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Are the Islamists Still Relevant? An In-Depth Study of the Ideology and Methodology of the Phenomenon

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by

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I also want to thank my supervisor who guided me through this journey under tough circumstances. Thank you, sir, we made it.

Note: This is a humble effort in the field saturated by exemplary work. I would like this research to be read as a starting point in my journey towards learning and writing about political Islam. The readers are welcome to learn with me and reach out if they encounter a factual discrepancy or wish to engage in a discussion on the topic.

(In the Name of Allah)

ABSTRACT

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Professor Abdul Wahab Suri, Supervisor

Political Islam or Islamism was a rising ideology during the latter half of the 20th century. 9/11 lent a fatal blow to Islamism and damaged the reputation of the Islamists, resulting in the global war on terror enacted by the US. US-funded military dictatorships repressed Islamists as an extension of the policy in most of the Arab world for most of the first decade of 2000. The Arab Uprisings of 2011 brought the dictators to their knees and Islamists rose with popular support again with Ennahda of Tunisia and the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt gaining electoral victories. The next decade marked a fall in their popularity owing to several reasons. With the global political order currently undergoing a shift, democratic states struggling with upholding democratic ideals moving towards hybridization, and authoritarian states such as China gaining global prominence, the question that arises is whether Islamism is still relevant. This study will look at the political trajectory of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and conduct a deep reading of selected chapters from "*Islami Riyasat"* (Islamic State) Syed Abul A'la Maududi to understand the phenomenon. Both are trailblazers of modern revivalist political Islam and will be studied using democratization as a theoretical framework. The Muslim Brotherhood's activity, policy, literature, and organizational structure will help us identify the viability of the Islamist method for survival and success in today's political order. The chapters will be a guide towards understanding the basic ideological underpinnings of the movement. As a result of this research, we will be able to conclude that Muslim societies and their relationship with religion need a rereading, as a result of which the role of religion in the public sphere must be redefined. This will allow us to conclude that religion will always remain an influential part of society in Muslim communities, and thus Islamism, as defined by its ideologues, cannot be irrelevant, especially with its democratic tendencies.

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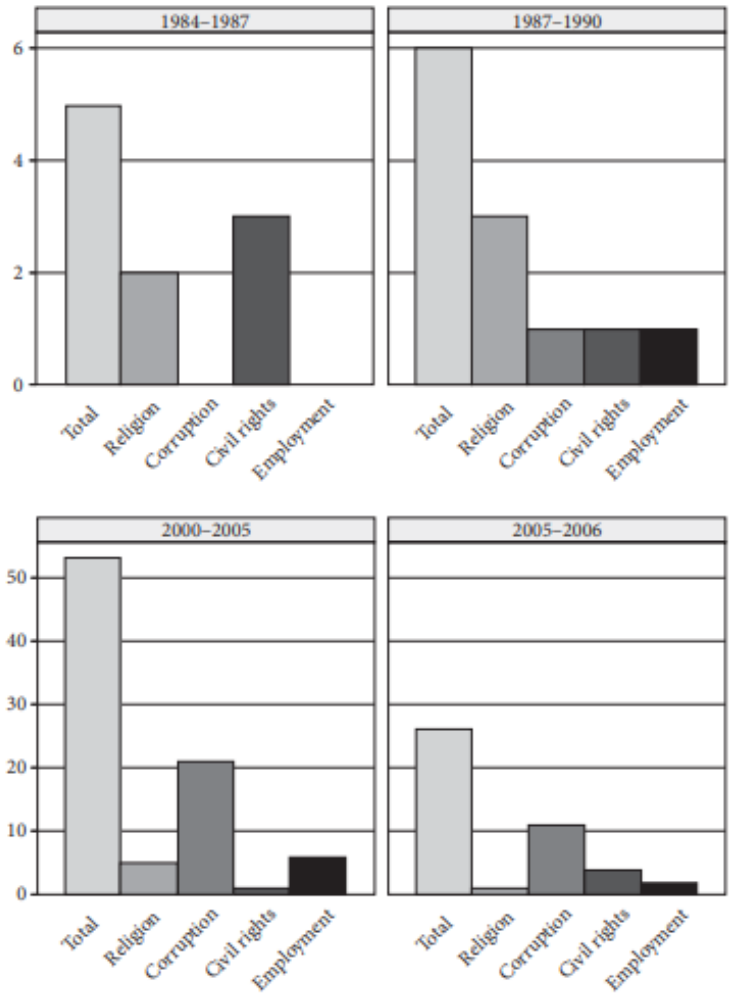

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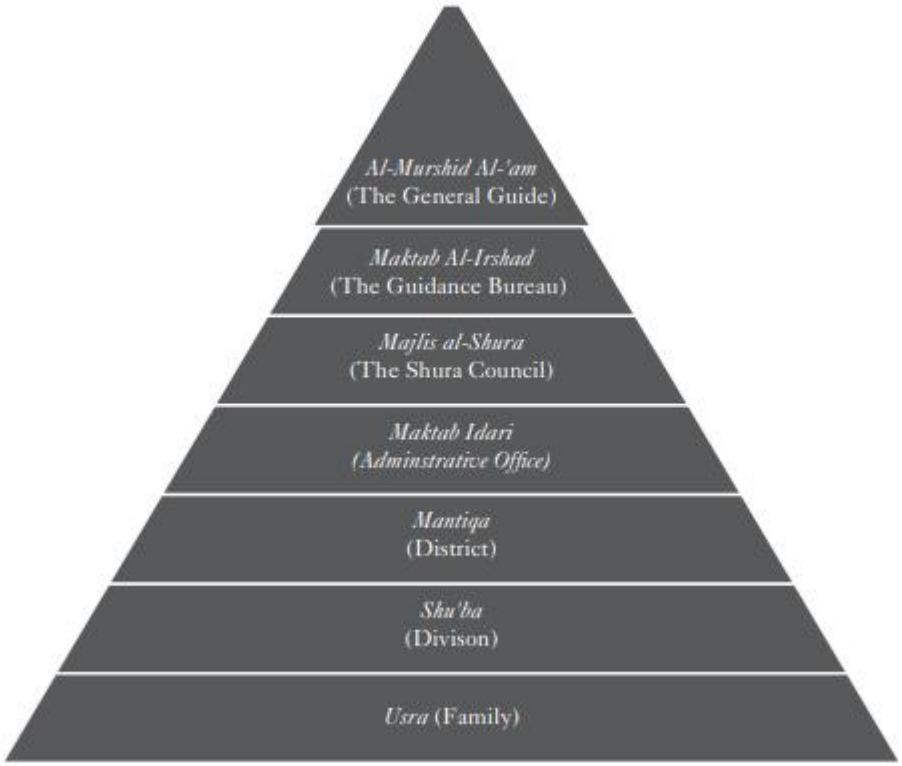
[1] John L. Esposito and Emad Eldin Shahin. The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics. Oxford, UK ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 488.



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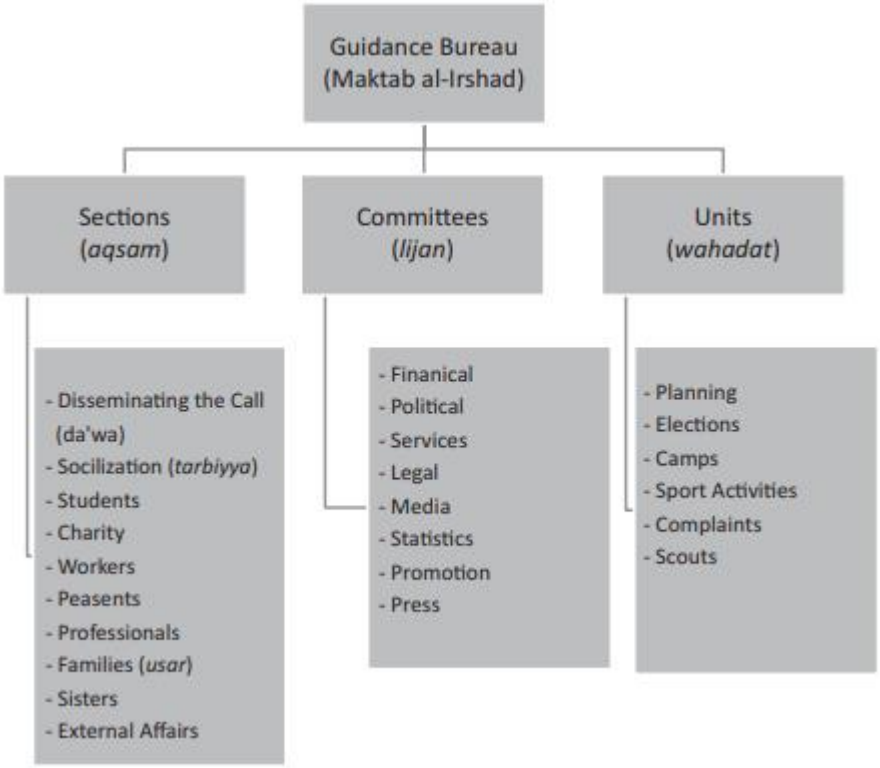
[2] Khalil Al-Anani, Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity, and Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Pp. 104.



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[3] Ibid. Pp. 105.

INTRODUCTION

Islamism is not a new phenomenon. Different versions of political Islam have existed throughout Islamic history. However, since the fall of the caliphate and the rise of the liberal democratic system emerging out of the European Enlightenment, the nature of political Islam took a unique form. Also known as revivalism, Muslim ideologues, frustrated by the social political, and moral colonization of the Muslim nations by the West, called for a return to the fundamental teachings of religion as prescribed by the Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. This ideology grew parallel to the Western influence on the society, culture, and politics of Muslim countries across the globe. This research aims to understand Islamism on its own terms by studying its ideology and methodology using a small but prominent and prestigious sample from the literary and political worlds of Islamism and answer the following research question: Is Pan-Islamism a possibility in the contemporary world?

The existing literature on the topic demonstrates a debate on the compatibility between Islam and Democracy. Writers' views have varied over the years but two overarching themes have emerged. The Islamic exceptionalism thesis provides an essentialist reading of Muslim societies and argues for the incompatibility of Islam and democracy based on varying theories of state-society relations, and authoritarian tendencies within Islam, concluding that Islam is resistant to modernity. In response, a school of theorists has sufficiently critiqued this thought. They argue for a contextualist reading of Muslim societies and believe there to be a possibility of reconciliation. My research lies on this side of the debate, as I have employed the case-study method for an in-depth reading and analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Abul A'la Maududi's *Islami Riyasat* (Islamic State).

In Chapter 1, I have displayed some of the key concepts from a seminal work of one of the most influential ideologues from South Asia, Syed Abul A'la Maududi's *Islami Riyasat* (Islamic State). Maududi has provided a comprehensive ideological background for his concept of an Islamic state. He defines Islam as a '*din*' which is a terminology of religion that is an all-encompassing worldview. Islam as a '*din*' influences man's public and private affairs, and orders the individual's and collective social, political, societal, and economic affairs. Therefore, Muslims inevitably seek to establish an Islamic state, the characteristics of which he describes in great detail. The primary goal of an Islamic state would be to implement God's law (Shari'ah) and it aims to do so through legislation in a modern democratic polity. This is

how, Maududi argues, Islam and politics are inextricable. In this chapter, I conclude that Islamism as an ideology is not antithetical to modern democracy and can exist despite its non-secular tendencies.

The next chapter is a detailed illustration of the political journey of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt since its inception to date. The social movement grew, spread, and matured under decades of military rule. The party remained the largest opposition to the changing regimes for most of Egypt's political trajectory. Their goal was the same as described in Islami Riyasat, the establishment of Shari'ah at the state level. The journey of the movement is characterized by periods of repression, protests for legal and political rights, constitutional reform, a revolution against despotism, eventually gaining an electoral victory, and then a complete ban after a military coup in 2013, within one year in office. The policy choices and strategies of the MB can be scrutinized for their merit, however, the party's commitment to democratic norms was unwavering throughout its political presence. I conclude that the MB's evolution within Egyptian society is one of many examples of Muslim societies where religion is a widely accepted, recognized, and welcomed part of the public sphere. Muslim societies should be studied according to the role of Islam in the public sphere rather than using studies done on Western societies that had a strikingly different relationship with Christianity to understand and order them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Readers of Political Islam

1. Frederic Volpi: Political Islam

Section Four: Political Islam and Democracy- four chapters

"Political Islam: A Critical Reader," edited by Frederic Volpi, is a comprehensive anthology that critically examines the multifaceted and evolving nature of political Islam. The book brings together a collection of key writings by various scholars and experts, providing a nuanced exploration of the political dimensions of Islam in different contexts. The anthology covers a wide range of topics, including the historical development of political Islam, its ideological foundations, the role of Islamic movements in governance, and the relationship between Islam and democracy. By presenting diverse perspectives and analytical approaches, the reader gains insights into the complexities and debates surrounding political Islam.

For this research, I have studied three out of four chapters from Section Four of the Reader, titled, Political Islam and Democracy. The section demonstrates in considerable detail the act of democratization among Islamist movements based on selective cases. The question arose in the Middle East, where Islamist movements gained popular support in Muslim-majority countries, and they had no apparent conflict with democracy, but rather called for democratization in some instances. Volpi expresses his curiosity over the relationship between the religiosity of the people translated to support for Islamism and levels of democracy in the society. These states have adopted institutions and systems of democracy, such as the electoral process, however, dismiss the aspect of secularization of public life.[4] This 'dilemma' is addressed in the four chapters of the section. The first chapter is by Asef Bayat, from his book, 'Making Islam Democratic', titled, The Politics of Presence.

In this chapter, Bayat identifies that Muslim-majority societies are plagued by the prevalence of only two possible political options, authoritarian regimes and Islamist opposition. He views the Islamist groups as equally controlling and oppressive as a military dictator. He proposes an active citizenry as the strategy for political transformation in a post-authoritarian state where the only other option is an Islamist party. Such a society whereby social groups are politicized

[4] Frederic Volpi, ed., Political Islam: A Critical Reader, 1st ed. (UK: Taylor and Francis , 2013), 135–37.

and vocal about their conditions and demands, calling it the art of presence. The people assume responsibility for advancing human rights, equality, and justice.[5]

This chapter belongs to Bayat's book, Making Islam Democratic is also somewhat relevant to this study. He has done a comparative analysis of Iran and Egypt to examine the history of Islamism and post-Islamism, an original term, in the two Muslim-majority states, within the broader theme of Islam and democracy. The author has argued for the irrelevance of the question of compatibility between the two, emphasizing the context and action. He has studied the events and actions of Muslim citizens and leaders in the two states to study Islamism as a social movement.

The chapter, and to a certain extent, Bayat's book can be fruitful for this research in its use of sociological theories such as Gramscian and Foucaultian theories of the social and public domain to study society. There is significant content on the rise of the Islamist movement in Egypt and the subsequent impact on democracy in the country, which will be useful for this research. However, Bayat's thesis about a post-Islamist reality, is defined by him as a phase in which 'the appeal, energy and sources of legitimacy of Islamism are exhausted', as well as a, 'a conscious attempt to conceptualize and strategize the rationale and modalities of transcending Islamism.'[6] He has failed to define Islamism in detail in the first place, which then translates into an ambiguous understanding of post-Islamism. However, Islamism can not be understood using a single definition because it is a term that emerged from a series of historical events and actions taken by individuals across the Muslim world. They did not describe themselves as Islamists and may often disagree with one another over principles and beliefs and questions of legal and political decision-making. Lastly, the book is outdated with respect to the events relevant to my research, to such a great extent that the events that followed his publications may even disprove some of his claims about there being a post-Islamist reality. At the time he was writing, Iran was the only state with a legitimate Islamist government. Six years after publication the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt in 2013 overthrew authoritarian rule by mobilizing social groups, led by students, in its support, and formed a government from popular vote. This hinders its ability to lend greatly to my research.

[5] Asef Bayat, "Politics of Presence," in Political Islam: A Critical Reader, ed. Frederic Volpi (UK: Taylor and Francis , 2013), 138–47.

[6] Asef Bayat, Making Islam Democratic : Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007), 11.

