A Gramscian Analysis of Political Islam: The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Da'wa Magazine (1976-81); a case study

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis utilises a Gramscian criterion of interpretation to engage in a historical dialectical materialist approach that seeks to explain key complexities and contradictions that denote the vast phenomenon that is Political Islam. In doing so, it emphasises the role of ideology as constituting a considerably more constitutive role in shaping the conjunctural terrain on which the forces of opposition organise to contest the reproduction of relations. It further seeks to break from the rigidity of liberal and Eurocentric frameworks that increasingly describe power dynamics and civil society in reductive terms so as to entrap the vast phenomenon into a reactionary and state-centric lens.

The historical dialectical materialist approach is employed in the form of a case study that explores the political and ideological leadership of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The concept of hegemony is utilised in conjunction with passive revolution and the 'dialectic of distincts', which includes but is not limited to an interpretation of the hegemony-counter-hegemony, international-national, organic-conjunctural, base-superstructure, revolution-restoration, qualitative-quantitative and progressive-regressive. The application of these concepts to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood are carried out non-rigidly and non-dogmatically in order to arrive at an alternative and nuanced understanding of how we ought to approach to organisation. This is further analysis on the ideological mouthpiece of the organisation *Al-Da'wa* magazine.

An analysis of the magazine puts into perspective the ideological and political shifts in its intellectual framework and in its political strategy. The findings provide a nuanced and alternative historical account that postulates a history of passive revolution and deflected passive revolution as playing a formative role in shaping the complex and contradictory developments, which have formatively shaped the dialectical relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the State in Egypt. The original contribution of this thesis to knowledge is the alternative approach it offers towards understanding Political Islam.

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Last but not least, to my parents Mohammad and Fouzia Ayaz: thank you for encouragement, patience, sacrifice and unconditional support. None of this would have been possible without you – I love you.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the lovely Simona Turla. Thank you for always inspiring and challenging me to be better. Antonio Gramsci once wrote:

> 'l'indifferenza è il peso morto della storia. L'indifferenza opera potentemente nella storia. Opera passivamente, ma opera. È la fatalità; è ciò su cui non si può contare; è ciò che sconvolge i programmi, che rovescia i piani meglio costruiti; è la materia bruta che strozza l'intelligenza.'

While the quote can only be attributed to Gramsci, it is through you that I have truly come to understand its essence and to learn to act upon it. I cannot say enough about you and the incredible person that you are.

Declaration of Originality

I certify that this thesis is solely the result of my own work and includes nothing, which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. It has not been previously submitted, in part of whole, to any university or institution for any degree, diploma, or other qualification.

I confirm that this thesis consists of 96,359 words.

Introduction

The Phenomenon of Political Islam

The resurgence and politicisation of Islamism has been analysed in a plethora of ways and innumerable angles. It is a vast phenomenon that is prevalent on nearly all levels: international, national and subnational. The manner in which it manifests is equally extensive and complex insofar as that it can appear as radical and militant, moderate and political, or social and pragmatic. To further complicate matters the aforementioned variations are not necessarily mutually exclusive which means that Political Islam may, as it often does, simultaneously assume a mixture of seemingly contradictory elements. It appears as such due to the fact that it is entirely a modern phenomenon that uses Islam to define itself. It is therefore pertinent that we approach Political Islam in the broadest sense possible. That is to say that we must treat it as a disparate collection of individuals and modern movements, "ideological trends and state-directed policies" seeking to establish an authoritative role for Islam in political life.[1] To state it differently, Political Islam constitutes the modern attempt to use political and ideological leadership to elevate the position of Islam.

It is not a pre-modern atavistic and monolithic force that seeks to return Islam civilisation to a golden age nor is it something that can be addressed solely through culture. To treat it in such a manner would be to indicate that it is impervious to social change. The pervasiveness of the cultural approach, exemplified by the likes of Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, cannot guide us in unravelling the complexities and contradictions of what is wholly a modern phenomenon. Any enquiry into Political Islam must account for the socioeconomic and political conditions that shape and guide its very existence. The starting point must therefore be to explore the vast academic discourse that delves into

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[1] March, Andrew. "Political Islam: Theory." *The Annual Review of Political Science*. 18 (2015). 104-123. Print.
[2] The terms 'modernist' and 'confrontationist' are loosely employed in order to provide a

combined and uneven effects that give life to Political Islam. It is this discourse, which problematizes Political Islam and treats it in a nuanced manner that we must continue to build upon.

That being said, the point of departure is to not confine our understanding of Political Islam through a state-centric or solely global economic perspective. Although such accounts are invariably more helpful than the cultural variant, they sometimes run the risk of overemphasising the role of global economics, employ strict liberal terminology and occasionally teeter towards state-centric explanations derived vis-à-vis methodological separation. In other words, there is an organic and reciprocal connection between the various elements that go into constituting Political Islam. We must therefore proportionately account for the role of these variables alongside historical conditions, modernity and ideology. In doing so, the hope is that a nuanced understanding may emerge so as to complement the existing contributions on a phenomenon that displays no tangible sign of fading away.

The Role of Ideology and Civil Society

It is pertinent to critically explore the role of ideology and civil society in shaping Political Islam. The role of ideology is far too frequently relegated to a secondary status that renders it to be a mere political tool used to acquire power. Instead, the argument is put forth that ideology ought to be understood along the lines of both shaping and being shaped by social relations and power dynamics. The articulation of ideology in involves the transmittance of beliefs that are genuinely believed and accepted as true. The set of beliefs that comprise an ideology are further subject to 'common sense' conceptions and worldviews that are pervasive and often uncritically accepted either passively or in certain instances without any awareness. This is particularly the case when the ideology of a dominant social force sediments itself through social institutions in a historically organic manner. This is further indicative of the notion that the dominant or hegemonic force in power does not and cannot solely rely on its coercive and juridico-administrative functions. Rather, it actively seeks to exert control through social institutions so as to ensure sufficient levels of consent. The ideological programmes of social forces must

therefore be able to satisfy the general interests of the subaltern if they wish to retain power and avoid a crisis of authority. The sedimentation of ideas over time may come to be accepted and believed as true irrespective of whether they actually are or not. The contestation of a dominant force therefore involves the active effort to build genuine and sustainable alliances through ideology and ideational complement. The entire process of cultivating social solidarity means that ideology assumes a reciprocal function wherein it shapes and is simultaneously shaped by historical and socio-political conditions.

