The 'Failure' of Political Islam? The Muslim Brotherhood's experience in government.

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University.

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University.

I declare that this Thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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Abstract

On 30th June 2012 Mohamed Morsi was elected as the first post-revolutionary Egyptian President, marking the first time in the country's history that an Islamist organisation legitimately ascended to power. This event dramatically changed political calculations across the region, and came with significant implications for both the Muslim Brotherhood and for the wider understanding of Political *Islams*. However, the Muslim Brotherhood's rule was short-lived, as Morsi was deposed by a *coup d'etat* on 3rd July 2013. Since then, many have taken his deposition as proof of the incompatibility of Islamism and democratic governance, building on Oliver Roy's argument of *The Failure of Political Islam*.

This thesis explores the Muslim Brotherhood's year in power to demonstrate that their removal is attributable to more than simply "undemocratic" choices and authoritarian tendencies, and analyses the sources of their political behaviour to highlight the importance of understanding Political Islam's heterogeneous nature. This heterogeneity sets up a range of different ways in which groups engage with politics and state institutions – which is why the ideology cannot be reduced to a monolithic set of beliefs and practices. This understanding is key to the re-thinking of contemporary foreign policies towards the region, which are currently shaped by a homogenous view of Islamism and by its equation to extremism and violence.

This thesis employs primary sources and data obtained from interviews with Egyptian activists and Muslim Brotherhood members, which investigated their role throughout the 2011 uprisings and up to July 2013. It provides a genealogy of the Muslim Brotherhood's evolution from a grassroots movement into an Islamist political party, and analyses the organisation's understanding of Political Islam to assess the implications of its deposition for the perception of the ideology as a whole. Ultimately, this thesis argues that the Muslim Brotherhood's removal does not equal the end of Political Islam, but rather underlines the need for an understanding of the doctrine that is case-specific and that recognises the heterogeneity of its practices and manifestations.

Contents

Timeline[1]

1882 - British troops defeat the Egyptian Army and take control of country.

1914 - Egypt formally becomes a British protectorate.

Independence Restored

1922 - Fuad I becomes King and Egypt gains independence, although British influence remains significant until mid-1950s.

1928 - The Muslim Brotherhood is founded by Hassan al Banna, who was killed in 1949. Its aims included reorienting Egypt and the whole Muslim Middle East away from Western influence.

1948 - Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Syria attack the new state of Israel. The Egyptian Army's poor performance increases the unpopularity of King Farouk.

1949 - The Committee of the Free Officers' Movement is formed with the aim of overthrowing the corrupt monarchy.

1952 (July) - Coup by the Free Officers' Movement. King Farouk abdicates in favour of his infant son Ahmed Fuad II.

The Rise of Nasser

1953 (June) - Coup leader Muhammad Najib becomes president as Egypt is declared a Republic.

1954 - Fellow coup leader Gamal Abdel Nasser becomes prime minister and in 1956 president, ruling unchallenged until his death in 1970.

1954 - Evacuation Treaty signed. British forces, who began a gradual withdrawal under 1936 Treaty, finally leave Egypt.

1958 - President Nasser steps up campaign to promote pan-Arab unity, the most visible signs of which were embodied by the brief creation of the United Arab Republic unitary state, which included Syria (1958-61). He also supports friendly elements in Lebanese and North Yemen conflicts to little avail.

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[1] BBC News, "Egypt's Profile: Timeline", (June 2017) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13315719

1961-66 - President Nasser adopts socialist policies, including nationalisation of industry and an ambitious welfare programme, combined with the repression of the Muslim Brotherhood and leftist opponents, in an unsuccessful attempt to boost the economy and the popularity of his government.

1967 (June) - Israeli pre-emptive attack defeats Egypt, Jordan and Syria, leaving it in control of Sinai up to the Suez Canal and Egyptian-occupied Gaza. Emergency Law largely suspends civil rights. It remains in force with a brief break in the early 1980s until 2012, when it represents one of the main grievances behind the outbreak of the popular protests.

Anwar Sadat's Presidency

1970 (September) - Nasser dies, having never recovered his leading role among Arab states after the 1967 defeat, and is succeeded by Vice-President Anwar al-Sadat.

1972 - President Sadat expels Soviet advisers and reorients Egypt towards the West, while launching an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to open the economy to market forces and foreign investment.

1973 (October) - Egypt and Syria go to war with Israel to reclaim the land lost in 1967. Egypt begins negotiations for the return of Sinai after the war.

1975 (June) - The Suez Canal is re-opened for first time since the 1967 war.

1977 (January) - "Bread riots" take place in major cities against the end of subsidies on basic foods and necessities, stipulated under agreements with the World Bank and with the International Monetary Fund.

1977 (October) - President Sadat visits Israel, beginning a process that leads to the 1979 peace treaty, the return of the occupied Sinai Peninsula, and Egypt's suspension from the Arab League until 1989. Egypt becomes a major beneficiary of US financial aid.

1981 (October) - President Sadat is assassinated by Islamist extremists a month after the government's clampdown on private press and opposition groups, in the wake of more anti-government riots. He is succeeded by Vice-President Hosni Mubarak.

Hosni Mubarak's Presidency

1981 - President Mubarak re-imposes the State of Emergency, which restricts political activity, freedom of expression and assembly.

2005 (May) - Referendum backs constitutional amendments allowing multiple candidates at presidential elections, after months of opposition protests.

2005 (December) - Parliamentary polls end with clashes between police and supporters of the opposition Muslim Brotherhood, who win record 20% of seats by standing as independents.

2008 (April) - Military courts sentence 25 leading Muslim Brotherhood members to jail terms in a crackdown targeting the organisation's funding. More than 800 are arrested over a month. The Brotherhood boycotted municipal elections after only 20 candidates were allowed to stand.

The Fall of Mubarak

2010 (February) - Former UN nuclear chief Mohammed ElBaradei returns to Egypt and, together with opposition figures and activists, forms a coalition for political change.

2010 (June) - The Muslim Brotherhood fails to win any seats in elections to the Shura consultative upper house of parliament; and alleges vote was rigged.

2010 (November) - Parliamentary polls are followed by protests against the alleged rigging of votes. The Muslim Brotherhood fails to win a single seat, though it held a fifth of the places in the last parliament.

2011 (January) - Anti-government demonstrations begin on January 25th, inspired by the self-immolation of Tunisian street vendor that triggered the "Jasmine Revolution", which prompted the sudden departure of President Ben Ali.

2011 (February) - President Mubarak steps down and hands power to the Supreme Council of Armed Forces. Mubarak goes on trial in August, and is charged with ordering the killing of demonstrators during the protests.

2011 (April-August) - Protests continue in Cairo's Tahrir Square over the slow pace of political change. Islamist groups come to the fore. The Army finally disperses protestors in August.

2011 (November) – Violence breaks in Cairo's Tahrir square as security forces clash with protesters accusing the military of trying to keep their grip on power. The violence escalates in the "Mohamed Mahmoud" protest on 19th November 2011, during which the Muslim Brotherhood sides with the Supreme Council of Armed Forces.

2011 (December) - A national unity government, headed by new Prime Minister Kamal al-Ganzouri, takes office.

2012 (January) - Islamist parties emerge as victors of drawn-out parliamentary elections.

2012 (May) - Military leaders announce the end of the State of Emergency in place since Anwar al-Sadat's assassination in 1981.

Mohamed Morsi's Presidency

2012 (June) - Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi narrowly wins presidential election. Court sentences ex-President Hosni Mubarak to life in prison for complicity in the killing of protesters during the 2011 uprisings.

2012 (August) - New prime minister Hisham Qandil appoints a cabinet dominated by figures from the outgoing government, technocrats and Islamists, but excluding secular and liberal forces. President Morsi dismisses Defence Minister Tantawi and Chief of Staff Sami Annan and strips military of say in legislation and drafting of the new constitution.

Tensions over the New Constitution

2012 (November) - President Morsi issues a constitutional decree stripping the Judiciary of the right to challenge his decisions, but rescinds it in the face of popular protests.

2012 (December) - Islamist-dominated constituent assembly approves draft constitution that boosts the role of Islam and restricts freedom of speech and assembly. Public approve it in a referendum, prompting extensive protest by secular opposition leaders, Christians and women's groups. Government paralysis weakens the currency and delays a $4.8bn (£3bn) IMF loan. Violent clashes between Muslim Brotherhood's supporters and secular protesters take place 5th and 6th December, and are referred to as the "Battle of Ittihadiya".

2013 (January) - More than 50 people are killed during days of violent street protests. Army chief Abdul Fattah al Sisi warns that political strife is pushing the state to the brink of collapse.

2013 (June) - President Morsi appoints Islamist allies as regional leaders in 13 of Egypt's 27 governorships.

Islamists ousted

2013 (July) - An Army-led *coup d'etat* overthrows President Morsi amid mass demonstrations calling on him to quit.

2013 (August) - Hundreds are killed as security forces storm pro-Morsi protest camps in Cairo, in what is now called the "Raba'a Massacre".

2013 (October) - US suspends large part of $1.3bn (£810m) in aid.

2013 (December) - Government declares Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group after a bomb blast in Mansoura kills 12.

2014 (January) - New constitution bans parties based on religion.

Abdel Fattah al Sisi's Presidency

2014 (May) - Former army chief Abdul Fattah al Sisi wins presidential election.

2014 (June) - International outcry as three al Jazeera journalists are jailed after being found guilty of spreading false news and supporting the banned Muslim Brotherhood. They are freed in February 2015.

2015 (May) - Ousted President Morsi is sentenced to death over 2011 mass breakout of Muslim Brotherhood prisoners, along with more than 100 others. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison in April over the arrest and torture of protesters during his 2012-2013 rule.

2016 (November) - Egypt's Appeals Court overturns the death sentence of former president Mohamed Morsi and orders a retrial in connection with a mass prison break in 2011.

2017 (April) - State of Emergency declared after suicide bombers kill dozens at two churches where worshippers celebrate Palm Sunday.

The 'Failure' of Political Islam? The Muslim Brotherhood's experience in government.

Introduction

> "We have a big war, but we are a peaceful movement and we want to go through it
> peacefully, doing the best for our people, and we will never give up, we need to
> save our history and our country too. We don't want the power. We never wanted
> the power, we have always looked to have a better lifestyle for our people."[2]

Six years after the Arab Springs, Islamist groups that seek to operate within the boundaries of institutional politics, such as the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), are finding themselves removed from power, brutally repressed, and internally fractured. Conversely, groups such as Da'esh[3], which focus on "state-building" through militia-based governance rather than participatory politics, have come to embody Political Islam in the eyes of international observers and policy makers. This shift in the regional (dis)order underlines the rise of a trend that began with the declaration of the War on Terror in September 2001, arguing for a military, legal, and conceptual struggle against Islamic terrorism and the groups and countries associated with it.[4] This has intensified after the rise of Da'esh and the deposition of the MB, both being events that have challenged mainstream Islamist models of political change. Islam has always been

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[2] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, Freedom and Justice Party's Foreign Relations Secretary

[3] Also "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant", self-declared as a transnational caliphate under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in June 2014. Mabon, S., Ardovini, L., "Daesh, Geopolitics and the Resurgence of Pan Arabism?", in *The Foreign Policy Centre*, (March 2015), p. 3 http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1691.pdf

[4] Schmitt, E., Shanker, T., "US officials retool slogan for the War on Terror", in *The New York Times*, (July 2005) http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/26/politics/us-officials-retool-slogan-for-terror-war.html

politicised.[5] However, its understanding as *deen wa dawla*, "a faith and a state", has never been as challenged as of today.[6]

The case of Egypt has perhaps been the most striking. The 3rd July Coup posed an end to Egypt's first freely and fairly elected government, ousted the rule of the MB, and has been perceived by many as the confirmation of Political Islam's inadequacy to legitimately govern. However, the MB's political behaviour and the justifications behind it have been left largely unanalysed, and so have the tensions originating from specific aspects of Political Islam (or Islamism) that are clearly identifiable within the group after a more focused analysis. This thesis puts forward the argument that there is more to the Brotherhood's deposition than simply "undemocratic" choices and authoritarian tendencies, and that the group's affiliation with a specific understanding of Political Islam needs to be examined in order to identify the sources of their political choices and perceived "failure".

Mohamed Morsi was elected as the first post-revolutionary Egyptian President on 30th June 2012, marking the first time in the country's history an Islamist legitimately ascended into power through the ballot box. Such an unprecedented and significant event did not go unobserved, as critics inside and outside the region associated the electoral results to a renewal of the infamous "Islamist Threat", while supporters across the Arab World cheered the political rise of the Islamist organisation. The MB election was indeed unprecedented and to some degrees divisive, but the organisation's time as head of the Egyptian government was remarkably short. Following from accusations of being exclusively serving the organisation's aims and of returning to some of Hosni Mubarak's repressive methods, Morsi was deposed and arrested on 3rd July 2013 by a *coup d'etat*[7] staged by the Egyptian Army, which claimed to be acting in the name of the people. Such actions made the country descend into

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[5] Osman, T., *Islamism: what it means for the Middle East and the World* (New Haven: Yale University press, 2016), p. 254

[6] ibid.

[7] Safwat, A., "Egypt's Bloody Coup D'Etat", in *Open Democracy* (October 2013) https://www.opendemocracy.net/north-africa-west-asia/ahmed-safwat/egypt%E2%80%99s-bloody-coup-d%E2%80%99etat

chaos again, while the Brotherhood's failure and removal was read by many as the ultimate example of Political Islam's inadequacy to legitimately rule. However, while many were quick to associate such events to the "failure" of Political Islam, it is also necessary to note that there are many elements that have been overlooked and left unaccounted for. This thesis will analyse the sources of the Brotherhood's political behaviour and examine their relation with a certain understanding of Political Islam, with the aim of challenging the assumption that their deposition represents the ultimate failure of Islamism.

This thesis does so with the aim of assessing the wider implications of the MB's removal from power for the regional and international understanding of Political Islam as a whole. It therefore begins by analysing its roots, and argues that Islamism is best understood as a multifaceted, heterogeneous doctrine, whose manifestations and practices vary depending upon national and socio-economic circumstances. However, while Political Islam is far from being monolithic, events such as the Global War on Terror and more recently the rise of Da'esh have certainly promoted its framing as such. The mainstream view shared by politicians and policy makers alike is therefore one that equates Islamism with violence and authoritarianism, contributing to the rise of Islamophobia and to the construction of Muslims as the "other".

Donald Trump's presidency is further highlighting the popularity of this trend, with the call for a "Muslim Ban" and the declaration that the "fight against Islamism" is the US's number one priority.[8] It follows that, in such a political climate, the MB's deposition was conveniently perceived as the ultimate proof of the incompatibility of democracy and the Islamic faith. This thesis challenges such view and argues that there is much more to the MB's deposition than just the Islamist component of their governance. Regardless of the way in which the events of July 30th are framed, it is undeniable that they came with fundamental repercussions for the perception of both the MB and of

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[8] Halper, D., "Trump vows to defeat ISIS", in *The New York Post*, (February 2017) http://nypost.com/2017/02/06/trump-pledges-to-defeat-isis-rebuild-military-with-beautiful-new-equipment/

Islamism as whole, which are best understood and analysed after having investigated both the roots of the doctrine and the significance of the organisation.

Such a task is of particular relevance and indeed necessary in the contemporary political climate. After being ousted from power in July 2013, the MB was officially proscribed as a terrorist organisation in Egypt, causing its members to suffer unprecedented persecution and repression.[9] The authoritarian nature of the Al Sisi regime means that the country is currently in the midst of its worst Human Rights crisis so far, with highly restrictive associations laws limiting the possibility for opposition, while the silencing and imprisonment of native and international journalists has become common practice.[10] In addition, several countries followed Egypt's lead in proscribing the MB as a terrorist organisation, therefore negatively influencing the understanding of both the group and of Political Islam more broadly. These include Kazakhstan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria and Russia, with the Trump administration recently launching an investigation aimed at declaring the MB a terrorist movement, and consequently subjecting it to US sanctions, revealing a worrying international trend.[11]

While the UK has not officially proscribed the group, the "Muslim Brotherhood Review" published in December 2015 revealed some conclusions that appear to have been largely influenced by this international trend, such as "aspects of Muslim Brotherhood ideology and tactics, in this country and overseas, are contrary to our values and have been contrary to our national interests and our national security".[12] These findings have been challenged to some degree by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review",

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[9] ibid.

[10] Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: consolidating repression under al Sisi", in *Human Rights Watch*, (January 2017) https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/12/egypt-consolidating-repression-under-al-sisi

[11] Hosenball, M., "Trump administration debates designating Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist group", in *Reuters*, (January 2017) http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-muslimbrotherhood-idUKKBN15D0VV

[12] "Return to an Address of the Honourable the House of Commons", (17 December 2015), in Muslim Brotherhood Review: Main Findings.

published in November 2016[13], but little has changed in the UK's attitude towards the group. With Islamophobia rising steadily and the recent waves of terrorist attacks across Europe claimed by Da'esh, it is now more important than ever to stress the heterogeneity and diversity of Political Islam. The Egyptian MB, with its long history of political involvement, it is the best example to build this argument on.

However, much of what has been written about the MB in recent years and especially since their electoral performance in 2005, has been in response to preoccupation about their intentions and mostly driven by policy questions. Therefore, part of the original contribution of this thesis is going beyond such approach, as it seeks to unveil and analyse the root causes of their political behaviour, and to understand how they operate within a political system or rather, how operating in politics shapes their actions and narratives. This is a necessary process as the sources of the MB's political behaviour have been left largely unanalysed, together with the tensions characteristic of the group that originate from of Political Islam. This thesis argues that the Brotherhood's failed attempt at governing is attributable to more than simply "undemocratic" choices and authoritarian tendencies, and that it is necessary to obtain a comprehensive understanding of events before assessing their relevance and consequences.

This thesis is based on a particular understanding of Political Islam, outlined in Chapter 1, and that is so because of the aim to build an analytical framework from which to examine the political behaviour of the MB while in power. In particular, the thesis will apply Historical Sociology as an analytical framework as this approach moves away from the traditional understanding of "Islam" or the "Arab mind" as explanatory elements of the region's geopolitics, and instead focuses on how institutions of both political and socio/religious power are established and maintained, recognising states, ideologies and societies as the core components of political and social order.[14]

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[13] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review", *Sixth Report of Session 2016-2017*, (November 2016) http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmfaff/118/118.pdf

[14] Halliday, F., *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 36

Therefore, it is most suited to the study of how the MB's political evolution has historically shaped the country's institutions, civil society, and politics. Through the analysis of the MB's political ascent, this thesis aims at investigating whether Political Islam really has 'failed' or is instead slowly adapting its narrative and aims to contemporary times, inevitably encountering obstacles along the way.

To conclude, the thesis' original contribution is two-fold, as it offers a framework to analyse and better understand Political Islam, while exploring the recent political behaviour of the MB and filling a considerable gap in the literature by doing so. To do so the thesis looks closely at the relationship between ideology and the Islamist group, as it seeks to unveil and analyse the root causes of their behaviour, and to understand how they operate within the political system or rather, how operating in politics shapes their actions and narratives. Moreover, another contribution is the presentation of the MB's version and perceptions of what happened from 2011 up to June 30th as, while these appear to have been somewhat documented in the Arabic media, they have been left largely unanalysed in the English language literature so far.

Historical Context

Mohamed Morsi was sworn in on 30th June 2012, as Egypt's first democratically elected president and as a representative of what is now regarded as one of the few Islamist organization gaining power in the region through a democratic process.[15] These conditions made it clear from the start that the President-elect was set to face unprecedented expectations and challenges, including the task of governing a post-revolutionary country while also guiding it through its democratic transition, and facing the remnants of Mubarak's deep state[16] that had not been wiped out by the events of January 25th. In addition, the organisation's historical role as one of the country's most influential civil society actors and its history of internal divisions meant

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[15] BBC News, "Muslim Brotherhood's Mursi declared Egypt's President", (June 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-18571580

[16] In this context the concept of "deep state" can be loosely understood as a network of individuals and groups who are in actual charge of a government. In the case of Egypt, that refers individuals and groups within the institutions of the state who had remained faithful to Mubarak, such as the Armed Forces.

that, while the MB was fully equipped to be a powerful opposition movement, its members had very little experience when it came to directly engaging with politics.

After the fall of Mubarak the MB emerged as one of the key political forces in Egypt, a position that was aided by the organization's long history as one of the country's oldest and most organised grassroots movements. Since its foray into electoral politics at the start of the 1990s, the MB had widened its already impressive amount of popular support, and was seen by many as the only alternative to Mubarak's dictatorial regime. The organisation's influence and ability to mobilise a significant amount of the population is something that had always shaped its troubled relationship with the various Egyptian regimes, which had historically seen the MB as either a source of legitimacy or as a potential threat. This meant that, despite being engaged in civil society activities, the organization has spent most of its history in a climate characterised by illegality and repression, with its members routinely persecuted and targeted by the country's security apparatus. Therefore, Mubarak's removal and the subsequent political vacuum that followed represented the first real opportunity for the MB to not only achieve legal status, but also to first fully engage with politics without fear of repression and repercussions.

While there are contradicting accounts analysing the ways in which the MB increasingly politicised after January 2011, quickly moving from the periphery to the core of Egyptian politics, it is undeniable that the organization underwent major reformation in order for its presidential candidate to be rightfully elected in June 2012, whether intentional or unintentional. Therefore, before trying to assess whether the Freedom and Justice Party's (FJP) deposition can really be understood as a "failure" of Political Islam, a working definition of "failure" needs to be provided, and the MB's politicisation process and its implications for the organization's ideology and practices need to be carefully analysed.

In order to understand the organisation's historical significance, Chapter 2 employs Historical Sociology to examine the MB's relationship with a specific understanding of Political Islam, and places it within Egypt's unique socio-political context. The chapter

focuses on the MB's history and political development as intrinsically tied to that of Egypt itself, in order to underline and analyse the mutually dependent relationship existing between the state and the Islamist group. The chapter provides a short but comprehensive analysis of Egyptian religious and political significance, followed by a detailed examination of the MB's history and evolution into one of the most influential Islamist groups in the region, and a review of Egypt's geopolitical importance that further justifies the choice of the country as a case study. Following this, Chapter 3 examines the role that the organisation played during the January 2011 uprisings and at the very start of the transitional period, which culminated in the creation of the FJP in June 2011. Understanding such a watershed event as the beginning of the MB's experience in government, the chapter examines the significance of the creation of the FJP and of Mohammed Morsi's election, by focusing on the implications that this had for the mainstream organization and for its ideology.

Having set both a theoretical and historical understanding of the organisation's significance and main characteristics, Chapter 4 critically analyses the MB's time in government, focusing on its policies, political choices, and varying relationships with the other political actors in Egypt, in order to understand what ultimately led to the premature departure of Morsi from the presidency. The MB's performance while in government is indeed inseparable from the party's troublesome foundation process. This will become clear as this chapter tracks internal and external tensions that, arisen at the time of the FJP formation, carried on to be become distinctive features of the MB rule. Following from this, the chapter sets a framework for the analysis of the four main factors contributing to the downfall of the MB that will be examined in Chapter 5, these being: the MB's legacy of internal divisions, its "arrogance" and refusal to cooperate with revolutionary groups, its miscalculations regarding the extent of power the group actually held, and failure to take into account the prominent and historical role of the Army within the Egyptian context.

Chapter 5 subsequently looks at the events leading up to Morsi's deposition and examines the reasons behind popular discontent and perceived failure of the MB. Once again, the legacy of division characteristic of the organisation and certain

perceptions of Political Islam played a major role in the unravelling of these occurrences. Justifications, accusations, and political actions are examined within the framework of Political Islam and that of Egypt itself, with the aim to identify the extent to which history and ideology influenced them. Ultimately, Chapter 5 critically engages with Roy's account of the "Failure of Political Islam", in order to assess whether or not it is applicable to the case of the FJP's removal in July 2013.

Overall, Morsi's removal can be understood as sending a very powerful message: winning an election is not sufficient to govern Egypt. The country's historical and socio-political background means that the acceptance of both the population and the Military Apparatus are key to gain the legitimacy needed to govern, and the MB overestimated just how much power they had over these two entities. Following from this, the thesis proposes that together with the misunderstanding of the domestic balance of power, the MB's underestimation of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces' (SCAF) significance and intentions, its apparent refusal to cooperate with secular and revolutionary groups, and internal divisions are the main explanations for the FJP's deposition.

Political Islam(s)

There is a vast amount of literature on Political Islam that has been produced over the years and, more recently, as a direct response to the so-called democratic wave of the "Arab Springs" that swept across the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA) in 2011. With many fearing the rise of an "Islamist Winter"[17] after the deposition of long-standing dictators and the rise to power through the ballot box of Islamist groups such as the MB in Egypt and the Ennahda in Tunisia, there has been a rise in the literature that seeks to understand Islamism as a monolithic ideology, in order to make sense of events in the region. Similarly, the deposition of the MB from power in July 2013 was widely perceived as the confirmation that Islamism had indeed failed in its experiment with governance, and as a proof of the incompatibility of the ideology and democratic

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[17] Totten, M., Schenker, D., Abdul-Hussain, H., "Arab Spring or Islamist Winter? Three Views", in *World Affairs*, Vol. 174, No. 5, (January 2012), pp. 23-42

rule. While both these positions are grounded in existing research, this thesis argues that it is necessary to move away from the understanding of Political Islam as a monolithic movement and instead focus on the diversity of Islamist groups across the region. This is fundamental to understand how their ideologies and practices relate back to a more case-specific understanding of Islamism, and to assess the broader consequences of the MB's toppling for Political Islam as a whole.

This thesis provides an original and comprehensive insight into Political Islam and the MB. More specifically, this thesis makes a considerable contribution to the emerging literature focusing on Islamism after the Arab Springs, positioning itself at the vanguard of contemporary debates. The framework for this contribution is set up in Chapter 1, which focuses on the analysis and review of the existing body of literature on the topic, with the aim to identify gaps that need to be addressed. Chapter 1 therefore begins from the discussion of what makes Islam an inherently political religion, by reviewing the core tenets of Political Islam and looking into its origins, taking into consideration the Sunni-Shia schism, in order to challenge its monolithic perception and argue that it is more appropriate to talk about Political *Islams*. While remaining conscious of the ideology's vast diversity, Chapter 1 examines the works of the "founding fathers" of (Sunni) Political Islam, namely Hassan al Banna and Ala Mawdudi, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how two of its most influential thinkers shaped its practice and comprehension. The works of other Islamist thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb are also examined in order to start bringing out the tensions within Political Islam, and to show how different interpretations of the original thought behind it have led to conflicting narratives and aims.

Similarly, the unique case of post-revolutionary Iran is analysed to bring Shi'a political thought into the picture, and once again stress the incredibly heterogeneous nature of Islamism. Following from this, Chapter 1 focuses on the works of James Piscatori and Dale Eickelman to further stress the comprehension of Political Islam as an evolving, modern phenomenon, and sets the framework for outlining Political Islam's relevance to recent times and governments by reviewing John Esposito's and Fred Halliday's positions. The chapter concludes by reviewing two new emerging trends in

the literature concerning the nature of post-revolutionary Middle Eastern states, based on the works of Tarek Osman, Quinn Mecham and Muqtedar Khan. These emerging trends embody the debates between those who see the post-2011 context as an "Islamists' Winter" and those who instead interpret it as a chance for Islamist groups to self reflect and re-invent themselves in the light of the new regional (dis)order. In particular, this thesis makes a considerable contribution to the latter of these positions, therefore positioning itself at the vanguard of contemporary debates.

The thesis particularly focuses on Oliver Roy's account of the failure of Political Islam, as his work skilfully underlines the tensions within the doctrine as a whole and presents an interesting argument for its (contemporary) inadequacy to govern. Chapter 1 engages with "failure" as a concept, analysing Roy's understanding of the term and providing a working definition of it for the purposes of this thesis. While Roy's ideas have been widely criticised in the past, little work has been done examining his positions and reactions to recent event across the region. Therefore, in Chapter 5 his theory is applied to the examination of the MB's behaviour while in power, with the aim to investigate whether the FJP perceived "failure" reinforces his arguments or has to be understood in a different way instead. Asef Bayat's account of Post Islamism is also similarly assessed, as it is an approach that Roy himself refers to, and that is gaining increasing traction in the post 2011 context. Arguably, the confusion of ideals and aims that historically characterise the manifestations of this ideology can be held partially responsible for the Brotherhood's "failure" while in government, and for the lack of continuity and unifying narrative that has been characteristic of the organisation since its inception. It is also necessary to fully acknowledge these tensions in both the theory and practice of Political Islam before embarking on the research that this thesis conducts, in order to avoid generalisation and to recognize the striking heterogeneity of Islamism.

While a substantial amount of work has been produced on the FJP's performance during its twelve months in power and while the actions taken by President Morsi have been widely criticized, there has not been sufficient attention paid to the reasons behind the Brotherhood's political "failure". This thesis does not attempt to

justify the political behaviour of the MB, but it does offer an understanding of the reasons why its transition from a grass-roots opposition movement into a legal political party has been so traumatic and unsuccessful. One thing that needs to be kept in mind while embarking on this study is that despite the decades-long history of the Brotherhood's narrative, the movement has spent most of its existence being an illegal organization, therefore lacking knowledge and experience of how to govern a country. This lack of institutional experience is clearly reflected into the group's incapability to effectively translate their narrative into policies and reforms, and this is something this thesis particularly looks at in details, to assess whether or not it represents a "failure" of the notion of Islamic governance. This comes with substantial policy implications, especially given the current political climate, as a deeper understanding of both the doctrine and the MB is necessary to challenge the rise of Islamophobia and of aggressive foreign policies towards the region.

Within this thesis there will be a specific focus on certain actors and groups, the names of which will be be abbreviated for the purposes of clarity and brevity. These are:

Freedom and Justice Party (FJP): (*Ḥizb al-Ḥurriya wa al-'Adala*) the FJP was an Egyptian Islamist political party and represented the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. The head of the party Mohamed Morsi served as President of Egypt in 2012-2013, before being removed by a *coup d'etat*. The party was banned and legally dissolved by the current Egyptian regime in 2014.[18]

Muslim Brotherhood (MB): (*Jamāʿat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*) also referred to in the thesis as "Brotherhood" and "Ikhwan". The Muslim Brotherhood is a transnational Sunni Islamist organisation funded in 1928 in Egypt by Islamic scholar and schoolteacher Hassan al Banna. After decades of governmental crackdowns and repression, it governed Egypt through the Freedom and Justice Party from 30th June 2012 to 30th June 2013, when it was removed by a *coup d'etat* staged by the Egyptian

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[18] Shehata, S., "Profile: Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party", in *BBC News*, (November 2011)
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15899548

Armed Forces.[19] As of 2015, it is considered a terrorist organisation by the governments of Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Russia.

Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF): (*al-Maǧlis al-ʾAʿlā lil-Quwwāt al-Musallaḥa*) It is a statutory body composed by 20-25 senior Egyptian Military Officers.[20] The Council assumed power on 11th February 2011 after Hosni Mubarak's removal by the January 25th popular uprisings, and officially relinquished it on 30th June 2012 upon the start of Mohamed Morsi's presidency. Field Marshal Abdul Fatah al Sisi and Chief Justice Adly Mansour played a key role in the *coup d'etat* that removed Morsi from power on 30th June 2013.

Research Questions

The research at the core of this thesis follows a precise set of research questions, which have been developed and expanded in the course of interviews, the answers to which are drawn from both secondary and primary sources. They are divided between primary questions and secondary questions.

The main questions that this thesis asks are:

1) Is the MB's recent deposition evidence of Political Islam's inadequacy to legitimately govern?

2) What does the MB's deposition mean for Political Islam as a whole?

3) The Egyptian MB is often regarded as the Islamist organization *par excellence*. How can their recent political behaviour and difficulties with governance be explained in relation to their adherence to Political Islam?

In order to answer these main questions, some secondary queries have been addressed in the course of the thesis, these being:

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[19] Laub, Z., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", in *Council on Foreign Relations*, http://www.cfr.org/egypt/egypts-muslim-brotherhood/p23991

[20] Abul-Magd, Z., "Understanding SCAF", in *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, (Summer 2012) https://www.thecairoreview.com/essays/understanding-scaf/

- Why is the election of an Islamist party in Egypt such an unprecedented event?
- What policies did the Brotherhood put forward while in power? How are these related to Political Islam?
- What are the tensions in Political Islam? How do they manifest in the MB?

Ultimately, through the analysis of the MB's time in government, the thesis seeks to answer the overarching question of what their removal means for the understanding of Political Islam as a broader, heterogeneous movement, and whether the FJP's removal represents the failure of Political Islam as a whole.

Claims to Originality

The pairing of primary and secondary sources is essential when trying to make sense of the post-2011 geopolitical situation in the MENA region, and especially so when trying to understand what the broader implications of the FJP's removal are for the wider field of Political Islam and for the foreign policies currently directed at the region. This thesis therefore brings together the existing research with primary data obtained through interviews with both Egyptian secular activists and MB members and supporters, with the aim of identifying the tensions and obstacles that led to the abrupt end of its political experience. This thesis argues that there is more to the Brotherhood's political behaviour than what has been shown, and investigates whether Political Islam really has 'failed' or is instead slowly adapting its narrative and aims to contemporary times, inevitably encountering obstacles on the way.

Therefore, this thesis's original contribution is two-fold, as it offers a framework to analyse and better understand domestic and international approaches to Political Islam in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings, while also exploring the MB's recent political behaviour and filling a considerable gap in the English-language literature by doing so. The thesis looks closely at the relationship between ideology and the Islamist group, unveiling and analysing the root causes of their behaviour, to understand how they operate within the political system or rather, how operating in politics shapes their actions and narratives. The thesis also uses Historical Sociology to examine the

troubled history of the MB and various Egyptian regimes, as that is essential to understand the organisation's politicisation process and the way in which decades of repression and persecution have affected the MB's ideology and practices. Moreover, another contribution of this thesis is putting forward the MB's version and perceptions of what happened from 2011 up to June 30th as, while these appear to have been somewhat documented in the Arabic media, they have been left unanalysed in the English-language literature thus far.

This particular aspect, when combined with the examination of the MB's political behaviour, represents one of the most original contribution of this thesis. This is the case as most of the existing literature covering the removal of the MB focus solely on the manifestations, or symptoms, of the MB political "failure", such as their authoritarian tendencies and evident lack of political experience. Instead, the research conducted by this thesis focuses on the very source of these political choices, identifying the root causes of the MB political choice and placing them within the context of Egyptian domestic politics, therefore filling a considerable gap in the literature by doing so. Relying on the combination of primary and secondary sources this thesis identifies four main reasons that led to the July 2013 *coup d'etat*, these being the MB's legacy of internal divisions, its "arrogance" and refusal to cooperate with revolutionary groups, its miscalculations regarding the extent of power the group actually held, and failure to take into account the prominent and historical role of the Army within the Egyptian context.

Ultimately, in terms of assessing its implications for the broader understanding and interpretation of Political Islam, many were quick to point to the removal of the FJP as the ultimate proof of the incompatibility of Islamism and democratic governance.[21] While this assumption is not inherently incorrect, it needs to be acknowledged that it might be true only in specific countries, and under specific circumstances. This is why accounts such as Roy's "Failure of Political Islam" and Bayat's "Post Islamism" need to be applied with caution, as they are both very context-specific in their prerequisites

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[21] Nafi, B., "The Failure of Political Islam?", in *Middle East Eye*, (July 2015)
http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/failure-political-islam-1791846098

and do not really take into account the wide diversity of belief and practices that fall under the broader category of "Political Islam". Therefore, there is a need to move towards an understanding of Political Islam that not only recognises the diversity of the groups that fall under this label, but that also acknowledges the importance of its comprehension as modern, evolving phenomenon.

Following from this, the thesis makes a considerable contribution to the contemporary literature focusing on Political Islam in the post-2011 regional context, as it positions itself at the vanguard of contemporary debates. This literature will be examined in details later on, but it is roughly divided between two main trends led by scholars such as Tarek Osman, Quinn Mecham and Muqtedar Khan. In particular, these trends develop along the lines of those who understand the post-2011 context as an "Islamists' Winter" and those who instead interpret it as a chance for Islamist groups to self reflect and re-invent themselves in the light of the new regional (dis)order. By identifying four domestic factors that led the removal of the MB government this thesis aligns with the latter of these trends, as it will be shown.

Specifically in the case of the MB, this thesis proposes that it is highly inaccurate to equate Morsi's rule to the more general failure of Political Islam. This is the case as the conditions that characterised the MB's politicisation and rise to power are unique to Egypt, and so are the organization's practices linked to their own understanding of Islamism. Overall, the MB was not removed from government purely because it was an Islamist party; rather, almost all of my interviewees agreed that the Armed Forces would have somehow regained power regardless of who was in charge of the transitional government. This is the case as the MB did not operate in a vacuum, and Egypt's unique socio-political conditions mean that in the past few decades the Armed Forces have come to be the unofficial ruler of the country, strengthening the power and influence of the deep state. As such, in order to understand the reasons that led to the MB's perceived failure, we must locate the analysis away from a monolithic understanding of Political Islam, and within the context of Egypt's historical political and social actors.

1. Political *Islams*

"I went to the West and saw Islam, but no Muslims; I got back to the East and saw Muslims, but not Islam."
(Muhammad Abduh, 1988)

The 3rd July 2013 *coup d'etat* posed an end to the first Islamist government coming to power through the ballot box in the country, and ousted the rule of the MB while the Armed Forces took control of Egypt once again. Morsi's removal has been perceived by many as the confirmation of Political Islam's incompatibility with democracy and legitimate governance. However, the MB's political behaviour while in power and the justifications behind it have been left largely unanalysed, together with the tensions originating from specific aspects of Political Islam that are clearly identifiable within the group after a more focused analysis. This thesis argues that the Brotherhood's failed attempt at governing is attributable to more than simply "undemocratic" choices and authoritarian tendencies, and that there is the need to obtain a full picture of the events before speculating about their significance for the country and the region.

It follows that an understanding of Political Islam as a heterogeneous and dynamic ideology is necessary to fully understand and analyse the significance of the MB's short-lived rule for both the country and the region, and for the understanding of the ideology as whole. The aim of this thesis is to explore the MB's political behaviour while in power in 2012-2013, focusing on the way in which some key aspects of Morsi's governance were built upon the organisation's understanding of Political Islam. It will do so with the intention to identify the various tensions and obstacles that led to the failure of its political project, which can be found both within the organization and its ideology, and within Egypt's state institutions. The thesis identifies specific aspects of Political Islam with the aim of building an analytical framework from which to examine the political behaviour of the MB while in power. Ultimately, the thesis relies on

Historical Sociology to investigate whether Political Islam really has failed in its quest for governance or is instead slowly adapting its aims and narratives to contemporary times, inevitably encountering challenging obstacles along the way.

There is a vast amount of literature covering the subject of Political Islam, upon which this chapter builds an analytical framework. Most of the scholarly work on the subject has been challenged by the events that took place across the region in 2011; therefore, this thesis also contributes to the literature by examining perceptions of Political Islam in the contemporary political framework.[22] In order to provide a comprehensive understanding and background of both Islamism and the Brotherhood, this chapter begins by providing a short but comprehensive discussion of what makes Islam an inherently political religion. When doing so it also reviews the core tenets of Political Islam and looks into its origins, taking into consideration the Sunni-Shia schism, in order to challenge its monolithic perception from the very start and argue that it is more appropriate to talk about Political *Islams*. The chapter then focuses on the main literature relevant to the notion of Islamic political thought, while remaining conscious of its vast diversity.

To begin with, the works of the "founding fathers" of (Sunni) Political Islam, namely Hassan al Banna and Abu Ala Mawdudi, is be examined along with their interpretations, with the aim of obtaining a strong background on the origins of such an influential ideology. The work of other Islamist thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb is also reviewed in order to bring out the tensions within Political Islam, and to show how different interpretations of the original thought have led to conflicting narratives and aims. To conclude, the Chapter then focuses on the unique case of post-revolutionary Iran in order to bring Shi'a political thought into the picture, and to do so will take into account the work and influence of Grand Ayatollah Khomeini over one manifestation

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[22] See for example: Ayoob, M., *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2008); Ayubi, N., *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991); Eickelman, D., Piscatori, J., *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Esposito, J., *The Islamic Threat: Myth of Reality?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

of the ideology. Having set up a comprehensive background, the chapter then focuses on the understanding of Political Islam as an evolving, modern phenomenon, presented by Beverly Milton-Edwards and both James Piscatori and Dale Eickelman in many of their works.[23] In order to outline the relevance of Islamism to recent times and governments the works of John Esposito is also taken into consideration, along with those of Fred Halliday.

Finally, the chapter focuses on Oliver Roy's account of the failure of Political Islam, as his work underlines the tensions within the doctrine as a whole and presents a compelling argument for its (contemporary) inadequacy to governance. Most of all, his theory will be applied to the examination of MB's behaviour while in power, with the aim to analyse whether their failure reinforces his arguments or has to be read in a different way. Asef Bayat's account of Post Islamism will also be analysed, as it is an approach that Roy himself refers to, and that is gaining increasing traction in the post 2011 context. Arguably, the confusion of ideals and aims that historically characterise the manifestations of this ideology can be held partially responsible for the Brotherhood's failure while in government, and for the lack of continuity and unifying narrative that has been characteristic of the organisation since its inception. It is also necessary to fully acknowledge these tensions in both the theory and practice of Political Islam before embarking on the research that this thesis seeks to conduct, in order to avoid generalisation and to recognize the striking heterogeneity of the ideology.

To conclude, this research identifies and focus on a clear gap in the literature that is important to the understanding of the topic of this thesis. Doing so will also bring about the originality of the argument and novelty for the subject of analysis in question. While a lot has been written on what the FJP did during its 12 months in power and while the actions taken by President Morsi have been widely criticized, there has not been sufficient attention paid to the reasons behind the Brotherhood's political failure. The research does not attempt to justify the political behaviour of the

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[23] See for example: Eickelman, D., Piscatori, J., *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996)

MB, but seeks to understand the reasons why its transition from a grass-roots opposition movement into a legal political party has been so traumatic and unsuccessful. One thing that needs to be kept in mind while embarking in this study is that despite the decades-long history of the Brotherhood's narrative, the movement has spent most of its existence being an illegal organization, therefore lacking the knowledge and experience of how to govern a country. This lack of institutional experience is clearly reflected into the group's inability to effectively translate their narrative into policies and reforms, and this is something this thesis particularly looks at in detail to assess whether it represents a failure of the notion of Islamic governance or not.

1.1 The dual nature of the Islamic faith: the religious and the political

A notion central to the analysis put forward in this thesis is that Islam is in itself a political religion, and that it cannot be fully understood if either of these two spheres, the religious and the political, is separated from the other. This is particularly important when seeking to examine the MB's political behaviour, as many of their policies can only be understood fully when placed in an Islamist context. The origins of Islam as a political as well as religious movement date back to the times of the Prophet and to the first notion of the "Islamic State" (*dawlah islāmiyah*)[24] that Mohamed established in Medina, founded on a formal agreement with the families and tribes inhabiting the territory that therefore recognised him as the Prophet and ruler.[25] This document, often referred to as the Medina Charter, is widely recognised as the first constitution ever written, and by basing its principles on the teachings contained in the Quran and the *Sunna* underlines the original combination of religion and politics within the Islamic faith.[26] It is this notion of the *umma*, the Muslim community that is both a source of identity and a sovereign state, that really poses the

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[24] The term "Islamic State" is used to refer to the Prophet's original understanding of it. In this context the Islamic State is far from resembling a modern nation state or caliphate, as theorised by Ayatollah Khomeini, Sayyd Qutb or even Da'esh. Rather, it would be better understood as a "nation", or *umma*, referring to the political unity of the Muslim community.

[25] Watt, M., *Muhammad at Medina* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956) pp. 221-228

[26] ibid.

basis for the political nature of the Islamic faith in Mohamed's constitution.[27] While scholars such as Bernard Lewis argue that such document is more similar to a unilateral agreement than to a constitution, it is undeniable that the official establishment of an Islamic state had great repercussions for the Muslim psyche and for the notion of Islamic governance.[28]

Another reason for Islam's political nature lies in the schism between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims that followed the Prophet's death, and that led to the separation of these two strands along political lines. This is still relevant today not only because it stressed the dual nature of the Islamic faith, but also because it led to considerably different interpretations of the Islamic State and of Political Islam. The first tensions between Sunnis and Shi'ites emerged from disagreements over the notion of leadership and succession to the Prophet that followed his death in 632 AD.[29] The source of the debate was the lack of consensus on who should be the ruler of the Caliphate after Mohamed's passing, as he left no guidance in this sense, and while Shi'ites believed that the leadership should follow the prophet bloodline and divine ordainment, Sunnis argued that any competent Muslim chosen by the community was suitable for the role.[30] Following the belief that only *Imams* who were both directly related to Mohamed and divinely designated were suitable to rule, the Shi'a community recognised the *Mahdi* in Ali, Mohamed's cousin and son in law, whose son Hussein would be protagonist of the Karbala tragedy examined later on.[31]

At the same time Sunnis held that Abu Bakr, one of the Prophet's companions, was suitable to the role of the Caliph as he was a pious and competent believer, and therefore elected him as the new ruler of the Caliphate.[32] The disagreements between the two groups over his legitimacy and that of those who followed him characterised

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[27] El-Affendi, A., "Umma, State, and Movement: Events that shaped the Modern Debate", in Hroub, K., (ed.), *Political Islam: context versus ideology* (London: SAQI Books, 2010), p. 29

[28] Lewis, B., *The Arabs in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 42

[29] Blanchard, C., "Islam: Sunnis and Shi'ites", in *Congressional Research Service*, (January 2009), p. 1

[30] El-Affendi, A., "Umma, State, and Movement: Events that shaped the Modern Debate", p. 22

[31] Blanchard, C., "Islam: Sunnis and Shi'ites", p. 1

[32] ibid.

the first decades of the Caliphate, and escalated when Ali's son Hussein was assassinated by the hand of Sunni caliph Yazid in Karbala in 680 AD.[33] That tragic event still affects Shi'a psyche today and marked the final schism between these two strands of Islam, which grew increasingly different in both religious and political practices throughout the centuries. In particular, the fact that this schism is originally based on the question of governance stresses once again the fact that Islam is an inherently political religion in its nature, and that its manifestations are as heterogeneous as its origins. As the ways in which Shi'a and Sunni Muslims live and practice the Islamic faith are inherently different, it can be argued that the manifestations of Islamic political thought stemming from these two branches are also very diverse, making it appropriate to talk about Political *Islams*. Contemporary implications of this historical schism can be clearly seen today, as they are reflected in the turbulent geopolitics of the the region. Therefore, applying Historical Sociology to the study of how different interpretations of Islam have shaped nations and states in the Middle East is necessary to the analysis of its current politics.

1.2 Core tenets of Political Islam: the Sunni-Shi'a schism

From what has been said so far, it follows that the core tenets of Political Islam vary depending on which strand they originate from and on the context they are employed within. There are, of course, shared values and beliefs that are common to both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, which impact on both their religious and political life. These are, for example, the adherence to the five pillars of the Islamic faith, and the shared credence that the sources of Islamic jurisprudence are the Quran, the *sunna*, and *shari'a* law.[34] Similarly, it follows that both interpretations of Islam hold that to be considered as such, the Islamic state should be based on these principles and be free from foreign influences and corruption. The notion of the *umma* codified by Mohamed in the Medina Charter is key to both understandings of the Islamic State, as while it is a source of identity and spiritual belonging it is also inseparable from the idea of a

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[33] ibid.

[34] Ayubi, N., *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 2-3

sovereign territory, which needs a government to be considered as such.[35] In modern times the Islamic State has grown to be characterised by the rule of *shari'a* law and by the separation between ruling and legislative powers, which have to be exercised respectively by the Caliph and the *ulema*, Islamic jurists and "guardians of the law". It is on the role and duties of the *ulema* that major differences in terms of Islamic political thought emerge between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, as their different conception of jurists' authority leads to diverse modes of governance.

Apart from different opinions regarding the leadership of the Muslim community, Sunni and Shi'a Muslims also have a very different understanding of the role that clerics and jurists should play within the context of an Islamic State. In the Sunni understanding of Political Islam, the role of the jurists is that of legitimizing the acts of the ruler and maintaining the integrity of the community, making sure that *shari'a* law is respected and rightly implemented.[36] The Sunni religious hierarchy is considerably less structured than the Shi'a one, as it is believed by most that no human being could be attributed the same superior status of the Quranic *Imams*.[37] On the contrary, as demonstrated by the unique case of Iran, Twelver Shi'a Muslims practice a sort of veneration of *Imams*, who they believe descend directly from the Prophet.[38] Because of this, those belonging to the *ulema* enjoy an almost privileged status in the community and are considered to be the only ones fit to rule in the absence of the Twelfth Imam, who is still in occultation.[39]

Moreover, Shi'a clerics often engage in the practice of *ijtihad,* independent reasoning*,* which is the interpretation of *shari'a* for legal purposes.[40] This is perhaps one of the

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[35] El-Affendi, A., "Umma, State, and Movement: Events that shaped the Modern Debate", p. 29

[36] Ayubi, N., *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, p.16

[37] Blanchard, C., "Islam: Sunnis and Shi'ites", p. 3

[38] ibid., pp. 3-4

[39] Again, this is a belief that is specific to the Islamic Republic of Iran, as other Shi'a communities across the region and in particular in Iraq disagree with this notion.

[40] Esposito, J., "Ijtihad", in *The Islamic World: Past and Present,* (Oxford Islamic Studies Online),http://oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/Login.html?url=%2Fapp%3Fservice%3Dexternalpagem ethod%26page%3DArticleViewDispatch%26method%3Dview%26uri%3D%2Fopr%2Ft243%2Fe150&fai lReason

most dividing differences between these two Islamic strands, as in Sunnism such practice is strongly restricted and often absent.

It is now clear that Sunni and Shi'a Islamic thought and practices come from very different backgrounds, even if they are both clearly political in nature. In terms of the evidence of these differences within their respective application of Political Islam, the works of prominent Sunni thinkers such as Ala abu Mawdudi and Hassan al Banna will be examined along those of Shi'a Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, with the aim of providing a comprehensive review of the main manifestations of this ideology. Once again, the existence of different practices, conflicting identities, interpretations, and even diverse origins underlines the problematic presence of various tensions within the doctrine of Political Islam.

1.3 Political Islam: Initial Definitions and Misconceptions

Following the schism between two distinct "sects", part of the confusion and controversy surrounding both the theory and practice of Political Islam is due to its extremely heterogeneous nature, which varies depending on the country and socio-political conditions it develops within, and to the lack of a common narrative and strategy. In times that are shaped by the Global War on Terror, which is often misconstrued as a "War against Islam", it is therefore easy to generalise the understanding of the term and of its implications, and to assume that the characteristics of political Islamic thought in a particular country or context would also apply everywhere else. This heterogeneous nature is what causes the presence of so many competing tensions within the wider doctrine, which are often incompatible and highly specific to a particular context. This makes its understanding even more challenging, and leads to the creation of damaging assumptions and stereotypes.

While a definition of what the term "Political Islam" suggests is indeed useful when beginning to approach the subject, this chapter aims to strongly challenge practices of generalisation and oversimplification of such a complex and influential ideology. Through the lens of Historical Sociology, this chapter identifies a working definition of the term, but does so while also acknowledging its particularity and diversity

depending on regional and national circumstances. It follows that the scope of the first part of this Chapter is to provide a basic understanding and background knowledge of the origins and core constituents of Political Islam, with the aims of starting to identify the inner tensions that makes its application and understanding as challenging as they are.

Political Islam, often referred to as Islamism, can be understood as a collection of views and practices sharing the belief that the Islamic faith should guide political, personal, and social life.[41] Being a religious ideology that supposedly provides both practical and spiritual guidance, it follows that while its core components are universal, its interpretation and implications vary depending on the geographical location and political context, therefore generating tensions.[42] This is why Historical Sociology provides an effective analytical framework for the purpose of this study, as it moves away from the traditional understanding of "Islam" or the "Arab mind" as explanatory elements of the region's geopolitics, and instead focuses on how religious and social institutions are established and maintained in a variety of different national contexts. The belief that politics should be an extension of faith causes a fascinating overlap between the secular and the religious spheres, hence the adoption of the term "Political" is extremely useful in demonstrating how social activities linked to Islam still have to act within the political domain and are often restricted by state-based "secular" institutions.[43] Once again, it follows that practices of *da'wa'*, "preaching" or "invitation to Islam", the application of the Islamic law *shari'a*, and similar activities are widely influenced by the socio-political context in which they find themselves.

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[41] Berman, S., "Islamism, Revolution, and Civil Society", in *Perspectives on Politics,* Vol. 1, No. 2, (June 2003), p. 257

[42] Butterworth, C., "Political Islam: the origins", in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 254, (Nov., 1992), p. 28

[43] Hirschkind, C., "What is Political Islam", in *Middle East Research and Information Project*, MER 205, http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/what-political-islam ; and The Economist Special Report: the Arab Spring, "Political Islam: the power of religion", in *The Economist*, (July 2013), http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21580618-islamists-government-proving-harder-opposition-power-religion

Overall, Islamism holds that Islam is a complete and unique system providing a synthetizing ideology, the aim of which is to gradually transform society into an Islamic one.[44] As Oliver Roy notes: "the Islamist movement thus conceives itself explicitly as a socio-political movement, founded on Islam defined as much in terms of a political ideology as in terms of a religion."[45] Despite its diversity, Islamism is still largely held to be a homogeneous ideology, a view that consequently shapes the foreign policies and approaches to the region of many Western states, including the UK. Beverly Milton-Edwards notes that this is not a contemporary phenomenon, rather, such trends are a contemporary manifestation of the deep "historical antipathy" established between Islam and the West at the time of the crusades.[46] This has led to Islamic fundamentalism being the primary analytical tool for the study of contemporary Islam, a conceptualisation that not only fails to understand Islamism as a modern phenomenon, but also comes with serious repercussion for domestic and international policy-making.

Most importantly, even if various forms of political guidance within Islam date back to the times of Prophet Mohammed, Political Islam has to be understood as a modern phenomenon the roots of which originated in the 19th and early 20th century as a response to Western colonization, values, and socio-political influence.[47] John Esposito argues that modern Political Islam has emerged as an alternative to failing secular ideologies such as capitalism, nationalism, and socialism, as demonstrated by the slogan "Islam is the solution".[48] Modernization and Westernization are therefore perceived as evil forces that erode Muslim cultural and religious identities, leading Islamist groups to challenge governments, neo-colonialism and foreign powers.[49] In such a framework, different Islamist organizations act as "agents of change", and while most of them do so within the structures of governments and civil society, a minority is known for the use of violent means and therefore attach negative stereotypes to

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[44] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 39

[45] ibid.

[46] Milton-Edwards, B*., Islamic Fundamentalism since 1945* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 2-4

[47] Ayoob, M., "Political Islam: Image and Reality", in *World Policy Journal*, (Fall 2004), p. 2

[48] Esposito, J., "Political Islam and the West", in *JFQ Forum*, (Spring 2000), p. 50

[49] ibid.

the doctrine as a whole. This is why failing to see the difference between the various manifestations of Political Islam can be misleading, and often leads to the perception of an Islamic threat that generates international security concerns. In the words of Mohammed Ayoob "No two Islamisms are alike because they are determined by the context in which they operate".[50]

While organizations such as the Egyptian MB historically act within a system of electoral politics, other groups like Hamas and Hezbollah are more commonly known for being split between a political party and a militia group, which carry out their religiously legitimised agendas through violent tactics.[51] However, Ayoob argues that a clear line should be drawn between such groups and transnational Islamist organizations like Al Qaeda. This is the case as, historically, violent acts perpetrated by militias linked to Hamas and Hezbollah have been territorially restricted and aimed exclusively at targets that were arguably obstructing their desire to free an occupied territory, or achieve national independence.[52] On the contrary, the kind of violence carried out by Islamist groups such as Al Qaeda is transnational and indiscriminate in nature, and does not necessarily serve a specific purpose. While this claim does not justify Hezbollah's actions in any way, it does still underline the nature of Political Islam as a catalyst for change and as a force against oppression. In particular, it also emphasizes the notion of Islamist groups across the region embodying resistance against colonial powers and autocratic regimes, which in the case of the MB was the main drive behind the organization's creation.

Moreover, the idea that the core components of Political Islam are directly related to the socio-political conditions of Muslim countries at the beginning of the 20th century also puts forward the argument that Islamism has been a key factor in the formation of the (anachronistic) national identities of these states.[53] As most Islamic organizations developed as opposition cells and agents of change, this doctrine is said

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[50] Ayoob, M., "Political Islam: Image and Reality", p. 1

[51] Esposito, J., "Political Islam and the West", p. 52

[52] Ayoob, M., "Political Islam: Image and Reality", p. 8

[53] ibid., pp. 2-3

to have acted as a source of both identity and political force within Sunni and Shi'a contexts alike. As such this argument further strengthens the links between the secular and religious spheres that Political Islam brings together, and underlines the major influence that this ideology had in the Arab World since its inception. This is also why Political Islam can be understood as a means through which its followers sought to achieve Arab dignity lost to Colonization, an unprecedented form of resistance and "identity politics", which also explains the nationalistic language to which its founding fathers are associated, sometimes openly challenging the notion of Pan-Arabism.[54]

1.4 Hassan al Banna and Abu ala Mawdudi: the origins of (Sunni) Political Islam and emerging tensions

These elements of resistance and identity politics are central to the origins of modern Islamist thought, which are usually dated back to the beginning of the 20th century. It was then that Hassan al Banna founded the Society of Muslim Brothers in Egypt and Abu ala Mawdudi started developing his Muslim revivalist discourse before creating the Jamat-i-Islami. At the same time, Shi'a clerics in Iran were growing increasingly politicized in opposition to foreign forces and corrupted leaders' influence on the country. Both these scholars are regarded as the founding fathers of modern (Sunni) Political Islam, and the two organisations they created are held as examples of what a religious political movement that promotes Islamic values and practices should be like. Despite the fact that there are many tensions within Political Islam, it is interesting to note that the two scholars were initially similar in their thought and that their religious and political messages originated from their shared experiences and beliefs.[55]

While the MB and the Jamat-i-Islami appealed to very different publics, respectively Arab and South Asian Muslims, both organisations called for the establishment of

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[54] Fuller, G., *The Future of Political Islam* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), p. 21

[55] "many of the positions and arguments associated with Qutb, Mawdudi and Khomeini are a systematic articulation of a worldview already evident in the model of…socio-moral reform Banna left behind" see: Euben, R., Zaman, M., (eds.) 'Hasan al-Banna' in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from Al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 49

Islamic governance and were therefore based on an Islamist political ideology.[56] The brotherly relations that their members entertained over the years, the similarity in objectives, and the fact that the Pakistani Jamaat-I-Islami "borrowed" its ideological basis from the Egyptian MB reinforces the conviction that the message perpetrated by their founders represents the original bulk of modern Political Islam.[57] Moreover, authoritarian governance characterised the experience of both Egyptian and Pakistani Islamists and their historical and ideological bond is still strong today, to the point that when Mohamed Morsi won the Egyptian presidential elections in 2012 his victory was also celebrated in Pakistan with a special ceremony and prayers of gratitude.[58] However, tensions and competing strategies are evident when looking at these two organizations: while the MB soon became politicized and historically struggled against the dictatorship and corruption of the Egyptian Army, the Jamaat-i-Islam remains somewhat reactionary in its means, while also entertaining friendly relationships with the Pakistani Army.[59] Therefore, it is important to note how inner conflicts and tensions can originate even from the two groups created by the founding fathers of this politico-religious ideology.

Given that Mawdudi was directly inspired by al Banna's thought, the core tenets of modern (Sunni) Political Islam are to be found in the Egyptian schoolteacher's works, which influenced Islamist groups across the globe and are still widely analysed today. The origins of al Banna's political and religious thought come from both his personal background and education, which made him acutely aware of the socio-political conditions characteristic of Egypt at the beginning of the 20th century. Being the son of a local *Imam* and Islamic author, from a very young age al Banna was devoted to

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[56] Pew Forum Staff, "Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-i-Islami", in "Muslim Networks and Movements in Western Europe, Pew Forum On religion and Public Life, (Sept., 2010), p. 20

[57] ibid.

[58] "Congratulations to Ikhwane Muslameen (Egyptian Brotherhood) on their glorious success. The sacrifices of the martyrs Imam Hasan al Banna, Syed Qutb and thousands of activists have borne fruit in the shape of the revolution in Egypt. God willing, an Islamic revolution is Pakistan's destiny too". Staff Report, "Jammat-e-Islami, Karachi celebrates Morsi's victory", in Daily Times Pakistan, (26 June 2012) http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C06%5C26%5Cstory_26-6-2012_pg12_1

[59] Siddiqui, S., "Drawing parallels between Jamaat-e-Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood", in *International New York Times: The Express Tribune*, (18th July 2012) http://tribune.com.pk/story/409788/drawing-parallels-between-jamaat-e-islami-and-muslim-brotherhood/

Quranic studies and deeply involved in religious societies, which he always actively contributed to develop and promote throughout his life.[60] By the time he became a teacher, not only he was extremely familiar with the Quran and *hadit*s, but also increasingly worried by the challenges that the Egyptian society was facing at the time, namely British colonial rule, increasing Westernization, and growing corruption.[61] It was in such a state of mind that Political Islam originated from al Banna's works, as he grew increasingly committed to the aim of returning the Egyptian society to original Islamic norms and values, rejecting the corruption and promiscuity brought about by Western colonialism.[62]

In order to fully articulate and strive towards its aims, al Banna started advocating the "defence" of the homeland and Islam and in 1928 he founded the MB with two clear objectives: the removal of colonial power and influence from Egypt and the gradual establishment of an Islamic state that was to set an example for the other countries in the region. [63] It can be seen how the message of Political Islam had an inherent nationalist component, somewhat linked to the idea of a transnational *umma* being firstly linked to a politicized territory, leading it to be more than an ideology but also an identity-building force. Moreover, many of these sources of discontent can also be found in the Shi'a interpretation of Islamic political thought.