The second chapter I have studied is by Robert Hefner titled, Public Islam and the Problem of Democratization. Hefner uses the case study of Indonesia to comment on the relationship of the publicization of Islam with civil society and democratization. He critiques the Eurocentric theories of some religions being more civil than others as Huntington proposed in the Clash of Civilizations, and the post-Enlightenment stress and advocacy on privatization of religion arising from situations very specific to Christianity. The problematic application of privatized understanding of religion in Muslim societies which have historically had varied centers of power, religion was public and politically legitimizing. Most Muslim societies were plural and pro-plural. Hefner labels pro-democratic and pro-plural Islam as civil Islam.[7] Although this categorization creates an uncomfortable dichotomy, necessitating the existence of an uncivil Islam, it does help highlight the public nature of religion in Muslim societies. Hefner uses historical examples of Muslim empires and contemporary Indonesian society to describe the role religion plays in constructing culture, language, and civic associations in Muslim societies. He also utilizes Habermas's theory of the creation of meaning from communication in the public sphere. He concludes that value for free speech, respect for rights, and mediating government institutions, all are and have been characteristics of a civil Muslim society, likening it to the Tocquevillian Republic rather than the 'Atlantic' liberal in spirit.[8]

This chapter is a necessary aid to my research because of its emphasis on the use of Islam as a source of maintaining public order in addition to personal ethics. This is why Islam has forged political power throughout history. This work comprehensively dismisses ethnocentric post-enlightenment literature that imposed the religio-cultural dynamics of the West on the rest of the world. He cites Bernard Lewis's work to substantiate this point, who impresses that Islam is 'din wa dawla' religion and state.[9] It's a useful lens to view secondary literature on the topic, especially considering that this study seeks a possibility that involves both Islam and democracy. Democracy is a product of the Enlightenment era; thus it encompasses and holds within it the ideals and values of the movement. It is tricky to keep the moral compasses separate while drawing conclusions regarding the possibilities of a middle ground having established the presence of democratic tendencies within civic Muslim societies.

[7] Robert w. Hefner, "Public Islam and the Problem of Democratization," in Political Islam: A Critical Reader, ed. Frederic Volpi (UK: Taylor and Francis , 2013), 167.
[8] Ibid. 168.
[9] Bernard Lewis. The political language of Islam. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1988 Chapter 2.

The final chapter of the section by Carrie Rosefsky Wickham tackles the strategic repositioning of Islamist parties towards democratization and at times political liberalization, using the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and its branch the Wasat Party as a case study. It is titled, 'The Path To Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party'. Wickham has written extensively on Islamism and the MB. The passage aims to explain and highlight how and why Islamist parties seek moderation in their ideologies. Ideological moderation, as defined by Wickham, 'entails a shift toward a substantive commitment to democratic principles, including the peaceful alternation of power, ideological and political pluralism, and citizenship rights' as a result of an abandonment of 'radical' goals by the party leadership.[10] The likes of Daniel Pipes and other scholars of Islamic revivalism believe there to be no such thing as Islamist moderation. He categorizes all Islamists as fundamentalists sharing the utopian goal of an Islamic state and society that is 'by definition, "anti-democratic," "anti-moderate," "antisemitic," and "anti-western."'[11] The way Nazis can never be moderate, Islamists also can never have non-radical versions. In contrast, there are scholars of the Middle East like John L. Esposito and Fuller Graham who have categorized Islamists and view them as diverse groups holding varying beliefs. Some are more democratic in their agendas than others. The Wasat Party of Egypt, which broke off from the MB due to differences in goals, has portrayed elements of ideological moderation according to the author, and the reasons for this are Egypt's domestic political environment and the regional and international trends, which Wickham predicts lead to radicalization or moderation of movements.

The language in the passage is quite biased and the author seems to approach the issue with certain preconceived notions. Adjectives such as moderate and radical are comparative and specific to context. Wickham fails to establish a context or describe the spectrum upon which she is assessing the party behaviors.

Moreover, some claims are factually inaccurate. The author believes popular sovereignty, pluralism, and equal citizenship rights to be 'modern ideas' that the Wasat Party integrates in its manifesto. However, these have also been explicitly stated as important tenets of the Muslim Brotherhood's manifesto called the Nahda (Rennaissance) Project presented by the MB after

[10]Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, "The Path To Moderation: Strategy and learning in the formation of Egypt's Wasat party" in Political Islam: A Critical Reader, ed. Frederic Volpi (UK: Taylor and Francis , 2013), 173.
[11] Daniel Pipes, "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam," The National Interest, 41 (Fall 1995), 48–52, 54.

the 2013 revolution.[12] The distinction between the moderates and the extremists is unclear. Not to say of course that there isn't one. However, the question then stands, what exactly is the basis of distinction among Islamist parties? It is the reinterpretation of Islam, 'ijtihad' in light of modern ideas, with varying levels of adaptation and sticking with traditional interpretations Where does democracy lie in all of this?[13] The answers to these questions are deeply relevant to my research because as Wickham established, parties tend to evolve with a change in leadership, domestic political situation, and international and regional political trends. Why a party chooses to democratize or move away from democratization is necessary to determine whether or not Islamism is still a possibility.

2. Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts From al-Banna to Bin Laden

Edited by Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman 2009

The second reader I have made extensive use of for this research is Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts From al-Banna to Bin Laden Edited by Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman. The reader illustrates the breadth of Islamist thought, illustrating the theoretical, political, and theological complexity across the works of writers, theologians, politicians, and academics of the school. It provides a curated selection of key texts that span the diverse spectrum of Islamist thought, tracing its evolution from the early 20th century with figures like Hassan al-Banna to more contemporary figures such as Osama bin Laden. This reader serves as an introduction to the primary readings from Islamist thinkers from different regions across the globe. By illustrating the depth and width of the discourses on this topic, it highlights the variety and diversity within the different ways these thinkers have reinterpreted Islam, pertaining to their specific historical, political, and cultural contexts, addressing varying types of problems and audiences. The editors offer insightful introductions to each section, providing historical context and analysis to help readers understand the ideological shifts and debates within Islamist thought. The collection allows readers to explore the complex and multifaceted nature of Islamist discourse, delving into issues such as political

[12] "all our fellow Copts' rights of citizenship and realizing their full legal equality as Egyptian citizens while maintaining their right to appeal to their religious strictures on matters pertaining to personal status and their religious affairs," in the Nahada Manifesto. https://ikhwanweb.com/dr-morsis-electoral-program/

[13] Charles Kurzman. 2002. Modernist Islam, 1840–1940: A Sourcebook. New York: Oxford University Press.

governance, social justice, and the relationship between Islam and the state. The different debates it explores in the discussion, situating views of the thinkers in the larger framework of the debates, and which inform the selection of works are Islamism and Violence, Islamism and Gender, Islamism, and Democracy, the Politics of Islamism. It also situates Islamists in the previously well-established categories of Muslim intellectual orders: Sufis and Islamists, Salafis and Islamists, Modernists, Islamists, and the 'Ulama, the Muslim Modernists and the 'Ulama. Euben's definition and description of Islamism is an invaluable contribution to this research which I will be using hereon. Islamism would refer to

"Contemporary movements that attempt the return to the scriptural foundations of the Muslim community, excavating and reinterpreting them for application to the present-day social and political world. Such foundations consist of the Qur'an and the normative example of the Prophet Muhammad (sunna; hadith), which constitute the sources of God's guidance in matters pertaining to both worship and human relations. In general, Islamists aim at restoring the primacy of the norms derived from these foundational texts in collective life, regarding them not only as an expression of God's will but as an antidote to the moral bankruptcy inaugurated by the Western cultural dominance from abroad, aided and abetted by the corrupt Muslim rulers within the umma (Islamic community)."[14]

Although the group of people this definition refers to never identified themselves as Islamists, there is no corresponding term in Arabic or Urdu that could be neatly translated. This is so primarily because the movements are not organically linked in any way. This connection is an academic endeavor, purely emerging out of English scholarship. Regardless, this definition appeared to be the closest summary of the ideas of several intellectual and political torchbearers of Islamism.

In addition to borrowing their definition and theoretical framework of Islamism, I will be studying the authors' commentary on the life and work of al-Banna, and Mawdudi as well.

Al Banna

Euben describes briefly Hasan al-Banna's life history and socio-political context, concluding that it was a mix of his personal experiences, a charismatic personality, the political dynamics

[14] Roxanne Leslie Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought : Texts and Contexts from Al-Banna to Bin Laden (Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, Cop, 2009). p4.

of Egypt, and global events such as World War 2 that culminated in the creation of the movement that would be the source of a global phenomenon. She walks us through details of his childhood, education, employment, personality, inclinations, spiritual journey, and the creation of the MB. His personal experiences such as working as a teacher in Ismailliyah compelled him to dwell on the living conditions of the working class in Egypt under the monarchy and the British. Coupled with domestic politics, this contributed to the circumstances that led to the creation of the 'Society of Muslim Brothers' in 1928. Euben writes, 'The crises plaguing Egyptian politics at the time provided fertile soil for such efforts and strategies.'[15] Three political powers were competing for dominance simultaneously, the British, the Egyptian monarchy, and a nationalist Wafd Party, who would often get into conflict, pushing the country deeper and deeper into a political and increasingly economic crisis, while engaging in corruption. British virtually held all the power, which became evident during the Second World War.

Till 1936, the Brotherhood's activities were focused on growing the party in terms of recruitment and starting social welfare programs. Disciplined and organized cadres became part of the movement as it grew in Egypt among educated working-class individuals, students, religious people, and other groups. Their initial goal was to work to improve the living conditions of Egyptian society, which al-Banna believed was deeply linked with the society's relationship with religion and God. He spread his message through the publication of 'epistles'(Rasail) which would be short booklets convenient for dissemination throughout Egypt and beyond to other Arab countries.

After the Second World War, Banna's political presence grew as he rose in popularity in the region. He showed resistance to the Egyptian monarchy and the British in the region. As a result, the Brotherhood spread to Palestine calling for Palestinian freedom from the British mandate. He also ran for office multiple times, but elections were always compromised and he ended up unsuccessful. The relations between the state and the Brotherhood grew antagonistic over time, and the society made an addition of a 'secret apparatus' for protection against the hostile government.[16] Euben continues to use secondary scholarship to illustrate the trajectory of the movement, the different forms it assumed, and the circumstances that shaped its evolution. According to Harris's book, Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the

[15] Roxanne Leslie Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought : Texts and Contexts from Al-Banna to Bin Laden (Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, Cop, 2009). Pp 51.
[16] Richard P. Mitchell, 1993. The Society of the Muslim Brothers. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 32.

Muslim Brotherhood, the party now "operated on the edge of, or beneath the surface of, Egyptian political life."[17]

In 1948 the party was dissolved and the prime minister who ordered this proclamation was assassinated shortly after by one of the party members. The next prime minister ordered Banna's execution on February 12, 1949, alleviating his status from a leader to a martyr.

Hasan al Banna's writings would form the foundation of Islamism which would then be enriched and intellectually matured by Mawdudi, and later, Qutb, Khomeini, Qaradawi, etc.

Some of the main points from the Rasai'l are presented by Euben that would be recurring teachings in all Islamists. Such as the establishment of Islam as an all-encompassing entity serving as a way of life consisting of a set of religio-political commandments. The intellectual and material success of the West is described as the root of moral bankruptcy and materialism, leading to the social and moral deterioration of Muslim societies. Al Banna argues and demonstrates that the many problems that the Muslim Umma is confronting call for a commitment to action above words, behavior above slogans, practical knowledge above theoretical knowledge, and unity over conflict. This would eventually evolve into the 'anti-intellectualist tendencies of Islamists', writes Euben.[18] His methodology was simple and transparent. Educate, mobilize, and then execute as stated in Risalat al-Mu'tamar al-Khamis.[19] Euben and Zaman's work is quite extensive, covering the most notable thinkers and writers of Islamism and tackling ideas about contemporary themes and questions in political theory. For this research and intellectual constraints, I will be looking at one additional section.

Mawdudi

It wasn't in the Middle East or the Arab, but the Indian subcontinent "that Sunni Islamist thought found one of its earliest and most sustained articulations."[20] In this section as well, the

[17] Christina Phelps Harris. 1964. Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Hague: Mouton. Pp. 180

[18] Roxanne Leslie Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought : Texts and Contexts from Al-Banna to Bin Laden (Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, Cop, 2009). Pp. 53.

[19] 1950. Pages 20, 21

[20] Roxanne Leslie Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought : Texts and Contexts from Al-Banna to Bin Laden (Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, Cop, 2009). Pp. 80

authors maintain the primacy of the intellectual and political context in shaping the political careers of the Islamist leaders.

Mawdudi's childhood education in a madrassa in India, under the tutelage of a teacher who liked to experiment with traditional forms of religious knowledge, rather than belonging to a traditional madrasa of one of the schools where he would get an aalim education. His career as a journalist and later editor of his own magazine kickstarted his political writing career. At first, he wrote for a magazine published by the Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-e-Hind. This political party held anti-colonial views similar to al Banna's, attributing India's social and economic problems to colonial rule. He was also dismissive of a growing nationalist sentiment among Muslims of India, led by the Muslim League, believing it to be a premature political aspiration, disguised as a religious one.[21] After the creation of Pakistan, he moved to the independent Islamic state and continued his struggle for the implementation of Islamic law and dissemination of religious education among the masses.

An Islamic state, according to Mawdudi, rests on the belief in Tawhid, the oneness of God. This is not just a religious belief, but rather a political command which necessitates legal and political reform that conforms to the sovereignty of God. Piety without political power was meaningless according to him, and the right kind of leadership was at the center of everything. The authors comment on the closeness of this doctrine to despotism due to the unchecked power it gives to the leader. However, Mawdudi was not concerned with this as he relied on spiritual greatness that would ensure the accountability of the ruler directly to God. The complete integration of the Jamaat-e-Islami in the federal democratic framework of Pakistan shows his acceptance of the mechanisms of distributed powers and a separate judiciary put in place by the democratic system to keep the premiers' powers in check.

Along with starting political activity right away, Mawdudi who had formed the Jamaat e Islami in 1941, continued his work of educating the masses on teachings of the Quran. He showed that political struggle and grooming the masses in religious education went hand in hand, a concept also visible in al-Banna's life. He wrote extensively alongside his political ambitions, which were not mutually exclusive. The provisions of Pakistan's 1956 constitution illustrate the direction of his struggle and implementation of Islamic laws at the state level.

[21] Ibid. Pp. 81

The authors credit Mawdudi's Western education and excellent writing and speaking abilities for the audience he managed to pull including foreign non-Urdu-speaking Muslims, non-religious folk, and even non-Muslims. Having a political party allowed him to have more pragmatic politics,[22] and the ability to influence the political arena and introduce reform, something which the 'ulema was unable to achieve.

Euben and Zaman have provided insightful biographical details using a decent mix of secondary and primary research of the two key thinkers I am studying in this research, which will undoubtedly inform my readings of their primary works. Although the introduction states that the work is not exhaustive by any means, however, providing sweeping judgments and proclamations on ideas and doctrines of a writer warrants a thorough study of all of their scholarship to avoid misquotations or generic conclusions. Moreover, the extract on Islamism in the introduction included references from limited Islamist writers, and ideologues, and next to none from the works of al-Banna or Mawdudi. I will have to draw key findings on the topic from my assessment of their primary works for further development.

[22] Ibid.Pp. 85.

B. Reports by Research Institutes

1. Cheryl Benard: Civil Democratic Islam 2003

Benard was a social scientist, academic, and writer who used to write for a US-based thinktank, RAND. One of her key areas of interest during her time at RAND was US policy on Islamism. This particular report assesses the situation of political Islam and suggests strategies and ways in which the US should react keeping in mind its objectives, which, according to the report are: prevention of the spread of violence and extremism in ways that do not display Islamophobia, and as a long-term goal, work towards dissolving the political, economic and social reasons propagating Islamic radicalism. In turn, this propels these societies in the direction of democratization.

It identifies the need for intervention on behalf of the US to prevent the rise of Islamic fundamentalism which is incompatible with the 'modern industrialized' Western world. At the time that it is being written, the Islamic civilization is in a volatile state, where different groups are competing over values, identities, and the role of religion in the state. Cheryl categorizes the positions of different groups of Muslims into four different types: The Fundamentalists, who reject democracy and call for an authoritarian rule based on Islamic laws. The Traditionalists, who advocate for a conservative society, resist modernity and change. The Modernists, who accept global modernity and want Islam to adapt to and integrate into the modern world. And, the Secularists who agree with the divorce of the church and the state and believe religion to be a private matter. These four groups have conflicting views on social issues and questions of governance and law such as criminal justice, education, individual freedom, and more. Cheryl then proceeds to suggest approaches that the US could take while dealing with the rise of political Islam. These are, that the West should support Modernists by facilitating and propagating their work, widen the divide between traditionalists and fundamentalists in support of the traditionalists, oppose and weaken the fundamentalists, and participate in selective support of the Secularists. She has gone to lengths to describe the specific activities that would help achieve these strategies, such as publishing works of modernists, giving them public platforms, promoting pre-and non-Islamic cultures of the countries, etc. facilitating modernists; and other investigative activities to defame and

delegitimize fundamentalists, such as 'encouraging journalists to investigate issues of corruption, hypocrisy, and immorality in fundamentalist and terrorist circles.'[23]

2. Cheryl Benard: Building Moderate Muslim Networks 2007

This report prescribes the development of an alternate force to counter the rise of Islamic fundamentalists (as described by Cheryle in her previous works). This is to be done through the artificial development of moderate Muslim networks in countries where there is believed to exist a large support for radicals in the same fashion in which the US did network building during the Cold War to counter the Communists. There is a parallel established between the Communists and the radical Islamists in a way that it bears an ideological threat to the values of the West, and the proposition for the solution is directed toward the creation of moderate versions of the ideology to weaken it. With the use of information on Muslim ideologies, and experiences of the Cold War, the report suggests a working plan for how the creation of such networks and institutions could be achieved.[24]

The goal in both these reports is to foster the development of a civil, democratic Islam, emerging out of the fear of radicalization as a result of political Islam, specifically the 'fundamentalists' leading to violence. This would, Benard proposes, serve as an extension of the US strategy against the war on terror. This is an outdated document and a lot of developments in the Middle East and the Islamic world now make this work look hysterical. The Taliban still exist, but they have been marginalized by the larger Muslim world. Most Islamists don't find democracy problematic and have welcomed it in their politics to varying degrees.