Taking the aforementioned into consideration means that we must also reconsider how we approach the concept of civil society – particularly in the MENA region. If we are to gauge civil society in this region exclusively through liberal terminology it will invariably reduce the sphere into a nascent and embryonic state. The notion that civil society is autonomous, wholly benign and based on spontaneous consent ignores the nuanced realities that go into forming the vastly complex and often contradictory sphere. Therefore, we must begin by accounting for historical conditions of state formation and how they contribute to making civil society gelatinous across the region. We must equally consider the presence of the state through its ideology and ideational activity in civil society. Upon doing so, it becomes clear that civil society is not wholly autonomous, benign or based on spontaneous consent. To state it differently, the state actively engages in civil society vis-à-vis its social institutions whether it is through education reform, the media, clubs and so forth. It does so with the aim of consistently manufacturing consent. Yet, it is a monumental task for any ideological programme to arrive at a point where it comes to constitute a historically organic ideology. Such a task requires the development of organic intellectuals that are capable of constantly organising the political, social and economic interests of society in an intricate and changing sphere. It is why the hegemonic force rarely comes to dominate the entirely of relations and why pockets of space always exist for subaltern groups to organise in opposition. Ultimately, civil society is the conduit through which ideological and political leadership is transmitted, accepted and contested.

A Gramscian Approach

A Gramscian enquiry into Political Islam offers us a non-rigid and non-dogmatic to help advance our understanding of the phenomenon. Gramsci's concepts provide us with a criterion of interpretation that allow us to explore the modalities of power rather than getting bogged down by an institutional analysis of state power. Moreover, an approach rooted in Gramsci's writings and general rhythm of thought aids us in illuminating fragmentation not only between social forces but also within. This assists us unravelling the assertion that Political Islam constitutes a monolithic entity. An analysis rooted in Gramsci does not mean that we have to apply a wholly class-based interpretation of Political Islam. His reconciliation of the theory of praxis however provides us with a source that highlights the organic and inseparability of the base with the superstructure. It therefore offers an alternative means of understanding the geo-temporal intricacies, contradictions and developments that go into the dialectical conflict between Political Islam and the State.

Correspondingly, the arguments advanced in this thesis do not suggest that Political Islam constitutes a viable counter hegemonic force capable of toppling the State on the basis that it engages in a protracted strategy and often operates as the main counter force to the dominant force. The historical dialectic materialist approach of Gramsci can help us to unravel how Political Islam has been able to emerge as the sole opposition. The success of Political Islam in denying other subaltern groups space cannot wholly be attributed to its ideological and political leadership. The concepts of passive revolution and Caesarism provide us with an alternative criterion of interpretation that can elucidate the aforementioned through a reconnaissance of historical developments that have shaped the conjunctural terrain and altered organic relations.

A Gramscian approach further means that we can move past neoliberalism and state-centric analyses of Political Islam that reduce it to an exclusively reactionary phenomenon as if it were on a transmission belt. By adopting an interscalar and national point of departure stance, we stand to see more clearly the importance of concrete

developments that transpire at the subnational and national level. Ultimately, Gramsci's concepts are malleable and remain applicable to studies of the contemporary. In using Gramsci's concepts are a vehicle of interpretation we can uncover how ideological and political leadership produce changes in the production and reproduction of social relations.

The Case Study

The rationale for choosing the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a case study is relatively straightforward. The organisation is not only the oldest of its kind but it has also proven to be the most influential and prosperous in advancing its agenda. Moreover, it has a deep and drawn out history with the state of Egypt. The complex nature of this reciprocal history has undoubtedly impacted the organisations composition, strategy, ideology and its relationship with the state and society. The aim is to therefore analyse these developments through a Gramscian approach that can ultimately provide a nuanced reading of how we ought to understand the Political Islam in relation to the organic and conjunctural sphere. The benefits of undertaking a case study are that they enable us to undertake a detailed critical analysis of the intricacies that shape Political Islam's flagship organisation with the hopes of providing a complementary avenue that can help us to understand the wider phenomenon.

The periodical served as the ideological mouthpiece of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and therefore provides for a number of overarching themes that assist us in unravelling the ideological and political strategy of the organisation in relation to the historical development of Egypt. Although the content of the magazine is wide-ranging, eclectic and often unfocused, it nevertheless gives us an uninterrupted look into the ideological themes and messages the organisation sought to advance with the aim of altering common sense conceptions of the world. In this sense, the magazine is an attempt to develop and articulate its ideology as a comprehensive vision of Islam's role in society. It is moreover an attempt to recalibrate its own ideological and political leadership to changing social and political circumstances.

Research Questions

- How can a Gramscian historical dialectic framework contribute towards advancing our understanding of the role of political and ideological leadership in shaping Political Islam?

- Has the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood at any point in its history constituted a viable counter-hegemonic force?

- What are the ways in which the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood utilises ideology within its efforts to give Islam authoritative status in daily life?

- How can we understand its strategy in relation to the conjunctural sphere wherein the forces of opposition are said to organise?

- What historical and socioeconomic conditions contributed to shaping the respective strategies of Hasan Al-Banna and the leadership behind the Al-Da'wa periodical? How effective were these strategies?

Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 on the thesis delves into the popular and academic debates on Political Islam. It covers the vast array of arguments shaped around the themes of culture and modernity. It is postulated that the cultural arguments advanced by proponents of the clash thesis do not constitute the actual discourse on Political Islam. Furthermore, the argument is raised that it is critical to proportionately account for the role of ideology and to reconsider the rigidity of overly liberal interpretations of civil society when analysing Political Islam. The ideological underpinnings of Political Islam and the variations in Islamist ideology and discursiveness are therefore explored. In doing so, the role of ideology and ideational complement in both shaping and being shaped by social processes that unfold within the complex sphere of civil society are emphasised. The concept of Islam as a 'master-signifier' is explored and it is ultimately argued that empirical complexities and contradictions prevent Political Islamists from establishing Islam as such, in spite of their efforts. Moreover, the chapter asserts that it is imperative to account for empirical

realities that transpire on the conjunctural terrain wherein the forces of opposition organise and contest existing forms of power.

Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the initial chapters and outlines the research methodology. It introduces t the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and their publication *Al-Da'wa* as a case study and seeks to justify how a Gramscian analysis can contribute to our understanding of Political Islam.

Chapter 3 sets out to establish a suitable theoretical framework for the remainder of the thesis. The concepts of Antonio Gramsci are covered at great detail in order to accomplish the abovementioned objective. It is argued that the non-rigid and non-dogmatic rhythm of thought that Gramsci employs can aid us developing a nuanced understanding of Political Islam. By engaging in a historical dialectic materialism approach to Political Islam we are better equipped to gauge how Political Islam is dialectically shaped in relation to the State rather than by it.

Chapter 4 delves into a dialectical enquiry into the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the State in Egypt in order to magnify the complex and contradictory nature of the conjunctural terrain and how developments that take place within it result in organic changes. The ideological and political leadership of the Brotherhood is extensively through historical context and its dialectical relationship with hegemonic forces.

Chapter 5 critically introduces *Al-Da'wa* magazine and explores the developments that contributed to noticeable change in the Brotherhood's ideological and political leadership. It is argued that the intellectual framework that guided the organisation in its origins no longer exists in spite of the historical continuity that the periodical seeks to advance as witnessed in its shift from Sufi inspired social activism to salafi driven demands for sharia. This development is explored through various articles in the magazine and it is argued that *Al-Da'wa* is a reconstructed form of its original strategy of spreading the call.

Chapter I: A Clash of Discourses?

1.1. Introduction

The discourse on Political Islam offers a vast range of seminal insights as to how we ought to gauge the constantly evolving phenomenon. The colossal scope, continued topicality and socio-political impact of the phenomenon however have meant that analyses on Political Islam extend well beyond wholly academic pursuits. The discourse is entangled within a wider debate that often obfuscates existing efforts aimed at facilitating a deeper conceptual understanding of how and why the complex phenomenon continues to persist. In fact, the palaver generated by particular elements within the popular debate has resulted in a tendency that has fragmented the literature and even led it askew due to the insistence of methodologically assigning singularity and determinant value to variables such as culture, colonialism, modernity and much else in between. The concern is not so much with the divisiveness that has arisen out of this approach but more so with the intransigent value attributed to the aforementioned themes which ultimately steer our understanding away from the intricately intertwined causes that truly enable Political Islam to persist and proliferate.

The analytical challenge thus is invariably to devise an approach that can mitigate the rift created by the debate, bridge the deepening divide within the literature and produce a nuanced perspective that can assist in unravelling the key facets the drive and define Political Islam. This chapter is therefore designed to present the prevalent and recurring themes that contiguously serve to shape both the debate and discourse on Political Islam. The literature assessed in this chapter is comprehensively divided into three main areas of analysis, all of which have a profound influence on how we understand and frame Political Islam. The first area of focus addresses the predominantly realist-based assessments that view Political Islam through a cultural lens and postulate an inevitable clash of civilisations. The argument made is that cultural based interpretations of Political Islam, namely the clash thesis, ought to be categorised as falling within the wider debate as opposed to the discourse on Political Islam. That said, the continued prevalence and

popularity of the clash thesis requires that we gauge its merits in order to weigh both the validity of cultural based interpretations and of its overall place within the discourse. The resonance of the clash thesis, in spite of the plethora of existing commentaries on the issue, necessitates that we revisit the merits of the thesis in relation to the competing literature so as to establish a broader view of how our understanding of Political Islam is framed.

The subsequent area of analysis is to then contrast the clash thesis with the modernist approach, which moves away from cultural based arguments by attributing greater value to socioeconomic and political realities derived from the processes of capitalism and globalisation. It is pertinent to note here that the distinctions ascribed and positions assigned to the commentators covered in this chapter are not meant to be rigid but simply serve to provide an overview of the thematic arguments that stem out of the cultural confrontationist and modernist schools of thought.[2] As a whole, the chapter commences with a relatively ephemeral outline of the core premises that comprise the highly debated clash of civilisations thesis. Upon having done so, the focus shits to a critical assessment of the culturally driven merits of the clash thesis and how its proponents continue to advocate and espouse a culture-centric understanding of Political Islam. The chapter then proceeds to make the case that the clash thesis has a polarising impact and ultimately exacerbates our understanding of Political Islam. The merits of the clash thesis, it is argued, ought to be understood alongside a lens that emphasises the role of ideological cultivation, the dynamic nature of power and the central role of conjunctural processes that transpire at the grassroots level. In the absence of this more nuanced framework, the clash thesis falls short in capturing the complexities of Political Islam and renders an abstract categorisation of civilisations that overlooks the importance of power relations within the social milieu that is civil society.[3] This outlook fosters cultural inertia and

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[2] The terms 'modernist' and 'confrontationist' are loosely employed in order to provide a cursor to help us gauge the vast scope of the debate.

[3] The use of the term civil society denotes a liberal definition marked by the separation of the state from the autonomous private sphere that encompasses associations such as the media, church, clubs, etc. This liberal definition shall be the point of contestation of forthcoming chapters.

encourages the continuance of pseudo-factual analyses, sensationalist terminology and the sweeping oversimplification of Political Islam.

The middle half of the chapter progresses to assess the merits and pitfalls associated with the overarching premise that Political Islam constitutes a social construct of modernity shaped by capitalism and globalisation. Comparatively speaking, the works of a number of key theorists loosely labelled as 'modernist' are presented and analysed as falling within the discourse on Political Islam. It is argued that the emphasis placed on modernity and capitalism by these theorists provides for a sturdier foundation and therefore a more reliable analysis of Political Islam. However, the pre-eminence given to capitalism and globalisation at times results in the conflation or subordination of crucial elements that contribute to Political Islam such as the role of ideology, civil society and power dynamics that unfold on a conjunctural terrain. An approach rooted wholly in an economic or modernist understanding can thus distort and devalue the ideational underpinnings that have a seminal influence on Political Islam.