One of the main misconceptions surrounding the doctrine of Political Islam today is the assumption of its inherently authoritarian nature, a prejudice that completely disregards the notion that one of the major opponents of Islamists are dictators and tyrants, while fitting Western foreign policy's aims. From the beginning al Banna strongly emphasized the necessity for an Islamisation from below, arguing for a gradual and bottom-up approach that started from the individual and ended with the

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[60] Mitchell, P., R., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 1-3

[61] Helbawy, K., "The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: historical evolution and future prospects", in Hroub, K., (ed.) *Political Islam: Context versus Ideology* (London: SAQI, 2010), p. 63

[62] Zahid, M., *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's succession crisis: the politics of liberalisation and reform in the Middle East* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010), p. 70

[63] Mitchell, P., R., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*; and Caromba, L., & Solomon, H., "Understanding Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", in *African Security Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (July 2010), p. 119

achievement of Allah's sovereignty over every aspect of society.[64] This inclination strongly rejects the prejudice outline above and is clearly identifiable in al Banna's own words:

> Muslims, this is a period of rebuilding: re-build yourselves, and your Umma will as a consequence be rebuilt![65]

This also explains the original charitable nature of the MB, which was created as a grassroots organisation focused on providing essential social services such as education and healthcare, while also delivering moral guidance and discussions of the Quran and its teaching.[66] Down the line, the MB would come to be perceived as a "state within a state", embodying many of the tensions between the concept of sovereignty and the state in Egypt. At the same time, some of the stated objectives of the organization were "To establish Allah's sovereignty over the world. To guide all of humanity to the precepts of Islam and its teachings (without which mankind cannot attain happiness)", once again emphasising the individuals' role within the wider Islamist project.[67]

So far, an Historical Sociological analysis of the genealogy of the doctrine has shown that Political Islam in its original form argues for a peaceful and moderate transition to an Islamic state, aimed at transforming society as a whole rather than imposing *shari'a* Law and Islamic Jurisprudence on it straight away. However, its understanding of such is still largely missing from the foreign policies of many Western government, a trend that particularly intensified after the rise of Da'esh in June 2014.

Islamism is therefore "political" as it often acts within the boundaries imposed by the state, an element of which al Banna was extremely conscious and that he embraced

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[64] Mura, A., "A genealogical inquiry into early Islamism: the discourse of Hasan al-Banna", in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (2012), pp. 70-71

[65] Al Banna, H., *To What Do We Invite Humanity?* (Cairo: n.p., 1934) and on Ikhwanweb http://www.ikhwanweb.com/print.php?id=804 ; and also appeared as a Pamphlet "The Complete Works of Imam Hassan al Banna" in 1936, as available on http://thequranblog.files.wordpress.com/2008/06/_6_-our-message.pdf

[66] Stilt, K., "Islam is the Solution: Constitutional visions of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood", in *Texas International Law Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 73, (2010), pp. 76-77

[67] Al Banna, H., *To What Do We Invite Humanity?*

fully after some initial doubts. While holding that God's sovereignty (*al ḥākimiyya li-l-lāh*) is indisputable and has to be reflected in every aspect of society, Political Islam also recognises the importance of state institutions and their necessary role in governance. Contrary to Militant Islam (often mistaken for Political Islam because of the presence of political goals), al Banna argued that rather than being eliminated and targeted by *jihad*, state institutions had to be gradually reshaped in an Islamic form, and drew from Islamic traditions and jurisprudence to sustain his argument. [68] These precepts are also what make the MB an *evolutionary* rather then *revolutionary* organization, a characteristic whose importance will become increasingly clear when looking at their foray into electoral politics. In al Banna's view, *shari'a* Law is understood as a legitimate source of jurisprudence that also embodies Allah's sovereignty, therefore fitting the notion of both an Islamic and a modern state, as reflected in al Banna's own words:

> Every nation has a set of laws in which the people partake their ruling. These sets of laws must be derived from the proscriptions of the Islamic Sharee'ah (drawn from the Noble Qur'an, and in accordance with the basic sources of Islamic jurisprudence). The Islamic Sharee'ah and the decisions of the Islamic jurists are completely sufficient, supply every need, and cover every contingency, and they produce the most excellent results and the most blessed fruits. [69]

Hassan al Banna successfully developed and spread a message of gradual Islamisation through peaceful activities and moderation, rejecting violence and recognizing the importance of state structures and institutions, operating under the overarching notion of God's Sovereignty. [70]

Despite being regarded as one of the founding fathers of (Sunni) Political Islam, something that is often overlooked is the progressive radicalization of Mawdudi's thought, which is reflected in the reactionary nature of the Jamaat-i-Islami and in his

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[68] Mura, A., "A genealogical inquiry into early Islamism: the discourse of Hasan al-Banna", p. 71

[69] Al Banna, H., *To What Do We Invite Humanity?*

[70] Eid Mohammed, "The Muslim Brotherhood: Between Democracy, Ideology, and Distrust", *Brookings*, (11 January 2013) http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/01/11-muslim-brotherhood-mohamed

controversial influence on both Sayyid Qutb and the Salafist doctrine[71]. The origins of tensions and competing narratives that complicate the theory and practice of Political Islam can be traced back to the gradual radicalization of his own thought. While Mawdudi was one of the first Islamist thinkers to produce a political interpretation of the Islamic teachings and to develop a set of social actions aiming towards the Islamisation of the state, his views considerably shifted as he aged, moving from Political Islam towards Islamic Radicalism.[72]

Interestingly enough the origins of his thought are directly drawn from al Banna's example, as it developed in an Indo-Pakistani context where the subcontinent experienced centuries-long foreign domination, which caused a sharp decline in Islamic culture and societal practices just as in the Egyptian case. As a response to it – and inspired by the MB's example – Mawdudi founded the Jamaat-i-Islami in 1948 and set it up to be a religious political movement aimed at the promotion of Islamic practices and values.[73] At this initial stage, Mawdudi already perceived Islam as more than a religion, understanding it as a unifying system that encompassed everything from politics, economy, to sociology and legislation, and as al Banna he longed for a society based on its core tenets.[74]

It is clear that at the start of his career, Mawdudi was arguing for an understanding of Political Islam that was inspired by and therefore very similar to the one put forward by al Banna. However, as Indian and Pakistani politics deteriorated and the subcontinent was eventually partitioned, his argument significantly shifted and this digression from the original form of Islamism is arguably what initiated the tensions within the doctrine. It was at this stage that Mawdudi started drafting what is

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[71] Emerged in the 18th century, Salafism takes a fundamentalist approach to Islam and broadly argues for a return to the times of the Prophet, rejecting religious innovation. It is therefore usually associated to a strict, puritanical and literal approach to Islam.

[72] Nasr, S., *Mawdudi and the making of Islamic Revivalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 3

[73] Global Security, "Jamaat-e-Islami", in *Global Security.org*
http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/ji.htm

[74] Mawdudi, A., *Towards Understanding the Quran* (Lahore, Pakistan), Chapter 7, as found on:
http://www.webcitation.org/5klXo9uVR

considered the most precise conceptualisation of an Islamic state and its structures, while also drawing a clear line between Muslim and Islamic governance. That is to say, an Islamic state can be considered as such only when it is based on the Quranic teachings and ruled by *shari'a* Law, and its status does not depend on how many of its citizens practice Islam as that would merely make it a Muslim state.[75] Mawdudi goes even further in designing what can be considered a (Theo) Islamic democracy, which is to be founded on the three precepts of "oneness of God (*tawhid*), prophet hood (*risala*) and caliphate (*khilafa*)".[76]

However unprecedented and precise, this particular conceptualisation of the state causes yet another series of tensions within the original formulation of Political Islam, as many regard it as being more a dictatorship in the making than a Theo-democracy. This is the case because in Mawdudi's view non-Muslims, or *takfiris*, would have limited rights when living under the Islamic state and would also have to pay a special tax, *jizya*, and both these arguments counter the conception of Islam as an inclusive and tolerant religion.[77] The developments of these aspects are one of the reasons why Grand Ayatollah Khomeini's thought can be understood as being rather close to the Sunni conception of Caliphate, which will be discussed later on in the chapter.

There are even more controversies originating from Mawdudi's later conception of Political Islam, such as the fact that although he did not go as far as directly justifying the use of violent *jihad*, he did not stop or condemn the Jamaat-i-Islami from engaging in it.[78] Moreover, he also rediscovered the reshaped the concept of *jahiliyya*, or pre-Islamic ignorance, which was then picked up by Sayyid Qutb, and put forward a rather controversial response to it. Mawdudi argued that *jahiliyya* had not been eliminated by the advent of Islam and that his contemporary Muslim fellows were as guilty of it as non-believers, and went as far as calling for jihad against those Muslim countries

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[75] Jackson, R., *Malana Mawdudi & Political Islam: Authority and the Islamic State* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), pp.128-130

[76] Esposito, J., Piscatory, J., "Democratization and Islam", in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3, (Summer 1991), pp. 437-440

[77] Mawdudi, A., *The Meaning of the Qur'an* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1993), pp. 183-186

[78] Global Security, "Jamaat-e-Islami"

that in his opinion had lost their ways.[79] Such a controversial perspective leads to yet another contradiction, as while al Banna's understanding of *jihad* referred to it as the personal struggle to better oneself, Mawdudi goes as far as suggesting that it should be waged against non-believers and even against fellow Muslims.

From what has been said, it is clear that Political Islam in its original form has been theorised as a religious political ideology, combining faith and the application of Islamic precepts to everyday life. The difficult socio-political conditions such an ideology originated from have been extensively reviewed, with the aim to explain how this doctrine can also be understood as an identity building and dignity seeking process, rather that only as a set of prescriptions. The thought of Hassan al Banna and Abu ala Mawdudi has been examined to provide a background knowledge of what Political Islam in its Sunni form looks like in different contexts. However, in doing so some inner tensions started arising, as Mawdudi's thought strongly radicalised with the passing of the time and arguably diverted from Islamism in its "pure" formulation. Such contradictions at this initial stage are indicative of what would would happen across the 20th century, as Political Islam has been interpreted and reshaped many times during the years, therefore leading to confusion surrounding both its theory and practice and to the construction of unending prejudices.

1.5 Sayyid Qutb: the 'radical' turn[80]

Much of these prejudices are shaped by the narrative and justification for the Global War on Terror, which have been shaping public opinions and foreign policies alike since its declaration in 2001. Ayoob argues that the Western perception of Political Islam is negatively influenced by three main prejudices, which have strengthened since the terrorist attack on 9/11.[81] These misconceptions are that Political Islam, like the

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[79] Sagiv, D., *Fundamentalism and Intellectuals in Egypt, 1973-1993* (Oxon: Routledge, 1995), pp. 40-41; and Zollner, B., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p. 79

[80] In this context "radicalisation" is understood as a process through which an individual or group come to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideas that undermine freedom of choice or Human Rights.

[81] Ayoob, M., "Political Islam: Image and Reality", p. 1

faith itself, is monolithic, that the interconnection of religion and politics is unique to the Islamic faith, and that Political Islam is inherently violent.[82] While these prejudices can be easily deconstructed by the informed reader, they are undoubtedly affecting the way in which Political Islam is perceived internationally, therefore negatively impacting on the reputation of those countries in the Arab World that are incorporating aspects of Islamism into their governance.

To start with, it should be clear that Political Islam is far from being monolithic, but rather both its theory and practice are heavily influenced by context, political discourses, and inclination of the various Islamist groups that follow this ideology. This aspect should be even clearer now that the political thought of al Banna and Mawdudi has been highlighted, as it shows how contradictions and tensions could originate even from the works of the two founding fathers of this doctrine. Consequently, there is not such a thing as a universal practice of Islamism, but rather there is a collection of ideas that hold the Islamisation of society and institution of Islamic governance as a final, shared aim, while the paths to it are blurred and vary heavily. In turn, this causes a great deal of confusion and equally damaging prejudices, which this research engages with.

Secondly, the assumption that the interconnectedness of religion and politics is unique to the Islamic faith is equally incorrect and anchored to outdated Orientalist approaches[83]. Those who hold such belief against Islamism fail to remember that secular and religious powers held a deeply intertwined role in government throughout European history, and that Christianity prescribes various forms of interaction between church and state.[84] Moreover, not only is this mutual influence undeniable when analysing history, but a growing focus on religious issues is increasingly influencing Western politics nowadays, challenging the secularist trend characteristic of the 20th century.[85] Finally, when it comes to the supposition that Political Islam is

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[82] ibid.

[83] See: Said, E., *Orientalism* (Penguin Books: London, 2003)

[84] Fiala, P., "Religion and European Politics", in *20th IPSA World Congress*, (July 2006), pp. 1-2

[85] ibid., pp. 6-9

inherently violent, there is much to be said about those tensions in both theory and practice. Political Islam is not a monolithic force and therefore lacks a clear set of practices that are to be universally followed, as its applications and understanding vary depending on its geographical locations and socio-political circumstances. It follows that this led to many different interpretations of Islamism throughout the years, causing the core tenets of this ideology to be repeatedly re-interpreted and reshaped to fit particular historical circumstances. On several occasions the peaceful precepts argued by al Banna have been undeniably disregarded, even by the MB itself, but while a radical turn in the practice of Political Islam is indeed detectable it still does not make the whole ideology a violent doctrine.

There is a considerable debate within the literature regarding the place that political violence, more specifically "lesser *jihad*", holds inside the wider doctrine of Political Islam. This debate intensifies when it comes to the role of the MB, as while many see the group as a laboratory for democratic development others, such as Roy, identify it as one of the main cradles for Islamic terrorism. Those who argue for the terrorist trend generally base their rhetoric on the study of the influence that the Egyptian scholar Sayyid Qutb had on both the theory and practice of Political Islam. Originally part of the MB, through its written works Qutb developed a radicalised understanding of Political Islam and argued for the re-interpretation of some its core tenets, making them fit both his contemporary context and personal political aims, therefore generating much of the chaos and controversy generally associated to Political Islam. Considered to be one of the most influential Islamist ideologues, at the start of his career Qutb shared al Banna's concerns regarding the corruption of Egyptian society brought about by Western values, and sought to return to the original practice of the Islamic faith.[86] However, Qutb's major and most controversial contribution to Islamism is his development of the concept of *jahiliyya*, which he borrowed from Mawdudi's thought and proceeded to make his own.

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[86] Bergen, P., *The Osama Bin Laden I know: an Oral History of Al Qaeda's leader* New York: Free Press, 2006) pp. 18-20

In *Milestones*, his most famous work, Qutb identifies the notion of *jahiliyya* (ignorance of divine guidance) as the predominant characteristic of secular regimes, Western values, and Arab contemporary governments, and regards it as the major obstacle to the achievement of an Islamic society. [87] He formed the argument that such obstacles had to be removed through the practice of *jihad*, intended in both his greater understanding as "personal/internal battle" and in lesser sense as "armed Struggle".[88] As a consequence, throughout the course of his life, Qutb developed a precise set of notions that justified the use of violent *jihad* as opposed to peaceful means to express opposition against the regime, which appealed to many Egyptian Islamists especially during Nasser's oppressive rule. Equally, the application of this understanding of *jihad* can be somewhat recognized in the means adopted by both Hezbollah and Hamas for the achievement of their aims.

Qutb was hanged in 1966 under the accusation of having participated in the plot to assassinate Nasser, but the relevance of his legacy was already set and it is said to have directly influenced Al Qaeda, as Bin Laden was a student of Qutb's brother in his youth.[89] However, because of his "extreme" ideals and direct involvement in violent *jihad* Qutb clearly distanced himself from what was the Brotherhood's core ideology, and therefore it is incorrect to associate his influence to that of the Muslim Brotherhood's as a whole.

It is clear how Qutb's notions of *jahiliyya* and justifications of violent *jihad* as a legitimate means to achieve political aims are directly opposite to the understanding of Political Islam put forward by al Banna, consequently generating tensions within the practice of Islamism. Given the challenging times in which such notions were developed, it is not surprising that they appealed to a wide number of Islamists globally. As a consequence, however, these notions led to a heavy radicalisation of the

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[87] Qutb, S., *Milestones* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1990), p. 8

[88] Zollner, B., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology*, pp. 58-63

[89] Berman, P., "The philosopher of Islamic terror", *The New York Times Magazine* (23 March 2003) http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/23/magazine/the-philosopher-of-islamic-terror.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm ; Irwin, R., "Is this the man who inspired Bin Laden?", *The Guardian*, (1 December 2001) http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/nov/01/afghanistan.terrorism3

Islamist thought that, in turn, contributed to the generation of prejudices towards the whole doctrine. Qutb's radical view is not inherent to Political Islam in itself, but rather is a misreading and biased reinterpretation of the ideology, which would create endless issues for both Islamists and external observers. Islamist movements around the world are strongly divided in their practices over the concept of *jahiliyya*, and that proceeds to generate even more clashes in the understanding of this doctrine. As Khatab points out, "Islam and *jahiliyya* are two binary opposites and the real struggle in the future will be between them, and not between East and West.".[90] This shows once again just how diverse Islamist movements and their practices can be, meaning that Islamism is far from being monolithic, but is rather characterised by internal tensions and schisms.

1.6 Shi'a Islamism: The case of the Islamic Republic of Iran

One of the main and most damaging misconceptions surrounding the doctrine of Political Islam is not only the assumption of its monolithic nature, but the global tendency to equate such ideology uniquely with the Sunni branch of the Islamic faith. There are many reasons behind this malpractice, first of all the staggering prominence of Sunni Islam in comparison to Shi'a Islam worldwide, which is estimated as Sunni Muslims accounting for 87-90% of the total Muslim population.[91] Moreover, the global resonance of Islamist groups such the Egyptian MB or the Pakistani Jamaat-I-Islami, together with al Qaeda and more recently Da'esh, has reinforced the immediate connection of Political Islam to the Sunni doctrine.

However, it needs to be noted that Political Islam is not only heterogeneous in its manifestations, but that this diversity can be traced back to its very origins and to the schism between Sunni and Shi'a Islams. In fact, just as these two branches differ in religious practices and beliefs, they also embody two very diverse interpretations and practices of this particular ideology. Therefore, in order to gain the comprehensive and

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[90] Khatab, S., *The Political Thought of Sayyd Qutb: the theory of jahiliyyah* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 1

[91] Pew Research Centre, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population", in *Pew Research Religion and Public Life Project*, (October 2009), http://pewforum.org/Muslim/Mapping-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx

insightful understanding of Islamism that this Chapter aims to provide, it is necessary to take into account the Shi'ite interpretation of Political Islam as well. Doing so also emphasises the numerous tensions inherent in this doctrine, as they do not stem solely from different interpretations of the same ideology, but arguably from two very diverse origins of the notion of Political Islam.

The schism between Sunni and Shi'a Islam is itself political in its nature, as it was provoked by disagreements over matters of succession to the caliphate after the death of the Prophet Mohamed. It follows that different positions regarding the nature of the leader of an Islamic state result in as many diverse versions of the Islamist doctrine, going back to the idea of Political Islams. Therefore, it is necessary to go against the misconceptions surrounding the term and analyse the Shi'ite version of Political Islam as an equally interesting and meaningful manifestation of this doctrine. In order to do this, the Chapter will focus particularly on the case of post-revolutionary Iran, as being the only "functioning" theocracy in the Middle East it provides a strong example of what Shi'ite Islamism entails.

There are several other reasons that make Iran's case unique and appropriate to this study, particularly the fact that Iran's state religion is "Twelver Islam", a unique manifestation of Shi'ism that therefore makes the country a source of diversity and authority in the region. Moreover, Oliver Roy notes that not only Iran is the only country in which Twelver Shi'ism is the official state religion, but more importantly it is the only one in which a successful Islamic revolution took place and maintained power after 1979.[92] It follows that many of the elements that foster Political Islam across the Muslim World are also easily found in Iran, namely Islamist clerics/intellectual and discontent urban population, underlining once again its importance in the study of the manifestations of this ideology.[93]

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[92] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 168
[93] ibid., p. 172

Following from this, John Esposito notes that contrary to contemporary perceptions "containing Islamism" for a long time meant countering the spread of Shi'ism and the success of the 1979 Iranian revolution, which was viewed by many as the most militant and revolutionary force in the Islamic world.[94] It is understandable that the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution could have been read as a major source of inspiration by the other Islamist organisations in the region, as the strive for change and challenge to authoritarianism are characteristics of both Sunni and Shi'a manifestations of Political Islam. Moreover, the toppling of the Shah and instalment of a functioning theocracy also demonstrated that Islam could be employed as a tool to successfully counter the influence of foreign powers in the region and to bring about social and political change, a set of powerful messages that made Iran the target for concerned Western an Arab analysts alike.[95] It follows that at the time Sunni Islamism was very much considered as a "lesser evil", reflecting how a particular set of events can change perceptions in a relatively short period of time. Furthermore, another justification for the choice of Iran as a case study for Shi'ite Political Islam is the considerable influence and support that the country has over Islamist groups such as Hizbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in occupied Palestine, which are similar in practices and aims to the Muslim Brotherhood and not inferior in terms of regional importance.

Before embarking on an explanation of Islamism in Iran, it is important to stress that the country is unique in its case and devoted to a politicized version of Twelver Shi'ism, which shapes its political precepts and beliefs. This particular branch of Islam is characterised by a messianic narrative in the sense that, originating from the belief that only God has the authority to appoint the successor to the prophet, there are twelve chosen *Imams* who have been divinely indicated and of whom Ali was the first.[96] Twelvers consequently believe that the twelfth Imam in still in occultation, and that someone has to rule in his place until its return. In the original Shi'a tradition it is believed that a "guardian" Council, composed by clerics educated in the knowledge of

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[94] Esposito, J., "Political Islam and the West", in *JFQ Forum*, (Spring 2000), p. 54

[95] Hunter, S., "Iran and the spread of Revolutionary Islam", in *Third World Quarterly: Islam and Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (April 1988), p. 731

[96] Blanchard, C., "Islam: Sunnis and Shi'ites", p. 5

the Quran and *sha'ria* Law, should rule in the place of the hidden Imam until his return, in order to preserve the true essence of the Islamic state and to avoid the corruption of Shi'ite values and traditions.[97]

It is from this particular narrative that in the later part of his life Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini developed the concept of *velayat-e faqih*, literally "governance of the jurists". At the base of this ideology there is Khomeini's interpretation of Twelver Shi'ism, and the claim that in the absence of the Hidden Imam a *faqih*, a leading Islamic jurist, must rule in order to protect the Islamic faith and the people.[98] This interpretation prescribes a political guardianship over a country during the time of occultation, and argues that Islamic jurists should not be limited to the application of *shari'a* law, but that they are indeed the successors of the Prophet and Imams, and are therefore the only authorities fit to rule.[99] It is necessary to point out that the *ulema,* or clergy, always had a prominent role within Shi'a Islam and that this institutionalization of religious figures is one of the main differences when compared to Sunni Islam, but the notion of *velayat-e faqih* represents the culmination of its politicization and one of the most striking characteristics of Iranian Shi'a Islamism.[100] With the intention of further justifying this process, Khomeini argued in his book that the figure of the *faqih* is indeed divinely appointed and that he should be the highest authority in both political and religious matters. He does so by reinterpreting the traditional Shi'ite understanding of the Imam's role and states that:

> Today the Jurists of Islam are proofs (of God) to the people, proofs of the Imam. Total obedience is owed to them, since they are specially appointed by the Prophet to be his successors and to rule. The Jurists' authority in government affairs is equal to that of the Prophet and of the Imams, since they all share in common the burden of executive power to apply the divine law.[101]

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[97] ibid.

[98] Khuri, F., "The Ulama: A Comparative Study of Sunni and Shi'a Religious Officials", in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Jul., 1987), p. 293

[99] Bayat, M., "The Iranian Revolution of 1978-79: Fundamentalist or Modern?", in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Winter, 1983), p. 37

[100] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 172

[101] Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini, *Hukumat-iIslami*, (Najaf, 1971), pp. 62-63

By doing so Khomeini concedes supreme authority to the *ulema*, in accordance of the belief that such a figure is necessary to maintain the Islamic government as unspoiled, superior, and a source of inspiration for other countries. However, even if the notion of *velayat-e faqih* has proven to be successful in maintaining stability in Iran since 1979, despite contemporary socio-economic challenges, it needs to be noted that it is Khomeini's account of what Islamism within Shi'a thought is like and not necessarily "original" in its nature, leading to another source of tensions within Islamic political thought. Ayubi highlights the perception that Khomeini's thirst for power led him to heavily manipulate some of the core tenets of Twelver Shi'ism, regulating the notion of "guardianship" of the faith, and consequently shifting it heavily in favour of the *ulema*.[102] For these reasons, there are claims that Khomeini's political thought is to be placed close to the beliefs of Sunni Islamic thinkers such as Mawdudi and Qutb, and to the Sunni notion of Caliphate.[103] Regardless, Iran remains the only available example of a functioning manifestation of Shi'a political thought and it projects a powerful influence on the region's stability, which is why it remains an appropriate point of reference. Nonetheless, when approaching it there is the need to keep in mind that Iran's worldview is very much Khomeini's own, and as always be aware of the numerous manifestations of Islamic political thought, which changes over time.

When looking at the Iranian theocracy it is possible to identify a number of recurring themes that are heavily present in both religious and political life, and can therefore be considered as drivers of the Shi'a version of political Islam. Before examining these it needs to be remembered that just like the Sunni branch of Islam, Shi'ism is political in its origins and history, as it originated from the schisms over leadership between these two different currents. Farid Mirgabari notes that this political connotation was further strengthened by Shah Esmail I's decision to adopt Shi'ism as the state's official religion in 1501, an action that inaugurated the institutional politicization of the faith in Iran.[104] This also meant that from then onwards Shi'ism was closely linked to the

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[102] Ayubi, N., *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, pp. 146-150
[103] ibid.
[104] Mirbaghari, F., "Shi'ism and Iran's Foreign Policy", in *The Muslim World*, Vol. 94, (October 2004), p. 556

country's politics, which led to an increasing degree of cooperation between the clergy and the state.[105]

This aspect is particularly important as the institutionalised role of the clergy is one of Iranian Shi'ism's main characteristics, and a fundamental difference when compared to Sunni Islam. In particular, the clergy played an unprecedented and fundamental role in the development of the events leading up to the 1979 Revolution, and their high level of involvement arguably facilitated the instalment of a Theocracy in its aftermath. The Shi'a clergy acted as a catalyst for political change in 1979, and as representatives of the widespread political dissent enveloping the country at the time.[106] Their opposition to the Shah' tyranny acted as a channel for popular discontent, and demonstrated the revolutionary potential of political Islam.[107] Roy notes that the politicization of Shi'a clergy was not a new phenomenon, but was rooted in its history of cooperation/interference with the Iranian government, as a similar episode happened at the end of the 19th century when the *ulema* protested against the influence of Russian and British forces on the country.[108] Khomeini brought the clergy's politicization to its peak, marking the fundamental difference with Sunni Islam according to which the caliphate's legitimacy lies in the community's consensus rather than in the clergy's authority.[109]

Mirghabari also notes that in Shi'ism the only source of legitimate political behaviour is God, justifying the role of the clergy as fundamental to governance and explaining why it is professed that the Islamic state has to be based upon the application of *shari'a* law.[110] However, there are several other notions that encompass Shi'a political thought and therefore needs to be considered. The first one of these is the notion of *Karbala*, which undeniably has a strong influence on the way in which Shi'ism is

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[105] ibid., pp. 558-559

[106] Ayoob, M., "Two Faces of Political Islam: Iran and Pakistan Compared", in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 19, No. 6 (Jun., 1979), p. 540

[107] ibid.

[108] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 171

[109] Ayoob, M., "Two Faces of Political Islam: Iran and Pakistan Compared", pp. 540-541

[110] Mirbaghari, F., "Shi'ism and Iran's Foreign Policy", p. 559

translated into a system of governance. Originating from the notion that only God has the authority to appoint the Prophet's successor, and that his cousin Ali was the first *Imam*, the narrative of *Karbala* refers back to Ali's son Hussein's assassination on the hand of the Sunni caliph Yazid while he was on his way to Kufa.[111] Hussein's death not only has a strong political connotation but is also is seen as an act of martyrdom in Shi'a Islam and as an unforgivable source of guilt, which is yet to be amended today.

Therefore, the Karbala narrative has a strong influence on Shi'a political thought, as it is directly linked to the notion of *mustakbarin* vs*. mustazeifin*, oppressors vs. oppressed. This legacy of guilt in fact translates into a duty to support the oppressed Muslim population in the world that is even enshrined in Article 3.16 of the Iranian constitution, and that therefore explains Iran's explicit support for "controversial" Islamist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah.[112] Moreover this narrative also divides the world into two distinct categories, where Western superpowers and Israel are perceived as the oppressors and most of the "third world"/Muslim countries are the oppressed.[113] Such a legacy not only manifests itself in the Iranian commitment to support oppressed Muslim populations, regardless of the branch of Islam to which they adhere, but is also present in the notion of Pan-Islamism and commitment to export the revolution that have been characteristic of Shi'a political thought since 1979.

From what has been said, it is now clear that Shi'a political thought is historically influential and needs to be considered when striving to get a complete sense of Political Islam. It can be argued that it was the 1979 Revolution and its aftermath that really brought its relevance to light, and Shi'ism influence has not decreased since. While the instalment of a theocracy run by clerics and Islamic jurists underlines some of the major differences between Shi'a and Sunni political thought, there are some narratives that are common to both forms of Political Islam. Even if it was not strictly

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[111] Blanchard, C., "Islam: Sunnis and Shi'ites", p. 1

[112] Islamic Republic of Iran, Constitution, http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/constitution.html

[113] Hunter, S., "Iran and the spread of Revolutionary Islam", p. 734

Islamic in its origins, the 1979 Revolution is now read as an Iranian/Shi'a effort to use Islam as a political weapon to topple an unjust socio-economic political order, and an element of Islamic political thought that can be directly related to its Sunni manifestations. Moreover, the anti-monarchical and anti-Western drive of Khomeini's "regency of the jurists" touches on some themes that were core to the Egyptian MB when created and recurrent in both Mawdudi and al Banna's works. In addition, Islamist groups belonging to either manifestations of the Islamic faith share a similar, inherent relationship with modernity, which in turn shapes their policies and behaviour.

Moreover, Iran and its geopolitics have become increasingly fundamental to the study of the region. The historical rivalry between the US and the Islamic Republic has been further reinforced by Bush's inclusion of Iran in the Axis of Evil, with the former U.S. President stating that "(Iran) aggressively pursues these weapons (of mass destruction) and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom."[114] It follows that, in the aftermath of 9/11, international perceptions of Iran's status in the region increasingly focused on its geopolitical role, the importance of which is further accentuated by the Republic's historical rivalry with both Iraq and Saudi Arabia. This rivalry is of increased international significance today, especially when taking into consideration the regional implications of Iran's support of the Assad regime, its relationship with Hizballah, and its ideological and military opposition to Daesh. To conclude, the study of Iran's own practice of Islamism is a worthwhile and necessary exercise as the Republic is more involved than ever in the geopolitics of the region, meaning that its foreign policies come with both practical and ideological consequences.

1.7 The "Islamic Threat" and Western Perceptions

It is now clear that many of the tensions and conflicting narratives complicating the understanding of Political Islam arise within the different origins and manifestations

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[114] BBC News, "Full Text: State of the Union Address", (January 2002)
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1790537.stm

of the doctrine themselves. However, many of the prejudices surrounding this particular ideology come from Western misunderstandings of its core principles and generalisation of the Muslim identity. Coupled with the view that Islam is an inherently violent religion, over the years these have led to the construction of the "Islamic Threat" and to the misinterpretation of wider Islamic political thought. This trend intensified in the aftermath of 9/11 and acted as a source of legitimacy for the US-led War on Terror, but it lives on today and often constitutes the perspective from which many in the Western world look at the Arab Awakenings and their implications. This was clearly demonstrated by the international preoccupation originated by Mohamed Morsi's elections, while Al Sisi's authoritarian ways are being left largely unscrutinised.

Despite its diversity, Islamism is still largely held to be a homogeneous ideology, a view that consequently shapes the foreign policies and approaches to the region of many Western states, including the UK. As Beverly Milton-Edwards notes in her work "Islam and Politics in the Contemporary World", the Western widespread understanding of contemporary Islam is inherently political in the sense that the public is encouraged to view the Muslim "other" as "a challenge to what they in the West have and which the Muslims want to do away with and replace with their own divinely inspired order".[115] It follows that Western perceptions of Islam are often informed by prejudice, which create tensions that are exacerbated by the media portrayal of the Islamic faith as associated to fanaticism, violence, and terror, fitting a predominant political agenda arguing for the increasing securitization of the faith and of its followers. Such perceptions are based on the belief that "Islamic politics represents a rigid pattern of activity undertaken by a bitter religious group with a major grudge against the rest of the world".[116] However, there is the need to move away from the monolithic understanding of all politics associated with Islam as similar in its roots and manifestations. Rather, as Eickleman and Piscatori state, Islamic manifestations of politics are as multifaceted and heterogeneous as any liberal-democratic ones, and

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[115] Milton-Edwards, B., *Islam and Politics in the Contemporary World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), p. 2
[116] ibid., p. 3

therefore highlight the fact that "the need to place Muslim Politics into multiple and shifting contexts then becomes apparent".[117]

After the rise of Da'esh in 2014, negative assumptions coming from the West continue to surround the doctrine of Political Islam. Claims of its incompatibility with democracy and liberal institutions, its alleged tendencies towards authoritarianism, terrorism, and religious propaganda still characterise the general understanding of this ideology, which as said before is extremely diverse and heterogeneous. It should be clear that attempting to compare Western institutions to the ones actually in place in many Middle Eastern countries is a futile process, as is pushing for the institution of a "Western" kind of democracy, as cultural and historical differences make for a diverse mode of governance. Regardless, the lack of "purely" democratic institutions is still an argument put forward by certain scholars and analysts to lessen the validity of liberal Islamic practices, and to assert the superiority of the West. However, there is a less radical trend within the Western literature that argues for a more open-minded approach towards Political Islam, and that openly challenges discrimination and prejudice. The first one of these scholars was Fred Halliday, who during the course of his career wrote expansively on the Middle East and on Political Islam in particular.

Applying Historical Sociology to the study of International Relations in the region, Halliday draws a fundamental difference between Islam as a religious faith and Islam as a social and political force, and also challenges the binary representation of the "West vs. Islam".[118] Halliday recognises Islamism as a modern phenomenon, and also acknowledges the fact that the call for Political Islam originated as a response to issues of a socio-political nature, therefore accounting for diversity in its application and practice.[119] By doing so he also challenges the portrayal of Islamism as a (dangerous) stateless force, as Islamism's political nature ties it to the nation state, and its forms are defined by the issues that society in a particular nation is facing.[120] It follows that

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[117] Eickleman, D., Piscatori, J., *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20

[118] Halliday, F., *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 2

[119] ibid., pp. 118-119

[120] ibid.

rather than being directly addressed against foreign domination and powers, as the "Islamic threat" argument tries to argue, contemporary Political Islam is rather concerned with the very society and government it finds itself in, something that the unravelling of the Arab Awakenings clearly demonstrate. Moreover, in the demonization and portrayal of Islamism as a threatening force Halliday recognises the Western search for a "necessary enemy", for a binary opposition system that was needed more than ever after the events of 9/11.[121] Such arguments delegitimise the misunderstanding and generalisation towards Political Islam typical of the Western view, which while occasionally based on real events, is a construction more than everything else.

John Esposito is another scholar coming from a Western perspective who refutes the portrayal of Political Islam as the manifestation of a faith that is inherently linked to fanaticism, religious extremism, and violence. He argues that, because of the tendency to equate violence and terrorism to Political Islam, the West is also failing to grasp the wide variety of practices and the depth of Islamism, which result in crippling misinterpretations and excessive fear.[122] Esposito understands the origins of modern Political Islam as a response against foreign secular narratives, and the development of both Islamist groups and Shi'a clerics as agents of opposition and change.[123] He also underlines the differences in origin, application and manifestations of Political Islams depending on the context and on the groups who identify as followers of such ideology, and warns against the practice of generalization of this diverse and comprehensive doctrine. Political Islam, as the Islamic faith, is extremely comprehensive in its scope and message, as proven by the conception of religion being fundamental for both society and politics, but the secularised West is holding on to its militarised versions and failing to go beyond it.[124]

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[121] ibid., p. 113

[122] Esposito, J., *The Islamic Threat: Myth of Reality?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 257

[123] Esposito, J., "Political Islam and the West", p. 50

[124] ibid.

The case of the Arab Awakenings and of Egypt in particular also shows that Islamism is far from being widely accepted and supported by Arab Muslims, but rather demonstrates that Political Islam is struggling to rise up to the standards set up by its founding fathers. Esposito argues that this is the case because Islamic Politics, just like its secular counterpart, is strongly influenced by internal struggles, shifting ideologies, and local issues; all elements that reinforce its political legitimacy as opposed to the misinterpretations that compare it with radical movements.[125] Esposito's works offers an innovative take on Edward's Said account of Orientalism. This view goes beyond the biases of the past and claims that a new, revolutionized form of Orientalism is flourishing today: it is found in the practice of associating Islamism with uniquely violent and radical activities, and in the failure of recognising that a small radicalised minority does not stand for the huge majority of Muslims who are committed to a "mainstream" and moderate expression of their faith.[126]

Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori also belong to this trend within the literature covering Political Islam, as they go back to the roots of modern Political Islam rather that simply analysing the much feared Islamic Revivalism characteristic of the 1970s. They state that "Muslim Politics involves the competition and contest over both the interpretation of symbols and control of the institutions, formal and informal, that produce and sustain them".[127] By doing so Eickelman and Piscatori underline the dynamism and fluidity of Islamic societies, once again confirmed by the events of 2011, and the diversity and relevance of Political *Islams*. They recognize the fundamental contribution that Islamism made to the development of national identity in the wider Arab World, which makes it a legitimate and cultural-specific political force.[128] The fluidity and ever-evolving status that they attribute to Islamic Politics directly challenges the mainstream assumptions regarding its allegedly authoritarian nature, as the way in which the Muslim population thinks about politics is malleable, therefore not excluding the possibility of a liberal result.

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[125] Esposito, J., *The Islamic Threat: Myth of Reality?*, pp. 268-269
[126] ibid.*, p. 261
[127] Eickelman, D., Piscatori, J., *Muslim Politics*, p. 5
[128] ibid.*, p. 12

1.8 Oliver Roy and "Failure"

The French scholar Oliver Roy offers a different perspective on contemporary Political Islam, which particularly gained international traction and recognition in the 1990s, shaping both foreign policies and public perceptions. This thesis will focus on his understanding of Political Islam as having ultimately failed as an ideology, as the MB's deposition was perceived by many as a proof of its demise. While a more in-depth assessment of Roy's argument will be provided in Chapter 5, it is worth initially engaging with his approach, and set out exactly what he means by "failure", to then gain a working definition of the term.

First of all, Roy understands Political Islam as a monolithic phenomenon, failing to acknowledge the wide diversity of practices and understandings that fall under this label. However, he draws a distinction between contemporary Islamism and the "traditional" view of the *ulamas* (clergy), arguing that while Islamists indeed argue for a return to traditional forms of Islam, they mean to do that in an almost "secular" way.[129] He argues that modern Political Islam in its original form was and is guided by scholars and intellectuals that identify themselves as "religious thinkers", rather than by exponents of the clergy, therefore drawing a clear difference between moderate Political Islam and its radicalised forms, which are usually "driven by self-nominated *Imams*".[130]

What Roy means by that is that there is a distinction between "Islamism" as such and "neofundamentalism", with the former referring to the drive for political power, and the latter meaning a much narrower focus on the family and the mosque instead. Roy goes further by arguing that because of misinterpretations of the original thought and subsequent radicalization, Islamism has turned into neo-radicalism, the followers of which lack any form of political or economic program and are therefore heavily authoritarian in their thought.[131] It is this degenerated form of Islamism instigated by the thought of Sayyid Qutb that gave birth to radical groups such as Al Qaeda that, by

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[129] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 36
[130] ibid.
[131] ibid., pp. 51-55

claiming to be Islamist, contribute to the stigmas and prejudices surrounding Political Islam.

Subsequently, Roy argues that because of this neo-fundamentalist trend Political Islam is not revolutionary anymore, and that its ideology has failed since it has proven incapable of providing the basis to build a new society or even a viable alternative to Western democracy.[132] According to his position, "Aside from the Iranian Revolution, Islamism has not significantly altered the political landscape of the Middle East. Political Islam does not pass the test of power".[133] In essence, at the time of writing, Roy believed that Islamist movements were running out of "revolutionary steam", and that they would either become normal political parties or lead to individualistic neo-fundamentalism. In conclusion, he predicted that Islamists would disappear from the political arena, and solely focus on social and ethical issues rather than on the creation of an Islamic State.[134]

Roy therefore understands "failure" as being primarily intellectual, by saying that "Islamism is a failure historically: neither in Iran or in liberated Afghanistan has a new society been established. The failure of Islamism does not mean that parties such as the Algerian ISF will not achieve power, but only that those parties will not invent a new society."[135] Ultimately, reflecting on the Egyptian context in 2013 after Morsi's removal by the military-led *coup d'etat*, Roy stated that "The failure of Political Islam is not the political failure of the Islamists; it is the collapse of Islamism as a political ideology"[136], claiming that Islamism has lost its credibility as a champion of change. While undeniably interesting, this argument is also very provoking, as many have seen its confirmation in the removal of president Morsi in July 2013.

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[132] Roy, O., "Islamism's Failure, Islamists' Future", in *OpenDemocracy*, (30 October 2006), http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/islamism_4043.jsp

[133] ibid., p. ix

[134] Steele, J., "Globalised Islam", in *The Guardian* (November 2004) https://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/nov/13/highereducation.news

[135] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. ix

[136] Roy, O., "There Will be no Islamist Revolution", in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (January 2013), p. 16

1.9 Failure and Destitution compared

The notion of political "failure" is indeed an amorphous one, yet it is one that is central to this thesis. A working definition and understanding of the term are therefore necessary at this point to set up a robust analytical framework, which will then drive the research at the core of this work. To start with, for what has been said above, it is clear that Roy understands "failure" as being primarily an intellectual and ideological one, embodied by the incapability of Islamism of being an "actor of change". According to Roy and to those who share his opinions, then, there seem to be some core criteria that can be applied to demonstrate that Political Islam has historically failed to fulfil its goals in the region, and particularly after the Arab Springs. The first one of these criteria would be the understanding of "failure" as an intellectual one, namely the fact that Islamist groups have long ceased to be revolutionary in both their ideology and their means, and would therefore solely focus on the mosque or employ secular approaches to politics. The second criterion is the incompatibility of Islam and democratic rule, which could be demonstrated by the MB's removal in July 2013, after only 12 months in power. This goes hand in hand with the idea that Islamism has "failed" in the sense that it is incapable to lawfully govern. Overall, these all lead to the idea that Political Islam as a whole ideology "does not pass the test of power".

More specifically, this is what is meant from now on when referring to "failure" throughout the thesis. Roy's understanding of the term is the one the arguments and analysis in this thesis are built upon, or against, as the ultimate conclusion is that this is not an understanding that satisfactorily describes the end of the MB's rule or the current state of Islamist groups across the region. Therefore, the thesis will make the argument that, given what Roy meant by "failure", it would be more accurate to refer to what happened to the MB in 2013 as a "destitution", in order to avoid misunderstandings and misleading assumptions about the general state of Islamism as a whole.

There are several reasons why the work presented in this thesis contests Roy's account of "failure", which will be ultimately unpacked in Chapter 5. For now, it needs to be said that while still recognising the validity and utility of Roy's argument, the criteria

that he uses to identify failure do not stand when compared to the recent history of the region. Firstly, throughout this chapter it has been argued that there is not such a thing as a monolithic Political Islam, but rather there are many Political Islams, an argument that makes Roy's claim inaccurate and too general in its assumptions. This consequently challenges the idea that Islamism has intellectually failed to be revolutionary and an "actor of change". One of the most influential Islamist groups in the region, the Egyptian MB, has specifically never claimed to be a revolutionary group, but an evolutionary one that never aimed at creating a new society, but rather at reforming the current one. In addition, the MB can not be classified as a neo-fundamentalist Islamic group, and its perceived "failure" can be attributed to both external and internal factors. On the contrary, Da'esh has infamously demonstrated that certain forms of Islamism are indeed still capable of bringing about radical change and of subverting the region's status quo, be it for the better of for the worst. Both of these groups embody current manifestation of Political Islam, but differ widely in their means and aims.

Similarly, when it comes to the incompatibility of Political Islam and democratic rule, this is also a criterion that is not applicable to the recent regional order. The case of the Islamic Republic of Iran examined earlier is proof of the fact that certain manifestations of Islamism are indeed compatible and can co-exist with democratic structures. In the case of the MB, this thesis will argue that its removal and destitution were due to domestic and internal factors, which are not necessarily attributable to its being an Islamist organisation. This is the case as, particularly in the Egyptian context, any post-Mubarak government was set to face a unique set of challenges independently from its ideological affiliations or political composition. Egypt's domestic conditions and the country's legacy of authoritarian rule meant that the post-2011 transitional period was marked by an unprecedented political vacuum, which facilitated the split between actors that had been a part of the country's politics for decades and those that were just coming to be as a result of the Uprisings. Further challenges included the task of re-writing the country's constitution, the need to challenge wide-spread corruption, and to tackle the remnants of the deep state.

This last challenge in particular was the one dominating the transitional period. During the course of the decades preceding the events of 2011 the Armed Forces had grown increasingly embedded into Egyptian politics, a condition that reached its peak during the Mubarak government. This is also why, retrospectively, it would be possible for some to look back at the events of 2011 and argue that whichever party took over the country's transition would have been set up to be removed from the very start. However, in order to avoid pre-conceptions, this is a matter that has been raised with all interviewees, whose accounts will be examined further later on.

It is therefore debatable whether Islamism is indeed a failed ideology because of its alleged "radicalization", as some of its more original and moderate forms arguably need the time to adapt to modern institutions before being able to provide legitimate governance. Furthermore, by looking at historical manifestations of Political Islam it can be argued that it is a resilient phenomenon, which despite often challenging historical circumstances managed to adapt itself and to keep expanding to new areas. There are also some perceived anachronisms within both certain interpretations of Political Islam and the way in which Islamist movements are analysed in relation to modernity, which call for a more case-specific examination. Especially when considering recent developments, it is clear that despite President Morsi's removal various Islamist projects of different natures are still evolving and developing in many parts of the region, and that the Iranian theocracy is still functional and standing, further challenging Roy's argument.

To conclude, something else that needs to be taken into consideration when advancing such claim is the context in which the "failure" is perceived, as temporal, national and societal factors could impact significantly on success's rates and indicators, regardless of ideological affiliations. In summary, while the MB has undeniably failed to keep its promises and to legitimately govern, it has done so because of domestic and internal factors that are not directly caused by its affiliation to a particular understanding of Political Islam. While the series of events that led to the July 2013 *coup* are the manifestation of a political failure nonetheless, in the

broader sense of the term, they are not so in Roy's understanding and it and of its implications.

1.10 Post Islamism

Roy also suggests that in the aftermath of the Arab Springs[137] and in the midst of what has been defined as an "Islamist Winter", groups such as the MB might be moving towards "Post Islamism". Developed by Bayat in 1995 Post Islamism was based on the analysis of the Iranian experience, but has gained increasing traction during the past few years, which is why it is worth examining here. Contrary to Roy, Bayat draws a distinction between *reformist* Islamist groups, who seek to gradually establish an Islamic state within pre-existing constitutional frameworks, and *revolutionary/militant* ones, known to resort to violence, and successfully underlines their differences in terms of aims, strategies, and impacts.[138] Bayat begins from the assumption that *reformist* Islamists' desire to hold state power derives from the Quranic principle of "command right, forbid wrong", despite the lack of legal definition of these two terms.[139] Regardless, he argues that Islamists desire to control state power not only because it would ensure their rule, but also because they understand the state as being the most powerful and efficient institution that is able to enforce "good" and eradicate "evil" within Muslim Societies.[140]

Following from this, Bayat stipulates Post Islamism (PI) as both a condition and a project, and as a trend that has gradually intensified since the early 1990s. In the "condition" understanding, Bayat refers to PI as both a political and social condition where the appeal and legitimacy of Islamism have been exhausted, following a phase of experimentation, meaning that even its most vocal advocates see its practical flaws. Consequently, in the process of attempting to establish and institutionalise their rule, Islamists have become aware of the anomalies of their own discourse, and of the fact

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[137] This thesis refers to the 2011 popular uprisings as the Arab *Springs*. It uses a plural connotation in order to recognize the protests' diversity in aims, strategies, and contexts.

[138] Bayat. A., (ed.), *Post Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 5

[139] ibid.

[140] ibid.

that "pragmatic attempts to maintain the system would reinforce the abandonment of certain of its underlying principles".[141] In turn, Islamism would be compelled to reinvent itself, but do so at the very high qualitative and ideological cost that Bayat recognises in the transformation of religious and political discourse that took place in Iran in the 1990s.

Therefore, Bayat proposes the understanding of PI as a "project", or as a conscious attempt to fuse religiosity and rights, Islam and liberty, and to conceptualise the rationale of Islamism in the social, political, and intellectual domains.[142] He argues that "whereas Islamism is defined by the fusion of religion and responsibility, Post Islamism empathises religiosity and rights. Yet, while it favours a civil and nonreligious state, it accords an active role for religion in the public sphere".[143] According to his analysis, this is a trend that, originating in Iran in the 1990s, has been consistently spreading across Muslim countries over the past few decades, and is therefore leading to a radical shift in the way in which Islamism is both understood and applied. However, while Bayat's analysis is compelling, it is still too generalist in that it seeks to be applied to Islamic movements as a whole, as being a trend that has undoubtedly come out of the Arab Springs too. Rather, as will become clear in the following chapters, even if one subscribes to Bayat's notion of Post-Islamism, it would be hard to claim that such a change and self-analysis has taken place in Egypt. Instead, one could say that it is the very lack of thereof that would eventually lead to the downfall of the FJP, making PI an interesting concept, but a too generalised one nonetheless.

1.11 Emerging Trends: Islamist Winters VS Islamic Awakening

Following the aftermath of the Arab Springs, there are two emerging schools of thought that focus on Political Islam and on the wider implications of the MB's deposition in 2013. There are some, such as Tarek Osman and Quinn Mecham, who argue that Islamist groups are growing authoritarian in the post-2011 regional context, which has strengthened the binary between Arab secularism and Islamism. Others,

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[141] ibid., p. 8

[142] ibid.

[143] ibid.

such as Muqtedar Khan, instead understand the current regional (dis)order as a chance for moderate Islamist groups to self-reflect and re-invent themselves in the light of new regional needs and circumstances. With these new trends in the literature still being in the making, this thesis makes a considerable contribution to the study of the subject as it positions itself at the vanguard of these debates. Regardless of which of these trends one subscribes to, the understanding of Political Islam as a multifaceted and heterogeneous ideology is still necessary to make sense of the ideological and geopolitical trends currently enveloping the region.

Quinn Mecham argues that there are four main trends that characterise Islamism as a whole in the aftermath of the Arab Springs. These are the removal and repression of the MB, the rise of Islamist militia-based state building embodied by Da'esh, increasing sectarianism and proxy wars, and Islamists' increased caution in participating in participatory politics and in directly challenging their governments.[144] He believes that the MB's deposition came with enormous consequences for Islamist groups competing in politics, and predicts that exclusion and perceptions of injustice will eventually lead to the group's resort to militancy.[145] This has been followed by the rise of a "new model" for Islamism, exemplified by Da'esh, which is that of militant Islamist groups stepping in to fill the void left by failing states. He argues that these groups, while rejecting the Westphalian system, still borrow many of the tools of modern state systems and are challenging international norms by seeking to establish a new political order.[146]

This new political order is one that is fostering the rise of sectarian ideologies and proxy conflicts in places like Syria, mostly along Sunni-Shiite lines, as it is encapsulated by the growing geopolitical rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia and by its manifestation in contested spaces such as Syria and Iraq. In Mecham's view, this will lead to militant Islamist groups across the region being considerably more well-

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[144] Mechan, Q., "The evolution of Islamism since the Arab Uprisings", in *The Washington Post*, (October 2014) https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/24/the-evolution-of-islamism-since-the-arab-uprisings/?utm_term=.d1b8cc86c631
[145] ibid.
[146] ibid.

funded, diverse, and sectarian in their ideology than before the Arab Springs, in a trend that is already leading to a deep polarization between these groups that will take years to reverse.[147] Lastly, these trends have also contributed to the shaping of a regional political environment that actively discourages non-militant Islamist groups from directly engaging in politics, for the fear of being targeted and repressed. This is in direct opposition to the growth in political space and participation fostered by the Arab Springs, and is instead leading back to a pre-2011 deeply negative political space.

Tarek Osman holds a similarly negative understanding, and states that the failure to take power during the Arab Springs "has led not to 'soul-searching'" in major Islamist groups about what went wrong, but instead to "antagonism and fiery anger" and a thirst for revenge. Partisans of political Islam see themselves as victims of an injustice whose perpetrators are not just "individual conspirators but entire social groups".[148] He predicts that there will soon have to be a fight to save the soul of Islamism, meaning that, as Salafist jihadist groups grow in numbers and popularity, non-militant Islamist groups and thinkers will have to defend the idea of Political Islam against the accusation of being equated with violence and terror.[149] According to Osman, this will include a battle over what it means to be an Islamist. However, the research conducted by this thesis demonstrates that this is not necessarily the case, and that the future of Islamism does not necessarily call for a battle between Mohamed Abdou and Sayyid Qutb, according to a binary between moderate and radical Islamism. Rather, the current regional circumstance should be thought of as an opportunity for self reflection and reformation, in the lights of changing needs and circumstances, which is a process that has always been at the core of non-militant Political Islam and that has allowed the doctrine to grow and thrive in all its different manifestations

Muqtedar Khan belongs to the second trend within the literature on contemporary forms of Islamism, and he notes that the MB's inability to provide good governance

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[147] Osman, T., *Islamism: what it means for the Middle East and the World*, (New Haven: Yale University press, 2016)
p. 244
[148] ibid.
[149] ibid., p. 256

and unite Egyptian society under a common purpose does not directly imply that Political Islam and democracy are incompatible.[150] Similarly, the fact that the organization is widely considered one of the region's oldest and most influential Islamist groups does not mean that the MB has a monopoly on Political Islam, or that its perceived failure is also the failure of Islamic values.[151] In fact, the counter-revolution and the country's elites were brought together by their shared anger over the Brotherhood's perceived attempt to consolidate their power while alienating those who had supported them during the elections. Therefore, the popular protests that escalated in a *coup d'etat* were not the rejection of Political Islam or of democracy, they were simply a rejection of the MB's rule.

In addition, the fact that other Islamist groups, such as the Salafist al Nour Party, are still active and engaged with the country's politics if a further testimony that Egypt has not given up on Islamism, it has simply let go of the Brotherhood. Similarly, other Islamists groups around the region have not been discouraged by the MB's deposition, on the contrary, the appetite for Islam in the public and civil spheres is continuously shifting forms, looking for new ways to adapt to contemporary challenges. Khan predicts that the continuous regional and international battle against the "Islamic Threat" will do nothing but strengthen these groups' sense of victimhood, which will in turn push them to thrive and develop.[152]

To conclude, it is now clear that the history of both Political Islam and of the MB in particular is characterised by strong contradictions and lack of continuity, which complicates attempts to profile the influence and role of the organisation. Its history has never been static, but is rather characterised by a constant state of flux, internal contradictions, and changes in the social composition of the organisation. Such heritage of changes in strategies and narratives, and lack of unity in both composition

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[150] Khan, M., "Islam, Democracy and Islamism after the Counterrevolution in Egypt", in *Middle East Policy Council*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (Spring 2014) http://mepc.org/islam-democracy-and-islamism-after-counterrevolution-egypt

[151] Feldman, N., "Don't Blame Islam for the Failure of Egypt's Democracy" in *Bloomberg View*, (July 2013) https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2013-07-05/don-t-blame-islam-for-the-failure-of-egypt-s-democracy

[152] Khan, M., "Islam, Democracy and Islamism after the Counterrevolution in Egypt"

and aims, is prominent today and is arguably one of the causes of the Brotherhood's political failure, and will therefore be carefully analysed throughout the course of this thesis. However, over all the internal schism and competing narratives, it needs to be noted that there has been an historical continuity in the organisation's commitment to (Political) Islam as an ultimate aim, and to the Islamic faith as a unifying factor.

1.12 Methodology

In order to facilitate our understanding of the contemporary challenges faced by Political Islam in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the thesis will specifically look at the case study of the MB government in Egypt. The thesis does so by relying on qualitative research that is based on both primary and secondary sources, adding to the existing literature on the topic with data gained through interviews with both Egyptian Secular Activists and members/supporters of the MB. Indeed, two meaningful contributions that this thesis make are the presentation of the MB's account of what happened during the FJP's year in power, gained though interviews with some of its prominent members, and the identification of four domestic factors, unrelated to ideological matters, which led to the July 2013 coup. That is the case as, given the recent nature of the events examined, the implications of the MB's deposition for the broader understanding of Political Islam have been left largely unassessed.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, and the nature of the current military regime in Egypt, there are several events that led to the MB being voted into power that have been left largely un-investigated, but are nonetheless key to the understanding of what happened during the post-2011 transitional period. The initial interview questions detailed below have been designed to specifically address these gaps, and have been posed to both secular activists and MB members/supporters, inevitably evolving over time as new information was gathered, as can be seen on the transcripts. By interviewing both secular activists and MB members, this thesis seeks to provide a tool to assess perceptions and experiences that are usually not analysed together in the current narrative. By doing so, another original contribution of this thesis is the

space given to the MB account of events that, while it is somewhat present in the Arabic media, is largely missing from the English equivalent. The thesis has attempted to give equal space to activists and MB members and supporters, in order to put forward balanced data that can therefore be used to add and further understand the factors that led to the FJP's toppling in 2013, and its wider implications for the understanding of Political Islam. The interviews conducted for the scope of this research were structured around these main nine questions:

1. The MB (in particular some of its factions) have been perceived as having played a fundamental strategic and organizational role during the 2011 uprisings. What is your perception of this?

2. How relevant were the MB internal schisms (especially those between the conservative VS the reformist wings) in the post-2011 context? Do you think that they negatively impacted on the MB's direct engagement with politics?

3. In your opinion, what were the main factors that led to the parliamentary and presidential victory of the FJP in the post-2011 context?

4. Many observers argued that the MB failed to maintain power as it was not revolutionary enough. Do you agree with this statement/why?

5. Do you think that the creation of the FJP went against the MB's nature as a grassroots organisation, or was it a necessary step to take at the time?

6. Do you think that the MB "hijacked" the post-2011 emerging political order for its own advantages?

7. What do you perceive to be the main gap between ideology and practice looking at the experience of the MB in the post-2011 context?

8. What do you think went wrong under Morsi's rule?

9. In your opinion, does the MB's experience mean that we are witnessing the "failure" of Islamism, or are we rather witnessing its transformation and adaptation to contemporary times? (i.e. Post-Islamism)

As one can imagine, there are extreme difficulties that arise from the study of an organization that was proscribed as a "terrorist" actor both domestically and

internationally.[153] Such difficulties are tied to the sensitivity of the topic analysed and therefore translate into issues of access and consequently, the potential participants' willingness to be interviewed and to share their experiences. The proscription of the MB and the subsequent sensitivity of the topic also translates into considerable ethical concerns for the safety of both the researcher and the participants, hence why fieldwork has taken place in the UK, which has historically offered asylum to both MBs and secular activists therefore making primary research achievable, and via Skype. However, there were several ethical and security challenges that limited the scope of primary research that could be conducted towards this thesis. These include:

- The current political climate in Egypt.
- The country's treatment of journalists and researchers (as embodied by the case of Giulio Regeni).
- The UK government stance towards the Muslim Brotherhood and Political Islam more broadly.
- The process of obtaining ethical approval from the University's Ethical Committee.
- Issues surrounding the security of both the researcher and the interviewees.