This is still an important work to assess the evolution of political Islam in its relationship with democracy and democratic countries, and more importantly the perception of this relationship in the minds of the US foreign policy elite and academics.

[23] Cheryl Benard, Civil Democratic Islam Partners, Resources, and Strategies (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, National Security Research Division, 2003).
[24] Cheryl Benard et al., "Building Moderate Muslim Networks" (USA: RAND Center For Middle East Public Policy, 2007).

C. Deep Analysis of The Muslim Brotherhood

Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity and Politics. By Khalil Al-Anani. 2016

This book serves as an insider perspective on the MB. It is a product of long-term ethnographic research complimented by a strong theoretical base. Al-Anani uses a sociological lens to study the movement and highlight the impact of external political pressures such as repression on movements and organizations. He employs the social movement theory and collective identity framework and argues that institutional and ideational factors in Egypt have assisted the MB in building its identity. The first chapter situates Islamist parties as social movements and presents a literature review of work on identity as a means of understanding movements and bodies of collective action. He claims to break down the process of identity formation in the case of the MB and narrates the manner in which they engage in the processes of recruitment, indoctrination, and identification. The chapter introduces 'Ikhwanism' as an identification marker for the members. It serves as a 'cognitive code' and in extension decides norms and assist the party in making moral and political decisions. These norms and values are: allegiance, obedience, trust, commitment, and loyalty. Second, it introduces the organizational structure of the movement, the Jama'a paradigm created by al-Banna. He comments on the party's resilience in the face of chronic repression, that actually worked in their favor.

The second chapter presents a detailed literature review on Islamist movements, and the different approaches applied to the topic by writers since the 1980s. It mentions the 'essentialist' vs 'contextualist' debate (discussed in the next section) and the application of other social movement theories on Islamist movement. The theoretical basis of the study is outlined in Chapter 3. Social constructivism and social movement theory serve as the study's starting points in an effort to better comprehend the identity of the brotherhood. In chapter 4 the Al-Anani describes how the Brotherhood's founder and principal ideologue, Hasan al-Banna, contributed to the formulation of the movement's identity. Through an examination of al-Banna's philosophical and educational background, he demonstrates how his influence has impacted and defined the Brotherhood's character. I look into the "jama'a paradigm," which sets the Brotherhood apart and enables it to continue its activities and identity in trying times. He goes into extensive detail on the Muslim Brotherhood's internal workings in chapter 5 in an effort to clarify their recruiting and mobilization tactics. He mentions how the Brotherhood uses "chasing the prey" to draw in new members. This chapter also describes how the

socialization and indoctrination processes correlate with the various stages of the Brotherhood's recruiting approach. The analysis of the Brotherhood's identity consolidation process through the absorption of its goals, norms, and values is continued in Chapter 6. It offers a comprehensive account of the Brotherhood's indoctrination and socialization procedures. The author offers a model that unifies ideational and institutional elements to explain how the Brotherhood solidifies and reconfigures the identities of its members. This framework, known as the "incubation model," is a rigorous socialization process that modifies a person's perceptions to conform to the goals and ideology of the movement. The two main elements of the model are the Brotherhood's multitiered membership structure and distinctive socialization method, known as *tarbiyy*a. He demonstrates how the Brotherhood solidifies and strengthens the identities of its members by combining a structured membership structure with its socialization process. Building on the incubation model, Chapter 7 explores the relationship between the philosophy and organizational structure of the Brotherhood. The author starts by outlining how the movement's organizational framework has allowed it to withstand persecution by regimes and grow in activism over the years. By examining the relationships between the Brotherhood's many organizational levels (usra, shu'ba, mantiqa, etc.) and talking about the effects of bylaws and charter modifications, he offers a new perspective on the organization's structure. The chapter also demonstrates how the Brotherhood's organizational issues affect its performance and reputation. He examines the idea of ikhwanism in chapter 8 establishing that it acts as an identity code that protects the movement's action and continued existence. He looks at the norms and guidelines of the Brotherhood that affect its members in day-to-day activities, emphasizing five main rules: bay'a (allegiance), ta'ah (obedience), thiqa (trust), iltizam (commitment), and intima (loyalty). The chapter demonstrates how the Brotherhood's organization and members absorb these standards. In chapter 9. he shows how important repression is in defining the internal dynamics of the movement. Repression is a tactic used by the Brotherhood to keep unity and cohesion within its ranks. By looking at the relationships between various groups and generations, he also demonstrates how the power dynamics within the Brotherhood have changed over time.

The book is a product of a qualitative discursive analysis and the methodology used by the writer includes semi-structured interviews, overt observation in which the writer was immersed in the daily activities of the movements for more than a decade. The author writes from a place of first-hand knowledge of the internal workings of the movement and as someone who the members and leaders trusted which is reflected in the details of the internal structure of the

movement. Although there is considerable mention of the political repression in Egypt against the MB, however, the book downplays the impact of regional and international actors on the connstrictionogf the identity of a movement, especially on like the MB which has a transnational character. The intervening role of foreign powers has shaped the domestic political arena of Egypt which has an impact on the character and decision-making of the movement. Moreover international perception of Islamist parties post-9/11, also fueled by propaganda and misinformation emerging out of the West, has forced Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood to take moderating measures and considerably shift tones to represent the ideology. Regardless, “Inside the Muslim Brotherhood” is relevant to this research as a descriptive text for the MB’s structure and party dynamics. The book makes accessible the information that is concealed by language barriers as well as due to the members’ discrete nature.

Research question: Is Pan-Islamism a possibility in the contemporary world: A Case Study of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt.

Conceptualizing Islamism and Democratization. Independently at first and then the relationship between Islam and Democracy.

A. DEMOCRATIZATION

Democracy is commonly defined as rule by the people. Western scholars of democracy have gravitated towards Robert Dahl's "procedural minimum" which includes: free, fair elections, protection of civil liberties, absence of non-elected authorities that limit elected officials' power to govern, and full adult suffrage. The current widely accepted definition of liberal democracy, described by Dahl as a political system where ultimate authority lies in the consent of those being governed based on political freedom guaranteed institutionally,[25] is going to be used hereon.

Democratization, however, is described as the actual process of a country transitioning from an autocratic governing system to one that is 'more' democratic.[26] This doesn't necessarily imply that the country undergoing the process of democratization will always result in a democracy. This is precisely why there exists the concept of 'waves' of democratization in history, where the outcome is often a mix of authoritarianism and democracy. In the Arab context, these are often dubbed, 'illiberal democracies'[27] and 'liberalized autocracies'[28] among other titles. There is evidence of resistance to democratization in regions that have been ruled by autocracies in the past, which includes Arab states. Due to this prevalent mix of authoritarian

[25] Robert Dahl. Democracy and Its Critics, New Haven: Yale University Press. 1989. Pp. 220-221
[26] Kamran Bokhari and Farid Senzai, Political Islam in the Age of Democratization (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[27] Fareed Zakaria, The Future of Freedom : Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad (New York ; London: W.W. Norton, 2003).
[28] Daniel Brumberg, "Democratization in the Arab World? The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy ," Journal of Democracy 13, no. 4 (2002), https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Dan_Brumberg.pdf.

procedures and democratic practices in many parts of the world, scholars have been forced to consider alternative conceptual lenses such as Islamism.

B. ISLAMISM

Islamism or Pan-Islamism is known across global literature and media as 'Islamic Fundamentalism" and "Political Islam". The word is contested and varies in meaning across sources. For this research, the following will be true for the ideology: It is not a single body of political ideology, but rather a diverse set of ideas about governance with one thing in common: Islam at the center of the political system. Islamists differ among themselves not just on sectarian lines, but also in relation to other agents, such as local leaders, regional opponents, European and U.S. observers, the United Nations, and NGOs. It is not a singular organized political movement working on a similar set of geopolitical objectives. Despite important differences among Islamist thinkers, they have in common a tendency to view "human sovereignty" as transgressive of divine law and share the aspiration to establish shari'a as the primary or sole source of authority. The ideology emerged after the First World War, the Ottoman Empire was dissolved and the caliphate came to an end during the early twentieth century. The former Ottoman Empire including North Africa and the Middle East was divided into states and taken over by the colonizing powers as a result of the Sykes-Picot agreement. It was in this post-imperial context that a call for the revival of the Islamic political order came about, starting in the Middle East. Simultaneously in the Subcontinent, Mawdudi was producing literature on similar strands of thought.

Euben and Zaman also provide a considerably holistic definition of Islamism borrowing from ideas across Islamist literature and political activities.

"Contemporary movements that attempt the return to the scriptural foundations of the Muslim community, excavating and reinterpreting them for application to the present-day social and political world. Such foundations consist of the Qur'an and the normative example of the Prophet Muhammad (sunna; hadith), which constitute the sources of God's guidance in matters pertaining to both worship and human relations. In general, Islamists aim at restoring the primacy of the norms derived from these foundational texts in collective life, regarding them not only as an expression of God's will but as an antidote to the moral bankruptcy inaugurated by the Western cultural dominance from abroad, aided and abetted by the corrupt Muslim rulers within the umma (Islamic community)."[29]

[29] Roxanne Leslie Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from Al-Banna to Bin Laden (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, Cop, 2009). p4.

The scriptural foundations the ideology is based on are limited to the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. These must be the source of guidance in personal and public matters. Legal, ethical, social, economic, political, and all kinds of decision-making at the state level must conform to and seek legitimacy from these two sources which are believed to be abundant and complete in their wisdom.

According to Euben and Zaman, Islamists have long maintained that one should approach God's word directly, without the assistance of any previous or current ulema/scholars. This implies that the reader's understanding of the Quran is 'synonymous with God's eternal intent.'[30] It is meant to be accessible and open to individual interpretation, approached without any mediation. This way Islam is a critique of the past and the present Islamic scholarly tradition 'driven by aspirations to institute a new religio-political order.'[31] Islamists not only distinguish themselves from the ulema class but insist on being different from Salafis and Sufis as well. However, they don't align with modernists either. Modernists are Muslims who try to establish the compatibility of Islam with Western standards in issues of politics, law, ethics, etc., often consciously or unconsciously holding religion accountable to Western ideals and concepts. Islamists, on the other hand, maintain the supremacy of religion in all matters a very basic tenet of being a Muslim.[32]

Bokhari and Senzai make four important relevant additions to the description. Islamism is, 'diverse, a modern phenomenon, an instrument of political change, and a work in progress.'[33] This implies that Islamists may disagree in their interpretation and strategy for the implementation of shari'ah, however, all Islamists share the same goal, the establishment of an Islamic state. Secondly, because Islamists situate their goals and aspirations within the apparatus of the modern state, such as making constitutional amendments, building social institutions, passing legislations, and engaging in democratization, Islamism is a modern phenomenon, compared to other manifestations of political Islam such as the caliphate or the Muslim empires. Third, Islamism responds to global and societal challenges politically. They utilize the shari'ah and traditional Islamic concepts from the Quran and sunnah to reinterpret teachings in today's context, applying them to modern challenges through political

[30] Ibid, Pp 14.
[31] Ibid, Pp 14.
[32] Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi. 1960. The Islamic Law and Constitution. Translated and edited by Khurshid Ahmad. Lahore: Islamic Publications. Pp. 67.
[33] Kamran Bokhari and Farid Senzai, Political Islam in the Age of Democratization (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Pp. 20.

mobilization. Finally, Islamism is evolving as we speak. Because Islamist groups continue to exist Islamism remains relevant. The continuous application of ideology to policy forces them to be pragmatic and adapt to the fast-changing trends in an increasingly interconnected world.

Asef Bayat maintains that the question of the compatibility between Islam and democracy is a political one and not a philosophical one. The establishment of sovereignty and authority of shari'a in political and legal decision-making in a democratic state as a result of the establishment of divine sovereignty is the widely agreed upon Islamist doctrine. It is also the point of contention between Islamists and proponents of democracy who believe that the rule of majority and secularism lie at its heart. Is that true at all? Can democracy exist in the absence of secularism and have multiple sovereigns? Pan-Islamism is viewed in the 21st century as a failed project, a 'distant dream'.[34] It is accused of failing to create a political system capable of integrating a fragmented religious society. The accusation of violence attached to it by the West has further tarnished the term. This leads me to the question at hand: Is Islamism still a political possibility?

[34] Gerhard Böwering, Islamic Political Thought: An Introduction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). Pp.23.

C. ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

Before discussing literature on the topics of Islam and democracy, it is first important to understand the historical context of the question. The origin of the debate lies in the question of the role of religion in democracy. With whom does the legitimate political authority rest? Who is sovereign? The common man, the monarch, the wealthy class, or the group of clerics?[35] After the Enlightenment, the common view was against the presence of the church in matters of the state and public life. Writers such as Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx, and Mill were writing on these topics and were concerned about the prevalence of Christianity in the newly imagined state and society. The view that religion was a hindrance to democracy arose from an incomplete reading of history Esposito argues, that Christianity had shaped, developed, and constructed Western society long before the Enlightenment. It was never a private part of society and would not be in the future. Alfred Stepan stresses that writers are guilty of taking an ahistorical approach by implying that secularism is necessary for the development of democracy, considering that the Western societies 'the twin tolerations', or the coexistence of both democratic norms and religious freedom have always been part of the public sphere.[36] Empirical data collected by Jonathon Fox has shown that the separation of religion and state is not a prerequisite for a functioning liberal democracy.[37] The role of religion in politics and society has always been a contentious issue. The postcolonial Muslim-majority nation-state was also subject to this debate. However, Bokhari and Senzai argue that the relationship between religion and politics in Islamic societies is complex and has been understudied and misunderstood by the West. The scholars make an exaggerated conclusion regarding the inseparability of religion and politics in Islam, comparing it to the West's neat distinction between God and Caesar. Neither are accurate depictions of both societies.[38] As described previously, Christianity played a formative role in founding the Western states and the writers are guilty of ahistoricity when they expect the secularization of Muslim societies to be a seamless project, condemning Islam for being the resistant force in the development of

[35] John L Esposito and Emad Eldin Shahin, The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics (Oxford, Uk; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013). Pp. 70

[36] Alfred Stepan. Arguing Comparative Politics. New York: Oxford University Press. 2001.

[37] Jonathan Fox. "Do Democracies Have Separation of Religion and State?" Canadian Journal of Political Science. 2007. 40:1–25. And, Jonathan Fox. A World Survey of Religion and State. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2008.

[38] Kamran Bokhari and Farid Senzai, Political Islam in the Age of Democratization (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Pp. 2.

democracy. The writers believe this to be an unfair superimposition of the history and development of a political system in one civilization onto another civilization, the latter having been smothered by colonialism and imperial powers for centuries.

The topic of Islam and democracy resurfaced after the Arab Spring. Where writers were curious to investigate the phenomenon that enabled the fall of authoritarian regimes and popular rule replacing them. In most Arab states, this enabled the rise of Islamist opposition parties such as the Ennahda in Tunisia, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The question of compatibility between Islam and democracy has been a ripe one since then, especially in the West, where the celebration of the Spring turned into confusion over what the popular choice ended up being. Much of the scholarship emerging from the West has held skeptical views about Islam and modernity and 9/11 only amplified their anxiety, bringing the topic to the forefront. [39] Scholarship on Islam's relationship and compatibility with democracy can be understood in terms of debates. There's the body of literature that believes democracy can not thrive in an Islamic society, and that suggests a middle ground exists: the compatibility versus incompatibility debate.