Hence, the remainder of the chapter then moves on to consider the ideological underpinnings that influence and in certain cases guide the actions and efforts of Political Islamists in their attempts to attain authoritative status for Islam in political life. The explicit objective is to explore the role of ideology and the nuanced ways in which it both shapes and is simultaneously shaped by the social processes that transpire within the sphere of civil society. In essence, the section builds upon the modernist perspective by elucidating a firmer understanding of the central role of ideology in relation to Political Islam. The aim as such is to coalesce modernist themes with a theoretical exploration of ideology so as to buttress modernist themes vis-a-vis a theoretical exploration of ideology. That is to indicate that while the modernist perspective provides essential insight into the international conditions that mimetically condition Political Islam, it tends to fall short in proportionately emphasising the role of ideology. An approach that revolves exclusively around measuring global and economic factors, while necessary, risks understating the importance of geo-temporal realities and the overall significance of the conjunctural terrain on which ideology and ideational activities of Islamists tangibly

take shape. An investigation into the ideological programmes and activities of Islamists thus enables us to strengthen the modernist approach by providing us with a theoretical avenue to delve into the formative ways in which Islamists contest power, deny it to others and have it denied to them by hegemonic forces. It equally enables us to develop a clearer understanding as to how 'new meanings' emerge, are cultivated and articulated in a concerted attempt to rearrange the existing social order.

The inexorable and organic link between power and the cultivation of ideology can help us to contextualise the role of symbolic themes such as the caliphate, *umma* and sharia and how Islamists utilise them in an effort to articulate a 'legitimised' Islamic worldview. While Islamists have invoked all of the abovementioned themes in a concerted effort to combat deteriorating political unity through religious solidarity[4] their strategy has gradually shifted towards honing in on sharia as a key ideational principle. An enquiry into the symbolic themes as they relate to power dynamics can therefore provide us with critical insight into how the relatively fluid articulation of an Islamist worldview has during different periods of time been supported through the symbolisation of the caliphate, *umma* and sharia. The ahistorical projection of these themes within the ideational activities of Islamists can further bring to the forefront a number of important features prevalent within the ideation of Islamists. Namely, it highlights how the cultivation and articulation of an Islamic worldview is allegedly harnessed and legitimised by the symbolic value attached to themes. It is ultimately argued that the centrality of the caliphate and *umma* as fortifying themes in Islamist ideology have over time given way to sharia as the articulating principle.

In considering interscalar developments we shall see that the signification of Islam as an ideology is not exclusively rooted in the dissolution of the caliphate and the waning of 'western' hegemony as argued by the likes of Bobby S. Sayyid. The attempt to frame Islam as a so-called 'master signifier' is rooted in the notion that the caliphate and umma operate as Lacanian 'quilting points' that reinforce Islam as a 'master signifier' and serve

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[4] Watt, Montgomery W. *Islam and the Integration of Society*. London: Routledge, 1961. Pg. 82-85. Print.

to distinguish it as an alternative model of international relations.[5] Sayyid argues that Islam, the religion, is retroactively utilised in order to contest the existing global hegemonic system in place and to deny competing ideologies from making further progress in Muslim societies. Although he makes a number of cogent points and his overall insights are undeniably seminal in helping elucidate the role of ideology and ideational efforts in understanding Political Islam, the case is made that an understanding of ideology and ideational efforts as it pertains to Political Islam must incorporate the tangible role of historical and social conditions which unequivocally influence the ideological programmes of Political Islamists.

In order to develop this argument the broad variations in ideational activity and how they are intimately linked to the superstructure are explored by an in-depth enquiry into the manner in which social processes and power dynamics transpire alongside the dominant ideology of the hegemonic bloc. The interaction between these elements and the immediacy of their respective and combined effects works to reduce the symbolic value of the caliphate and *umma* so as to subordinate, if not altogether, negate their relevance. The dynamics of power alongside the embedded social presence of the hegemonic bloc's ideology result in a paradoxical shift insofar as that Islamist ideational activity comes to facilitate a framework constitutive of subaltern nationalism. The conjunctural terrain hence represents the sphere of activity in which the search for legitimacy, whether by subordinated forces or the hegemon, is intertwined to the intricate ideational quest aimed at cultivating consent. As a result, it is ultimately argued that in order to understand the articulation of Islam as an ideology it is necessary to analyse the complex terrain wherein the forces of opposition organise and interactions manifest.

After critically exploring the respective literature the chapter concludes by introducing the paradoxical case of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The respective merits and pitfalls of each school of thought are juxtaposed with the introduction of a case study that can help us to highlight the need to more meticulously explore the role of civil society,

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[5] The worldview is distinguished from the modern nation-state system derivative of the Western model of international relations.

ideology and power dynamics in relation to Political Islam. To reiterate, and as stated in the introduction, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has been chosen as a case study due to the history, popularity and strength of the group. In part, these attributes provide us with a platform to develop the argument that a re-conceptualisation of how we understand Political Islam is needed. In order to arrive at such a juncture, it would be appropriate at this point to shift our discussion to the clash thesis.

1.2. Revisiting the 'Clash of Civilisations' Thesis

The clash thesis constitutes a seminal and recurring theme that is frequently invoked when analysing Political Islam. However, a critical assessment of the thesis suggests that it masquerades as part of the discourse on Political Islam – which is otherwise a wholly academic pursuit. To put it differently, the clash thesis consists of a combination of popular, political and policy driven agendas that reflect the broader and less nuanced debate on Political Islam rather than the true discourse. In spite of this, its resilience and resonance in shaping perceptions about Political Islam are an imperative indication that it is germane to critically revisit the merits of the culturally driven thesis. As such, it is argued that the overarching arguments put forth by the thesis and its various proponents ought to be understood as the propagation of a particular set of common sense conceptions that draw upon partial truths and contradictions so as to ultimately form an incoherent whole.[6] In turn, the conceptions and views to emerge become imposed, passively absorbed and uncritically accepted.[7]

The absorption and uncritical acceptance of what are otherwise conceptions predominantly driven by political and policy agendas lend credence to the notion that the thesis uncritically combines aspects of the truth alongside elements of misrepresentation. These conceptions, propagated by a particular stratum of society, are framed as being unquestionably natural, matter-of-fact and unchanging. The dissemination of these views as representing common sense along with their uncritical acceptance is narrow and