After being ousted from power in July 2013, the MB was officially proscribed as a terrorist organisation in Egypt, causing its members to suffer unprecedented persecution and repression.[154] The authoritarian nature of the Al Sisi regime means that the country is currently in the midst of its worst Human Rights crisis so far, with highly restrictive association laws limiting the possibility for opposition, while the silencing and imprisonment of native and international journalists has become common practice.[155] The disappearance, torture and murder of Italian doctoral researcher Giulio Regeni made it clear that Egypt is not safe for academics either, stressing further the incompatibility between the current political climate and primary research. In addition, several countries followed Egypt's lead in proscribing the MB as

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[153] The Guardian, "Egypt Declares Muslim Brotherhood a Terrorist Group", in *The Guardian*, (December 2013) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/25/egypt-declares-muslim-brotherhood-terrorist-group
[154] ibid.
[155] Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: consolidating repression under al Sisi"

a terrorist organisation, therefore limiting the scope for research and negatively influencing the understanding of both the organisation and of Political Islam more broadly. These include Kazakhstan, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Russia, with the Trump administration recently launching an investigation aimed at declaring the MB a terrorist group, and consequently subjecting it to US sanctions, revealing a worrying international trend.[156]

While the UK has not officially proscribed the group, the "Muslim Brotherhood Review" published in December 2015 revealed some conclusions that appear to have been largely influenced by this international trend, such as "there is little evidence that the experience of power in Egypt has caused a rethinking in the Muslim Brotherhood of its ideology or conduct. UK official engagement with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood produced no discernible change in their thinking. Indeed even by mid 2014 statements from Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood-linked media platforms seem to have deliberately incited violence" and "aspects of Muslim Brotherhood ideology and tactics, in this country and overseas, are contrary to our values and have been contrary to our national interests and our national security".[157] These findings have been challenged to some degree by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review", published in November 2016 [158], but little has changed in the UK's attitude towards the group.

This meant that obtaining Ethical Approval to conduct interviews from the Lancaster University Ethical Committee proved to be a rather lengthy process, ultimately limiting the scope of primary research to the UK. Given the contemporary political nature of this research, the main concerns were the safety of both the interviewer and the interviewees, meaning that anonymity has been applied in all but one case, where the interviewee's public engagement and willingness to be identified have been taken into

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[156] Hosenball, M., "Trump administration debates designating Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist group"

[157] "Return to an Address of the Honourable the House of Commons", (17 December 2015), in Muslim Brotherhood Review: Main Findings.

[158] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review"

account after careful consideration. The anonymity of all other participants is ensured by the meticulous selection of the data presented throughout this thesis, meaning the omission of particular life experiences, mentions of backgrounds, and so on, aimed at preventing the identification of interviewees by external parties. To this aim, and in line with the directions given by the Lancaster University's Ethics Committee, transcripts will not be made accessible to further protect the interviewees' identity.

Furthermore, there are other limitations that come with the gathering of primary data from a geographically restricted area and relatively small number of participants. These are the possibility of gaining a biased or at least only partial version of events, to give more relevance to one group of interviewees over the other, or to report claims that are hard to verify fully. These potential shortcomings have been addressed by choosing to interview a balanced number of participants from each side in order to avoid biases when possible, and by cross referencing all data gained with other primary sources to verify their factuality. These are interviews gained and published by other authors, public statements, news sources, media publications, and official documents such as texts of Constitutional Decrees, political manifestoes, legislations, and Constitutions.

1.13 Conceptual Approach: Historical Sociology

This thesis relies on a specific understanding of Historical Sociology (HS) as the main theoretical framework supporting the research conducted for the scope of this thesis. While HS is not a new approach, few have applied it to the study of the ways in which a group such as the MB can shape the state within which it exists and acts. In particular, HS will be used to address questions and concepts such as the relationship between domestic factors and state institutions, legitimacy originating from non-state actors, and the interconnectedness of religious ideology and governance. Therefore, in order to understand how HS fits with the purpose of this research, it is first necessary to look at the development of HS as a multifaceted discipline, and to examine the ways in which it could successfully be applied to the study of International Relations (IR), and in particular to the analysis of the state.

This thesis relies on the works of Max Weber and on his development of what is now called "Comparative Historical Sociology" to provide an original lens through which analyse the ways in which domestic factors influence change both within and outside the state.[159] It does so in conjunction with Fred Halliday's contribution to the field, as he was the first to argue in favour of the application of HS to the study of geopolitics and IR in the MENA region.[160] In particular, this research employs HS as it moves away from the Realist and traditional understanding of "Islam" or the "Arab mind" as explanatory elements of the region's geopolitics, but rather focuses on how institutions of both political and socio/religious power are established and maintained, recognising states, ideologies and societies as the core components of political and social order.[161] Therefore, it is most suited to the study of how the MB's political evolution has historically shaped the country's institutions, civil society, and politics.

Originating within the field of Sociology itself, and particularly driven by the works of Karl Marx and Max Weber, HS asserted itself as a discipline that could be applied to the study of IR at the beginning of the 20th century, in what is now called the "first wave" of HS. Understood as a broad discipline, HS is not a mere sociological study of the past, but rather focuses on how societies develop through history in order to explain the structures of contemporary societies. While these structures are often regarded as being natural, HS argues that they are instead shaped by complex social processes, and that their origins and development ought to be analysed in order to understand the ways in which they in turn shape institutions, organizations, and societies themselves.[162] Following from this, contemporary HS focuses on how the state has developed through the analysis of the relations between states, classes, economics and political systems.[163] However, HS is not a unitary discipline. Charles Tilly notes that it can be understood as developing in four different directions, these

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[159] Kalberg, S., *Max Weber's Comparative Historical Sociology: and Interpretation and Critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994)

[160] Halliday, F., *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*

[161] ibid., p. 36

[162] Tilly, C., "Historical Sociology", in *International Encyclopaedia of the Behavioural and Social Sciences*, Vol. 10, (2001), 6753–6757

[163] Clemens, E., "Toward a Historicized Sociology: Theorizing Events, Processes, and Emergence", in *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 33, (2007), p. 527

being: social criticism, pattern identification, scope extension, and process analysis.[164] While these are all legitimate manifestations of historical sociological analyses, they differ widely in aims, procedures, and results.

Similarly, HS can also be seen as being composed of three main historical waves. The first wave, relying on the works of Karl Marx and Max Weber, aimed to understand the processes by which social structures and actors originated and then transformed during the transition from feudal societies to "modern" social life.[165] Modernity and the motors of social change are understood differently by thinkers included in this wave, varying from Marx's analysis of the rise of capitalism and class-structured actors to the formation of the "disciplined bourgeois subject and his confinement in the iron cage of rationalized collective life" theorised by Weber.[166] While this undeniably created a diverse intellectual landscape, these theorists still converged on a common, fundamentally historical project.

The second wave of HS arose in the 1960s-70s and, while still relying on Marxist conceptions of history, focused more on issues of political economy and centrality of the state rather than on the cultural level, discarding Modernization Theory in favour of conflict-theoretical perspectives and a focus on revolutions and social mechanisms.[167] Thinkers such Charles Tilly and Andrew Abbot are usually identified as key figures of this movement. Adams *et al.* note that the third wave of HS is still very much in the making, but that it will arguably be the most intersectional and interdisciplinary in nature. This will include Feminist thought, Postcolonial Studies, and a renewed focus on the cultural, social, and modernization aspects that were suppressed during the second wave.[168] Overall, it can be seen how diverse and multifaceted HS is as a discipline. While these different waves and thinkers share a common aim, at times they conduct their analyses in ways that can be perceived as

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[164] Tilly, C., "Historical Sociology", p. 6753

[165] Adams, J., Clemens, E., Orloff, A., "Social Theory, Modernity, and the Three Waves of Historical Sociology", in *Russell Sage Foundation*, Working Paper #206, (April 2013), pp. 3

[166] ibid., 4

[167] ibid., pp. 4-7

[168] ibid., pp. 65

being significantly different. Although all of these strategies provide a new lens for the study of IR, this thesis will rely particularly on Weber's Comparative Historical Sociology and on Halliday's application of HS to the MENA region in order to provided a genealogy of the MB's political evolution.

1.14 Max Weber's "Comparative Historical Sociology"

Beginning his career as an historian, Weber would develop a new way of merging history and sociology together, revolutionising what had been a rather antagonistic relationship between these two disciplines until then. Because of this he is often remembered for his contribution to the field of HS, a reputation that continues to grow with the recent renewed interest in the discipline. Writing at the turn of the 20th century, Weber argued in favour of a methodological division of labour between history and sociology, acknowledging their difference in levels of analysis and rejecting the prescription that the individual researcher should be either a sociologist or an historian.[169] Weber's view was undeniably influenced by the Historiographic crisis brought about by World War I and by the peak of European hegemony and capitalism, which posed questions of identity, purpose, and reorientation. According to Weber, the answer to these questions could only be found by combining levels of analysis that had been kept separated before, therefore leading to the merging of the historical and the sociological.[170] Since then, the field of HS developed in a variety of different directions, but Weber's contribution to the field remains one of the most relevant to this day, especially when wanting to apply this discipline to the study of IR.

HS as firstly theorised by Weber allows for the study of state autonomy by shifting the focus towards non-state actors and dynamics. The popularity that Weber's approach to IR quickly gained was due to the high adaptability of the theory, which rested on six main principles that can be understood in opposition to those developed by Hans Morgenthau, one of the founding fathers of Realism. These are: History and Change, Multi Causality, Multi Spatiality, Partial Autonomy, Complex Change and the Non-

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[169] Roth, G., "History and Sociology in the work of Max Weber", in *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 27, No. 3., (September 1976), p. 306
[170] ibid., p. 310

Realist Concept of State Autonomy. The first principle draws attention to the fact that the study of history is crucial not just for itself, but also as a means of problematizing and critically exploring the origins of modern domestic and international institutions and practices.[171] In essence, it is fundamental to the understanding of the process of change, both within and outside the state and in and around institutions. Multi Causality further reinforces the concept that social and political change can only be understood through the interaction of multiple forces, none of which can be reduced to a single essence.[172] The third principle follows on from the second, and asserts that societies, states and international systems (both political and economic) are inherently linked, therefore emphasising the necessity of an intersectional and encompassing approach.[173]

Partial Autonomy embodies the assumption that, because power forces and actors are multiple, and constantly interact and shape each other in complex ways, it becomes problematic to talk of power actors such as states or classes as wholly autonomous and self-constituting. Therefore, they cannot be understood as wholly rational and pure phenomena with single interests, as they are determined by the interaction of multiple sources of power.[174] In clear opposition with the Neoliberal notion of continuity in world politics , Complex Change rests on the concept that both societies and international politics are areas subject to constant change, and that it is therefore more pertinent to focus on discontinuity in IR.[175] Finally, the sixth principle directly challenges the Neoliberal understanding of political autonomy as resting on a fundamental analytical separation of the state from societal forces. Rather, HS relies on the belief that:

> State autonomy is not absolute and wholly separate from society, nor is it measured in terms of the state's ability to separate itself from society. Rather, state autonomy is

[171] Hobson, J., "Debate: The 'second wave' of Weberian historical sociology - The historical sociology of the state and the state of historical sociology in international relations", in *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (1998), p. 286

[172] ibid., p. 287

[173] ibid., p. 288

[174] ibid., p. 289

[175] ibid., p. 290

measured in terms of a state's degree of embeddedness within society. Thus the more a state is embedded in society, the greater its capacity to maintain itself domestically and abroad. Conversely, the higher the isolation from society (i.e., in Mann's terms, where 'despotic' power is high), the more a state's capacity to maintain itself domestically and internationally is diminished. The basic principle here is that state power and capacity can be greatly enhanced by mobilizing society, and by maintaining a high degree of consent. This places emphasis on 'collective' power which enables the development of state and society, as opposed to the more 'zero-sum' conception of power found in realism and crude statism.[176]

Therefore, Weber's understanding of the indivisible nature of the mutual relationship between state and society is most suited to the understanding of the MB's genealogy and influence on Egypt's institutions and society. This is the case as the group has historically acted as a "state within a state"[177] despite its troubled history of repression, routinely mobilising society against the country's elites and Armed Forces. Therefore, an analysis of Egypt's contemporary geopolitical role and of the country's recent history would be incomplete if not paired with the study of the MB.

1.15 Fred Halliday's "International Sociology"

Fred Halliday's contribution to HS within IR theory came from the merging of his intellectual Marxist background with Weber's influence on the discipline. Halliday's understanding of IR as an analytical lens for the study of state-society relations in the Middle East goes beyond the traditional divide between normative and analytic theories. Rather, he argues in favour of an approach that does not just focus on the study of norms and ethical issues within the international context, or solely on the provision of a set of explanations for how the international system works, stating the need to move away from these tendencies that have dominated the study of the region for the past several decades. The approach that Halliday proposes is that of Historical/International Sociology, which has the state as its main focus, but conceptualises in a completely different way than the Realist. This is the case as,

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[176] ibid., p. 293

[177] Here understood in reference to Hezbollah's historical role as a "voice of the downtrodden". Abdul-Hussain, A., "Hezbollah: a state within a state", in *Hudson Institute*, (May 2009) https://hudson.org/research/9801-hezbollah-a-state-within-a-state

ontologically speaking, HS falls within the post-positivist category and believes in a verifiable reality, focusing on emotions, groups, and structures within the wider framework of IR.

According to Halliday, HS understands the state as a distinct institutional category rather than as a sum of myriad decisions, and combines its study with the foreign policy analysis approach.[178] HS employs foreign policy analysis not to reduce or qualify the role of the state, but rather to understand the state as an actor that through its influence on society creates the very context for the formation of foreign policies that it then implements. Therefore, this approach combines the study of the international role of the state with that of key domestic factors that are usually presented as timeless features of the region's politics by other schools of thought, such as nationalism or religious fundamentalism, arguing that they are formed and transformed by their very association with the state. As Halliday states "Just as a more flexible and specific view of history has made historical analysis more effective, a more specific view of the state may, thereby, lead to a recognition of its greater influence".[179]

Therefore, HS moves away from the traditional Realist and homogeneous understanding of "Islam" or the "Arab mind" as explanatory elements of the region's geopolitics, but rather focuses on how institutions of both political and socio/religious power are established and maintained, recognising states, ideologies and societies as the core components of political and social order.[180] It therefore seeks to understand the relevance of these social factors within the historical and international context in which they were created, with the aim of gaining a comprehensive view of how they then shape politics. Therefore, this particular understanding of HS is most suited to the study of how the MB's political evolution has shaped the country's institutions, civil society, and politics.

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[178] Halliday, F., *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*, p. 36
[179] ibid.
[180] ibid.

Especially in the First Wave, HS begins with the assumption that the starting point for the historical perception of the state are the two categories of modernity and force. This is the case as the state, understood as an institution of coercion and administration, has existed for millennia, while according to Halliday modern states are not necessarily a linear continuation of these original institutions. Rather, he understands the state as a creature of modernity, as a product of the economic and social changes that have been associated with the transformation of the world since the creation of a new interstate system in 1780.[181] It follows that states forged through inter-state competition owe their inception to the reproduction of force, which in turns means that the origin of modern states, and their primary activity, has historically been violence (especially when taking claims to religious or popular legitimacy into account).[182] By adopting this approach HS makes a meaningful contribution to the study of IR in the Middle East, which has historically focused on the state, by understanding it as an institution of coercion and appropriation that operates on two levels, the internal state–society dimension and the external state–state dimension. [183]

By doing this HS fuses the study of the state with that of another wide range of issues that are traditionally key to the analysis of the region, these being the role of ideology and religion, conflicts and their causes, transnational actors and movements, and the role of domestic change within society. Ideology and norms are therefore understood as central to the process of legitimation and coercion that is at the very core of the state, further underlining the fact that HS provides a theoretical framework for the understanding of the region that goes beyond generalisation and takes into account domestic dynamics and factors.

Therefore, Halliday's contribution to the field of HS and IR is undoubtedly a fundamental one, which has been developed through several of his works such as "The

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[181] ibid.
[182] ibid.
[183] ibid., p. 37

Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology"[184], "State and Society in International Relations"[185] and "For an International Sociology"[186]. However, there are some who criticize his methods and approaches, and argue that his call for a "sociological turn" in IR theory was informed by multiple and often conflicting contributory elements, and therefore plagued by ambivalence and inconsistency.[187] One of the most common critiques moved to his scholarship is that of being underpinned by "creative tensions", as his internationalism at times focused on resistance to systems of oppression such as capitalism, while at other times it appeared to be supporting the spread of ideas and practices through capitalist means.[188]

Similarly, there is a shared perception that while Halliday undeniably contributed to the development of HS in IR, he did so without offering his own definitive theoretical statement on the discipline, but rather remained a "miscellaneous theorist". This is the case as he remained tied to an understanding of International Theory as being tri-partite in nature, divided between the inter-state (realist), transnational (liberal) and systemic (structural/Marxist) levels.[189] However, despite Halliday's propensity to draw upon competing theoretical understandings, there were two particular characteristic of his approach to HS that were always consistently applied, and they both fell within his unfaltering concern with human *agency* and with the way in which individuals took control of their surroundings and determined their own future, which is central to the purpose of this thesis. The first feature is the need to move away from naturalised understandings of the international order, such as capitalist modernity, and the second is the necessity to focus upon the successes and failures of individuals and

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[184] Halliday, F., *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*

[185] Halliday, F., 'State and society in International Relations', in *Rethinking International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1994)

[186] Halliday, F., 'For an International Sociology', in Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson, (eds) *Historical Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

[187] Teschke, B., "Advances and Impasses in Fred Halliday's international historical sociology: a critical appraisal", in *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 5, (2011), pp. 1087-1106

[188] Colas, A., Lawson, G., "Fred Halliday: Achievements, Ambivalences and Openings", in *Millenium,* Vol. 39, No. 2, (2010), pp. 5-11

[189] ibid., p. 17

movements that challenge these structures of oppression.[190] These two aspects, combined with Weber's own contribution to HS in IR, are fundamental to the study of the way in which the MB's politicisation has shaped the Egyptian State, making HS the most suitable methodological approach for the purpose of this thesis.

1.16 Framework: Historical Sociology and the Muslim Brotherhood

Despite its flaws, there are several features of Halliday's contribution to and understanding of HS that make this approach fundamental to the purpose of this thesis. First of all, while HS is generally understood as a dialogue between Weber and Marx, Halliday managed to successfully bring together both sides of the debate in his understanding, making two particularly striking contributions to the application of HS to the region: first, "the need to denaturalise taken-for-granted understandings and practices of international order, (…) and, secondly, the need to study the successes – and failures – of individuals and movements that had challenged these structures of domination".[191] His concern with human agency is what makes this particular conception of HS fundamental for the study of the MB in Egypt, as an analysis of how individual-driven domestic factors that directly challenge the status quo end up playing such a fundamental role in the legitimisation and formation of the state itself. Moreover, such an intersectional approach is the most suited to the study of the MB's political and ideological evolution within the context of the Egyptian state and history. This is the case because, as it will become clear during the course of this thesis, the MB's history is inseparable from that of modern Egypt itself, therefore underlining the importance and interconnectedness of domestic factors and state development and legitimacy. Understanding the influence that the MB historically had on the country's civil society and political life is fundamental to understanding the Egyptian state itself, particularly when seeking to focus on the events that followed the 2011 Uprisings. As such, to understand the MB we must first understand the Egyptian state and vice versa.

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[190] ibid.

[191] ibid.

HS will therefore be applied throughout this research, as a means to investigate and understand the MB's relevance in terms of roots, ideology, and relations with state institutions since its foundation. In Chapter 2 HS will examine the MB's roots in resistance and identity politics, and for the understanding of the organisation's core tenets and transnational appeal. Chapter 3 will apply Halliday's conception of HS to the analysis of the relationship between structure and agency, with the aim to understand the MB's historical role in shaping Egyptian politics as more than yet another manifestation of how Islam is understood as affecting the geopolitics of the region. Similarly, Chapter 4 will focus on the creation of the FJP with the aim of recognising the fundamental role that ideology plays in the formation of both political and social institutions, focusing on the tensions and contradictions that it might also cause. Finally, Chapter 5 will analyse the events leading up to June 30th with the intent of showing that, as Halliday argues, it is necessary to move away from the conception of "Islam" as an explanatory element of the region's politics, as there is a lot more to the MB's deposition than just their Islamist message.

1.17 Conclusion

This Chapter has provided a review of the key texts and authors that provide the fundamental background needed when engaging in research concerning the topic of Political Islam. It has done so while attempting to challenge prejudices and to keep an engaging and provocative argument, and has therefore examined both its Shi'ite and Sunni manifestations. After providing a short historical background and basic understanding of the implications of the term, the chapter has moved on to the analysis of the existing body of literature. First of all, it has focused on the thought of the founding fathers of (Sunni) Political Islam Hassan al Banna and Abu ala Mawdudi, whose works arguably set the basis for modern Islamist thought and whose influence can also be recognized in Khomeini's Shi'ite Iran. While reviewing the main manifestations of this ideology that originate from these two scholars' writings, this Chapter has identified the source of tensions and contradictions within Political Islam in Mawdudi's radicalization, showing how diverse this discipline has been since its inception.

The research has then moved to the analysis of the misinterpretations and radicalization of original (Sunni) Islamic thought, which is arguably still driving most of the mainstream Western approaches to Political Islam today. To do so, the thought and influence of Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb has been examined, showing how the development of concepts such as *jahiliyya* and the justification of violent *jihad* have caused a radicalization surge that still negatively affects perceptions of this doctrine today. The Chapter then moved onto the analysis of secondary sources, reviewing some of the key Western literature that argues for an inevitable clash between Western and Islamic cultures, and therefore contributes to the construction of the feared "Islamic Threat". However, the Chapter later focused on a selection of Western scholars who interestingly recognise the huge diversity characterising Political Islam, and put forward several arguments against its stereotyping and demonization. Ultimately, Roy's argument for the failure of Political Islam has been quickly reviewed and challenged, as this thesis focuses on it with the aim to investigate whether the removal of the MB from governance in Egypt is a symptom of failure or just a step on Political Islam's road to adaptation to governance.

Overall, the final aim of this Chapter was to provide solid background knowledge on the subject of Political Islam, and a working definition of the term and of its main characteristics. It also aimed to show that there is more to this doctrine than what is being presented, and that it is far from being a radicalised and violent religious ideology. In order to do so the diversity of Political Islam and the multiplicity of its forms and origins have been identified and justified throughout the whole chapter, with the ultimate aim to challenge prejudices and to examine the sources of chaos and confusion. To conclude, the chapter has presented the methodology and analytical framework that the thesis relies on. Given the high sensitivity of the topic and the contemporary perceptions surrounding Political Islam, the primary research conducted for the scope of this thesis was faced by several intellectual and ethical obstacles, which have been outlined above.

Because of this, Historical Sociology has been presented as the most appropriate analytical framework for the aims of this research. In particular, this thesis relies on

Historical Sociology as this approach moves away from the Realist and traditional understanding of "Islam" or the "Arab mind" as explanatory elements of the region's geopolitics, but rather focuses on how institutions of both political and socio/religious power are established and maintained, recognising states, ideologies and societies as the core components of political and social order.[192] This is the case as, in order to understand the MB and other groups like it, one must place them within a broader context. HS allows this thesis to accomplish that. Therefore, it is most suited to the study of how the MB's political evolution has historically shaped the country's institutions, civil society, and politics, which will begin in the next Chapter.

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[192] Halliday, F., *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*, p. 36

2. The *Ikhwan* and Egypt: the religious meets the political

"No one but God knows how many nights we spent reviewing the state of the nation… analysing the sickness, and thinking of the possible remedies. So disturbed were we, that we reached the point of tears."
(Hassan al Banna, 1939)

In the winter of 1938, Hassan al Banna stated "Islam does have a policy embracing the happiness of this world",[193] in response to accusations that labelled the MB as a mostly political rather than religious group. The MB founder sought to emphasise that, because of the nature of Islam, separating the religious and the political was an impossible task, and that the MB had therefore to be concerned with both given its Islamist nature. This statement marks a clear acknowledgement of interconnectedness between Islam and politics, which will be analysed by this chapter relying on the case of the historical mutually dependent relationship between the MB and the Egyptian state. The chapter argues that the MB's political development needs to be analysed alongside that of Egypt's itself, as the mutually dependent relationship between the group and secular institutions has been historically key to the development of both.

Having analysed the historical and ideological roots of Political Islam in the region, it has been established that this thesis puts forward an understanding of the doctrine that highlights its diversity and heterogeneousness. An awareness of just how diverse manifestations of Islamism can be, depending on contexts, groups, and circumstances, is key to the purposes of this research and to the understanding of the MB's political evolution. This is the case as, even the group that is considered the Islamist organisation *par excellence*, has had a varied relationship with Political Islam across the decades, experiencing recurring internal schisms over ideological matters. Following this premise, this chapter examines the Egyptian MB's relationship with a specific understanding of Political Islam and governance, with the aim of providing a

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[193] Lia, B., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942*. (Reading: Garnet, 1998), p. 202

genealogy of the Egyptian group and to highlight its importance for the purposes of this thesis. The chapter will therefore focus on the MB's history and political development as inherently tied to that of Egypt itself, and will rely on Historical Sociology in order to underline and analyse the mutually dependent relationship existing between the state and the Islamist group. The chapter provides a short but comprehensive analysis of Egyptian religious and political significance, followed by a detailed examination of the MB's history and evolution into one of the most influential Islamist groups in the region, and a review of Egypt's geopolitical importance that further justifies the choice of the country as a case study.

This chapter also teases out the tensions inherent in the MB's practices of Political Islam, and therefore establishes the context for the understanding of what "failed" in 2012. The chapter focuses on the MB's ideology and tactics, and shows how they progressed and developed since the inception of the organization in 1928, underlining why they could be perceived as being inconsistent. That is the case because, rather than subscribing to a unified and cohesive political narrative, the Brotherhood has historically been characterised by internal divisions that therefore lead to different interpretations and practices of the same ideology. While its members overall share al Banna's beliefs and objectives, the tactics used to achieve said aims can heavily vary and even, at times, be opposed. Once again, this shows how many different manifestations of Political Islam can exist within the same interpretation of it, and how difficult it is even for an affirmed and influential group to agree on a coherent political path.

Ultimately, this chapter argues that despite its troubled history and internal divisions, the MB has played a fundamental role in shaping both Egyptian identity and state structures that in turn shaped the organisation itself. Its Islamist nature has been both an advantage and a liability throughout its political development and has undoubtedly shaped its relations with both the regime and the population. This once again goes to show that an Historical Sociological approach is fundamental to understanding how social and political institutions are established and maintained or, in the case of Egypt,

to understand how the MB's inception and political evolution has shaped the country's institutions, politics, and civil society, and vice versa.

2.1 Genealogy and Historical Context

The Egyptian MB is renowned for putting forward a very specific and pragmatic understanding of Political Islam, and because of its influence on other Islamist organizations it embodies a deep religious significance for both the country and the region. This relevance is further accentuated by the Brotherhood's widely recognised status as one of the most prolific and renowned Islamist organizations in the region, which therefore makes the group's impact wider and more significant than that of smaller or more national-focused Islamist groups. This is not to say that the Egyptian MB is somehow representative of Political Islam as a whole, since this doctrine is extremely multifaceted as explained in the previous chapter, but it is undeniable that the organization and its ideology have been historically taken as an example by several Islamist groups across the MENA region. Sisters organizations in Syria, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have been directly inspired by the Egyptian group, and MB's authority and influence is widely acknowledged across the Arab World.[194]

Another unique characteristic of the Brotherhood is the close involvement with politics and with the Egyptian government that the organization has had since its creation in 1928. This Islamist group is therefore uniquely representative of Political Islam's dedication to society and participation in government, an element that will be analysed in depth throughout this thesis and that adds to the MB's region-wide influence. Moreover, the Brotherhood's status as one of the main civil society actors in the country suggests that the organisation has historically acted as a "state within a state"[195]. While this is often used in reference to Hizbollah, I argue that this concept is also suited to describe the MB's involvement with civil society, as the organisation

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[194] Wright, R., *Dreams and Shadows: The future of the Middle East* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), pp. 245-250

[195] In this context the concept of a "state within a state" is understood as a political or religious groups stepping in to fill the gaps in civil society left by the state, therefore providing basic social services such as healthcare and education.

historically derived legitimacy and popular support not just from its religious narrative, but also from its social involvement. Millions of Egyptians have for decades relied on its provision of basic social services such as education, free healthcare, and so on, which shows how deeply embedded the organization is within the country itself.

It is worth noting that this commitment to both government and society is one of the main sources of tension within the Brotherhood, as it put the organisation in an arguably untenable position, making the exploration of the interplay of commitments to both state and religion a recurrent theme throughout the thesis. Therefore, the study of the MB's genealogy is also the study of the development of the Egyptian state itself, as the two cannot be separated.

Founded in 1928 as a religious grass-roots movement, the MB has since developed into one of the most influential Islamist organisations in the Arab World. Despite its troubled history, from the start the Brotherhood directly contributed to the development of Egypt's political identity, by defining it in opposition to colonialism and British rule, and represented a steady opposition force against corruption and authoritarianism by providing social services and support where the government failed to do so. Moreover, notwithstanding internal disputes and external difficulties, the organisation has been consistently present throughout the political crises that have characterised Egypt since 1952, showing itself to be instrumental to regime-change and political transitions, while revealing the capability to adapt its narrative to changing circumstances and needs.

Deriving its popularity from both its civil society involvement and religious narrative, the Brotherhood had the unique capability of being able to mobilise a significant part of the Egyptian population, a trait that has historically led to the perception of the organization as both a potential government ally and a significant threat.[196] Because of this, the MB alternated brief periods of somewhat necessary mutual collaboration with various Egyptian presidents with decades of harsh repression and illegality, which

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[196] That is because historically the Egyptian population has sided with the organization rather than the government numerous times, as the Muslim Brotherhood represented the only real political opposition.

can be understood as instances of sectarian violence[197], which developed the organization's skills in surviving and adapting to changing political circumstances.

While this dynamic nature is somewhat problematic when trying to track the MB's ideological development, this particular characteristic coupled with the Brotherhood's grassroots nature and dedication to the provision of basic social services meant that it was not long before the organization sought to have a more active say in Egyptian politics. This shift was somehow facilitated by the fact that, as mentioned above, the MB's religious narrative gained it support beyond the state, along with its behaviour. However, as outlined in the previous chapter, the organization's dedication to electoral politics was source of various internal schisms and ideological and tactical tensions, which eventually divided the MB between those committed to "legitimate" political means and those who resorted to the use of violent *jihad*. This is one of the many sources of internal tensions and disagreements that are characteristic of the Brotherhood's history, to be examined later on in the chapter.

The organisation's evolution from a religious movement into a powerful political entity is linked to Egypt's own revolutionary history as, since its inception, the Brotherhood has progressively participated in the country's political life and its Islamist ideology has brought about topical debates and repeatedly challenged despotic governance. The Brotherhood's election as a result of the 2011 Revolution comes with unprecedented implications, and a comprehensive understanding of the organisation's narrative(s) is fundamental to grasping the relevance of these contemporary events. Following this, it is necessary to clarify that there are five clear themes that are recurrent throughout the Brotherhood's history and political development, which are also fundamental to understand its religious significance and influence. These are the politicization of a religious movement, radicalization[198], involvement in politics, civil society, and internal divisions; all aspects that need to be analysed in order to understand the

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[197] Ardovini, L., "The Politicisation of Sectarianism in Egypt: the state VS the Ikhwan", in *Global Discourse*, Vol. 6., No. 4, (December 2016), pp. 579-600

[198] Understood as the conception of the use of violence as a legitimate political means and strengthening of ideologies.

organization's significance and perception. Often a source of tensions and misunderstanding, these themes will be analysed throughout this chapter in order to provide a complete understanding of the Brotherhood's importance in the context of Islamic politics and (Egyptian) nation building.

Having acknowledged the importance of the MB, this chapter will also focus on Egypt's religious significance and on its relationship to the origin and growth of some very influential understandings of Islamism. Ayoob identifies three specific elements underlining Egypt's affinity to some Political Islam(s), which also explain how it grew to be a regional centre for Sunni Islamic theology, a status that is still upheld today and embodied in the authority of Al Azar's University and Mosque. What is behind this inseparable relationship is first of all the incredible growth of religious writing and literature that started taking place in the country at the beginning of the 19th century, and was then renewed towards the end of the 20th century during what is generally identified as "Islamic revivalism".[199] Secondly, because of the growing success and popularity of the MB, which after only 10 years from its foundation had about 150,000 active members, the Egyptian government and in particular presidents Nasser and Sadat inevitably found themselves having to rely on Islam as a source of legitimacy in order to gain popular support.[200] This underlines a lack of governmental control and capability to look after its own population that still characterises the country today, leaving numerous gaps to be filled by other actors, further decreasing its volatile legitimacy. In the case of Gamal Nasser, the Pan-Arab president allied with the MB in order to successfully complete the Free Officers Coup in 1952 and then, after outlawing the organization, kept their networks of social services provision in place out of fear of a popular insurgence.[201]

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[199] Ayubi, N., "The Political Revival of Islam: the case of Egypt", in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 12, (1980), pp. 487-488

[200] ibid.

[201] Aburish, S., K., *Nasser: The last Arab* (New York: St. Martin Press, 2004), pp. 11-12

Similarly, upon being elected President, Anwar Sadat called himself "the believer president"[202], freed MB political prisoners jailed by the Nasserist regime, and was know to conclude his speeches with verses from the Quran.[203] Finally, even Hosni Mubarak who was distinctively hostile towards the MB, cracked down on the organization but once again kept their social institutions in place, aware of the government's inability to compete with and substitute them. These are but a few examples of how deeply ingrained Political Islam, and in particular the MB's understanding(s) of it, are within Egyptian society, which makes the country and the organization a unique case study. Thirdly, Egypt is a state in which the tendency of Islamist groups to represent the political opposition and to act as a catalyst for socio-political revolts reached its peak, once again through the means of the MB.[204] Despite being proscribed as illegal for the most of its existence, the MB had a unique capability of mobilising popular masses in Egypt, contributing to it being at the centre of the country's most significant uprisings throughout its history, such as the January 25th movement that culminated with the ousting of Mubarak's three-decade-long dictatorship.

While this particular aspect will be further explained in the next chapter, the importance and influence of the Egyptian MB has now been briefly outlined and will be underlined further while analysing key themes such as the politicization of a religious movement, radicalization, involvement in politics and internal divisions. Their importance will be further stressed throughout the detailed analysis of the MB's genealogy and political development. To this aim, it is also necessary to contextualise Egypt' religious and geopolitical importance, using Historical Sociology, as the MB can fully be understood only when discussed within the context that influenced its political and ideological development. While doing so, the chapter will flag up sources of tensions and internal disagreements that are characteristic of the organization and of its approach to politics.

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[202] Zahid, M., *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's succession crisis: the politics of liberalisation and reform in the Middle East*, pp. 81-83
[203] Ayubi, "The Political Revival of Islam: the case of Egypt", p. 488
[204] ibid.

2.2 Religion, Society and Geopolitics in Egypt

Before moving onto the study of the MB's religious and political development, it is necessary to provide an analysis of Egypt's fundamental religious significance. The close relationship between the Islamic faith and Egyptian society is not a modern phenomenon, as this particular coexistence began with the Arab invasion in the 7th century AD.[205] This event was to shape Egypt's essence for the centuries to come, turning the country into an Arabic speaking and Islamic nation. Conquered by Umar, the second caliph, Egypt slowly grew into one of the leading intellectual, economic, and political protagonists of the region, acquiring the geopolitical and strategic importance that still characterises the country today. Moreover, being conquered by the former companion of the prophet Mohamed meant that the Egyptian population adhered to uniquely Sunni Islam, with a small percentage remaining faithful to Christianity, making the country homogeneous in its Islamic component, a characteristic that is rare in the region.[206] This was a time when, along with prosperity, loyalty to Islam progressively grew to be absolute over that for the state, a trend that even survived Egypt's annexation to the Ottoman Empire in 1517.[207] Despite Istanbul's replacement of Cairo as a centre of religious and spiritual authority, the majority of the Egyptian population maintained their Islamic faith independently of their rulers until the 19th century, and developed most of the social and communal structures that were then to be taken over by Islamist organizations in the wake of the 20th century.

The comprehensive doctrine that is now referred to as Political Islam is thought to have firstly emerged in Egypt in the 19th century, starting off the mutual and at times tempestuous relationship between the Islamic faith, society, and the Egyptian state. This conception of Islamism was sparked by various factors and events, such as the

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[205] Abdo, G., *No God but God: Egypt and the triumph of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.10

[206] Sullivan, D., Abed-Kotob, S., *Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), pp. 8-19 It is estimated that approximately 90% of the 80 million Egyptians are Sunni Muslim, with the remaining 10% consisting of Shi'a Muslims, Coptic Christians, and smaller Islamic groups.

[207] Abdo, G., *No God but God: Egypt and the triumph of Islam*, p. 10

Napoleonic invasion, the move to secularization with the emergence of the nation state, and popular mobilization ignited by Islamic counter-elites.[208] First of all, it was foreign intervention and the cultural alienation that came with it that inspired the rise of Islamic activism, which was born in response to the Napoleonic and then British colonization of North Africa and the Middle East.[209] This was when the colonial experience fostered the growth of a particular understanding of Political Islam as a means against occupation and an expression of resistance, which was also legitimised by a new conception of *jihad*.[210] According to Ayoob, the Islamic opposition to colonial occupation and corruption of society that triggered the origins of Islamism also resulted in the understanding of *jihad* as a political "struggle" for freedom, a concept that Sayyid Qutb later developed further.[211] Following this, and perceiving Western powers both as rivals and innovators, Egyptian scholars such as Jamal Eddin al-Afghani and Mohammed Abduh started arguing for the application of the Islamic faith to societal life, almost a century before Hassan al Banna and Sayyid Qutb.

These scholars argued that religious thought had to be reformed and dedicated to progress, much needed in order to counteract the advanced innovations introduced by colonial powers.[212] However, viewing Western colonial powers both as an enemy and a model, Abduh and al-Afghani also argued that an ideal Islamic society should incorporate some of the Western innovations and achievements, to be a resilient opponent against external influence.[213] Abduh based this on the understanding that "most of the core values of Western Countries, such as freedom, human rights, and justice, are universal and do not conflict with Islam or any religion, even yet they are important constituents of Islamic teachings."[214] Such a notion is highly provocative as

[208] Wickham, C., *Mobilising Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 5-8

[209] ibid., pp.6-7

[210] Ayoob, M., *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), p. 8

[211] ibid.

[212] Abdo, G., *No God but God: Egypt and the triumph of Islam*, p. 10

[213] ibid.

[214] Hasan, A., "Democracy, Religion and Moral Values: A Road Map Towards Political Transformation in Egypt", in *Foreign Policy Journal*, (July 2011)

it is directly opposite to Hassan al Banna's understanding of Islamism, which viewed Western powers and their culture as the main corrupters of both the Egyptian society and the Islamic faith, and therefore as something that had to be removed in its entirety.

A more radical version of this ideological position was also shared by Sayyid Qutb, which underlines how many diverse school of Islamic thought were flourishing within the Egyptian borders and emphasises the importance of the country for the development of Islamic theology.[215] This variety once again underlines the importance of embracing relativism when approaching the study of Islamism, as even within the Egyptian context, the diversity of the various manifestations of the ideology is striking. This can be best achieved by applying Historical Sociology, as it allows for the unpacking of the mutual relationship between formal and informal structures, state and non-state actors, and ideology.

Mohamed Abduh, in particular, is regarded as one of the leading figures of early Islamist thought and as the precursor of the Egyptian Salafist movement, which emphasises once again the importance of Egypt for the development of various Islamist schools of thought. Abduh strongly advocated that the prime solution against the degeneration of the Muslim society was a return to the governance model created by the Prophet and by the first four Caliphs.[216] He also believed this to be achievable, as he considered the Quranic teachings to be in line with the rationality and positivism that characterized modernity.[217] It should be pointed out that, while these concepts were at the basis of one of the original schools of Egyptian Islamist thought, many of these positions were not shared by al Banna or by the MB. Even if the type of Islamism advocated by the MB is still directly linked to the birth of the (Egyptian) nation-state, which makes it almost anachronistic , it should be clarified that, in opposition to the

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https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2011/07/02/democracy-religion-and-moral-values-a-road-map-toward-political-transformation-in-egypt/

[215] Bergesen, J., (ed.), *The Sayyid Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion, and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 6-8

[216] Ayoob, M., *The Many Faces of Political Islam*, p. 7

[217] ibid.

Salafist movement, the MB has always argued for the transformation of society through constitutional means and within the boundaries of the civil state.[218] Following this, this could be seen as the characteristic that makes the MB a reformist movement rather than a radical one.

Moreover, it is interesting to note how some aspects of early Islamist thought had such influential repercussions on later Islamist theorists such as Sayyid Qutb. It is in fact clear that the thought of the notorious Islamist scholar was clearly influenced by Abduh's conception of *jihad*, and that the Salafist doctrine is strongly based on that of the 19th century scholar. This also supports once again the argument that Political Islam is indeed heterogeneous in its manifestations, as solely in the context of Egypt, where various Islamist thoughts arose out of the same causes, the various schools are inherently different and sometimes even opposite in their aims and means.

Meanwhile, at the end of the 19th century Egypt was moving towards secularization as a consequence of foreign intervention and colonial influence, a context that strongly affected its transition into a nation-state. Interestingly, the growth of some forms of Political Islam as we understand them today can be traced back to the formation of the nation-state itself, with this interplay of governance and Islamism being unique to the case of Egypt. It is worth noting that these tensions between state and religion would come to be embodied by the MB's ideology and practices, which highlight the mutually-shaping relationship between the organisation and the Egyptian state. It follows that, along with the secularization of the state came a strong wave of institutionalization of the religious field, which was due to the state's desire to control all aspects of everyday life and to somehow limit the influence of the Islamic faith.[219]

It is therefore clear that even decades before the creation of the MB, the state feared the influence and popularity of Islam on the Egyptian population and society, and

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[218] ibid., p. 17

[219] Skovgaard-Petersen, J., *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State: Muftis and Fatwas of the Dar al-Ifta* (New York: Brill, 1997), p. 28

attempted to control it in order to maintain legitimacy and stability.[220] The implementation of such state measures was evidently aimed at counteracting the high levels of popular support that many mainstream Islamist organizations enjoyed at the time, which was partly due to their use of a religious vocabulary familiar to the Egyptian people, and which therefore became a powerful mobilization tool.[221] The popular support enjoyed by the MB especially in the first half of the 20th century was one reason that made it so instrumental to regime-change and as a source of legitimacy, as the organization had the capability to mobilise a very significant portion of the Egyptian population.

This fear of Islamist groups receiving high levels of popular support led to the creation of the *Dar al-Ifta,* (Fatwa Office), in 1895. Created by the state, the institution was originally conceived as yet another tool to assert state control over the religious sphere.[222] However, the Fatwa Office was also set up in order to provide guidance on how to live according to the Quran and Islamic jurisprudence, and throughout the 20th century has been an instrumental actor in the on-going debate regarding the role of the Islamic faith within Egyptian society.[223] Part of the role embodied by its head, the state Mufti, was to serve as an example for pious Muslims to follow, while the institutionalization of this role officially marked the incorporation of religion within the sphere of the state. It follows that a new, more politicised form of Islam started emerging, which being directly linked to the nation-state, set the stage for the dispute between religious and governmental forces that still goes on in the country today. As Skovgaard-Petersen argues "The stage was set for a contest between the state and various oppositional forces in a common public discourse".[224] However, while this office is still in place, it has to be said that its institution had very little success in containing the spread and development of various schools of Islamist thought.

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[220] ibid.

[221] Ayoob, M., *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, p. 10

[222] Lee, R., *Religion and Politics in the Middle East: Identity, Ideology, Institutions, and Attitudes* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2014), chapter 2

[223] Ayoob, M., *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, p. 10

[224] Skovgaard-Petersen, J., *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State: Muftis and Fatwas of the Dar al-Ifta*, p. 28

This is because these new emerging practices of Political Islam took different forms and expressions depending on the changing socio-political circumstances and therefore lacked common strategies, aims, and a unifying or encompassing identity. This once again emphasises the key role that the Egyptian state played in the development of Islamist thought and of several of its manifestations. Therefore, even manifestations of oppositional Islam –embodied by the MB– were indeed a direct response to the formation of the nation-state. Once again, this shows how their two histories are inherently linked, and therefore need to be analysed together in order to fully understand their mutual influence.

While providing the framework for the development of various Islamist narratives, Egypt's move towards the creation of a secular nation-state also reinforced the leading geopolitical role that the country historically played in the region. Egypt's historic role as a regional leader partly derives from the state's borders, which makes it a land bridge between two continents and principal waterways,[225] and from its proximity to Israel and the Nile basin that has made the state subject to invasions and colonial takeovers because of its highly strategic position. [226] Moreover, throughout the 20th century Egypt further reinforced its central position in Middle Eastern and African affairs because of the pivotal role that its leaders, in particular Anwar Sadat, played in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which also came with strong implications for the narrative of Islamist groups such as the MB that have always been against the creation of the state of Israel.[227] Sadat's role as a moderator and ally to Israel in fact intensified popular discontent towards the government and therefore aided the MB's popularity, but also meant that Egypt started receiving unprecedented amounts of American support and aid in order to ensure that it kept being both a pacifier and a buffer zone.[228]

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[225] Thanks to the transnational nature of its borders Egypt brings together Africa and the Middle East, the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian ocean through the Suez Canal.

[226] Marr, P., "Egypt's Regional Role", in *National Defence University Strategic Forum, Institute for National Strategic Studies*, No. 24, (April 2005), p. 1

[227] ibid.

[228] Egypt is currently the second biggest receiver of US monetary aid in the MENA region after Israel, and this alliance makes the country gain even more strategic significance that it had before.

US monetary aid meant that Egypt could still relay on a steady affluence of economic support, allowing for the development of a private sector, industrial infrastructures, power-generation facilities, transportation and water.[229] Egypt benefitted from this geopolitical shift from an economic and infrastructural point of view, but significantly affected its perception as a regional leader both inside and outside its borders. Egypt's alliance with the US and Israel goes against the position of most states in the MENA region, and further justified the Brotherhood's narrative that calls for a removal of external influences from the country, therefore fostering the growth and popularity of Islamism.

Egypt's religious and geopolitical significance are therefore inseparable elements, which both contributed to the political development of various Islamist schools within the state. These forces also shaped the popular success of the MB throughout the 20th century. The regime's relationship with both Islamist thought and the MB is further assessed by Abdo, who identifies three distinct waves of Islamic activism that are discernible throughout the country's modern history and subsequently strengthen this relationship. The first wave was the aforementioned first expression of Political Islam perpetrated by Jamal Eddin al-Afghani, and was born out of a response against the Napoleonic invasion and British colonialism.[230] The foundation of the MB in 1928 represents the second wave of Islamic activism, together with the appearance of an ideology that sought to reform Egyptian society through the *al dawa*, Islamic call, and to merge religion with politics and society.[231]

The third wave of Islamic activism that enveloped the country is what is today identified with Islamic Revivalism, started in the 1970s and developed upon the previous experiences. The Islamists leading the revival soon split between those who advocated the achievement of an Islamic state through peaceful means and those who were more radical in their positions, who soon ended up on the fringes of society therefore leaving room for the moderates to take over the Egyptian political

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[229] Marr, P., "Egypt's Regional Role", p. 1
[230] Abdo, G., *No God but God: Egypt and the triumph of Islam*, p. 5
[231] ibid., pp. 6-7

discourse.[232] The MB, despite not being the only Islamist group active within Egypt at that time, led the moderate factions towards an increasing engagement in politics and on the quest for political legitimacy and recognition by the state. Therefore, it is clear that through these waves Islamism became deeply engraved in Egyptian society, to the point that the two are almost inseparable and mutually dependent.

It follows that Egypt has not only provided a unique environment for the MB to develop in, but has also played an historical role in shaping and leading the politics of the region. The 1950s and 1960s are now remembered as Egypt's golden era, with Cairo being the capital of the Arab World while the country was guided by Gamal Abdel Nasser, the post-colonial leader par excellence.[233] This is particularly true especially when looking at the country's influence during Nasser's times, when Egypt's role as a regional leader and innovator was at its modern historical peak. In his essay "Egypt's Liberation: Philosophy of a Revolution", Nasser identified three specific areas of influence on which the country had significant power, named "circles", which emphasised Egypt's strategic importance. Laying the basis for pan-Arabism, Nasser argued that Egypt existed within three significant orbits, namely the Islamic, Arab, and African contexts.[234]

This position not only underlines Egypt's multifaceted identity, which makes it an Arab Muslim country with deep African connotations, but also shows how vast and diverse its sphere of influence is, making it a desirable ally and a significant player in Middle Eastern affairs. The merging of its Islamic and Arab identities is one of the main forces that made Egypt the regional power and leader it has been for decades. The country's long Islamic heritage developed into a strong sense of identity that grew deeper during the times of the British occupation, and yet was somehow distinct from the rest of the Arab World. Egyptian national identity was in fact never just a part of a wider, encompassing Arabism, but was strongly influenced by the country's own history,

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[232] ibid., pp. 8-9. Groups such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the followers of Qutbism, and so on.

[233] Osman, T., "Who Will Win the Middle East? How new rivalries are transforming the strategic landscape", in *Foreign Affairs*, (20th May 2014) http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141442/tarek-osman/who-will-win-the-middle-east

[234] Tignor, R., *Egypt: a short history*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p.22

traditions, geography and language. However, this identity was and is without a doubt Arab-Islamic, which explains the country's influences over the entire Arab World and on particular Islamist schools of thought.

Before the Arab Uprisings and the chaos that came with the removal of Hosni Mubarak, Egypt was regarded as a significant regional power, able to influence the region culturally, politically and militarily. [235] Despite the significant turn in events, it is undeniable that the country's inseparable link to Islamic thought and literature is also an element that contributed to its prominence, even if everything that happened since 2011 has changed perceptions and affected regional equilibrium. Regardless, it can be seen once again that the country's religious significance and political relevance are inseparable characteristics, which both significantly affected the Muslim Brotherhood's narrative(s) and political development, as it will be shown in the rest of the chapter.

2.3 The Muslim Brotherhood: inception and narrative(s)

Considered to be one of the leading Islamist political movements in the world, the MB was founded as a grassroots, Pan-Islamic organization dedicated to the provision of basic social services to the Egyptian population.[236] However, it was not long before it sought to play an active part in the country's political arena.[237] Represented by the slogan "Islam is the solution", the Brotherhood benefitted from a comprehensive ideology and understanding of Islamic values as core pillars of society, which awarded it with an unprecedented level of domestic and regional support. [238] Because of this the MB soon came to embody a powerful religious and political opposition to the Egyptian government and, as the country's leading Islamist movement, successfully presented itself as the defender of Muslim dignity and Egyptian national interests

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[235] Cooper, F., Antkiewicz, A., Shaw, T., "Lessons from/for BRICSAM about South-North Relations at the Start of the 21st Century: Economic size trumps all else?", in *International Studies Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4, (Winter, 2007), pp. 675, 687

[236] Wickham, C., *Mobilising Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt*, p. 4

[237] El-Ghobashy, M., "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (August 2005), pp. 376-377

[238] Johnson, T., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", *Council on Foreign Relations*, (3 December 2012) http://www.cfr.org/africa/egypts-muslim-brotherhood/p23991

against the colonial occupiers and the national political elite.[239] When founding the organization, Hassan al Banna was attempting to challenge the British colonial presence in Egypt and to dismantle their collaboration with the national elite. This narrative eventually evolved to encompass contemporary issues and themes of resistance and identity politics.[240]

Under al Banna's guidance, the MB was committed to the Islamization of society through a bottom-up approach, but it is necessary to note that, in opposition to Mohamed Abduh's position outlined previously, al Banna did not argue for a return to the "original" model of governance existing at the time of the Prophet.[241] Rather, the MB had to operate within "the existing constitutional parliamentary framework in Egypt (that), if reformed, would satisfy the political requirements of Islam for a Muslim state".[242] Once again, the *evolutionary* rather than *revolutionary* nature of the MB is apparent and worth highlighting, as its importance will become clear later on in the thesis, especially when addressing Roy's understanding of "failure". Dedicated to a bottom-up approach, the MB aimed at constituting an inclusive society based on the teachings contained within the Quran and in the Sunnah, and successfully combined this inclination towards social and charity work with political activism and revolutionary activities.[243] This strategy, combined with the widespread frustration with Egypt's colonial ruler and corrupted government, was one of the elements that awarded the MB with unprecedented levels of popular support, which, in turn, made it a threat to the existing system of government.

While the exact level of support that the MB gained throughout the decades is hard to encapsulate in an exact figure, there are some statistics and estimates that can be used to provide an idea of just how quickly its influence grew. Munson notes that while the group remained relatively small in its first 3 years, it had 5 branch offices by 1930,

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[239] Ayoob, M., *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, p. 65
[240] ibid., p. 66
[241] Mitchell, P., R., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p.235
[242] ibid.
[243] El-Hudaibi, "The principles of the Muslim Brotherhood", *Ikhwan Web*, (1 February 2010) http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=813

15 by 1932, and 300 by 1938. Following from this, while the exact membership figures are unknown, 300 branches probably represented between 50,000 and 150,000 members, with at least double the amount of unofficial supporters.[244] By 1949, when the MB had become explicitly critical of British colonial forces had had began participating in parliamentary elections, the organization had over 2,000 branches throughout Egypt and between 300,000 and 600,000 active members— making it the largest organized force in the country.[245] Such a rapid and exponential growth is a good indication of just of unprecedented the level of popular support the MB enjoyed was, making the organisation a key actor in the country's political change and evolution.

However, when looking at the role played by the MB in the Egyptian context and examining the organization's significance as an Islamist political actor, it is necessary to be cautious when approaching matters of ideology, involvement with government, and internal schisms. This is the case as the history of the organization is dynamic, given various factors that forced the MB to constantly evolve in order to survive regime repression and therefore to develop impressive adaptation skills. While there has not been an extreme shift from al Banna's original teachings, the organization's narrative has shifted and the MB has evolved from a mostly religious and social movement to a more politicized one. Moreover, as will be developed further, it is necessary to note that the history of the organization is characterised by recurrent internal schisms over ideology and tactics, with its political evolution therefore being less than harmonious, both elements that would have a significant impact on the creation and performance of the FJP.

The Brotherhood's relations with different Egyptian presidents is also similarly challenging to evaluate, as they have been characterised by short periods of relative collaboration and decades of harsh repression. The controversial claim that the organization has also often resorted to the use of violence as a way to achieve its aims also needs to be carefully assessed. Therefore, all these aspects will now be examined

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[244] Munson, Z., "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Muslim Brotherhood", in *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4, (2001), p. 488
[245] ibid., p. 489

further in order to achieve a complete and objective understanding of the MB's significance in the Egyptian context. All along, it is necessary to keep in mind that the Brotherhood has played a fundamental role as both a civil society actor and political entity since its inception, and that its relevance as such needs to be carefully assessed especially in the light of contemporary events.

2.4 The Politicisation of a Religious Movement

The increasing influence of British colonial power on Egyptian affairs and the outbreak of the 1936 Arab Revolt in Palestine are amongst the main factors triggering the politicization of the Brotherhood, which also showed support for the Palestinian struggle through its newsletter and by encouraging sympathy for those rebelling.[246] The MB's newsletter can be used as a tool to track the organization's political evolution, as it was through it that the MB openly condemned the corruption of the Egyptian regime and repeatedly attacked British power. The Brotherhood's participation in the 1941 Parliamentary elections that marked the beginning of the organization's transition into a powerful political entity was also announced through their weekly magazine, which embodied the movement's political essence.[247] The Brotherhood's decision to participate in Parliamentary elections was not unexpected, as at the turn of 1940s the organization was at the peak of its popular success, with approximately 150,000 supporters and more than 300 branches spread across the country.[248] The Brotherhood's capability to mobilise such a significant amount of people was instrumental for the success of the increasing popular protests and strikes that were taking place at the time, and is an aspect that will be analysed further as it made the group both a threatening opposition force and a potential powerful ally for the Egyptian regime, something that would have a great relevance in the political vacuum that followed Mubarak's removal in 2011.

The Brotherhood's shift into becoming a mostly political actor, directly engaged in electoral politics despite the state's repression, did not alter the aims of the

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[246] ibid., p. 488

[247] ibid., p. 489

[248] Wright, R., *The Wrath of Militant Islam* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), pp. 175-179

organization nor did it weakened its core ideological positions, but rather further developed and clarified many of them. According to Zahid, one of al Banna's main motivations to embark on such a political transition was the aim of responding to the worsening economic crisis and increasing secular practices with a more powerful voice, that even as a successful civil society actor the Brotherhood simply did not have.[249] The political rhetoric adopted by the Brotherhood therefore included the objective of countering Egypt's moral decline and rising poverty through the constitution of the *umma*, the Muslim collective community, and also strongly focused on the removal of external pressures on the state.[250] The necessity to counter Western colonialism and to expel British forces from the country was in fact central to the Brotherhood's political discourse, together with the implementation and spreading of a more pure and less corrupted vision of the Islamic faith. To an extent, these are still some of the central aims of the organization today, even if slightly modified to meet contemporary challenges.

The MB found the legal basis for its increasingly politicized agenda and aims in the already existing Egyptian bureaucratic system and constitution, as al Banna was committed to the *evolutionary* reformation of modern state structures rather than to their complete eradication. The Brotherhood's famous slogan "Islam is the solution" fits perfectly within Article 2 of the Egyptian constitution, which made "the principles of Islamic Law the main source of legislation" and therefore legitimized the organization's call for a society based on original Islamic teachings.[251] Article 2 allows for the establishment of an Islamic state by recognising *shari'a* Law as a legitimate and principal source on jurisprudence, which once again underlines the link between the Egyptian state and Islamic thought. However, while Article 2 has been in place since 1952, its formulation had never specified the way in which such correlation had to be drawn, who was in charge of codifying *shari'a* into legislations, and which branch of Sunni Islam or school of jurisprudence had to be taken into account. These are all

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[249] ibid.

[250] Zahid, M., *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's succession crisis: the politics of liberalisation and reform in the Middle East*, p. 74

[251] Saleh, N., "The 2012 Constitution of Egypt", *Middle East, Information Technology, Foreign Policy*, http://niviensaleh.info/constitution-egypt-2012-translation/

aspects that the FJP would clarify when in power in the Constitution of December 2012, which is also often referred to as the MB's most obvious attempt to begin the Islamisation of the Egyptian state.

When it comes to the Brotherhood's politicization and to their agenda, a frequent source of debate is the role that its commitment to democracy has historically played within the organization's narrative. There are many who contest the applicability of this notion, however it needs to be noted that while al Banna was openly opposed to the concept of "partyism" and considered it one of the main reasons behind the corruption of the Egyptian parliament, he also argued that a democratic framework was not incompatible with an Islamic society but rather a component of it:[252]

> When one considers the principles that guide the constitutional system of government, one finds that such principles aim to preserve in all its forms the freedom of the individual citizen, to make the rulers accountable for their actions to the people and finally, to delimit the prerogatives of every single authoritative body. It will be clear to everyone that such basic principles correspond perfectly to the teaching of Islam concerning the system of government. For this reason, the Muslim Brothers consider that of all the existing systems of government, the constitutional system is the form that best suits Islam and Muslims.[253]

The Brotherhood's commitment to an Islamic conception of democracy fundamentally distinguishes the group from more radical Islamist organizations such as the Salafist Al Nour movement, and the value attributed to participation is also evident in the major role played within the organization by its followers and supporters. Moreover, as Eid Mohammed underlines, the MB is known for operating within the governmental framework existing in Egypt throughout the 20th century, and its commitment to the achievement of a more democratic political system is something that distinguished the organization especially during Hosni Mubarak's 30 year rule.[254] Since the 2005

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[252] Mitchell, P., R., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 261

[253] Lia, B., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942*, p. 202

[254] Eid, M., "The Muslim Brotherhood: Between Democracy, Ideology, and Distrust", *Brookings*, (11 January 2013) http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/01/11-muslim-brotherhood-mohamed

elections, democratic commitment and inclusive governance have been two of the main elements characterising the Brotherhood's political agenda, however, they are also a source of internal debates and disagreements, as became clear in the post-2012 political context.

Since openly politicizing its strategies, the MB experienced a further growth in support and popularity that, according to Munson, was due to three specific historical and political conditions. These were the continuing influence of British power on the Egyptian state, the loss of support experienced by the once anti-colonial Wafd Party, and the growing ideological struggle over the creation of the state of Israel.[255] At the time when the Brotherhood entered the political arena, the British issue was dominating Egypt's political debates, and the once nationalist Wafd party was controversially allying with both the government and the colonizers, thereby giving up its role as one of the main oppositional parties.[256] It follows that the Brotherhood quickly replaced the Wafd party in the public battle against colonialism, subsequently gaining even more followers and supporters, especially when coupled with the commitment to the Palestinian cause and clear opposition to the state of Israel.[257]

A very similar narrative, even if slightly modernised in order to fit contemporary events, was central to the Brotherhood's aims and political manifesto under the Morsi government, whose involvement in the 2012 Gaza conflict is often referred to as a continuation of the group's Islamist ideology. Moreover, upon becoming a political actor, the MB quickly filled the political vacuum taking place in Egypt at the time, but its ever-growing popularity soon started to be perceived as a threat by the regime. For this reason in 1941 the Brotherhood was outlawed, and al Banna and other prominent Brotherhood leaders were arrested in October, starting off the cycle of illegality and strive for legitimacy that was to characterise the organization for decades to come.[258]

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[255] Munson, Z., "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Muslim Brotherhood", pp. 494-495

[256] ibid., p. 187

[257] Munson, Z., "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Muslim Brotherhood", p. 495

[258] Mitchell, P., R., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 21

2.5 Radicalization[259] and Use of Political Violence

The MB is usually regarded as a moderate Islamist organization, however, there are also those who claim this to be false and consider it a radical and violent group.[260] In fact, despite the MB's clear commitment to the use of peaceful means, the group has historically been linked to political violence and lesser *jihad.*[261] This is particularly the case as some of its offshoots, such as Hamas, have often recurred to violence to achieve their aims and to the fact that some prominent members of Al Qaeda claimed in the past to have been directly inspired by some of the Brotherhood's ideologues.[262] There are consistent debates even within the literature regarding the historical heritage of the MB, with some considering it a laboratory for Political Islam and democratic progress and others viewing it as a core cradle of Islamist political violence. This latest claim needs to be assessed, as the history of the organization has been characterised by disputes over matters of ideology and tactics, which have arguably affected its political development and evolution.

