

IF YOU WANT TO BE *JUST* YOU BETTER BE *QUICK*: PERCEPTIONS OF A *JUST RETALIATION* IN THE DISCOURSE OF THE EGYPTIAN ARAB SPRING

1. INTRODUCTION

Almost from the onset of the Egyptian uprising of 2011, the call for QIṢĀṢ (RETALIATION) was among its most popular slogans. It soon became a common practice among the protesters to call each day of protest a specific name-slogan that expressed the message that the protesters meant to convey to the government and the larger public. A lot of events had QIṢĀṢ as a key element of such names, one of the earlier ones among them was a million-strong demonstration on Friday July 8, 2011 dubbed *jum 'at al-qīṣāṣ* (the Friday of QIṢĀṢ). Muhammad Mursi, who clearly saw his presidency as an accomplishment, if not the completion, of the revolution, was also thematizing QIṢĀṢ in his public discourse¹. A critically-minded local observer describing the Egyptian popular uprising of 2011 noted: *ata 'ajjib kaṭīran min ḥāl miṣr – awwal marra fī ta'rīḥ ajid tawra mubniya 'alā al-qīṣāṣ* (I am very much surprised at the state/situation of Egypt: [it is] the first time in my life that I find a revolution built on retaliation)². As early as October 2011, the phrase *tawrat al-qīṣāṣ* (revolution of retaliation) was used occasionally by the revolutionaries themselves, albeit not in reference to revolution in general³, but as a name for series of consecutive events, which used QIṢĀṢ as a motto⁴. Later, when the military deposed president Mursi, his supporters used the phrase *tawrat al-qīṣāṣ* in reference to the growing anti-coup protest movement⁵. Evidently, QIṢĀṢ appears to be one of the key concepts in the family of texts that we describe as the Egyptian revolutionary discourse. It is indeed so significant that, as we shall demonstrate below, it may even be seen as a marker that defines the temporal limits of this discourse as the manner and context, in which QIṢĀṢ is used in the mainstream media, changes with the transition from what could be described as revolutionary period back to the authoritarian regime.

Unlike some other concepts of the Egyptian revolutionary discourse, such as FULŪL⁶, QIṢĀṢ is not a new concept for the media discourse and even since January 25, 2011, as it appears more and more frequently in the language of Revolution, it maintains essentially the same semantic structure as before. The novelty is only in the way the new context is foregrounding certain frame-semantic elements at the expense of others, as well as the manner, in which what could be described as the concept's inherent semantics interplays with other conceptual frames and, last but not least, its salience and pragmatic significance in the revolutionary discourse.

Our overall approach to the analysis of the political discourse concepts is based on frame-semantic analysis⁷. Yet, as our previous studies demonstrate⁸ there is more than one frame that is at play, when it comes to the way concepts function in the discourse and not only the core, but often also the non-core elements of the frame underlying the concept appear to be essential for understanding the concept's semantic structure and the way the language semantics are shaped by meaning structures located outside of language proper, in the domain of the semiotics of culture (beliefs, values, religious traditions etc.). The material that we have collected for the purposes of our study of the concept QIṢĀṢ in the context of the Egyptian revolutionary discourse turned out to be so rich that it now

appears to be impossible to address all aspects in a single paper in view of the size constraints and we will, therefore, present it as a series of articles, one of which has already come out of print and explores the relationship between QIṢĀṢ and other key value concepts that featured as part of the revolutionary slogans, namely, ḤURRIYA (freedom), ‘ADĀLA (justice) and KARĀMA (dignity)⁹.

This paper will address the functioning of QIṢĀṢ in the Egyptian revolutionary discourse in the context of three most frequent attributive collocations with adjectives ‘*ādil* (just), *sarī*’ (speedy, fast), ‘*ājil* (immediate) and *nājiz* (prompt, complete).

2. JUST RETALIATION

QIṢĀṢ often occurs in collocation with an attributive ‘*ādil* (just). This is particularly characteristic for news items describing rallies demanding *qiṣāṣ li-š-šuhadā*’ (retaliation for the martyrs), cf.:

lam tamurr siwā sā‘āt ‘alā al-ḥukm ḥattā ḥarajat masīra fī al-qāhira wa talathā ba‘d yawm wāḥid muzāhara fī al-iskandariya tunaddid bi-tahāwun wa tuṭālib bi-*qiṣāṣ* ‘*ādil* yuṣaddid ‘uqūbat šurtīyeyn qatalā muwāṭinan dūna ḡanb¹⁰

[a few] hours had not passed since the verdict until a procession came out in Cairo and a demonstration followed it a day after in Alexandria denouncing complacency and demanding a *just* QIṢĀṢ [that would] strengthen punishment of the two policemen [who] killed an innocent (lit. without guilt) citizen

While as of mid January 2015 Google search returned 31,600 results for *al-qiṣāṣ al-‘ādil* (the just retaliation, *def. form*), the indefinite form *qiṣāṣ ‘ādil* ([a] just retaliation, *indef. form*) returned only 3,570 results¹¹. The phrase does not accept negation except for a very specific set of contexts. The Google search for standard negation *al-qiṣāṣ ḡayr al-‘ādil* has returned no results, while for the indefinite form *qiṣāṣ ḡayr ‘ādil* it showed only 8 results. Syntactically, the definite form in Arabic mostly functions as direct object, subject, or a Genitive attribute (e.g. *jum‘at al-qiṣāṣ al-‘ādil* – Friday of just retaliation), while the indefinite one appears in the predicative position¹². In the latter case, the sentences most often may be structured as *X [is] a just retaliation for Y*, less frequent are more complicated cases with indefinite *qiṣāṣ* featuring in Genitive case, e. g. 90 % *min jarāim al-qatl al-mumanhaj li-s-suhufiyīn dūna qiṣāṣ* (90 % of systematic murder crimes of journalists [are] without retaliation)¹³. The contexts where negation does occur are pragmatically limited to ironic and polemical ones. These observations lead us to the following conclusions: (1) the notion of JUSTICE is part of the semantic structure of QIṢĀṢ and the adjective ‘*ādil* (just) is used as attributive with *qiṣāṣ* merely to reinforce this meaning component – (al)- *qiṣāṣ* (al)- ‘*ādil* is not a type (a subset) of QIṢĀṢ, but QIṢĀṢ *proper*, the attribute ‘*ādil* in the discourse serves a pragmatic purpose¹⁴; (2) pragmatically, QIṢĀṢ features about ten times more often as a *subject of demand* compared to factual statements, i. e., speakers are ten times more likely to *ask* for QIṢĀṢ then to *assert* that it has actually been performed.