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[6] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from Cultural Writings.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985. Pg. 291.
[7] Ibid., 238-241.

impoverished. It ultimately impedes us from arriving at a more robust understanding of Political Islam.[8] Thus, by engaging in a historical and social criticism of the clash thesis we stand to carve out the importance of historical events and processes that can recover a more nuanced understanding of the social phenomenon that is Political Islam whilst simultaneously deconstructing how the clash thesis articulates and cultivates its worldview. This is particularly important as it enables us to bring to the surface the processes by which competing worldviews are cultivated, disseminated and accepted as truth. A critique of the clash argument equally aids us in advancing the ethical responsibilities involved in the occidental treatment of formulating conceptions pertaining to subaltern experiences. That is to say that the manner in which we formulate our understanding of Political Islam or any other social phenomenon for that matter is profoundly impacted by the common sense conceptions that are propagated about them. Hence, deconstructing the clash thesis serves an important role in unravelling the views disseminated and accepted regarding Political Islam – many of which tend to be shaped from isolated incidents that cannot adequately be quantified without obfuscating our understanding.

The following subsection therefore focuses on the above elements by first considering the pertinence of the clash thesis as advanced by its two chief architects, Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington. The culture-based claims that comprise the core assertions of Lewis and Huntington are presented and critically assessed. These assertions postulate the fixity of culture, the abstractness of civilisations and further claim that the presence of fatalism within Islamic doctrine is the inherent cause that exacerbates cultural divisions between Islamic civilisation and the West. Upon having explored these principal claims the latter half of this subsection shall present several prominent criticisms that have been levied against the clash thesis.

The criticisms presented further serve as a stepping-stone to advancing the claim that the clash thesis espouses a restricted understanding of Political Islam by overstating the importance of culture. Here, it is argued that Lewis and Huntington misappropriate

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[8] Ibid., 291-294.

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Islamic fatalism and rashly abstract the categories of 'Islam' and the 'West.' Not only is the abstraction of so-called civilisations questionable at the international level, it also erases the seminal importance of local experiences and reality that contribute to unrest. In this regard, Lewis and Huntington fundamentally obfuscate the dynamics that constitute the organic as well as the conjunctural. Hence, the premise of what constitutes a civilisation in the clash thesis is neither constructive in helping us unravel the complexities of the international sphere nor the localised internal dynamics that comprise social relations across civil society and within the structures of Political Islamist organisations. Ultimately, the argument to be extracted from this subsection is that culturally driven assessments that promote an understanding rooted in inertia are bound to overlook the pivotal influence that social processes and power dynamics have on the internal composition of Islamist organisations, their efforts to cultivate consciousness and equally the reciprocity involved in the ideological and political methods they put forth in relation to modernity. Turning to the works of Bernard Lewis, we stand to further develop the abovementioned points.

1.2.1. Lewis & The Roots of Muslim Rage

The phrase 'clash of civilisations' is widely attributed to Harvard professor Samuel Huntington's seminal and aptly named 1996 book *The Clash of Civilisations and the remaking of World Order.* The re-circulation of the phrase into popular discourse however owes to Islam historian and orientalist Bernard Lewis who used the term in his 1990 essay labelled 'The Roots of Muslim Rage.'[9] The article in question along with Lewis' relevant works[10] on Islam helped to produce a number of key themes that to this day remain prevalent within the contemporary debate on Islam. The gist of Lewis' argument rests in the notion that the main antagonisms for Islamists are secularism and

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[9] Neither was the term coined by Lewis. In fact, it had been in circulation for several decades and derived from the expression a 'clash of cultures.' As it pertains to Islam, the term was used as early as 1926 by Basil Mathews work titled Young Islam: A Study in the Clash of Civilizations.

[10] Most notably: *Islam and the West* and *What Went Wrong? The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East.*

modernism.[11] While the former is relatively self-explanatory in relation to the religious predisposition of Islamists, the latter, according to Lewis, has promoted a 'war' aimed at combatting the wholesale social change witnessed around the Islamic world over the course of the last century.

For Lewis, modernity has irrefutably "transformed the political, economic, social and even cultural structures of Muslim countries."[12] These drastic changes have been compounded by the relative failures of the Middle East to keep pace with the modernisation of the West and the Islamist inclination to equate local systems of governance as being western – rather than a hybrid form that fails to live up to western originals.[13] Thus, while Muslims may have initially held sentiments of 'admiration and emulation' the failure to keep pace with the West has led to their humiliation. Namely, it has fostered "a growing awareness, among the heirs of an old, proud and long dominant civilisation, of having been overtaken, overborne and overwhelmed by those whom they regarded as their inferiors."[14] In turn, Lewis postulates that the Islamist war against modernism provides a structured outlet for Muslim masses to harness their anger and resentment towards western "forces that have devalued their traditional values and loyalties and, in the final analysis, robbed them of their beliefs, their aspirations, their dignity, and to an increasing extent even their livelihood."[15]

These assertions are furthered by the claim that the cultural rift between Islam and the West is not something that can be rectified nor mitigated through policy or government mandated action. Here, Lewis acknowledges that not all Muslims are opposed to the West, their political interventions in the region or even the colonial presence. The argument made is that such activity has long ceased and the Muslims have largely failed to compete with the West since being given the reigns to govern. Yet, instead of hold

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[11] Lewis, Bernard. *The Roots of Muslim Rage.* The Atlantic Monthly 266(3). 1990. Pg. 56. Print.
[12] Ibid.,
[13] Ibid.,
[14] Ibid., 47
[15] Ibid.,

their own governments and people accountable they have remained steadfast in placing the blame on the West.[16] Lewis argues that this is due to the primordial processes that all societies engage in in order to differentiate themselves from outsiders.[17] The ostensible belief that primordial identities are fixed and absolute leads Lewis to disregard the long-term effects of policy measures and western interference in the affairs of 'Islamic lands' and instead trivialise a vast period of history that had wide-ranging implications as something simply accidental and benign.