Compatibility vs Incompatibility Debate

A large group of scholars, most belonging to the orientalist school attribute the challenges in democratization faced by Muslim-majority states to the religion, concluding that Islam is inherently incompatible with democracy and resistant to modernity. This can be termed herein as the Islamic exceptionalism thesis, supplemented by the idea of an essentialist understanding of Muslims across the world. Ernest Gellner likens Muslims to Marxists in a comprehensive anthropological thesis, 'Muslim Society', claiming that Islam is intrinsically resistant to modernity. This New Orientalist stream of thought followed from the 'Arab exceptionalism'

[39] Francis Fukuyama: "There does seem to be something about Islam . . . that makes Muslim societies particularly resistant to modernity." In*, The West has Won.* The Guardian. 2001. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/11/afghanistan.terrorism30
Bernard Lewis: "Is it possible for the Islamic peoples to evolve a form of government that will be compatible with their own historical, cultural, and religious traditions and yet will bring individual freedom and human rights to the governed as these terms are understood in the free societies of the West?" in *Faith and Power: Religion and Politics in the Middle Eas*t. New York: Oxford University Press. 2010. Pp. 64
"Either we bring them freedom, or they destroy us." Ibid. Pp 168.
"Islam is to blame for the Arab/Muslim world's lack of modernization." In, 'What Went Wrong: The Clash Between Modernity and Islam in the Middle East (New York: Harper Perennial, 2003). For a more detailed discussion about the debate about Orientalism, see Zachary Lockman, Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

thesis found in Western writers writing about waves of democracy before the Arab Uprisings arguing that there is something about the Muslim Arab society that repels democratic change. The writers belonging to the Orientalist school of thought proposed reasons that changed over time for this thesis. Huntington wrote in "Will More Countries Become Democratic?", "Among Islamic countries, particularly those in the Middle East, the prospects for democratic development seem low." This thesis was developed to involve commentary on state-society relations in the Middle East. Democratization would necessitate a strong society and a weak state. According to the writers, this resistance to democratization in the Arab world was because of the submissive nature of the Islamic doctrine which translates to a sort of political quietism within Muslim societies.[40] Social groups and a participatory civil society fail to gain much ground and the state assumes a despotic role. With the gradual increase in interest in research on interest groups in Muslim societies, there was a shift in the Orientalist perception regarding the state-society dynamic and the role of religion in the public realm. The rise of Islamist groups challenged the state assuming an authoritative public presence. These groups of religious scholars, activists, and radicals seemed to occupy a more instructive and defining role for civil society than the state, often turning citizens against the state based on religious motives. The Social Science Research Council produced a report in 1987 titled, "Retreating States and Expanding Societies", which was one of the several researches done on the same theme.[41] These scholars shared the old Orientalists' beliefs about Islam's incompatibility with democracy, however, based their reasoning on opposite grounds: that the social groups within Islamic societies weaken and repress the state, thereby limiting its democratic functionality. Patricia Crone makes the argument that the earliest Muslim societies could not accept political authority and will always find reasons to rebel against it, hence there will be perpetual political instability in Muslim societies.[42] Daniel Pipes builds on this to conclude that the failure of Muslims to develop a stale political system over the centuries is its weakness in its journey toward modernity.[43] More recent and novel works on the topic of compatibility from a state-society relations lens include the work by John Hall. He distinguishes between society and civil

[40] Yahya Sadowski , "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork eds., Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 33–51 .
[41] Augustus Richard Norton (ed.), Civil Society in the Middle East, vol. 1, 1994. And, Jillian Schwedler (ed.), Toward Civil Society in the Middle East? A Primer, 1995. Also, see NYU-based publications of Augusts Richard Norton and Farhad Kazemi.
[42] Yahya Sadowski , "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork eds., Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), Pp. 38.
[43] Daniel Pipes, "The Muslims are coming! The Muslims are Coming!" National Review 42. November 19,1990: 29.

society, where the former constructively engages with the state, and the latter works in isolation, arguing that the society/ social groups, such as tribes, in Islamic civilizations are so strong they block the organic germination of civil society. The presence of tribes limited motivation for creating other pressure groups, which these scholars argue is key to building a civil society, a basic tenet of democratization. Regardless of the lens through which they study Muslim societies or the conclusions they draw as a result. The orientalist and neo-orientalist scholars historically maintain their essentialist position about the incompatibility of Islam and democracy.

The Islamic Exceptionalism thesis has been sufficiently critiqued, most materializing from postmodern and multicultural schools of thought. Esposito and Voll argue for a widening of lens and a multidimensional study of Islam. They allow space for an academic study of multiple forms of democracy in Islamic societies which harbor social and political movements of varying cultural and social orientations. Among them exist violent groups, but those are on the 'fringe of the society' and are not representative of the mainstream nor reflect the diversity, a salient characteristic of these movements.[44] Similarly, Piscatori and Eickelman propose a contextual understanding of the relationship between Islam and politics in specific societies. They argue that most beliefs and traditions are fluid across time and space, and exist in a socioeconomic, political, and historical context. Muslims' views such as those about democracy are subject to many important factors that constitute a political structure.[45] They also critique the modernists' theses against Islamism by proving that Westernization and modernization don't necessarily have a causal relationship, because Islam is not 'traditional' in a way that is antithetical to modernity, because of its tendency to bring about revolutions such as the Iranian revolution of 1978. Kramer suggests that "it is not possible to talk about Islam and democracy in general but only about Muslims living and theorizing politics under specific historical circumstances."[46] Each country has a different political system, attached with it a history specific to the piece of land and that people. Moreover, the demographics of the country, state-society relations, and socio-economic indicators have an impact on the kinds of debates the general public and the policymaking elite are having regarding the role of religion in the state. Graham Fuller and Asef Bayat go on to reject the question of whether Islam is

[44] John L Esposito and Emad Eldin Shahin, The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics (Oxford, Uk; New York, Ny: Oxford University Press, 2013). Pp. 76.
[45] Dale F Eickelman and James Piscatori, Muslim Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Pp. 16.
[46] Gudrun Kramer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy." In Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report, ed. Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, Berkeley: University of California Press. 1997. Pp. 71–82.

compatible with democracy. Instead, Fuller suggests, it would be of more value to study what it is that Muslims want. If that is some version of liberal democracy that confirms with their religious ideal the onus is upon them to justify and theorize the resulting system.[47] Bayat makes a similar suggestion. To let the Muslims reach a desirable system where they achieve congruence between the two.[48] Bayat's concept of an 'alternative modernity' is compelling and certainly a liberating lens to use for studying Muslim societies and Islamist movements. Another substantial and comparatively recent critique of an essentialist reading of Muslim societies is presented by Noah Feldman. In "After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy", he proposes that there is no need to pit one against the other. Islam and democracy are mobile ideas with sufficient elasticity to accommodate each other and create a synthesis. He suggests Muslims are developing 'democratic readings of the Islamic tradition' and coming up with language and institutions that are in comparative harmony with the existing world order even if it is not fulfilling the ideals proposed by the West.[49] This is producing an 'alternative modernity' as Bayat would describe it.

These debates would often shape US foreign policy for the region and the insistence on the lack of democratic ethos in the region would promote US intervention often resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy. The policy recommendations such as those mentioned in the previous chapter emerge from an understanding of Muslim societies constructed in the decades of Orientalist literature.[50] To conclude whether Islamism is still relevant today, it is imperative first to understand the academic basis for the policies that led to the unceasing US presence in the region, shaping not only regional politics but the fate and the face of Islamism in the region. Those writers who hold and propagate the view that Muslim societies can never democratize support US intervention in Middle Eastern states, and view it as benign intervention.[51]

In conclusion, the debate on the compatibility of Islam and democracy has been an age-old one and continues to this day. Recently there has been a lull in the debate over the topic however it

[47] Graham Fuller, "Islam, a Force for Change." Le Monde Diplomatique. http://mondediplo.com/1999/09/16islam. September, 1999.
[48] Asef Bayat, Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007. Pp. 197.
[49] Noah Feldman, After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 2004. Pp. 54.
[50] Yahya Sadowski , "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork eds., Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), Pp. 39.
[51] Bernard Lewis and Fouad Ajami being two examples, of academics turned foreign policy-advisors during Bush administration, supporting US invasion of Iraq.

has not become irrelevant. Having gone over this debate, and understanding major arguments from both sides, we will now be able to study contemporary Islamism using the case study of the Muslim Brotherhood, analyze literature by founders of the parties, and formulate an original analysis that would be situated in and add to the existing debate. The answer to the "compatibility" question will eventually lead us to investigate the research question: whether or not Islamism is a viable political ideology today.

METHODOLOGY

A. THEORY

This section provides a brief commentary on the use of empirical data as a methodology to study Islamism.

A large body of literature examines empirical evidence from polls and observations from Muslim-majority states of the Middle East and South Asia, to determine the extent to which Muslim citizens and Islamists (two distinct groups), favor democracy and democratic norms such as equal citizenship rights in their country. Esposito and Mogahed did extensive work on this theme, in their book, "Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think?" One such survey was done in 2007 by Gallup over six years which claims to represent more than 90 percent of the global Muslim population. The survey concluded that Muslims mostly support democracy, and in Muslim countries, a good majority, (73 percent of Saudis, 89 percent of Iranians, 94 percent of Egyptians), wish for equal rights, freedom of speech, and other freedoms to be a part of the constitution.[52] However, in the 2007 poll, they also do not agree with the notion that "greater democracy requires a Western-like separation of church and state."[53]

Another important contribution in terms of categorization by Bokhari and Senzai is the classification of Islamist groups concerning their behavior toward the democratic nation-state and society rather than the stated ideology. They introduce three categories, the 'Acceptors', the 'Propagandists', and the 'Insurrectionists'. The 'Acceptors' are receptive to and participate in the democratic norms. They engage with society, contest in elections, adhere to the constitution, and act within the bounds of and consequently strengthen the democratic nation-state. The MB of Egypt is an example of an Acceptor movement. The Propagandists reject the democratic nation-state but engage with the society. They shape public opinion against the status quo and seek to rally the masses for a revolution, abolish the state, and reform the

[52] John Esposito, and Dalia Mogahed, "Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think." New York. Gallup Press. 2007. Pp. 47. And, John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed. "Muslim True/False." Los Angeles Times, April 2, 2008. A15.

[53] John L Esposito and Emad Eldin Shahin, The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics (Oxford, Uk ; New York, Ny: Oxford University Press, 2013).

caliphate. The Hizb al-Tahrir is an example. And finally, the Insurrectionists reject both the state and the society. They assume a militant disposition and 'view jihad as the means to dismantle what they deem to be unIslamic political systems'. They target the state and its key players to topple the status quo top-down and don't see any value in changing society or appealing to the masses. Al-Qaeda and such outfits are examples.[54]

In contrast, Wickham argues that Islamists must not be described as supporters or rejectors of democracy. Neither is the categorization of Islamists into groups based on arbitrarily created levels such as moderate Islamists or extremists any wiser because Islamist movement organizations are not 'monolithic entities' that act in coordination.[55] In her book, The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement, she outlines the non-linear and inconsistent patterns of thought among the members of Islamist movements showing how in the MB of Egypt and three of its off-shoot movements in Arab, ideas of freedom and democracy coexisted with illiberal ideas, members often disagreed over strategy and ideology, and in all countries Islamists showed widely different reactions to opposition. Esposito and Voll also share this perspective. In the traditional interpretation of Islamic literature, one can find evidence of concepts of 'constitutional opposition' and limits on arbitrary government power." They hold and advocate the view that multiple forms of both democracy and Islamism may exist, thus deterministic conclusions and grouping regarding both are erroneous.[56]

Assessing and analyzing individual movements in terms of non-linear change by tracing their evolution using self-defined theoretical criteria rather than grouping movements into vaguely defined categories and generalizing heavily contextual individual party trajectories is more academically viable in my opinion. Empirical data on public opinion in this era must get obsolete quite rapidly, and the merit of the scales used has been critiqued.[57]

It is also well suited to studying Islamism as a methodology because of the ideological scope and breadth of the movement as reinforced by the proponents of the contextualist reading of the movement. In this research, I will attempt to perform an analysis of the ideology and the methodology of Islamism. My sample will include primary literature i.e. the book '*Islami*

[54] Ibid, Pp. 27.
[55] Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, The Muslim Brotherhood Evolution of an Islamist Movement - Updated Edition (Princeton University Press, 2015). Pp.
[56] John Esposito and John Voll . "Islam's Democratic Essence." Middle East Quarterly, 1994. Pp 3–11.
[57] Iliya Harik. "Democracy, 'Arab Exceptionalism,' and Social Science." Middle East Journal 60, no. 4: 664–84. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4330317. 2006.

Riyasat' by an Islamist ideologue, Mawdudi; and the behavior and policies of an Islamist political party, the MB of Egypt. Of course, this is a limited sample, and other ideologues and parties may not align perfectly with the ideology and methodology of the sample. However, the disagreement would most probably be of a tactical nature, about the ways in which Shari'ah would be implemented on the state level because all Islamists agree on the fundamental tenet of Islamism, as demonstrated in Euben's definition earlier. This disagreement still hinders the efforts to generalize the literature and activities studied here to Islamism as a global ideological movement. However, there is good reason to make the choices that I did as will be explained in forthcoming chapters.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research will do a comparative study of two broad systems and worlds of meaning; Islam and liberal democracy. However, there isn't a neat distinction between the two concepts and attached systems I am looking at. They are not mutually exclusive, and finding out ways in which they are not is one of the outcomes of this research. As is evident from the definitions of Islamism presented above. In the case of Islamist governments, the two are inter-convoluted and hard to distinguish as separate systems. Rather, one is apparent as the means to achieve the other as an end. However, even that is a glaringly simplistic conclusion if one takes into account the various contradictions in each of the frameworks. It is also not easy to classify them both under similar categories or bodies of knowledge, which makes the act of drawing comparisons even more overwrought with complexities. However, In this research, with the help of theoretical and conceptual frameworks by various scholars defined above, I will attempt to operationalize and define them in a way that a comparison becomes possible.

While also making use of methodological pluralism, I will be making a case-study-based assessment of the ideology and methodology of Islamism. To understand the ideological underpinnings of Islamism I will be presenting a reading of chapters 1 and 3 from *Islami Riyasat* (Islamic State) by Maududi in light of democratization theory, and to assess the methodological choices made by Islamist parties I will use the case study of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. There were several offshoot movements and works inspired by and extended to this ideology. I will not be devoting much attention to those, as they require a contextual reading of their own. Similarly, the Maududi is one of many ideologues of Islamism, and the inability to extend my assessment to include works by them all will remain a limitation

of this research. Islamism is not a concrete universally agreed-upon phenomenon and has time and again been defined mostly by the actions and words of politicians and writers across the Muslim world.

The Primary material used in this research will include, '*Islami Riyasat'* (Islamic State) by Abul A'la Maududi, works of al Banna will also be a part of this study, extracted from *Mu'tamar ar-Rasail, Hasan al-Bann*a (Complete works of Hasan al-Banna), speeches and interviews of MB party spokesmen, party manifestos, and relevant newspaper reports for a sound analysis of on-ground activities, policy choices, public opinion, etc.

The goal is to trace the MB ideology and its trajectory as an Islamist political and social movement evolving within Egypt's domestic and regional political context. Through presenting an overview of the literature by one of the writers that spear-headed the Islamist cause (Maududi), speeches of leaders of the MB, party manifestos, and substantial steps taken by these parties, I will assess how successful the ideology is in today's context. Parameters of success will be determined using a combination of a few markers. Islamism will be operationalized by determining whether the ideology is capable of fulfilling its goals defined in the party literature. And for democracy, the various indexes such as those published by the Freedom House, and an expansive idealist theoretical framework provided by the Polyarchy Scale of Robert Dahl. These markers will determine the extent to which democratization has occurred in Egypt.

I will also utilize existing secondary research to inform my analysis. This will include:

Books and articles on:

- The historical assessment of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and offshoot movements.
- Analysis of the MB in the context of modern politics.
- Islamism
- Democratization, with case studies specifically from the region and period in question

Themes related to Islam and democracy have been extensively discussed in contemporary Islamic literature. As a result, I will show whether or not the two can be reconciled and to what extent.

CHAPTER 1

Islami Riyasat (Islamic State) by Abul A'la Maududi: A Brief Analysis of Chapters 1 and 3 in Light of the Democratization Theory

To understand the ideological underpinnings of Islamism and assess its relevance in the contemporary world we shall study the primary work of one of the torch-bearers of Islamism, Syed Abul A'la Maududi. His works have greatly influenced the discourse on modern political Islam as we know it today. India was getting increasingly frustrated by the British presence in the 1930s. Expressing disagreements with both the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress, Maududi founded the Jamaat-e-Islami, the Islamist party of the subcontinent in 1941. Despite his reservations about the idea of independence, the party survived the partition and continues to have a large political presence in both states. He moved to Pakistan and continued leading the party for the next three decades.

Maududi's role as a party head is transformative for Pakistan's politics, for example, he made a huge contribution in mobilizing the masses to call for or the passing of the Objectives Resolution which enshrined God's sovereignty in the preamble to the constitution, making the social contract subservient to Shari'ah. However, in this chapter, we aim to understand the ideological basis of an Islamist movement instead of indulging in the practical maneuvers of party politics, for which another chapter is designated. For this purpose, I have selected the original work '*Islami Riyasat', 2nd Edition* by Maududi compiled in 2000. The book will help us understand the rationale behind the decisions taken by Islamists in the political arena, their motives, and the philosophical intricacies, and above all help us answer the research question: Is Islamism still a viable ideology today?