While we have been writing this piece, a dramatic change has occurred in the Google search counts for one of the collocations that we study in this paper, which happened within a period of slightly over one month. As of 24 February, 2015, the score for the indefinite form of the noun phrase *qiṣāṣ ‘ādil* (just QIṢĀṢ) went up to 69,300 results, while for the definite form it showed only an insignificant increase (33,100 results)¹⁵. The updated figure for the indefinite form includes 1,370 reposts of essentially the same news item quoting a Twitter message by an Egyptian oppositional politician Ḥamdīn Sabāḥī on the Egyptian air force retaliatory attack on ISIS in Libya¹⁶. The nature of many other more recent posts in the selection is similar to the following: *i‘dām ‘iṣābat al-iḥwān qiṣāṣ ‘ādil* (death penalty for the [Muslim] Brotherhood gang is a just retaliation)¹⁷; *i‘dām qatalat*

dubāt kardāsa qiṣāṣ ‘ādil min al-qaḍā’ (death penalty for the killers of officers of Ker-dasa is a just retaliation from the judiciary)¹⁸. For all their relative scarcity, entries with the indefinite form related to President Mursi period are similar in nature¹⁹, highlighting the persistent public perception of a *just* government as the one capable to duly *punish* the offenders. The 20-fold increase in texts *asserting that QIṢĀṢ has been performed* compared to effective decline in the number of texts *demanding QIṢĀṢ to be performed*²⁰ may signify the change in discourse formation: the rapid come back of the authoritarian self-congratulatory rhetoric that had dominated the public discussion during the Mubarak period.

Contexts could be found, where nominations *qiṣāṣ* and *‘idāla* (justice) feature as full synonyms. Cf. the following two items, one of which represents a news article title and the other the body of the news item both referring to the same event²¹:

- (1) 90 % min jarāim al-qatl al-mumanhaj li-ṣ-ṣuḥufiyīn dūna qiṣāṣ – 90 % of systematic murder crimes of journalists [are left] without retaliation;
- (2) ... inna al-amr al-akṭar iṭāratan li-l-qalaq yakmun fī al-iḥṣā’iyāt aṣ-ṣādira ‘an al-lajna ad-duwaliya li-ḥimāyat aṣ-ṣuḥufiyīn bi-anna 90 % min al-qatala lam yatimm taqḍimuhum li-l-‘idāla
... the most troubling matter lies in statistics issued by the International Committee for the protection of journalists [which say] that 90 % of killers have not been brought to justice.

It is obvious that nominations *taqḍīm li-l-‘adāla* (bringing to justice) and *qiṣāṣ* in the two segments refer to the same event, and, hence, *‘adāla* and *qiṣāṣ* in this context are treated by the author as fully synonymous. The cited news article is largely based on an English original, which allows to match Arabic to source-language nominations: *dūna qiṣāṣ* matches the phrase *‘get away with it’*, *‘90 % min al-qatala lam yatimm taqḍimuhum li-l-‘adāla’* corresponds to the English phrase *‘90 % of murderers walking free’*, while the English segment *‘370 journalists have been murdered in direct retaliation for their work’* has been translated as *‘370 ṣuḥufiyan qutilū (...) fī-intiqām mubāṣir li-qiyāmihim bi-‘amalihim’*²². In the latter segment, an apparent negative evaluation embedded in the English word *retaliation* has prompted the Arab journalist to refrain from translating it as *qiṣāṣ*, and to use Arabic *intiqām* (revenge) instead²³.

In the following paragraph QIṢĀṢ is not only contrasted to the notion of (in)JUSTICE expressed as *ẓulm*²⁴, but appears to be somewhat superior to *‘adāla*, which in this context seems to be used in a more narrow sense (*criminal prosecution*), cf.:

‘indamā yaṭgā aẓ-ẓulm wa tata’ahḥar al-‘adāla, ḥīnamā yaḡīb mabda’ al-qiṣāṣ li-yatalāṣṭi aṣ-ṣu’ūr bi-l-amn ḥīnamā yatakarrar al-ḥādīṭ wa lā yataḥarrak aḥad lā tandahiṣ ḥīnamā tarā al-muwāṭinīn wa qad taḥawwalū li-quḍāt wa jallādīn fī al-waqt nafsīhi li-tasūd šarī‘at al-gāb bayn an-nās²⁵

When the injustice is excessive, and justice is late, when the law disappears, and the principle of QIṢĀṢ is obliterated so that the feeling of security vanishes, when the incident is repeated and no one moves, don’t be surprised when you see citizens having turned into judges and executioners at the same time, so that the law of the jungle prevails among the people.

QIṢĀṢ here comes at the conclusion of a list of nominations representing various aspects of JUSTICE and is even elevated to the status of an overarching principle of some sort. The author of the article then goes on describing in much detail the lynching by villagers of two thugs (*baltagiya*)²⁶, who came from outside and settled in the village and had been then engaged in criminal activities and harassed the locals for a long time, ‘which has raised the ire and wrath of the people so that they issued a summary verdict on QIṢĀṢ’ (*mimmā zāda min ḥanaq al-ahālī wa ḡaḍabihim fa-aṣdarū ḥukmahum al-jamā‘ī bi-l-qiṣāṣ*)²⁷. The villagers repeatedly attempted to seek redress from local authorities and alert police, but to no avail. The wrath of the villagers is described as a *just* one, while the

act of punishment, however barbaric and unlawful it may appear²⁸, is described as an act of QIṢĀṢ, which is framed as the right episode to make the story complete, just like a long story about sickness would be best completed by an episode of death or recovery. The author's criticism is aimed not at the purport of the act but the manner, in which it was performed, particularly, the fact that the citizens had to perform their retaliation *li-anfusihim* (for themselves) or *bi-aydihim* (by their own hands), not through the agency of a public institution. The journalist is also displeased with the public manner of the execution – ‘*alā mar’ā wa masma’ al-jamī ‘ haṣṣatan al-atfāl alladīna iṣṭaffū li-ru’yat hādā al-mašhad ad-damayī wa šarak fihi al-ba’d minhum* (on the hearing and sight of all, including, children, who lined up to see the bloody scene and some of them participated in it). The latter phrase is attributed to a local female teacher, who has also described this act of retaliation as *jarīma* (crime). The local security chief, while commenting on the event warned the villagers, that –