While the equation of the MB to political violence and extremism is not inherently incorrect according to some of its followers, it is necessary to recognise that such a notion does not account for the narrative and aims of the "mother" organization. Moreover, the radicalization of some of the organizations narratives and members can also be explained largely as a defensive rather than an offensive measure.[263] There are two "trends" of radicalization that can be identified when looking at the Brotherhood's history, however, a deeper analysis then shows that such events had been carried on by splinter groups or single individuals rather than by the "official" MB itself. The first

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[259] In this context "radicalisation" is understood as a process through which an individual or group come to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideas that undermine freedom of choice or Human Rights.

[260] This is manifested in the MB's proscription as a terrorist group by Egypt, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates.

[261] Bergesen, J., (ed.), *The Sayyid Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion, and Society*, pp. 6-8

[262] Sennot, M., C., "Inside the Muslim Brotherhood", *Frontline: Special Reports*, (21 February 2011) http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/egypt/110220/inside-the-muslim-brotherhood

[263] Ardovini, A., "Profiling the Muslim Brotherhood: Radicalisation and Extremism", in *Radicalisation Research*, (September 2015) http://www.radicalisationresearch.org/debate/ardovini-2015-muslim-brotherhood/

radicalization "trend" that swept the MB, in terms of both ideology and recurrence to violence as a means to an end, came at the peak of the organization's popularity in the early 1940s. This was a time when its members started separating into different groups with a significant divide taking place between the "traditional" Brothers and those who wanted to be more active in politics, therefore creating ideological debates.

The result of this schism was the creation of the Secret Apparatus, a paramilitary group that interpreted the slogan "jihad is our way" literally and therefore countered the MB's commitment to peaceful and constitutional means.[264] The Secret Apparatus was officially founded in order to offer protection to the Brotherhood's leaders and to further the organisation's aims through the use of politically motivated violence.[265] It was particularly active in the years between 1947 and 1949 and the escalation of violent activities linked to the paramilitary group led to the dissolution and outlawing of the "mother" organization in 1948.[266] However, it is necessary to note that this particular militia group was only a splinter of the original MB, and therefore separated from its "original" narrative in terms of both strategies and aims. Interestingly, MB members and supporters I have interviewed[267] all vehemently rejected the idea of the Secret Apparatus being somewhat attached to or representative of the mainstream organisation. Therefore, it follows that branding the main MB as extremist and radicalised is inappropriate, despite international efforts to proscribe the group as "terrorist".

Looking at the Brotherhood's history there is a second radicalisation "trend" that can be identified, which came in 1954 after Gamal Nasser's crackdown on the organization and with the emergence of "Qutbism". This trend could be understood as being defensive rather than offensive in nature. Regarded as one of the most influential Islamist scholars, Qutb was a founding member of the Brotherhood and shared al

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[264] Stilt, K., "Islam is the Solution: Constitutional visions of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood", pp. 76-78

[265] ibid.

[266] Zahid, M., *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's succession crisis: the politics of liberalisation and reform in the Middle East,* pp. 75-77

[267] Interviews with 3 MB members and 2 MB supporters.

Banna's preoccupation with the "degenerated" state of Egyptian society. Responding to Nasser's authoritarian and nationalist regime, Qutb took direct inspiration from Mawdudi's interpretation of *jahiliyya*, Islamic ignorance, and developed it further to make it embody a condition that could exist at any time rather than just an historical period.[268] By doing so, in his book "Milestones", Qutb identified *jahiliyya* as the core characteristic of secular regimes, Western values, and Nasser's government, which were therefore all obstacles to the achievement of an Islamic society.[269]

He consequently argued that the practice of *jihad* was the only solution to the removal of these obstacles, and understood it in both his greater sense as "personal/internal battle" and in a lesser sense as "armed struggle"[270]. Qutb subsequently developed a very precise set of notions that justified the use of violent *jihad* as opposed to peaceful means to express opposition against the regime, which appealed to many Brothers especially during Nasser's repressive rule. This consequently led to a deep ideological division within the organisation, and this radicalised narrative kept on fascinating numerous Muslim Brothers even after Qutb's death in 1966.[271] Subscription to Qutb's radicalised narrative is the main reason why links can easily be made between the MB and extremism or political violence. However, it needs to be pointed out that the existence of a paramilitary wing and the recourse to violent means has been condemned multiple times by the "mother" organization. While the group's affiliation to such practice is undeniable, one must always keep in mind the Brotherhood's diversity and internal divisions.

It is therefore a fact that certain factions of the group resorted to violent *jihad* and political violence at various times throughout its history, and the peak of such activities can be identified in the assassination of Anwar Sadat by one of the Brotherhood's

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[268] Ayoob, M., *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, p. 73

[269] Qutb, S., *Milestones*, p. 8

[270] Zollner, B., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan l-Hudaybi and* Ideology, pp. 58-63

[271] Qutb was hanged in 1966 under the accusation of having participated in the plot to assassinate Nasser.

splinter groups in 1981.[272] Moreover, Qutb's influence went beyond the sole use of violent *jihad*, but marked a clear radicalization of the Brotherhood's core ideology as well. Under Qutb's legacy, many young Muslim Brothers grew increasingly dissatisfied with what they identified as the organization's passivity towards the government oppression and persecution.[273] Such frustration and dissatisfaction with the organization's strategies led to further schisms and internal division, with many members leaving the "mother" organization in order to form more militant groups.[274]

It needs to be noted that the original components and majority of MB's members remained moderate and committed to peaceful means, increasingly focusing on social provision and political activism as a way to engage with the Egyptian population and government. This internal shift was further accentuated in the 1970s, when the Muslim Brotherhood guide and moderate Hasan al Hudaybi condemned and *de facto* excommunicated Sayyid Qutb in his book *Du'a la Quda* (Preachers, not Judges).[275] In Hudaybi's words: "Sayyid Qutb represented himself alone and not the Muslim Brethen".[276] Therefore, while it is clear that the Brotherhood has indeed been subjected to some radicalization trends, it should also be said that the "mother" organization also quickly distanced itself from its more radical elements. For this reason, arguing that the organization as a whole is radical and extremist is inappropriate, and for the purposes of this thesis only the moderate and mainstream part of the Brotherhood will be examined.

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[272] Al Arian, A., "Egypt: Reducing the Past", in *Al Jazeera*, (February 2011), http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/02/20112110358461902.html
[273] Soage, A., Franganillo. J., "The Muslim Brothers in Egypt", in Rubin, B., (ed). *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist Movement*. (New York: Palgrave, 2010)
[274] ibid.
[275] Zollner, B., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and ideology*, chapter 3
[276] Ayoob, M., *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, p. 80

2.6 The Brotherhood as a double-edged sword: source of legitimacy or threat?

The year 1941 marked the start of the Brotherhood's unstable relation with the Egyptian state, which saw cycles of political cooperation alternating with violent crackdowns and repeated outlawing of the country's leading Islamist movement. This was mostly due to one of the Brotherhood's most striking characteristic and resources, which is the unprecedented number of followers that, given its popularity, the organization could mobilise at any given time. As said before, while the exact numbers are hard to pin down, it is believed that at the time the MB had more than 150,000 active members, and about three times that amount of supporters.[277] This aspect was fundamental to the MB's political transition, and while making alliances with the organization has looked desirable to many Egyptian presidents, it also turned it into a considerable potential threat to the government's legitimacy. A similar pattern can be also identified when looking at the fragile and mutually beneficial alliance that the MB struck with SCAF after Mubarak's removal in 2011, which saw the remnants of the deep state once again temporarily coming to terms with the organisation as a way to meet popular expectations and gain legitimacy.

The Nasserist era is generally remembered as one of the most repressive times in the Brotherhood's history, characterised by persecutions, crackdowns, and illegality. However, there was a time during which these two political entities cooperated and worked together to better the country's conditions and fight external influences. The initial harmony between Nasser and the MB could be understood by considering that many of the Free Officers, including Nasser himself, came from an *Ikhwani* background and more specifically from the ranks of the Secret Apparatus, before it radicalised.[278]

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[277] Munson, Z., "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Muslim Brotherhood", p. 488
[278] All the five founders of the Free Officers Movement, namely Gamal Abdel Nasser, Abdel Monem, Abdel Rauf, Khaled Muhied-dine, Kamaleddine Hussein, and Hassan Ibrahim, had been trained under the Brotherhood's paramilitary organisation and had been active members of the Secret Apparatus between 1944 and 1945. Al-Ahram Staff, "All the Revolution's Men", in *Al-Ahram*, Vol. 18, No. 595, (July 2002)

It follows that the two groups had several key objectives in common, namely the removal of colonialism, tackling of the worsening socio-political conditions, and opposition to an increasingly corrupted government.[279] What tends to be forgotten is that Nasser himself was initially committed to a gradual Islamization of society as a means to get rid of external powers, which further accentuated the collaboration between these two entities; however, lacking a clear strategy themselves, the Free Officers heavily relied on the Brotherhood.[280] Moreover, because of the Brotherhood's popularity, the Free Officers heavily relied on this political alliance as a way to seek legitimacy after the coup, as they lacked a clear ideological narrative and therefore needed the MB to secure popular support.[281] Sadat and Mubarak also had a very similar affiliation to the MB at the start of their respective presidencies, showing various degrees of ideological opportunism that then ceased when they realised how powerful the organization actually was.

Nasser's initial affiliation with the MB bore its fruits, as the removal of King Farouk was seen by many as a proxy victory for the Islamist organization[282] and the Brotherhood leader al Hudaybi went as far as describing the coup as a "blessed revolution".[283] Therefore the Brotherhood initially acted as a source of legitimization for the Nasserist regime, but by 1953 this somewhat cooperative relationship had already started to crumble. As the Free Officers' popularity started to fade Nasser perceived the MB increasingly as a threat rather than an ally, and a long series of skirmishes and disagreements eventually culminated with the dissolution of the organization in January 1954.[284] The banning of the Brotherhood put the organization into an illegal status that lasted up to 2011, and caused a spiral of internal chaos that made Qutb's narrative appeal to an increasing number of members. The appeal of such radicalised

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[279] Cook, S., *The Struggle for Egypt: from Nasser to Tahrir Square* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 40

[280] Aburish, S., K., *Nasser: The last Arab*, pp. 11-12

[281] Farag, N., "Between piety and Politics: Social Services and the Muslim Brotherhood", in *PBS Frontline: Revolution in Cairo*, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/revolution-in-cairo/inside-muslim-brotherhood/piety-and-politics.html

[282] Zollner, B., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and ideology*, p. 414

[283] Elbendary, A., "The Long Revolution", in *Al-Ahram*, Vol. 18, No. 595, (24 July 2012)

[284] Rubin, B., *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1990) pp. 10-13

ideology was justified by Nasser's increasing persecution towards the MB, with thousands of followers being sent to concentration camp-like prisons, and many of these being executed on 9th December 1954.[285]

Even though the repression experienced during the Nasserist era did not eliminate the MB from the Egyptian political sphere, the organization lost approximately 4,000 followers as a direct consequence of it and was affected by unprecedented internal schisms, a blow from which it took a while to recover. Even though it was temporarily removed from the realm of high politics, the organization maintained its social activities that had always made it a fundamental low politics actor. Moreover, thanks to Sadat's initial openness, the 1970s witnessed a successful rebuilding of the Brotherhood, which went back to being one of the most powerful oppositional forces in the country. Zahid notes that Sadat's justifications for once again opening up the political system to the Brotherhood were very similar to Nasser's, as the newly installed President was in need of the legitimacy that in Egypt was inevitably tied up with the Islamic faith and with the Brotherhood.[286] Because of this and of Sadat's own religiosity, the Egyptian president is very often remembered as the "believing president".[287] It is important to note that while Sadat did welcome the Brotherhood back into the political context, he did not lift the illegal status of the organization, which therefore remained an unofficial but influential political actor.

This initial cooperation was indeed mutually beneficial, as Sadat gained considerable popular support while the MB was once again able to pursue its aims through legal and political means, whose success is clearly shown on the recognition of *shari'a* law as the main source of jurisprudence in 1971.[288] However, Sadat's increasing cooperation with Israel and the authoritarian nature of most of his policies soon brought history to repeat itself, with his refusal to legally re-install the organization

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[285] ibid., pp. 10-13

[286] Zahid, M., *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's succession crisis: the politics of liberalisation and reform in the Middle East*, pp. 81-83

[287] ibid.

[288] Berkley Staff, "Egypt", in *Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs*, http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/resources/countries/egypt

further souring his relations with the Brotherhood.[289] Sadat's popularity declined to the point that the Brotherhood joined the ranks of the political opposition once again, and allegedly played a role in both the political uprisings of the late 1970s and in Sadat's assassination in 1981.[290]

It can be seen that there are parallels between Nasser and Sadat when it comes to their relationship with the MB, and that the history of the organization is in this sense cyclical. Both Presidents sought the Brotherhood's support in order to secure legitimacy and popular support, and turned on the organization when they feared to be overthrown. This is the case as the MB's commitment to both governance and society meant that the organisation could mobilise popular support to a degree unmatchable by the state, as it was perceived by the millions of destitute Egyptians has having replaced the state when it came to the provision social services. Coupled with the fact that the MB also represented one of the most organised actors of the political opposition in the country, it follows that the organisation was indeed an important source of legitimacy. Nasser was the first president to fully grasp the MB's potential in this sense, and took actions to use their popular base for his full advantage. However, contrary to what happened under Nasser, the failed cooperation between Sadat and the Brotherhood turned out to be highly beneficial for the organization, as it further shaped its political identity and narrative and renewed its commitment to political activism and resistance.

It follows that, when Hosni Mubarak took Sadat's place in 1981, the Brotherhood was once again one of the most influential and powerful oppositional forces in the country, relying on nearly 1 million official members.[291] It should not come as a surprise to notice that the organization's relations with the president developed according to a pattern that was similar to the one observed at the times of Nasser and Sadat, with

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[289] Hinnebusch, R., "Egypt under Sadat: Elites, Power Structure, and Political Change in a Post-Populist State", in *Social Problems*, Vol.28, No.4, (April 1981), p. 441
[290] Al Arian, A., "Egypt: Reducing the Past", in *Al Jazeera*, (February 2011), http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/02/20112110358461902.html
[291] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review", p. 20

the first years of Mubarak's rule being characterised by (relative) political openness aimed at gaining legitimacy and popular support. In an attempt to show his commitment to democracy Mubarak released various political prisoners, among whom were several influential Muslim Brothers, [292] just as Sadat had done after succeeding Nasser in 1970.[293] Once again, the similarities between the strategies adopted by the different Egyptian Presidents to gain popularity are clear to see.

Despite its illegal status, the Brotherhood managed to participate in both the 1987 and 2000 elections by having candidates running as individuals or by affiliating with external parties,[294] and reached the peak of its popularity again in 1994.[295] However, it soon became clear to Mubarak that the organization's ever-growing popular support was a direct threat to his rule,[296] and the Brotherhood and its members started being persecuted again under the State of Emergency Law.[297] Governmental censorship and propaganda were focused on disregarding the authority of the organisation and on accentuating the schism between its members, in a clear attempt to provoke a split that would cause the Brothers to abandon political activities in what was effectively becoming a one-party state.[298]

However, despite unprecedented repression and indiscriminate arrests, the Brotherhood managed to participate in the 2005 parliamentary elections, winning 88 seats (20% of the total places) and therefore confirming once again its status as Egypt's

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[292] Walsh, J., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", in *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (Winter 2003) http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=4634&ref=search.php

[293] ibid.

[294] Laub, Z., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood"

[295] Paison, M., "The History of the Muslim Brotherhood: The Political, Social and Economic Transformation of the Arab Republic of Egypt", *The Institute for Global Leadership*, http://tiglarchives.org/files/resources/nimep/v4/The%20History%20of%20the%20Muslim%20Brotherhood.pdf

[296] Davidson, C., "Reform and Repression in Mubarak's Egypt", in *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 2, (Fall 2000), pp. 85-87

[297] Ardovini, L., Mabon, S., "Egypt's Unbreakable Curse: tracing the State of Exception from Mubarak to al Sisi", submitted to *Review of International Studies* (June 2017)

[298] Ottaway, D., "Egypt at the tipping point?", in *Middle East Program (Occasional Papers Series)*, Summer 2010, p. 9

principal opposition entity.[299] In doing so, the Brotherhood also marked a clear break with the past, as it finally achieved the political recognition that its members had sought for decades. This victory caused Mubarak's authoritarianism to increase even more, with Ottaway noticing that the closest parallel that can be drawn between Sadat and Mubarak is the brutality of the continuous crackdowns on the Brotherhood.[300] By the time of the 2010 contested elections, which are now considered as one of the main motives behind the outbreak of the 2011 revolution, hundreds of political opponents and Muslim Brothers had been jailed but the Egyptian people never gave up hope. With popular rage being fuelled by almost three decades of authoritarian rule, opposition groups kept going and governmental authority was challenged daily, eventually leading to the events of the 25th January that marked the beginning of Mubarak's fall. According to its original strategies, the Muslim Brothers were going to be silent protagonists and essential players throughout the uprisings that eventually led to their rise to power for the first time in history.

2.7 The Muslim Brotherhood and Civil Society: "a state within a state"

It is now clear that the MB and the understandings of Islamism that they advocate are deeply ingrained into Egyptian life and both high and low politics, because of the involvement in civil society and political affairs that the organization sought since its very beginning. What makes the MB unique is the commitment that the group dedicated to both national politics and social welfare despite its illegal status, which made it both a fundamental social welfare agency and a political movement.

Moreover, for decades the group has been the strongest and most vocal opposition to the authoritarianism embodied by Mubarak's dictatorship, inevitably tying the history of the organization with that of the country itself. Known for its moderate approach, the Brotherhood (along with other Islamist organizations) arguably did more for the Egyptian population than the state itself. The MB focused on the achievement of its objectives through means such as education, social services, consciousness-rising and

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[299] Traub, J., "Islamic Democrats?", in *The New York Times Magazine*, (29 April 2007) http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/magazine/29Brotherhood.t.html?_r=0
[300] Ottaway, D., "Egypt at the tipping point?", p. 18

nonviolence, which shortly made it an irreplaceable civil society actor in Egypt.[301] The huge popular support that the organization enjoyed up to the 2011 Revolution was mostly due to the provision of social services across the country, and that focused in particular on the poorest parts of the population that were often neglected by the state. The organization set up and ran schools, hospitals and job training centres, essentially allowing social welfare to develop and flourish in Egypt.[302] This further shows how Islamist ideologies and the role of Islamist organizations are irreplaceably linked with the modern history and development of the state.

Of course while the MB was the most renowned grassroots Islamist organization in the state, it was definitely not the only non-governmental association to be active within civil society. The presence of many more once again emphasises that unique relationship between Islamist ideology and the state in Egypt. in the first half of the 20th century, the poorest parts of the Egyptian population were heavily reliant on the presence of Islamist groups, along with hundreds of Christian and secular non-governmental organizations, which stepped in and filled the welfare and societal gaps left by the state. Sullivan notes that the popularity of the MB and other Islamist groups, despite their illegal status, was mostly due to two simple reasons, namely the failure and corruption of the government that was therefore unable to provide for its citizens, and the willingness demonstrated by these organizations to fill the gaps left by the state.[303]

Often led by the Brotherhood, these religious and secular NGOs were the only civil society actors willing to help local communities tackle poverty, unemployment, and government neglect. "Mosque-based" NGOS, aided by their secular counterparts, have been instrumental in providing their society with what the Egyptian government promised but never fulfilled. Their frustration with the self-centred and corrupt centralised authority motivated them to identify the specific needs of local communities and population and to develop welfare and social structures to tackle

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[301] Sullivan, D., *Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State*, p. 20
[302] ibid., p. 22
[303] ibid., pp. 23-24

their essential requirements.[304] They built hospitals, provided education and support, and overall created a sense of civil society and community that was often underpinned by the adherence to the Islamic faith. Therefore the MB can be regarded as both a political organization and a welfare agency, which has been historically active and instrumental in providing health care, education, and the promotion of social services.[305]

The extent to which the Brotherhood provided basic social services becomes even clearer when looking at statistics put together by the humanitarian news agency Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) in 2006, according to which 20% of about 5,000 legally registered NGOs in Egypt were Brotherhood-run or affiliated.[306] Even if the state provides some subsidized public services such as education and healthcare, the quality and accessibility to these facilities are often so low that they leave the majority of the population on their own.[307] Especially in particularly impoverished areas, governmental clinics are incredibly rare and often understaffed, with only one doctor having to care for entire neighbourhoods at time.[308] On the other hand, thanks to the wide networks of volunteers and charitable donations, MB's clinics are generally well staffed and better distributed, and their medical services are held to be lower in cost and better in quality than those available through the public systems.[309] It was also found that in 2006 the organization ran more than 22 hospitals and at least one school in each of Egypt's governorates, along with hospitality and care centres for orphans and widows and training programs for the unemployed.[310]

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[304] Darrag, A., Brooke, S., "Politics or Piety? Why the Muslim Brotherhood engages in social services provision: a conversation", in *Brookings*, (May 2016) https://www.brookings.edu/research/politics-or-piety-why-the-muslim-brotherhood-engages-in-social-service-provision-a-conversation/

[305] ibid.

[306] Integrated Regional Information Network, "Egypt: social programmes bolster the appeal of Muslim Brotherhood", in *IRIN*, http://www.irinnews.org/report/26150/egypt-social-programmes-bolster-appeal-of-muslim-brotherhood

[307] ibid.

[308] ibid.

[309] Farag, N., "Between Piety and Politics: Social Services and the Muslim Brotherhood"

[310] Integrated Regional Information Network, "Egypt: social programmes bolster the appeal of Muslim Brotherhood"

Moreover, the services provided by these centres and institutions are open to all citizens regardless of their religious and political affiliation, and often considerably cheaper than private alternatives. As reported by IRIN in an interview with prominent Brotherhood member Gamal Abdel-Salam in 2006, "A woman would usually pay at least US $875 to give birth in a private clinic, compared to just US $175 in one of our hospitals".[311] Many other Brotherhood members, when interviewed regarding the organization's involvement in social services provision and its perception as an alternative provider of services, stated that these activities are undertaken because they are a requirement of the Islamic faith, therefore once again strengthening the deep cooperation within religion and society in Egypt. The MB's historical commitment to the provision of social services is yet another example of how inherently political their narratives and existence have always been, an aspect that further showcases their multifaceted involvement in the country's high and low politics levels.

2.8 Membership and *usra*: the "family system"

One of the main differences between the MB and other social movements is its highly selective membership system, which is designed to ensure cohesiveness through a long process of identification, indoctrination, and socialization.[312] Despite the MB populist nature, becoming an official *ikhwani* is a process that takes several years because, as a social movement, it is essential for the MB that its members internalise the organisation's ideology, norms, and core values, develop a sense of belonging and self-commitment (*iltizam*), and merge their identity with that of the organization.[313] This last element is key to the MB's renowned influence and further stresses the "identity-politics" component of the organization's message, which significantly contributes to its strong and unmatchable organizational structure. Such rigidity can be easily explained by the fact that the MB had to exist in repressive conditions for the majority of its history, with the regime targeting its members and discriminating against them along sectarian lines in an attempt to diminish their influence and

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[311] ibid.

[312] Al Anani, K., *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity, and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 67

[313] ibid.

legitimacy. Therefore, the highly selective process prospective members have to go through is intentionally designed to avoid infiltration, to the point when one has to be formally invited to become a member rather than doing so voluntarily, leading one MB saying "the movement selects its sons",[314] and an ex-member stating "I did not join the Brotherhood, I was selected. The Brotherhood recruited me since I was eight years old through its children's program in my village".[315]

The MB members I interviewed were reticent when asked to talk about the organisation's internal structure, and it quickly became clear to me that this is a topic they would rather not discuss.[316] This could be attributable to the international scrutiny the MB is currently subjected to, which leads it members to be secretive when it comes to its inner workings. While there is a lack of original primary data on this topic, there is a consistent body of literature that examines what makes the MB so structurally rigorous and unique. The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee's piece, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review", casts some light on this. In addition to the lengthy and strict recruitment process outlined above, the MB builds and maintains its organizational unity with what is generally known as "usra", or as "the family system". First developed in 1949 the *usra* serves two main principles: it reinforces loyalty to avoid infiltration, and essentially constitutes an Islamic studies circle, in which the first step of *da'wa* is delivered.[317] The *usra* also constitutes the first of the three sphere that make up the national structure of the MB, with the other two being the regional and the national one. Evidence collected in the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on Political Islam and the Brotherhood describes the national hierarchical structure that governs the organisation as follows:

> The first organizational sphere is the local one in which each *usra*, "family", chooses a leader (naqib) to represent it on the administrative council of the local Muslim Brotherhood branch. Each family member is required to lead an Islamic lifestyle; "Regional—The activity of the

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[314] ibid.

[315] ibid.

[316] Interviews with MB current and former members.

[317] Wonder, K., *Re-Islamization in Higher Education and from above and below: the University of South Florida and its Global Context* (University of South Florida, 2008), p. 222

"families" is monitored by a regional administration…The activity of the regional administrations is directed by the professional departments, subjected to the General Guidance Office". "National—the structure of the Muslim Brotherhood has remained essentially identical to the initial scheme formed in the 1930s and 1940s". The submission explained that the top decision-making body of the Muslim Brotherhood was the General Guidance Office, which operated in conjunction with the General Shura Council.[318]

Such a tightly organised and interconnected structure is arguably what makes the MB's internal organisation unique, and has been a key factor in making the group one of the most powerful and influential opposition actors in Egypt up to Mubarak's removal in 2011. In addition, this internal structure and organisation was also reflected in the MB's unrivalled capability in mobilising people, which was explained to me by a secular activist that had marched in protests with the MB even before the events of 2011: "The MB are very organised. They have all of these hands signs (for protests) that indicate when to chant, when to march, when to stop. And also, they know how to mobilise. To the extent that, if you were participating in a protest before 2011, it would be 50% MBs and 50% other protesters from other groups".[319]

It is clear that the MB's internal structure undeniably put it in an advantaged position in the aftermath of Mubarak's removal, especially when combined with its decades-long experience within the circles of the opposition. However, despite these organisational efforts to foster unity and a sense of belonging, deep cracks and schisms along ideological lines have historically been characteristic of the MB, and their implications are arguably one of the main factors that would lead to the FJP's deposition in July 2013. A more detailed insight into how internal divisions shaped the creation of the FJP and the appointment of its leaders will be provided in Chapter 4, but it can be said now that this dichotomy between two separate ideological groups had a dramatic impact on the MB's performance while in government. The MB's lack of trust for outsiders and consequent lack of willingness to cooperate with the 2011 revolutionaries, together with the preference given to loyalty over expertise, can be

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[318] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review", p. 21
[319] Interview with a secular activist.

understood as direct results of the strict *usra* system that, designed to keep the MB united in times of repression, arguably played a major role in its downfall.

2.9 An history of Internal Divisions

Just as a troubled relationship with the Egyptian government is characteristic of the MB own history, so are the recurrent internal divisions and schism over ideology and tactics that indeed affected the organization's political development. Because of the extremely dynamic context in which the organization developed, and because of the often authoritarian nature of the Egyptian regimes, the MB had to learn to quickly adapt to changing and challenging situations, which, however, came with a price to pay in terms of internal harmony and overall political narrative. The first radicalisation "trend" that hit the Brotherhood in the Nasserist era brought about internal debates over ideology and the use of violence as a legitimate means, which led an era of confrontation within the organization itself. Such internal debates are also further proof of how diverse the "same" manifestation of Political Islam can be, depending on circumstances, individuals, and perspectives. It needs to be noted here that many could look at the MB ongoing history of internal divisions as being mostly based on tactical differences within a unique ideological context. While that is true to an extent, it needs to be acknowledged that, especially after 2011, internal schisms became so drastic that their source goes beyond just tactical differences, and that groups within the MB ended up following what arguably were distinct ideological paths.

The first manifestation of internal schisms was triggered by a series of historical coincidences, these being the death of al Banna, which caused debates over leadership, the group's outlawing at the hands of Nasser, and its deteriorating popularity because of illegality and of the regime's repression. In such a context the radicalised doctrine developed by Sayyid Qutb became appealing to many Muslim Brothers, who subscribed to a narrative that was inherently opposite to that articulated by al Banna himself.[320] While these divisions were mostly based on tactics at the start, it can be argued that they quickly became ideological, given the

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[320] Lynch, M., "The Brotherhood's Dilemma", in *Middle East Brief*, No. 25, (Jan. 2008), p. 6

incompatibility of the messages put forward by al Banna and Qutb. In fact, those radicalised soon clashed with the organization's new *murshid* (general guide) Hassan al Hudaybi, who was appointed in 1951 and shared with al Banna a deep friendship and a similar narrative.[321] The new General Guide was renowned for being explicitly committed to a gradual Islamization of society and to the use of peaceful means,[322] and his strategy to constitutionally regain the organization's lost legality and popularity was not shared by all. While al Hudaybi called for a stop to public rallies and manifestations and openly condemned the Secret Apparatus's radical tactics,[323] those who were supportive or part of the militia effectively left the organization and openly challenged it, asking for al Hudaybi's resignation.[324] These events marked the peak of the organization's ideological schisms, and also slowed down the MB's political development. From the 1950s onwards the Brotherhood has struggled to present itself as a united socio-political movement, something that arguably deeply affected the smooth running of the organization once President Morsi was elected into power in 2012.

While Sadat's time was relatively calm in terms of internal schisms, it still marked a definite evolution in terms of the organization's narrative and aims. The arrest and execution of Sayyid Qutb ended debates over leadership,[325] and al Hudaiby's beliefs led to an unprecedented change within the organization that was going to characterise its ideology and tactics from then on: the final shift from spiritual to political activism, which in turn impacted on the moderate Brotherhood's strategy and aims.[326] If during Nasser's rule the Brotherhood's political aims were strongly obstructed by internal disputes between competing leaders and narratives, soon after Sadat's appointment the focus shifted towards achieving political recognition and inaugurated the

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[321] Zollner, B., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and ideology*, pp. 17-20

[322] Zahid, M., *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's succession crisis: the politics of liberalisation and reform in the Middle East*, p. 78

[323] ibid.

[324] ibid., p. 77

[325] Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: evolution of an Islamist Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 29-30

[326] Meijer, R., Bakker, E., (eds.), *The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2012), pp. 305-308

beginning of the Brotherhood's modern era.[327] The Brotherhood started evolving from a grass-root religious organization and occasionally violent group to an influential political movement, developing an Islamist ideology that still characterises it.[328] Even if making such affirmations could be considered controversial, as the political inclination was present since the Brotherhood's inception in 1928, it is undeniable that the shift in aims happened then and that this trend has been characteristic of the Brotherhood ever since. Such an inclination was continued by the third *murshid* Umar al Tilmisani, whose leadership was instrumental in rejecting the use of violent *jihad* and therefore marking the shift towards a politicised narrative, and in leading the Brotherhood to the elections as independents in 1984.[329] Even if short lived, this internal harmony allowed the MB to pursue its own re-building and path to legalization, which would be instrumental to its survival during Mubarak's era.

The Brotherhood's now official ideological and tactical commitment to political means continued throughout the Mubarak's era. However, even if the internal schisms that characterised the organization throughout its history seemed to have reduced significantly during the first years of Sadat's Egypt, such confrontations quickly arose again with the increasing influence of the MB. The internal divisions characteristic of these era can be seen as being mostly tactical rather than ideological. The internal struggles that emerged in the early 1980s grew central to the organisation's running and, even if the Mubarak era undoubtedly marked one of the highest peaks of the Brotherhood's political activity, the continuous internal debates limited its potential. What in the times of Qutb and al Hudaybi was a disagreement between a moderate and a radical ideology turned into a confrontation over political involvement in the

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[327] The original beliefs in Islam as a complete system and tolerance of diversity that had been lost in the internal struggles typical of the Nasserist era came back to being central to the organization's narrative, and so did the commitment to *da'wa* as an invitation to Islam and to the application of Shari'a Law. Al Arian, A., "Re-engaging the State: the Muslim Brotherhood, the Sadat regime, and the quest for Islamic government in 1970s Egypt", in *Minaret of Freedom Blog*, (March 2013) http://blog.minaret.org/?p=8781

[328] These new members that joined the Brotherhood under Sadat constitute the leaders of today, who are committed to the original aims of the organisation such as the Islamization of society and the institution of an Islamic state, but seeks to achieve them through political means rather than only through spirituality. Zahid, M., *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's succession crisis: the politics of liberalisation and reform in the Middle East*, pp. 93-94

[329] El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", p. 378

1980s. This was due to the emergence of a new, younger generation of Muslim Brothers who were more committed to political means rather than religious preaching,[330] and therefore soon started to clash with the "Old Guard's" traditional approaches.[331]

The "new" Muslim Brothers took political dynamism and involvement very seriously, pursuing alliances with other opposition parties and participating in elections as independents in 1984, effectively taking the Brotherhood back to its old popularity and influence. [332] However, those constituting the Old Guard were highly reticent to be so deeply involved in the country's political life, and attributed the Brotherhood's success to Mubarak's growing authoritarianism and harsher repression of the organization.[333] As it happened in the 1950s with the advent of Qutbism, the internal debates eventually led to a breaking point over the creation of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated party al Wasat. With the Old Guard strongly challenging its creation, the organization came close to yet another crisis, therefore proving that internal disagreements remained the Brotherhood's weakest point.[334]

This is the case as internal schisms have occurred at different times within the organisation – and continued to do so until the 2013 *coup* – stemming from different visions over the political role of the MB, which translated into both ideological and tactical questions. The internal challenges that swept the organisation in the 1980s re-emerged in 2012 over the creation of the Freedom and Justice party, which

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[330] Those in the Old Guard remained committed to al Banna's original teachings and to the progressive Islamisation of society trough *da'awa* in its stricter sense, something that emerged as a strong contradiction to the Brotherhood's new political dynamism and narrative. Zahid, M., *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's succession crisis: the politics of liberalisation and reform in the Middle East,* pp. 91-93

[331] Philips, D., *From Bullets to Ballots: Violent Muslim Movements in Transition* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009), pp. 14-15

[332] Shehata, D., *Islamists and non-Islamists in the Egyptian opposition: Patterns of conflict and cooperation* (Washington: UMI, 2007), pp. 139-140

[333] Schenker, D., "Egypt's Enduring Challenges", in *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, Policy Focus, No. 110, p. 13

[334] To avoid the potentially disastrous splitting of the movement, a compromise was reached and the members who sought to create al Wasat and to be legally involved in the electoral process left the Brotherhood, although taking a consistent number of followers with them. El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", pp. 386-387

demonstrates how the Brotherhood still struggles to act as an ideologically and strategically unified political entity.

In the pre-2011 era, ideological schisms within the MB can be described as a divide between "conservatives", or "traditionalists", and "reformists". Traditionalism here does not refer to a commitment to pre-modern Islamic thought, but rather puts an emphasis on the MB's "traditions", these being gradualism, hierarchy, and "listening and obeying".[335] These divisions can also be thought of as two very clear, distinct boxes: an open box and a black box. The open box would represent the Reformist wing, whose followers identify with Al Tilmisani's school of thought, led by former presidential candidate Abdel Fotouh up until the schism that happened in 2011. The MB members composing this wing mostly joined the organisation in the 1970s and share a general background as student activists in universities, therefore being more open to outsiders, and willing to engage in dialogue and political activities with external actors. As the events following January 25th demonstrated, there are bigger strategic and tactical questions that emerge from these ideological differences.

On the other hand, the black box represents the Conservative/Qutbi wing, headed by Khairat al Shater, who would play a key role in both the creation and administration of the FJP in 2011. The conservative wing is characterised by a close-minded position and structure that derives from its members' shared historical experience: most of those belonging to this group came to the organization at the time of Qutbism and were imprisoned under Nasser, consequently being less trustful of both outsiders and fellow MB members who do not belong to their close circle. Particularly when it comes to the Conservative wing, and to the role that they played throughout Morsi's presidency, one could argue that their strategies and political behaviour also marked a very clear ideological schism from the rest of the MB membership.

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[335] Hamid, S., McCants, W., Dar, R., "Islamism after the Arab Springs: between the Islamic State and the Nation State", in *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World - U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers 2015,* (January 2017), p. 3

Most current MB members and supporters interviewed vehemently deny the presence of historical divisions within the MB, and rather argue that these have been over-emphasised by external actors seeking to diminish the organisation's renowned unity. This is somewhat corroborated by further interviews with secular activists, who mostly agree with the fact that "(before 2011) people definitely viewed the MB as one monolithic block (...) when Fotouh left, that's when the divisions became public".[336] However, several MB ex-members interviewed asserted that there was a leadership struggle taking place in the Shura Council even before 2011, playing out between Fotouh and al Shater, which had dramatic consequences when it came to the post-2011 transitional process.

Those will be explored in more detail in chapters 4 and 5, but are usually referred to as the "FJP Controversy", with the Reformist wing arguing that the MB should participate in the political system competing accordingly to the rules of the secular state and forming alliances and coalitions, and the Conservative wing wanting to create an MB specific political party. In addition, there was also an even more historically conservative wing that argued that the MB's focus should remain solely on *da'wa*, something that had already stopped happening in 1939 after the MB 5th Conference in Cairo, in which al Banna stated "we need to become political".[337] Public or not, the extent to which internal tensions evidently divided the MB in the aftermath of 2011 suggests that schisms over practice and ideology had indeed been part of the organisation for a while, which is not a surprising phenomenon when taking into consideration the size and diversity of its membership.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a clear analytical and geographical framework for the study of the MB's genealogy, with the aim to underline Egypt's relevance and importance to the growth and development of the organisation. To start with, Egypt's role as a cradle for Islamic theology and Islamist thought has been examined, showing how the

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[336] Interviews with secular activists.

[337] Lia, B., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942*, p. 202

country and various manifestations of Political Islam are historically tied and mutually depended. The chapter has then moved to the analysis of the MB's history and development into a powerful and influential political entity, especially focusing on recurring themes such as internal divisions, radicalization, governance, and civil society. By doing so the chapter has argued that the history of the organization is far from being linear or harmonious, and that its ideology and political narrative have therefore been significantly influenced by the status of illegality and instability in which the organization has existed.

It has been shown that the Brotherhood lacks and has historically lacked a cohesive and unifying ideology, because of internal tensions and different manifestations of the same Islamic thought. Regardless, the importance of the MB and of its understanding(s) of Islamism for the political history of the country has been examined, underlining how the organization has historically acted as a vector for change and political opposition since its inception in 1928. Finally, the chapter analysed sources of tensions and internal divisions that have characterised the Brotherhood throughout its political development, and by doing so it has set the basis for the understanding of what arguably went wrong when President Morsi achieved power in 2012. Internal disagreements over matters of leadership, ideology, and ultimately political strategies and tactics have affected the organization's evolution into a political party, as the lack of a unified narrative has compromised its potential to finally bring Egypt out of decades of dictatorship and repression.

Finally, this chapter has shown that the political development of the MB has been troubled and inconsistent, because of Egypt's political situation and of recurring internal divisions. The chapter has also outlined the MB's historical involvement in high and low politics, as both a political organization and a civil society actor, an aspect that has at times generated competing strategies and narratives within the very organization. Therefore, it can be seen that many of the issues that the MB experienced while in power in 2012-2013 are direct consequences of these disagreements, and of internal issues that have never been properly addressed. Moreover, it follows that even such a strong and influential organization appears

incapable of providing a unifying and cohesive practice of Political Islam, even when its members strives for the same ambitions. This last point farther strengthens the argument that Political Islam is far from being monolithic, and that therefore its practices vary significantly even within the same organization.

3. "Preachers not Leaders": the rise and fall of the Freedom and Justice Party

"Treat people like trees: when they throw stones at us, we will respond with fruits."[338]

The MB formally established a political party on 18th May 2011, for the first time since its foundation in 1928. Cheered by Islamists across the region and received with preoccupation by international observers, the founding of the MB's political arm embodied the opening up of the political space that followed Mubarak's removal. However, the establishment of the FJP was also a source of controversies both inside and outside the organisation, as the party was to play a key role in the country's short lived transition to democracy. The events of January 25th and the call for "bread, freedom, and social justice" embodied the manifestation of intersectional issues that transcended class, religion, and ideological boundaries, leading to the temporary formation of a wide-ranging coalition of interests that had Mubarak's removal as a key, shared objective. Yet, the quick success of the popular uprisings came as a surprise to many, with an activist stating "The whole 18 days, if you think of it, it was some kind of a euphoria, a dream, people did not really believe that something like this could happed (...) and then it happened".[339]

However, that temporary coalition quickly fragmented when faced with the challenged posed by a democratic transition, with the population splitting between those supporting the SCAF, secular activists, and MB's supporters. Having set up such a context, the chapter focuses on the creation of the FJP, examining its manifesto, aims, and relationship with both the "mother" organisation and secular actors. Understanding such a watershed event as the beginning of the MB's experience in

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[338] Mahdi, M., "Statement from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt", in *Ikhwan Message Newsletter*, (February 2007) http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=2850

[339] Interview with an Egyptian Activist who took part in the popular protests in both Cairo and Alexandria.

government, the chapter examines the significance of the creation of the FJP and of Mohammed Morsi's election, by focusing on the implications that this had for the mainstream organization and for its ideology. For example, the opposition to the party's creation from some prominent members within the MB, and the organization's unprecedented level of political involvement, significantly accentuated tensions over practice and ideology that have historically been characteristic of the MB, the outlining of which began in the previous chapter.

This chapter uses Historical Sociology to critically analyse the historical and political conditions that led to the creation of the Brotherhood-led FJP in the aftermath of the January 25th uprisings, in order to assess the implications of such a watershed event for both the organization and the perceived incompatibility of governance and Political Islam. The analysis of the FJP's role is fundamental to the purpose of this thesis, as the party arguably embodied an historical understanding of Political Islam that had to be applied to governance and institutions for the first time, and encountered both external and internal challenges while attempting to do so. This chapter does so by building upon the understanding of Political Islam as a comprehensive set of practices and ideologies established in Chapter 1, together with the teasing out of the various internal tensions that such diversity has historically caused for the MB. Following from this, Chapter 2 has examined the MB's interpretation and application of a certain understanding of Political Islam to civil and societal life, also focusing on the influence that Egypt's historical role as a regional leader and its geopolitical importance had on the organization's narrative and ideology. Subsequently, it has analysed the conditions that led to the politicisation of the Brotherhood from the 1990s onwards, and assessed the role that the organization played in the unfolding of the 2011 uprisings.

Chapter 2 also started outlining the tensions between agency and structure that the politicization of the Brotherhood's narrative brought about, which will be further analysed and contextualised in this chapter. The clash between agency and structure is another recurring theme that is essential to examine in order to fully understand the MB's political behaviour, as it was characteristic of every phase of the MB's history. This therefore drives the analysis that is conducted by each chapter and, together with

other core themes such as resistance and civil society, will be fully assessed in the Conclusion. Ultimately, this Chapter seeks to initially assess the Brotherhood's first direct engagement with governance, and the implications that this had for the organization's ideology and membership.

3.1 A Revolution in the making

The few years leading up to the January 25th uprisings were instrumental for the growth and establishment of the MB as a key political player in Egypt, as by directly engaging in formal electoral politics for the first time in its history, the organization was consolidating its shift from a purely grassroots movement focused on civil society to one of the leading actors of political opposition in the country. This was done in a context in which the Mubarak regime was growing increasingly authoritarian, restricting the already limited political space that it had allowed to Islamist and opposition groups during the 1980s, and while sectarian violence and discourses aimed at damaging the Brotherhood's reputation and legitimacy started escalating at an alarming rate. Despite such a hostile political environment, the decade between the late 1990s and the parliamentary elections of 2005 witnessed the establishment of a solid political platform and party structure for the Brotherhood, which were arguably instrumental for the organization's (albeit short-lived) success in the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings.

Despite Mubarak's authoritarian rule, the decade preceding his removal was identified by many as of one of "Islamic revivalism".[340] This was due to the initial openness demonstrated by the regime towards Islamist and opposition groups, a political manoeuvre specifically aimed at appeasing the growing levels of popular discontent that marked the shift between the Sadat and Mubarak era. Following from the success of its independent candidates in the parliamentary elections of 1980s, the MB made the most out of the temporary political openness despite its continuing illegal status. Under the guidance of Adly Masshour, who belonged to the MB's "Old Generation", the organization fully committed to al Banna's original approach to the institution of

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[340] Esposito, J., Voll, J., *Islam and* Democracy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 176-177

an Islamist state, which he argued had to come about through a gradual reformation of values, society, and governmental structures and institutions.[341] In order to renew its appeal to different levels and classes of Egyptian society the MB was careful to put forward a moderate and reformist narrative, therefore widening its appeal beyond what would have constituted the core of its membership thus far. In addition, the first decade of the Mubarak regime saw the Brotherhood reaching its peak as a civil society actor, as the organisation's charities, schools, and hospitals were taking care of millions of deprived Egyptians and therefore effectively creating what could be defined as "a state within a state".[342] The provision of social services is another element that widened the Brotherhood's membership throughout the 1990s, however, what aided its political establishment and growing perceived legitimacy even more was the change in the regime's approach to Islamist groups. It is estimated that just before the outbreak of the 2011 uprisings, the MB could rely on about 1 million active members.[343]

As his predecessors before him, Mubarak was well aware of the legitimising role that the Islamic faith played within the context of Egyptian politics, especially since Sadat's amendment to the Constitution in the 1980s, which saw the establishment of *shari'a* Law as the main source of Jurisprudence.[344] Therefore, in order to improve the regime's declining perceived legitimacy, Mubarak made a clear distinction in the way in which his cabinet was going to approach the two different strands of Islamism prominent in the country at that time, these being a violent form of Islamism or Jihadism that relied on strategies such as assassinations and attacks, and a more peaceful one that worked from within state institutions.[345] In particular, the regime hoped that by showing some degree of tolerance towards the MB, the organization's

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[341] 9 Bedford Row International, "The History of the Muslim Brotherhood", in *Report I*, (April 2015), p. 144

[342] Laub, Z., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood"

[343] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review", p. 20

[344] Lombardi, C., "Islamic Law as a source of Constitutional Law in Egypt: the Constitutionalization of Sharia in a Modern Arab State", in *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 37, No. 1, (1998), p. 83

[345] Emerson, M., Kausch, K., Youngs, R., (eds.) *Islamist Radicalisation: the Challenge for Euro-Mediterranean Relations* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2009), p. 42

peaceful narrative and gradual approach to the Islamisation of society would overcome and overshadow Jihadist groups' violent discourse. Moreover, enforcing harsh crackdowns on the Brotherhood would have also meant limiting the organization's scope as a civil society actor, a role that the government could not afford to replace either economically or structurally.

This is the case as in 2006 the organization ran more than 22 hospitals nationwide and at least one school in each of Egypt's governorates, along with hospitality and care centres for orphans and widows and training programs for the unemployed.[346] Besides, the services provided by these centres and institutions were open to all citizens regardless of their religious and political affiliation, and often considerably cheaper than private alternatives. The extent to which the Brotherhood provided basic social services becomes even clearer when looking at statistics put together by the humanitarian news agency Integrated Regional Information Network in 2006, according to which 20% of about 5,000 legally registered NGOs in Egypt were Brotherhood-run or affiliated.[347] Such an extensive networks would have been impossible for the regime to replace, and therefore had to remain unchallenged to avoid the emergence of even more grievances and popular discontent.

However, the regime's concessions of a wider political space and a higher degree of acceptance towards religious and opposition groups were set to be short lived. The emergence of Islamic Revivalism[348] soon meant that various Islamist groups started "politicising their achievements of social legitimacy in society", a trend that hugely accelerated the erosion of the regime's already lessening legitimacy.[349] In line with what happened under the rule of both Nasser and Sadat, it quickly became clear that the regime was willing to be accepting of the Brotherhood's social activities only as

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[346] Integrated Regional Information Network, "Egypt: social programmes bolster the appeal of Muslim Brotherhood", in *IRIN*, http://www.irinnews.org/report/26150/egypt-social-programmes-bolster-appeal-of-muslim-brotherhood

[347] ibid.

[348] Understood as the growth/expansion of Islamist movements, and "re-Islamisation" from above and below.

[349] El Houdaiby, I., *Revolution and Beyond* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2012), p. 135

long as they did not negatively impact on its authority, and that Mubarak's tolerance for their extra-legal integration was dictated by the regime's need for legitimacy.[350] The growing social and political successes of the MB were the main source of concern as, drawing on decades of experience as an illegal opposition group, the organization was quick to make the most of the opening up of the political space while it lasted.

The Brotherhood's achievements in 2005 represented the peak of Egypt's revivalist trend, as the months leading up to the parliamentary elections were characterised by numerous demonstrations, protests, and referendums, and culminated with the Brotherhood winning 88 seats in Parliament.[351] The MB candidates ran as independent and almost quintupled their presence in the Assembly, coming to represent the largest opposition bloc in Parliament. This was an unprecedented result even for the organization itself, as despite its long history, this meant that the Brotherhood had won four times the number of seats it had won in the previous elections, and more than ten times the number of seats won collectively by other opposition groups.[352]

As one might expect, the Brotherhood's electoral success was perceived by the regime as a direct and immediate threat to its authority, meaning that whatever little tolerance was shown to the organization until that point, was then quickly replaced by violent crackdowns and the almost sectarian persecution of its members. The troubled relationship between the MB and the various Egyptian regimes can in fact be understood as a manifestation of sectarian tensions and violence taking place between different political entities that share the same religious narrative. As argued elsewhere, in my article "The Politicisation of Sectarianism: the state VS the Ikhwan", state repression against the MB can be understood as a political tool aimed at constructing the group as both an "other" and a scapegoat".[353] In the case of Mubarak's regime, the dictator feared a rise in Islamic extremism as a direct result of the MB's electoral successes, and therefore attempted to stop its resurgence by

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[350] Davidson, C., "Reform and Repression in Mubarak's Egypt", pp. 85-87

[351] Traub, J., "Islamic Democrats?"

[352] Emerson, M., Kausch, K., Youngs, R., *Islamist Radicalisation: the Challenge for Euro-Mediterranean Relations*, p. 25

[353] Ardovini, L., "The Politicisation of Sectarianism in Egypt: the state VS the Ikhwan", pp. 579-600

putting in place legal reforms stipulating that "political activity or political parties shall not be based on any religious background or foundation", effectively restricting the organization's access to politics.[354]

Some of these legal reforms were specifically designed to target the MB and similar organisations, as the Constitution was rewritten to include an article stating that "Political activity or political parties shall not be based on any religious background or foundation", while other amendments made banned independent candidates from running for president.[355] New anti-terrorism legislations also gave the the security forces the power to arrest and detain suspects without a warrant, and to restrict public gatherings, therefore targeting the very heart of the MB's strategies and *modus operandi*.[356]

As a consequence, the regime targeted and arrested hundreds of Muslim Brothers and supporters, postponed municipal elections to avoid another Islamist success, and passed constitutional amendments aimed at restricting freedoms and at keeping Islamists out of politics.[357] Essentially, within the space of 18 months, what little attempt had been made to partially re-integrate Islamists into the political system had been completely erased once again. By the time of the 2010 elections, which are now considered as one of the main motives behind the outbreak of the 2011 revolution, hundreds of political opponents and Muslim Brothers had been jailed, with Mubarak portraying the Brotherhood through a sectarian lens[358] as an "illegal organization with ties to extremist groups".[359] As one Muslim Brother articulated: "we were always treated as second class citizens under Mubarak. If you are a member of the Muslim

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[354] 9 Bedford Row International, "The History of the Muslim Brotherhood", p. 145

[355] ibid.

[356] ibid.

[357] ibid., p. 143

[358] Sectarianism in this context is understood as the regime's systematic targeting of the Brotherhood and their discrimination along political lines. Therefore, it is meant as perpetration of violence and of sectarian discourses by a political group against another, within the context of the same state religion, which in the case of Egypt is Sunni Islam.

[359] Wickham, C., *Mobilising Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt*, p. 214

Brotherhood, you will not join the army, become a minister, or a governor", therefore creating a strong sense of deprivation and exclusion.[360]

3.2 Political Successes and Internal Schisms

Despite the regime's repression, the political progress and levels of popular legitimacy that the Brotherhood had achieved up to 2005 were not completely erased. Perceived by the majority of the population as a legitimate and powerful opposition actor, because of its history as one of the most vocal oppositional groups in Egypt, the Islamist organization could still rely on an almost complete control over the country's professional syndicates, and on a growing number of supporters and young activists within Egypt's most important universities.[361] This added to its already unrivalled membership, that at the turn of the decade counted approximately 1 million of active members, and even more non-affiliated supporters. If anything, the threats that the organization was facing in the six years leading up to the 2011 Uprisings were not coming from the outside, but were once again internal in nature.

In line with a trend that is characteristic of much of the Brotherhood's history, following the 2005 electoral success internal debates were very much focused on whether the organization should remain purely grassroots in nature and committed to gradual and long term social change, or whether its members should directly engage in competitive and "real" politics.[362] These debates were both ideological and tactical in nature. Therefore, the schism between conservative senior leaders and reformist youth activists that emerged during the Sadat era came to the fore once again, with internal competition over matters of engagement and leadership risking to seriously undermine the organization's political progress.[363]

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[360] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 69, No. 4, (Autumn 2015), p. 539

[361] Paison, M., "The History of the Muslim Brotherhood: The Political, Social and Economic Transformation of the Arab Republic of Egypt"

[362] Emerson, M., Kausch, K., Youngs, R., *Islamist Radicalisation: the Challenge for Euro-Mediterranean Relations*, p. 9

[363] Al Houdaiby, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood faces leadership Challenge", in *Egypt Independent*, (November 2009) http://www.egyptindependent.com/brotherhood-faces-leadership-challenge/

These internal divisions would also characterize the creation of the FJP after the successful removal of Hosni Mubarak, but in a pre-revolutionary context, there were four main principles that kept the Brotherhood united and relatively successful despite its internal struggles over power dynamics. These were articulated by the organization's founder Hassan al Banna, and were a belief that Islam is an all-encompassing system, the rejection of violence as a means of political change in domestic politics, the acceptance of democracy as a political system, the consequent recognition of political pluralism as a valid concept, and the support for resistance movements operating against foreign and colonial occupation.[364] Such values were being held by the vast majority of Muslim Brothers despite their sometimes competing ideological leanings, meaning that despite its internal dynamics, the organization went into the events of 2011 as an ideologically united group, even if the divisions in terms of interpretation flagged up in Chapter 2 still persisted among its members.

Islamist groups such as the Brotherhood were mostly operating at the fringes of Egyptian politics before the events of 2011, because of their illegal status and the regime's preoccupation with its own legitimacy. In the pre-2011 era, the MB in particular had two key objectives: the enhancement of its socio-political appeal and the survival of its organization, which it managed to achieve despite the brutal repression imposed on its members by the military dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak.[365] Such a mind-set, coupled with the serious transformation that the organization underwent in the previous decade, meant that when January 25th brought about the complete reshuffling of the country's political arena, the Brotherhood and its members had already developed a political agenda that increasingly prioritised democracy and reforms, setting them up to be easy winners of whatever was to come.[366]

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[364] ibid.

[365] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", p. 529

[366] El Houdaiby, I., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood faces leadership Challenge"

3.3 Lead up to January 25th: regime change VS. change of regime

In the six years leading up to the 2011 Uprisings, the Brotherhood grew to be recognised by both internal and external observers as the single largest and most organised opposition group in Egypt. It is estimated that by the time the popular protests started, the organisation counted 600,000 to 1 million active members, and a support base of approximately 2 million Egyptians.[367] That is because of the organization's charitable nature that appealed to many in a time of worsening economic and political crisis, and considerably widened the Brotherhood's appeal and influence. However, despite its established status as a fundamental civil society actor, the Brotherhood was just tolerated by the Mubarak regime, which meant that its members had to participate in politics as independents and were forced to operate in a grey area, which left them open to arrest and torture at any given time.[368] This blurred line between tolerance and repression is particularly important when understanding the role that the Brotherhood played during the 2011 Uprisings, as the organization's membership was torn between seizing the opportunity for change and fearing even harsher persecutions if the protests failed.

When the Egyptian population took to the streets on January 25th 2011, the general reaction was not surprise at the fact that an uprising was taking place in Egypt, but rather that it had taken so long. Decades of worsening economic conditions, restriction of political space and gross abuse of human rights under the Mubarak regime had left Egyptians – literally – hungry for change, as the numerous protests characterising the late 2000s demonstrate. It follows that the uprising that brought together Egyptians of all classes and religious backgrounds was only in part triggered by neighbouring Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution; rather, it was a result of popular grievances that had been building up for years in a country with a long history of both military authoritarianism and "street politics".[369] This can be seen as on 25th January 2011

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[367] Trager, E., "The Unbreakable Muslim Brotherhood", in *Foreign Affairs*, (September/October 2011) https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-africa/2011-09-01/unbreakable-muslim-brotherhood

[368] Noueihed, L., Warren, A., *The Battle for the Arab Spring* (London: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 103

[369] Ardovini, L., "Five Years on, the Spirit of Tahrir Square has been all but crashed", in *The Independent*, (January 2015) http://www.independent.co.uk/author/lucia-ardovini

Egyptians were not just calling for the fall of the regime. A demand that was louder than all the other chants was that for "bread, freedom, and (human) dignity".[370] It is estimated that at the time when the uprising broke out about 40% of Egyptian lived below the poverty line, while even higher percentages had to rely on subsidized goods[371], and 2.5 million Egyptians aged 20-24 were unemployed.[372] Hosni Mubarak's regime was the exemplary case of durable authoritarianism, allowing its citizens just enough political space to keep direct threats to the regime at bay. Interestingly, it was this admittedly very limited space that made the country's population extremely competent with the practice of politics and dissent in the street; essentially, a strong regime was deposed by an even stronger society.[373]

Likewise, the choice of January 25th as the initial day of the protests was also highly significant. Generally called "Police Day" it marked an annual national holiday meant to commemorate the lives of various policemen that died in the fight against British colonialism.[374] Anti-Mubarak political activists had gathered in Tahrir square on January 25th for years, in what had become an annual protest that usually failed to attract more than a few hundred people.[375] However, the continued escalation of police brutality and the regime's blatant interference in the 2010 parliamentary elections, when ballot boxes were tampered with in order to make Mubarak's National Democratic Party emerge as victor, made it clear that achieving reforms through formal institutional channels was increasingly becoming an utopia, while Ben Ali's successful removal allegedly demonstrated the efficacy of peaceful protests as a

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[370] El Shahed, S., "Freedom, Bread, Dignity: has Egypt answered January 25th demands?, in *Al Arabiya*, (January 2015) http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2015/01/25/Freedom-bread-dignity-Has-Egypt-answered-Jan-25-demands-.html

[371] France 24, "Egypt braces for nationwide protests", (January 2011) https://web.archive.org/web/20110201013309/http://www.france24.com/en/20110125-egypt-braces-nationwide-protests

[372] Korotayev, A., Zinkina, J., "Egyptian Revolution: a Demographic Structural Analysis", in *Middle Eastern Studies Online Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 5, (Winter 2011), p. 88 http://cliodynamics.ru/download/Korotayev_Zinkina_Egyptian_Revolution_MESOJ_2011.pdf

[373] El Ghobashy, M., "The Praxis of the Egyptian Revolution", in *Middle East Research and Information Project* http://www.merip.org/mer/mer258/praxis-egyptian-revolution

[374] El-Hennawy, N., "The Making of a Police State: from the battle of Ismailiya to Khaled Saeed", in *Egypt Independent*, (January 2011) http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/making-police-state-battle-ismailiya-khaled-saeed

[375] Noueihed, L., Warren, A., *The Battle for the Arab Spring*, p. 106

means of political change. Such a convergence of historical circumstances and regional dynamics were set make the 2011 Police Day a historical landmark in Egyptian history.

In the weeks leading up to January 25th, youth activists from several opposition groups had been secretly meeting to devise tactics that would attract more protesters and outsmart the police forces that would have been present *en mass*, a carefully planned process in which young MB activists played a fundamental role.[376] Friday 28th was chosen by the organisers as a national "Day of Rage" that had the overarching aim of occupying Tahrir Square, even if there were very few activists who believed that the protest would last that long. However, the conjunction of unique historical and regional circumstances meant that the activists' expectations were quickly met and surpassed, as millions of Egyptians joined marches not only in Cairo but throughout the country, in what would rapidly become an 18-days-long revolution that would topple one of the region's longest standing dictators.