Before we begin a few details linked to the selection need attention. The reason this book was chosen out of the hundreds Maududi has published is that this work, as he describes himself, is a compilation of multiple essays and speeches given at different instances on the topic of political Islam and therefore can be seen as a culmination of his thought over the years. Another clarification related to the choice of the writer is due. Maududi has single-handedly written the most on the topic, delivered countless lectures, and pursued the political struggle towards the fulfillment of the Islamist goal, i.e. establishment of Shari'ah literature on the topic than any other scholar in the Islamist school of thought. Moreover, his ideas traveled beyond the subcontinent and became a source text for writers in the contemporary context, writing on

gender roles, war, economics, international relations, and the Islamic state.[58] The influence, expansiveness, and ideological depth and breadth of his work have led to the selection of Maududi out of tens of other Islamist ideologues. It is also a limitation of this study, considering that Islamism is a broad umbrella ideology under which a wide array of interpretations of Islamic sources exists. It is a world where writers agree on the ultimate goal, but disagree with one another over the strategies i.e., the policy choices. I have also taken liberties with the translation of this work, considering that Urdu is my native language and my undergraduate-level education has been in the English Language, this was an achievable task. However, the effort cannot be error-free so I would also suggest readers who are familiar with the Urdu language visit the source wherever it is referenced.

The book has four sections, and a preface by Khurshid Ahmed. The first section is titled, 'Islam's Philosophy of Politics," Section 2 is a detailed account of what the State would look like, "Islamic Order of the State: Principles and System." The third section discusses, "Islam's Principles of Governance," and the final section provides a brief plan to execute an Islamic revolution under the heading, "The Way Towards an Islamic Revolution." For this chapter of my research, chapters 1 and 2 in Section 1 are relevant because they aim to explore the philosophical background of the thought in detail. The rest couple of sections dwell on the practical steps towards achieving an Islamic state.

Section 1: Islam's Philosophy of Politics

Maududi begins by describing the relationship between Islam as a religion and politics. First, he defines Islam as a religion.

Islam is an attitude of the mind, a way of thinking, and an outlook on life. Religion, culture, and civilization are indistinguishable in Islam because this is a religion that dictates everyday life. It provides man with ethics and moral responsibilities and establishes boundaries in everyday dealings and social relations. Moreover, it gives purpose to every action of man. Islam is more than a set of rituals and rules. The choices one makes in life after choosing a philosophy of life are not just limited to spiritual affairs. One's philosophy of life dictates his everyday decision-making such as the choices he makes about eating, clothing, economic decision-

[58] John L. Esposito and Emad Eldin Shahin. The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics. Oxford, Uk; New York, Ny: Oxford University Press, 2013.

making, trade, and politics. And Islam is a philosophy of life. Thus, it influences man's worldly matters.

Maududi then poses the question of why an Islamic state is important in the first place. He proceeds to answer. If a man truly wants to spend his life as a Muslim, he has no choice but to spend his entire life in submission to God and organize his personal and public affairs in agreement with Shar'iah i.e., Divine law. Islam does not give Muslims a choice to make that proclamation and simultaneously use other sources of law to organize their public and private affairs. This necessitates the implementation of an Islamic state and an Islamic constitution. The Quran supports this: God is the creator of the earth, the world and everything in it is His creation, and so only He has the right to rule. His creation being subjected to foreign rule is fundamentally wrong.[59] This includes all legal charters made by man. This is how Islam and politics are inextricably linked.

Maududi then proceeds to define Islam's mission in the world: Islam is a way of life. Once you enter the folds of Islam you believe it to be the best way of life and that renders other systems of living unfavorable. You would be disingenuous if you proclaim to be an adherent of a specific way of living because you believe it to be the best, and live under unfavorable systems. The sincerest path to tread would be to change the systems you exist within so they take the form of the one you believe to be the best. If you continue to exist in a system that is not the choicest system for you, you're either dishonest with yourself or with the society you exist in. This is why spreading the message (dawah) is an important tenet in Islam. The call towards the message of Islam and the struggle towards the establishment of an Islamic system of public life.

However, forcing people to accept its message is also not the correct course of action in Islam. Islam is categorically against forced conversions because action without belief is meaningless. So, it tolerates the presence of members of a society that don't conform to its way of living. However, it also does not tolerate the rule of an unIslamic system that forces Muslims to be subjects in a man-made system comprising values, education, societal dealings, economics, law, and politics devised by men. In such a state, Muslims would have to inevitably act in contradiction to Divine law. For example, in an economic system that promotes the usage of interest. Islam forbids interest, but Muslims living in such a system cannot possibly conduct

[59] Commentary on Al Kahf:26. And Bani Israel:11.

business smoothly without ever running into a situation that forces them to participate in receiving or giving interest. This is why Muslims can't passively exist in a system that does not conform to Shari'ah. And so, they must struggle to establish an Islamic state wherever they exist.

At the conclusion of this chapter, Maududi explains the need for a state in the modern world. He believes that some form of coercive power is needed to maintain order and discipline in collective life, hence a state exists. The construction of culture is dependent upon a coercive power i.e state, which orders the public and private life of all its citizens. A state always has an ideology. Based on this ideology, it promotes certain ideas and activities and discourages others. If a Muslim views Islam as a way of life (*din)* and not just a set of rituals (*mazhab*) they would want to gain control of the state, in order for the state to exert the ideology of Islam by enacting laws that conform to it and ordering affairs in tandem with the spirit of the Shari'ah.

In this chapter, Maududi has provided comprehensive arguments for the establishment of an Islamic state from a Muslim believer's perspective. He creates a link between Islam and politics by iterating that Islam is an all-encompassing entity that influences the private and public choices of its adherents and not just a set of rituals. Therefore, it seeks to be established on a societal level with all its manifestations, far and wide wherever Muslims exist. The ideology spreads and grows and looks for the seat of power to exert its influence. And it finds itself most easily realized in places where Muslims are in the majority, for example, the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. These are also regions where Islamism has been linked with violence and the war on terror has been carried out by the US. The US has sought to limit the growth of Islamist ideas and prevent the establishment of an Islamic state, seeing the rise of Islamism as an ideological threat to the West as communism did once. [60] The assessment is not wrong, Islam does seek to dominate all systems by achieving political dominance i.e., take control of the state. And it poses an existential threat to all prominent ideologies of today. This is a system that holds a powerful stance and has been downtrodden by the powers of today that view it as a threat to their ideology. However, it is not an obsolete ideology. It has identified pathways to stay alive in the systems present in states today. Its philosophy conforms to democratic principles and norms to a great extent. The following chapter will make the case for Islam's political philosophy, and the characteristics of an Islamic state.

[60] Cheryl Benard, Civil Democratic Islam Partners, Resources, and Strategies (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, National Security Research Division, 2003).

Islam's Political Philosophy

The rise of modern political awareness among Muslims of the subcontinent raised multiple issues, and at the forefront stood the question of which political system is best for Muslims.

Maududi describes Islam's basic principles, upon which the ideology stands. Islam is a complete system based on strong principles. All its components, and rules pertaining to different segments of life, are logically connected to these principles. He likens it to a tree. The seeds are connected to the roots, roots to trunks, trunks to the branches, and the branches hold flowers. He concludes that the flowers are always connected to the root. The root is where the essence of Islam lies and the flowers are all its components which are in one shape and form today and another tomorrow. This allegory helps to describe the flexible nature of Islam as a religious ideology.

Next, Maududi develops the argument against subjecthood in Islam. The root of evil is the man ruling over man. However, history has taught us that man cannot live without a god and that god can take a variety of forms. At times a nation becomes a god. Other times one class rules over another class like a god. Whatever the situation, wherever man has ruled over another man, the result has been violence, injustice, and general disarray. Being ruled by another man puts bounds on the otherwise free nature of man. Man was born free. Subservience to another man resulted in devastation and became an obstruction in humanity's path towards spiritual, intellectual, societal, political, and economic greatness. The prophets were always sent to free man from becoming slaves of other gods. Sometimes these were despotic kings and pharaohs, other times these were idols, etc., and brought them directly under the sovereignty of God. This is also what the Quran's message is.[61]

How then is a state justified in Islam? He proceeds to share the characteristics of an Islamic state that can be derived from verses of the Quran:

1. No individual, family, class, or group, in fact, all of a state's population combined does not have the right to rule. Only God is sovereign and everyone else is His subject.

2. The authority to enact laws also lies with no one but God. Even Muslims don't have the right to unite and form laws of their own and neither can they alter Divine law.

[61] Yusuf:40.

3. An Islamic state will be established on the Divine law promulgated by Prophet Muhammad. The government that runs the Islamic state will only be worthy of having loyal subjects if it aims to implement Divine law.

He builds on the description of the nature of the Islamic state. An Islamic state is not a secular democracy, where the common man holds the most authority and laws are made and changed according to the popular will. In Islam, an overarching foundational legal framework is provided in the Shari'ah and the state is subject to that. It is also not a theocracy as is understood by Western scholarship where a priest-class implements self-created laws under the pretext of Divine law. Islam does not believe in a priest class. The government in an Islamic state will comprise the average Muslim citizen who will run the state according to the Shari'ah. This can be called a Theo-Democracy (original term), which has 'limited popular sovereignty', paramountcy of God, and the government i.e., legislature and executive made up of common people.

All those aspects of governance that are not directly addressed by the Shari'ah will be dealt with by the consensus (Ijma) of Muslims. And wherever Divine law requires interpretation it shall be interpreted by Muslims. No group among Muslims is favored over another for this job. whosoever has displayed the ability to and made the effort is worthy of it. This way it is a democracy. Everyone has the right to hold office and enact laws. But in the instance where the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet give a clear judgment, no group or individual holds the right to act otherwise. This makes it a theocracy. Thus, with the acceptance of some characteristics of both a negation of some, an Islamic state is a Theo-Democracy according to Maududi.

Why the negation of popular sovereignty? Maududi tries to answer this by presenting a critique of democracy. A democracy claims to have popular sovereignty but in reality, people hand over their sovereignty to a few individuals who pass legislation on their behalf, however, originally the few who have the resources to influence opinion by money, wit, propaganda, etc. win. They enact legislation that benefits their interest. And if we assume that people do have a say in the legislation passed, humans don't always act in their best interest. For example, the Prohibition Law (1918) of the US made the consumption of alcohol illegal because it was proved as injurious to health by multiple studies. Soon after the ban, its consumption rose, crime rose, and a black market for alcohol emerged. This led to the reversal of the law despite it still being injurious to health.

This is the reason, Maududi argues, Divine limits, (*Hudood*) exist in Islam. These define the outermost boundaries within which humans can make regulations. For example, in economics. God has declared the giving of alms an obligation, private ownership of property a right, prohibited interest, defined laws of inheritance, and defined a few other restrictions. Everything within these boundaries is permissible and man is allowed to order his economic dealings however he wishes. These boundaries have enhanced his freedom on one hand and prevented extreme economic disparity on the other. The prevalence of Divine limits, thus, is necessary for balance and justice. Popular sovereignty alone cannot be trusted for the collective good.

This part of the passage directly answers the question of the compatibility of Islam and democracy within the Islamist framework from a primary source. All men are equal before the eyes of the law and capable of enacting legislation within the Divine limits. However, there's a break with democracy at a primary level where the Islamist framework does not accept popular sovereignty and sufficient critique is presented for it.

Next, the purpose of an Islamic state is explored. Maududi refers to Al-Hadeed: 25 for this part. According to his interpretation, the 'iron' mentioned in the verse is a metaphor for coercive power i.e., the state. The verse states that the purpose of the prophets was to establish social justice according to the well-balanced way of life taught to them by God. In extension, establishing an Islamic state is the reenactment of the prophets' job because the state motivates good deeds and prevents people from committing evil deeds. Using Quranic verses, Maududi provides evidence of the source of, and additional legitimacy to, his claims about the Islamic state.

He continues to build on the concept of the Islamic state. Some of the characteristics are:

A. Intervening and all-encompassing: The state's purpose is not just a negative one where it stops injustice from occurring, protects people's freedom, and defends the state. But it has a positive purpose as well which is to establish a balanced system of collective justice which presents God's Book. Its purpose is to erase evil in all its forms and make good available in all its forms. This means that the state's action influences all of human life. It is an all-encompassing entity that makes use of all mediums of influence such as education, media, individual opinion, and sometimes state power. Its intervening nature makes it bear similarities to a totalitarian state.

B. Organizational and Principled state: The correctional nature of the state and its purpose makes evident the fact that only those who are aware of and ascribe to this philosophy of the

state and agree with it can run it. There is no demographic limitation to those who can run for office except the singular limitation of belief in the philosophy. Those who do not believe and disagree can stay as *dhimmis*, and will have equal rights, and enjoy all protections that other citizens do, but cannot run for office.

So, who can run the Islamic state?

Maududi clarifies, using Quranic reference, that the status of someone who aims to establish Divine law on earth i.e an Islamic state is that of a representative of God.[62]

In Islam's theory of state, the text uses the term 'Vicegerent' rather than ruler. Because in Islam God is the ultimate ruler and the head of state is merely exercising delegated powers. Also, the verse doesn't promise vicegerency to one person, it also talks about 'popular vicegerency', where the common man is a vicegerent of God, and one vicegerent is not superior to the other.

This defines the status of Islamic democracy. An Islamic democracy, he describes, produces a society in which every man is a vicegerent and has equal participation in the political system. It does not tolerate class divisions. No one is exclusive, all are equal in status. The only thing that improves someone's status is his character. The Prophet's Last Sermon also establishes social equality, where the only scale is man's belief in God, "All humans are children of Adam." In this society, someone's social status or birthright does not impact his position. Nor is it a disability that is associated with the improvement of his personal qualities. Everyone is given equal and unrestrained opportunities to grow, where they can use their abilities and strength to go as far ahead in their respective fields as they wish.

Moreover, there is no space for dictatorship by a person or a group in this society. This is because as established earlier, every man is a vicegerent. No dictator has the right to snatch the vicegerency of other men. The Muslims in this state have willingly entrusted their vicegerency to the leader who is answerable to God and the men of this state. Acting with total impunity and assuming leadership without the will of the people equals dictatorship and that is antagonistic to the Islamic state. Though it is all-encompassing, that does not give it the right to enforce regimentation policies. It cannot dictate the specific life choices of individuals ranging from their profession to their education and dress code. The concept of personal accountability, wherein man is accountable to God, takes away this right from the state to extend its influence on the private choices of individuals.

[62] (Al Nur: 55)

And finally, every adult Muslim, male or female, has the equal right to form opinions and indulge in free speech. This is how they may express their commitment to the State.

On the one hand, Islam has established a democracy of sorts where each man has an equal status in a polity. On the other hand, it has created a unique relationship between the collective and the individual. In an Islamic state, the individual is not erased within the collective as is the characteristic of communism and fascism, nor is an individual empowered to the extent that he harms the collective, as is the case in Western democracies. In Islam, man's purpose in life is the same as a state's purpose. Establishment of Divine law and seeking His approval. It not only forces the state to fulfill the rights of man wholeheartedly but also places some responsibilities on the people towards the state. This way the individual gets the chance to nurture his capabilities and use them for the nourishment of the collective society.

Thus, Maududi establishes the relationship between man and state by first narrating man's role as a vicegerent. This places many issues regarding Islamism into perspective. A Muslim is not a subject of his state, rather he places his vicegerency in the hands of the head of state, who himself is a vicegerent, and what was individual Muslims' purpose is now by extension his purpose: establish an Islamic state where divine law is the primary source of law. Muslims all over the world are aware and accepting of the all-encompassing nature of Islam. As is evident by the decades-long popular struggle of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, they managed to rally support in favor of the Islamist ideology despite periods of violent repression. Muslims like to see their ideology represented at the state level. At the same time, they favor democratic principles. A 2007 Gallup poll revealed that Muslims mostly support democracy, and in Muslim-majority countries, a good majority, (73 percent of Saudis, 89 percent of Iranians, 94 percent of Egyptians), wish for equal rights, freedom of speech, and other freedoms to be a part of the constitution.[63] The study of Maududi's primary work shows how those two are not mutually exclusive events. Why then must they be understood and theorized as such?

[63] John Esposito, and Dalia Mogahed, "Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think." New York. Gallup Press. 2007. Pp. 47. And, John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed. "Muslim True/False." Los Angeles Times, April 2, 2008. A15.

CHAPTER 2

The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Democratization

For assessing the viability of Islamism in the contemporary world, it is necessary to study both the methodology and the ideology of the movement. This chapter will analyze the methodology using the case study of the MB. We will witness how the organization has interacted with the regimes since its inception in 1939 till the year 2024. The nature of the decisions and the supporting works of some leaders of the movement, including the official decisions made during the tenure in government and since will all be discussed in light of the democratization framework.