‘*inda tammakunihim min al-qabḍ ‘alā ayy baltaḡī darūrat at-tamahhul wa taqdīmihi li-l-‘adāla li-taṭbīq al-qiṣāṣ al-‘ādil wa infāḍ al-qānūn badlan min an-nayl min hā’ulā’ al-baltaḡiya wa al-fatḵ bihim ḥattā lā yataḥawwal al-mujtama’ ilā ḡāba*²⁹
if they manage to capture any thug, it is necessary for them (lit. the necessity is) to take respite and bring him to justice for the performance of the *just* QIṢĀṢ and the enforcement of the law instead of harming and killing these thugs so that the society does not transform into a jungle

All actors featuring in the article, including *villagers*, who committed the act of QIṢĀṢ, the *local teacher* and the *law enforcement officer*, and, notably, the *author* of the article appear to be in agreement about one thing, namely, that in situations as described in the article, QIṢĀṢ just *has* to be performed. Situations that call for QIṢĀṢ to be performed are the ones that involve violence. All actors appeared to be in agreement that such situation had indeed taken place. Yet, the teacher described the incident as a *crime* and the law enforcement officer's comment, although presupposing that QIṢĀṢ is a necessity, argues for a different manner, in which it has to be performed in the future, namely, through the formal institutions of justice. Although the villagers in this feature article do not speak for themselves, their presumed line of argument is reflected in the manner of the author's account of the incident. It hinges on the idea that justice system had either been too slow to react or simply failed, which prompted the villagers to perform QIṢĀṢ *with their own hands*. Characteristically, the law enforcement officer also shows concern over the time factor: he is insisting on the necessity of *tamahhul* (respite, delay) for the JUSTICE to be achieved. The word ‘*adāla* in this segment features in two senses: instrumental one, referring to the institutions of justice (criminal prosecution, courts) and a broader ethical one. For, the phrase *al-qiṣāṣ al-‘ādil* (just retaliation) is not necessarily interpreted as ‘performed through the agency of the formal justice system’. Although the law enforcement officer might have preferred precisely this interpretation, the villagers probably would argue that, as the formal justice system had failed them, their act of retaliation was also *just*. Consequently, among the two closely related concepts QIṢĀṢ and ‘ADĀLA it is the former one that appears to be beyond any argument, while the latter depends on contingencies such as time, the availability of means etc., which may also be a matter of individual opinion and interpretation. QIṢĀṢ, hence, functions as a stronger *moral imperative*, a *value* whose validity all concerned parties, despite their disagreement, do not dare question.

In frame semantics terms, QIṢĀṢ evokes situations with a set of frame elements similar to those of Revenge frame on the Framenet³⁰, including the core elements – Offender, Injury, Injured Party, Avenger and Punishment. The frame refers to situations that happen at what could be described as social micro level, i. e. the level that involves only the immediate participants. The inclusion of the ‘ADĀLA concept expands the scope of discussion to a social macro level – that of the society at large, including the role of public

institutions such as law enforcement and courts, allowing for the discussion of issues of broader public concern, such as *legality* vs. *societal disorder* (cf. the notion of the *law of jungle*)³¹. The projection of ADĀLA on the situation as discussed in the cited text changes nothing in the core structure of QIṢĀṢ as described above. It incorporates it, builds on it, while elaborating on some of the non-core elements of the frame, namely, Instrument and Manner, in the language of the cited Framenet description³².

3. SPEEDY RETALIATION

There is ample linguistic evidence both within what we have described as the discourse of the Egyptian revolution and in other genres of Arabic texts that QIṢĀṢ is generally expected to be performed in a *speedy* manner. Procrastination in the dispensation of justice, on the contrary, is often described as harmful to social peace and an incentive to further growth of crime. The discourse of the Arab Spring seems to pay far less attention to the notion of the *quality* of justice and attendant costs of it, including, notably, the time cost. The demand for a speedy QIṢĀṢ is a frequent occurrence in the language of political slogans during street protest, cf.:

wa ṭālab al-mutazāhirūn bi-dawla madaniya wa qiṣāṣ *sarī*‘ min al-qatala wa al-fāsidīn and taḥrīr ajhizat ad-dawla...³³
and the demonstrators demanded a civil state and *speedy* QIṢĀṢ against the killers and corruptionists and cleaning the state agencies...

Aside from *sarī*‘ (fast, speedy) there are at least two other adjectives that frequently co-occur with QIṢĀṢ in the revolutionary discourse: *‘ājil* (fast, immediate) and *nājiz* (full, complete, prompt). The semantic difference between the three adjectives is slight, which is attested by the infrequent co-occurrence of any two of these adjectives in collocation with QIṢĀṢ³⁴. Cf. a few examples:

qālat ad-duktūra Karīma al-Ḥafanāwī inna dimā’ šuhadā’ ṭawrat 25 yanāyir lan taḍī’ muṣṭiratan ilā annahum mustamirrūn min ajl *qiṣāṣ* *‘ājil* min mubārak alladī yajib am yuhākam ‘alā kull aš-šuhadā’ alladīna saqaṭū fī ṭawrat yanāyir³⁵
Dr. Karīma al-Ḥafanāwī said that the blood of martyrs of January 25 revolution will not be wasted, having pointed out that they (*probably in reference to her political party*) continue for the sake of an immediate QIṢĀṢ against Mubarak who has to be tried for all the martyrs who fell in January 25 revolution.