Because of the decades-long nature of the grievances that brought Egyptians together, the revolutionaries in Tahrir Square were quick to issue an official statement containing their 6 main demands[377], these being: the downfall of the regime of Hosni Mubarak and its ministers, the cessation of Emergency Law, freedom, justice, the formation of a new, non-military government with the interest of the Egyptian people at heart, and the constructive administration of all of Egypt's resources. Essentially what the people were asking for was the removal of an ancient and discriminatory status quo, which united them all in their popular struggle for dignity. Of course, the visions of what was to follow eventually turned out to be radically different from what actually took place in the following months and years.

Interestingly, the people were not fighting alone in Tahrir square, as the revolutionaries also had the army on their side. When the regime realized the extent

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[376] ibid., p. 107

[377] Madrigal, A., "Egyptian Activists' Action Plan: Translated", in *The Atlantic*, (January 2011) http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/01/egyptian-activists-action-plan-translated/70388/

to which the protesters were willing to go, Mubarak ordered tanks and troops in to restore order in the heart of Cairo. What happened instead is that the soldiers were welcomed as "guardians of the people", with chants such as "the people and the army are one hand" resonating from Tahrir square, reflecting the genuine affection that many felt towards the Army.[378] That was the case as throughout the decades the Army had managed to repeatedly present itself as one of the few competent organizations in Egypt's decaying public sector, and also distanced itself from some of the regime's most unpopular policies by refusing to get involved in acts of domestic repression.[379] This highly strategic move meant that in 2011 many genuinely perceived the Armed Forces as honest and trusted guardians of the state, and were therefore willing to trust the SCAF to oversee the transition from Mubarak's dictatorship to a democratic rule.

3.4 The Muslim Brotherhood and Jan 25th: the status quo VS. opportunity for change

The MB internal situation and its fragile relationship with the Mubarak regime are essential to examine when seeking to understand the role that the organization played during the 18 days that led to the toppling of Mubarak (even more so when considering that many of the actions taken by its members came as a surprise to both internal and external observers). Given the Brotherhood's activist history and its status as one of the most organised and influential opposition groups in Egypt, many expected its members to fully endorse the protest and take part in the uprising straight away; instead, its leaders held the MB back. This perception was also reinforced by the active role that the Brotherhood's youth activist wing had played in the organization of the popular gathering on January 25th, something that underlined the changing nature of the organization into an increasingly politicised group.

In a clear break with the past, and in opposition to the senior and more conservative leadership of the Brotherhood, in the decade preceding the 2011 uprising young Muslim Brothers had already started to engage with their secular counterparts,

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[378] Noueihed, L., Warren, A., *The Battle for the Arab Spring*, p. 108
[379] ibid.

especially within universities. Because of the organisation's internal discipline and organisation, Brotherhood affiliated youths represented the largest and most effective faction of the student movement, which made them a desirable ally for their fellows in other opposition groups.[380] While the organisation's senior leadership remained isolated and suspicious of cooperation with non-Islamist networks, many within the Brotherhood's youth grew increasingly convinced that their actions would be more effective if they came from a wider coalition, and therefore started to develop friendships and cooperative ties with their counterparts in secular human rights networks, as they shared the same overarching aims.[381]

Therefore, MB youth leaders with their secular allies were involved in the planning of January 25th from the very beginning, something that further accentuated internal divisions when the leadership realised that the uprising could represent a milestone in the organisation's history. Essentially, individual agency had started to become more of a driving force for the younger generation of Muslim Brothers, despite the rigidity of the organization's structure, creating a tension that would quickly surface in the aftermath of January 25th.

The position that the Brotherhood would take throughout the 2011 uprising therefore reflected this deep and long running internal divide between its reformist and conservative members. While the senior membership was deeply conservative in its means, sceptical towards the outcome of the revolution, and feared repercussions that could hit the organisation if it openly challenged the status quo, the Brotherhood's activist youth were leaning towards a more reformist narrative and were more eager to participate in anti-regime protests and to tackle Mubarak's deep state head on. Moreover, despite the fact that as youth members the young Brotherhood's reformists were still acting under the supervision of the senior Guidance Bureau, their activities and growing influence within universities meant that they enjoyed quite a sizeable degree of autonomy in practice. Therefore, as soon as it

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[380] Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 155
[381] ibid.

became clear that the 2011 uprisings were going to be inherently different from the protests that had been characterising the country for years, the MB found itself facing not only external challenges, but also a crippling internal divide.

Because of the active role that youth Brotherhood members played in the organisation of January 25th, they soon requested the Guidance Bureau's permission to participate in the protests in the name of *shabab al-Ikhwan* (Brotherhood youth), but they were denied permission because of the sensitivity of the issue.[382] One ex-MB member explained this reticence to me by saying "The main idea was that they (the MB leadership) did not want to get themselves involved in something they did not have much to do with. They thought it was not going to succeed, and they were afraid that no one would participate, and that if we went would take all the responsibility and we would go to jail if there was not everyone else in the street"[383]. However, as the protests spread throughout the country and progressively gained more momentum, the Brotherhood's senior leadership found themselves facing two inherently opposite choices: extreme provocation of the regime, or detachment from the broader nationalist movement.[384]

Both positions would come with severe consequences, as the Brotherhood could face yet another round of harsh governmental crackdowns that would further aggravate its failing quest towards legitimacy, or it could risk losing the support and influence on the population if it failed to participate in such a topical historical event. As a former Brotherhood member clearly articulated: "the MB is afraid of aggravating security forces against them and are at the same time afraid of missing the opportunity to participate in this widely anticipated protest against the regime".[385] The difficulty in choosing whether to endorse the protests or not was further aggravated by the Brotherhood youth's clear intent to participate as independents with or without the approval of the Guidance Bureau, which eventually complied to their request under

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[382] ibid., p. 160

[383] Interview with a former MB member.

[384] El Houdaiby, I., *Revolution and Beyond*, p. 130

[385] Fahmy, H., "The Muslim Brotherhood Reconsiders Refusal to Participate in January 25 Demo", in *Daily News Egypt*, (January 2011)

the condition that they would not openly target any governmental official by name.[386] Therefore, while the Brotherhood itself initially remained neutral, neither supporting the protests nor opposing it, its youth faction was present on the ground since day one, while the special circumstances that the organization faced as the largest and most organized faction of the opposition were reflected in the escalating tones of the statements that its senior leadership released between the 15-28th of January.

The Guidance Bureau's reluctance to officially endorse the revolution was deeply rooted in their fear of crippling governmental repercussions, a suspicion that was soon confirmed by the fact that, just hours into January 25th, the Interior Minister issued a statement blaming the Brotherhood for the unrest, while the following day several prominent senior members were warned that they would be arrested if the protest continued.[387] This is a clear example of the legacy of alternating and mostly troubled relations between the government and the MB, which particularly under the Mubarak regime was often identified as a scapegoat. However, such threats made those who were reluctant within the Brotherhood realise that the organization would have been the first target of governmental wrath whatever the outcome of the uprisings or the extent of their involvement, which made them change their position and release a statement on January 26th calling for the regime to "comply to the people's will".[388]

The former MB member quoted above commented on the tensions between the organisation's leadership and its members by saying "We contacted them (the Guidance Bureau) and told them "There is a Revolution in the street! Let us participate!".[389] On the night of January 27th, some 75 members of the MB were arrested by governmental forces, among whom was Mohamed Morsi, reinforcing the growing conviction that the organization would have been used as a scapegoat once again, regardless of whether its leaders decided to officially endorse the protests or not. This realisation was not only essential to the MB's "race" to politicisation that

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[386] Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, p. 161
[387] ibid., p. 162
[388] El Houdaiby, I., *Revolution and Beyond*, p. 137
[389] Interview with a former MB member.

took place in the following months, but was also another example of how openly its members were consistently sectarianized by the regime.[390] Subsequently, on the eve of the "day of rage", January 28th, the organization announced its endorsement and called upon its members to join the revolutionaries in the streets after the noon prayers on Friday 28th.[391] When it ordered its member to the streets, the MB became a vital part of the uprisings, in line with its revolutionary history in the country's opposition movement. Some would go as far as saying that Mubarak's removal would not have been possible without the Brotherhood's participation, as the organization not only provided an unprecedented amount of manpower, but also lent its historical experience in successfully managing protests to the revolutionaries in the street.

Mohamed Soudan, the FJP Foreign Relations Secretary and a MB member for over 30 years, identified Friday 28th as the day the "real revolution" started. He recalls "From the 27th at night, we got an order from the General Guidance saying that everyone had to go and join the revolution. We got the plan, the agenda, and a breakdown of who was doing what at which time (…) it was not random, everything was planned. We took 3 million people with us".[392] In his account, the MB's historical ability to organize and mobilise in times of oppression comes across clearly, as because of the regime's shutdown of the internet and the MB's own reticence to use phones to communicate because of security concerns, the top rank of the organisation had to spread the message across their membership in the country on a person by person basis, which they succeeded to do in just over 5 hours. When asked why the organisation waited until the 28th to join the protests, he said that the MB' General Guidance not only feared repercussions from the regime, but they were also suspicious about the nature of the revolution, since to them it was not clear who really was behind it and what the main aims were.[393] Regardless, when the Shura (Consultation) Council voted in favour of joining the revolutionaries, the MB shifted the power of balance in their favour by

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[390] Ardovini, L., "The Politicisation of Sectarianism in Egypt: the state VS the Ikhwan", pp. 579-600

[391] Brooke, S., Hamid, S., "The Muslim Brotherhood's Role in the Egyptian Revolution", in *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (February 2011), p. 2

[392] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.

[393] ibid.

mobilising millions of members and supporters around the country, once again confirming its position as Egypt's most influential grassroots group.

However, Soudan stands behind the doubts that the General Guidance had about which one of Egypt's many actors wanted the revolution to succeed, and now believes that the security forces and SCAF in particular used the revolutionaries for their own benefit since the very first day. As evidence, he states that the Police Forces were clearly on the side of the people, as "What I noticed is that the majority of those who were there to prevent the revolution, they did not fire on us. They used tear gas and rubber bullets, but they did not fire on us".[394] He adds that, upon sending the Police Forces home in the afternoon of January 28th, the Army then took over and started spreading the famous slogan "the Army and the people are one hand", which "was a big lie, but many people believed it". In retrospect, Soudan regrets the fact that by taking the side of the protesters the MB facilitated SCAF's seizure of power, but it cannot be denied that the role played by the organization was instrumental in the revolution's success, regardless of its outcomes.[395]

3.5 The Brotherhood's revolutionary youth: the key to success?

Many have argued that the role that the Brotherhood was to play in Tahrir square and in other key opposition locations across the country can be seen as directly reflecting the organization's deep internal divisions over tactics, especially when taking into account the General Guidance's reticence, as it was its revolutionary youth that was instrumental to the success of January 25th. Indeed, the young reformists that had been so heavily criticized by the organization's senior leadership were quick to gain control of revolutionary actions and to use their experience to coordinate anti-regime rallies and to keep the revolutionaries safe, which in turn enhanced the perceived legitimacy of the Brotherhood as a whole. I have conducted several interviews with people coming from different social and political backgrounds, all present in Tahrir Square, and the general consensus is that while the MB did not join straight away,

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[394] ibid.

[395] ibid.

when they did they brought their renowned organisational capability with them: "they led many of the protests, like organizing where they would be starting from, where they were going to go, but also providing the cars, and the microphones, and the flags, all of this was really organised by the MBs at the time".[396]

Despite this, the position taken by the Brotherhood still reflected a deep internal divide over tactics, as while activists on the ground were playing a vital role for the success of the uprisings, senior members remained anchored to their conservative positions as they clearly endorsed the revolutionaries' demands and opposed the regime's threats, but also "opened the door to a constructive, productive and sincere dialogue" with the falling government.[397] Therefore, the activists' actions in the unravelling of the 2011 uprisings only further accentuated the senior leadership's dilemma over which role the organization should take in the protests and in what was to follow, heightening a long series of internal division that some would argue led to the failure of the FJP governance in the Summer of 2013.

Following the Guidance Bureau's official endorsement of the uprisings, its members rallied behind the protesters instantly, multiplying their number; it is estimated that on January 28th alone more that 100,000 Brothers joined the demonstration.[398] Moreover, the Brotherhood's youth was instrumental in defending the revolutionaries and people amassed in the squares against the brutal attacks of the Armed Forces and hired thugs, as their well practiced discipline and expertise in protesting was key to maintaining order and safety across the country. Soudan claims that their orders were also to protect governmental buildings such as police stations, NDP headquarters and so on, from vandalism allegedly perpetrated by infiltrated revolutionaries to justify the regime's violent treatment of protesters. He added "Also we got the order we had to save every particular building belonging to the government: police stations, NDP headquarters, we had to safeguard it from people who were infiltrated and there just

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[396] Interviews with religious and secular activists.

[397] El Houdaiby, I., *Revolution and Beyond*, p. 138

[398] Tamman, H., Haenni, P., "Islam in the insurrection", in *Al Ahram Weekly*, no. 1037, (March 2011), http://weekly.ahram.org/

to make chaos, that was another job for us. I was one of the heads to control this. The worst thing for us was to prevent those people from being inserted by the security forces to create chaos, and violence…because we would have been blamed otherwise. We tried as much as we could".[399] Such actions were instrumental to keeping the revolutionaries safe from government-led violence, but also show once again the regime's tendency to target the MB whenever it was faced with public discontent, a trend of which MB members were aware and actively attempted to counteract.

The Brotherhood's young reformists soon began to act as a fundamental point of contact between Islamist and secular opposition forces, relying on the ties of friendship and cooperation with fellow secular revolutionaries that they had established within universities.[400] This in turn unified the demands of the protesters and accentuated their common aims, which was instrumental for the revolutionary movement to gain momentum and spread even to the most rural parts of the country. In addition, the Brotherhood also called upon its long term supporters, the country's poorest, to join the anti-regime movement, as its youth activists engaged in direct outreach with the residents of the *sha'bi* neighbourhoods of greater Cairo, which helped connect the political demands of the protestors with the socioeconomic grievances of Egypt's poor.[401] Therefore, the actions undertaken by the Brotherhood's youth were instrumental in shaping popular and regional perceptions of the organization's role in the uprisings, which led to a sharp increase in the Brotherhood's perceived legitimacy and was arguably key to its success in the post-Mubarak political context. Interviews with protesters reveal accounts such as "They (MB youth) were on the ground mixing with others and this gave the Brotherhood legitimacy. The Guidance Bureau was forced to depend on them, whether they wanted to or not", while others praised the courage of the Brotherhood's cadres and their skills in outmanoeuvring the attackers by saying "they were at the forefront. They defended us all, this is a fact".[402]

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[399] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.

[400] Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, p. 162

[401] ibid., p. 163

[402] Ezzat, D., "Tactical Gains", in *Al Ahram Weekly*, No. 1034, (2011)

However, the increasing organizational role that some of its members were playing in the streets presented the Brotherhood's leadership with two more challenges: reassure both domestic and regional observers that the organization was not trying to hijack the revolution for its own means, and managing the growing call for reforms of the organization's hierarchical structure that originated within the Brotherhood itself. In terms of dealing with the first challenge, while the Brotherhood's senior members were well aware of the fact that a successful outcome of the uprisings could have represented a watershed moment for the organization after decades of illegality and persecution, they were incredibly careful not to claim the uprising as "Islamist" and to downplay their role and participation in them. In order to avoid being seen as exploiting the revolution for its own end, the Guidance Bureau was careful to stress that Brotherhood members had joined the protests as Egyptians, not Islamists, releasing statements such as "the Egyptian protests are not an Islamic uprising, but a mass protest against an unjust, autocratic regime, which includes Egyptians from all walks of life, all religions, and all sects"[403] and "we come with no special agenda of our own- our agenda is that of the Egyptian people. We aim to achieve reform and rights for all: not just for the MB, not just for Muslims, but for all Egyptians".[404] Similarly, the slogan and chants used by the revolutionaries did not make reference to any partisan agenda and remained politically neutral, with no religious allusion whatsoever.[405]

Arguably, the Brotherhood's effort to remain in the background stemmed from its members' awareness that, as the largest and most popular opposition group in the country, a transition to democracy was in the organization's best interest, and also reflected their intense desire for the uprising to succeed and for the long decades of marginalization and exclusion to come to an end. However, the Brotherhood's widening internal divide and ideological dilemma over the extent to which the organization should engage in politics was much harder to disguise, and would come

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[403] Ikhwan Web, "Egypt's Revolution is a People's Revolution with no Islamic Agenda", in *Ikhwan Web,* (February 2011), http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=27963

[404] El Errian, E., "What the Muslim Brotherhood Wants", in *The New York Times*, (February 2011) http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/10/opinion/10erian.html

[405] Heggy, T., "Egypt's Revolution: What Happened?", in *Gatestone Institute*, (June 2011) http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2140/egypt-revolution-what-happened

back to the fore in the post-Mubarak transitional period. Once again, the tension between structure and agency that started to emerge in the lead up to January 25th, was becoming increasingly prominent and bore considerable implications for the political future of the organization as a whole.

3.6 Transition

After 18 days, the popular struggle for dignity and for the removal of an ancient and discriminatory status quo seemed to succeed, as Hosni Mubarak was deposed on 11th February 2011, an event that caused equal levels of regional and global concern and elation. The significance of the removal of a man who embodied an almost three-decade-long political stasis is encapsulated by statements such as "Lift your head up, you are an Egyptian" and "We can breathe fresh air, we can feel our freedom",[406] which were being chanted by the thousands gathered in Tahrir Square that day. However, the success of the 2011 uprising was not due to "people power" alone as it relied on the support of the Egyptian military, the only institution in the country capable of forcing Mubarak to resign from power, and therefore was not a *thawra* (revolution). Arguably, rather than leading to the dismantling of the authoritarian state and the assumption of power by revolutionary leaders, the concentration of power in the hands on the SCAF produced what can be defined as a "change of regime" rather than a "regime change". Indeed, the seizing of power by an institution formerly allied with Mubarak exposed the gap between the protesters' aspirations and their capability to translate them into an enforceable political manifesto, mostly because of the reliance on the deep state and the fragmentation and disorganization of the uprisings' leaders.

Hosni Mubarak resigned from his post as the fourth president of Egypt on 11th February 2011, and many of those who had fought in Tahrir square for 18 days welcomed the Army's new role as the pinnacle of political power, chanting the slogan "the Army and the people are one hand".[407] The SCAF announced that the constitution

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[406] Soueif, A., "The Arab Spring: one year on", in *The Guardian*, (January 2012)
https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jan/13/arab-spring-cairo-ahdaf-soueif
[407] Noueihed, L., Warren, A., *The Battle for the Arab Spring*, p. 109

was suspended, that the parliament was dissolved, and that it would remain in power in order to oversee a just and democratic transition to an elected government until presidential and parliamentary elections could be held, estimating that to be in six months time.[408] The removal of Mubarak led to the creation of a huge political void in Egypt, the gravity of which failed to be immediately recognised because of the euphoria brought about being free from a corrupt and brutal authoritarian regime enveloping the country. However, the absence of a clear and transparent political leadership was going to come with severe consequences for Egypt.

Despite being careful not to hijack the revolution for its own means, and regardless of its deep internal division, the MB emerged from 2011 as a victor and as a key player in Egypt's incipient political order. Like many others representing the anti-Mubarak political opposition, the Brotherhood saw SCAF's assumption of power as a means to an end to achieve political transition, as its leaders were aware that military support was necessary to the installing of a new regime and political order. Additionally, after nearly six decades of marginalisation and illegality, the Brotherhood was invited by the interim administration supervised by SCAF to participate in a national dialogue on the country's future.[409] Because of their historical involvement in the country's politics, the MB's members were by far the most organised participants in said dialogue, which put them in a privileged position that was ill received by the other opposition groups who had played an instrumental role in the organising of the protests.[410] The Brotherhood's familiarity with the workings of Egyptian politics, its consistent availability of funding, and an outreach capability that encompassed million of Egyptians also meant that it was in an advantageous position when compared to the smaller political groups that formed during the uprisings, which lacked leadership, structure, and political experience.

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[408] Leyne, J., *"Egyptian Military dissolves parliament",* in *BBC News,* (February 2011) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12443678
[409] Osman, T., *Egypt on the Brink* (London: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 119
[410] ibid.

Therefore, it did not come as a surprise that, when given the opportunity to solidify its political gains and aims after the uprisings, the MB was not reluctant to take it. The disorganisation and fragmentation of other political parties and the leadership vacuum left by the fall of Mubarak presented the organisation with the perfect opportunity to recover from years of illegality and persecution, setting yet another milestone in its history.[411] This chance was ultimately presented by the Constitutional amendments presented by the Interim Government headed by SCAF, which were meant to pave the way to the country's first free Parliamentary elections in November 2011.

The proposed Constitutional Referendum was set to take place in March 2011, and, in line with the SCAF's promise to deliver a peaceful and democratic transition to an elected government, included reforms to previous articles that severely limited political participation and space. Such amendments included a limitation to the presidency to at most two four-years terms, judicial supervision of elections, a requirement for the president to appoint at least one vice president, a commission to draft a new constitution following the parliamentary election, and easier access to presidential elections by candidates (to be done by achieving 30,000 signatures from at least 15 provinces, 30 members of a chamber of the legislature, or nomination by a party holding at least one seat in the legislature).[412] While it was clear that the proposed reforms were set to increase democratic and liberal practices, the majority of the country's opposition groups were concerned that an election held too soon would inevitably be favourable to long established political groups such as the Brotherhood over more recent revolutionary ones, because of their fragmentation and lack of supporters and funding.[413]

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[411] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", pp. 530-531

[412] El Hennawy, M., "Commission announces proposed changes to Egyptian Constitution", in *Egypt Independent*, (February 2011) http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/commission-announces-proposed-changes-egyptian-constitution

[413] Reuters, "Egypt to call March referendum this week, lawyer", in *Reuters*, (March 2011) http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-referendum-idUSTRE71Q11620110227

Similarly, waiting too long posed the country to the risk of a military regime taking control of its political system once again. The Brotherhood declared itself in favour of the proposed Constitutional amendments, also because with its long history of grassroots activities and large popular support among the country's poorest, the organization was set to do well whatever the electoral system in place. Despite calls of controversy and boycott, the referendum held on 19th March 2011 saw more than 18 million Egyptians voting, and the amendments being approved with 77% of the vote in favour, therefore paving the way to Parliamentary elections.[414]

3.7 Freedom and Justice Party

The country's unprecedented political openness and leadership vacuum presented the Brotherhood with yet another set of challenges, first and foremost demonstrating to both the Egyptian public and other opposition groups that it did not seek to monopolise power in the upcoming political order. To this end, and soon after Mubarak's removal, Supreme Guide Mohamed Badie released a statement saying that the Brotherhood "sought to participate, not to dominate" and aimed at advancing the interests of the nation as a whole.[415] The Brotherhood seized the political chance, and on 21st February 2011 announced the intention of creating the Freedom and Justice Party (*hizb al-hurriyya wa al-'adala)*, which was to be led by the organization's parliamentary bloc leader and Guidance Bureau member Saad El-Katatni.[416] The Party was founded an April 30th, and gained official status on 6th June 2011, a date that set yet another milestone in the Brotherhood's history.[417]

In its first meeting since 1985, the Brotherhood's legislative body Shura Council appointed Mohamed Morsi as president of the Freedom and Justice Party, Essam al-

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[414] BBC News, "Egypt referendum strongly backs Constitutional changes", (March 2011) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12801125

[415] Ikhwan Web, "MB Chairman: we seek to participate not to dominate", in *Ikhwan Web*, (April 2011) http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28432

[416] Ahram Online, "Egypt's El Katatni becomes new head of Muslim Brotherhood's FJP", (October 2012) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/56019/Egypt/Politics-/BREAKING-Egypts-ElKatatni-becomes-new-head-of-Musl.aspx

[417] Trager, E., "The Unbreakable Muslim Brotherhood", in *Foreign Affairs*, (September/October 2011) https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-africa/2011-09-01/unbreakable-muslim-brotherhood

Erian as vice president and Saad al-Katatny as secretary general, and also announced that the party sought to claim no more than 30% of the seats in the country's upcoming parliamentary elections, in line with the slogan "participation, not domination".[418] In order to appeal to the Egyptian masses and remain faithful to the aims of the revolution, the FJP was created to be open to citizens of all faiths, and to be "a civil party with an Islamic frame of reference".[419] In its founding statement also further underlines the inclusive and revolutionary nature of the party, specifying that:

> We are working to rebuild state institutions on the basis of a strong and sound commitment to the will of the free Egyptian people, including the institution of the presidency, the government, parliament and local councils, and we work to establish institutions of civil society; trade unions, public groups, associations and human rights organizations to enhance the unity of the national fabric and induce a united coherent and solid fusion within the community. We aspire to get everyone in the nation working as part of a team, seeking to achieve the hopes and goals of Egypt in the battle of renaissance and construction.[420]

In order to further reinforce its commitment to "participation not domination", the Brotherhood's spokesmen stressed that the FJP was not conceived to be the organization's political wing, but rather the party would be fully independent and only consult with the organization on important policy decisions, something that other parties had always done throughout the Brotherhood's history.[421]

To further stress the FJP's independence, its newly appointed leaders had to step down from the positions they held within the MB, severing the direct link between the two political entities.[422] After achieving legal status in June 2011, the party's leaders

[418] El Hennawy, M., "Muslim Brotherhood selects hawkish leaders", in *Egypt Independent*, (March 2011) http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt%E2%80%99s-muslim-brotherhood-selects-hawkish-leaders

[419] The Founding Statement of the Freedom and Justice Party http://www.fjponline.com/view.php?pid=1

[420] ibid.

[421] Trager, E., "Think Again: The Muslim Brotherhood", in *Foreign Policy*, (January 2013) http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/01/28/think-again-the-muslim-brotherhood/

[422] ibid.

released a statement saying "we are wiling to form an alliance with the political forces that agree to our principles, whether they are socialists, liberals, or other Islamist forces and all forces concerned about this homeland"[423], and reported to have approximately 9,000 founding members, of whom circa 80% were affiliated with the MB.[424] Although women were historically barred from full membership in the Brotherhood, roughly a thousand of the FJP's founding members were female and the party appointed a Christian Copt as their chairman, once again stressing inclusivity and independence from the Brotherhood.[425] However, undermining the claim to autonomy, the MB leadership wrote the FJP's platform and ratified its bylaws, which clearly state that "the party is dedicated to peaceful and gradual reform along Islamic lines", which includes "the reform of the individual, the family, the society, the government, and then institutions of the state".[426] In essence, the (debated) separation of the FJP from the Brotherhood gave the group more room for political manoeuvres, wherein the official party could adopt a politically correct and inclusive stance while the MB as a whole maintained its focus on religious authenticity.

Therefore, the freest and most inclusive time in the history of the Brotherhood was soon overshadowed by its crippling internal divisions that, quickly put to the side during the uprisings, came back to the core over the creation of the FJP. The schism between reformists and traditionalists outlined in the previous chapter was further encapsulated by the creation of what was effectively the Brotherhood's political arm, which also polarized conservative members within the Brotherhood. While the country's new electoral rules did not represent a threat for the organization,

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[423] Zaid, M., "El Erian to Political Parties: Win Votes than discuss power", in *Ikhwan Web*, (June 2011) http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28713

[424] Eleiba, A., "Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Guide praises Egypt's revolution for bringing about fair elections", in *Ahram Online*, (August 2011) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/18227/Egypt/Politics-/Muslim-Brotherhood-Supreme-Guide-praises-Egypts-re.aspx

[425] ibid.

[426] Brown, N., "The Muslim Brotherhood as a Helicopter Parent", in *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (May 2011) http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/05/27/muslim-brotherhood-as-helicopter-parent and Freedom and Justice Party's Political Platforms http://www.fjponline.com/articles.php?pid=80

challenges arising from its own ranks caused the Brotherhood to lose some of its most prominent reformist leaders, who started to defect the organization in Spring 2011.

Most of those who planned and participated in the January 25th uprisings felt that the creation of the FJP went against the aims of the revolution, and that the mainstream organization was seeking to manipulate the emerging political context for its own means. Reformist leaders did not oppose the creation of a political party *per se*, but harshly questioned its autonomy because of the uninterrupted consultation between the Brotherhood and the FJP's guides, and because of the exclusion of young activist members in these talks.[427] They also argued that the FJP's leaders should have been elected by the party members and supporters, rather than appointed by the senior leadership of the Guidance Bureau.[428] Once again, internal tensions between organizational structures and individuals' agency, between young and old, were coming to the fore, setting yet more obstacles on the Brotherhood's path to governance.

In what was an unprecedented move, hundreds of young Brothers came together against the organization's Supreme Guide, asking for "better representation of young Brothers in the group's higher power structures and the full independence of the MB's nascent FJP from all proselytizing bodies".[429] Consequently, many of them defected from the Brotherhood and created their own political parties, such as the Egyptian Current Party, which was composed by both ex young Muslim Brothers and members of the April 6 Movement.[430] One of its founders, a MB member at the time, recalls the reasons that led him to leave the organization by saying "we told them (the GB) 'You cannot go by yourself, create a party, you'll burn yourself. Wait 3 or 4 years, and *then* create a party. (...) We knew that the MB was the most powerful organisation at the

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[427] Solayman, H., "Muslim Brotherhood young members dismayed at new Leadership appointment", in *Daily News Egypt*, (May 2011) https://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2011/05/04/muslim-brotherhoods-young-members-dismayed-at-new-leadership-appointments/

[428] ibid.

[429] Farag, M., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the January 25 Revolution: new political party, new circumstances", in *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 219

[430] Bradley, M., "Young Brothers Rebel in Egypt", in *The Wall Street Journal*, (June 2011) http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303970604576401923397045788

time, but there were still a lot of steps we needed to take if we wanted our revolution to succeed. If in 4 years, after the revolution, we have equality, and justice, freedom, and free elections, the MB would naturally come to power. This is a very pragmatic issue when people are in the streets. You need to take a step behind and let them fight. But they did not listen to us."[431]

At the same time, the Brotherhood's leadership was also facing discontent arising from those in its most conservative ranks. There were many who questioned the extent to which the organization should get involved in "real" politics, therefore arguing against the very creation of a political party in principle. According to these traditionalists, no one but the Prophet Mohamed had the right to fuse religion and political authority, and therefore these two domains should have been kept separate in order to "prevent tyranny".[432] They argued that the MB should remain faithful to its origins as a *da'wa* organization and therefore only operate within the field of civil society, while its members should be free to support any party they wanted if they sought to directly engage in politics.[433] As said in Chapter 2, that is something that had already stopped happening in 1939 after the MB 5th Conference in Cairo, in which Hassan al Banna stated "We need to become political".

However, it is worth flagging up that Mohamed Soudan, who played an instrumental role in the creation of the party, rejects all claims of divisions splitting the MB into factions when it came to the establishment of the FJP. He added that the only internal discussion that took place regarded the membership of the party, and the possibility to open it up to non-Muslims, which was overwhelmingly voted in favour of in the Shura Council. He also wanted to stress the inclusive nature of the party, pointing out that membership was not restricted to MBs "Only 45% of the FJP members were MBs, the vice president was a Coptic Christian. The party was for everyone. We had meetings every couple of weeks with all representatives (of revolutionary groups) in

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[431] Interview with a former MB member.

[432] Hasan, S., "Abul Fotouh: I reject the existence of a Muslim Brotherhood party in Egypt", in *Islam Online*, (March 2011) http://islamonline.net/

[433] ibid.

our headquarters because we were the most organised, here was the coalition, in every province in Egypt! We did not want to be the sole ruler, we wanted to cooperate".[434] The claims would also go against one of the main accusations moved to the FJP while in power, which was their perceived refusal to cooperate with revolutionary groups from the very start. While it is difficult to assess the truthfulness of claims on both sides, it is indeed fair to take both into consideration.

3.8 FJP: Significance and Political trajectory

By now it is clear that throughout its long history the MB had always refrained from being a revolutionary movement and always argued for a gradualist approach to politics and social change, therefore being *evolutionary* in its approach. One could go as far as to argue that the organization has been historically characterised by caution and moderation in its approach to high politics, as these two features were fundamental for the Brotherhood's survival, and even made it thrive under Mubarak's authoritarian regime. However, this struggle for survival has also made the Brotherhood incredibly reluctant to directly engage in activities that openly challenged the regime despite its politicisation in the 1900s, which makes the organization fit into what is defined as the "Paradox of Moderation".

Moderation Theory is based on three distinct casual mechanisms, these being the effects of free electoral competition, the effects of state repression, and the effects of organizational resources, and analyses how these three effects shape political behaviour.[435] It argues that once "radical" political groups or organisations that aim to overthrow an authoritarian regime, such as the Brotherhood, organise as vote-seeking parties, electoral consideration inevitably leads to such groups refuting their reformist goals.[436] This is the case as ideologically heavy platforms usually fail to appeal to majorities, and groups that were once illegal now need to widen their agenda in order

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[434] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.

[435] Tezcur, G., *Muslim Reformers in Iran and Turkey: the Paradox of Moderation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), Chapter 2

[436] ibid.

to gain votes, remain politically viable, and win elections.[437] Moreover, the former ruling elites and the state apparatus are likely to remain wary of these groups, which in turn adopt more cautious and conciliatory policies in order to avoid repression and outlawing.[438] Lastly, commitment to democratic structures is likely to cause internal schisms within organisations that are characterised by a hierarchical and centralised decision making process, as is the case with the MB. In essence, the self-restraint of an anti-system group decreases the likelihood that its members will participate in a democratization movement. In the case of the Brotherhood, the trait that enabled it to survive and thrive under an authoritarian regime became its biggest obstacle in post-2011 Egypt, as embodied by the reactions to and implications of the creation of the FJP.

The Brotherhood's typical caution and uncertainty were clear throughout the uprisings, as the organization vacillated between endorsing the protests and negotiating with the regime, leading some to say that the group had "one foot in the square and another one with the regime".[439] However, the formation of a political party was the first and most significant indication of the Brotherhood's newfound commitment to politics, together with the inevitable internal restructuring that it caused. Wilmot argues that the foundation of a political party comes with important consequences, in particular the implication of a tangible distinction between an Islamist social movement concerned with its own survival and a political party fuelled by political imperatives, which should exist as two separate entities.[440]

This was one of the main challenges faced by the Brotherhood in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 uprisings as, arguably, the way in which the FJP was created and structured in relation to the MB did nothing but reinforce the pre-existing hierarchy within the movement. However, some degree of organisational change became increasingly evident in the way in which the FJP structured its policies and orientation

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[437] ibid.

[438] ibid.

[439] Wilmot, J., "A commitment to politics: the trajectory of the Muslim Brotherhood during Egypt's 2011-2013 political opening", in *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 385

[440] ibid., p. 386

that, by necessity, needed to be more inclusive than the Brotherhood's in order to appeal to a wider portion of the Egyptian population.

First of all, since its foundation in 1928 the Brotherhood had been a resistance movement fighting against the prevailing order, and therefore most of its popular support stemmed from its challenge to the repressive political context and status quo. However, the creation of the FJP after Mubarak's removal significantly reoriented the MB's stance towards politics, as the movement finally, if reluctantly, committed to mainstream politics. This meant that the newly formed FJP openly sought an influential (although not dominating) role within the emerging political system, moving away from being "just" a pillar of resistance. Moreover, aware of the necessity to put forward a more inclusive manifesto[441] and of the International Community's fear over Islamic Resurgence, the MB consciously tried to give its political wing a more liberal edge, once again relying on its capability to compromise that was a direct heritage of the decades spent under repressive and authoritarian regimes.

Ideologically, the most prominent difference between the two platforms was that the FJP's omission of a rather controversial provision that granted clerics a formal role in both politics and legislation, while the MB's 2007 programme explicitly called for the formation of a committee of senior religious scholars to advise parliament and the president, which would have created something rather close to the Iranian model.[442] In a clear leap to autonomy and inclusivity, the FJP also removed an article underlining the importance of state's religious functions, which would have implicitly prevented Christian Cops, non-Muslims, and women from becoming head of state.[443]

However, despite the FJP identifying itself as a "civil party" (*hizb madani*), therefore implying secularity, religious aspects had quite a heavy presence throughout its platform. Also, the party declared that its primary objectives were not to gain power,

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[441] See Appendix for the abridged version of the Freedom and Justice Party Manifesto.

[442] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", p. 531

[443] Sadiki, L., (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 229

but to "enhance Islamic morals, values, and concepts in individuals' lives and society", a narrative and goals that are more similar to those of a religious group that of a political party.[444] This could be the case as, understandably, it would have been rather difficult for the FJP to heavily distance itself from the MB, as the organisation provided it with funds, personnel, and political and ideological support. However, the FJP has avoided engaging in issues that could have polarised and hindered its growing influence, such as bans on alcohol, gambling, or attempts to further Islamise the constitution.[445] Instead, in the first 18 months following the 2011 uprisings, the FJP succeeded to distance itself from the MB's historical caution and self restraint, and its activities displayed the growing presence of two features: a concern for the public image of the MB and of its party, and an unprecedented level of political ambition.[446]

3.9 Parliamentary Elections and the road to Presidency

Released from the constraints of semi-authoritarianism, which considerably contained the organisation's scope given its illegal status, the MB invested in and committed to the political process for the first time in its history. This was the time for the MB to bridge the gap between what they knew how to do well, it being informal politics, and to finally engage in the country's formal politics. It did so with two specific goals in mind: wanting to secure a legitimate position of influence for the FJP, and demonstrating to both Egyptians and the International Community that the organization could be a moderate and responsible political entity.[447] In particular, the FJP was anxious to demonstrate its ability to govern and to tackle the country's most pressing problems, namely economy and public security, and sought to shift the MB's focus away from morality and towards the provision of technical expertise and competence, given the varied composition of the organization's members.[448]

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[444] Al Anani, K., "Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party: to be or not to be Independent", in *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (June 2011) http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/?fa=44324

[445] Kenney, J., "The New Politics of Movement Activism: The Society of Muslim Brothers after Egypt's Arab Spring", in *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, Vol. 16, No. 3, p. 96

[446] Wilmot, J., "A commitment to politics: the trajectory of the Muslim Brotherhood during Egypt's 2011-2013 political opening", p. 381

[447] ibid., p. 388

[448] Brown, N., "When Victory Becomes an Option: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Confronts Success", in *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (January 2012), p. 16

Ultimately, these efforts from both the MB and the FJP sought to underline the fact that Islamist movements are not solely about political power, but also remained faithful to their original reform agenda, only a part of which could be achieved through the political process.

After several months of reiterating the slogan "participation, not domination" and of containing its own electoral ambitions in fear of both internal and external repercussions, the MB-backed FJP formally dove into the electoral process with unprecedented enthusiasm and commitment, focusing all of its efforts and organisational capabilities on the lead up to the November 2011 Parliamentary elections. At the beginning of the political campaign, the FJP stated that it would not contest more than 1/3 of the seats, which interestingly was the the threshold that the MB adhered to during semi-authoritarian elections, as a stronger showing would have granted the movement an element of authority in the form of veto power over the government constitutional amendments.[449] However, as the campaign progressed, this element of self restraint that reflected the MB's political strategy under authoritarianism was replaced by the FJP's growing political ambition, as the party reversed its earlier statements and announced that it would contend up to 50% of the seats.[450] Mohamed Soudan explained this contentious move by saying that it had always been a MB strategy to put forward more candidates than the seats they sought to gain, and that they did not expect the overwhelming support they received, consequently awarding the FJP with more seats than what they initially claimed they would contest.

Moreover, to avoid being accused of wanting to monopolise the emerging political order, the FJP fielded its candidates a part of the wider Democratic Alliance coalition, composed of more than 40 religious and secular parties, whose aim was to ""mobilize political forces that are committed to the principles of democracy and a civil state"

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[449] Wilmot, J., "A commitment to politics: the trajectory of the Muslim Brotherhood during Egypt's 2011-2013 political opening", p. 389

[450] Azuri, L., "Muslim Brotherhood prepares for Parliamentary, Presidential elections", in *MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis Series*, No. 753, (October 2011) http://www.memri.org/report/en/print5745.htm

and "secure a representative parliament that will lead to a government of national unity".[451] The unifying factor of an alliance grouping together such diverse political parties was a fear that the parliament would be taken over by figures associated with the old regime, who would have rid the cabinet of any element of opposition.[452] However, when the elections started, the FJP's candidates represented 60% of the Alliance's 46 closed lists, in addition to running candidates for 70% of the individual seats in local districts.[453]

The months leading up to the first round of the Parliamentary elections in November 2011 were characterised by yet more popular protests, aimed at overthrowing the SCAF and its practice of military trials of civilian protesters and suppression of revolutionary activities.[454] The most significant was the Mohamed Mahmoud street protest, in which the MB decided to side with SCAF, making was arguably was one of the top 3 mistakes that led to the population losing faith in the organization, the significance of which will be analysed further in Chapter 5. Despite more uprisings and SCAF-led violence, about 28 million people, representing 54% of the country's eligible voters, participated in the elections, demonstrating a strong sense of confidence in the election process.[455] The MB's superior organisational machine was evident from the start, as its members maintained a strong presence in polling stations all across the country, and successfully mobilised their supporters in the poor neighbourhoods relying on their established infrastructures.

Farag notes that approximately 29% of Egyptians eligible to vote also happen to be illiterate and to come from hugely deprived neighbourhoods, where the MB's extensive social networks are most developed, arguing that the organisation's decades-long provision of social services in economically disadvantaged areas was key

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[451] Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, p. 249

[452] Egyptian Elections Watch, "Democratic Alliance for Egypt", in *Jadaliyya*, (November 2011) http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3160/democratic-alliance-for-egypt

[453] ibid.

[454] Farag, M., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the January 25 Revolution: new political party, new circumstances", p. 225

[455] Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, p. 250

in mobilising voters and in the FJP achieving such unprecedented results.[456] Overall, the Democratic Alliance won a staggering 10,138,134 votes, over a third of the total, meaning that the FJP emerged as the largest bloc in Parliament, with 235 or 47% of the seats.[457] In addition, when the heads of the parliamentary committees were announced, 12 of them, including the most high-profiles posts, went to the leaders in the FJP.[458] Once again, the Islamists had proven to be the most successful in organising and mobilising support and voters.

The results of the parliamentary elections meant that, for the first time in the history of the country, Islamists were dominating 70% of the Assembly. This was mostly due to the combination of the MB representatives and those of the Al Nour party, which also marked the Salafists' first ever formal engagement with Egypt's political process.[459] Mohamed Soudan commented on this displaying the MB's typical distrust of outsiders, and displaying conviction that the Salafists' sudden desire to participate in politics must have been fostered by a third party, such as SCAF, in order to make all Islamists lose credibility later on, because of the outrageousness of their claims. Regardless of the above allegations, the world watched in apprehension as Egypt was taken over by the first elected Islamist-dominated parliament in the history of the region. Even if the FJP technically stuck to its promise not to hijack the elections for its own advantages, by running its candidates under the banner of the Democratic Alliance, the MB's political wing was essentially dominating the People's Assembly, something that generated fears for both the SCAF and external observers. In the space of one year, the MB had gone from being an illegal opposition group to effectively ruling the country, which presented the organisation with unprecedented challenges and matters of responsibility in governance.

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[456] Farag, M., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the January 25 Revolution: new political party, new circumstances", p. 222

[457] Al Jazeera, "Muslim Brotherhood Tops Egyptian poll result", in *Al Jazeera*, (January 2012) http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/01/2012121125958580264.html

[458] ibid.

[459] Brown, J., "Salafis and Sufis in Egypt", in *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (December 2011) http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/12/20/salafis-and-sufis-in-egypt/8fj4

The most pressing challenge that the FJP faced soon after winning the majority in Parliament, was a series of bureaucratic and institutional barriers put in place by the secular opposition, the judiciary, and the military. In essence, those belonging to Mubarak's deep state were not ready to relinquish power, in particular to an Islamist majority, and effectively made it impossible to govern or to take any meaningful choice for the newly elected parliament. This is why, when the time to nominate a candidate for the upcoming presidential elections came, the MB had to break its promise of not running a presidential candidate of its own. The organisation had stated several times that they did not wish to elect a MB official to run for the presidency, as they professed no desire to become a complete ruling majority anytime soon.[460] However, the FJP soon found itself unable to govern and, in the absence of an external candidate that was a partner rather than a rival, the MB leadership saw no option but to run a candidate of its own.

This decision triggered the outbreak of yet more schisms within the Brotherhood, as several members belonging to the reformist wing rejected such a proposition, arguing that breaking the MB's previous promise would tarnish its reputation, or as a member put it "The MB can't come out now and refute its promise not to nominate one of its members. No one will trust us anymore".[461] Moreover, the fact that the MB never really intended to field a presidential candidate is further supported by the fact that, upon finding its members unable to agree, the MB had to refer the question of contending the presidency to the Shura Council, where it was passed by a narrow margin[462] of 56 to 52 votes. Mohamed Morsi himself, at the time head of the FJP, even stated that "We have chosen the path of the presidency not because we are greedy

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[460] Farag, M., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the January 25 Revolution: new political party, new circumstances", p. 221

[461] Fadel, L., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood faces sharp internal divisions over Presidential Race", in *The Washington Post*, (March 2012) https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypts-muslim-brotherhood-faces-sharp-internal-divisions-over-presidential-race/2012/03/26/gIQASa7qcS_story.htmlThe

[462] Wilmot, J., "A commitment to politics: the trajectory of the Muslim Brotherhood during Egypt's 2011-2013 political opening", p. 390

for power, but because we have a majority in parliament which is unable to fulfil its duties".[463]

3.10 Internal Divisions come to the fore

It follows that the Brotherhood's incentives to participate in the Presidential elections were two-fold: the obvious leading motive was to secure the FJP's capacity to govern and keep the increasingly intrusive SCAF in check. Secondly, the organization was greatly concerned with the maintenance of its own internal unity.[464] In fact, the already existing historical rivalries between Reformists and Qutbis came to the fore over this very issue, and arguably set the precedent for one of the very reasons that eventually led to the downfall of the FJP. While these schisms might appear to be uniquely tactical in nature, they are underpinned by profound ideological differences.

Both ex-MB members and activists that have been interviewed for this research point to the decision to put forward a presidential candidate as one of the most divisive in the history of the organization.[465] This was also a time in which the decades-long struggle for power between Abdel Fotouh and Khairat al Shater reached its peak. When asked whose decision it was to go against the organization's promised and decide to run for presidential elections, an ex-MB said:

> It was all Khairat al Shater's idea, as he was one of the most influential leaders in the MB. (...) During the transition, we spoke to them and said 'you have to wait 3-4 years', if in 4 years, we have equality, justice, freedom, and free elections, the MB would naturally come to power. (...) We have to make sure not to overdo ourselves, we need to make sure that people do not think that this is going to be an Islamic state. But al Shater wanted a president. They just wanted to take over. They kept saying "this is our time, after 80 years, we must take over". They waited 80 years, could they not have waited 4 more?[466]

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[463] Chick, K., "In Major Reversal, Muslim Brotherhood will Vie for Egypt's Presidency", in *Cristian Science Monitor*, (April 2012) http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2012/0401/In-major-reversal-Muslim-Brotherhood-will-vie-for-Egypt-s-presidency

[464] Wilmot, J., "A commitment to politics: the trajectory of the Muslim Brotherhood during Egypt's 2011-2013 political opening", p. 390

[465] Interviews with former MB members and secular and religious activists.

[466] Interview with a former MB member.

Someone who was really close to the MB at the time reinforced these rumours, explaining that al Shater had been allegedly grooming "his people" for years, with Morsi being one of them, ready to place them in positions of power: "He (al Shater) restructured the Brotherhood in such a way that it will always be in his favour. He created people in the past twenty years to put them in key positions. He can be in control behind the curtains. People like Mursi (...)".[467] These allegations will be explored further in Chapter 5. With the decision to put forward a presidential candidate being one of the hardest in the history of the organization, essentially splitting the Shura Council into two, al Shater was awarded the candidacy with 85% of the votes. The struggle for power between the two leaders is still one of the most controversial moments in the history of the organization, leading Fotouh to leave and form his own party. The impact of such event on both the organisation and the psyche of its members is further evidenced by the fact that, invariably, each MB member I have interviewed either refused to talk about it, or was clearly uncomfortable while doing so.

Effectively, Mohamed Soudan and other MB members reject these claims, together with those accusing al Shater of being the one really ruling the country through Morsi in 2012 and 2013. Mohamed Soudan also claimed that the MB was pressured into putting forward a presidential candidate when it became clear to them that SCAF was effectively still running Egypt, and that it had no intention of relinquishing that power. He points to a particular episode that took place in December 2011, when the parliament's Financial Committee, headed by MB Saad el Katatni, had to review SCAF's budget. "The SCAF refused to cooperate, said their budget was a state secret and could not be reviewed. (...) So Katatni went to speak to al Tantawi (the general who would then be removed by Morsi), but he was told the Army would still not cooperate, and was threatened by saying that the SCAF already had the order to suspend the parliament in the draw, ready to go".[468] After this incident Soudan tells that Katatni went back to the organisation and made them realised that "is a façade, we are not a

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[467] Interview with a prominent secular activist.

[468] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.

democracy but a military state, we are just actors fighting SCAF and the deep state at the same time, we cannot change anything, we have no real power".[469] Soudan then claimed that the MB felt pressured to take responsibility, and that was what sparked the Shura Council voting. He further added "We did not like it, but we had to, or the country would come back to square one again.".[470]

Regardless of the reasons that might have led the MB to run a presidential candidate, following from the divisive Shura Council vote, the Brotherhood put forward Khairat al Shater as its presidential candidate, essentially sealing the Qutbists victory over the Reformists. One of the four deputies of Supreme Guide's Mohamed Badie, al Shater's influence went way beyond that role, given that as a multimillionaire businessman he was also one of the Brotherhood's main financers, and because of the position of power he held in the past, the strategist Brother would give the group a strong grip on both the country's legislative and executive branches.[471] Even more important and strategic was al Shater's ideological position: belonging to the pragmatic conservative mainstream wing of the group, he was close to those in the Old Guard but also had good relationships with leaders in the Brotherhood's reformist wing; at time of internal division and confusion, al Shater was perceived as the only individual who could keep the two factions united.[472] Imprisoned in 2007 under the Mubarak's regime, the businessman was regardless considered one of the most important strategist and more experienced leaders of the Brotherhood, hence the belief that its choice as a candidate placated internal divisions in the organization.[473]

However, al Shater's candidacy was short lived. The Presidential Election Commission (PEC), a panel of senior judges appointed by the SCAF to oversee the upcoming

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[469] Ibid.

[470] Ibid.

[471] Al Jazeera, "Brotherhood to run for Egyptian presidency", (April 2012) http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/03/2012331191231210148.html

[472] Kirkpatrick, D., "Islamist Group Breaks Pledge to Stay Out of Race in Egypt", in *The New York Times*, (March 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/01/world/middleeast/brotherhood-chooses-a-candidate-in-egypt.html

[473] Islamic Human Rights Commission, "Muslim Brotherhood: Khairat al Shater", (May 2007), pp. 10-13

presidential race, disqualified ten candidates on 14 April 2012, among whom there was al Shater himself. The PEC did so on the basis that, according to new elections rules stating that a candidate had to have been released from prison for 6 years before being allowed to run, al Shater did not fit that requirement as he was only released in 2011.[474] Brotherhood leaders criticised this ruling as evidence that the deep state-affiliated PEC coordinated efforts with the SCAF to remove strong Islamist leaders from the competition, arguing that almost all members of the PEC were "sympathisers with the old regime".[475] Despite such an hostile environment, the MB leadership was aware of the uniqueness of the occasion to run its own Presidential candidate, and therefore put forward its back-up candidate Mohamed Morsi, head of the FJP, Guidance Bureau former member, head of the MB's parliamentary bloc in 2000-2005, and one of al Shater's closest pupils.[476] Despite his developed political career, Morsi's association to the more conservative wing of the Brotherhood and his lack of charisma when compared to al Shater arguably limited his appeal.

When asked about Morsi's candidacy, an ex-MB commented: "Morsi was not even the second choice, he was the third one. (he was chosen because) he was a student in the class of al Shater, so obviously he trusted him. He belonged to Ezzat's wing before that".[477] Therefore, everything seems to suggest that all the appointments made in the FJP, starting with Morsi's own, were made on the basis of loyalty rather than expertise, something that will be examined further in chapter 5, and arguably one of the crucial mistakes that eventually led to the fall of the FJP.

The first round of Egypt's first free and competitive Presidential elections took place on May 23-24 2012. The feelings surrounding these elections marked a stark difference with the past, as according to my interviewees, for the first time "People

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[474] BBC News, "Egypt sets presidential elections rules", (January 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16785829
[475] Leyne, J., "Egypt Election Bans Threaten Fresh Political Turmoil", in *BBC News*, (April 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-17732164
[476] BBC News, "Profile: Egypt's Mohammed Morsi", (April 2015) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-18371427
[477] Interview with a former MB member.

literally believed they were voting for a different Egypt, that they were picking their representatives".[478] When speaking to someone who worked as an electoral monitor, they said:

> From the turnout, it was probably the most memorable elections we have ever had, and it would probably remain that way. I don't think it was rigged, I disagree with people who say it was. Even if any sort of rigging took place, it would have been very low compared to any other elections we had before. So I think it was fair, and even though from the turnout there were some violations taking place, like people campaigning outside the polling stations, which definitely impacted the voters, but in general I think it was a fair elections compared to the ones we had before.[479]

Despite this, with an official turnout of 46% of eligible voters, the first round of elections revealed just how fragmented the Egyptian electorate was, as none of the candidates won an absolute majority. FJP's Morsi came first with 24.7%, which still represented a huge decline in support for the Brotherhood; the FJP-led Democratic Alliance had won more than 10 million votes in November 2011, while Morsi only gained 5.4 million, roughly half that number.[480] The second round of Presidential elections saw Morsi, renamed "the candidate of the revolution", running against Mubarak-affiliated ex-Prime Minister Ahmad Shafiq, and despite the discouraging precedents, the percentage of voters increased to 51.7%.[481] once again, the MB's impressive organizational capability was clear throughout the process, with at least one Brother present at each polling station, keeping a close eye on the ballot box. Mohammed Morsi won with 13.2 million votes or 51.7% of the ballot, against Shafiq's 12.3 million votes or 48.3%.[482] Morsi's appointment as President on 24th June 2012 was a watershed event, as it was the first time Egypt had democratically elected its leader. Moreover, his inauguration also represented an unthinkable breakthrough for a group that had spent most of its existence under siege.

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[478] Interview with a student activist.

[479] Interview with a secular activist.

[480] Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, p. 257

[481] ibid.

[482] BBC News, "Muslim Brotherhood's Mursi declared Egypt's President", (June 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-18571580

3.11 The Islamist takeover?

Mohamed Morsi's victory came as a shock for both regional and international observes, who were worried over the potential radical tendencies that an Islamist government could bring about. However, following the liberal and almost secular trend that characterized the run up to elections, upon taking office Morsi stayed well clear of policies regulating morality or private life, but rather pledged to tackle five ordinary issues that negatively impacted Egyptians' everyday life and eventually forced people to the streets. These were these were: lack of security, inadequate sanitation infrastructure, traffic, and shortages of bread and fuel.[483] Moreover, when put into context, the Islamists' victory of the presidential race does not come as a shock.

First of all, in the last round of the Presidential elections, the competition was between MB's Morsi and former prime minister Ahmad Shafiq, which essentially gave Egyptians the choice to either go back to the deep state they had just managed to remove after nearly 30 years, or take a leap into the unknown and give trust to a group that for decades had essentially been a state within a state, providing essential social services to the country's poorest. When asked about this, one of the activists that I have interviewed said "we need to remember that the MB weren't really embraced, it won because we also campaigned for them. I myself, as a secular activist, I convinced my parents to go and vote for him, because we just didn't want someone from the old regime to win".[484]

This was further aided by the fact that since the mid-2000s the MB had successfully managed to develop a political narrative that was not exclusively ideology-driven, but rather coherent and inclusive in its nature. Essentially, the organization reflected mainstream, liberal, political ideas, which Egypt's authoritarian rulers always voiced but never implemented. Thirdly, despite its commitment to the notion that Islam is a complete and total system, the MB and the FJP in particular successfully managed to

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[483] Kenney, J., "The New Politics of Movement Activism: The Society of Muslim Brothers after Egypt's Arab Spring", p. 96

[484] Interview with a secular activist.

keep their activities separated in practice, therefore widening their appeal to include less pious citizens. Furthermore, the MB's conceptualization of state and governance starts with the notion of the people, and they see empowerment and participation as essential to the working of a democratic Islamic state.[485]

Therefore, looking at the Brotherhood's decades-long history as an essential civil society actor and as a pillar of resistance against the status quo, it is not that surprising that, once their political manifesto embraced some liberal notions, the organization had such traction and appeal to the Egyptian people. In line with this narrative, Morsi's first major policies focused on alleviating economic and social hardship rather than on religious matters or on the citizens' private behaviour. Something that is not usually mentioned by external commentators is also the degree to which most of the MB's ideas regarding the nature of an Islamic state are shared by Egyptians, therefore making their narrative not that unapproachable, but rather something that is easy to share and subscribe to. Surveys conducted soon after the removal of Mubarak showed that a full 62% of Egyptians believed that Egyptian law should strictly adhere to the word and teachings of the Quran, and that the majority of Egyptian Muslims completely supported the idea of a democracy, while they rejected the idea of a theocracy based on the Iranian model.[486] Finally, when taking into account the chaotic conditions and the leadership vacuum of the country post 2011 Uprisings, it is not that hard to understand why, presented in a certain why, the MB's narrative was so popular amongst Egyptians.

3.12 Conclusion: Preachers, not Leaders

In the absence of a Constitution, Mohamed Morsi assumed the presidency at a time in which the exact nature of the authority embedded in that position remained vaguely defined and therefore open to conflicting interpretations. The presidential runoff took place in the total absence of an elected legislative parliament, a constitution, or even

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[485] Kenney, J., "The New Politics of Movement Activism: The Society of Muslim Brothers after Egypt's Arab Spring", p. 110

[486] Farag, M., "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the January 25 Revolution: new political party, new circumstances", p. 223

checks on the authority of the PEC. While the Brotherhood had never rejected its historical commitment to working within the system, political engagement, while necessary, it is not always sufficient to ensure success. Being an Islamist party governing for the first time, the FJP faced several challenges, none of which any of its members had ever had to deal with before. Because of the MB's illegal status and its nature as a resistance and opposition organization, its members had proven to be experts in protesting and opposing political regimes since 1928, but lacked both the experience and the opportunities to govern. As Al Anani states, "the Brotherhood trains its members to become preachers (du'a), not leaders". While the Brothers were excellent at running mosques, syndicates, and welfare and educational networks, they were never trained to be professional civil servants, which represented an insurmountable obstacle for the MB once it gained power in 2012.

Although Morsi had won the presidential race, even if by a narrow margin, his capacity to govern was significantly constrained by a series of military decrees and judicial rulings. In addition to the challenges posed by the remnants and institutions of the deep state, the Brotherhood was learning how to act politically in the new Egypt, while at the same time trying to re-invent what it meant to be a movement in a radically different regional environment. The FJP had to go about executing mundane governmental tasks such as developing a failing economy and providing security in an emerging political system, while some of the key institutions still in place strongly opposed the existence of an Islamist government. Yet the most taxing challenge, and the one that was the MB's undoing, was having to gain the trust and confidence of diverse sectors of the Egyptian society without losing the support of its base, or, pursuing the party's political agenda without marginalizing the other sectors of Egyptian society.

According to some, what the MB's political struggle represents is nothing but the "coming" of Post-Islamism, which is to say, what happens when an Islamist group becomes compelled by both its own internal contradictions and by societal pressures to re-invent itself, and embraces notions of democracy and modernity, while also re-

secularising the role of religion in their narrative.[487] Regardless of the perspective adopted, it is undeniable that the post 2011 political context led the MB to unprecedented levels of internal restructuring and direct engagement with politics, that therefore need to be carefully analysed in order to understand the role that their particular understanding of Islamism played in post-revolutionary Egypt, and the effects that it had on the oldest Islamist organization of the Arab world.

To conclude, this chapter has critically analysed the historical and political conditions that led to the establishment of the FJP and, consequently, to the official start of the MB's direct engagement with governance. Following from the tensions between agency and structure already outlined in Chapter 2, it could be argued that the Brotherhood's history of repression and consequent political moderation represented one of the biggest obstacles in the final stage of the organization's transition to becoming a fully committed political actor. Tensions between practice and ideology are evident from the very start of the January 25th uprisings and only intensified during the post-revolutionary transition period, therefore adding to the set of already critical external challenges that the MB faced in its quest to legitimate governance. These tensions, which were undoubtedly shaped by the political environment the MB found itself operating within, will be further contextualised in the next chapter, where the obstacles to the application of a certain understanding of Political Islam to governance will be assessed through a careful scrutiny of Morsi's short lived rule and political choices.

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[487] Bayat, A., "The Coming of a Post-Islamic Society", in The Coming of a Post-Islamic Society", in *Critique*, (Fall 1996), pp. 45-47

4. The "Ikwhanisation" of the state VS. the "statification" of the Brotherhood.

Mohamed Morsi was sworn in on 30th June 2012, as Egypt's first democratically elected president and as a representative of one of the very few Islamist organizations to gain power in the region through a democratic process. These conditions made it clear from the start that the president-elect was set to face unprecedented expectations and challenges, some of the most prominent being the task of governing a post-revolutionary country while also guiding it through its transition to democracy, and facing the remnants of Mubarak's deep state[488] that had not been wiped out by the events of January 25th. Moreover, while the FJP candidate won the elections, he did so by a very narrow margin, with approximately 12 million voters who supported Mubarak's ex prime minister, Ahmed Shafiq, against the Islamist candidate. This data alone suggested that while Hosni Mubarak had been toppled, his regime had remained largely intact and determined to fight its way back to the top.