The purpose of selecting democratization as the theoretical framework is not because liberal democracy is in any way superior to Islamism and we aim to assess whether the latter conforms to the former, in which case it shall be determined a viable ideology for the contemporary world. Democracy has been chosen as the benchmark and Islamism is being investigated under the framework because it is the status quo and the most popular system in today's day and age. If a competing ideology is to be deemed viable for today's day and age it must not be antithetical to the status quo, but rather, either complimentary or on a spectrum towards or away from it. Islamism, in many ways, as will be made clear in the next chapter, lies on the same spectrum. It prioritizes values of freedom, justice, and civic rights. We aim to investigate whether, if Islamism is adopted as a political ideology by a regime, it has the potential to survive. Survival of a regime is dependent upon a few factors. Some may be contested however most are widely agreed upon. These include the regime's ability to maintain the social, economic, and political stability of the country. And the self-corrective ability of the power structures including the political institutions that originally brought it to power. These institutions must have the ability to control the amount of power a single entity holds and have systems of accountability for unforeseen events that threaten their sanctity such as a military takeover. We are assuming that liberal democracy has achieved this degree of competence and is successful among regime types, not because it is the most widely adopted political ideology today but because it has managed to survive in varying forms for more than two centuries. It has independent institutions which have built-in systems of accountability and no one office holds unchecked powers in theory. The ability to extend and enforce political influence using soft and hard power onto other states is an additional trait that strengthens regimes by allowing

countries to export their choice of ideology and curb the rise of competing ones, as was the case during the Cold War between capitalism and communism. It is worth noting that liberal democracy is not the only political ideology that has managed to survive this long historically, it is just the most sought-after and successful today. Having established that, we now have to assess whether the MB can manage to ensure regime survival, and hence be deemed a viable political ideology in the contemporary world.

Democratization can be operationalized in the following way. A country can be assumed to be democratizing if it is making reforms in the direction of certain principles. These include separation of power, pluralism, respect for civil rights and freedoms including women's rights and civil liberties, environment for the prevalence of an active civil society, rule of law, and observance of free and fair competitive elections. The analysis of a political party within the framework of democratization necessitates a close look at its policies, behavior in response to domestic and foreign political stimuli, statements, manifestos, and the organization's internal organizational structure.

Early Muslim Brotherhood and Ideological Foundations

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) of Egypt was founded in 1928 by a young charismatic school teacher. Hasan al-Banna also preached to Muslim men belonging to the working class in his free time. He wrote the 'Messages' (Rasail) throughout his political career which he published and distributed across and beyond Egypt. Al-Banna's message was simple: "Islam is a comprehensive system which deals with all spheres of life," and the goal was "to establish divine sovereignty over the world and to guide all of humanity to the sound precepts of Islam", where Islam was the message of the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet.[64] He simplified religion for Muslims, who only knew traditional Islam of the ulema which had scholarly barriers to entry and was 'rigid', or the Sufi order which was vague and superstitious.[65] Most of Egypt was living near the poverty line and had no political freedom as Egypt was still virtually a monarchy and the British had major political control. The people harbored resentment for the Europeans because of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and the misuse of power by the British and French after their victory. Al-Banna's message of religious

[64] Al-Banna, Majmou't Rass'il Al-Imam Al-Shahid Hasan Al-Banna (A Collection of Hasan Al-Banna Messages) Cairo: Dar Al-Da'wa Publications. 2002.
[65] Joas Wagemakers, The Muslim Brotherhood: Ideology, History, Decendents (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022). Pp. 35.

unification (Pan-Islamism) resonated with the people. He also supported Egyptian nationalism and saw the liberation of Egypt as a step towards greater Islamic liberation from the colonizers. Among the duties of Muslims that he describes in "Message of the Teachings", are "Liberation of the homeland from all unIslamic or foreign control, whether political, economic, or ideological" and "Reforming the government so that it may become a truly Islamic government." He describes the "Islamic government" to be one that makes decisions in accordance with the shari'ah. And recognizes there to be flexibility in the detailed structure of the government as long as it is "in agreement with the general principles of the Islamic system of rule." This allows for flexibility in strategy as well such as contesting elections and operating within a democratic institutional framework.

On the role of subject-state loyalty, he states that all Muslim citizens have to be loyal to the state if it completes the following obligations:

"Maintain peace and order, enforce the Islamic Law, spread education, provide military security, protect public health, oversee public utilities, develop the resources of the land, guard the public treasury, strengthen the morals of the people, and spread the call of Islam."[66]

This would be the manifesto of the movement if it were to attain a leadership position in Egypt. With the slogan of "Jihad is our means" where jihad can be translated to 'struggle' and ranges from the use of a sword to an aggrieved heart. Al-Banna's primary preoccupation was with the rapid Westernization and the revival of Islam which had suffered a political and moral blow after the last caliphate ended. Muslims needed an alternate value system that would replace the Western value system rapidly spreading across the Arab world. However, he did not aim to replace the constitutional government which he saw as complimentary to Islam because of its systems of accountability.[67]

The movement's focus was the provision of social services of health education and religion and recruitment through spreading the message. They formally entered politics in 1942 when al-Banna decided to contest in the parliamentary elections. He had to withdraw due to pressures from the government however this decision made his stance on democracy clear among members as well as the general public.

[66] Rasail Pp. 15.
[67] Khalil Al-Anani, Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity, and Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Pp. 57.

As the membership grew the Egyptian leadership grew fearful of their rising influence and their growing hostility towards the British. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 granted permission for British troops to stay for the protection of the Suez Canal. However, the British were extending their influence on the political developments of Egypt. Al-Banna always denounced violence as a means to achieve their political goals. However, he believed the group needed protection so he formed paramilitary groups, *jawwala* and *kata'ib*. Egypt was facing a widespread deficiency of law and order, and over time several paramilitary groups were becoming active such as the Blue Shirts of the Wafd party. Late in 1942, the MB formed another armed group, the Special Apparatus which revolted against the British authorities and Egyptian officials.[68] The message was a complete rebuke of foreign and despotic rule. This group also participated in the war against the creation of Israel in Palestinian territory and is accused of perpetrating violence against Egyptian Jews and their businesses. They were also responsible for the assassination attempt of Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha in 1948. As a result, the movement was outlawed and al-Banna was assassinated by government agents.

The commitment to a state rather than a greater ummah or return to the caliphate was a key feature of the early MB. It showed acceptance of the state system and actively engaged in constitutionalism, using its vocabulary and demanding fulfillment of its clauses from the rulers such as the right to self-determination. Their demand for a shari'ah-based system was also rooted in constitutional change, within the parliamentary system of government. The contestation in the 1942 elections demonstrates its commitment to democratic institutions and trust in the methods of the institutions to bring about desirable change. Al-Banna was willing to play the slow game and conform to the liberal democratic ethos of political participation. He also contributed to the enrichment of civil society in Egypt by promoting education, being an active voice of dissent against despotism, and encouraging activism among common working-class people and students. Their attitudes towards religious minorities were a response to the socio-political environment of Egypt and the Middle East. The treatment lent by the British to the Egyptian Muslims and the Jews to the Palestinians in the neighborhood made them distrustful towards them. However, al-Banna reiterated the Quranic way of dealing with non-Muslims i.e., 'contractually protected by Muslims in return for payment of Jizya. For interpersonal relations with non-Muslims Al-Banna references Surah 60:8, "('God forbids you not, as regards those who have not fought you in religion's cause, nor expelled you from your habitations, that you should be kindly to them, and act justly towards them; surely God loves

[68] Ibid. 6.

the just.')[69] The promotion of civil liberties was a key tenet of the MB's campaign, based on the shari'ah of the Quran and Sunnah. Islam prioritizes individual autonomy and equal treatment of all men regardless of race, religion, or caste.

Egypt Under Military Rule: The Nasser Regime

In 1952 the monarchy and colonial rule ended and was replaced by a military coup d'état by the 'Free Officers'. For a short period, the MB supported the Free Officers in hopes that they would bring Egypt closer to independence and give them space in the political arena. Support for a coup was a controversial decision but in light of the context of a country that has recently been freed of two imperial powers, most people were hopeful they may finally have a say in the country's political matters. Soon they realized that the military leadership was no more in favor of sharing power than the previous rulers and the MB being the largest opposition to the regime was made the target of brutal repression. Regardless, it continued its criticism of Jamal Abdel Nasser's regime and was banned again in 1954. A Brotherhood member made a murder attempt on Nasser in public of which the movement denied any knowledge, but it was enough to give Nasser the green light to do everything in his power to crush the movement. From 1954 to the 1970s its members were imprisoned and tortured and the group was forced to disappear from the political landscape of Egypt. A thousand Brotherhood leaders were tried in court, headquarters were razed to the ground, and the remaining members hid or went into exile. The party, however, did not cease to exist. It forced the party to undergo an ideological introspection, resulting in a radical turn. By this time Syed Qutb, an ardent writer of the movement had started gaining prominence with his ideas among the members. Syed Qutb and al-Hudaybi (current head of the MB) had an ideological debate over the way the Muslim Brotherhood needs to operate. In *Ma'alim fii al-Tariq* Syed Qutb presented the concepts of *jahiliyyah* and *hakimiyya*, which he built on to conclude that all governments that enabled legal systems that were not based on Shari'ah (man-made laws) were Jahili systems against which jihad in the sense of a holy war must be launched.[70] He garnered a following among the younger members of the Brotherhood who had not witnessed al-Banna's gradualist style of running the

[69] Joas Wagemakers, The Muslim Brotherhood: Ideology, History, Decendents (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022). Pp. 65.

[70] The concepts of Jahilliyah and Hakimiyyah are suggested by Wickham to have been a development on existing frameworks provided originally by Mawdudi in, Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, The Muslim Brotherhood Evolution of an Islamist Movement - Updated Edition (Princeton University Press, 2015). Pp. 28.

movement and were enraged by the treatment being lent out to the movement by the Nasser regime. This drew criticism from among the Qutbists in the MB toward the *Murshid* of the time, Hasan al Hudeibi for participating in a *jahilliyah* state system. In response, Hudeibi was compelled to publish *Du'ah la Qudah* (Preachers, not Judges) which presented a justification for the gradualist style party policy adopted by the MB leadership since al-Banna.

The setback from the death of its founder and the physical losses under Nasser's dictatorship did not shake the MB's democratic resolve. They bounced back with the same commitments to the principles and ethos of democracy the foundations of which al-Banna had laid. Although the followers of Syed Qutb believed that the non-violence policy was no longer feasible considering they Were under an existential threat from the state, the majority of the members led by Hudeibi were loyal to the legacy of al-Banna.

Sadat Takes Office and MB's Constitutional Struggle

After Jamal Abdel Nasser died in 1970, his Vice President, Anwar Sadat took the president's office and made deliberate changes in social and economic policy, dubbing it the "correction of the revolution."[71] The MB was granted general amnesty by Sadat in hopes that they would neutralize the Nasserists who were challenging his authority. The movement gradually resumed activities, the primary one being publications, reiterating their commitment to non-violence in the face of years-long oppression. In their journal, al-Da'wa, the spokesman, and *Murshid* al-Tilmisani stated: "If what is meant by *haraka* (movement) is to confront the regime by force and violence, then we believe that this is a futile use of the people's strength which benefits no one but the enemies of this country."[72] The MB began protesting against the regime after Sadat became unpopular for signing the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1977. Sadat's Political Parties Law of 1977 further antagonized the MB because it expressly stated the prohibition of the creation of political parties based on religion.

However, the struggle for the implementation of Shari'ah in the legal system continued. Article 2 of the 1971 Constitution promulgated by Sadat declared the principles of Islamic shari'ah to be a "chief source of legislation." Members of the MB were involved in the study of its implementation. The MB parliamentarians lobbied to change the status of Shari'ah from 'a

[71] Wickham, Pp. 29.
[72] Ibid. 30.

source' to 'a primary source' and the removal of laws that were inconsistent with it. This demand gained legitimacy after the parliament approved and ratified the legislation to amend Article 2 in 1980, which now deemed "the principles of Islamic Shari'ah as the chief source of legislation."[73] In 1981, Sadat carried out a mass arrest of all voices of dissent, banned opposition journals including al-Da'wah, and soon after was assassinated by the brother of one of the detained activists.

During the short period of relief under Sadat, The Muslim Brotherhood was expanding not just in civil society across rural and urban Egypt, but also gaining ground in university campuses. Religious student societies were initially supported by Sadat because they were counterbalancing more leftist student groups. The MB supported the rise of student groups and the success of student unions, however, would also work with the regime to identify violent elements among these groups. They approached student leaders for recruitment but were seen as too passive and weak a movement by the young blood.[74] Regardless, many students were reluctant to join, preferring to 'breathe new life' into an already existing movement rather than starting a new one. The MB's constitutional struggle had become a hallmark of the movement. They continued to work within the system despite crackdowns and repression, in a gradualist fashion. The instrumentalization of constitutionalism to achieve ideological goals is a recurring theme in Islamist methodology.

The Mubarak Regime

The MB still under the leadership of Umar al-Tilmisani entered a new regime in 1981. The Mubarak regime began in relative peace, releasing many of the political prisoners and announcing elections. Sadat had begun defense cooperation with the US and his Israel policy was an extension of this alliance in return for defense aid. This was continued by Mubarak throughout his time in office as the US considered his to be a friendly regime despite its undemocratic nature.[75] He also gave political space to moderate Muslim groups to counterweight the more radical groups such as the one responsible for Sadat's death. Seeing the opportunity, the MB decided to contest the parliamentary elections, which now required candidates to contest under a political party rather than independently. The party prioritized

[73] Ibid. 33.
[74] Wickham. Pp.40.
[75] Thalia Beaty, "U.S. Aid and Egypt: It's Complicated," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 23, 2012, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2012/10/us-aid-and-egypt-its-complicated?lang=en.

political integration and saw this as a chance to enter and influence public space after years of repression and working underground. This marked the entrance of the MB into Egyptian party politics. Although its social and student activities were continuing as usual, the movement needed a political presence to make a substantial change. Once in the parliament, the MB made some notable decisions and questioned the government on multiple issues. Figure 1 shows some statistics on the subject matter of protests raised by the MB for the government from 1984 to 2005 divided into periods of 3 years. The subject matter included civil rights, employment, corruption, and religion among which religion dominated the charts only twice out of four times, and issues of civil rights, political freedom, and corruption remained contentious throughout.[76]

Some of the issues raised in the parliament by members of the MB were to increase government employee wages, take national-level measures to increase private investment in local businesses, improve and upscale the country's national grid and sewerage systems, and also discuss regional issues such as the growing presence of the US defense troops in the Middle East.[77] They demanded freedom in the formation of political parties and of speech and information.

One view is that the agenda of application of the Shari'ah and other religious demands was being presented gradually by the Supreme Guide before the regime, and not forcefully, so as not to "antagonize the Mubarak regime and alienate secular parties."[78] However, Wickham argues that it is clear instrumental logic, considering that the greatest sufferer as a result of restrictions of freedoms was the MB itself.[79] Brown argues that the reason that political issues came to the forefront of the Mb agenda was because the focus of MB's discourse had shifted from the 'letter' of the Shari'ah to the 'maqasid' of Shari'ah. The Maqasid al Shariah was an intellectual discourse that suggested the use of reinterpretation (ijtihad) of the Quran and sunnah for the implementation of shari'ah in public policy which allowed for the use of unconventional or non-traditional methods to achieve the broader goals of shari'ah.[80]

[76] John L. Esposito and Emad Eldin Shahin. The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics. Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 487- 488.
[77] Muhammad ʿAbdallah al-Khatib. 1990. Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun Taht Qubbat al Barlaman [The Muslim Brotherhood under the Dome of Parliament]. Cairo: Islamic Distribution and Publishing House. In Wickham Pp. 55.
[78] Wickham. Pp. 53.
[79] Ibid. Pp 55
[80] Nathan Brown, "Debating the Islamic Shar`a in 21st Century Egypt: Consensus and Cacophony," in Robert W. Hefner, ed. Shari`a Politics: Islamic Law and Society in the Modern World, Indiana University Press, 2011, pp. 94-121.

Considering that the MB was positioning itself as a non-traditional, more 'moderate' Islamic movement in contrast to the Salafists and the jihadist groups, this explanation seems most plausible. This also explains the adoption of a party status to achieve political integration which was a contentious subject among the Brothers since the beginning. The party had prioritized the goals of the Shari'ah and showed flexibility in the strategies used to achieve those.