The adjective *‘ājil* probably conveys the idea of *urgency* as compared to other adjective on our list. The phrase *al-qiṣāṣ ‘ājil* often occur in texts justifying political violence. Echoing the famous Islamist slogan *Islām huwa al-ḥall* (Islam is the solution), an article titled *al-qiṣāṣ al-‘ājil huwa al-ḥall* (immediate QIṢĀṢ is the solution) calls for *sur‘at taṭbīq al-qānūn* (a speedy application of law) over the members of anti-government Islamist rebellion in Sinai underscoring the *urgency* of the matter by claiming that *lā badīla siwā an taqūm ad-dawla bi-ḍ-ḍarb bi-yad min ḥadīd li-l-qaḍā’ ‘alayhim* (*there is no choice for the state but to deal a blow by a fist [lit. hand] of iron to get done with them*)³⁶. Speediness of QIṢĀṢ also implies simplicity, cf.:

badlan min an yakūn al-qiṣāṣ *an-nājiz aysar* ahdāf aṭ-ṭawra wa *asra ‘ahā* taḥaqquqan waqa’ ṭunā’ī al-ḥukm al-‘askarī wa al-madanī fī ḥaṭa’ fāḍih *‘indamā ta‘āmal ma‘a malaff jarā’im* rumūz al-‘ahd al-bā’id bad’an bi-ra’s an-niṣām ḥusnī mubārak wa intihā’an bi-aḍnābihī min al-balṭagiya wa ṣuḡār al-fāsidīn kamā law kān ta‘āmal ma‘a jarīmat naṣl waqa’at fī otobīs naql *‘ām aw ḥadīṭ murūr...*³⁷

Instead of [for] the *prompt* QIṢĀṢ to be the *easiest* and the *speediest* in achievement of the goals of the revolution, the military civilian duumvirate fell into a fatal error when [it] treated the file of crimes of the symbols³⁸ of the bygone era beginning with the head of the

regime Hosni Mubarak and ending with its tails including the thugs³⁹ and small corruptionists as if it [would be] treating a crime of pickpocketing that happened on a public bus or a traffic accident...

It is characteristic not only of this example but of the entire sample that we have assembled for the purposes of this study using collocations of *qiṣāṣ* with adjectives ‘*ādil* (just), *sarī*’ (speedy), *nājiz* (complete, prompt) that they all appear to be built on a presupposition that the nature of crime is clear and there is no doubt whatsoever as to who is the offender.

The adjective *nājiz* (complete, prompt) is semantically somewhat more complicated compared to the former two adjectives. The source meaning of the root *n-j-z* is ‘accomplish, fulfill, complete’, the temporal semantics is part of the presupposition: whatever has been completed must have had some length, which by completion was *cut short*, hence the idea of *promptness*. Cf.:

inna al-‘adāla al-intiqāliyya yajib an tatimm ‘abra qānūn wa laysa hadafuhā al-intiqām bal, *qiṣāṣ nāji* ‘ yurīḥ qulūb ahālī aš-šuhadā’ wa al-mawjū‘īn...⁴⁰

The transitional justice has to be performed through law and its goal is not revenge but *complete (prompt) QIṢĀṢ* [that would] relieve families of martyrs and those who feel pain (*lit. pained ones*)...

Here the adjective *nājiz* is used to reinforce the meaning, which is already part of *QIṢĀṢ* semantics, i. e. the capacity to *bring (prompt or complete) relief* from moral pain⁴¹.

All three adjectives do not function as definitive attributes but rather as intensifiers, for the idea of *speediness* that is embedded in the semantics of *QIṢĀṢ*. The adjectives in collocation with the noun *qiṣāṣ* do not accept negation: phrases **al-qiṣāṣ (al-)ğayr (as-)sarī*’ or **qiṣāṣ ğayr sarī*’ return no results on Google search, while *al-qiṣāṣ al-muta’ahḥir* (the delayed *QIṢĀṢ def.*) showed 3 and *qiṣāṣ muta’ahḥir* (delayed *QIṢĀṢ indef.*) – only one result, which renders them rather anomalous. A *speedy QIṢĀṢ*, hence, is not a type of *QIṢĀṢ* but rather *QIṢĀṢ* proper. Consider also the following example: *inna al-qiṣāṣ min al-mujrimīn huwa aqṣar aṭ-ṭuruq li-taḥīr al-bilād min al-fasād* (*QIṢĀṢ* against (*lit. from*) the criminals [is] the shortest way of clearing the country from corruption)⁴². The phrase, which contains no attribute explicitly conveying the idea of *speediness* is obviously built on a presupposition that may be formulated as: *it takes little time to perform qiṣāṣ* or, in other words, *qiṣāṣ is speedy*. In line with this presupposition, *QIṢĀṢ* is presented in the cited text as some sort of *magic bullet* – an instrument that may bring about a *quick* solution to complicated (and notably, *protracted*) social problems.

It is notable as well that the notion of *speediness* in relation to justice does not seem to have a negative connotation. An April 6 movement activist, ‘Alā’ ‘Abd-ul-Fattāḥ, along with 25 others was arrested for protesting against the newly re-introduced restrictions on the freedom of assembly in the early post-coup Egypt⁴³. The activists were then submitted to *al-muḥākama al-‘ājila* (speedy trial)⁴⁴ and an activist’s mother commented on it saying: *lā yūjid ladaynā qaḍā’ ‘ājil fī miṣr wa lākin yūjid qaḍā’ yulqī al-qabḍ bi-šakl ‘ašwā’ī ‘alā al-muwāṭinīn* (there is no speedy/immediate [discharge of] justice in Egypt, but there is justice that randomly arrests citizens). Obviously the two parts of the utterance are contrasted as *normative/commendable vs. abnormal/deplorable*, and the first part is based on a presupposition that *speedy Justice is good*.

In the media discourse, the demand for a *speedy QIṢĀṢ* is often contrasted to the description of *justice system* as prone to procrastination. Specific lexis combining temporal semantics with negative evaluation such as *taqā’us* (sluggishness, failure to do something) often feature in such contexts, cf.:

*al-taqā’us fī jam’ adillat qatl aš-šuhadā’ ḥattā ba’d al-i’lān ad-dastūrī yu’akkid ḍu’f rağbat man bi-s-sulṭa fī al-qiṣāṣ*⁴⁵

Sluggishness in collecting evidence of the killing of martyrs even after the Constitutional Declaration confirms the weakness of desire [on the part] of [those] who are in power in [performing] QIṢĀṢ.

The idea of the desirability of *speediness* may feature in a text discussing justice even without QIṢĀṢ being explicitly mentioned, cf.:

... fa-qīmat al-‘adl ta‘lū wa tazīd wa tastaqīr fī ḍamīr al-mujtama‘ ‘indamā ta‘tī aḥkām al-qaḍā‘ nājiza sarī‘a lā yuqayyiduhā tabāṭī al-ijrā‘āt wa lā tu‘aṭṭiluhā ‘aqabāt šakliya aw mu‘awwiqāt ‘amaliyya⁴⁶.