The vast majority of the Egyptian activists interviewed for the scope of this thesis have confirmed that the Islamist candidate had been elected as he was the only option representing an alternative to the return of the authoritarianism that had ruled Egypt for decades, and that parts of the population who would not have normally supported an Islamist candidate voted for him on the basis of "when it came to the presidency, I supported Fotouh in the first round and Morsi in the second because, as most people, we did not want Shafiq into power. So we did not have much room to manoeuvre".[489] This also led to the labelling of those who voted for Morsi as "lemon-squeezers"[490], a nickname that refers to the Egyptian costume of squeezing lemon juice over food on the verge of going off in order to make it edible and not too unpleasant to consume.

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[488] The concept of "deep state" has been unpacked in the previous chapters, but in this context it can be loosely understood as a network of individuals and groups who are in actual charge of a government. In the case of Egypt, that refers individuals and groups within the institutions of the state who had remained faithful to Mubarak.

[489] Interviews with secular activists.

[490] ibid.

These being the conditions from the start, it was clear that Mohamed Morsi was far from being the "people's president" he claimed to be, and was dealing with a country that was deeply divided along political and ideological lines.

Following this, the chapter critically analyses the MB's time in government placing it within the Egyptian context, focusing on its policies, political choices, and varying relationships with the other political actors, in order to understand what led to the premature departure of Morsi from the presidency. The analysis will focus on the impact than a history of "moderation" had on the MB political manifesto (or lack of thereof), and on the ideological and tactical challenges posed by the move from the periphery to the centre of Egyptian politics. The chapter then moves to the examination of Morsi's attempts to contain the Army, the Brotherhood's "Renaissance Project", and to the assessment of Morsi's 100 Days Plan. Ultimately, Morsi's November 2012 Constitutional Declaration is examined, as this event is considered pivotal to the removal of the MB government. This goes hand in hand with the examination of the December 2012 MB Constitution whose text, much like in the case of the Constitutional Decree, was left largely unscrutinised, as domestic and international observers focused mainly on the protests and popular uprisings surrounding their issuing, rather than on a critical analysis of their content. Therefore, the very institutional and bureaucratic impacts and consequences of these documents have been left largely unanalysed. In order to address this gap, the chapter will rely on the combination of primary and secondary sources to try and make sense of such controversial and pivotal documents.

The MB's performance while in government is indeed inseparable from the party's troublesome foundation process, which will become clear as this chapter tracks internal and external tensions that, arising at the time of the FJP formation, carried on to become distinctive features of the MB rule. Following from this, the chapters sets a framework for the analysis of the four main factors contributing to the downfall of the MB that will be discussed in Chapter 5, these being: the MB's legacy of internal divisions, its "arrogance" and refusal to cooperate with revolutionary groups, its miscalculations regarding the extent of power the group actually held, and failure to

take into account the prominent and historical role of the Army within the Egyptian context.

During his first speech addressing the population in Tahrir Square, Mohamed Morsi purposely unbuttoned his jacket to reveal that he was not wearing a bulletproof vest, a hugely symbolic gesture that temporarily won him the sympathies of even those who did not vote for him in the crowd.[491] Knowing that he could not rule a country in which half of the population was against him, Morsi's immediate priority should have been building bridges with those who did not support him, especially liberals and Copts. Several other pressing issues to be addressed straight away were the setting up of a framework for national reconciliation, defining what kind of relationship was to be had with Egypt's ever-present military forces (SCAF in this particular instance), tackling the worsening security and domestic economic situation, and defining what sort of rapport a MB government would have with external powers such as Israel and the US. These matters were central to address for several key reasons. In terms of national reconciliation, Morsi had to show that he could at least officially distance himself from the MB and be a much needed "president for all Egyptians".

When it came to his relationship with the SCAF, at the time of his election the military was essentially still attempting to run the country, issuing a constitutional declaration that had the power to heavily cut down on the president's authority as soon as the presidential stand-off started. The MB's troubled relationship with the Army is one to pay close attention to, especially in light of the events of June 30th. On the domestic front, Morsi inherited a country in which 40% of the population was still living below the poverty line, with security being at an all-time low since the outbreak of the 2011 uprisings because of continuing clashes between the population and the armed forces. Furthermore, relationships with Israel and the US were fundamental to address, as the majority of Egyptians were critical of Mubarak for being "subordinate to the US", and the MB had historically seen the Palestinian case as their own.

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[491] Kingsley, P, ""How Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's First Elected President, ended up on death row", in *The Guardian*, (June 2015) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/01/mohamed-morsi-execution-death-sentence-egypt

Considering the above conditions, it could be said that the MB president was faced with a variety of challenges from the start. Brotherhood official Ahmed el-Khoufi, now sentenced to death together with his president and interviewed in 2015, stated that "The struggle was inevitable. (...) It was inevitable that there would be a clash between [the supporters of] a revolution that called for freedom, social justice, and dignity, and a regime that ruled Egypt for decades".[492] However, it did not necessarily have to be that way. In order to unify the country and fight off the very lively remnants of the Mubarak regime, president Morsi had to keep his revolutionary bedfellows, the liberals, leftists and moderates that later partnered up with the deep state, very close to him. This could have been done through offering their representatives seats in government, and by establishing dialogues and alliances. Rather, in retrospect, it is evident that the president-elect did entirely the opposite, alienating them rather than developing a working relationship, and putting the interests of the MB first. Abdel Fotouh, a prominent ex-MB and who also ran for presidency, summarises this by stating that "The Brotherhood had a degree of political stupidity (...) They thought they could protect themselves from the conspiracy of the Mubarak regime through [just] their own organisation. They were arrogant. But it's impossible in the aftermath of any revolution to be protected by anyone other than the owners of that revolution: the people."[493]

Building on the analytical framework and background established so far, this chapter uses Historical Sociology to critically analyse the MB's time in government, focusing on its policies, political choices, and varying relationships with the other political actors in Egypt, in order to understand what ultimately led to the premature departure of Morsi from the presidency. It does so following on from the previous chapter, in which the formation and rise to power of the FJP has been critically analysed and put into context. The MB's performance while in government is indeed inseparable from the party's troublesome foundation process, which will become clear as this chapter tracks

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[492] ibid.
[493] ibid.

internal and external tensions that, arising at the time of the FJP formation, became a distinctive feature of the MB's rule. While there is a growing body of literature looking at the so called "Brotherhood rule"[494], this is a topic that still remains largely unexplored.

There seems to be four main factors that contributed to the downfall of the MB, these being: the MB's legacy of internal divisions, its "arrogance" and refusal to cooperate with revolutionary groups, its miscalculations regarding the extent of power the group actually held, and failure to take into account the prominent and historical role of the Army within the Egyptian context. This chapter does so with the aim of setting up the framework for analysis of the final events leading up to the July 3rd Coup and, more importantly, for the critical discussion of the MB's achievements and mistakes that will take place in the following chapter. This analysis' contribution to the thesis is two fold. Firstly, it completes the genealogy of the MB by examining the final stage of their political evolution, particularly focusing on the nexus between Islamism and governance. Secondly, the understanding of what led to the MB's demise is crucial to reflect upon Political Islam as a whole in the contemporary context, in order to challenge the wide-spread perception that the MB's removal represented the failure of the ideology itself. Rather, it is one example of an Islamist group that attempted to balance ideology and governance, while arguably misjudging the challenges posed by a democratic transition.

4.1 The 'Moderation Paradox' & the downfall of the MB

Part of what made the MB stand out when compared to the other parties running for elections, and appealed to parts of the population that would not have normally supported Islamists, was its history of maintaining a moderate stance in the face of repression. The group's embodiment of informal structures in the country can be analysed by relying on Historical Sociology. Always prevented from taking an active

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[494] see for example Al Anani, K., *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity, and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Osman, T., *Egypt on the Brink* (London: Yale University Press, 2013)

part in politics because of its illegal status, the MB instead opted for engagement through democratic strategies such as provision of social services and education, effectively becoming what could be defined as a "state within a state". I have argued that the organization owes a great part of its success in the 2012 presidential elections to these moderate policies and civil society activities, which for decades have been far-reaching and inclusive. Moreover, being an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary group, through its moderate stance the MB has also historically displayed a certain commitment to a democratic system of governance compatible to its aim of a slow Islamization, on the bases that the *umma* (Muslim Community) is the source of *sulta* (political authority), therefore appealing to Islamists and liberals alike, or at least presenting itself as the "least dangerous" option.[495]

However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the organization's moderation could also be seen as its ultimate downfall. Facing continuous threats and repression in the pre-revolutionary context, the MB used moderation as a defensive weapon and made the organization's survival its top priority. The long lasting trend of an institutionalized "state of emergency" in Egypt, initiated by Nasser, was also what kept the group unified for years, allowing the leadership to prevent recurring and crippling debates over ideological differences from actually dividing the organization. The MB's celebrated organizational unity was also a result of this focus on survival and moderation, as the group responded to recurrent security threats by developing a "pyramid-shaped hierarchy (which) ensures that members execute the aims of its national leadership at the local level".[496] As a consequence, the historical opportunity to pose an end to decades of depression and marginalization that January 25th represented for the organization, also brought about a deep qualitative shift. As underlined in Chapters 2 and 3, gradualism was an ethos that the MB's founder, Hassan al Banna, had always promoted, together with the notion that the organization should pursue the Islamization of society over a long term period, developed in response to the state's crackdowns on the MB in the 1950s. Using Historical Sociology,

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[495] Aknur, M., "The Muslim Brotherhood in Politics in Egypt: from Moderation to Authoritarianism?", in *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika*, Vol. 9, No. 33, (2013), p. 11

[496] Mahan, S., Griset, P., *Terrorism in Perspective* (Washington DC: SAGE, 2013), p. 377

it can be seen that the MB's ideology had always involved politics, but only as a consequence of social change:

> Our doctrine does not rely on revolutions, but on pyramid-shape gradualism; it begins from the base, which is the individual and the family, and climbs up to society, which (once Islamized) engenders the Muslim state. We have already seen that dynamic at work with the 2011 parliament, where the Muslim society we have built voted for us in large numbers.[497]

Moreover, internal unity and efficiency, although admittedly shaken by the events of 2011, has historically been achieved and maintained through the MB's centralized decision-making and de-centralized implementation, despite recurring internal schisms. Nevertheless, the eighteen days preceding Mubarak's ousting have had a profound impact on the MB, and pushed the group outside of the "comfort zone" provided by the focus on identity politics. The FJP's call for a "civil state with an Islamic reference" undoubtedly helped to differentiate the MB from more militant Islamist groups such as the Salafis, and to present itself as a more moderate and mainstream movement, which acted as a bridge between the two competing sides of the Egyptian political spectrum: the Islamist and the secular civil forces.[498] While that historical dichotomy had been removed during the years leading up to January 25th, the post revolutionary transitional context polarized secular and religious actors against each other once again, as finding common ground and agreeing on transitional policies became incredibly difficult.

In opposition to its secular counterparts, and according to the Moderation Paradox theory proposed in the previous chapter, the MB's historically moderate political stance could also be its greatest downfall, as the decades spent focusing on survival meant that the MB was entering governance without a clearly defined political manifesto. Moreover, the organization's shift from the periphery to the centre of Egyptian politics also meant that the MB had to rethink and leave behind its cautionary

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[497] El Shimy, Y., "The Muslim Brotherhood", in *Adelphi Series*, Vol. 55, No. 453-454, (2015), p. 2

[498] El Houdaiby, I., "From Prison to Palace: the Muslim Brotherhood's challenges and responses in post-revolution Egypt", in *FRIDE*, No. 117, (February 2013), pp. 8-9

and moderate approach that, as it has been shown in the previous chapter, inevitably led to schisms over ideology, practice, and internal divisions.

4.2 Ideological and Organizational Challenges

Aside from the obstacles represented by the responsibility of governing a post-revolutionary country, the MB was arguably facing an even bigger challenge, namely finding a way to maintain its organizational unity and ideological integrity while avoiding to alienate the portion of the population it was supposed to represent. These sort of internal challenges naturally originated from the rapid transformation that the organization underwent soon after the outbreak of January 25th, when through the creation of the FJP the MB's position shifted from the periphery to the centre. This political ascent meant that the organization had to quickly rethink its ways, and come up with new strategies to uphold both internal unity and external support, while facing the need to undergo deep structural change.

It is important to stress again that throughout the vast majority of its history so far, the MB had been an *evolutionary* rather than a *revolutionary* organization. Because of its marginalised, although embedded, historical position within Egyptian political and social life, for decades the MB centred its ideology and narrative around identity politics. That is to say, the organization gained its ideological legitimacy by focusing on the need to uphold and defend Muslim identity against the West, which was to be achieved through implementing legislations compatible with Islamic law.[499] Therefore, this rhetoric was also used to maintain the strong organizational unity that the MB had always been renowned for, which remained mostly unchallenged despite internal divisions, at least until the creation of the FJP. On the other hand this also meant that, being one of the country's most powerful opposition entities, the MB always spent little to no time on developing alternative policies to those of the "anti-Islamic" regime. It follows that with the FJP coming to power, a new reality had to be created, and one of the the main post-revolutionary challenges for the organization became

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[499] Salwa, I., *Being Muslim: Islam, Islamism, and Identity Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing LTD, 2004), p. 616

how to successfully make this shift from identity politics to policy, from ideology to governance.

The MB's rapid growth and shift from the prison to the presidential palace therefore meant that the group was soon faced with the necessity to abandon some of its historical ideological positions, in favour of more inclusive and relevant ones. According to El Houdaiby, while these sort of compromises can be overlooked in the short term, they can also considerably hurt an organization's credibility and generate both internal and external legitimacy crises if not handled correctly.[500] Oliver Roy and Asef Bayat both address these issues in their works, "The Failure of Political Islam" and "Post Islamism"[501], leading many to believe that the lenses they provide could be useful when applied to the analysis of the MB's time in government. These claims will be assessed further in the next chapter, but it is worth noting that the organization's key decisions and choice of policies outlined in this chapter reflect the ones that are generally used by observers to reflect upon the MB's political "experiment".

It follows that in order to smoothly make the shift from identity politics from policy in a post revolutionary context, the MB had to start developing coherent political strategies, balancing its Islamic principles with popular demands for democracy and socio-economic reforms. That meant that there was a strong urgency to focus on services and policies that were central to the Egyptian public debate, such as the economy, provision of resources, national reconciliation, and foreign policy. However, El Houdaiby underlines that the real obstacle in 2012 was represented by the authenticity-modernity/relevance dialectic. That is to say, the MB's long decades of passive participation in Egyptian politics and focus on survival had led to the stagnation of Islamist scholarship in socio-political domains, and to the lack of a clear, workable project of "Islamization". Therefore, the argument is that the absence of a clear

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[500] El Houdaiby, I., "From Prison to Palace: the Muslim Brotherhood's challenges and responses in post-revolution Egypt", p. 13

[501] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*; Bayat. A., (ed.), *Post Islamism: the Changing Faces of Political Islam*

political project makes it harder to strike a balance between organizational/ideological authenticity and practicalities.[502]

In the particular case of the MB, El Houdaiby warned that the MB's tendency to adopt a pragmatic stance relying on its organizational structure and Islamist narrative would put practicality before authenticity, therefore creating the risk of a legitimacy crisis emerging over the nexus between ideology and practice.[503] In essence, when Morsi came to power, the MB's immediate challenge was to tackle the paradox between the FJP's promise for change (as in the slogan "Islam is the solution" and in the "Renaissance Project" discussed below) and the maintenance of the status quo, which was essential to avoid being directly targeted by the Military. As El Houdaiby argues:

> The Brotherhood is now trapped between two threats. Holding on to identity politics implies discarding more serious policy questions that are gaining in importance in light of economic hardships and security sector reform challenges. (…)Entering the realm of policy would take out the group's common denominator for internal unity. Contradictions between different classes, ideologies and other biases will come to the fore, leading to a multitude of political manifestations. If the MB continues to have the FJP as its sole political representative, splits and cracks will be unavoidable, eventually leading to the group's complete breakdown.[504]

It follows that, as many predicted, the MB had to confront internal challenges over leadership and ideology even before it started to face external ones, such as those presented by the remnants of the deep state. While the organisation's relationship with other revolutionary groups was still in place, the MB started facing internal challenges soon after the creation of its legal party, the FJP. Chapter 3 showed that some MB members saw the establishment of the FJP as a distraction from the organization's main historical aim: the long-term, gradual Islamization of Egyptian society through the provision of social services. Others, mainly the younger generations, saw the MB leadership's insistence that its members should support the

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[502] El Houdaiby, I., "From Prison to Palace: the Muslim Brotherhood's challenges and responses in post-revolution Egypt", p. 13
[503] ibid.
[504] ibid.

FJP when it came to elections as too limiting, and the escalation of these sort of tactical internal tensions contributed to the split of the MB into separate political factions.

This is a trend that seems to affect in particular the youth factions of the MB, which were also the most active during January 25th, and cooperated with other secular revolutionary groups in the development of the uprisings. Their inability to share the "mother" organization's ideological aims and tactics after the fall of Mubarak led several leaders of the youth factions to leave the MB, while others were expelled, and to found the *Hizb al-Tayyar al-Masry* (the Egyptian Current Party), in June 2011.[505] Opposing the MB top-down leadership structure and the circumstances surrounding the creation of the FJP, members of *Hizb al-Tayyar al-Masry* were open to dialogue with their secular counterparts, and were living proof of the deep internal dissent that was enveloping the organization.[506]

One of the founders of the Egyptian Current Party, when interviewed for this research, reiterated several times the frustration that he felt as a MB member since the very start of the 2011 Uprisings. He claims that because of al Shater's own desire for power, the MB leadership was too eager to get to power, and not only compromised the organization's ideology, but also the Revolution's aims in the process of achieving it. He left when it became clear that the MB was going to go back on its promise to cooperate with the revolutionary and secular groups it fought alongside within Tahrir Square, as he believed, and still does, that cooperation and coalition were the only options to successfully tackle the remnants of the deep state.

> That's why I left. When they started the party (FJP) we decided to go out and make a new one, the MB leaders selected the president of the party, that's not a party, it is still the MB! We decided to leave because there is no separation. (...) They took all the power away from the revolutionary groups. They worked alone, there was no cooperation. They fought against the military and the deep state alone. They should have cooperated with someone else.[507]

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[505] Mahan, S., Griset, P., *Terrorism in* Perspective, p. 379
[506] Bradley, M., "Young Brothers Rebel in Egypt"
[507] Interview with a former MB member and founder of the Egyptian Current Party.

Furthermore, when asked about the MB's decision to enter negotiations with the SCAF during the transitional period, and refusal to take part in the November 2011 Mohamed Mahmoud protests, he said:

> I think they did not make a deal with SCAF (...) But they said this time we have to rule; after 80 years we have to rule. There is finally an opportunity for us to take over and have authority. So they felt that the revolution was a threat for them, not an ally, but an enemy. (...) That's the same issue that made the MB and the SCAF meet in the middle. They said "we have the same issue, we need to contain this revolution" there is a big change happening in Egypt and we need to take it to our side again.[508]

Statements like this clarify just how much internal unity and cohesion the MB had to relinquish in 2011 in order to make the shift from the periphery to the centre of Egyptian politics and, in the process, compromised the very organizational strength that gave it a chance to stand over other opposition groups in the aftermath of Mubarak's removal. It follows that, after finally being elected into government, the MB appeared to be facing both internal and external challenges. In particular, the organization's splits into different factions because of internal ideological/tactical disagreements and lack of a coherent political plan preoccupied most observers, and raises the question "if the MB cannot even represent its own followers, how would it be suitable to govern a deeply divided and post-revolutionary country?".

4.3 A Rocky Start

Upon being elected president on 24th June 2012 with 51.73% of the popular vote, with a 51% turnout, Morsi immediately resigned from the presidency of the FJP to further emphasize his (at least apparent) distancing from the MB and will to become the "people's president".[509] In an attempt to emphasise his commitment to democracy, during his victory speech the president-elect stated his intention of building a new constitutional, democratic, and modern country with the help and cooperation of his

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[508] ibid.

[509] Fathi, Y., "Brotherhood campaigners elated as Morsi is named Egypt's next president", in *al Ahram*, (June 2012) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/46064/Egypt/Politics-/Brotherhood-campaigners-ecstatic-as-Mursi-is-decla.aspx

people, saying "We Egyptians, Muslims, and Christians (…) are advocates of civilization and construction"[510]. He further stressed his inclination toward building a tolerant constitutional democracy granting equal rights to men and women, replacing authoritarianism with transparency and human rights, and promised "an Egyptian renaissance with an Islamic foundation".[511] However, Morsi soon had to come to terms with the SCAF's unwillingness to relinquish power, and with the remnants of Mubarak's deep state still strongly embedded within the country's Army and institutions.

As soon as the FJP won 47% of the seats in the People's Assembly (PA) elections in the beginning of 2012, which amounted to 70% if one takes the shares of other Islamist factions into consideration,[512] both the SCAF and the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) set out to challenge the rise of the Islamists, and dissolved the first democratically elected PA through a constitutional decree on 15th June 2012.[513] However, upon being elected, and in a clear attempt to challenge the armed forces, Morsi issued his own decree commanding the dissolved PA to reconvene, and successfully re-instated the Islamist-led parliament on 10th July 2012.[514] Such a bold move was pivotal in Egypt's tumultuous transition from dictatorship to democracy, and central to the struggle over authority and executive powers between the presidency and the military forces.

In a further attempt to assert his authority, on 12th August 2012 Morsi asked the head of the country's armed forces and chief of staff to resign, (respectively Field Marshal Tantawi and and Chief of Staff Hafez Anan), annulled SCAF's constitutional

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[510] Aknur, M., "The Muslim Brotherhood in Politics in Egypt: from Moderation to Authoritarianism?", p. 21

[511] ibid.

[512] Kirkpatrick, D., "Islamists win 70% of seats in the Egyptian Parliament", in *The New York Times*, (January 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/world/middleeast/muslim-brotherhood-wins-47-of-egypt-assembly-seats.html

[513] Brown, N., "Cairo's Judicial Coup", in *Foreign Policy*, (June 2012) http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/14/cairos-judicial-coup/

[514] Hendrix, S., Londono, E., "Egypt's Morsi makes bid to reinstate Islamist-dominated Parliament", in *The Washington Post*, (July 2012) https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/egypts-morsi-makes-bid-to-reinstate-islamist-parliament/2012/07/08/gJQAQTnDWW_story.html

amendments that restricted the powers of the presidency, and transferred the powers of the generals as well as the legislative authority to the presidency.[515] These two army men in particular were perceived as being the architects of the SCAF's bid to increase their power after the 2011 uprisings, and therefore their forced retirement was acclaimed by the vast majority of the revolutionary groups, with liberal political activist Shady al Ghazaly Harb stating "We had been chanting, 'Down, down with military rule (…) Today it came true."[516]

Soon after, Morsi unexpectedly appointed the former head of military intelligence, General Abdul-Fattah al-Sisi as his new defence minister, leading many to believe that he may have struck a deal with younger officers within the SCAF.[517] These allegations are also supported by Mohamed Soudan, who said Morsi decided to forcibly retired the two generals after suffering a failed assassination attempt that took place in July 2012, when the two strongly encouraged him to attend a public funeral of officers who lost their lives in the Sinai. He claims that Morsi, having the police, Army, and judiciary against him, had no choice but to accept the deal offered to him, which was the retirement of Tantawi and Anan in exchange for Sisi's appointment.[518] Even more controversially, al Sisi was found by external observers such as Amnesty International to be the principal instigator of the shooting on protesters during key clashes such as Tahrir Square and Mohamed Mahmoud, and also to be the mind behind the "virginity tests" female protesters were subjected to in Tahrir.[519] Soudan also told me of a secret investigation launched by Morsi in January 2013 into the Armed Forces' violence on protesters that, even though it was never made public, pointed to al Sisi as the main instigator. "He was a mass murderer, but he was part of the government. What was there to do?".[520]

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[515] Fahim, K., "*In Upheaval for Egypt, Morsi Forces Out Military Chiefs*", in *The New York Times*, (August 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/13/world/middleeast/egyptian-leader-ousts-military-chiefs.html?hp&_r=0

[516] Pargeter, A., *Return to the Shadows: the Muslim Brotherhood and An-Nahda since the Arab Spring* (London: Saqi Books, 2016)

[517] Fahim, K., "*In Upheaval for Egypt, Morsi Forces Out Military Chiefs*"

[518] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.

[519] Fahim, K., "*In Upheaval for Egypt, Morsi Forces Out Military Chiefs*"

[520] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.

Despite these allegations, this particular move was described by Al Jazeera as a "stunning purge" and as part of an "escalating power struggle" between the president and the military.[521] Regardless of international preoccupations, Morsi was asserting his authority as the first president not to come from the military establishment, and with the SCAF pretending to be temporarily neutralised, it was time for the MB to forget its moderate ways and to embark on the shift from the periphery to the core.

4.4 The Brotherhood's "Renaissance Project"

Sworn in as Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohamed Morsi was facing a daunting and almost impossible task: to guide the country through the key stages of the post-uprisings transitional period, and to establish an inclusive, democratic, and post-revolutionary government. Stepping up to fill the leadership and political vacuum that Egypt had been existing in since the removal of Hosni Mubarak, Morsi unveiled a "100 days plan", a roadmap based on the MB's *Nahda* "Renaissance Project" that the organization had been promoting since Al Shater was its presidential candidate of choice.[522] Developed by the MB's most influent businessmen, the "Renaissance Project" was an economic policy-focused manifesto that outlined the necessary steps to tackle poverty and the country's ever-worsening economic situation, which appeared to have worsened even more after Mubarak's removal. However, its text was heavily ambivalent and accentuated the MB's external critics' claims that the organization was formed by "free market capitalists", who were just waiting for the right moment to pursue foreign investments and strike economic deals with the West.[523]

Nevertheless, far from being a capitalist manifesto, the "Renaissance Project" reflected the confusion and lack of a clear message and ideology that had been

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[521] Al Jazeera, "Crowds in Cairo praise Morsi's Army overhaul", in *Al Jazeera*, (August 2012) http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/08/201281215511142445.html

[522] Ikhwan Web, "Al-Shater, in Cairo: Renaissance Project Made by All Egyptians", in *Ikhwan Web*, (April 2012) http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29881

[523] Trager, E., "Think Again: The Muslim Brotherhood"

characteristic of the MB throughout the transitional period. Some sections of the document indeed echoed the critics' concerns, as the organization seemed to call for capitalist practices such as reducing bureaucratic regulations that prevent the emergence of new businesses, reducing the country's budget deficit, and encouraging foreign trade.[524] On the other hand, it also argued in favour of state-support for farmers, envisioned a larger role for the state in managing the country's economy, and sought to eradicate the remnants of the Mubarak-era's state-owned enterprises.[525] Moreover, the Renaissance Project also included clear instances of Islamist economic agendas, such as the tackling of poverty through *zakat* (religiously mandated charity) and *waqf* (Islamic endowments), and the intention to establish governmental Islamic institutions.[526] The ambivalence and confusion that was evident throughout the *Nahda* should not come as a surprise, as at the time of its commission the MB was facing two of the most arduous tasks in its history: the evolution into a legitimate and ruling political party, and the need to address and reform the economic policies it inherited from the Mubarak government.

Market-oriented reforms had been implemented under Mubarak, leading to temporary economic growth, but because of well established elites and the corrupted nature of the regime and deep state, the economic benefits were not distributed evenly and resulted in some of the key grievances behind the January 25th Uprisings: a sharp increase in income and wealth inequality.[527] Together with the difficulty of having to come up with an achievable economic plan, Mohamed Morsi also faced the challenge of filling the leadership vacuum that had been enveloping the country since Mubarak's removal, and had to do so despite the very narrow margin that saw him elected president.

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[524] ibid.

[525] ibid.

[526] Habibi, N., "The Economic Agendas and Expected Economic Policies of Islamists in Egypt and Tunisia", in *Crown Centre for Middle East Studies: Middle East Brief*, No. 67, (October 2012), pp. 4-5

[527] The centrality of economic inequality in the outbreak of the 2011 Uprisings is well encapsulated by one of the most popular slogans in Tahrir Square: "Bread, Freedom, and Social Justice".
Shaub, W., "The Roots of the Revolution in Egypt", in *Arbitrage Magazine*,
http://www.arbitragemagazine.com/topics/international-affairs/middle-east/the-roots-of-revolution-in-egypt/?page=all

4.5 Morsi's "100 Days Plan"

Despite his lack of political experience, flagged up in the previous chapter, the newly elected president was aware of the enormity of the tasks that lay in front of him, and inaugurated his rule with a speech that outlined his 64 promises to the country, and a plan to meet each of them in the first 100 days of his rule. The main areas that the "100 Days Plan" was set to tackle were related to security, traffic, bread, environmental footprint/cleanliness, and fuel, all major issues that had been plaguing the country for decades and hugely contributed to fuelling the grievances behind the outbreak of January 25th. In the eyes of its critics, the MB's belief to be able to address and reform such deep rooted problems was a major sign of the organization's lack of ruling experience, and of its naivety when it came to making promises that could not be delivered. It follows that as soon as Morsi released his roadmap, several organizations aimed at scrutinizing and keeping track of his government's performances formed, which in retrospect offer a very detailed and objective insight into the first ever 100 days of the MB's rule.

One of these associations was the newly-created "Forum of Independent Egyptian Human Rights Associations" that, constituted of 17 human rights-focused NGOs, aimed at "evaluating the performance of the president-elect during his first 100 days in office"[528]. Through the launching of their "Human Rights in 100 days" campaign, the association sent Morsi a 7-page memo stating that his 100 Days Plan did not sufficiently address the severe lack of human rights in the country, and containing suggestions as to what decrees to adopt and which to avoid, in what was a comprehensive document composed by 30 demands and divided into 6 sections.[529] This memo reminded the president-elect of the necessity to meet the people's demand and expectations, and to address the tragic legacies that decades of gross human rights abuses had left behind.

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[528] Social Watch, "Egyptian NGOs launch campaign to monitor new government's first 100 days", in *Social Watch*, (July 2012) http://www.socialwatch.org/node/15102

[529] Egypt Initiative for Personal Rights, "Our Rights in 100 Days: "The form" Launch a Campaign to Monitor the President Human Rights Priorities", in *EIPR*, (July 2012) http://eipr.org/node/1444

Similarly, "independent youth with no specific ideology or political bias" came together to create "MorsiMeter", an interactive online platform aimed at monitoring the effectiveness of Morsi's 100 Days plan, by comparing what was being achieved against what had been promised.[530] The online platform is divided into five sections reflecting the problem areas that Morsi vowed to tackle and the number of promises associated to them, these being: security (17 promises), traffic (21 promises), bread (13 promises), environmental cleanliness (8 promises), and fuel (5 promises). MorsiMeter works by comparing statements and statistics released by the media (independent and official) to what is released by the official presidency office, by conducting opinion polls, and by giving its online visitors the possibility to report whether or not they felt that the MB government was fulfilling its promises or not, under the categories "spotted as achieved", "spotted as in progress", and "not spotted". Its interactive nature makes its content easy and straightforward to engage with, all the while collecting primary data that is essential to the scope of this chapter.

While relying on a single organization to assess the government's performance in its first 100 days is analytically limited and unlikely to lead to reliable and objective results, comparing results and findings from different monitor groups leads to some gloomy conclusions. Addressing a large crowd in October 2012, 3 months after taking office, Morsi claimed that 70% of his security goals had been reached, and similarly that 40% of the promised rubbish collection target had allegedly been met, and that he was over 80% of the way to ending the ongoing shortage of bread.[531] However, data gathered by various observer organization painted a much less optimistic picture, and concluded the the MB government was already proving to be inadequate, or at least too disconnected from the actual potentiality of achieving their promises, just over 3 months after being established.[532]

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[530] Morsi Meter http://morsimeter.com/en

[531] Al Jazeera "Have Morsi's first 100 days been a success?", in *Al Jazeera Inside Story*, (October 2012) http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2012/10/201210952026585832.html

[532] Morsi Meter http://morsimeter.com/en

According to data gathered on MorsiMeter, 24 out of his 64 promises were still under the "work in progress" category, while only 9 promises had been achieved, meaning that 58% of Egyptians declared their disappointment in how little had been achieved thus far.[533] Despite the words of Rashad Bayoumi, spokesman for the FJP, who stated "I think his performance has been great", the Washington Post reported that "Piles of garbage continue to line some streets of the capital. Strikes over wages and overdue benefits have halted some public-sector services, particularly in Egypt's woefully underfunded hospitals. One man even filed a police report against Morsi for failing to implement all of his 100-day promises.", but nothing more came of it.[534]

While it is undeniable that in its first 100 days the Morsi's government had not achieved what it promised, the conditions under which said government was elected need to be brought into the analysis. The MB found itself transformed from an embedded opposition group into the country's ruling party in a matter of months, and its politically-inexperienced leaders were left with an inherited political and economic situation on the verge of collapse, which would have been nearly impossible for anyone to tackle. Moreover, the country's internal security had continued to decrease after the removal of Hosni Mubarak, making events such as murders, sexual violence, and gross abuses of human rights a daily occurrence. At the time of Morsi's election, approximately 40% of the Egyptian population still lived in poverty[535], the country was deeply divided in terms of its citizens' choice of President and was under the watchful scrutiny of international powers concerned by the rise to power of Islamists. All

[533] ibid.

[534] Hauslohner, A., "Mixed Reviews as Egypt's new president hits 100-day mark in office", in *The Washington Post*, (October 2012) https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/mixed-reviews-as-egypts-new-president-hits-100-day-mark-in-office/2012/10/06/af4be574-0f12-11e2-bb5e-492c0d30bff6_story.html "The report was filed by a local business owner, 56-year-old Zaki M., to complain about the accumulation of garbage on the streets of Menouf City as a result of the garbage collectors' strike. According to the report, the plaintiff holds the governor and the president responsible because Morsy promised that certain goals would be achieved during his first 100 days, including cleaner streets and garbage control."
Al Masry, Y., "Complaint filed against Morsi for failure of 100 days plan", in *Egypt Independent*, (October 2012) http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/complaint-filed-against-morsy-failure-100-day-plan

[535] The World Bank, "Egypt Overview", (updated October 2016) http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview

considered, Morsi managed to meet at least some of his promises, which came as unexpected for several external observers.

Furthermore, despite the undeniable failure of his 100 Days Plan, Morsi still managed to achieve something quite extraordinary in his first 3 months in power: he seemed to be asserting his own authority over that of the SCAF and the Army, which only contributed to the MB's huge miscalculation of the balance of power in the country, which will be examined in the next chapter. The question now was whether that would have been enough to keep the people on his side, despite the growing popular discontent.

4.6 The Brotherhood's Constitutional Decree: the beginning of the end?

During his first 100 days, Morsi also successfully oversaw a treaty between Israel and Hamas, and stipulated a preliminary deal with the International Monetary Fund for a much needed loan.[536] For a short while, it looked like Morsi was the pragmatist and leader that the country needed, committed to returning Egypt to the centre of the regional political balance. However, the president's basking in international acclaims was set to be short lived. Egypt was still without an operating constitution 18 months after Mubarak's removal and on November 22, 2012, Morsi released a Constitutional Decree (see Appendix) that expanded the presidency's legislative and judicial authority, essentially granting himself extraordinary powers. This move triggered a surge of popular protests and mobilization that would eventually culminate in the July 2013 Coup, and is now accepted in the literature as the beginning of the end of the MB government. However, it needs to be noted here that, while this event is considered pivotal to the removal of the MB government, its causes, impacts and consequences have been left largely unanalysed. Therefore, this chapter will rely on the combination of primary and secondary sources to try and make sense of such a controversial and crucial decision.

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[536] Brumberg, D., "Morsi's Moment on Gaza", in in *POMEPS Briefings: The Battle for Egypt's Constitution*, (January 2013), pp. 8-10

Morsi's decree is so significant because it brought about some troubling questions regarding the nature of Egypt's transition. It caused large popular protests, resignations for his administration, judicial backlash, and reinforced the already existing doubts about the true political intentions of the MB. However, while domestic and international critics alike braced for the rise of "religious fascism", Morsi's move has to be placed and understood in the context of Cairo's intensively polarised politics, rather than just as an expression of Islamist intent. As Mark Lynch notes, "Morsi's power is more impressive on paper than in reality", although there is no doubt that with such a declaration the MB passed the point of no return.[537]

There is a considerable gap in the literature, both in the academic and in the media-based one, that focuses on the reasons behind the issuing of such a controversial Constitutional Decree. The FJP presidency attempted to justify it as the only way to overcome the country's political deadlock, and as a necessary step towards achieving "revolutionary demands and rooting out remnants of the old regime".[538] Gehad El-Haddad, a senior presidential advisor in the FJP, even turned to Twitter to informally defend the government's decision, tweeting "Someone needed to get real", in a gesture that perfectly encapsulates the fragility of the country's equilibrium at that point in time.[539] However, the consequences of the constitutional declaration were clear: Morsi had stripped the judiciary of almost all of its influence over the presidency, immunising his decisions from judicial oversight, pre-empting legal challenges to an Islamist-dominated constitutional process, and making himself legally untouchable.

What confused both internal and external observers was the fact that Morsi declared the Constitutional Decree at what was the highest point of his 5 months old rule thus far, when the MB administration was being praised internationally for the crucial role

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[537] Lynch, M., "Morsi's Mixed Moves", in *POMEPS Briefings: The Battle for Egypt's Constitution*, (January 2013), p. 10

[538] Revkin, M., "Egypt's Untouchable President", in *POMEPS Briefings: The Battle for Egypt's Constitution*, (January 2013), p. 13

[539] El Haddad, G., https://twitter.com/gelhaddad

it played in overseeing the above-mentioned ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.[540] However, while the country's international reputation was rising, Egypt's internal situation was far from stable, something that arguably played a big part in triggering the declaration of the Constitutional Decree. The Constitutional Assembly tasked with drafting the country's new constitution was on the verge of collapsing because of disagreements between its Islamists and non-Islamist members, all the while still being subjected to the SCAF's power to veto whatever document they eventually produced.

Such a situation was causing several representatives of secular and liberal parties, such as the Kefaya Movement, to call for a boycott of the document that was being produced, as they argued that it did not take into account popular consensus nor the aims of the 2011 revolution.[541] Moreover, clashes between revolutionaries and police forces regularly occurred in the capital's streets and squares, as popular frustration over the slow pace of change continued to escalate. Therefore, internal turmoil and the very real possibility of yet another Constitutional Assembly failing to produce a new document, nearly 20 months after Mubarak's removal, were likely the main triggers behind Morsi's controversial decision. Accordingly, the President publicly declared that his decree represented an attempt to safeguard the country's transition to a constitutional democracy and aimed at fulfilling popular demands for justice, but he definitely did not foresee how profound the consequences of such a decision were going to be.[542]

The seven-point decree radically altered the already fragile balance of power in the country by taking away the judiciary's authority to challenge presidential decisions, and pre-empted legal actions aimed at the dissolution of the constituent assembly and

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[540] Baker, P., Kirkpatrick, D., "Egyptian President and Obama forge link in Gaza deal", in *The New York Times*, (November 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/22/world/middleeast/egypt-leader-and-obama-forge-link-in-gaza-deal.html?ref=barackobama&_r=0

[541] Ahram, "Political Forces sign on El Baradei call for Constituent Assembly Boycott", in *al Ahram*, (September 2012) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/0/54250/Egypt/0/Political-forces-sign-on-ElBaradei-call-for-Consti.aspx.aspx

[542] Kirkpatrick, D., El Sheik, M., "Citing Deadlock, Egypt's new leader seizes new power and plans Mubarak retrial", in *The New York Times*, (November 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/23/world/middleeast/egypts-president-morsi-gives-himself-new-powers.html

of the upper house of parliament, as it happened in June 2012.[543] The declaration stated that, after January 25th, the Presidency held the responsibility to wipe out remnants of the Mubarak regime from the country's institutions, and to achieve revolutionary demands calling for the institutions of "a new legitimacy built on a constitution that protects freedom, justice, and democracy".[544] Moreover, Article VI stated "The President may take the necessary actions and measures to protect the country and the goals of the revolution.", essentially granting Morsi the authority to seize extraordinary powers without having to face legal recourses.[545]

While the popular protests and violent governmental response with which they were met will be discussed later on, it is now safe to say that in seizing dictatorial powers in the name of safeguarding Egypt's democratic transition, Morsi was starting to look more and more similar to his deposed predecessor, renowned for his dependency upon Emergency Laws.

4.7 The MB's Constitution Examined

Once again, much like in the case of the Constitutional Decree, the text of the MB Constitution was left largely unscrutinised, as domestic and international observers focused mainly on the protests and popular uprisings surrounding their issuing, rather than on a critical analysis of their content. Therefore, this chapter will focus its analysis on the text of the Constitution itself, in order to identify its institutional and bureaucratic implications and consequences.

Despite the ongoing protests, the drafting of a new constitution continued, producing a document that was contentious not only in its content, but also in the process behind it. A constitution that was meant to represent a united post-revolutionary Egypt instead embodied the country's lack of political consensus. Moreover, the drafting

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[543] Revkin, M., "Egypt's Untouchable President", p. 14

[544] Ahram, "English Text of Morsi's Constitutional Declaration", in *Al Ahram*, (November 2012) http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/58947.aspx

[545] Ardovini, L., Mabon, S., "Egypt's Unbreakable Curse: tracing the State of Exception from Mubarak to al Sisi", submitted to *World Politics* (June 2017)

process in itself was far from being transparent. Initially supposed to take two months, it was sped up due to Morsi's fear of a judiciary retaliation after the issuing of the Constitutional Decree, which resulted in most of the Parliament's non-Islamist member walking out in protest of what they perceived as a process dominated by the Islamists.[546] Regardless of the tense political and social situation, the text of the new Constitution was put to the test through a referendum that took place on 15th December 2012, when it passed with 64% of the popular vote.[547]

Notwithstanding the controversies surrounding it, the passing of the constitution did not come as a surprise, as to much of the politically exhausted population, a "yes" vote represented a further step towards stability. However, it needs to be noted that only 33% of Egypt's 52 million eligible voters cast their ballot – in the lowest turnout since the transition's beginning—meaning that the MB Constitution lacked popular support and legitimacy from the very start.[548] This also meant that, for the first time since its creation, the much praised MB's mobilization capabilities failed to live up to expectations, and numerous reports of electoral violations painted a problematic and worrying picture of the state of democracy and security in the country.

Aside from the allegations of a flawed and unengaging referendum, the text of the Constitution itself (see Appendix) was regarded by critics as highly problematic. While the MB constitution makes for a stronger parliament, limits the presidency's powers, and poses severe obstacle for the practice of torture and imprisonment without trial, the document still grants Egypt's generals the power and privileges to which they were entitled under Mubarak. There are several reasons why this is the case: for example, the document was drafted on the basis of the 1971 Constitution, and while there have been improvements, a lot of the issues contained in the original document remained. To start with, the approved Constitution does nothing to challenge Egypt's highly

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[546] El Amrani, I., "Navigating Egypt's Political Crisis", in *European Council on Foreign Relations*, (December 2012) http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_navigating_egypts_political_crisis

[547] BBC News, "Egyptian Constitution Approved in referendum", in *BBC News*, (December 2012) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20829911

[548] Beaumont, P., "Mohamed Morsi signs Egypt's new constitution into law", in Mohamed Morsi signs Egypt's new constitution into law", in *The Guardian*, (December 2012) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/26/mohamed-morsi-egypt-constitution-law

centralised system of governance, and while Article 188 allows for the election of local councils, it also states that their authority can be overturned by the central government at any time for reasons of "public interest".[549] This grants no transparency regarding the way in which these local governors are to be elected, and essentially ensures that high levels of poverty will continue to be widespread outside of Cairo. Nevertheless, The MB Constitution does impose checks on presidential powers, limiting the President elect to two four-years terms and taking away the individual power to declare a state of emergency, which would have to be approved by a majority in both houses of government (Art. 148. "For the state of emergency to take effect, the consent of the majority in each of the two chambers is necessary.").[550] However, the President still gets to nominate the Prime Minister, governors, and a tenth of the Shura Council, making true accountability hard to achieve.[551] Article 2 remains untouched, stating that "the principles of Islamic Law are the main sources of legislation", but another article now clearly defines the principles of *shari'a* Law as those of Sunni Muslim jurisprudence (Art. 219 "The principles of Islamic Law (*sharia*) include general evidence, the foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence, the reliable sources from among the Sunni schools of thought (*madhahib*)".[552]

Another major issue is represented by the fact that the MB Constitution is negligible at best when it comes to the protection of freedom and human rights. While it provides some sort of protection against arbitrary torture and detention (Articles 35 and 36 "Anyone who has been arrested, jailed, or restricted in his freedom in any form is entitled to being treated in a way that respects his dignity. He must not be tortured, threatened, or degraded. He must not be harmed physically or mentally."), Human Rights Watch points out that the document fails to actually enforce freedom of

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[549] Mabrouk, M., "The View from a Distance: Egypt's Contentious New Constitution", in *Brookings: Middles East Memo*, (January 2013), p. 5 See Appendix.

[550] Kirkpatrick, D., "Egypt Islamists Approve Draft Constitution Despite Objections", in *The New York Times*, (November 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/30/world/middleeast/panel-drafting-egypts-constitution-prepares-quick-vote.html?ref=world&pagewanted=all

[551] ibid.

[552] ibid.

expression and religion, which are long running issues in the country.[553] On freedom of expression, while Article 45 guarantees freedom of thought and opinion ("The freedom of thought and opinion are guaranteed. Every person has the right to express his opinion in speaking, writing, image, or otherwise."), preceding articles prohibit insulting prophets, but fail to define what constitutes an insult, therefore remaining unclear (Article 44 "It is forbidden to insult any messengers or prophets.").[554] When it comes to freedom of religion, things seems to have regressed rather than progressed, as the Constitution does grant freedom of worship, but only allows the followers of the three Abrahamic religions to build places of worship, leaving Egypt's ethnic and religious minorities largely unprotected.[555]

Recurring inconsistencies also affect women's rights, as Article 9 now refers to equality without mention of gender ("The state commits itself to providing security, tranquillity and equality of opportunity for all citizens, without discrimination."), but then Article 10 specifically states that "the State shall balance between a woman's obligations towards family and public work", while it does not do so for men, essentially leaving the gap between genders unaddressed and unchanged.[556] Moreover, any hope of seeing some degree of military accountability enforced in the Constitution have vanished, as the Army still gets preferential treatment, controlling its own budget, while military trials for civilians are still allowed in cases that "harm the armed forces" (Article 198 "Civilians may not be tried by the military judiciary unless they are accused of crimes that hurt the armed forces."), with no further clarification.[557]

Finally, the most confusing and worrying feature of the new Constitution is encapsulated in article 81, which states that "rights and freedoms shall be exercised insofar as they do not contradict the principles set out in the Chapter on State and

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[553] Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: New Constitution Mixed on Support of Rights", in *Human Rights Watch*, (November 2012) https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/11/30/egypt-new-constitution-mixed-support-rights

[554] ibid.

[555] Mabrouk, M., "The View from a Distance: Egypt's Contentious New Constitution", p. 7

[556] ibid., p. 6

[557] ibid., p. 7

Society in this constitution". This is in conjunction with problematic terminology surrounding the role of the state in "preserving the true nature of the Egyptian family" (Article 10) and "protecting ethics and morals and public order" (Article 11), which therefore gives the state the power to place public and social obligations above personal freedoms.[558]

Therefore, what had to be a document that sealed Morsi's position as "the President for all Egypt" turned out to be the MB's biggest downfall, the the turning point that sparked a series of popular protests and discontent that would lead to the July 2013 Coup. The Constitution validated most Egyptians' fear that the MB was primarily concerned with the implementation of an Islamic Project rather than the overall good of the whole country, a perception that was also shared by Egyptians who supported and voted for Morsi in the Presidential elections. However, as mentioned above, it is also true that the hurried and controversial drafting of the 2012 Constitution took place at a time when the MB was in the midst of an existential fight, battling with both internal and external oppositions, which led to the suspension of the "normal" rules of politics.

Interestingly, prominent MB members were aware of what a dangerous step this was, but made it clear that at the time there was no other choice for the organization and the party. When the Constitutional decree was first issued, one of the FJP representatives stated "yes, the decree isn't democratic and it isn't what you would expect after a revolution", but also shared his belief that the MB's hands were tied.[559] Regardless, the articles in the Constitution that gave the state a powerful role in determining the moral and religious values of a nations were perceived by both revolutionary groups and the population as being inherently antithetical to democracy and to the demands of January 25th, which kick started a series of protests that would eventually culminate in Morsi's removal 7 months later.

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[558] ibid., pp. 7-8

[559] Hamid, S., "Is There an Egyptian Nation?", in *POMEPS Briefings: The Battle for Egypt's Constitution*, (January 2013), p. 26

4.8 The Beginning of the End: The Battles of Ittihadiya

Up until November 2012, the MB presidency seemed to be proceeding without major setbacks, excluding the ongoing power struggle with the military and the deep state, which was far from being surprising or unexpected. The much feared "Brotherhoodization" of the state, a process according to which MB members would dominate official institutions that had previously been closed to Islamists because of their illegal status, was somewhat underway, but personnel changes had not been drastic or widespread. If anything, it seemed that the opposite was taking place, and that Egypt was witnessing a "stratification" of the Brotherhood, where the organization was struggling to adapt to its newly achieved powers, and trying to figure out how to be several things at once.[560] In its quest to efficiently govern a country in transition, it seemed that the MB was almost moving away from its original *reason d'etre*, with Morsi having to behave as a "president for all", rather than just as a devoted Islamist. However, everything changed after the issuing of the Constitutional Decree on November 22nd, with the release of a document that immunized all presidential decisions from judicial objections and subsequently added judiciary powers to the president's existing legislative and executive authority. Such a move gave the opposition and the revolutionary groups that had been excluded from consultation the spark they needed to start re-launching street protests, and November 22nd 2012 marked the beginning of a political crisis from which the Morsi government would never recover.

Popular sit-ins and marches in opposition to the MB Constitution started soon after the announcement of the Constitutional Decree, but it was not until December 1st, when Morsi declared his intention to go ahead with the drafting of the document and called for a popular referendum to take place on December 15th, that Egypt's internal situation started to become even more tense. Thousands of Morsi's opponents flocked to Cairo's Tahrir Square to protest the president's "power-grab", where they were met by pro-Brotherhood demonstrators chanting "The people support the President

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[560] Brown, N., "The transition: from Mubarak's fall to the 2014 presidential election", in *Adelphi Series*, Vol. 55, No. 453, (2015), p. 24

decision" and "the people want the implementation of God's law".[561] While it became clearer that the country was deeply divided, the rising tensions between demonstrators on both sides and the police forces charged with maintaining public order kept escalating, and would eventually culminate in a defining set of protests that would take place between the 5th and the 9th December 2012, subsequently named "The Battles of Ittihadiya". It needs to be noted that, in response to the violence gripping the country one again, Morsi released yet another Constitutional Decree on 9th December 2012, revoking the previous one issued in November, but still kept the plebiscite date set for December 15th 2012.[562]

On December 5th, thousands of protesters marched to Ittihadiya Square to protest against what they perceived as the start of a new dictatorship, aiming to hold a peaceful sit-in outside the Presidential palace. Anti-Morsi demonstrators chanted the slogan "the people want the fall of the regime" that came to define the 2011 uprisings, and were met by unprecedented violence on the hands of both the police and the MB's supporters.[563] What was shocking and exceptional was the violence inflicted on demonstrators by alleged pro-Morsi militias, who unleashed on the crowds, chanting Morsi's name, painting over revolutionary graffiti on the presidential palace, and tearing down tents.[564] Moreover, these episodes were particularly unexpected as most of the protesters gathered in the square belonged to Egypt's middle class, which had traditionally provided a reliable source of support for the MB, and were now being targeted by "thugs" allegedly belonging to the same organization.[565]

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[561] BBC News, "Egypt Crisis: Islamists rally for President Morsi", in *BBC News*, (December 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20564038

[562] Ahram, "Translation of President Morsi's latest Constitutional Decree", in *Al Ahram*, (December 2012) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/60116/Egypt/Politics-/Translation-of-President-Morsis-latest-constitutio.aspx

[563] Siddique, H., "Mohamed Morsi supporters and opponents clash in Cairo", in *The Guardian*, (December 2012) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/05/morsi-supporters-opponents-clash-cairo

[564] BBC News, "Egypt Crisis: fatal Cairo clashes amid constitutional row", in BBC News, (December 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20605134

[565] Mabrouk, M., "The View from a Distance: Egypt's Contentious New Constitution", p. 1

The pro-Morsi demonstrators chanted "the people want to cleanse the square" and "the president has legitimacy", but displayed little of the MB's famous organizational and coordination capabilities, leading many to question their allegiance to the organization.[566] There are several allegations as to who these militants might have been, which will be further examines in the next chapter. Several interviewees, both members and critics of the MB, had no problem in stating that they genuinely believed that the SCAF staged most of what happened in Itthihadyia, with the clear aim of setting the protesters and the MB against each other once and for all. One particular participant, who was very close to the MB at the time of the revolution, claimed that Morsi genuinely believed that he was going to be killed that day, and that he stated "Today is the day I will become a martyr".[567] This belief is based on the fact that, after decades of confrontation, the SCAF knew exactly how the MB would react to a similar threat, which mirrors exactly what happened. Interviewees say that al Shater called a "war meeting" when protesters started pushing at the gates, and:

> He started mobilizing people and he started saying that now is the day to become either a martyr or either become victorious. He succeeded in mobilizing (people), so the youth went out, willing to die. The security had their thugs standing on both sides, shooting at each side, so that both sides really believed that they were under attack by the other. To heighten the violence many made actual attacks between both. This trap was for Mursi to call the Brothers to come down to his defence so they could clash with the opposition. Because they would not gain anything if he would actually be killed, on the contrary, if he would be killed he would gain national sympathy, he would become a martyr.[568]

This could explain the violence that took place afterwards. Over the course of 4 days, large gangs of armed men violently clashed with the anti-Morsi demonstrators, capturing and torturing 49 men for over two days, before handing them over to the police.[569] Armed thugs splashed water on women, threw molotovs at protesters, and injured hundreds, all under the eyes of the police forces, who at this initial stage

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[566] BBC News, "Egypt Crisis: fatal Cairo clashes amid constitutional row", in BBC News, (December 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20605134

[567] Interview with a former MB member.

[568] Interview with a prominent secular activist.

[569] Mabrouk, M., "The View from a Distance: Egypt's Contentious New Constitution", p. 2

remained largely inactive. However, as the days went by, and despite the approval of the new Constitution by popular referendum, the real consequences of the Battles of Itthihadiya became apparent.

First of all, Morsi's claim to be "president for all Egypt" rather than just a representative of the MB collapsed, together with public support for Islamist parties and organizations. Moreover, as a result of the riots, the armed forces started to move away from Morsi, and from the deals that were maintaining some sort of peace between the government and the deep state. A fragile agreement of support had been secretly sealed between Morsi and the Army in July 2012, in exchange for privileges such as control over their own budget and impunity for the massacres perpetuated by SCAF in 2011 and 2012.[570] However, on December 8th the Army released a statement saying "The armed forces... realise their responsibility to preserve the higher interests of the country and to secure and protect vital targets, public institutions and the interests of innocent citizens", and "The opposite of that will bring us to a dark tunnel that will result in catastrophe and that is something we will not allow", making it clear that they wished to keep a neutral position and would not automatically side with the government.[571] The withdrawal of what little Army support Morsi could count on marked the beginning of the end of the Morsi government, as in the following months the presidency's authority was eroded little by little, eventually culminating in the June 30th 2013 protests and in the removal of Mohammed Morsi by a *coup d'etat.*

4.9 Back to Square One

In the months that followed the Battle of Itthihadiya, popular protests and violent clashes between protesters and government supporters continued, as Morsi scrambled to maintain power and reassert his authority. Soon after the approval of the MB Constitution, it became clear that the Brotherhood's lack of a strong political vision and their crippling identity crisis was starting to take its toll, as the ruling party

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[570] Amar, P., "Egypt", in Amar, P., Prashad, V., (eds.) *Dispatches from the Arab Spring: Understanding the new Middle East* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), p. 37

[571] BBC News, "Army warns it will not allow 'dark tunnel'", in *BBC News*, (December 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20651896

alienated all the revolutionary groups it was once allied to, refused to take part in dialogue, and increasingly conformed to the stereotype of its members being preachers, not leaders. This was a sharp shift from the previous two years' electoral successes and the organization's rapid rise after the removal of Hosni Mubarak, which had led to the perception of MB leaders as almost "liberal democrats" committed to guiding the country through transition, rather than solely pursuing the organization's Islamic narrative. For decades the MB's leadership had operated under the assumption that the values they stood for were also shared by the country's silent majority, which seemed to have been confirmed by the events following the 2011 uprisings. However, just over six months into the MB's presidency, it became clear that the organization was not primarily built for high politics, and certainly not for governing, as its crippling internal divisions and inexperience with handling direct power demonstrated.[572]

Throughout Morsi's presidency, the MB struggled to find a new identity, and attempted to be too many things at the same time. The organization's leaders also struggled to let go of the historical sense of being besieged, which resulted in the movement being pulled between its past as a hounded victim and its reality as a governing party. The FJP government's shortcomings undoubtedly resulted from these internal tensions, which translated into a weak legislative agenda antithetical to revolutionary demands, failure to restructure the state, a disappointing 100 Days program, and the FJP's failure to represent a real alternative to the policies it had previously so vocally criticized. Faced with unprecedented challenges, it appeared that the MB leadership preferred to continue with "business as usual" rather than attempting to come up with strategies and a viable political manifesto. Arguably, this is partially due to the fact that the MB leadership in 2012 had been elected before the 2011 revolution, meaning that it was the result of years of political stagnation and brutal governmental repression.

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[572] Brown, J., "Islam and Politics in the new Egypt", in *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (April 2013), p. 4

Consciously or not, the MB then decided to keep focusing on the only strategy they knew to maintain unity, identity politics, and struggled to let go of their tendency to present themselves as victims.[573] However, this strategy backfired, and alienated the sizeable majority of the Egyptian population that had looked at the Brotherhood as providing an opportunity for change. To understand why, we must once again use Historical Sociology to look at the history of the organization, its relationship with the Egyptian population, and the mutual shaping process between the organization's and other state actors and institutions.

4.10 Conclusion

On the second anniversary of the beginning of the 2011 uprisings, several thousand people gathered in Tahrir Square, initiating a series of protests that would continue for days, and were characterized by violence between protesters and security forces.[574] The uprisings quickly spread across the country, with several hundred people injured and 33 reported dead by the end of January 27th.[575] On the same day, in a speech to the nation, a worried Morsi declared a state of emergency and the imposition of a curfew in the port cities of the Suez canal, which only reinforced his opponents' perceptions of the growing similarities between their ousted and current leaders.[576] In an attempt to maintain some of his authority, Morsi also called for 11 political parties and four of the main opposition leaders to come together to discuss the growing unrest, but the leading opposition party, the National Salvation Front, refused to engage in dialogue until the Constitution was reformed and a new government was put in place.[577] To further reinforce the gravity of the situation, on

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[573] El Houdaiby, I., "From Prison to Palace: the Muslim Brotherhood's challenges and responses in post-revolution Egypt", pp. 10-11

[574] Kirkpatrick, D., "Deadly Riots Erupt Across Egypt on Anniversary of Revolution", in *The New York Times*, (January 2013) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/26/world/middleeast/tens-of-thousands-fill-tahrir-square-on-anniversary-of-egyptian-revolt.html

[575] Ahram, "Seven Killed Sunday in Port Amid mass funeral clashes" in *Al Ahram*, (January 2017) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/63428/Egypt/Politics-/UPDATE--Seven-die-Sunday-in-Port-Said-clashes.aspx

[576] خطاب السيد الرئيس بخصوص أحداث بورسعيد والسويس (January 2013)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H96WRAKRoS0

[577] BBC News, "Egypt Opposition Rejects Mohamed Morsi Dialogue Call", in *BBC News*, (January 2013) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21234543

29ᵗʰ January, the then Egyptian Defense Minister Abdul Fattah al Sisi issued a warning to protesters on both sides, stating that "their disagreement on running the affairs of the country may lead to the collapse of the state and threatens the future of the coming generations".[578] In retrospect, it could be argued that the fate of the MB government had already been sealed.

Amid recurring clashes and escalating violence, Morsi was also quickly losing what little support he had from the deep state, which was reverting to its old strategy of using the MB as a scapegoat on which to blame the country's issues. Ali Gooma, the head of Egypt's religious establishment, progressively distanced himself from the MB, while the military stood on its own and reinforced the judiciary's campaign against the president.[579] Facing enemies on all sides, Morsi lacked the political expertise to build an alternative support base from outside the state, and arguably failed to realize just how quickly his authority was being eroded. Another meaningful factor that is usually ignored, is the fact that the MB government was put in charge of a state that was still in transition, and lacked a basic political framework on which to build new institutions and implement reforms. In addition to being burdened by the reality of governance, the MB also had to operate within a state apparatus that it did not control, and that consistently attempted to dismantle the government from within.