Lewis instead maintains that the clash between the two civilisations stems from a deeply rooted "historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present and worldwide expansion of both."[18] In his own words, he sums up contemporary relations between the two rival civilisations through a so-called 'historically' derived cultural perspective:

> The Muslim has suffered successive stages of defeat. The first was his loss of domination in the world, to the advancing power of Russia and the West. The second was the undermining of his authority in his own culture, through an invasion of foreign ideas, laws, ways of life and sometimes even foreign rulers or settlers, not to mention the enfranchisement of native non-Muslim elements. The third -- the last straw -- was the challenge to his mastery in his own house, from emancipated women and rebellious children. It was too much to endure, and the outbreak of rage against these alien, infidel, and incompressible forces that had subverted his dominance, disrupted his society, and finally violated the sanctuary of his home was inevitable. It was also natural that this rage should be directed primarily against the millennial enemy and should draw its strength from ancient beliefs and loyalties.[19]

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[16] Ibid., 48.

[17] Notably absent from Lewis' postulation that primordial processes result in a Benedict Anderson-esque 'us' vs. 'them' output is any tangible attempt to provide a deeper reconnaissance into the complex processes through which identity is formulated.

[18] Ibid.,

[19] Ibid., 49.

C.M. Naim questions Lewis' reasoning in the abovementioned passage by inverting Lewis' logic to produce the following analogy:

> The American has suffered successive stages of defeat. The first was his loss of domination in the world to the advancing economic power of Japan and Germany. The second was the undermining of his authority in his own country, through the invasion of foreign ideas and ways of life brought in by waves of non-European immigrants, and the enfranchisement of the vast African-American and Mexican-American population within the country. The third - the last straw - was the challenge to his mastery in his own house, from emancipated women and rebellious children. It was too much to endure. It was natural that this rage should be directed primarily against the millennial enemy and should draw its strength from ancient beliefs and loyalties.[20]

Instead of considering such scenarios and possibilities, Lewis is adamant in maintaining that it is the superiority of Western culture and the humiliation of Islam that has resulted in the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism. It is why he postulates that fundamentalists retain their cultural preference for tunics and peaked caps whilst strategically cherry-picking superior western inventions such as artillery and justifying it as a military necessity.[21] These choices are said to be solidified by the revival of ancient prejudices and are validated by the fatalistic doctrines of Islam that assure it supremacy.[22] The age-old cultural rivalry is thus purported to find its support in the tenets of Islam, which foster the roots of Muslim rage and lead fundamentalists to engage in a clash of civilisations. It is this latter premise that Samuel Huntington advances in his seminal work, *The Clash of Civilisations and the remaking of World Order* when he puts forth the claim that it is not simply Islamists but rather it is Islam itself that serves as the main source of a clash between civilisations.

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[20] Naim, C.M. *The Outrage of Bernard Lewis*. Social Text (30) 1992. 114. Print.
[21] Ibid.,
[22] Ibid.,

1.2.2. Huntington's Clash Thesis

Samuel Huntington, in a measured response to Fukashima's The End of History, builds upon the premises put forth by Lewis. At the crux of his analysis rests the hypothesis that the 'fundamental source of conflict' in the post-cold war era shall unfold neither along ideological or economic lines but rather along cultural lines.[23] This culture-oriented claim, though not entirely original in itself,[24] is rooted in the premise that western attempts aimed at homogenising culture constitute a sort of 'parochial conceit' that triggers antagonisms and in turn accelerates conflict between civilisations.[25] For Huntington, civilisations are characterised through 'durable' and 'resilient' identification markers that tend to predominantly be primordial: ethnicity, kinship, religion, historic culture, geographic allegiances, et cetera.[26] Through the use of these indicators, Huntington carves out nine civilisations[27] in the form of politically conscious units, of which, the Islamic denotes the civilisation with the highest probability for cross-cultural conflict.[28] Just as with Lewis' hypothesis, the non-secular nature of Islamic civilisation is attributed as a key factor in the deepening divide between Islam, the West and the 'rest.' More precisely, Islamic culture is posited as conflicting with Western civilisation for a variety of reasons that range from the Islamist denunciation of morally degenerate

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[23] Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. Print.

[24] Historian Arnold Toynbee and Carroll Quigley both discussed 'clash' between civilisations. In fact, Huntington's definition of civilisation stems from the ideas and writings of Toynbee. See: Carroll Quigley: The Evolution of Civilizations, Liberty Fund: Indianapolis, 1979. And Toynbee, Arnold. A Study of History Volume 12. Oxford UP: London, 1961.

[25] Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. Pg. 55 Print.

[26] It is interesting to note that Huntington excludes Greece from Western civilization in spite of its historic contribution to western culture on the grounds of orthodoxy.

[27] The civilisations are as follows: The civilisations according to Huntington are: Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist and Japanese. See figures 1 and 2 in Appendix.

[28] Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. Pg. 22. Print.

western individualism,[29] to the notion that Islam is a religion of the sword that glorifies military virtues and even to the claim that imperialistic oppression by the West, dating back to the crusades, still resonates in the minds of present-day Muslims.[30] At the core of such reasoning is the belief that conflict between these two civilisations is predominantly the result of Islam itself and dates back to fourteen hundred years of history.[31] Islam is regarded as an absolutist, atavistic and fatalist religion whose main tenets reinforce authoritarian structures, endorse militaristic views and promulgate visions of pre-destination.[32] For instance, let us consider the following Huntington quotes:

1. The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilisation whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power.[33]

2. Becoming a modern society is about industrialisation, urbanisation and rising levels of literacy, education, and wealth. The qualities that make a society Western, in contrast, are special: the classical legacy, Christianity, the separation of church and state, the rule of law, civil society.[34]

The abovementioned quotes are pivotal to understanding why Huntington declares Islamic civilisation as the most potent source of cross-cultural conflict. The key inferences to be drawn from the first quote are that absolutism and fatalism are inherent components of Islam. Thus, when Huntington postulates that Islam's borders and innards are bloody[35] it is precisely because theological absolutism is alleged to reinforce Muslim