... for the value of justice goes up and increases and stabilizes in the conscientiousness of the society when the verdicts of judiciary come prompt and speedy, and the slowness of procedures does not restrict them and formal obstacles and practical impediments do not disrupt them.

This contraposition between the *speedy* QIṢĀṢ and *sluggish* formal justice system, a recurring theme in the discourse of the revolution, contributes to creating tensions between the notions of (formal) JUSTICE and QIṢĀṢ.

The moral imperative of *speedy* QIṢĀṢ is so deeply embedded in the Arab culture that it functions as part of the interpretative narrative used to make sense of the formative events of Arab history. It is a common belief that the disagreement about how soon QIṢĀṢ had to be performed may have led to the most important schism in Islamic history, cf. a modern account of the event by a prominent Egyptian 20th century author Ṭaha Ḥusain:

tawallā al-imām ‘alī bnu abī ṭālib al-ḥilāfa fī zurūf instiṭnā‘iyya ḥayṭu kānat al-fitna ta‘šifu bi-bilād al-islām, wa qad sāla ‘alā arḍihā dam ḥalīfatihā. wa kāna amāma ‘alī al-kaṭīr min al-mahām al-jisām allatī lā taḥtamalu at-ta‘jīl, wa min aṭḥarīhā al-qiṣāṣ min qatalat ‘uṭmān, ḡayru anna al-imāma ‘aliyyan kāna yarā ḍarūrat al-intizār rayṭanā yuḥkimu sayṭaratahu ‘alā ad-dawla, ammā al-mu‘āwiya bna abī sufyan wa man šāya‘ahu fa-arādū al-qiṣāṣ as-sarī‘. wa ḍālika kāna ra’s al-fitna allatī rāḥa ḍahīyatahā ḥayru al-muslimīn, wa taḥawwala bi-hā niẓām al-ḥukm min aš-šūrā ilā al-wirāṭa wa zahara aš-šī‘a – anṣār ‘alī bni abī ṭālib wa al-ḥawārij – mu‘āriḍūhu – ka-aḥzāb siyāsiyya qabla an tattaḥaḍu maṣḥa ijtīmā‘iyya wa dīniyya, lakinna an-natīja al-akṭar ilāman hiya anna kaṭīran min an-nakabāt allatī ta‘šifu al-yawma bi-l-muslimīn ta‘ūdu juḍūruhā ilā tilka al-fitna allatī mā zālat juḍwatuhā mut-taqada ḥattā al-yawm⁴⁷.

Imam Ali Ibn Abu-Talib assumed the [office of] Caliph in exclusive circumstance while FITNA was raging through the country of Islam and the blood of its Caliph had been spilled on its land. And in front of Ali were many big tasks that would not endure delay, one of the most important of which was QIṢĀṢ against (lit. from) the killers of [Caliph] Othman and those who joined him, however Imam Ali was seeing the necessity of waiting until he is in full control over the state. Meanwhile Muawiya Ibn Abu-Sufyan and those who joint him wanted a speedy QIṢĀṢ. And that was the head of FITNA, which claimed the lives of the best of Muslims, and the regime of rule had thereby transformed from consultative to hereditary, and Shia emerged – the supporters of Ali Ibn Abu-Talib, and the Kharijites – his opponents – as political parties before they assumed a social and religious touch. But the most painful result is that many of the troubles that rage today on Muslims, their roots go back to that FITNA, whose firebrand is still burning to this day.

The formal justice system may often be presented as an instrument for performing QIṢĀṢ, while the *promptness* of retaliation is justified by the need to mitigate a negative psychological effect, cf.:

kamā akkad ‘alā ḍarūrat taḥqīq al-‘adāla wa ittīḥād al-ijrā‘āt wa sann al-qawānīn al-lāzima wa as-sarī‘a fī al-qiṣāṣ kay tabrud qulūb ahālī aš-šuhadā‘ wa yataḥaqqaq al-itsqrār al-manšūd⁴⁸ [He] also stressed the need to implement justice and take measures and adopt the necessary and *speedy laws* in [respect to] QIṢĀṢ in order for the hearts of the relatives of martyrs to cool down and the desired stability to be achieved.

Note the metaphoric ‘hot hearts’, which are supposed to be cooled by QIṢĀṢ. The causative link between the notion of HEAT and *speedy* action could also be illustrated by examples from other contexts: a rubric on urgent matters in a media publication, for instance, may be called *qaḍāya sāhina* (hot issues)⁴⁹.

While the notion of *justice delayed as justice denied* in the English-language debate on justice, seems to be similar to the idea of *immediacy* associated with QIṢĀṢ, there is a significant difference between the two. Different elements including both the core and non-core ones are foregrounded in the English (and generally Western) discussion on *timely* justice. *Trial* is the key locus and instrument of Justice in the English-language notion of the *speediness* of Justice. It is also notable that *speediness* in the Western legal tradition is seen as serving the interests of the defendant⁵⁰, while the QIṢĀṢ-centered discussion strongly foregrounds Punishment as the outcome of the process and the Victim and the Victim’s next of kin as the key protagonists. Cf.:

al-qiṣāṣ al-‘ajil yā siyādat ar-ra’īs ya’nī ḥaqq ahālī aš-šuhadā’ wa laysa amwāl wa ḥajj wa ‘umra wa ta’wīdāt⁵¹

The immediate QIṢĀṢ, Mr. President, *is a right of the relatives* of the martyrs and not money and *hajj* and *umra*⁵² and compensations.

QIṢĀṢ is presented here as serving the interests of victim’s next of kin first and foremost. It also appears to be superior to other, milder, forms of justice.