Soon popular campaigns holding that the Morsi's presidency was a failure started gaining momentum throughout the country, together with the claim that new Presidential elections should be held before the set date in 2016. Several opposition movements gathered in Tahrir Square on 30ᵗʰ June 2013, a final uprising that was quickly adopted by the Army as a justification for enacting a *coup d'etat* and arresting Morsi and his cabinet. Headed by the then Defense Minister Abdul Fattah al Sisi, those supporting the coup proclaimed themselves a second revolution, and promised full democracy. Just over 3 years on, it can now be argued that they did so only in the most formal sense.

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[578] Kirkpatrick, D., "Chaos in Egypt stirs warning of a collapse", in *The New York Times*, (January 2013) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/30/world/middleeast/egypt-protest-updates.html

[579] Brown, J., "Islam and Politics in the new Egypt", p. 25

It is undeniable that the MB failed to rise to the challenge presented by the evolution from an evolutionary movement to a political party, but it also needs to be acknowledged that they only stayed in power for one of the fours years allocated to them. The main downfalls and flaws of the organization that arguably led to the MB failure will be detailed and analysed in the next chapter, but it is now worth concluding on a post shared on Facebook by an anti-al Sisi page on 23rd June 2016, stating:

> Some of us never voted for Morsi, but never supported the military coming into power. Some of us were critical of the Muslim Brotherhood administration, but we never chanted or called for their execution even when that became the mainstream in the media. Some of us warned the world of the catastrophic results of June 30th, but nobody listened when the euphoria of protest images took them over. It's June 2016. Had he remained as president, Mohammed Morsi would have finished his term this month without all the atrocities, bloodshed, executions, life sentences, and all what your call for "early elections" and "military intervention" caused Egypt, Egyptians, and the world. Thank you for your shortsighted selfishness. [580]

This is also a sentiment echoed by all the interviewees who took part in this research, regardless of their class, faith, or political affiliations. If anything, there seems to be a shared awareness of all the opportunities that were lost after the return of the deep state, which is now the driving force behind contemporary manifestations of social unrest in Egypt.

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[580] The Unheard Egypt https://www.facebook.com/Unheard.Egypt/posts/1356493911046525

5. July 2013 *Coup d'Etat*/Morsi's deposition= failure of Political Islam?

> "If the price of protecting legitimacy is my blood, I'm willing to pay it (…) And it would be a cheap price for the sake of protecting this country."
> (Mohamed Morsi, July 2nd 2013)

Just over two years after the beginning of a popular movement that led to the removal of the Mubarak regime, it seemed like Egypt was back to where it all started. Daily clashes between protesters and police, growing popular grievances, and the disintegration of the people's trust in the FJP government painted a picture that was far from one of a country that should have been on its way to a peaceful, democratic transition. Following the Battle of Itthihadiya, this chapter looks at the events leading up to Morsi's removal and examines the reasons behind popular discontent and the perceived failure of the MB. Once again, the legacy of division characteristic of the organisation and certain perceptions of Political Islam played a major role in the unravelling of these events. Justifications, accusations, and political choices are examined within the framework of Political Islam and that of Egypt itself, with the aim of identifying the extent to which they were influenced by history and ideology. Ultimately, this chapter identifies four main reasons that have arguably led to the deposition of the FJP, these being the MB's legacy of internal divisions, its "arrogance" and refusal to cooperate with revolutionary groups, its miscalculations regarding the extent of power the group actually held, and failure to take into account the prominent and historical role of the Army within the Egyptian context.

Drawing on Historical Sociology and on what has been said so far, it is now possible to bring together the MB's ideological tensions discussed beforehand with internal schisms and approaches to politics. This chapter does so with the aim of offering a conclusive analysis of what led to Morsi's toppling, and of what that means for the organization's history and for its domestic and international perception. In the past few years, many have engaged with the events of June 30th 2013 and with the

subsequent *coup d'etat* perpetrated by the Egyptian Army, with the general narrative "blaming" the military takeover on the MB's lack of political engagement. However, this chapter will put forward four main reasons that have arguably led to the MB's deposition, which go beyond the mainstream arguments and provide a much more detailed analysis and explanation of the events. In turn, this also comes with significant implications for the contemporary understanding of Political Islam, which is reflected in the aggressive foreign policies that are internationally aimed at the region.

In order to do this, and following from the initial analysis set up in Chapter 1, the chapter critically engages with Oliver Roy's account of the "failure of Political Islam", as it is necessary to clarify and understand exactly what the scholar meant by that in order to challenge his position. Therefore, Roy's account of Islamism and "failure" will be explained and criticised, with the aim of setting a comprehensive framework for analysis. It should be made clear that this is not an attack on Roy himself. Rather, this thesis seeks to address and problematize a much broader trend that homogenises the understanding of Political Islam, ultimately represented by Roy's "The Failure of Political Islam". This is a necessary exercise as there has been a return to the monolithic understanding of Islamism in the aftermath of events such as the War on Terror and the rise of Da'esh, with the MB's removal further emphasising this. In turn, the homogenising of Political Islam has led to its equation with violence, extremism and incompatibility with democratic governance, contributing to the growing rise of Islamophobia and to the construction of Muslims as the "other".

Therefore, using the MB's example to critically engage with Roy's work comes with a set of much broader implications. In particular, this thesis uses it to argue that it is necessary to acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of Political Islam and the fact that it is a modern, ever-evolving phenomenon that is inextricably linked to sources of power and legitimacy. This is an understanding that is largely absent in international foreign policy-making circles, leading to the "fight against Islamism" being the priority of hugely influential global actors such as the US. This is why approaches based on Historical Sociology, which take into account the influence of different social, political,

and historical contexts, are key to understanding what a group like the MB embodies and to comprehend its identity and message.

Following from this, the chapter will engage with the question of whether Morsi's government can be considered to have been Islamist in nature, as that relevance is necessary when trying to address Roy's account. The chapter argues that the MB's short year in power indeed laid down the foundations of Islamist rule, providing three different explanations as to why, and is therefore fit to be analysed under such a framework. It then goes on to propose four reasons/sets of events that can be understood as triggering the events leading up to the July 2013 *coup d'etat,* and I argue that it would be more appropriate to talk about a deposition, rather than failure, of an Islamist regime in the making. Once again, this stresses the much wider contribution that the thesis makes beyond the study of the MB, specifically when it comes to the implications of the FJP's destitution for the wider understanding of Political Islam.

5.1 Tamarod, Sisi, and the Coup

On June 30th 2013, the day marking the one-year anniversary of Morsi's presidential inauguration, millions of Egyptians gathered in squares across the country chanting "the people want the fall of the regime", echoing the cry that became the symbol of the protests that removed Hosni Mubarak in February 2011.[581] Two and a half years and a free presidential election later, revolutionaries were back on the streets, demanding the Islamist government to step down and asking for early presidential elections.[582] Demonstrators accused the MB of having hijacked the Revolution for their own means, and of using their power to impose Islamic law. The events of June 30th were the peak of a series of popular protests that had been escalating in numbers and frequency in Egypt over the previous few months, and that eventually led to the removal of the country's first freely elected government.

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[581] Fayed, S., Saleh, J., "Million flood Egypt's streets to demand Mursi quit", in *Reuters*, (June 2013) http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-protests-idUSBRE95Q0NO20130630

[582] Hellyer, H., "Egypt after the Arab Spring: Revolt and Reaction", in *Adelphi Series*, Vol. 55, No. 453-454, (2015), p. 135

One of the main forces behind the June 30th Revolution was the Tamarod ("revolt") movement, a grassroots youth group that formed in April 2013 and quickly gained the sympathies of most of Morsi's opponents, ranging from the secular Kefaya Movement to Fatouh's own "Strong Egypt" Party.[583] The movement quickly earned a lot of traction among those who feared the "Ikhwanization" of the state, and a potentially indefinite Islamist authoritarian rule, therefore bringing together activists from completely different religious and secular backgrounds, and even some remnants of the Mubarak regime.[584] The identity and political affiliation of those who took to the streets therefore remains greatly unclear, with members of the deposed FJP attributing the protests to a carefully orchestrated SCAF's "conspiracy" or, in the words of Morsi's Foreign Minister Mohamed Soudan "Many of these people were counter-revolutionaries and loyalists of the former regime. To give you an example, Mubarak's portrait was raised high in Tahrir Square on 30th June (2013). This shows that something was wrong. This was a counter-revolutionary crowd."[585]

Regardless of their composition, the protests on June the 30th were arguably sparked by the government's lack of response to a petition launched by Tamarod, asking Morsi to resign and allow for new presidential elections to be held, for which they group claimed to have collected over 22 million signatures, although this number is highly disputed.[586] Being the main force behind the revolution, Tamarod issued an ultimatum giving Morsi two days to step down, and called for "state institutions including the army, the police and the judiciary, to clearly side with the popular will as represented by the crowds".[587] What the revolutionaries probably did not expect, was the extent to which the Egyptian Armed Forces seized the occasion to do just that.

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[583] Ahram Online, "Strong Egypt Party supports protest on 30 June, opposes coup", in *Ahram Online*, (June 2013) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/74273/Egypt/Politics-/Strong-Egypt-Party-supports-protest-on--June,-oppo.aspx

[584] Tabaar, M., "Assessing In(security) after the Arab Spring: the case of Egypt", in *American Political Science Association*, (2013), p. 730

[585] Abedin, M., "Egypt: the Muslim Brotherhood in Exile. An interview with Mohammad Soudan", in *Religioscope*, (February 2014) http://english.religion.info/2014/02/24/egypt-the-muslim-brotherhood-in-exile-an-interview-with-mohammad-soudan/

[586] BBC News, "Profile: Egypt's Tamarod protest movement", in *BBC News*, (July 2013) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23131953

[587] ibid.

Following Tamarod's example the SCAF gave the government a window of 48 hours to meet the demands of the Egyptian people until it "stepped in to restore order", referring to the ultimatum as a "a final chance to shoulder the burden of a historic moment in our country."[588] Morsi refused to meet both the protesters' and the Army's demands, issuing an emotional speech on the night of July 2nd in which he insisted he was the legitimate leader of the country, and that his removal would only lead to more violence:

> The people empowered me, the people chose me, through a free and fair election (...) Legitimacy is the only way to protect our country and prevent bloodshed, to move to a new phase (…) Legitimacy is the only thing that guarantees for all of us that there will not be any fighting and conflict, that there will not be bloodshed. (...) If the price of protecting legitimacy is my blood, I'm willing to pay it," he said. "And it would be a cheap price for the sake of protecting this country.[589]

Despite his powerful words, 12 months of perceived political ineptitude and controversial policies caught up with the leader of the Islamist government, as SCAF removed him through a *coup d'etat* the following day. This also came to embody one of the darkest times in the MB's history and officially welcomed the return of military authoritarianism to Egypt. As the revolutionaries got crushed once again, and now that the country is in the midst of one of the worst Human Rights crises it has ever experienced, it is worth analysing the reasons that led to the FJP's removal, and its implications and ramifications for Political Islam as a heterogeneous movement.

5.2 The "Failure of Political Islam?" Assessing Roy's Claim

When looking at the rise to power of Islamist forces in the region, be it through revolutionary or "democratic" means, one of the most prominent analyses of such phenomenon is that provided by the Oliver Roy in his 1994 book "The Failure of Political Islam". In both this work and in several subsequent articles, Roy puts forward

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[588] Wedeman, B., "Egypt's Military gives Morsi ultimatum", in *CNN*, (July 2013) http://edition.cnn.com/2013/07/01/world/meast/egypt-protests/index.html?hpt=hp_t1

[589] Kirkpatrick, D., Hubbard, B., "Morsi Defies Egypt's Army Ultimatum to Bend to Protest", in *The New York Times*, (July 2013) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/03/world/middleeast/egypt-protests.html?pagewanted=all

an argument that starts by assessing and challenging what had been the mainstream perception of Political Islam in Western policy circles up to that point in history, namely the view of Islam as a religion of political extremisms, as something anachronistic, and therefore as incompatible with the Western ideal even when politicised. Roy undeniably challenged such a-historicism and tendency to reduce the regional geopolitics of the time to a mere "clash of civilisations"; however, while countering such gross generalizations, Roy arguably established a new set of equally damaging ones, which will be further analysed below. This is the case because, as explained in the first chapter of this thesis, it is necessary to engage with Roy's position when looking to assess whether the MB "failed" in their Islamist journey in 2012 or not. Having already established that Morsi's time in power can indeed be recognised as the making of an Islamist government, Roy's claim therefore needs to be measured against it.

Firstly then, in order to address the question of whether Islamist rule as embodied by the MB's year in power has failed or not, there is the need to understand what exactly Roy meant by "failure". By doing so, the purpose of this thesis is to argue that it is necessary to take a more nuanced approach to the analysis of what happened in Egypt in 2012, and to move away from the narrative of an (Islamist) government either failing or succeeding while in power, as that is too reductive and does not add to the discussion of this topic at all. Rather, it is more useful to challenge Roy's fixed terminology and criteria while looking at the staggering diversity of Islamist movements across the region, and at the differences found not only within the same national context, embodied in Egypt by the struggle between the MB and the Salafis, but also at schisms within the same Islamist organisation. This can also be done by looking at the particular conditions that led to Morsi's appointment as president in 2012, arguing that ultimately it is not about failure as Roy understands it, but about the inability to maintain power.

Seeking to break down and challenge the binary between either failing or succeeding when talking about an Islamist government, in particular that of the MB, it is first necessary to engage with the terminology used by Roy, and to really understand what

the scholar means by "failure" when referring to the Islamist "quest" to governance. In "The Failure of Political Islam", Roy puts forward a rather compelling argument attempting to explain contemporary forms of Islamism as "third world movements",[590] inspired by Western ideologies such as communism or socialism. However, rather than differentiating between the different ideologies and strategies that set each Islamist group aside from the other, Roy seems to be grouping them all together under the label of "neo-fundamentalism". What he means by that is a distinction between "Islamism" as such and "neofundamentalism", with the former referring to the drive for political power, and the latter meaning a much narrower focus on the family and the mosque instead.

Therefore, in Roy's opinion, neofundamentalists would be represented by the Saudi regime, while Iran would embody "Islamism" as a comprehensive notion. In doing so, Roy claims that unlike the "original" Islamists, contemporary groups (neo-fundamentalists) have distanced themselves from the intellectual challenges posed by modernity and instead limit themselves to channelling the discontent of the urban youth into political opposition. Therefore, Roy is essentially arguing that "Neo-fundamentalists worry about morals, mixed education, veiling, and the corrupting influence of the West, but they have no real political or economic program. If they come to power they will resemble the repressive, one-party regimes that they are likely to replace, and will in turn face the opposition of these same disaffected classes.".[591] Consequently, in Roy's view, "neofundamentalism represents a "degradation" and an "enfeeblement" of Islamism, for it challenges "the political, economic, and social realms…only in words."[592]

Roy further claims that "aside from the Iranian Revolution, Islamism has not significantly altered the political landscape of the Middle East. Political Islam does not

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[590] "They have in common the cult of the return to the past, of authenticity and purity; the concern with dress, food, and conviviality; the rebuilding of a "traditional" way of life in a context and by methods that presuppose that the tradition is obsolete; the shift into terrorism for the most radical fringe.", Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 5

[591] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 75

[592] ibid.

pass the test of power".[593] In essence, at the time of writing, Roy believed that Islamist movements were running out of "revolutionary steam", and that they would either become normal political parties or lead to individualistic neo-fundamentalism. Consequently, he predicted that Islamists would disappear from the political arena, and solely focus on social and ethical issues rather than on the creation of an Islamic State.[594] He therefore understands "failure" as being primarily an intellectual one, by saying that "Islamism is a failure historically: neither in Iran or in liberated Afghanistan has a new society been established. The failure of Islamism does not mean that parties such as the Algerian ISF will not achieve power, but only that those parties will not invent a new society."[595] Ultimately, reflecting on the Egyptian context in 2013 after Morsi's removal by the military-led *coup d'etat*, Roy stated that "The failure of Political Islam is not the political failure of the Islamists; it is the collapse of Islamism as a political ideology"[596], claiming that Islamism as a whole has lost its credibility as a champion of change.

Although this is an admittedly short summary of Roy's position, it should already be apparent that although such an argument might come across as compelling and convincing at first, a deeper analysis reveals a number of shortcomings. Therefore, before moving onto the specific discussion of how Roy would look at the events of 2012 in Egypt as the demonstration of his "failure" theory, it is necessary to contextualise and criticise its foundations first. To begin with, Roy's choices of case studies while developing its original theory are questionable. The supposed inability of the Afghan *mujahedeen* to seize power was disproved in 1996, when the civil war ended with the overarching victory of a specific branch of the Afghan Taliban movement over the country's more secular forces. Similarly, Roy's claims that "Islamists have changed, or at least they have understood that the world has changed. Even where they have taken control, as in Iran or Gaza, they have been unable to

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[593] ibid., p. ix

[594] Steele, J., "Globalised Islam"

[595] Roy, O., *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. ix

[596] Roy, O., "There Will be no Islamist Revolution", p. 16

establish a successful model of an Islamic state".[597] Further claims that, aside from the Iranian Revolution, Islamism has not significantly altered the political landscape of the Middle East, are equally hasty if not just simply incorrect in the light of contemporary events. Even more importantly, it is necessary to note that the binary that Roy draws between "original" Islamism and neofundamentalism is also too narrow and incorrect, as it does not take into account the diversity of practices and ideological leanings that are manifested even with the same Islamist movement. For example in the case of the MB, it has been underlined in the previous chapters how its membership has historically been split between these two tendencies, with groups focusing on the achievement of political power while other factions argued for the need to maintain their primary focus on the individual rather than the state.

Therefore, claiming that contemporary neofundamentalist movements have hijacked the original notion of Islamism is again incorrect, as it draws an unnecessary binary, and groups the many different manifestations of Islamism under a monolithic label, without taking diversity of experiences and practices into account. Moreover, Roy also ignores socio-economic contexts that play a key role in shaping the aims and strategies of these groups, as this thesis has shown in the case of the MB in Egypt.

Reflecting on the impact of his main work in 2006, Roy attempted to defend his thesis by stating "By my title, I meant that the Islamist ideology is simply not working. It didn't provide the basis to create a new society, a new state, or offer an alternative to the (then) two paths of western democracy and communism."[598] However, this claim once again underlines how general Roy's approach is, and his failure to take into account the broad range of Islamist groups in the region, whose aims and strategies widely differ depending on their historical and socio-political context. In claiming that the overarching aim of an Islamist ideology is the creation of a "utopian Islamic State" and the creation of a new society, Roy severely reduces this diversity and, in doing so, excludes the majority of Islamist movements from his analysis. This is the case as most

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[597] Roy, O., "The Transformation of the Arab World", in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (July 2012), p. 10

[598] Roy, O., "Islamism's Failure, Islamists' Future"

Islamist groups, such as the MB, never strove for the creation of a new society, but rather for the gradual reformation of the current one, in line with the organization's evolutionary rather than revolutionary approach. Similarly, the claim that an Islamist government has never successfully manage to establish a new society (when wanting to do so) is equally wrong, and it can be proved by the case of Iran which, ironically, was one of Roy's main case studies in the 1990s.

Moreover, Islamists have arguably done the opposite of disappearing from the political arena, with various groups still heavily influencing the region's geopolitics today. Therefore, one question needing an answer is, in the eyes of whom has the Islamist state/movement lost its credibility? Is it in the eyes of the Islamists themselves, whose policies reached their highest point in 2012 in countries like Egypt and Tunisia? Or is it rather in the eyes of the West that, failing to recognise an Islamist government when there is one, as demonstrated above, therefore also fails to recognise the pull and relevance of an ideology that is far from being defeated today? This question is particularly relevant now, when international foreign policies seem to be increasingly driven by the narrative calling for a "war against Islam", understood in a monolithic sense, which is alienating entire communities rather than building peace

To conclude, in opposition to Roy's understanding of "failure", this thesis refers to the MB's removal as a "deposition" instead. This is not to say that the actions that led to the events of July 2013 do not embody various degrees of political failure in its broader sense. However, for the purposes of this thesis, it is necessary to use a different terminology in order to challenge the understanding of "failure" as that of a broader ideology as a whole, which would be too homogenising and would therefore hinder the understanding of the impacts that the MB's removal had on regional dynamics.

5.3 The FJP in power: Islamist government or democratic transition?

When looking at the violent end of the MB's rule in July 2013, several critics such as Roy adopt such event as a proof of the incompatibility of democracy and Islamic rule. However, before attempting to address the question of whether "Political Islam" (as

embodied by the MB's rule) has failed in its quest for governance or not, there is the need to first establish whether Morsi's government could be defined as Islamist.

This is a necessary step as "we", as Western observers, have our own biases and expectations regarding what an Islamist government would and should look like, regardless of rejections of Orientalism[599] and breaking down of prejudices. To a "mainstream" external observer an Islamist state would display some core criteria, some of the most common ones being the enforcement of the *hijab* on women, or the severe constraint of freedom of worship, and so on. However, these expectations are strongly biased and not reflective of what the goals and strategies of the MB, here the case study Islamist organization, would be. Therefore, these perceptions need to be challenged when addressing the questions as to whether the Morsi's government was laying down the foundations for Islamist governance or not.

An initial answer can be provided by looking at the way in which the FJP labelled itself since its foundation and throughout the electoral campaign. Despite referring to the group as a "civil party" (*hizb madani*), the FJP also declared numerous time that its primary objective was not to gain power, as one would expect of any political party, but rather to "enhance Islamic morals, values, and concepts in individuals' lives and society," which are goals closer to that of a religious group.[600] It is also worth mentioning here the dilemma presented by what Wael Hallaq defines as the "impossible state", this being the inherent incompatibility of the modern nation-state and of an "Islamic" State because of modernity's moral predicaments.[601] It is likely that, whether acknowledged or not, these were some of the challenges that the FJP faced in 2012.

In the aftermath of the July 2013 *coup d'etat* that posed a violent end to the MB's rule, most regional and international critics explained the events of the previous 12 months

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[599] Said, E., *Orientalism*

[600] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", pp. 532

[601] Hallaq, W., *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013)

as yet another example of authoritarian rule in the country. It is undeniable that the MB took some questionable decisions and consistently alienated all other political forces in the country, therefore failing to fulfil Morsi's promise of being "the people's president". However, this thesis argues that the Islamist element was a strong component of the FJP's regime, and that their time in government can therefore be identified as at least a strong attempt to establish some sort of an Islamist rule in the country. This claim can be supported by taking into consideration the "top three" decisions taken by Morsi and his advisors while in power, and analysing whether they are Islamist in nature and whether they fit with the organization's historical narrative and ideology. These decisions have been identified after interviews conducted with both Morsi's supporters and opponents, and are also recognised as fundamental to understanding the nature and downfall of the MB's rule by international bodies (such as the FAC report) and observers. These decisions are the forced retirement of some of the Army's oldest key generals, the Gaza ceasefire, and the MB Constitution of December 2012.

5.3 (1) Morsi and the SCAF: legacy of civil-institutional relations

As explained in the previous chapter, one of the biggest obstacles faced by Morsi after being appointed president was SCAF's unwillingness to relinquish (informal) power. This was the case as there has historically been a tension between formal and informal power in Egypt, with institutions such as the Army unofficially holding both political and economic powers. The SCAF had been *de facto* ruling Egypt from February 2011 to June 2012, a fierce reminder of the fact that the country's status quo was far from being gone even after the 2011 uprisings. Throughout Egypt's modern history the Army has always held a central place in both the political and the economic realms and, consequently, in the citizen's psyche. Therefore, until 2011 the military forces had enjoyed a considerable amount of political and decisional power, which is why the revolutionaries actually welcomed the SCAF involvement during the last few days leading up to Mubarak's removal. Even though the SCAF and the MB established some sort of dialogue during the initial stages of the transitional period, it soon became clear that both groups were doing so in the pursuit of purely selfish interests, rather than having a shared vision of what the future of the country should look like.

Moreover, Morsi was the country's first president without a military background or connections, breaking an historical trend and also limiting the army's control over the political sphere. With the SCAF representing the status quo and embodying the remnants of Mubarak's deep state, and Morsi representing the MB, these two historical enemies found themselves facing each other once again, with profound consequences. In the words of Mohamed Soudan "Without the MB support to the revolution the SCAF would not have come back to power. Many of other MBs are not happy with me saying this, but we accidently supported SCAF in 2011, helped them to steal the power back and go back into a military state, this is unfortunately what happened."[602]

SCAF's unwillingness to relinquish power to an elected authority became clear after the last round of the presidential elections, when the military body, backed up by the country's Constitutional Court, dissolved the Islamist-dominated parliament on June 30th 2012, just a few days before Morsi's instalment as Egypt's first democratically elected president.[603] To maintain its historical power to legitimately intervene in politics, the SCAF was arguably seeking to establish a parliament with limited powers and a presidency subordinate to the armed forces.[604] These intentions became even clearer in July 2012, when the SCAF ruled a constitutional addendum that granted it the powers of the dissolved parliament, including the fundamental right to form a constitutional assembly, and prescribing the formation of a national defence council dominated by 11 Army commanders.[605] Such actions could be understood as being akin to a declaration of war or, at least, as a very clear manifestation of the Armed forces' intention to prevail over their historical MB enemy once again. However, the

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[602] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.

[603] Al Jazeera, "Egypt Court orders dissolving of Parliament", in *Al Jazeera*, (June 2012) http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/06/2012614124538532758.html

[604] Ashour, O., "Ballots vs. Bullets: the crisis of civil-military relations in Egypt", in *Al Jazeera Center for Studies*, (September 2013) https://www.brookings.edu/articles/ballots-versus-bullets-the-crisis-of-civil-military-relations-in-egypt/

[605] ibid.

MB had just obtained the political power they had been seeking for almost a century, and finally saw the opportunity to stand against SCAF once and for all.

Mohamed Morsi initially attempted to shift the balance of power between the elected civilian administration and the military establishment, attempting to reinstate Parliament to no avail. However, in August 2012, the FJP government successfully managed to freeze the Constitutional addendum and to forcibly retire the generals who had issued it, these being Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawy, also Mubarak's Minister of Defence since 1991, and his deputy General Sami Anan.[606] The order to removed the head of SCAF itself marked the first time in Egyptian history that an elected civilian head of state had altered critical decisions made by the heads of the military establishment and then removed them, establishing an historical step forward.[607] This decision was the first influential one taken by the Morsi government, and arguably shaped the rest of the FJP's time in government. By forcibly retiring some of the oldest Army's generals, Morsi was attempting to assert his power over that of the deep state and, by doing so, seeking to kick-start a transitional process that was free from the Army's influence. This fits with the MB's historical narrative as it can be interpreted as the culmination of the schisms between the organization and the regime, which as previously argued have shaped Egypt's modern political history, and have been fundamental for the development of the MB's evolutionary Islamist ideology. It is this ideology that the FJP attempted to incorporate into their rule, as the MB constitution makes clear.

5.3 (2) An Islamist Constitution

On December 25th, 2012, after the MB Constitution was approved by a national Referendum, Morsi publicly stated: "This is a historic day. A free Constitution has come to Egyptians. Not by a king's endowment or a president's imposition or a dictate by

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[606] Matthies-Boon, V., de Smeth, B., "From rebel to revolution? Formal democracy and its grievances" https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/5713980/file/5842872
[607] Ashour, O., "Ballots vs. Bullets: the crisis of civil-military relations in Egypt"

colonialists. Rather, it's a Constitution chosen by the Egyptian people of their own free and conscious will.".[608]

The controversial nature of the drafting of the MB's constitution and its implications has been discussed at length in the previous chapter, so it is now necessary to determine whether or not the document is Islamist in nature, in order to understand the nature of the FJP government itself. To start with, there are some elements in the 2012 MB Constitution that heavily resemble that of 1971, stipulated under "believer President" Anwar Sadat, and even some similarities to that regulating the country under deposed autocrat Hosni Mubarak. The most relevant of these continuities is embodied in Article 2, stipulating that "Islam is the state's religion, and Arabic is its official language. The principles of Islamic law (*sharia*) form the main source of legislation.".[609] While the implications of this particular article will be discussed below, it is worth noting that the *shari'a* element is what really makes this document an undeniably Islamist one. The 2012 Constitution indeed embodied a fundamental tension, having been on one hand modelled on the Constitutions of Western Liberal Democratic states, while also stating that its constitutional provisions would only be valid as long as they did not contradict the precepts of *shari'a*.[610]

When looking at the 2012 MB constitution as a whole there are three Articles in particular that stipulate its Islamist nature, these being Articles 2, 4, and 219. Article 2, mandating that *shari'a* is the main source of legislation, had also been featured in the previous constitutions, but gained a new relevance under Morsi's presidency. This is the case as an immediate question that arises when looking at this article in particular is how to enforce the principles of *shari'a* in the 21st century, as it is not a legal code, but rather a body of jurisprudence developed by various schools and thinkers over a period of over 13 centuries. For this reason, Article 2 had always been quite vague in its stipulations before 2012, when it was then complemented by Articles

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[608] Trager, E., *Arab Fall: How the Muslim Brotherhood Won and Lost Egypt in 891 Days* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2016), p. 190

[609] 2012 Constitution of Egypt http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/eg/eg047en.pdf

[610] Nakissa, A., "Islamist Understandings of Sharia and their Implications for the Post-revolutionary Egyptian Constitution", in *Crown Centre for Middle East Studies*, No.68, (November 2012), p. 4

4 and 219, which really stress the Islamist nature of this document. Article 4 states that:

> The noble Azhar is an independent Islamic institution of higher learning. It handles all its affairs without outside interference. It leads the call into Islam and assumes responsibility for religious studies and the Arabic language in Egypt and the world. The Azhar's Body of Senior Scholars is to be consulted in matters pertaining to Islamic law (sharia). The state guarantees the financial means needed to fulfil these tasks.[611]

Therefore granting the power of judging the compliance to *shari'a* to religious scholars rather than to the Judiciary. This meant that an academic institution would be the arbiter of Islamic Law and also had the power to overrule the country's Legislative body, which embodied once again the separation between the MB government and the remnants of the deep state. Additionally, Article 219 rules that "The principles of Islamic law (*sharia*) include general evidence, the foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), the reliable sources from among the Sunni schools of thought (*madhahib*)."[612], therefore identifying a particular interpretation and school of Islam, of the Sunni denomination, on which to build the normative framework of the country's jurisprudence.[613] This amount of details concerning religion and its role in the daily governing of the country had not been found before the MB took power, giving an undeniable Islamist characteristic to the document and its implications.

Moreover, other Articles throughout the Constitution further reinforced the role of the state in patrolling morals, and while Article 64 states that freedom of belief is absolute[614], it then contradicts itself by limiting the freedom of religious practice and of establishing places of worship to the followers of the "heavenly religions," meaning Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Overall, a particular interpretation of Sunni Islam, regulated by the religious scholars of al Azhar, is what should have ruled Egypt according to the 2012 Constitution, which is arguably the country's most Islamist one

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[611] 2012 Constitution of Egypt http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/eg/eg047en.pdf
[612] 2012 Constitution of Egypt http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/eg/eg047en.pdf
[613] Khan, M., "Islam, Democracy and Islamism after the counterrevolution in Egypt", p. 78
[614] 2012 Constitution of Egypt http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/eg/eg047en.pdf

to date, embodying many of the core principles guiding the MB's ideology. To conclude, when looking at the MB constitution's key articles and message, it is undeniable that it is Islamist in nature. This can be demonstrated by looking at the enhanced role of the state in "patrolling" morals, and by the fact that a particular branch of Sunni Islam was defined as being the source of *shari'a*, and therefore of the rule of law in the country.

5.3 (3) Morsi's Moment on Gaza

Of all the foreign policies pursued by the MB while in power, the most telling and significant one was the reshuffling of the country's relationship with Israel. When it comes to its neighbour, Egypt has historically played a fundamental geopolitical role as a "buffer zone" since the 1970s, entering into a special relationship with the US meaning that the country is the second biggest receiver of US military and monetary aid in the region after Israel in itself.[615] Consequently, when Morsi was elected in June 2012, there was a preoccupation arising in Washington over what Egypt's approach to Israel would be, since the MB does not recognize Israel as a legitimate state and has historically seen the plight of Palestinians as that of Arabs as a whole, with Hamas being a direct outshoot of the MB itself.

Reacting to the results of the June 2012 presidential elections, Israel publicly stated its respect for the democratic process in Egypt and its outcome, as well as its intent to continue cooperation with the Morsi administration on the basis of the peace treaty.[616] However, it appears that the president elect had other intentions. As Gerges underlines, in his first speech to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2012 Morsi demanded that the UN granted membership to the Palestinians, with or without a peace agreement with Israel, saying "The fruits of dignity and freedom must not remain far from the Palestinian people," and adding that it was 'shameful' that UN

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[615] Reuters, "Most US Aid to Egypt goes to Military", in *Reuters*, (January 2011) http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-usa-aid-idUSTRE70S0IN20110129

[616] Morsy, A., "Morsi's Un-Revolutionary Foreign Policy", in *Middle East Institute*, (April 2013) http://www.mei.edu/content/morsi%E2%80%99s-un-revolutionary-foreign-policy#_ftn8

resolutions aiding the Palestinians were not being enforced.[617] Such bold statements made clear that the Islamist president was about to be the first to break the historical special relationship with Washington over Israel, or that he was at least about to severely alter the pre-existing balance of power. His intentions met praxis in November 2012, when the Egyptian president played a key role in the stipulation of the Gaza ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.[618]

Upon the outbreak of Israeli aggression and airstrikes against Gaza, Morsi responded by immediately summoning Egypt's ambassador from Israel and calling for an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council.[619] He also opened the Rafah border to allow Gazan casualties to cross over to the Egyptian side to get treatment and, in an unprecedented move, dispatched his prime minister, Hisham Qandil, to visit the Gaza strip during the war.[620] Ultimately, he played a key role in overseeing the stipulation of a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, in a series of evens that definitely differentiated his foreign policy choices from those who ruled the country before him.

To conclude, it is clear that the key role played by Morsi in overseeing the stipulation of the Gaza ceasefire between Israel and Hamas fits with the organization's Islamist ideology and narrative. This is the case as it reinforced the MB's commitment to the Palestinian cause, which has historically characterised its narrative and policies. The MB has always considered the Palestinian struggle as that of "all Arabs", fought alongside Palestinian forces several times, and gained supporters by being outspoken about their commitment to the removal of the State of Israel. Morsi's choices also brought about a reshuffling of the pre-existing balance of power, as before (and after) the FJP rule Egypt had always acted as a buffer zone between Israel and the rest of the

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[617] Gerges, F., "The Islamist Moment: From Islamic State to Civil Islam?", in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 128, No.3, (2013), p. 406

[618] Beaumont, P., "Gaza ceasefire imminent, says Egypt's president Mohamed Morsi", in *The Guardian*, (November 2012) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/20/gaza-ceasefire-imminent-egypt-morsi

[619] Al Arabiya, "Islamist Mursi recalls Egypt's ambassador to Israel over Gaza", in *Al Arabiya*, (November 2012) https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/14/249646.html

[620] Ahram, "Egypt's Morsi reminisces on Gaza ceasefire, speaks of post-revolution 'dilemma'", in *Ahram*, (May 2013) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/70741/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-Morsi-reminisces-on-Gaza-ceasefire,-speaks-.aspx

Arab world, by conforming to US's interests and foreign policies goals in exchange for monetary and military aid. Morsi was therefore the first and only president to break this trend, pursuing foreign policies that conformed to the MB's vision and practice of Islamism.

5.4 The MB Government

It should now be clear that, despite Roy's argument being somewhat convincing at first, some of the claims it is based on appear to be highly problematic and reductive after a further analysis. This is also true of Roy's interpretation of the 2012 MB government in Egypt, and of the reasons behind the June 30th *coup d'etat*. Therefore, this is why it would be more correct to refer to those events as the MB's inability to maintain power, rather than referring to it as a prime example of Islamism failing in its quest for governance. It is now more important than ever to engage with Political Islam as a heterogeneous doctrine, especially in the light of contemporary events such as Donald Trump's Muslim Ban and the constant rise of Islamophobia in the UK and Europe.

In his 2012 essay "The Transformation of the Arab World", in which he reflects on the Arab Springs and their implications, Roy makes the statement "The failure of political Islam that I pointed to twenty years ago is now obvious".[621] However, Fradkin points out that this seems to be a contradiction of his original argument to start with, as twenty years prior one of the grounding criteria for Roy's account of the "failure" of Islamism was its inability to take power and the expectation that it never would.[622] Clearly, such a paradoxical argument could not possibly stand anymore in 2012, especially given the recent successes of Islamist groups in both Egypt and Tunisia. Therefore, in "The Transformation of the Arab World" Roy restructured his thesis by saying that "their utopian conception of an "Islamic state" has lost credibility[623]. Islamist ideology is now finding itself challenged both by calls for democracy that reject

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[621] Roy, O., "The Transformation of the Arab World", p. 8

[622] Fradkin, H., "Arab Democracy or Islamist Revolution?", in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (January 2013), p. 6

[623] Roy, O., "The Transformation of the Arab World", p. 9

any monopoly claim on power by a single party or ideology, and by neofundamentalist Salafists who declare that only a strict personal return to the true tenets of religious practice can serve as the basis of an 'Islamic society' ".[624] Once again, there is the need to ask the question of according to whom this credibility had been lost, and the need to stop using "Islamism" as an encompassing label.

Furthermore, some of the reflections that Roy made when referring to the MB government might lead to the understanding that the scholar has a very narrow view of what the organization stands for, and also fails to take into account the diversity of its membership and the MB/FJP split analysed in previous chapters. To start with, Roy asserts that there was a distinct lack of "revolutionary dynamics" in Egypt in 2011, and that the MB consequently "is no longer a revolutionary movement, but rather a conservative one".[625] To say that Egypt lacked revolutionary dynamics in 2011 is quite a bold statement in itself, as the diversity of protesters who came together in Tahrir square and the rise in political engagement demonstrate.

Moreover, while he does not explain what he means exactly by "revolutionary dynamics", it appears that Roy also happens to misunderstand the role and practices that have characterised the MB's historical political growth, most importantly of all, the fact that the MB was never a revolutionary movement, but rather an evolutionary one. If the MB does not behave like a revolutionary movement, it is because it has never been one. As has been made clear throughout the development of this thesis, the MB has always argued for a gradual reformation of society, starting with the individual rather than with institutions. Again, this is an example of why Roy's binary between "true" Islamists and neofundamentalists does not stand when applied to the praxis. Secondly, Roy also asserts that the 2011 Uprisings had taken the MB by surprise, another statement that seems paradoxical when put into context. While it is true that the MB was largely absent from the street during the first days of January 2011, that was because of their fear of governmental persecution rather than because

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[624] ibid.

[625] Roy, O., "There Will be no Islamist Revolution", p. 14

of its members being unaware of what was about to happen. As argued in Chapter 4, the youth factions of the MB had been instrumental in the organization of the events leading up to Mubarak's removal, and it is argued by many that without the MB presence in Tahrir and support they offered to the revolutionaries it is unlikely that Mubarak would have been ousted.

In addition, when looking at the MB rule, Roy once again falls victim to his own generalist approach and lack of specificity. He looks at the MB as having lost credibility by attempting to pursue an "utopian conception of an Islamic state", therefore failing to put forward an approach that would lead to the creation of a new society. Khairat al Shater, the mastermind of the FJP platform and policies, addressed these critiques in a speech he gave in April 2011. In said speech, al Shater made clear that the MB was not seeking a new direction, path, or vision. Rather, he insisted that the current circumstances offered yet another chance to reaffirm al Banna's aim, this being:

> Restoring Islam in its all-encompassing conception; subjugating people to God; instituting the religion of God; the Islamization of life, empowering of God's religion; establishing the Nahda [Renaissance] of the Ummah [the global Muslim community] and its civilization on the basis of Islam.[626]

Once again, this confirms that fact that Roy seems to fundamentally misunderstand the aims and strategies of Islamist movements such as the MB. The Islamist message and practice they embody is not about inventing or imposing a new society, but about laying the basis for the society to gradually transform itself into an Islamist one over time. This is the "method" that al Banna himself preferred, arguing for the need to "build" in progressive order, beginning from the "Muslim individual" and proceeding through the "Muslim family, the Muslim society, the Islamic government, the global Islamic State and [eventually] reaching the status of *Ustathiya* [pre-eminence or mastership] with that State."[627] To conclude, when trying to analyse and explain events such as the MB's rule and removal, there is the need to put forward a more

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[626] "Khairat al Shater on the Nahda Project Complete Translation", in *Hudson Institute,* (April 2012) http://www.hudson.org/research/9820-khairat-al-shater-on-the-nahda-project-complete-translation-
[627] Fradkin, H., "Arab Democracy or Islamist Revolution?", p. 11

nuanced and balanced analysis. Ultimately it is not about failure, it is about the inability to maintain power. Neither it is a binary between failing or succeeding, therefore such a limited approach does not add do the discussion of this topic at all.

5.5 Reasons for Failure

Following from the analysis and critique of Roy's position, this research has established that it would be more appropriate to look at the reasons that led to the deposition of the MB, rather than understanding the June 30th coup merely as its *failure*. Since the events of July 2013 and al Sisi's seizure of power, there are several accounts in the literature around the topic that look at the MB deposition as the direct result of what they call their "authoritarian tendencies"[628], while several scholars and analysts have come up with less biased explanations and series of reasons that have arguably led to the demise of the MB. One of the most objective accounts is that given by al Anani, which ascribes the fall of the Islamist government to three key factors, these being: the MB's lack of a revolutionary agenda, its organizational stagnation and inertia, and its leaders' incompetence and inexperience in government.[629] While these factors are in line with the findings of this research, there are others that need to be considered, such as the resistance of the deep state, together with its unwillingness to relinquish power, and the role of the media in shaping perceptions and narratives.

Following from this, this research identifies four main reasons why the MB did not succeed in maintaining power while in government in 2012, which can be linked to both internal and external factors. These are the MB's legacy of internal divisions, their refusal to cooperate with revolutionary groups, their lack of expertise and of understanding of the balance of power in the country, and the role of the Army/deep state. These factors have been identified relying on both primary and secondary

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[628] El Sherif, A., "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Failures", in *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (July 2014)

[629] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", pp. 527-543

sources, and have been complemented by official documents such as the UK's Foreign Affairs Committee's "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review".[630]

5.5 (1) Loyalty over Expertise: the high price of internal divisions

All the MB members and supporters that have been interviewed throughout this research have denied the presence of deep internal fractures within the MB. However, the organization's historical internal schisms have been largely documented in the literature surrounding the topic[631], and their legacy arguably represents one of the main reasons that led to the FJP's demise. This is the case as after 2011 the MB appeared to be controlled by its conservative faction, which therefore influenced its political growth and led to the appointment of Brothers to positions of power on a loyalty rather than expertise base, with dramatic implications.

Chapter 4 examined the deep fractures, both tactical and ideological, that allegedly split the organizations between its "revolutionary" and conservative wings in the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings, when the MB was faced with the dilemma over whether to create its own political party or not, but these are worth assessing again here. For the sake of context, it is important to remember that the MB has historically been split between two main groups, these being the "Tilmisanis", led by the expelled presidential candidate Abdel Fotouh, and the "Qutbis", led by businessman Khairat al Shater and Mahmoud Ezzat, with the more conservative wing effectively being in control of the organization's decision making since the early 1990s.[632] The rivalry between these two factions and their leaders was mostly based on their competing strategies, with Fotouh being more open to dialogue with external actors and al Shater representing the more conservative, closed side of the organization. In particular, the figure of al Shater needs to be taken into closer consideration, as he is perceived to be one of the MB's most influential leaders, controlling the organization not only because of his vast financial resources, but also acting as one of its key policy-makers.

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[630] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood Review"

[631] Wickham, C., *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*

[632] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", p. 536

One of the interviewees who was close to the MB at the time of the transition confirmed what I have already been told by others, reiterating allegations of al Shater working behind the scenes for years to gain as much executive power as possible, and preparing members close to him for power. "He does not want to be the *murshid*, rather, he wants the *murshid* to be under his wing".[633] Despite the fact that all the MB members and supporters who have been interviewed throughout the scope of this research strongly deny these claims, there are also strong historical and primary evidences of internal divisions undoubtedly crippling the organization's unity, which is why these are still being examined here.

Looking at the role allegedly played by al Shater is essential to understanding the way in which the MB behaved during the transitional period, and the reasoning behind the seemingly illogical appointment of members of the Morsi cabinet. According to someone who was very close to the MB during the post-2011 transitional period, Al Shater used two techniques in order to gain as many supporters as possible within the MB's Shura Council: starting in the 1990s he modified the organization's membership process, making it so the lengthy process to become an active MB member, which could previously take up to 15 years, was significantly shortened. Even more importantly, al Shater and his affiliates focused heavily on recruiting new members from the peripheries and the countryside, therefore attracting some of the more conservative youth who, because of their background, were more easily dogmatised and directed. This meant that by the time of the 2011 Uprisings, al Shater not only had the *murshid* by his side, but also controlled nearly half of the MBs sitting in the Shura Council, which gave him an incredible amount of leverage.

These internal divisions came clearly to the fore in 2011, when the Shura Council had to vote to decide whether to field a presidential candidate. Given the MB's tense relationship with the SCAF at the time, the first round of voting took place rather hastily, and also happened to be one of the most closely contested votes in the history

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[633] Interview with a MB supporter.

of the movement. The first round saw the Shura Council narrowly voting in favour of fielding a candidate for the presidential elections, with 56 votes in favour and 52 against out of 108, putting al Shater forward as the presidential candidate.[634] Despite being nominated as the MB primary candidate, al Shater was barred from running because of his recent imprisonment. The MB support shifted to Morsi, who had always been close to the businessman while also being a loyal and committed member of the MB's leadership since he joined in the 1970s.[635] A member of the Shura Council commented on the controversial process of selecting a presidential candidate by saying: "When we took the decision to nominate Mursi, after the withdrawal of Khairat El-Shater, he (Mursi) returned home weeping: he had been given a responsibility that he had not sought (...) It was known that whoever took responsibility at this time would not find the road covered in roses. But we also knew that there was nobody at that time who could undertake this the way we could."[636]

As Al Anani points out, the selection of al Shater and then Morsi as presidential candidates is an accurate reflection of what the balance of power was within the organisation at the time. While al Shater was one of the key leaders, "Morsi was a clear example of how conservatives created their loyal cadres and members within the organization"[637], therefore emphasising just how divided the MB was when it came to one of the most defining moments in its history. Despite not being elected president, al Shater was one of the minds behind the FJP's "Nahda Project" and continued to play a key role in the MB in both strategizing and policy-making, all the while remaining the organization's point of contact between the MB and the SCAF.[638] This high level of influence gave way to speculations that al Shater was essentially using his position to influence Morsi's decisions, both when it came to the appointment of his cabinet and

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[634] Balir, E., Taylor, P., Perry, T., "Special Report: How the Muslim Brotherhood lost Egypt", in *Reuters* (July 2013) http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-mistakes-specialreport-idUSBRE96O07H20130726

[635] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", p. 538

[636] Balir, E., Taylor, P., Perry, T., "Special Report: How the Muslim Brotherhood lost Egypt"

[637] Al Anani, K., "Upended Path: the rise and fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", p. 538

[638] Trager, E., Kiraly, K., Klose, C., Calhoun, E., "Who is Who in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", in *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, (2012), p. 8

during his time in government.[639] It can indeed be seen that those who were appointed to ministerial positions came from the MB's conservative inner circle, and that once again loyalty was chosen over expertise, once again a dramatic manifestation of the MB's historical divisions, and arguably one of the main reasons behind the FJP's collapse while in government.

5.5 (2) MB's "arrogance" and refusal to cooperate with revolutionary groups.

Another mistake made by the MB, which arguably led to the Morsi government's demise, was their refusal to cooperate and engage in dialogue with the secular groups that had taken part in the revolution, even after promising to do so. When interviewed, several secular and religious activists that took part in the 2011 Uprisings, some less willingly than others, admitted to supporting Morsi when it came to presidential elections in order to avoid having Mubarak's prime minister elected. In the words of one of them, "When it came to the presidential elections, I supported Futuh in the first round and Morsi in the second because, as most people, we did not want Shafiq into power. So we did not have much room to manoeuvre.". They did so on the understanding that the FJP would set aside its ideological goals in order to put forward the goals of the revolution, a promise they failed to maintain when they eventually got to power, which in turn considerably decreased their perceived legitimacy within revolutionary groups and, down the line, turned the general population against them.

Gaining power in a time of great political uncertainty, the MB was expected to stabilise the political arena through bargaining and sealing alliances with the groups they fought alongside in Tahrir square. This was the case as it was clear to most that none of the three contenders for power in Egypt at the time, these being the MB, the SCAF/deep state and civil activists, was strong enough to rule alone, therefore making

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[639] Halime, F., "Khairat al Shater and the President: a divide", in *Rebel Economies*, (September 2012) http://rebeleconomy.com/economy/khairat-al-shater-and-the-president-a-divide/

alliances a necessity.[640] Instead, the FJP seemed to forget about the promises they made and instead closed upon itself, even selecting its cabinet members solely from a small group of trusted, long-time Brothers. By doing so, the MB alienated the politicians essential to solving Egypt's problems and declared war against the bureaucracy it needed to govern, arguably setting up the conditions for its own demise.[641]

In order to consolidate its power and to at least attempt to successfully co-opt the remnants of the deep state, the MB should have reached out to the opposition seeking to establish a coalition, which would have granted it more power when confronted by the Army, and mitigated the lack of trust and popular support that was quickly spreading throughout the population. Instead, the MB sought to consolidate its power too quickly, alienating both its secular and Islamist allies and failing to confront the institutional power base.[642] Most of all, the MB underestimated just how angry and betrayed the revolutionary and secular groups it fought alongside in Tahrir square were. Feeling like they had been tricked, these groups reacted negatively to the MB's attempt to dominate the political process, with the organization gaining yet another enemy in the process.

Such behaviour could be explained (although not justified) when looking at the organization's history of repression and illegality, and at the fact that the MB's paranoia was far from being born out of fantasy. As one of the interviewees put it, "they simply did not trust many people".[643] This is the case because, as I argue elsewhere[644], for almost eight decades the MB had been consistently sectarianized and persecuted by the regime, which perceived the group and its growing influence as

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[640] Kandil, H., "The Muslim Brotherhood failed in Egypt because it was inept, incompetent and out of touch", in *The Conversation*, (February 2014) http://theconversation.com/the-muslim-brotherhood-failed-in-egypt-because-it-was-inept-incompetent-and-out-of-touch-23738
[641] Barfi, B., "Why the Brotherhood Failed", in *World Affairs*, http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/why-brotherhood-failed
[642] El Sherif, A., "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Failures", in *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (July 2014), p. 10
[643] Interview with a prominent secular activist.
[644] Ardovini, L., "The Politicisation of Sectarianism in Egypt: the state VS the Ikhwan", pp. 579-600

the main threat to its legitimacy. The Egyptian security apparatus assassinated Hassan al Banna, persecuted its members, and incarcerated its leaders, causing the MB to develop a so called "bunker-mentality" that leads to perceiving outsiders as potential threats.[645] This explains the fact that Morsi's cabinet was heavily dominated by MB members that were chosen according to their loyalty rather than their expertise, and his refusal to pursue the creation of a coalition government which would have been more representative of the population's demands and needs. Moreover, another interviewee stated:

> The big problem is that the MB was still controlled by the older generation, and they were fixed back in time way before 2011. I don't think they understood what happened and how big and dynamic it was; I don't think they understand it today (...) Every time it came to taking a decision that was going to either please the revolutionaries or the old guard/deep state, they went with the deep state. They were thinking that rather than dismantling the deep state and its institutions, they thought they could use it for their benefit. That was so naïve.[646]

Regardless of their motivations, the MB refusal to include revolutionary groups in government led to them being perceived as if they were taking an authoritarian turn, and also alienated thousands of Egyptians who fought hard to bring about a change of regime in 2011 and had entrusted the MB with the responsibility to guide the country throughout its democratic transition. Because of their paranoia, the MB made the decision to distance themselves from the *shabbab al taher* (pure youth) that made the uprisings possible to begin with, a decision that they would come to regret. When asked about what they thought were the biggest mistakes made by the FJP while in power, all of those interviewed who did not identify with or support the MB gave answers that could be summarised by the statement below:

> One of their biggest mistakes was trying to build on loyalty rather than on competence (...) it was all about the inner circle and the clique, all the while there were excellent people from the MB and from the outside who were willing to work with them in the early stages.

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[645] Barfi, B., "Why the Brotherhood Failed"

[646] Interview with a former MB supporter.

Everyone later avoided them as if they were the plague, but in the earliest stages there were some excellent people who were reduced to tears because of direct exclusion.[647]

Mohamed Soudan claims that the MB indeed attempted to establish a coalition several times, offering ministerial positions to key secular and revolutionary leaders such as el Baradei and Wael Gonim, who refused because they allegedly did not want to be affiliated to an Islamist government. While there is no evidence of this, he claims that these particular cases have been covered by Arabic media. Similarly, he rejects accusations of the MB's attempt to hijack power by pointing to the composition of the cabinet and saying: "how many people that Morsi appointed to be ministers belonged to the MB? It was 7 only. For 10 months, and after, he elected 2 more for 2 months. In one year, only 9 were MB, from 35 ministers, all the rest were from the Mubarak regime or from secular groups (...) many people did not want to work under the umbrella of the MB".[648] While these allegations are hard to verify, it is worth noting here how a key MB responded to this particular "accusation".

5.5 (3) Overestimation of how much power the MB actually held

Once elected into power, the MB not only faced the challenge of winning over the sympathies of the almost half of the Egyptian population that did not vote for Morsi, but also had to find ways to placate the remnants of the deep state in order to keep them at bay. As outlined above, its historical internal schisms and the strong hierarchical structure of the organization meant that loyalty seem to have been prioritised over expertise, therefore leading to the FJP's cabinet being composed of MB members who had little to no political experience and were therefore unequipped to deal with the enormous tasks ahead of them. Because of this, at the very start of the Morsi presidency it seemed like the MB was convinced that winning the elections was going to be enough to provide legitimacy to their rule, but this proved to be just one of their many miscalculations. One of the main reasons behind the fall of the FJP is arguably the MB's repeated overestimating of how much power they actually held, and its underestimating of the lengths to which the Security Apparatus and Deep State

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[647] Interviews with secular and religious activists not affiliated with the MB.
[648] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.

were willing to go to in order to regain power. Throughout Morsi's presidency, the FJP's political analysts failed to correctly assess the balance of power in the country, the real objectives of the deep state, the size of the opposition, and the surprising rate at which the MB's popularity was dropping.

El Sherif claims that the MB misread the situation they were in right from the start, by moving toward political domination too quickly and believing Morsi's victory was the equivalent of a popular mandate.[649] By doing so, they failed to understand the balance of power at the time, which saw the Security Apparatus and the remnants of the deep state effectively remaining the holders of decisional power in the country, and therefore failed to address them correctly. The best thing to do would have been attempting to forge a working relationship with the institutional power bases that were effectively still in charge of military power and legislation, these being the military, the police, and the judiciaries.[650] However, while attempting to appease and co-opt these institutions would have been an arduous task even for a coalition government, the MB was arrogant and overly-confident in its power and decided to face them alone, engaging in an unwinnable battle that was driven more by ideological zeal rather than by a realistic assessment of the current political environment in the country.[651] This decision was also influenced by the legacy of the MB's troubled relationships with the state, which was deeply embedded within its members' psyches. While it is correct to assume that, given historical political tensions, a conflict between the MB and the deep state would have been unavoidable in the long term, it is also arguable that the MB's incapability to correctly assess where the power lay and to engage with the relevant institutions in a more constructive way accelerated this process, and ultimately led to their demise.

The considering miscalculations of the political context they found themselves in could be justified by the fact that, in the aftermath of 2011, there was a widespread

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[649] El Sherif, A., "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Failures", p. 1

[650] The "deep state" is understood once again as being composed by the military forces, but also by the the police, ministerial bureaucracies, public-sector companies, the judiciary, municipalities, and all these institutions' related patronage networks.

[651] El Sherif, A., "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Failures", p. 1

assumption that Mubarak's removal had also triggered the elimination of the status quo, therefore redistributing the balance of power between the country's new and old political actors. In reality, very little had change. The structures of political and economic power remained controlled by the old elites, hence the deep state, while revolutionaries and secular groups failed to dismantle the old regime in favour of a new one, and were faced with marginalisation and exclusion.[652] On this note, the MB also failed to understand just how much the secular and revolutionary groups that they had shunned after the presidential elections resented them, which is surprising when taking into consideration their paranoid mindset when it came to outsiders. Similarly, their distrust of external actors also meant that, when they were warned multiple times of the fast approaching *coup d'etat*, they dismissed these suggestions, once again failing to realise just how thin their level of popular support had become. Indeed, there are documented instances of members of the parliament and Morsi's personal advisors being warned several times by both their secular counterparts and international figures about the increasingly likeliness of being overthrown, but these claims were repeatedly disregarded. This blindness to what was obvious to everyone else is what critics and commentators refer to as "naivety" and "stupidity", when faced with the task of determining what ultimately brought down the FJP government.

In particular, it appears that al Shater was approached several times by both international and domestic actors warning him against the intentions of the Armed forces, but the MB leader failed to react effectively to these claims. Two months before June 30th al Shater met with the US ambassador to Egypt Anne Patterson, who allegedly warned him about the escalating domestic situation, but failed to get an appropriate reaction.[653] Similarly, a month before the coup, al Shater met with Amr Moussa, foreign minister under Mubarak, who suggested that in order to avoid confrontation "Mursi should heed opposition demands, including a change of

[652] Selim, G., "Egypt under SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood: The triangle of counter-revolution", in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 2, (Spring 2015), pp. 178

[653] Ibrahim., R., "Egyptian Politician Calls U.S. Ambassador Patterson 'Member of Muslim Brotherhood Sleeper Cell', in *Jihad Watch*, (June 2013) http://raymondibrahim.com/2013/06/27/egyptian-politician-calls-u-s-ambassador-patterson-member-of-muslim-brotherhood-sleeper-cell/

government."[654] The MB leader allegedly replied that the government's problemS were due to the ""non-cooperation of the 'deep state'" - the entrenched interests in the army, the security services, some of the judiciary and the bureaucracy"[655], and that the FJP was not open to compromise, therefore dismissing yet another warning. Soudan also told me he was approached by the US Consul just a week preceding the coup, in what he believes was both a warning and an attempt to gauge what the MB's reaction to the protests would be:

> On 21st June 2013 the US consul called me and said she absolutely needed to see me because it was very urgent (...) She came to my office and asked me what Morsi was going to do on the 30th. I told her, Morsi had faced lots of protests since he came to office, and he always treated them softly, he would never use violence against them. She told me "this time is different, what is he going to do?" I knew he considered the protesters like sons, he would never hurt them. She said "are you sure?" I said I'm not in the cabinet, I just work in the party, I don't know what they are doing. Than she stood up and asked me "How much does Morsi trust Sisi?" and she was smiling. I didn't tell her the truth, I told her, as much as I know, he still trusts him. And she said "Still? Good luck Mohamed, see you later Insh'allah.". (...) She wanted to know how much we knew, and how far we were willing to go, if we were going to send people to protect the palace as we did in December 2012 for Ittihadiya.[656]

Soudan claims he tried to warn Morsi about the coup, but the president once again failed to listen. "Morsi trusted too much some generals in the army, trusted the judiciary, he was very soft towards the republican guards, while all of them were members in the conspiracy".[657] While the belief that there was a conspiracy between the armed forces and external actors will further examined later on, this fits once again within the psyche of the MB. It is easy to understand that, as the organisation and its members had been persecuted for decades, the idea of a conspiracy put in place to remove Morsi does not sound too absurd when placed within that context.

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[654] Balir, E., Taylor, P., Perry, T., "Special Report: How the Muslim Brotherhood lost Egypt"
[655] ibid.
[656] Interview with Mohamed Soudan, FJP Foreign Relations Secretary.
[657] Ibid.

Particularly when it comes to the role of the Army, one of the MB's biggest overestimations was the belief of having dealt with it effectively when Morsi forced its oldest generals to retire, which was far for being the case. One colonel allegedly said "They (the Brotherhood) misread what happened. We allowed it to happen (…) Mursi believed the military would not act against him, especially if the Brotherhood took care of the army's economic interests when drafting a new constitution (...) He thought Sisi was his guy. He didn't understand the power dynamics.".[658] In retrospect, the statement released by the Armed forces following the Battle of Ittihadiya, in which they pledged to remain a "solid and cohesive block" in the face of political unrest, could be interpreted as a clear declaration of intent and an indication of a planned military intervention.

Of all the fatal overestimations that cost the MB its power, their failure to assess al Sisi's position and intentions is the most compelling one. It seems like popular rumours depicting al Sisi as a "covert Muslim" and as an "Islamist in disguise" had bought over some of Morsi's closest advisors, who repeatedly urged him to trust the Army.[659] Commenting on this, one of the interviewees said "I know people who used to say that Sisi was even more religious than some MB members, with the Arabic expression 'fasting and praying throughout the night', and that he was an Islamist in disguise, they were disillusioned, a lot of them believed that. They have even interpreted Morsi's last address when he said in the army we have a "man made of gold" as referring to al Sisi (...)".[660] This shows just how misled the MB leadership was, and the huge difference that preferring expertise over loyalty would have made.