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[29] Akbar Ahmed finds that individualism and postmodernism coincide to the extent that cynicism and irony challenge the morality, faith and piety of the Islamic worldview. See: Ahmed, Akbar. *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity.* London: Routledge, 1994.
[30] Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. 263-5. Print.
[31] Ibid., Pg. 209.
[32] Ibid., 213.
[33] Ibid., 217-218.
[34] Ibid.,
[35] Ibid.,

sentiments of cultural superiority[36] while fatalism simultaneously fortifies the cultural belief that the re-establishment of Islamic global domination is inevitable. In terms of the latter quote, the rule of God is said to clash with the rule of law and fatalism is posited to hinder individualism and free will; both of which are required to quicken the pace of becoming a modern society that features industry, literacy, education and so forth. Instead, the presence of fatalism serves to promote a collective, at times, atavistic mind-set resigned to the supposed inevitability of pre-destination. Hence, while Islamists may partake, and ultimately be the product of modernity[37] the tenets of Islam complicate (but do not necessarily eliminate) efforts aimed at the sustained modernisation of Muslim society due to the lack of emphasis placed on individualism, self-empowerment and progressive change. While Lewis finds that the overriding theocratic nature of Islam directly clashes with the advent of modernity,[38] the distinctions Huntington makes between modernism and westernism in the latter quote suggest that being Islamic does not automatically preclude becoming modern, though it certainly complicates it. Aspiring to become western however is ruled out as constituting a distinct and unattainable feat. Moreover, it is also regarded as an undesired feat for Muslims with Huntington pointing out that "the 'westoxification' of their culture has reinvigorated the resurgence of Islam as a source of identity, meaning, stability, legitimacy, power and hope epitomised in the slogan "Islam is the solution. Modernity is accepted, westernism rejected and a recommitment to Islam as the guide to life in the modern world espoused."[39]

According to Huntington the acceptance of modernism is evident from the growing emphasis Islamists have placed on increasing their activity across social organisations and institutions. One such example is the heightened efforts to establish Islamic schools

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[36] Islam as the complete and perfected version of monotheism to which Christians and Jews belong (as people of the book). The charge against western society is that it has strayed from religion by turning to the false Gods of materialism.

[37]Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. Pg. 112. Print.

[38] Nafissi, Mohammad. "Before and Beyond the Clash of Civilizations." *International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World* 19 (2007): pg.1. Print.

[39] Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. Pg. 109-10. Print.

and to exert stronger Islamic influence in state administered schools. Equally, Islamists have acted more proactively in seizing available societal openings by providing social services and welfare in a manner that has 'paralleled, surpassed, and often supplanted' services provided by secular civil society in Islamic countries.[40] An increased social presence in sectors where the state has stalled or proved inadequate in meeting societal needs has contributed considerably in swaying Muslims towards solidifying their belief in Islamic culture over that of the west. Huntington states that this has led to a Muslim rejection of western civilisation which in turn leads him to controversially claim that the West is engaged in a quasi-war not simply with Islamists "but with Muslims of all political and religious colorations."[41]

The foregone certainty with which Huntington alleges a clash of civilisations results in his proposal that the most appropriate method for mitigating cultural conflict is through the establishment of "an international order based on civilisations."[42] Unfortunately, the proposed solution of working towards building a harmonious multi-civilisational world vis-à-vis the international sphere drastically undervalues the importance of the domestic milieu. The pursuit of amity between civilisations at the international level operates under the flawed premise that the respective cultures of each of Huntington's civilisations are either homogeneous or striving towards such a goal. The abstraction of civilisations and the simplification of culture as such obscures the political, economic and social complexities that consistently shape and re-shape culture. It is thus without surprise that the clash thesis has fallen subject to considerable criticisms.

1.2.3. Chief Criticisms of the Clash Thesis

Lewis and Huntington's clash theses have drawn a wide range of criticisms, all of which cannot be addressed here. As a result, those criticisms, which address the core components of the clash of cultures hypothesis, shall briefly be explored. The main criticisms, which overlap, pertain to the abstraction of civilisations, the oversimplification

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[40] Ibid., 112.
[41] Ibid., 209.
[42] Ibid., 321.

of the local or domestic sphere insofar as its contribution to the fluidity of cultural and social processes, ahistoricism and the emphasis placed on the religious tenets of Islam as inherently evoking conflict with the West.

The abstraction of multifaceted civilisations into unitary entities and the subsequent application of the 'west versus the rest' concept has been criticised for its 'Manichean simplicity.'[43] Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori describe the clash thesis as essentialist insofar as that it eschews the critical importance of historical variances within 'civilisations' and criticise it for sidestepping the crucial role that internal dynamics have on the formulation of identity.[44]Likewise, historian Felipe Fernandez-Armesto points out that that by treating civilisations as political units Huntington devalues the fact that internal tension and hatred within societies spill beyond political boundaries.[45] The reality is that societies engage in diverse and often contentious internal debate as to determining values and who ought to have the authority to articulate and implement them. As a consequence "civilisations, like cultures, are contested, temporal and emergent" and therefore ought to be treated in relation to "specific contexts, times and localities."[46] To state it differently, the fault lines of civilizational conflict do not primarily occur at the frontlines but rather at the more intimate level of civilizational subunits where conflict is more frequently present. The categorisation of civilisations proves far too broad a concept given that it minimises the local milieu and conjunctural terrain where concrete social developments transpire, foster division and drive action.

The claim that Islam marks the chief source of conflict for the West has also been criticised as problematic as it facilitates austere cultural perspectives that overlook, misinterpret, or in certain insistences, altogether reinvent history. For instance, Edward Said goes as far as to deem Lewis and Huntington's theories as reckless for the

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[43] Eickelman, Dale F. and James Piscatori. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2004. Pg. 162. Print.
[44] Ibid.,
[45] Fernandez-Armesto, Felipe. *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order book review*. International Affairs 73(3), 1997. Pg.547-8. Print.
[46] Eickelman, Dale F. and James Piscatori. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2004. Pg. 163. Print.