The prominence of QIṢĀṢ in the set of related concepts such as JUSTICE is such that its essential semantic elements may be evoked even when the concept does not feature explicitly in the text. The following text that explicitly mentions JUSTICE and not QIṢĀṢ, features three essential elements associated with the latter: *speediness*, *deterrence* of further crimes, and the *psychological relief* for those affected, cf.:

wa la’alla al-ḥukm aš-šādir munḍu yawmayn bi-i’ḍām 26 irhābiyan yakūn bidāyatan ḥaqqīya li-rad’ kull man yuhaddid amn al-waṭan .. wa yaḏill as-su’āl kayfa tataḥaqqaq al-‘adāla fī asra’ waqt li-ya’ūd al-amān wa as-sakīna fī nufūs al-maṣriyīn?⁵³

And perhaps the verdict issued two days ago on the death penalty for 26 terrorists will be the true beginning for *detering* everyone, who is threatening the national security ... and the question remains how may the justice be achieved *in the nearest time* for *the calm and quite to return to the souls* of the Egyptians?

A frequently reoccurring theme in the revolutionary discourse is the idea that the adjudication of cases that emerged in the context of the revolution needs to be *speeded up* to ensure a *speedy* QIṢĀṢ, which is seen as essential for the progress of Revolution – an instrument that will quickly move the Egyptian society from the past to a better future. Cf.:

kulla mā narjū taḥṣiṣ dawā’ir kāfiya tatafarrag li-nazr ḥāḍihi al-qaḍāyā min ajl sur’at al-injāz l-iḡlāq malaffāt al-māḍī wa at-tawajjuh naḥwa al-mustaqbal al-afḍal bi-ḍni-llāh⁵⁴

All what we ask for [is] to designate sufficient [number of] departments [specifically] dedicated to the review of these cases for the speediness of delivery and in order *to close the files of the past and turn toward the better future* with God’s permission.

Here is the same idea expressed in a slightly different manner:

nurīd as-sur’at fī taḥqīq al-‘adāla wa al-qiṣāṣ li-kay narmī ḥalfā zahrinā ḥāḍihi al-ḥiqba al-baḡīḍa min tāriḥ miṣr wa li-nakṣif ‘an sawā’idinā wa na’mal ‘alā raf’ miṣr min ḥāḍā al-ḥāḍīd allāḍī agraqa miṣr fī al-fasād wa al-mufsidīn⁵⁵.

We want *speed* in ensuring justice and QIṢĀṢ in order to throw behind our backs this abhorrent era of Egypt’s history and roll up our sleeves and work on raising Egypt from this abyss which has drowned Egypt in corruption and corruptionists.

In this context a *speedy* QIṢĀṢ apparently lends its momentum to the Revolution, which is understood as a purposeful forward-going movement of the Egyptian people⁵⁶. QIṢĀṢ may even be presented as an instrument of a broad social reform:

kamā anna *al-qīṣāṣ iṣlāḥ* li-anna isti'ṣāl al-fāṣidīn wa al-mujrimīn ya'nī tajhīz al-arḍ li-waḍ' asās al-binā' as-salīm min nāḥiya wa yuwajjih risālat rad' li-ayy mas'ūl turāwidūhu nafsuhu 'alā al-fasād ba'd an yata'akkad inna miqṣalat al-muḥāsiba mawjūda wa tantazir raqabat ayy fāsīd⁵⁷.

QIṢĀṢ [is] also reform because the eradication of the corruptionists and the criminals means the preparation of ground for laying the foundation for a healthy (*also* 'whole, sound) construction, on the one hand, and [it] sends a message of deterrence to any official [whose] soul/self is tempting him to [engage in] corruption as he is convinced that the guillotine of accountability exists and is waiting for the neck of any corruptionist.

From that perspective, it is clear why a prominent revolutionary Islamic preacher Mazhar Ṣāhīn named an *immediate* QIṢĀṢ the key demand of Revolution:

naḥnu mustamirrūn fī ṭawratinā ḥattā taḥqīq jamī' al-maṭālib wa 'alā ra'sihā *al-qīṣāṣ al-'ājil*⁵⁸

we continue our revolution until the fulfilment of all our demands and foremost (lit. at the head of them) among them the *immediate* QIṢĀṢ

4. CONCLUSIONS

QIṢĀṢ is the embodiment of the idea of *natural justice*, which also is believed to be *divine*, as it is sanctioned by the Islamic tradition. Qualities that are believed to be immanent to QIṢĀṢ, which in fact are encoded in the Arab culture and reflected in the discourse, include *speediness*, which by extension also implies *easiness* and *completeness*: once it's done it will bring a *relief* to those affected by crime and *forestall* more crime. QIṢĀṢ is essentially egalitarian as it is meant to re-instate a sense of balance in the community and to give everyone their due by privileging the Victim and his or her next of kin and *empowering* them against the Offender. By way of contrast, 'ADĀLA (JUSTICE), which is associated with formal institutions of power, is non-egalitarian by definition⁵⁹. The Egyptian revolutionary discourse reflects a growing tension between the two concepts, and by privileging QIṢĀṢ and making it their key demand the revolutionaries challenge the powers that be and their *slow* JUSTICE system. They converted QIṢĀṢ effectively into an instrument of power struggle, which accounts for the high salience of the concept in the revolutionary discourse. The proponents of the authoritarian regime, on the contrary, hold the formal JUSTICE for an overarching value and argue that QIṢĀṢ, whose value they acknowledge as well should be done according to *their* rules. With the re-institution of the authoritarian regime, this tension is discursively overcome as the public discussion witnesses the comeback of the old self-congratulatory rhetoric, which proclaims QIṢĀṢ as something that has already been delivered, praise be to the authorities who did it promptly and will do it again, whenever the interests of national security (not the *blood of the martyrs* of revolution) would require that.

¹ Cf. a characteristic media article of 2 June, 2012 titled 'Mursi committing to retaliate for the martyrs of the revolution' (mursī yata'ahhad bi-l-qīṣāṣ li-ṣuhadā' aṭ-ṭawra) on Al-Jazeera.net – <http://www.aljazeera.net/mob/f6451603-4dff-4ca1-9c10-122741d17432/ee5af389-1dbb-4835-b696-6146cdd70af7>

² The phrase is cited in an article titled Culture of Retaliation and Revenge (*ṭaqāfat al-qīṣāṣ wa l-intiqām*) by an Egyptian journalist Rola Kharsa published by an electronic publication *al-Miṣrī al-Yawm*, 14.2.2012 and is attributed to an unidentified 'socialist, friend' of the author – <http://m.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/52941>

³ Which would be more often described as *ṭawrat yanāyir* (January Revolution) or the Revolution of Dignity.