By the 1980s and onwards, the language of the movement had taken a pragmatic tone, appealing to the constitution and seeking legitimacy from the liberal democratic framework. Mamoun Hudeibi made a speech in a parliament in 1988:

"The President of the Cabinet claimed in a recent speech that the government has opted for democracy with the utmost faith and conviction, and it is the primary foundation for social and economic development . . . but we are forced to wonder about the real extent to which these words are applied in practice. The Emergency Law which invalidates all the provisions of the Constitution and defies all of the protections guaranteed within it—does this achieve democracy?"[81]

By pleading the principles of democracy and the rule of law, the MB called for the implementation of Shari'ah based on the grounds that it is the popular will:

"If democracy is the rule of the people by the people and in the interest of the people, as we know, well then, the people of Egypt believe in their religion and their Shariʿa and have repeated time and again that they want to be ruled according to laws which conform with their beliefs and opinions and feelings."[82]

It was also gradually gaining support among social groups whilst forming alliances with other parties and was turning into the largest opposition to the regime. They had contested elections for boards of professional syndicates and in 1986 the MB had the most seats on the executive board of the doctors' syndicate. Similarly, during the 1990s they had a substantial presence in the scientists' and engineers' syndicates. Members of the party had notable support in the faculty clubs of a few renowned universities. Under the name of the Islamic Trend, they worked to bring the state's attention to issues in their respective domains. They conducted conferences highlighting the regime's inefficiencies, raised voices on broader regional issues, held debates, and reached out to NGOs, academics, activists, journalists, and government officials to bring

[81] Cited in al-Khatib 1990, 74. In Wickham, Pp.56.
[82] Ibid.

about political reform. The Islamic Trend leaders gradually became more independent in their work, distinguishing themselves from them as a 'civil institution and not a religious one' and viewed the MB to be narrow and closed in their societal outlook.[83] Such was the extent of outreach and activism of the party. Then came the mid-90s, and Mubarak decided to launch a crackdown on the Brotherhood. The regime called elections in 1990 in haste which resulted in most opposition parties including the MB boycotting the elections in protest against gerrymandering and 'insufficient guarantees of fairness."[84]

This was also when a group of disillusioned members possessing certain ideological differences broke away from the party, accusing the leadership of ignoring internal laws, and not working hard enough to legalize the party. According to a Wasat leader Aboul 'Ela Madi:

"We sought to make a difference inside the organization itself by pushing for more internal democracy and accountability. We also worked hard to push the organization to take more progressive positions on a wide array of issues including democracy, and equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender or religion. After almost twenty years of repeated frustrations, we realized that such changes were vehemently resisted by the powers that be inside the organization. At that point we decided to quit and establish our own more progressive and tolerant project: the Wasat party."[85]

This event was a setback to the Brotherhood because of the loss of members in key leadership positions and public defamation. They went from being the more moderate Muslim group to one that held extreme positions that they were unwilling to revise and a corrupt internal system of accountability. The Wasat group appeared more committed to democratic principles and civil rights and held more open positions on issues of gender and religious minorities. This was not the only challenge of the period. Soon after Hosni Mubarak decided to suppress all voices of dissent and imposed harsh restrictions on freedom of expression, banning protests arresting journalists, and trying civilians in military courts.

On the eve of elections in 1995, around a thousand MB members and supporters were arrested. This election was also marred by unprecedented levels of rigging after which an NDP-dominated parliament was selected. The repression continued and political participation once

[83] Wickham. Pp. 63.
[84] Eberhard Kienle. "More than a Response to Islamism: The Political Deliberalization of Egypt in the 1990s." Middle East Journal 52, no. 2 (1998): 219–35. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329187.
[85] Talʿat Ramih. 1997. Al-Wasat wa al-Ikhwan [The Wasat and the Brotherhood]. Cairo: Jaffa Center for Studies and Research. From Wickham. Pp 90.

again dove to its lowest levels. Through the early 2000s, the party remained on the back foot, avoiding greater issues of ideology and limiting participation to districts. They also deliberately gave space to other candidates in syndicates, knowing full well that if they contested, they could win the seats. This was an attempt to increase plurality and assist democracy. The party avoided protesting, even on international-level issues such as the US invasion of Iraq. It was a price they paid for having a large public presence.

Post-9/11, in 2003, President Bush announced a change in the Middle East Policy that directly impacted domestic politics in Egypt. He resolved to promote freedom and democracy in the MENA region to combat the rise of jihadist elements which they deemed a national security concern. Egypt was given special focus, and Mubarak was under scrutiny for some months. This motivated political parties to demand reform, including the MB that published the Reform Initiative in 2004. This document presented their demands, asking for fulfillment of the democratic principles including free and fair elections, freedom in general for citizens, and an independent judiciary. At the same time, it reiterated its mission of establishing the word of God on His land. Islam and democracy were always presented as conjoined twins, goals that can be achieved in unison:

"We affirm our support for a state system which is a republican, parliamentary, constitutional and democratic system in the framework of the principles of Islam" and "affirm freedom of opinion and the right to promote ideas peacefully in the framework of the public order and public morals and the constitutive foundations of society."[86]

During the years 2004-2005, widespread protests for democratic reform broke out in Egypt by a group of independent activists under the name of Kefayah. The MB also organized one, five times larger, first after years of practicing caution and self-restraint. Although the protests were erupting from multiple different pressure groups and parties, the MB protests were by far the largest and most organized, which made them the first target of crackdown. They managed to participate in the parliamentary elections and continued the policy of restraint by limiting the number of candidates they ran to maintain the NDP's majority. During the elections, however, violence and repression by security officers and opposition ensued. A report showed 2271 arrests, about 800 wounded, and 14 deaths.[87] During the years after the election, there was extensive intra-party debate over party policy regarding Mubarak's containment and

[86] Wickham. Pp. 106.
[87] Noha Antar. 2006. "The Muslim Brotherhood's Success in the Legislative Elections in Egypt 2005: Reasons and Implications." Euro-MeSCo Paper, No. 51. October. 15n43

oppression. The old guard wanted to continue practicing caution and laying low, while the younger members believed they needed to take a bolder position. The new prime minister held a firm resolve to completely eradicate the MB from the political arena. This campaign included propaganda against the movement, detention at any public demonstration, arrests before elections, and freezing of businesses and assets of members. The regime passed an alarming number of legislations, two of which were fatal to the MB. The party could no longer be registered because of a constitutional ban and independent candidates could not contest at all. The Brotherhood responded with more restraint, sticking to the party's nonviolent policy. It is interesting to note that by now the US interest in promoting democratic reform in Egypt and other states of the Middle East had waned, and particularly Obama administration was keen on maintaining friendly ties with authoritarian rulers by staying silent on the repressive measures taken by the regime against popular voices of dissent. This was a pragmatic decision prioritizing stability over democracy, considering the US had key strategic interests in Egypt that it did not want to risk disturbing, namely, the rising terrorism, energy security, Arab-Israel conflict, and nuclear proliferation.[88]

In 2007 the Brotherhood decided to publish the Draft Party Platform in an attempt to illustrate the party's position on different issues and reiterate their commitment to democratic principles. The Draft was a controversial text, outside the party, within the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, and even among Brotherhood leaders outside Egypt. The most contentious issues were the exclusion of Copts and women from the presidency and the establishment of a council of religious scholars to ensure that legislations and executive orders were in agreement with the Shari'ah. Some members of the MB were embarrassed by the document, having had no knowledge of the contents before it was made public. Internal disagreements among the party members were gradually entering public discourse and this reached its culmination in the internal election of 2008. The ban on party meetings did not help with the situation. As a result, the election process was compromised and the Guidance Bureau was dominated by the conservative wing of the party. The criticism by party members was being done on national news outlets.

[88] FAWAZ A. GERGES, The Obama approach to the Middle East: the end of America's moment?, International Affairs, Volume 89, Issue 2, March 2013, Pages 299–323, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12019

The Arab Uprising

The 2011 protests that started in Tunisia and spread through other Arab countries reached Egypt as well. The uprisings were widespread, unexpected, and had a kind of exponential domino effect that most despotic rulers in these countries could not control. The MB initially refrained from joining the protest because of their policy of restraint, however, soon they joined in and became the center of gravity. Within eighteen days of the protests, President Hosni Mubarak had to resign from his thirty-year-long tenure. The protests were organized by young activists, largely using social media platforms. They managed to reach ordinary Egyptians and force them to come out on the streets. Moreover, the demand for Mubarak's resignation was loud and clear across all groups. These were some of the reasons the January 25 protests were successful in getting Mubarak to resign. However, Wickham argues that this was not the revolution it is made out to be in Egypt and international media, because the state remained in the hands of the Supreme Court of the Armed Forces (SCAF). The authoritarian state apparatus and power structures remained in place and the elections were called. Field Marshall Husayn Tantawi assumed the role of head of state and became responsible for overseeing the transition. The Muslim Brotherhood formed the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in preparation for elections. Another task at hand was the drafting of a constitution which was held after a referendum was held to decide whether it was to be done before or after elections. The MB wanted it to happen after the elections so that their maximum presence in the parliament was guaranteed. Their primary worry was Article 2 which secular groups were hoping to erase from the constitution. Since the uprising, the MB's first electoral victory came in the form of the results of the referendum, overwhelmingly in their favor.

The Nahda (Renaissance) Project

The Nahda (Renaissance) Project was a political and economic initiative proposed by Khayrat al-Shatir during the 2012 presidential elections. In a lecture titled, "Features of Nahda: Gains of the Revolution and the Horizons for Developing," Al-Shatir, presented this project as a comprehensive development program aimed at modernizing Egypt through Islamic principles and economic reform. Although he was ultimately disqualified from running for president, the project was later endorsed by Mohamed Morsi, the Brotherhood's candidate who went on to become Egypt's first democratically elected president. The project was deeply rooted in the concept of Islamic values and governance, promoting Sharia-compliant policies in both social

and economic spheres. It emphasized that Islamic principles could lead to a modern and prosperous state while maintaining moral and ethical integrity.

The economic vision of the Nahda Project focused on reducing poverty, creating jobs, and increasing Egypt's GDP. It aimed at fostering private sector growth, encouraging entrepreneurship, and attracting foreign investment. It also suggested specific proposals such as the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs**)**, reforming the tax system, and implementing social justice programs to redistribute wealth.

The project stressed the importance of modernizing Egypt's industrial base and promoting technological innovation. It proposed improving infrastructure, developing high-tech industries, and fostering a knowledge-based economy. There was also a focus on improving agriculture and achieving self-sufficiency in food production through sustainable practices.

One of the core aspects of the Nahda Project was a focus on education reform, aiming to improve Egypt's education system by increasing investment in schools, universities, and vocational training programs. The project sought to align education with the demands of the job market, particularly in the science and technology sectors.

The Nahda Project also suggested prioritization of energy independence by developing renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, and reducing Egypt's reliance on imported energy. This was part of a broader initiative to create a sustainable development model.

Under administrative reform, it suggested reducing bureaucracy and tackling corruption within the Egyptian state apparatus. It proposed decentralizing power and improving governance through greater transparency and accountability in both the public and private sectors.

The project emphasized improving social welfare through initiatives like affordable housing, healthcare reform such as improving access, and social safety nets for the poor and unemployed.

Later, as President, Morsi would often refer to the Nahda Project as a long-term policy plan for Egypt.

The 2011 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

A charter was published before the elections. To avoid allegations of hijacking the constitution-drafting project, the MB formed a 25-party alliance, the Democratic Coalition for Egypt (DCE),

and invited representatives to FJP's headquarters. The Constitutional Commission was also deliberately made to include members from a wide range of social groups. They did however object to the formation of higher principles. They argued that there cannot be anything binding above the Constitution. The decision to make Shari'ah the primary source of legislation was argued to be the will of the majority of Egyptians, "including Muslims and Christians."[89] The DCE came up with some overarching principles that represented the themes important to all parties. This document did 'read as a blueprint for liberal democracy' but established Islam as *din wa dawla*, an Islamist concept, and shari'ah as the primary source of legislation.[90] In July the Salafis took over the Tahrir Square for demonstrations, demanding more than the Brotherhood. They wanted the language of Article 2 to be changed, from 'principles of Shari'ah' to 'commandments of Shari'ah.' They condemned the Brotherhood for deserting the Islamic cause and appeasing the secularists, claiming that it was the Islamists who were in the majority in Egypt and that their voices should be heard. A young protestor exclaimed, "If democracy is the voice of the majority and we as Islamists are the majority, why do they want to impose on us the views of minorities—the liberals and the secularists?"[91] The MB were quick to distance themselves from the demands of the Salafists though and reiterated their commitment to democracy.

For the election, the FJP decided to form an 11-party alliance which included some secular parties as well but was dominated by the FJP. They had initially promised to contest for 40-50% of the seats to avoid vilifying SCAF, saying they intend to 'participate, not dominate', but ended up fielding candidates for most seats. The MB explained saying they did it out of necessity due to the recent electoral reforms. The FJP-led alliance won almost half the seats in the parliamentary elections. Following them was the Salafist parties' alliance, the Wafd party at third place, and secular parties at the fifth. The Wafd and secular parties achieved about 20% of the seats. Once their position as the successful party in the parliament was consolidated the MB appointed its members for important posts. The Speaker of the Assembly and twelve out of nineteen committees were led by FJP members, which included the Defense and National Security Committee, Foreign Affairs Committee, Budget and Planning Committee, and Religious Affairs Committee. About 80% of the total seats were led by Islamist parties.

[89] Interview of a member, Islam lutfi, in Wickham. Pp. 192.
[90] Ibid.
[91] A twenty-six-year-old student in the protest. In, Anthony Shadid, "Islamists Flood Square in Cairo in Show of Strength," New York Times, July 29, 2011; "Cairo: Muslim Brotherhood Call for Islamist State," Global Post, July 29, 2011.

The Constituent Assembly was selected next, half comprised of Parliamentarians and the rest were legal experts and representatives of civil groups. The assembly selection was a subject of debate and many members ended up boycotting or not showing up at the first meeting. The Islamists sought an assembly representing the democratically elected parliament. To add to the challenge the SCAF reinterpreted the constitution to keep exerting control over cabinet appointments until a president was elected. This meant that regardless of having maximum seats in the parliament the FJP could not form a government. This reinforced their resolve to have their president, a reversal from their initial position and they chose the most influential candidate, Khayrat al-Shatir. Shatir was disqualified along with 9 other candidates by the legal body, owing to his 2007 military trial. The Brotherhood pleaded the inapplicability of the rule to political trials but failed to get heard. As a result, they went with Muhammad Morsi. Morsi belonged to the old guard in the MB and among the members possessed comparatively more conservative views. He had substantial experience representing the Brotherhood in the parliament before but he had rarely made public appearances. He was on the MB's Guidance Bureau since 2000. The first round of presidential elections resulted in a competition between the last prime minister to serve under Mubarak, Ahmad Shafiq, and FJP's Morsi. Combined, both their votes made less than half of the votes which showed how divided people's loyalties were and a decline in the MB's popularity in the course of the previous five months. Before the runoffs could take place the SCAF with the assistance of the judiciary took over the parliament by dismissing independents' seats hence dissolving the government. It also dissolved the existing constituent assembly and removed the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs from under the parliament to ensure that the civilian control did not extend to their institutions.

Morsi's Presidency and a Dysfunctional Brotherhood-Led Parliament

Morsi won the runoffs and was sworn in as the president on June 30, 2012. The environment in the office was hostile and filled with distrust and confusion. The SCAF was exerting as much control as it possibly could over the state affairs, the parliament was dissolved, the judiciary had tensions with the Brotherhood, and the country had no constitution. He was made to take an oath before the Supreme Court, which he did begrudgingly, and later while addressing the people, he reassured them that public will stood above every institution. The first formal decree passed by Mursi was the reinstatement of the parliament, but the SCC did not accept that and

ordered its dissolution again. In the absence of a constitution, the SCC assumed the highest level of authority on all judicial matters.

It was evident that the non-elected arms of the state, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy were united against the elected group, the parliament, and the executive. It took a region-wide uprising to remove the authoritarian regime, a legal battle to participate in elections and win presidential elections under non-desirable circumstances, and now that they had the majority vote, and had entered the parliament, they were kicked out by a combined veto of the SCAF, led by the minister of defense Field Marshall Muhammed Hussein Tantawi, and the SSC judges who seemed to put up a united front against the MB. Some judges did however support Morsi's right to pass a decree but those remained in the minority. The next instance where Morsi exercised his powers as Head of State was the removal of Tantawi and other military leaders, and the annulment of the addendum to the constitution which gave the SCAF unconstitutional powers. This was an attempt to limit the military's influence on civilian offices and a show of authority which further enraged the military leaders. In principle, the use of the powers vested in the democratically elected president by the state to shake the status quo and redistribute power should be supported by the civilians. However, this decision was met with skepticism and there were accusations of backdoor diplomacy with senior military officials before Morsi took the decision. Some writers believe that the military allowed him to make this change so that they could move on with their desired leadership plans within the military.[92] This allowed Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi to take over the roles of defense minister and military chief.

The distrust of the general population towards the President was an additional challenge for Morsi. However, the party was also seeking to consolidate power before it was snatched from them once again. In the attempts to do that, the Islamist party would be accused of 'overreaching' and 'ikhwanising' the government and lose support.[93] The party also had its mandate to fulfill. Thus, the MB was caught between a rock and a hard place. The new Constitutional Assembly also received ample criticism for being dominated by Islamists. The cabinet appointments were also disappointing to liberals and the advisors to the President were also Islamists. The lack of inclusivity in the government was causing alienation, that was spreading fast and all sides, from the Salafists to the secularists, were quick to profess that the President was not doing enough.

[92] Kamran Bokhari and Farid Senzai, Political Islam in the age of democratization. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013. Pp. 67.
[93] Wickham. Pp. 270.

