impact do clerical sermons, recourse to legal protections and communal sanctions have on relations between Egyptian Christian denominations and family formation? The Church-state relationship in Egypt continues to be predicated on the Orthodox patriarch carrying the sole authoritative voice for the Copts. Yet interdenominational tensions over the rightness of Orthodoxy persist and effect relations between Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant members of the same family.

Finally, the history of Coptic immigrants in the twentieth century was inherently transnational. The study of North American Immigration and Ethnicity can no longer discount the Middle East as a hermetically sealed zone. Copts show how Egypt's revolutionary struggles were felt by immigrants operating in various locations in Canada and the United States who

became integrated in their cities and relied on international networks of support. In looking to such everyday relations within broader systems of power, I also seek to engage new research in diaspora and transnationalism, working class history, and gender studies. I presented a heteroglossia of competing narratives configured by class, gender, generational, and regional difference. Having normalized the voices of ordinary Copts, I recognize that a gendered analysis that centers the everyday of female Coptic immigrants is not realized in this study. How did gender divisions affect churches, associations and communities and the ways immigrants remember these histories? Women are missing in the historical record but were responsible for the tangible and intangible success of the associations, from ensuring the magazines were ready on time to maintaining ties by mediating disputes. We should also inquire into the experiences of many Egyptian food vendors and factory workers and how their stories may differ. To examine Coptic material and spiritual experiences through a transnational lens reveals how such a relatively small ethno-religious group may participate in and be party to global social, religious and political change that so deeply impacted the course of the twentieth century.

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Basma Shalaby (1 session. 01:54:09. Toronto, Canada)

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Essam Iskander (3 sessions. 04:28:28. New York, USA)

Fr. Athanasius Iskander (1 session. 01:59:33. Pickering, Canada)

Fr. Daoud Bebawi (1 session. 01:57:30. New York, USA)

Fr. Mina Yanni (1 session. 01:33:55. New York, USA)

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Fr. Tadros Malaty (1 session. 02:28:43. New Jersey, USA)

Hela Behkit (1 session. 01:59:41. Toronto, Canada)

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Pseud. Hank (1 session. 00:48:36. Toronto, Canada)

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Appendix 1 - Copy of Oral History Guiding Questions

1) Where did you come from (specific region) and what was your childhood like?

2) What was the reason you emigrated? How old were you at that time?

3) What were the social and political conditions in Egypt when you left?

4) How did others in your home country treat you when they knew you were leaving?

5) What was your old country like? (customs, climate, food, language, etc.)

6) Did you leave anyone or anything behind? If so, would you like to tell me more about it?

7) What was it like traveling to North America?

8) How did you get here? (Car/boat/train/plane/other way) How long did it take?

9) Do you have any interesting stories that happened while you were traveling?

10) Where did you go when you first arrived and what was it like? How did it make you feel?

11) Where did you finally settle down and why?

12) Did you know anyone here, family or friends, and if so whom?

13) How did you learn English and adjust to the new language?

14) Were there any associations or groups available to help in settlement? If so, would you like to tell me about them?

15) Were you treated differently here than in Egypt? If so, how?

16) Are you treated any differently today than from when you first arrived?

17) Have you been back to Egypt? If so, how often and what was it like? Did anything change?

18) What do you keep of your home country? Do you still know and use the language, and special customs, foods, manners, others things like that?

19) What were your hopes for yourself (and/or your family) when you came here?

20) What does Egypt mean to you now? How do you feel about it?

Appendix 2 - Copy of Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Study name

Ecumenical Alliances and Social Reform: A Pan-Arab Canadian Coptic Church, 1940-1995

Researchers

Researcher name Michael Akladios

Doctoral Candidate

Graduate Program in History

Email address masri@yorku.ca Office phone

Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to discover the history of the Coptic Orthodox community in Ontario. Participants will be asked to discuss their experiences in Egypt, their choice to emigrate, their journey to Canada, and their experiences settling in Canada. The central question is: how is the migration and expansion of the Coptic Church significant to evolving articulations of pan-Arab concerns in North America and civic social reform in Canada? Oral interviews will be used to augment the textual evidence collected for research with the goal of publishing a history of Coptic immigrants.

What you will be asked to do in the research

You will be asked to answer interview questions and engage in free-range discussion of your experiences for a two-hour period. Interviews may take place in one day or over the course of several days, as your schedule permits.

Risks and discomforts

There is minimal risk, the audio recordings will be kept private on an encrypted hard-drive, and if at any time you feel uncomfortable your answers to specific questions will not be required. If at any time you wish to withdraw, any data collected will be destroyed.

Benefits of the research and benefits to you

The research will shed light on an under-researched aspect of Canadian immigration history and Coptic history. This will be of benefit to the academic community and the Coptic community in the lands of immigration.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

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Withdrawal from the study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality

No hardcopy data will be collected. Audio recordings will be securely stored on an encrypted hard drive. The external hard drive is password protected and will be securely stored in my personal safe at my residence. The data will be kept for the course of my research and writing (approximately 2 years). The data will then be destroyed or provided to participants, if they so choose.

Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions about the research?

If you have any questions about the research, please contact me at: masri@yorku.ca. My supervisor, professor Roberto Perin, may be contacted at rperin@glendon.yorku.ca or 416-736-2100x88249. The History Graduate Program Director may be contacted at: dgshist@yorku.ca or 416-736-2100 ext.66969.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, your may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca

Legal rights and signatures:

I, _____, consent to participate in

Coptic oral history interview

conducted by Michael Akladios. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____ **Date** _____
Participant

Signature _____ **Date** _____
Principal Investigator

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