⁴ Cf. a media article title on al-Miṣr al-Yawm *ḥālīd sa'īd min daḥiyat ta'ḍīb ilā muḥajjir ṭawrat al-qīṣāṣ min ad-dāḥiliya* (Khaled Said: from the victim of torture to the exploder of the revolution of retaliation against the [Ministry of] Interior) – <http://m.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/121627>

⁵ For some graphic imagery advertising August 2014 events tagged as Revolution of Retaliation see: <http://goo.gl/txoNuR>

⁶ FULŪL is a key term used for othering political opponents in the discourse of the Egyptian Arab Spring, initially used mainly in reference to the government officials and clients of the Ancien Régime, but later expanding its meaning and the range of reference. Cf. Alexander Bogomolov. Constructing Political Other in the Discourse of the Egyptian Arab Spring // Scripta Neophilologica Posnaniensia. Tom XIV, 2014.

⁷ Cf. of Charles J. Fillmore. Frames and the semantics of understanding. Quaderni di semantica. Vol. VI, no. 2, December 1985, pp. 222–254.

⁸ Cf., particularly, Alexander Bogomolov. Constructing Political Other in the Discourse of the Egyptian Arab Spring // Scripta Neophilologica Posnaniensia. Tom XIV, 2014, p. 29.

⁹ See: O. V. Bogomolov. Bread, Dignity, Justice and... Retaliation: the concept of QIṢĀṢ and the values of the Egyptian revolution // The Oriental Studies, 2014, № 67, pp. 20–38.

¹⁰ <http://m.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/121627>

¹¹ We have limited our search to Egyptian web resources only.

¹² We have discounted from our analysis the Accusative case indefinite form, which functions as a direct object, for it is graphically different from Nominative and Genitive case forms (it has the letter 'alif at the end of each word) and does interfere with search results that we discuss in this section.

¹³ A news article title on al-Yawm as-Sābi' newspaper – <http://goo.gl/m6A5c6>

¹⁴ For instance in the above example the illocutionary point is the demand for a *stronger* punishment, which is based on the presupposition that *just* QIṢĀṢ is the one that is *strong enough*.

¹⁵ We have noted that Google search results may vary over time and even during the same day, for instance, on 25 Feb 2015, the number was initially 62,300 and then dropped to 59,700, but such variations are anyway no where near the 20-fold increase that we have registered.

¹⁶ The significance of the Twitter post that could have led to its reprinting by every media outlet in Egypt seems to be that a well-known politician with revolutionary credentials and a certified opponent of Ḥusnī Mubārak regime was now congratulating the Air Force, and by extension the military establishment – the backbone of the president Abd-al-Fattāḥ as-Sīsī regime.

¹⁷ A news article title heading dated 28 April 2014, on al-Wafd website citing a local 'political activist' Muhammad Abū-Ḥāmid praising the verdict of Minya governorate court in Upper Egypt, which issued 37 death and 491 life imprisonment sentences for members and supporters of Muslim Brotherhood – <http://goo.gl/ANaHz1>

¹⁸ A news article title heading dated 3 February 2015 on Miṣr al-Balad website praising the death sentence for 183 defendants in the case of an assault on district police station at the village of Kerdasā, Giza governorate – <http://misralbalad.com/page.php?id=25493#.VO3yP3yUcT8>

¹⁹ Cf. news article titled *islām aš-šāṭir: ḥukm majzarat būr sa'īd qiṣāṣ 'ādil* (Islam aš-Šāṭir: the verdict on Port Said slaughter is a just retaliation) dated 26 January 2013 on Masress website – <http://www.masress.com/alnahar/102280>

²⁰ The little growth in the number of definite form *al-qiṣāṣ al-'ādil* occurrences effectively means that almost no new cases have been registered by the search engine during the period under review.

²¹ Here and in the paragraph that follows, we cite a news article by Rīm Abd-al-Ḥamīd published on 3 November 2014 on electronic newspaper al-Yawm as-Sābi' under the heading 'taqrīr duwalī: 90 % min jarāim al-qatl al-mumanhaj li-s-suḥufiyīn dūna qiṣāṣ' – <http://m2.youm7.com> + on-site search or <http://goo.gl/kZrUp0>

²² For the original English text see article '90 % of journalists' murderers across the world get away with it – report', The Guardian, 28 October 2014 – <http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2014/oct/28/journalist-safety-press-freedom>

²³ Note also the rendition of *qiṣāṣ* as 'legal retribution' in the pious English translation of the Quran (Saheeh – <http://quran.com/2>).

²⁴ There are several nominations in Arabic that express this idea with *ẓulm* being perhaps the most comprehensive one and very common in the religious discourse.

²⁵ A feature article titled *intiqām al-ahālī min al-balṭaḡiya* (people's revenge against thugs) published on al-Ahrām al-Yawmī on 8 September 2012 – <http://digital.ahram.org.eg/articles.aspx?Serial=1122056&eid=837>

²⁶ *balṭagiya* (pl., sing. *balṭagī* – lit. ax-holders), often translated as *thugs* in English. In the discourse of the recent Egyptian revolution this term is used mainly in reference to irregulars employed by the Mubarak regime to harass participants of the antigovernment rallies.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The two thugs were dragged along the streets of the village, slaughtered with knives, their arms and legs cut and, finally, hanged on the street light pillars.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ FrameNet is a web-based corpus based on the ideas of Charles J. Fillmore's frame semantics that contains description of the internal structure of various semantic frames that refer to situations, actions, events – cf. <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/home>. Cf. *Revenge* on the Framenet Frame Index – <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/index.php?q=frameIndex>

³¹ The scope of 'ADĀLA is of course much wider than that of QIṢĀṢ, as aside from situations related to violent crimes, it is applicable to any situation that may presuppose judgment of right and wrong, e. g. the distribution of goods or expenses (cf. *ḥiṣṣa 'ādila, qisṭ 'ādil* – a fair share, *taqsīm 'ādil* – a fair/just distribution).

³² We do not propose to treat Revenge frame description as fully corresponding to the frame structure of QIṢĀṢ; while some non-core elements of Revenge frame may appear to be extra-thematic or non-relevant altogether for QIṢĀṢ, the whole set of core elements and some non-core elements, including notably, Instrument and Manner, appear to be similar.