Morsi's initial phase of short-term policy-making was on themes of alleviating economic and social difficulties faced by the common man on an everyday basis. The 100-day plan laid out areas that he would target for improvement. These were bread, fuel, garbage collection, security, and traffic. He introduced the Clean Homeland Initiative and commissioned engineers to design traffic plans. For long-term policy plsns, Morsi referred to the Nahda (Rennaissance) Project presented by al-Shatir which included policies on the development of the sectors of education, energy, health care, and administrative reform.

The foreign policy decision to respect the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty despite having held a strong anti-Israel position and extending support to the resistance group Hamas in the past was seen as pragmatism by commentators and caution by others.[94] The Morsi regime also continued with the blockade of Gaza. This continuation of old foreign policy and acting with restraint rather than pursuing its more radical goals was a key feature of Morsi's strategy. He also prioritized friendship with the US as an important goal. Morsi's visit to the US confirmed his commitment to getting the US to trust the regime. However, the pro-US stance should be understood in the context of the statement by al-Shatir:

"We will follow the homeland's interests wherever they point unless they conflict with Islamic principles, which set the general basic rules."[95]

The MB was working on the charter for the constitution despite the grievances of under-representation by many groups in the CA. In November, Morsi used his powers to remove the assembly from under courts' jurisdiction. This further angered the secularists because they viewed this decree as a move by the FJP to seize all power, and they formed the National Salvation Front (NSF) in protest. This move did irreversible damage to Morsi's credibility in the eyes of secularists, and there was growing polarization between the MB and other groups with each passing day. Although he reversed the decree, the damage was done. The constitution was passed in December 2012 and the parliamentary election for the remaining third of the seats was next on the agenda. Morsi gave the upper house responsibility for this, relieving himself of the authority over the affairs of the parliament.

The constitution was controversial and Morsi's administration was not willing to make changes. Neither were they inclined towards forming a national unity government. As a result,

[94] Anthony Rusonik, "Editorial: Morsi the Pragmatist? | Geopolitical Monitor," Geopolitical Monitor, August 22, 2012, https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/editorial-morsi-the-pragmatist-4717/.
[95] Matthew Kaminski's interview with al-Shater, "Khayrat al Shater: The Brother Who Would Run Egypt," Wall Street Journal, June 22, 2012.

the NSF was displeased and unwilling to negotiate. They protested against the government and a security crisis was brewing which Morsi's government was not handling well. The plans to conduct parliamentary elections were also brought to a halt by the judiciary in April 2013, and in May a rebel party came into existence, Tamarrod. The purpose of this movement was to arrange nationwide protests against the government and get the President to resign. It didn't help that the economic situation had worsened during the past year. The country experienced zero net growth at the end of 2011, and there continued to be a rise in unemployment as the population continued to grow. Egypt was the highest importer of wheat and among the highest for other staples and prices were at an all-time high. The policies needed to improve the economic situation required tough measures such as further spike in food prices. Experts were foreshadowing bankruptcy unless Egypt borrowed loans from international financial sources. The SCAF has been negotiating with the IMF since 2012. The FJP also met with the IMF to discuss possible deals, having realized that foreign investment and improvement in foreign reserves were key to improving the country's economic situation. Regardless of their ideological position.

Amid the rising anti-Morsi sentiment, the MB called for a counter-protest against the Tamarrod. This created physical political turmoil leading the army, which was initially on good terms with Morsi and was keen on working with the government, to decide to intervene. On June 30 there was a massive protest across Egypt in which millions of people participated. This was the pretext the army needed to return in a coup led by Defense Minister, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. On July 3, 2013, Egypt's first year-and-a-half-long tumultuous democratic period came to an end and the country returned to its authoritarian caretakers.

Military Coup and the End of Democracy in Egypt

Under el-Sisi, the Muslim Brotherhood experienced more violent repression. The Rabaa al-Adawiya massacre in August 2013 is one of the darkest moments in Egypt's modern history. Security forces dispersed a pro-Morsi sit-in at Cairo's Rabaa Square, killing at least 800 people, according to Human Rights Watch, in what has been described as one of the largest mass killings of demonstrators in modern history. This event cemented el-Sisi's hardlined approach to dealing with dissent, particularly from the Brotherhood. Many Brotherhood leaders and members fled Egypt following the crackdown. He banned the group's social and political activities, even the ones under FJP, shut down their offices and media outlets, and seized assets.

El-Sisi's government designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization in December 2013, blaming it for numerous acts of violence, though the Brotherhood has denied involvement in terrorism. Thousands of Brotherhood members, including most of its leadership, were arrested, tried, and imprisoned. Many were sentenced to death or given long prison terms for inciting violence. The crackdown extended beyond leaders to supporters and affiliates, leading to a broad repression of Islamist groups and a crackdown on civil liberties. Egypt's broader civil society has also been heavily repressed under el-Sisi, with NGOs, journalists, and activists facing increasing restrictions. The group now largely operates in exile, with a significant number of members in Turkey, Qatar, and other countries.

In 2014, he passed a constitution that replaced the 2012 version that had been drafted during the presidency of Mohamed Morsi. The 2014 constitution initially limited the president to two four-year terms, ensuring that no president could serve more than eight years in office consecutively. It also limited the president's authority, making him subservient to the parliament. However, it gave the SCAF the authority to select defense ministers, silencing the only civilian voice in military matters.

The next constitutional reform occurred in 2019 when major changes were made to the 2014 constitution. Sisi's six years in office were over and he would have to wrap his tenure in two years. This constitution would extend his rule and alter the political structure to give more authority to the presidency. The amendment also enhanced presidential powers over the judiciary, created a senate limiting parliamentary checks on the president, and multiplied the military's influence on affairs of the state. The amendments enshrined the military's role as the "protector of the constitution, democracy, and the civil state." The government justified these reforms as necessary for political stability and continuity, arguing that Egypt needed strong leadership amid regional turmoil and security threats, particularly from Islamist groups. He grouped the MB with the jihadists under the broader category of Islamist groups to justify the crackdown. However, insurgencies against state institutions, especially in the Sinai region, are largely driven by jihadist groups, particularly Wilayat Sinai, an ISIS affiliate.

While el-Sisi has maintained close ties with countries like the U.S. and Europe**,** particularly in the context of security cooperation and counterterrorism, his regime has faced significant international criticism over its human rights record. Regardless the US, like Sisi, believes the security of the region and a compliant dictator at the cost of democracy in Egypt to be a better

bargain.[96] As of 2024, the Muslim Brotherhood remains outlawed in Egypt, and there is little sign of any imminent reconciliation between the group and the government. The political environment remains tightly controlled, with limited space for opposition, and el-Sisi's government continues to emphasize stability and security over democratic reforms.

Internal Democratic Organizational Structure of the MB

The internal organizational structure was introduced by Hasan al-Banna himself under the Jama'a system. We can understand them as vertical and horizontal hierarchies working in tandem. The Vertical hierarchy can be divided into 7 organizational levels: At the highest position was the *Murshid 'Aam* (General Guide), which he held. Beneath this were the executive body: *Maktab al-Irshad* (Guidance Bureau) and the legislative and administrative bodies: the *Majlis al-Shura* ('Consultation Council') and the *Maktab Idari* ('Administrative Bureau'). Then, the organization was split into cells: *mantiqa* (district), *shu'ba* (division), and *usra* (family).[97] (Fig. 2) the central legislative body i.e Majlis al-Shura members are elected by the shura of governorates. The members of the executive body, (Guidance Bureau) are elected by the legislative body (Majlis al-Shura), based on representation of the demographic distribution. The *Murshid,* who heads the executive and legislative bodies and is the leader of the movement, is elected by the legislative body as well.

The horizontal axis includes three primary components: *aqsam* (sections), *lijan* (committees), and *wahdat* (units). (Fig. 3) and they exist across each administrative unit. The horizontal axis makes this centralized movement two-pronged: The decision-making happening at the top by the leaders and the implementation which includes outreach, strategy, campaigning, etc, at the bottom.[98]

During 1940, the movement was facing arrests and severe repression which led them to take deliberate decentralization measures. The central authority was strengthened, however, branches were given directives of their responsibilities and enabled to function without the involvement of the center. District towns and provincial capitals were handed power and

[96] Michael Wahid, "How the Counter-Terrorism Imperative Has Warped U.S.-Egyptian Ties," www.crisisgroup.org (International Crisis Group, September 13, 2021), https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/how-counter-terrorism-imperative-has-warped-us-egyptian-ties.
[97] Ibid. Pp 74.
[98] Khalil Al-Anani, Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity, and Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Pp. 110.

further divided from three to four branches. The decentralizing efforts were to ensure that the arrests of leadership figures did not handicap the party and it would remain functional. This was observed again in 2013, when President Morsi was ousted in a military coup and the MB faced brutal persecution including widespread arrests of its leadership. This organizational efficiency not only allowed the party to function without patronage and under bans but also enabled men from the middle and lower class, as well as members in rural areas to participate and have representation in the party.[99] The MB could call itself a people's representative, and not just a group that worked for the interest of the political or religious elite. The organization has a sophisticated system with a division of the executive, legislative, and administrative wings. These are made up of elected party members and have a limit to the years for which they can assume the position. Recently it has been victim to inertia owing to the prevalence of a submissive culture in the movement which rewards members who are obedient and don't challenge the leadership rather than having a merit-based system.[100] There is a discipline mechanism in place, run by a committee that listens to complaints against members and is allowed to carry out investigations and punishments if rules are found to be violated. More criticism of the internal structure of the movement centers on the absence of female representation in the major decision-making levels, the Shurah Council and Guidance Bureau. The movement has a sister wing that engages in social work, dawah, and political work. However, it is not autonomous beyond a certain level, like the rest of the party, and is subservient to the male-dominant center.

Commentary

In 1994, the party published a paper titled "The Right of Women to Vote and to Membership in Parliamentary Assemblies and to Assume Public Posts" in a bid to make its policy on the topic clearer and public. This was the first document of its kind presented by the movement, and so it was revolutionary in its own right. However, in essence, it dwelled on the limits, etiquettes, and conditions imposed by Islam on female political participation. On the question of whether women can hold the presidency, in 2007 the party concluded:

[99] Brynjar Lia, The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt : The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928-1942 (Reading, England: Ithaca Press, 2006). Pp. 191.
[100] Khalil Al-Anani, Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity, and Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Pp. 117.

"From our point of view, we see that the obligations imposed on the president of the state, who is responsible for command of the army, are among obligations that women should not be forced to undertake because they are at odds with her nature and with her social and humanitarian roles."[101]

In the case of the status of religious minorities, the MB on paper, agrees on equal treatment of Coptic Christians who make up 10 percent of the total population of the country. However, the Brotherhood does not ascribe to the secular understanding of the telos of a state and has its own, as stated in the Draft Party Platform (2007):

"The state has fundamental religious functions, for it is responsible for protecting and defending the religion."[102]

According to the role of the state as the Islamist party defines it, the job of the state is to:

"defend the non-Muslim in his creed and worship and house of worship, and must defend Islam and protect its matters and ensure that nothing exists that contradicts the practice of Islam, in worship, proselytizing, pilgrimage to Mecca, etc."

Thus, it concludes that a non-Muslim cannot be tasked with fulfilling these responsibilities as the head of state.

In the context of the essentialist vs contextualist debate on Islamism in the Middle East by scholars of the Middle East, this analysis attempts to support the contextualists' argument. The evolution of the MB is a direct consequence of the political context of Egypt and beyond. The rise and fall of a party may be partly due to the positions it takes and the decisions it makes. In this case, it may be argued that the Islamist goals of implementing Shari'ah at the state level may be a decision that made it unpopular among secularists and placed hurdles in its rise to power. However, this would be a naïve argument. The decisions of a movement are a response to the events of the past and present. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood's policy of restraint during the Mubarak regime was a consequence of years of repression that often led to violence and loss of life under the dictatorships of Nasser and Sadat. Islamism didn't fail in Egypt. If one does consider it failed. The failure had nothing to do with Islam or the religious policies of the Brotherhood. The MB often pursued democratic goals for Egypt and the same argument

[101] John L. Esposito and Emad Eldin Shahin. The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics. Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 490.
[102] Muslim Brotherhood Draft Party Platform. 2007. Pp. 15

could be made for democracy. It failed because, in a political structure that placed at the helm of affairs one dictator after another, a democratic party was never given a fair chance or the space to fight in the first place.

The question of the viability of an Islamist movement like the MB in today's context is perhaps best understood in the context of the Public Islam thesis by Robert Hefner. Hefner argues that understanding Islamic societies from the European perspective leads to a misreading of the basic characteristics of the society and results in problematic conclusions. The application of the secularism theory to Muslim societies is one such example. European history and people's relationship with Christianity was shaped by historical events that look nothing like Islamic history. Therefore, the role that religion plays in politics in Islamic societies is different from that of religion in European societies. Hefner introduces 'civil Islam' which is one of the many interpretations of Islam by Muslims. Civil Islam is pro-democratic, and pro-plural, and exists in the public space.[103] Its presence is whole-heartedly accepted by the majority because it formulates social order, dictates public dealings, defines norms and ethics, and contributes to culture. The Muslim Brotherhood can be understood in this light. It is the face of civil Islam in Egypt and its popularity in the country is a testament to the popular support for its presence.

[103] Robert w. Hefner, "Public Islam and the Problem of Democratization," in Political Islam: A Critical Reader, ed. Frederic Volpi (UK: Taylor and Francis , 2013), 167.

CONCLUSION

In our assessment of the ideology and methodology of Islamism, we found that both samples displayed deep agreement with the democratic system and ideology. The only point of contention was the rejection of secularism.

In Abul A'la Maududi's *Islami Riyasat*,(Islamic State), he presents the ideological underpinnings of an Islamic state. HE stresses on the inextricability of politics and religion owing to the all-encompassing nature of Islam as a 'din'. Because Islam influences the public and private dealings of its adherents it attempts to dominate the highest level of human organization, i.e., the state. Next, he establishes the sovereignty of God in the Islamic State and the equality of all Muslims in their purpose and role. He describes the qualities of this state, the society it procreates, and the role of the leader in it. The relationship between man and the state is understood as a subset of the role of man as a vicegerent of God on earth. The state is intervening, because it aims to influence individuals through all means possible, but it is not despotic and does not act against people's will. It is assumed that this state exists in a Muslim-majority society because it is formed through a social contract. Maududi calls this a 'Theo-Democracy' because all members of the society are qualified for the job of enacting legislation, however, within the Divine legal limits provided by God in the Holy Quran and Prophet Muhammad's sunnah. The Islamic State is democratic but without the popular sovereignty and non-secular.

In the next chapter, the case study of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt is used to understand the ways Islamists operate in the political arena, both in office and in opposition. The MB waited to gain an electoral victory for almost seven decades while employing tools and methods provided by the democratic framework. Egypt barely witnessed proper democracy, undergoing the rule of one military dictatorship after another. However, the MB continued protesting for their desired reforms, mobilizing civilian population for social welfare and political change. Mostly adopting the policy of non-violence that the founder, al-Banna established, the Brotherhood campaigned for free speech, an end to censorship, right to self-determination for all, and access to free and far elections. Despite years of repression, multiple violent crackdowns, and censorship of its publications, the movement sought constitutional reforms, specifically Article 2 which they managed to enshrine in the constitution under Mursi's presidency. The party's short tenure was also marked by a consistent fight for their elected

voice in the parliament against the military and the judiciary. The policies they adopted can be rated on their merit, however, they were within ambit of the global norms of politics. The tenure was cut short by a military coup in 2013, and the party was brutally crushed and banned.

The evolution of the party reveals export of the Islamist ideology to the greater region and creation of offshoot movements, multiple changes in leadership, philosophical debates among party ideologues, the commitment to social welfare programs, empowering student political participation, and above all an unyielding commitment to democratic principles in the face of autocratic repression.

The two ways in which our samples have deviated from the democratic framework are the pursuit of a non-secular state and placing divine sovereignty over popular will. Although these are fundamental tenets of democracy, the democratic political structure does not crumble in their absence. Bokhari and Senzai argue that Islamism is a modern phenomenon because Islamists situate their goals and aspirations within the apparatus of the modern state, such as making constitutional amendments, building social institutions, passing legislation, and engaging in democratization.[104] It is evident that a differently-democratic ideology that integrates naturally into the democratic framework of 'procedural minimum' has a space in modern politics.[105] Islamism is not an outdated ideology in a world of backsliding democracies,[106] hybrid regimes, and democratic monarchies, one can argue for the relevance of and space for an ideology that places Divine sovereignty over popular will and manages to gain an electoral victory with that manifesto. Islamism should be reread in light of the role of religion in public life, and the choices and values of Muslim societies should be respected.

[104] Kamran Bokhari and Farid Senzai, Political Islam in the Age of Democratization (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Pp. 20.
[105] Robert Dahl. Democracy and Its Critics, New Haven: Yale University Press. 1989. Pp. 220-221
[106] Stephan Haggard and Robert R Kaufman, Backsliding : Democratic Regress in the Contemporary World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

"O Allah, let Your Blessings come upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as you have blessed Ibrahim and his family. Truly, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious"

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