More than anything, the MB's most significant miscalculation was its failure to recognize just how much had changed in the relationship between subjects and authority in the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings.[661] This meant that by relying on the very same mechanisms of subjection that had ruled Egypt for decades, they failed to

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[658] ibid.

[659] Interview with a religious activist not affiliated with the MB

[660] ibid.

[661] Abourahme, N., "Past the end, not yet at the beginning", in *City*, Vol. 17, No. 4, (2013), p. 426

properly adapt to the character of their time, and attempted to keep protesters at bay by invoking the sanctity of the "ballot box". However, they also failed to realise that legitimacy had rarely resided in the ballot box in Egypt, and when July 2013 came along, the protesters gathered in Tahrir square as the Army took over chanted "The legitimacy of your ballot box is cancelled by our martyrs' coffins!".[662]

5.5 (4) Role of the Army/Deep State

The final reason behind the fall of the MB government was Morsi's failure to understand and successfully address the role and influence that the Army still held in the country. Historically, the armed and military forces have acted as political and economic actors in the country, a trend that further intensified during the Mubarak regime. All of the participants I have interviewed for the scope of this research, regardless of their political affiliations or religious approach, agreed that the Army element is something that must be looked at when trying to understand the fall of the FJP government, and they all agree with the statement that "the Army would have gained power regardless of who was in government anyway"[663]. Therefore, when looking at the main "mistakes" committed by the FJP government that eventually led to their demise, it could be argued that the overestimation of the role and influence of the army was one of the most irreparable ones. Interestingly, this mistake is not unique to the MB, as one secular activist leader told me:

> It was also on us (the secular revolutionaries). We could have been better at understanding that SCAF was never going to give up power… that it was playing a "divide and conquer" strategy. This happened because most of the people, even the majority of those in the square, they still thought that it is SCAF, it is the Egyptian military, it is noble, it could never do anything against its people, it even stood against its own president when Egyptian said so (...).[664]

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[662] ibid., p. 427

[663] Interview with both secular and religious activists.

[664] Interview with a prominent secular activist.

Therefore, when looking at the main "mistakes" committed by the FJP government that eventually led to their demise, it could be argued that the overestimation of the role and influence of the army was one of the most irreparable ones.

Upon being elected president Morsi was immediately faced with the Army's refusal to relinquish power, which set out from the very start a struggle for power between the Islamists and the remnants of the deep state. The blurring of the lines between the armed forces' military responsibilities and their political and economic influences in Egypt started with Nasser's government in the 1950s, but particularly strengthened under Mubarak, meaning that by the time 2011 came around the Army had already established itself as a major political player in both the country's institutions and in the people's minds. There are several reasons as to why this is the case, first and foremost the fact that before Morsi Egypt had always been rule by presidents who came from a military background, and therefore relied on the armed forces as both a source of legitimacy and as a power base.[665]

Since the Free Officer's coup that overthrew the monarchy in 1952 the military had gained a disproportionate share of political power, leading to the blurring of the separation between military and civilian authority, and the utter lack of subordination of the former to the latter.[666] This meant that whenever the country went through a crisis, such as the one brought about by Sadat's assassination in 1981, the armed forces and their authoritative control proved to be vital for the regime's survival. To some extent, this is what happened in 2011 after Mubarak's removal, with the sole difference being that the SCAF sought to create its own regime rather than supporting the existing one, and in the process of achieving that it perceived the MB's power and popularity as both a commodity and a threat.

Despite coming from a military background, Sadat attempted to disengage the military from political life during the last few years of the presidency, following the perceived

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[665] Karawan, I., (2011) "Politics and the Army in Egypt", in *Survival*, Vol. 53, No. 2, (2011), p. 44

[666] Khan, A., *The Long Struggle: the Muslim World Western Problem* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2010), p. 58

failure of his foreign policies towards Israel. However, this trend was quickly reversed under Mubarak's presidency, who embraced and encouraged the Army's participation in non-military affairs, essentially making it one of the pillars of the deep state. The Mubarak regime effectively witnessed the creation of a new dynamic between politics and the Army, which led to the revitalisation of the military as an active player in national affairs, granted it the control of an increasing share of central government expenditures and domestic activities, and the assumption of the principal responsibility for the regime's security.[667]

Satloff identifies two main reasons that led Mubarak to rely so heavily on the armed forces as a source of legitimacy, these being his need to gain support for the reconstruction and democratic challenges, and most importantly the fact that Mubarak himself was appointed president because of his wartime accomplishments as an Air Force Commander, and therefore viewed the military as part of the solution rather than as a component of Egypt's larger problem.[668] Therefore, under Mubarak's rule, the army grew both as a political and economic player, with his officers enjoying high salaries and preferential treatment in medical care, housing, and transport, all the while reaping US$1.3 billion every year in military aid from the United States.[669]

By 2011 the Army's political and domestic role had been ingrained in both the country's institutions and in the people's mind, leading to the crowd of revolutionaries cheering and welcoming troops when the Army was deployed to Tahrir Square on January 28th.[670] Egypt's High Military Court assumed power on 11th February 2011, with the public aim of "restoring stability, putting the country on the road to democracy and restoring civilian government in the wake of the popular uprising that

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[667] Satloff, R., "Army and Politics in Mubarak's Egypt", in *The Washington Institute for the Near East Policy* Papers, No.10, (1988), p. vii

[668] ibid., p. 10

[669] Barany, Z., "The Role of the Military", in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (October 2011), p. 28

[670] Al Jazeera, "Timeline: Egypt's Revolution", in *Al Jazeera*, (February 2011) http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/01/201112515334871490.html

began in January.".[671] This was also the first time since the Free Officers Coup that the Army did not support the existing regime in a time of crisis, but rather sided with the revolutionaries, arguably to pursue its own political aspirations. Barany notes that there are a few clear reasons as to why this may have been the case, first and foremost the fact that the rising violence and disorder perpetrated by governmental forces in Tahrir Square took away what little credit the regime still had in the eyes of the people, and would also have hurt the military's legitimacy and influence were it to side with Mubarak.[672] Moreover, military elites made no secret of their dislike for Gamal Mubarak, the President's son and presumed successor, making a future alliance unlikely. Even more importantly, Egypt's army is made up of mostly conscripts who therefore had ties to society and to the revolutionaries, meaning that many officers and enlisted men would have refused the order to shoot on the demonstrators.[673]

To conclude, it is now clear that by the time Morsi was elected president, the remnants of the deep state represented by the armed forces were unwilling to relinquish power, having finally removed the already blurred lines between civil and military power. Everyone I have interviewed, regardless of their political or religious leanings, agreed that the Army would have eventually seized power anyway. This is due to the historical role the armed forces have always played in the country, which is also engrained in the psyche of Egyptians. Admittedly, the MB miscalculated the extent to which the Army was "tricking" them, and tried to co-opt elements of the deep state into their government without realising that it was impossible to do so. There are also "hear-say" allegations that suggests that the Army had deeply infiltrated the MB even before 2011. This is corroborated by the fact that the SCAF "pardoned" and released over 800 prisoners with an Islamist and Jihadists background during their year in power, supporting the argument that these individuals could then have infiltrated organisations and political parties after being freed.[674]

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[671] Bassiouni, M., *Chronicles of the Egyptian Revolution and its Aftermath: 2011-2016* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), chapter 2

[672] Barany, Z., "The Role of the Military", pp. 28-29

[673] ibid.

[674] Bahgat, H., "Who let the Jihadis out?", in *Mada Masr*, (February 2014)
http://www.madamasr.com/en/2014/02/16/feature/politics/who-let-the-jihadis-out/

5.6 Organizational breakdown or sabotage?

Having analysed the organization's deep internal fractures, inexperience, and misunderstanding of the balance of power in Egypt, it is now clear what were the main shortcomings that led to the demise of the Morsi government. However, despite the relevance of all of these elements, some questions still remain, as most of the decisions made by the MB while in power seem rather counterintuitive, just as it is hard to believe that someone in the top ranks of the organization – other than al Shater of course – failed to realise what was happening and to act accordingly. How did this happen then? Was the MB really blind, or was it all part of a bigger plan orchestrated by the Security Apparatus and the deep state to gain back control? Some of the participants interviewed for the scope of this research seems to think so. The MB's paranoia and distrust of outsiders has been discussed above, together with the dramatic consequences that this particular mind-set brought about for the Morsi government. Therefore, it should not come as surprise that without fail, the several MB members that have been interviewed for this research have claimed that the organization fell victim of a "conspiracy" orchestrated by the Armed Forces to regain power.

What is interesting, however, is the high number of interviewees who, with no connection to the MB whatsoever, also think that has been the case. While all of the participants agreed that the Army would have somehow seized power back anyway, regardless of whoever was in government, some of them believe that the organization has been infiltrated by the regime, with some of his members working with the Security Apparatus all along to sabotage the whole venture. One interviewee stated "There is this idea that they (the MB) must have been penetrated by the regime, because they seem to have sabotaged themselves"[675] and continued to say that there is a history of Salafis and Islamists working with the government after spending time in prison, and then being pardoned and going trough a process of "repentance". While this is well documented in Arabic, there is very little in the English literature concerning this, but several people agreed that some preachers have come out of prison having

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[675] Interview with a secular activist.

repented and then gone back to preaching, but with a very different, less critical, slant in their sermons.[676] Despite the lack of English sources, there seems to be a well established "hear-say" narrative in the country concerning governmental infiltration of Islamist movements in the past, which is entirely possible considering just how powerful the Security and Intelligence forces are, that then raises the questions as to whether or not that could have been the case with the Brotherhood.

Another interviewee pointed to some key MB officials that, along with al Shater, openly collaborated with the Army all the way through the coup, and have not been arrested after July 30th despite their key position within the organization. One of the "suspects" they pointed to is Mahmoud Ezzat, also known as "Iron Man", who has historically been the leader of the Qutbist wing of the MB, deputy Supreme Guide, and historically very close to al Shater, with whom he spent a decade in prison under the Mubarak regime. There are allegations saying that Ezzat, who was a key figure in coordinating policy decisions between the Guidance Office and the FJP during the Morsi's government, kept supporting the Army until the very last moment, and therefore pressuring the government to not give in to the popular protests and to not challenge the Army, although given his position he must have had information that told him otherwise.[677] These suspicions are further corroborated by the fact that, after the coup happened, Ezzat was not arrested despite being one of the key decision makers in the MB and in the FJP, but rather disappeared for a while before fleeing in exile to Istanbul.[678] Of course, this is all based on "hear-say" allegations that are documented in Arabic media, but absent in the English ones, that are worth flagging up as a point for reflection.

While suspicions of Intelligence infiltration of the MB and FJP are almost impossible to confirm, it is undeniable that the Egyptian media grew increasingly hostile against the

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[676] This is reinforced by the fact that some "equally dangerous" Salafi prisoners had not been let out and served their full sentences and more, so why have some been released with a completely new narrative being put forward in their speeches?

[677] Interview with a prominent secular activist.

[678] Trager, E., Shalabi, M., "The Brotherhood breaks down", in *The Washington Institute*, (January 2016) http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-brotherhood-breaks-down

Morsi government in the months leading up to the coup, with reports that very closely resembled hate speech. In particular, an interesting example is the increasing attention given to ex-MB Tharwat al Kharbawi's book "The Secret of the Temple: The Hidden Secrets of the Muslim Brotherhood", with which the author claims to be denouncing the group's "hidden radicalism".[679] While the book fails to reveal anything original about the organization, it has been adopted by the media as a tool to lead a blatant smear campaign against the Brotherhood, and quickly became a best-seller in the months leading up to the *coup d'etat*. Reflecting on the negative impact that the book had on the popular perception of the MB, one interviewee stated "the way in which he (Tharwat al Kharbawi) was given a forum was clearly choreographed, it was not innocent. Suddenly this book became available to everyone, all classes, everyone was talking about it. Even those who did not read it saw the author on every channel that was popular in Egypt around that time".[680]

Negative propaganda aimed at the MB was not a new phenomenon. For the past 40 years, different forms of media ranging from TV dramas to cinema have been openly anti-Islamist, contributing to the governmental effort to effectively discriminate against the organization in a sectarian way throughout the last few decades. This shows just how deeply embedded the targeting of the organization was within the country's informal structure, to the point that it could be recognised as an instance of cultural violence. This is the case as, because of the MB history as the most organised and influential opposition group in the country, they have been perceived as the only alternative by the population, which is one of the elements that contributed to their rise to power in the aftermath of 2011. If follows that in response, the organisation has been consistently attacked by the regime along sectarian lines, in an attempt to systematically entrench the idea of the MB being the enemy of Egyptian identity and of the Egyptian state, even in the psyche of pious citizens.[681] Therefore, during the past few decades, each representation of an Islamist character in state-run popular media

[679] Saleh., J., Perry, T., "Egypt book blasts Brotherhood, becomes best-seller", in *Reuters*, (March 2015) http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-egypt-brotherhood-book-idUKBRE9240NC20130305
[680] Interview with a religious activist.
[681] Ardovini, L. "The Politicisation of Sectarianism in Egypt: the state vs. the Ikhwan", pp. 1-22

has been presented as being ugly and suspicious, in line with this narrative aimed at reducing their popularity and influence. A clear example of this is the popular TV drama "Al Gama'a", released in 2010, that focuses on the figure of Hassan al Banna and on the rise of the MB, portraying them as a mafia-like extremist organization, therefore being accused of conforming to the pro-government propaganda.[682]

It needs to be noted that while these allegations seem to have been widely accepted, there is very little in the English literature (at least up to now) that could confirm these claims. However, given the well known Intelligence abilities of the Egyptian Security Apparatus, and evidence of similar infiltrations having happened in the past, this is not an option that should be discounted. Of course, this is not to suggest that the MB demise was entirely due to an Army's plot, but rather, this could be just another element that contributed to the lead up to the events of June 30th. As one of the interviewees, who is very critical of the MB and in no way affiliated to them, repeatedly stated: "I take the idea of the infiltration seriously. It is not conspiracy, but I think they (the MB) were not operating in a vacuum, and there were people within the MB that were cooperating with the regime for sure, at greater levels than a lot of people thought, there was a sabotage from the inside, I do believe that".[683] While these statements and allegations might come across as unfounded to outsiders, it is necessary to reflect on the importance of the local and historical context in which they developed. Neither the MB nor the Army were operating in a vacuum in the aftermath of Mubarak's removal, and historical tensions coupled with the difficulties brought about by the transitional period might have led many to believe that such allegations might be true.

5.7 The beginning of the end

After having examined the four main reasons leading to the MB's deposition, it is appropriate to look at specific events and political choices that are thought to have triggered the popular discontent and Army's manoeuvres that eventually led to the

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682 Magd, N., "Brotherhood TV drama hits a nerve in Egypt", in *The National*, (January 2017) http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/brotherhood-tv-drama-hits-a-nerve-in-egypt
683 Interview with a prominent secular activist.

July 2013 *coup d'etat*. The research focuses on three specific events have been identified following interviews with both MB supporters and opponents, and are also regarded as topical in both the existing literature around the subject and in reports released by international institutions and bodies. These three events can be understood not only as catalysis for popular grievances and the Army's intention to not relinquish power, but also embody and represent the four main reasons for removal that I have identified earlier.

5.7 (1) November 2012 Constitutional Declaration

Chapter 4 claimed that an event that significantly shifted popular discontent against the FJP is the Constitutional Decree released by Morsi in November 2012, and the controversial drafting process of the MB Constitution that followed. In a bold and troublesome move, Morsi's constitutional decree expanded the presidency's legislative and judicial authority, essentially granting it extraordinary powers.[684] This triggered a wave of popular protests and mobilization that would eventually culminate in the July 2013 Coup, and is now seen as the beginning of the end of the MB's government. However, Chapter 4 also underlined that while the consequences of these events, such as popular protests and revolts, have been the main focus of analysis in the literature on the topic, the reasons behind it have been left largely unanalysed. It is therefore necessary to rely on a combination of primary and secondary sources to try and make sense of these events.

The reason why the decree sparked such an unprecedented mobilization against the MB is the set of questions that it brought about concerning the true nature of Egypt's transition. Critics argued that the document revealed the MB's intention to bypass the democratic process, and their desire to seize the country's transition and use it as a gateway to impose their own authoritarian Islamist regime. However, as analysed in Chapter 4, while it is undeniable that such a document came with some troubling

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[684] Kirkpatrick, D., El Sheik, M., "Citing Deadlock, Egypt's new leader seizes new power and plans Mubarak retrial", in *The New York Times*, (November 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/23/world/middleeast/egypts-president-morsi-gives-himself-new-powers.html

implications concerning the nature of Egypt's institutions, Morsi's move was far from being spurred by "religious fascism" and needs to be understood within the context the MB found itself in at that time.

When looking at the reasons behind the issuing of the Constitutional Decree, it is easy to classify it as an avoidable and largely unexplained mistake. However, a closer examination of Egypt's domestic conditions at the time, and of the MB's internal struggles, might provide an answer as to why Morsi released such a controversial document. To start with, the Constitutional Decree was released to address the fact that Egypt was still without an operating constitution 18 months after Mubarak's removal, a condition that was caused by the ever-present struggle for power between the SCAF and the country's other political actors. Moreover, the country's internal situation was exponentially growing tenser, with daily clashes taking place between protesters and the police because of popular frustration over the slow pace of change. Representatives of secular and liberal parties were also threatening to boycott the Constitutional Assembly because of disagreements with its Islamist members, consequently adding to the instability of the country's socio-political conditions.[685] In addition, in November 2012 the MB was also facing its own internal battles, struggling to remain united while its members had split between two main factions that diverged on crucial ideological and strategic issues. Therefore, internal turmoil and the very real possibility of yet another Constitutional Assembly failing to produce a new document, nearly 20 months after Mubarak's removal, were likely the main triggers behind Morsi's controversial decision.

However, despite the MB's attempt to justify the decree as the only way to overcome the country's political deadlock, and as a necessary step to achieving "revolutionary demands and rooting out remnants of the old regime"[686], this move caused large popular protests, judicial backlash, and reinforced the already existing doubts about

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[685] Ahram, "Political Forces sign on El Baradei call for Constituent Assembly Boycott", in *al Ahram*, (September 2012) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/0/54250/Egypt/0/Political-forces-sign-on-ElBaradei-call-for-Consti.aspx.aspx

[686] Revkin, M., "Egypt's Untouchable President", p. 13

the true political intentions of the MB. In particular, manifestation of popular discontent escalated in what is now know as the "Battle of Ittihadiya", commonly referred to as "the beginning of the end" for the MB government, making the Constitutional Decree one of Morsi's "avoidable mistakes".

5.7 (2) Mohamed Mahmoud November 2011 Clashes

The clashes between revolutionaries and police forces that took place in Mohamed Mahmoud street on November 19th 2011 hold a strong metaphorical meaning, as they have become the symbol of Egypt's revolutionary spirit, and anti-regime forces gather there every year on the anniversary to celebrate its martyrs. Most importantly for the scope of this research, it was during this particular event that the first cracks between the country's revolutionary forces and the MB started to appear, with democratic groups accusing the Islamists of being on the side of the SCAF and therefore of cooperating with the deep state. One secular activist I interviewed, who fought alongside the MB in January 2011, told me "(when we were in Mohamed Mahmoud) when we realised what the MB was doing, I thought 'it is done. Now there is blood between us and the MB'. Because it was not just a political disagreement anymore".[687]

Named after the street in which they took place, which connects the Ministry of Interior to Cairo's Tahrir Square, the clashes aimed at criticizing SCAF's seizure of power and apparent unwillingness to quickly guide the country through a democratic transition. Revolutionaries of all backgrounds gathered in Mohamed Mahmoud street following the so called "million man march" led by the MB on 18th November 2011, when thousands of Islamists gathered in Tahrir Square protesting against the deputy Prime Minister Aly El-Salmy's "supra-constitutional principles," which gave the SCAF complete control over the constitution-drafting process and over the transition to civilian rule.[688] Similarly, those who attacked the Ministry of Interior, a symbol of the police state and the repression that it perpetrated, on November 19th did so with the

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[687] Interview with a secular activist.

[688] Daily News Egypt, "Remembering Mohamed Mahmoud: the good the bad and the Brotherhood", in *Daily News Egypt*, (November 2012) http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2012/11/19/remembering-mohamed-mahmoud-the-good-the-bad-and-the-brotherhood/

aim of pressuring SCAF into hastening the presidential elections, the scheduled date of which had been moved from April 2012 to June 2013.[689] Taking place just 9 days before the first round of Parliamentary elections since Mubarak's removal, the clashes went on for 6 days and were the deadliest up to that point, with 47 protesters losing their life as a result of police brutality, therefore remaining ingrained in the revolutionaries' hearts and minds.[690]

However, a notable absence in Mohamed Mahmoud street was that of the MB, whose members had remained active and present during street protests up to that point. The MB's decision to boycott the clashes cost the organization the revolutionaries' trust, as Islamists had already been accused of aligning with the military forces in order to ensure the stable handling of the Parliamentary elections, in which they were expected to gain the majority of seats due to their strong organizational structure.[691] Indeed it appears that during the clashes the MB took the military's side, with both the organization and the SCAF addressing the protesters asking them to exercise "wisdom and restraint" and emphasising the importance of the upcoming parliamentary elections, and painting the protests as an attempt to derail the aims of the January 25th Revolution.[692] In a statement released on November 20th, the FJP said "we announce that we will not participate in any more protests or demonstrations that may lead to more confrontations and tensions in a continuous effort to bury the strife between all parties sparked by the Interior Ministry.", making their disassociation with the protesters abundantly clear. While the MB's reasons for doing so are rather easy to understand in retrospect (after all, the organization had been presented with the opportunity to legitimately ascend to power for the first time in its troubled history), their actions broke the fragile link that have been developed with

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[689] Taha, R., Kortam, H., "The Remains of Mohamed Mahmoud", in *Daily News Egypt*, (November 2013) http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/11/19/the-remains-of-mohamed-mahmoud/

[690] Ryzova, L., "The Battle of Cairo's Mohamed Mahmoud Street", in *Al Jazeera*, (November 2011) http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/11/201111288494638419.html

[691] Hoge, J., "Mohamed Mahmoud III and the Revolutionary Front in Egypt", in *Muftah*, (November 2013) http://muftah.org/mohamed-mahmoud-iii-and-the-revolutionary-front/#.WHil6bbJyYU

[692] Daily News Egypt, "Remembering Mohamed Mahmoud: the good the bad and the Brotherhood", (November 2012) https://dailynewsegypt.com/2012/11/19/remembering-mohamed-mahmoud-the-good-the-bad-and-the-brotherhood/

the other opposition groups during January 25th, a break that was embodied in the mantra "the Brotherhood sold us out in Mohamed Mahmoud".[693]

Several revolutionary groups accused the MB of betraying the 2011 revolution by aligning themselves with the military regime, despite the organization releasing a statement in which they claimed to agree with the with protesters' wish to remove the SCAF from the political scene, while at the same time disagreeing with the means, arguing instead for elections.[694] However, the MB's actions marked the beginning of a movement that opposed both the SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood, which was seen as an ally of the then-ruling military forces. Arguably, the population's distrust of the FJP started then, well before the Presidential elections took place, therefore marking one of the organization's top mistakes that would then play a part in the discontent that led to their deposition.

5.7 (3) The Battle of Ittihadiya

The deadly clashes that took place in Ittihadiya in December 2012 are seen in the mainstream narrative surrounding the fall of the MB as the turning point in which Morsi started being openly contested by the people. However, getting an objective understanding of what actually happened between the 5th and the 9th of December has proved to be incredibly hard, as competing versions of the facts are put forward by those who took part, depending on which side they feel they belong to. Regardless, it is undeniable that the FJP's relationship with the general population kept on decreasing after the clashes, witnessing an almost daily escalation of protests that eventually led to the June 30th coup, which is why the way in which the MB reacted to the Ittihadiya clashes is identified as the last of Morsi's top three mistakes by this thesis.

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[693] The New Arab, "Egypt: Understanding Mohamed Mahmoud", in *The New Arab*, (November 2014) https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2014/11/22/egypt-understanding-mohamed-mahmoud
[694] Ahram Online, "Muslim Brotherhood defends stance on Mohamed Mahmoud Clashes", in *Ahram Online*, (November 2013) http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/87351/Egypt/Politics-/Muslim-Brotherhood-defends-stance-on-Mohamed-Mahmo.aspx

Popular sit-ins and marches in opposition to the MB Constitution started soon after the announcement of the controversial constitutional decree in November 2012, but started to intensify on December 1st after the confirmation that a Constitutional referendum was to take place on December 15th. Thousands of people took to the streets to protest against the president's "power-grab", aiming to hold a peaceful demonstration outside the presidential palace.[695] However, that is when things get blurry. Over the course of 4 days, large gangs of men violently clashed with the anti-Morsi demonstrators, capturing and torturing 49 men for over two days, before handing them over to the police.[696] There were allegations that these were thugs hired by the MB themselves, especially by al Shater, but these have never been confirmed.[697]

Therefore, it is incredibly challenging to understand the MB's level of involvement in the clashes, and to identify who in the organization was aware of what was about to happen or not, or to even assess whether this is yet another case of the younger MB generation being disconnected from the older, conservative one that was ruling the country. Several members of the MB I have interviewed for the scope of this research, together with another one who was working in Morsi's Media Office at the time of the clashes, reject the allegations of violent thugs being dispatched against the protesters by the MB, and claim that the organization itself was in the dark as to what was about to happen in Ittihadiya. While it is undeniable that MB supporters being caught in the demonstrations did resort to violence, one must wonder why that was the case, especially knowing the organization's historical commitment to peaceful means. The interviewees explained this particular circumstance without denying the violence taking place, but emphasising the fact that the reasons behind it were kept hidden. They claim that even the leadership of the MB itself did not understand what was happening during the first few days, and that no one expected it to be that bloody. They also claim that MB supporters in the streets were told that the SCAF, together

[695] BBC News, "Egypt Crisis: Islamists rally for President Morsi", in *BBC News*, (December 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20564038

[696] Mabrouk, M., "The View from a Distance: Egypt's Contentious New Constitution", p. 2

[697] BBC News, "Egypt Crisis: fatal Cairo clashes amid constitutional row", in BBC News, (December 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20605134

with the Judiciary and the police forces, had everything in place to forcibly remove Morsi from power on the very first day of the clashes, an allegation that despite not being confirmed, could explain the MB actions, even if it does not justify them in any way.

What can be said is that the profound implications of the clashes, and the MB's mishandling of the situation, arguably played a big part in the building up of a popular momentum that eventually culminated in the removal of the FJP's government. As a result of the riot, Morsi's claim to be a "president for all Egypt" collapsed, while the armed forces released a statement on December 8th saying ""The armed forces... realise their responsibility to preserve the higher interests of the country and to secure and protect vital targets, public institutions and the interests of innocent citizens", and "The opposite of that will bring us to a dark tunnel that will result in catastrophe and that is something we will not allow", making it clear that they wished to keep a neutral position and would not automatically side with the government.".[698] As a consequence, what fragile truce had been in place between the MB and the Army was also removed, essentially marking the beginning of the end of the Morsi government, as in the following months the presidency's authority was eroded little by little, eventually culminating in the June 30th 2013 protests and in the removal of Mohammed Morsi by a *coup d'etat*. It follows that, despite the fact that the circumstances surrounding the clashes are far from being clear, for the scope of this research the Battle of Ittihadiya is considered to be the last fatal mistake committed by the MB while in power, as that triggered the escalation of the popular protests wave hat would eventually lead to their deposition.

5.8 Conclusion

To conclude, this Chapter has argued that there is more to the FJP's toppling than just a lack of expertise and a series of seemingly undemocratic political choices. While it is undeniable that Morsi failed to be a "president for all Egyptians", it is also clear that

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[698] BBC News, "Army warns it will not allow 'dark tunnel'", in *BBC News*, (December 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20651896

there were other actors involved in the country's political processes that played a considerable part in that being the case. Therefore, the chapter has argued that Roy's account of the "failure of political Islam" is an unsuitable lens to apply to the analysis of the MB's removal from power. The remnants of the deep state and the Army's historical leading role in both the country's politics and in Egyptians' psyches seems to indicate what most of the interviewees agreed upon, which is the belief that SCAF would have somehow gained power anyway, regardless of who was in charge of the transitional government.

Allegations aside, it is now clear that, by beginning to establish what was effectively an Islamist government, the FJP alienated a considerable part of the population, and was subsequently perceived as having hijacked the 2011 revolution for its own means. These perceptions, together with Morsi's avoidable mistakes reviewed above, meant that the progressive escalation of popular grievances and discontent would have inevitably led to a clash between the government and its citizens. However, the chapter has shown that it would be incorrect to assume that the FJP was violently removed because of its Islamist nature. Rather, the chapter has proposed four clear reasons that can be understood as being behind the series of events leading to the July 2013 *coup*, these being the implications of the MB's perceived historical divisions, its alleged failure to successfully engage with revolutionary and secular groups, its misunderstanding of the domestic balance of power, and its miscalculations of the SCAF's aims and intention. Moreover, the chapter has critically assessed Roy's account of the "Failure of Political Islam", which many claims have been embodied by Morsi's own removal. However, the chapter has concluded that Roy's account is too monolithic and generalist in its views, and that it would therefore be more correct to understand what happened in July 2013 as the FJP's *deposition*, rather than as its *failure*.

Conclusion

"They tried to bury us; they did not know we were seeds"[699]

On June 30th 2013, the day marking the one-year anniversary of Morsi's presidential inauguration, millions of Egyptians gathered in squares across the country chanting "the people want the fall of the regime", echoing the cry that became the symbol of the protests that removed Hosni Mubarak in February 2011.[700] Two and a half years and a free presidential election later, revolutionaries were back on the streets, demanding the Islamist government's removal and asking for early presidential elections.[701] What would unravel in the days to follow led to the country falling into the grip of a military regime once again, to the persecution of the MB, and to the further restriction of political space. Just over two years after the beginning of a popular movement that led to the removal of the Mubarak regime, it seemed like Egypt was back at square one.

At the outset of this research, this thesis sought to answer the question of "Does the MB's deposition equal the failure of Political Islam?". It answered by arguing for a less monolithic understanding of Political Islam, by analysing the MB's practices and ideology within the Egyptian context, and by critically analysing the FJP's performance in government. Ultimately, this thesis has concluded that the MB's removal does not equal the end of Political Islam, but rather underlines the need for an understanding of the doctrine that is case-specific and that takes into account different contexts. This is particularly important considering the contemporary international understanding of Political Islam, which tends to homogenise the ideology and to equate it with violence and extremism. In turn, this contributes to the development of aggressive foreign

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[699] Quote by a secular activist, in direct reference to the proverbial saying typical of Latin America's Civil Rights Movements.

[700] Fayed, S., Saleh, J., "Million flood Egypt's streets to demand Mursi quit", in *Reuters*, (June 2013) http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-protests-idUSBRE95Q0NO20130630

[701] Hellyer, H., "Egypt after the Arab Spring: Revolt and Reaction", p. 135

policies against the MENA region. Therefore, the MB example is key to the understanding of Political Islam as a modern, ever-evolving phenomenon that is inextricably linked to sources of legitimacy and authority, the manifestations of which vary widely depending on national and social contexts.

This is a view that is noticeably absent from international foreign policies directed at the region, and is therefore contributing to the rise of Islamophobia and to the portrayal of Muslims as the "other". This thesis has challenged this perception by bringing together primary and secondary data, therefore adding to the existing literature on the topic with interviews with both secular activists and MB members and supporters, attempting to do so equally despite the complicated nature and set of circumstances surrounding the subject at hand. Finally, this thesis has shown that the FJP's toppling is far from being a proof of the incompatibility of Political Islam and democracy, and should therefore be thought of as just a deposition.

The thesis has done so by providing an in-depth analysis of the existing research and literature on Islamism in Chapter 1, and critically addressing theoretical positions that appear to be too generalist and outdated to be suited to the investigation of the many contemporary manifestations of Political Islam, such as Oliver Roy's account of "The Failure of Political Islam". It needs to be made clear once again that this is not an attack on Roy himself. Rather, this thesis has sought to address and problematize a much broader trend that homogenises the understanding of Political Islam, ultimately represented by Roy's main work. This is why approaches based on Historical Sociology, which take into account the influence of different social, political, and historical contexts, are key to understand what a group like the MB means and to examine its identity and message. Historical Sociology has also been introduced as the theoretical framework supporting the analysis as, moving away from the Realist and traditional understanding of "Islam" or the "Arab mind" as explanatory elements of the region's geopolitics, it instead focuses on how institutions of both political and socio/religious power are established and maintained, recognising states, ideologies and societies as

the core components of political and social order.[702] Therefore, it is most suited to the study of how the MB's political evolution has historically shaped the country's institutions, civil society, and politics.

Following this, Chapter 2 engaged with the MB's genealogy and development within the Egyptian context, focusing on the organization's interpretation and practices of Political Islam and on its troubled while still mutually dependant relationship with the various regimes. Historical Sociology has shown that the history of the MB is inextricably tied to that of Egypt itself, and argued for the need to examine both together in order to understand what led to the MB's rise and fall from power. Having provided a genealogy of the MB's political and ideological development within the unique Egyptian context, Chapter 3 examined the role that the organisation played during the January 2011 uprisings and at the very start of the transitional period, which culminated in the creation of the FJP in June 2011. Understanding such a watershed event as the beginning of the MB's experience in government, the chapter focused on the significance of the creation of the FJP and of Mohammed Morsi's election, by analysing the implications that this had for the mainstream organization and for its ideology.

Chapter 4 set the framework for the critical analysis of the MB's time in government, focusing on its policies, political choices, and varying relationships with the other political actors in Egypt, in order to understand what ultimately went wrong and led to the premature departure of Morsi from the presidency. Following from this, the chapter proposed four main factors that can be understood as being behind the downfall of the MB, which have then be examined in Chapter 5, these being: the MB's legacy of internal divisions, its "arrogance" and refusal to cooperate with revolutionary group, its miscalculations regarding the extent of power the group actually held, and failure to take into account the prominent and historical role of the Army within the Egyptian context. Chapter 5 additionally looked at the events leading up to Morsi's removal and examines the reasons behind popular discontent and perceived failure of

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[702] Halliday, F., *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*, p. 36

the MB. Once again, the legacy of division characteristic of the organisation and certain perceptions of Political Islam played a major role in the unravelling of these occurrences. Justifications, accusations, and political actions were examined within the framework of Political Islam and that of Egypt itself, with the aim of identifying the extent to which they were influenced by history and ideology. Ultimately, Chapter 5 critically engaged with Roy's account of the "Failure of Political Islam", and determined that it was not applicable to the case of the FJP's toppling in July 2013.

It is undeniable that the MB was not ready to face the challenges that came with democratic governance. Its long history as an opposition movement meant that the Brotherhood could benefit from an exceptionally strong organizational strength and structure, which gave it an advantage over less-experienced secular and revolutionary groups in the post-Mubarak context, but that did not equal political expertise. Its members' inexperience in assessing the country's balance of power, the permanence of the remnants of the deep state, SCAF's unwillingness to relinquish power and the alienation perceived by secular and revolutionary groups have proven to be too much to handle for the MB. However, while the MB's first experience in governance has ended quickly and brutally, this does not equal the end of one of the region's oldest and most influential Islamist groups, and it definitely does not prove that Political Islam and democratic governance are incompatible by default.

Contributions

This thesis has argued that it necessary to return to the pre-2011 understanding of Political Islam as a modern, ever-evolving phenomenon, that is inextricably linked to sources of power and legitimacy within the state, and is therefore slowly adapting its narrative and aims to contemporary times, inevitably encountering obstacles on the way. As an historical phenomenon, Political Islam in its various manifestations is and will remain closely related to the persistent dilemma regarding the role of religion in civil and public spaces, and to the highly complex question of legitimacy and the rising power of the state.[703] Historical Sociology has been used to show that, especially in

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[703] Nafi, B., "The Failure of Political Islam?"

the case of Egypt, religion also plays a key role in the context of civil society, therefore directly shaping characteristics and perceptions of states, societies, and institutions. Because of its nature, it is therefore necessary to renew the move towards an understanding of Political Islam that is case specific and takes into account the wide array of diversity and practices that manifest across the various groups that fall under this label, rather than seeking to restrict its comprehension to a monolithic and prescribing set of rules. The question of whether the FJP's removal equals the failure of Political Islam as a whole further reinforces the contemporary currency of this need.

On July 3rd, 2013, the region's first democratically elected Islamist government was overthrown by a *coup d'etat* brought about by an unpredicted partnership between Egypt's Armed Forces and the grassroots opposition movement Tamarod. The speed at which these events unfolded and the brutal persecution of MB's members that followed al Sisi's seizure of power was monitored with stupor by observers around the world, while bigger questions regarding the compatibility of Political Islam and democracy inevitably arose. While some simply limited their analysis to the study of the MB's unfortunate attempt at governance, many more looked at these events as the ultimate proof that Political Islam had indeed failed, as predicted by Oliver Roy in 1992. However, by examining the MB's practices and ideology within the Egyptian context, and by carefully analysing the organization's post-2011 politicisation process and their time in government, this thesis has demonstrated that it would be more appropriate to refer to July 3rd 2013 as the day of the FJP's deposition, rather than as the failure of Political Islam as a whole.

There are several reasons why this is the case. First of all, Oliver Roy's book was written in a very particular historical period, under very specific circumstances, that do not reflect those currently characterising events in the region today. In the early 1990s, the geopolitical conditions witnessed by Roy might have indeed pointed to the assumption that Political Islam was doomed to fail: in Afghanistan, the *mujahedeen* had failed to provide a durable political alternative to the defeated Communist regime; Egypt was being ripped apart by daily clashes between the country's Armed Forces and radical Islamist groups such as the Islamic Jihad; Algeria witnessed the brutal

suppression of the Islamic Salvation Front.[704] At the time, it seemed like Islamist groups were struggling to even survive, let alone contemplating the possibility of bringing about political change through governmental and democratic structures.

However, what Roy failed to foresee was just how significantly circumstances would change since then. The rise of the Turkish model and the Islamic Republic of Iran's example began challenging Roy's predictions. In 2011, the region was swept by the rebellious wave of the "Arab Springs", which saw long-standing dictators and authoritarian regimes being toppled by popular movements that were chanting about democracy, freedom, and human rights. In the political vacuum that followed, Islamist groups such as the MB and the Ennahda drew on decades of experience as both grassroots groups and opposition movements to seize the opportunity to gain legality and legitimacy, and did so through the power of the ballot box. The world watched in disbelief as the "Arab Springs" quickly turned into "Islamist Winters", however, these groups' political projects were destined to be short lived. Nevertheless, such a strict framing of events and its deep policy implications need to be problematized.

Following from this, the thesis makes a considerable contribution to the contemporary literature focusing on Political Islam in the post-2011 regional context, as it poses it position itself at the vanguard of contemporary debates. This literature will be summarised below, but it is roughly divided between two main trends led by scholars such as Tarek Osman, Quinn Mecham and Muqtedar Khan. In particular, these trends develop along the lines of those who understand the post-2011 context as an "Islamists' Winter" and those who instead interpret it as a chance for Islamist groups to self reflect and re-invent themselves in the light of the new regional (dis)order. By identifying four domestic factors that led the removal of the MB government this thesis aligns with the latter of these trends, as it will be shown.

The argument here is that it is necessary to move towards an understanding of Political Islam that is case-specific, and recognises its diversity depending on contexts and

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[704] ibid.

histories. Of course, this also comes with several policy implications. In an era dominated by the trend of equating Islamism with terrorism and violence, and Islamist groups with Da'esh, it is increasingly important to challenge generalist currents and to acknowledge the heterogeneity of this doctrine. Such an intellectual move would certainly have repercussion for foreign policies, and would eventually challenge rising sentiments of Islamophobia and the increasing construction of Muslims as the "other". While it is undeniable that it is necessary for Islamist groups to engage in self-reflection and reformation following the Arab Springs and the MB's removal, the same should be said for international policy makers and observers. A more comprehensive understanding of Islamism as something that is multifaceted and ever-evolving would eventually lead to the shift away from a Global War on Islam and towards a global effort against authoritarianism, which does not have to see Muslims and Islamists as enemies, but rather as allies.

Contemporary Political Islams: Islamist Winters VS Islamic Awakening

In 2013, following the removal of the FJP by a military-led *coup d'etat*, an old set of questions about the compatibility of Islam and democracy resurfaced, while Roy's prediction about the failure of Political Islam seemed to be embraced by most. Chapter 1 has highlighted the fact that, following the aftermath of the Arab Springs and the rise of Da'esh, the literature on this topic seems to have split between two emerging currents. With these new trends in the literature still being in the making, this thesis makes a considerable contribution to the study of the subject as it positions itself at the vanguard of these debates. Moreover, regardless of which of these binary positions one subscribes to, the understanding of Political Islam as a multifaceted and heterogeneous ideology is still necessary to make sense of the ideological and geopolitical trends currently enveloping the region.

As emphasised in Chapter 1, those belonging to the first emerging trend in the literature, such as Tarek Osman and Quinn Mecham, argue that Islamist groups are growing increasingly authoritarian in the post-2011 regional context, which has strengthened the binary between Arab secularism and Islamism. Mecham claims that there are four main trends that characterise Islamism as a whole in the aftermath of

the Arab Springs. These are the removal and repression of the MB, the rise of Islamist militia-based state building embodied by Da'esh, increasing sectarianism and proxy wars, and Islamists' increased caution in participating in participatory politics and in directly challenging their governments.[705] He believes that the MB's deposition came with enormous consequences for Islamist groups competing in politics, and predicts that exclusion and perceptions of injustice will eventually lead to the group resorting to militancy.[706] Tarek Osman holds a similarly negative understanding, and states that the failure to take power during the Arab Springs "has led not to 'soul-searching' in major Islamist groups about what went wrong, but instead to 'antagonism and fiery anger' and a thirst for revenge'".[707]Partisans of Political therefore Islam see themselves as victims of an injustice whose perpetrators are not just "individual conspirators but entire social groups".[708] He predicts that there will soon have to be a fight to save the soul of Islamism, meaning that, as Salafist jihadist groups grow in numbers and popularity, non-militant Islamist groups and thinkers will have to defend the idea of Political Islam against being equated with violence and terror.[709] According to Osman, this will include a battle over what it means to be an Islamist.

Others, such as Muqtedar Khan, belong to the second trend in the literature and instead understand the current regional (dis)order as a chance for moderate Islamist groups to self-reflect and re-invent themselves in the light of new regional needs and circumstances. As stated in Chapter 1, Khan notes that the MB's inability to provide good governance and unite Egyptian society under a common purpose does not directly imply that Political Islam and democracy are incompatible.[710] Similarly, the fact that the organization is widely considered one of the region's oldest and most influential Islamist groups does not mean that the MB has a monopoly on Political Islam, or that its perceived failure is also the failure of Islamic values.[711] Therefore, the

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[705] Mechan, Q., "The evolution of Islamism since the Arab Uprisings"

[706] ibid.

[707] Osman, T., *Islamism: what it means for the Middle East and the World*, p. 244

[708] ibid.

[709] ibid., p. 256

[710] Khan, M., "Islam, Democracy and Islamism after the Counterrevolution in Egypt"

[711] Feldman, N., "Don't Blame Islam for the Failure of Egypt's Democracy"

popular protests that escalated in the *coup d'etat* were not the rejection of Political Islam or of democracy, they were simply a rejection of the MB's rule.

Similarly, other Islamist groups around the region have not been discouraged by the MB's deposition; on the contrary, the appetite for Islam in the public and civil spheres is continuously shifting forms and looking for new ways to adapt to contemporary challenges. With these new trends in the literature still being in the making, this thesis therefore contributes to the emerging literature on the topic and positions itself within the second trend, by arguing that it is necessary to move towards an understanding of Political Islam that is case-specific, and that recognises its diversity depending on context and history.

In particular, following from both the MB's and the Ennahda's experiences, it is clear that modern forms of Islamism are still trying to adapt to contemporary challenges, which might require them to make a conceptual and ideological shift. While these changes are case specific, in the case of the Brotherhood it could be argued that the group's source of legitimacy and support needs to move from "Islamic Identity" to "Islamic Values". The analysis of the troubled relationship between the group and the various Egyptian regimes has demonstrated that Islam has been used as a source of legitimacy for almost a century, which together with the group's original anti-colonial nature has contributed to the reduction of the Islamic faith to a political ideology. Its underlying themes of resistance and identity politics have never really gone away, they have just been hidden by the demands of high politics, which the MB was undeniably unprepared to tackle.

While engaging with the process of rebuilding the MB, its leaders also need to regain their credibility as moral actors who seek to govern for the sake of justice rather than power, and the only way to do that is to return to the conception of Islam as both a faith and a set of values rather than just an identity that fosters political mobilization.[712] Since its formation, the MB has primarily been a social movement,

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[712] ibid.

whose program depends on bringing about social change as a foundation and a condition for political change. This has not changed in the aftermath of 2013 and, if anything, its members and supporters are finding themselves needing to rebuild the strong organisation they once were. This process will undoubtedly come with fascinating implications not only for Egypt, but for the wider understanding of Political Islam as well.

To conclude, the question of whether and how Islam could form the basis of political legitimacy and a frame of reference for modern societies with Muslim majorities has not been settled[713], and it likely will not be anytime soon. Meanwhile, politics in Egypt in the Al Sisi era is currently in a state of suspension, with the MB being persecuted and the forced exclusion of secular activists from the political space. However, this does not mean the end of Political Islam. Most of my interviewees, secular and religious, agree with the statement that "as long as there is poverty in Egypt, there will be Islamism".[714] This suggests that while there is some self-reflection and re-invention for Islamists to do, the doctrine is far from being defeated even in the eyes of some of its most vehement critics. When asked about the future of the MB, a young secular activist stressed once again just how embedded the organisation is within Egyptian structures and psyche, by saying:

> I think the people will end up reconciling with the MB at some point, it will happen sooner or later, to me it is the only thing that makes sense. It will happen because they are part of the Egyptian people. You will not be able to completely amputate them or to amputate their organization. If the MB became such a bad organization, terrorist and so on, maybe it will start reformulating under a different entity and a different name, and present an alternative.[715]

Finally, together with the necessity of moving towards an understanding of Political Islam that recognises its heterogeneousness and takes into account different contexts, the MB's deposition also calls for an awakening to take place within current Islamist

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[713] Osman, T., *Islamism: what it means for the Middle East and the World*, p. 260
[714] based on interviews with secular and religious activists, and with MB members and supporters.
[715] Interview with a secular activist.

groups, one that is based on self reflection and analysis. To some degrees, this is already taking place. While younger Islamists would see elections as a part of their identity, rather than just a means of political change,[716] they are starting to move away from the process of equating electoral success to "winning". The MB's case certainly teaches them a lesson in that. Wael Hallaq writes "for many Islamists (and Muslims more broadly), there is a certain measure of dissonance between their moral and cultural aspirations, on the one hand, and the moral realities of a modern world, on the other—realities with which they must live but were not of their own making".[717] The current regional circumstances are not what they would have wanted, and they are now faced with several competing challenges, such as maintaining unity despite disagreement, and the difficulty and sometimes impossibility of separating religion and politics. Although the younger generations of Islamists have not yet found answers, they have started to ask themselves these challenging questions. This can be seen as one, or possibly the only, positive legacy of the Arab Springs.[718]

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[716] Hamid, S., McCants, W., Dar, R., "Islamism after the Arab Springs: between the Islamic State and the Nation State", p. 17

[717] Hallaq, W., *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament,* p.3

[718] Hamid, S., McCants, W., Dar, R., "Islamism after the Arab Springs: between the Islamic State and the Nation State", p. 18

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Appendix A

Freedom and Justice Party Election Program[719]

Parliamentary Elections 2011

(Freedom … Justice … Development … Leadership)

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

This program:

Pursuant to the blessed revolution of the great Egyptian people, who were able with God's will and power to overturn the tyrannical corrupt former regime, and out of loyalty to the martyrs of the revolution, and in response to the thundering voice of our people and their just demands to complete the demolition of the repressive regime,

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[719] For the purposes of clarity and brevity, an abridged version of the Freedom and Justice Party Election Program is included, with a specific focus on issues discussed in the Thesis.
Freedom and Justice Party Election Program
http://kurzman.unc.edu/files/2011/06/FJP_2011_English.pdf

to purge the country of corruption and to begin a new phase of building and development of Egypt, we proudly present this program as an integrated vision for the next phase with all its political, security, economic, social, cultural, scientific (..) and other requirements. This will undoubtedly be an ultra-sensitive phase, for it will witness the foundation of what could be called "the second republic" which we – all Egyptians – aspire to and endeavour to achieve its goals of building a free, stable, strong, leading and advanced country. We stress that reforming what was corrupted by the tyrants of the past and rejuvenating the country is a huge task that no political party or national stakeholder can achieve on its own. Hence, we call for national cooperation, or at least fair competition to serve our people and our families, without excluding, removing or accusing each other, and without fear -mongering, treason or intellectual terrorism. That is: we should seek a balanced Parliament.

The Egyptian people, in its entirety, is now looking forward to real stability based on a security system that provides safety and security, and a political and constitutional system that re -builds the state administration, and an economic system that rescues the economy and rids the Egyptian citizen of the burdens of unemployment, poverty and high cost of living… in addition to a comprehensive system for integrated development and national security, foreign policy, culture and the media, as well as endowments and religious affairs.

Therefore, our program is based on the priorities of the people and reflects their aspirations for practical initiatives and programs that will achieve the freedom, Shura (consultation), dignity y, security, safety, justice, stability, development, progress, advancement and leadership they deserve.

Thus, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) presents a hand -picked selection of candidates with varied specialties and multiple abilities, representing all segments of the Egyptian people, including: university professors, professionals, workers, farmers and others. We also present a number of female candidates who represent Egyptian women in all segments and their respective communities. This is based on our belief that women are capable sisters of men, and are just as able to effectively participate

in the service of their homeland and their religion "The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong…" [Quranic Chapter 9 Repentance: 71]

We strive arduously to be an honest, faithful voice for our people, our Egypt, to carry their concerns, demands and aspirations, and work to mobilize and engage all the resources and creative energies of the honest, loyal and strong citizens of this nation to achieve the following:

- Building a strong democratic political system that safeguards the citizens' rights and freedoms, applies the principle of Shura (consultation), and builds an institutional state where the rule of the law is the title of civilized modern human life.

- Achieving social justice that will preserve the citizens" dignity, safeguard their rights and provide a decent life for all, irrespective of class, status or affiliation.

- Laying the foundation for real integrated development and progress of Egypt, our beloved homeland, with all its human and economic resources, its production and construction.

- Restoring the leadership which Egypt has long since lost under rule of the former regime on all Arab, African, Islamic, international, scientific, cultural, and media levels.

Hence this program is founded on four fundamental principles, which represent the great purposes of Sharia (Islamic law) namely: Freedom, Justice, Development, Leadership.

With freedom, justice is achieved; and with justice, real development takes place; and thus Egypt is launched forth into real progress and proper leadership as befits its noble people and great history.

We present this election program to our people, and we are confident that:

- Together, we can get our country to safety

- Together, we can rebuild free strong leading dear Egypt

- Together, we can protect Egypt's national unity and preserve its security and achieve stability

- Together, we can develop Egypt's resources and its economy and perfect its rejuvenation

- Together, we can raise Egypt's status, restore its vital role and take it to leadership position – because we believe that our free people who accomplished for Egypt – with God's Grace – the great goals of liberation and purging of corruption, are able - with God's help - to accomplish the tasks of leadership, construction and development.

- A quick look at the situation inherited from the corrupt former regime, that grabbed Egypt for too long – which was the direct cause of the people's revolution on the twenty -fifth of January – as compared with the proper status that we seek for Egypt with our great people for the future through this program, will highlight the enormous efforts required for Egypt to return to its proper position and to achieve the hopes and dreams of the great Egyptian people.

Appendix B

President Mohamed Morsi's Constitutional Declaration, (November 2012).[720]

Article I:

Reopen the investigations and prosecutions in the cases of the murder, the attempted murder and the wounding of protesters as well as the crimes of terror committed against the revolutionaries by anyone who held a political or executive position under the former regime, according to the Law of the Protection of the Revolution and other laws.

Article II:

Previous constitutional declarations, laws, and decrees made by the president since he took office on 30 June 2012, until the constitution is approved and a new People's Assembly [lower house of parliament] is elected, are final and binding and cannot be appealed by any way or to any entity. Nor shall they be suspended or cancelled and all lawsuits related to them and brought before any judicial body against these decisions are annulled.

Article III:

The prosecutor-general is to be appointed from among the members of the judiciary by the President of the Republic for a period of four years commencing from the date of office and is subject to the general conditions of being appointed as a judge and should not be under the age of 40. This provision applies to the one currently holding the position with immediate effect.

Article IV:

The text of the article on the formation of the Constituent Assembly in the 30 March 2011 Constitutional Declaration that reads, "it shall prepare a draft of a new constitution in a

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[720] "English Text of Morsi's Constitutional Declaration", in *Al Ahram*, (November 2012) http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/58947.aspx

period of six months from the date it was formed" is to be amended to "it shall prepare the draft of a new constitution for the country no later than eight months from the date of its formation."

Article V:

No judicial body can dissolve the Shura Council [upper house of parliament] or the Constituent Assembly.

Article VI:

The President may take the necessary actions and measures to protect the country and the goals of the revolution.

Article VII:

This Constitutional Declaration is valid from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

Appendix C

Abridged Egyptian Constitution of 2012[721]

CONSTITUTION PREAMBLE

We, the people of Egypt,

In the name of the merciful God and with his aid,

declare this to be

Our Constitution, the document of the 25th of January revolution, which was started by our youth, embraced by our people, supported by our Armed Forces;

Having rejected, in Tahrir Square and all over the country all forms of injustice, oppression, tyranny, despotism, exclusion, plunder and monopoly;

Proclaimed our full rights to "bread, freedom, social justice, and human dignity," paid for by the blood of our martyrs, the pain of our injured, the dreams of our children, the strife of our men and women;

Recovered the spirit of our great civilization and our luminous history, for on the banks of the timeless Nile we established the oldest state that has always known the meaning of citizenship and equality, gave humanity the first alphabet, opened the way to monotheism and the knowledge of the Creator, embraced God's prophets and messages, and adorned the pages of history with parades of creativity;

And in continuation of our virtuous revolution which has unified all Egyptians on the path of building a modern democratic state, we declare our adherence to the following principles:

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[721] For the purposes of clarity and brevity, an abridged version of the 2012 Egyptian Constitution is included, with a specific focus on the Articles that have been discussed in the Thesis.
Nariman, Y., "Egypt's Draft Constitution Translated", in *Egypt Independent*, (November 2012) http://www.egyptindependent.com/egypt-s-draft-constitution-translated/
2012 Constitution of Egypt http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/eg/eg047en.pdf

I:

The people are the source of all authorities. Authorities are instituted by and derive their legitimacy from the people, and are subject to the people's will. The responsibilities and competencies of authorities are a duty to bear, not a privilege or a source of immunity.

II:

A democratic system of government, establishing the grounds for peaceful transfer of power, supporting political pluralism, ensuring fair elections and the people's contribution in the decision-making process.

III:

The individual's dignity is an extension of the nation's dignity. Further, there is no dignity for a country in which women are not honoured; women are the sisters of men and partners in all national gains and responsibilities.

IV:

Freedom is a right: freedom of thought, expression and creativity; freedom in housing, property and travel; its principles laid down by the Creator in the motion of the universe and human nature.

V:

Equality and equal opportunities are established for all citizens, men and women, without discrimination or nepotism or preferential treatment, in both rights and duties.

VI:

The rule of law is the basis of the individual's freedom, the legitimacy of authority, and the state's respect of the law. No power shall override that of righteousness, and the judiciary shall be independent, bearer of the honourable mission of defending the Constitution, upholding justice, and preserving rights and freedoms.

VII:

Upholding national unity is an obligation, and the cornerstone of building a modern

Egypt and the path to progress and development. To that end, the values of tolerance and moderation shall be spread, and the rights and freedoms of all citizens shall be protected without discrimination.

VIII:

Defending the nation is a duty and an honour. Our Armed Forces form a professional and neutral national institution that does not interfere in political affairs. It is the protective shield of the country.

IX:

Security is a great blessing; it falls on the shoulders of a police force which works in the service of the people, for their protection and to enforce the measures of justice. For there can be no justice without protection, and no protection without security institutions that respect the rule of law and human dignity.

X:

Unity is the hope of the Arab nation; it is history's call, the future's bid, and destiny's demand. Such unity is to be reinforced through the integration and fraternity with countries of the Nile Valley and of the Muslim world, both a natural extension borne out of the distinctiveness of Egypt's position on the global map.

XI:

Egypt's pioneering intellectual and cultural leadership is an embodiment of its soft power, and a model of the free generosity of original creators and thinkers, universities, science centres, linguistic and research centres, the press, the arts, literature and mass media, the national church, and Al-Azhar with its history as a mainstay of national identity, the Arabic language and Islamic Sharia, and as a beacon for moderate enlightened thought.

We, the people of Egypt,

Out of faith in God and His heavenly messages,

In recognition of the right of the country and the nation,

With awareness of our responsibilities toward the nation and humanity,

Pledge to stay committed to the principles laid out in this Constitution, which we accept and grant to ourselves, affirming our determination to uphold and defend it, and asserting that it shall be protected and respected by the State's authorities and the general public.

STATE AND SOCIETY

Political principles

Article 2

Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic its official language. Principles of Islamic Sharia are the principal source of legislation.

Social and ethical principles

Article 9

The state commits itself to providing security, tranquillity and equality of opportunity for all citizens, without discrimination.

Article 10

The family is the foundation of society. The family's foundations are religion, morality, and patriotism. Both state and society seek to preserve the inherent character of the Egyptian family, its cohesion, stability, and moral character, and to protect the family as specified by law. The state guarantees mother-and-child services that are free of charge and pledges to reconcile the woman's duties toward her family with her work in the public sphere. The state provides special protections for female breadwinners, divorced women, and widows.

Article 11

The state promotes morality, decency, and public order, as well as a high level of education and religious and patriotic values, scientific truths, the Arab culture, and the historical and civilizational patrimony of the People. All this as specified by law.

RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Personal Rights

Article 35

Unless caught in the act, a person can only be arrested, searched, jailed, prevented from travel, or in any other way restricted in his freedom if doing so follows a court order. Anyone whose freedom has been curtailed is entitled to receive a written notice listing the reasons within twelve hours. Within 24 hours of the curtailment of his freedom, a person must be brought before the investigating authority. This must happen in the presence of his attorney. If he does not have an attorney, one will be provided for him. Anyone whose freedom has been constrained, and anyone else, has the right to lodge a complaint before the judge in regards to this procedure and receive a decision within a week. If a decision has not been issued within that time, the person must be released. The law specifies the rules for detention, its duration, its reasons, and for the right to compensation either for temporary detention or for the completion of a sentence that a court has revoked.

Article 36

Anyone who has been arrested, jailed, or restricted in his freedom in any form is entitled to being treated in a way that respects his dignity. He must not be tortured, threatened, or degraded. He must not be harmed physically or mentally. He must only be detained or jailed in locations that are hygienic and becoming to a human being and that are under judicial supervision. Any deviation from these instructions is a crime that will be punished, as stipulated by law. Any statement made under such illegal circumstances or elicited under threat of such circumstances shall be considered null and void.

Moral and political rights

Article 44

It is forbidden to insult any messengers or prophets.

Article 45

The freedom of thought and opinion are guaranteed. Every person has the right to express his opinion in speaking, writing, image, or otherwise

Economic and social rights

Article 81

The rights and freedoms that attach to the citizen must not be impaired. No law regulating the practice of these rights and freedoms may narrow their intent and essence. The rights and freedoms are to be practiced in such a way that they do not conflict with the provisions of Part One of this Constitution, which covers the elements of state and society

EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

Section 1: The President

Article 148

After consultation with the Government and in accordance with the law, the President of the Republic declares the state of emergency. This declaration must be submitted to the House of Representatives within the following seven days. If the declaration is made while the House is in recess, it must promptly be called back into session. If the chamber has been dissolved, the declaration must be made to the Consultative Assembly and within the seven-day period stipulated in the previous paragraph. For the state of emergency to take effect, the consent of the majority in each of the two chambers is necessary. The declaration is valid for a specified period not to exceed six months. It can be extended once and for a period of similar length. Such an extension requires the prior consent of the People, expressed in a public referendum. The House of Representatives must not be dissolved while the state of emergency is in effect.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Section 2: Local Councils

Article 188

Each local unit elects an assembly through universal, secret and direct ballot. The assembly's mandate lasts four years. A candidate for a seat in the local assembly must be at least 21 years of age by the date the registration of candidates opens. The local assembly includes the local representatives of the executive. These representatives have no vote. Every assembly elects its president and his vice president from among its elected members. The law specifies other conditions for candidacy as well as the election procedures.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

Section 4: The Military Judiciary

Article 198

The military judiciary is an independent branch of the judiciary. It alone decides on all crimes related to the armed forces, their officers, and personnel. Civilians may not be tried by the military judiciary unless they are accused of crimes that hurt the armed forces. The law specifies these crimes as well as other competencies of the military judiciary. Members of the military judiciary are independent. They cannot be dismissed, and they have the guarantees, rights, and duties that attach to all members of the judiciary.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Article 219

The principles of Islamic law (*Shari'a*) include general evidence, the foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), the reliable sources from among the Sunni schools of thought (*madhahib*).