³³ Quotation from a news article on al-Miṣrī al-Yawm newspaper, dated 8 August 2011, enumerating three standard demands of the January 25, 2011 revolution that would appear on placards held by protesters – <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/102540>

³⁴ Google search has returned 5 results for *al-qīṣāṣ as-sarī 'wa an-nājiz*; 6 for *al-qīṣāṣ as-sarī 'wa al-'ājil*; 2 for *al-qīṣāṣ an-nājiz wa al-'ājil* and 49 for *al-qīṣāṣ al-'ājil wa an-nājiz*, which may be accounted for by the fact that *nājiz* has additional meaning component (complete), while the other two only express slightly different aspects of temporality.

³⁵ An appearance on aṭ-Ṭarīq TV channel by a prominent politician a co-founder of Kyfāya movement and the National Association for Change Karīma al-Ḥafanāwī – dated 13 August 2014 – i. e. just a week before a highly contested 20 August retrial of former President Mubarak – <http://www.atvsat.com/latest-news/item/53021>

³⁶ An op-ed article published on al-Ahrām daily newspaper on 25 November 2014 – <http://digital.ahram.org.eg/Community.aspx?Serial=1726025>

³⁷ From an op-ed article with a characteristic title *al-Qiṣāṣ Taḥrīr and Iṣlāḥ* (QIṢĀṢ – cleansing and reform/improvement) dated 7 July 2011 – <http://www.shorouknews.com/columns/view.aspx?cdate=07072011&id=51006460-fb78-48aa-9fad-a6671a551fb8>

³⁸ The idiom *rumūz* (symbols) *of smth.* e. g. *regime, political organization, historic period* is used in reference to leaders and most prominent figures associated with some entity or period.

³⁹ See footnote 26 above.

⁴⁰ News article dated 5 August 2014, titled *Ṣabāḥī: attafaq ma'a qānūn 'adāla intiqāliyya lā intiqāmiyya aw intiqā'iyya* (Sabahi: I agree with the law on transitional justice, not the revengeful nor the selective [one]) – <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/442821>

⁴¹ Pain of relatives, as we shall see below, is an essential part of the frame semantics of QIṢĀṢ.

⁴² From an op-ed article with a characteristic title *al-Qiṣāṣ Taḥrīr and Iṣlāḥ* (QIṢĀṢ – cleansing and reform/improvement) dated 7 July 2011 – <http://www.shorouknews.com/columns/view.aspx?cdate=07072011&id=51006460-fb78-48aa-9fad-a6671a551fb8>

⁴³ The story is related in a news article titled *iḥālat 26 nāṣiṭan siyāsiyyan baynahum Alā'* 'Abd-ul-Fattāḥ wa Aḥmad Māhir li-muḥākama 'ājila (The transfer of 26 political activists among them Alā' 'Abd-ul-Fattāḥ and Aḥmad Māhir to a speedy trial) published on 2 December 2013 – <http://www.masress.com/fjp/98669>; for mother's comments dated 14 March 2014 published on al-Badil website see: <http://goo.gl/MR60yw>

⁴⁴ This term frequently occurs in the 2011–2015 Egyptian media texts (19,800 results on Google search for *muḥākama 'ājila* – and 5,610 for *al-muḥākama al-'ājila*), it is essentially a technical term used in reference to an abridged procedure applied in simple cases and has nothing to do with the notion of *speedy trial* in the Western legal tradition as discussed below.

⁴⁵ The phrase is attributed to the relatives of martyrs killed during January 2011 events – published on 17 December 2012 – <http://albedaiiah.com/node/11586>

⁴⁶ An op-ed article dated 17 January 2013 – <http://www.gamalnassar.com/main/art.php?id=6&art=632>

⁴⁷ Ṭaha Ḥusayn. al-Fitna al-Kubra (al-juz ‘ at-ṭānī): ‘Alī wa Banūh. (The Great Fitna, Part 2: Ali and his Sons) – <http://www.hindawi.org/books/46307961/>

⁴⁸ From an article on Miṣr 11 website (www.masr11.com), the quotation is attributed to a ‘political analyst’ Muḥsin Ṣalabī – <http://goo.gl/8L8afM>

⁴⁹ See: <http://albedaiah.com/node/11586> for an article under this rubric.

⁵⁰ Cf. the notion of *speedy trial* in the US Constitution Sixth Amendment. *Speedy trial*, as described in the Sixth Amendment, is in fact only one of the many aspects that constitute a *fair trial*, others include public nature of the trial, impartial jury, the right to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation, to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, the right to defense, etc.

⁵¹ The phrase is attributed to Karīma al-Ḥafnāwī, a member of the oppositional National Association for Change and Social Justice Alliance – <http://www.cairoportal.com/story/126174>

⁵² *Hajj* is a regular annual pilgrimage to Mecca, also one of the five pillars of Islam (duty of every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it to be performed at least once in a lifetime), *Umrah* is a non-compulsory irregular minor pilgrimage; al-Ḥafnāwī is referring to a practice of sponsoring pilgrimage to holy places as a type of award of compensation by the government.

⁵³ <http://goo.gl/g6Y6N9>

⁵⁴ From an article published in al-Ahrām newspaper on 17 July 2011 titled *kalimat ḥaqq* (A Word of Truth) – <http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Columns/News/90086.aspx>

⁵⁵ <http://www.egyptianoasis.net/showthread.php?t=58345>

⁵⁶ Cf. Alexander Bogomolov. Constructing Political Other in the Discourse of the Egyptian Arab Spring // *Scripta Neophilologica Posnaniensia*. Tom XIV, 2014, p. 29.

⁵⁷ From an op-ed article with a characteristic title al-Qiṣāṣ Taṭhīr and Iṣlāḥ (QIṢĀṢ – cleansing and reform/improvement) dated 7 July 2011 – <http://www.shorouknews.com/columns/view.aspx?cdate=07072011&id=51006460-fb78-48aa-9fad-a6671a551fb8>

⁵⁸ The phrase is attributed to a prominent revolutionary Islamic preacher Maḥzar Ṣāhīn <http://www.el-balad.com/154193.aspx>

⁵⁹ In that sense it appears to be similar to the way Wierzbicka describes the pre-modern Anglo notion of Justice, cf. Anna Wierzbicka. *English: Meaning and Culture*. Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 158–159.