"personification of enormous entities labelled 'the West' and 'Islam.'"[47] In fact, the following quote by Said cogently captures the abstractness criticism levied against the clash thesis:

> At some level, for instance, primitive passions and sophisticated know-how converge in ways that give the lie to a fortified boundary not only between "West" and "Islam" but also between past and present, us and them, to say nothing of the very concepts of identity and nationality about which there is unending disagreement and debate. A unilateral decision made to draw lines in the sand, to undertake crusades, to oppose their evil with our good, to extirpate terrorism and, in Paul Wolfowitz's nihilistic vocabulary, to end nations entirely, doesn't make the supposed entities any easier to see; rather, it speaks to how much simpler it is to make bellicose statements for the purpose of mobilizing collective passions than to reflect, examine, sort out what it is we are dealing with in reality, the interconnectedness of innumerable lives, "ours" as well as "theirs."[48]

Amartya Sen echoes Said's above criticism by emphasising that the chief pitfall to emerge from the presumption that humanity can be reduced down to clearly discernable civilisations is the ensuing 'loss of understanding' of relations that encompass longstanding "cross-border interactions and involvement…spanning shared human interests" from arts and literature to science, politics, and so forth. Thus, while Huntington's quest to develop a paradigm that pursues global peace is admirable it nevertheless fails due to its "fundamentally illusory understanding of the world of human beings."[49] The alliances between civilisations that Huntington envisions are in essence the misinterpreted interests of powerful economic states rather than the interests of any

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[47] Said, Edward. *The Clash of Ignorance.* October 4 2001. http://www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance/
[48] Ibid.,
[49] Sen, Amartya quoted in Bottoci, Chiara and Benoit Challand. *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations*. New York: Routledge, 2012. Pg. 101. Print.

particular cultures. The clash of civilisations ought therefore to be understood as a clash of interests as opposed to one of cultures or civilisations.[50]

There still remains the question of assessing Huntington's claim that the tenets of Islam directly prescribe a recipe for the clash between civilisations. This assertion is predicated on the belief that Islam is an inherently fatalistic and absolutist religion that promotes predestination by championing itself as the perfected version of monotheism. The celestial sphere is deemed to be inseparable from the temporal, which in turn, suggests that *all* Muslims are at odds with western civilisation and its individualistic moral compass.[51] The above line of reasoning has been the subject of criticism for its traditional, if not altogether outmoded, interpretation of fate in Islam.

Islam scholar Vincent Cornell adeptly points out that Muslims do not interpret the determining role of God as denoting fatalism but rather as common sense. The belief is that certain affairs cannot be dictated given the fallible limitations of human agency. To accept this belief is regarded as a form of liberation insofar as that it absolves believers from having to "strive in vain" to change that which cannot be changed and enables them to concentrate their efforts towards engaging constructively towards that which can be changed.[52] The acceptance of this belief ought not to be regarded as irrational[53] but rather as a conscious and rational choice whereby the limits of human will deliberately give way to the absolute will of God.[54] The emphasis then must be placed on the involvement of human agency and the ways in which it is cultivated and manipulated in determining

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[50] Gerges, Fawaz. America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests? New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pg. 99. Print.

[51] Kader, Zerougui Abdel. "The Clash of Civilisations and the remaking of world order: book review. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 20(1) (1998). Pg. 89-92. Print.

[52] Cornell, Vincent J. "Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: The Relationship Between Faith and Practice in Islam." *The Oxford History of Islam.* Ed. John L. Esposito. Pg. 71. Oxford, Oxford UP, 1999. Print.

[53] This understanding can help to make sense of Jeanne Kirkpatrick's claim that the Arab world constitutes the only part of the world where the populace does not make rational decisions but rather fundamentalist ones. See: Diamond, Larry Jay. *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle To Build Free Societies Throughout The World*. New York: Time Books, 2008. Pg. 19. Print.

[54] Ibid., 67.

which matters fall within the control of the human will. That is not to suggest that fatalism is non-existent in Islam or to deny that religious doctrine does not encourage fatalism in particular contexts. Instead, it is to suggest that, as Gabriel Acevedo does, that in order to truly grasp the role of fatalism in Islam it is essential that we broaden the variables involved in understanding fatalism. It is egregious to assume that fatalism can be aptly understood through a dichotomy between Islam and the West and that it does not require that we factor in the seminal role of "complex historical, cultural, economic and socio-political processes."[55] It is the fluidity of these sorts of processes that contributes to the shaping and re-shaping of the human will in relation to God's will.[56]

Lastly, an overlapping yet equally prominent criticism of the clash thesis is that it engages in ahistoricism by hypostatising Islam as an impediment to the West, to modernisation and to the consolidation of democracy. Although Huntington acknowledges the lack of a central authority in his 'Islamic civilisation' he nevertheless latently treats Islam, the religion, as possessing a brain – a feat that would seem to require a distinguishable ruling hierarchy.[57] The stress the clash thesis places on broad theocratic overtures and the sovereignty of God fails to take into consideration the internal dynamics of rule by human order in Islam whereby traditionalist scholars established sharia on the basis of fabricated or at the very least unverifiable words and deeds (*sunna*).[58] The invention of sharia by scholars primarily served to extend the "Quran's limited and ambiguous legal content and (b) to trump all living claimants to Islam with the legacy of the dead prophet and (c) to guarantee their own role as guardians of what became a well-guarded but mummified Islam."[59] The ruling central authority, or caliphs, meanwhile only played a nominal role in matters of faith and hence mandated the exclusion of sharia from the political sphere as well as from constitutional and

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[55] Acevedo, Gabriel A. "Islamic Fatalism and the Clash of Civilizations: An Appraisal of a Contentious and Dubious Theory.*" Social Forces 86(4),* 2008. Pg. 1711-1741.
[56] Esposito, John L. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.* Ed. 2003, 254.
[57] Bottici, Chiara and Benoit Challand. *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations.* Abingdon: Routledge Advances in Middle East and Islamic Studies, 2012. Pg. 63. Print.
[58] Nafissi, Mohammad. "Before and Beyond the Clash of Civilizations." *International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World* 19 (2007): pg.1. Print
[59] Ibid.,

administrative law.[60] That is to say that the 'rule of God' and sharia both lack historical validity given that the Caliphate operated as an absolute monarchy which sought to minimise the political role of religion by relegating it to the private sphere. The principal functions of religion were to serve as a moral code that could reinforce social solidarity, provide stability and justify the actions of the monarch.

1.2.4 The Clash Thesis in Perspective

The culture-centric hypotheses put forth by Lewis and Huntington remain prominent and continue to have a profound effect towards our understanding of Political Islam in spite of their various shortcomings. The clash approach remains influential primarily due to the on-going contention over Political Islam within the geopolitical landscape. A number of contemporary proponents of the hypothesis agree with Lewis that Islamists utilise fatalistic tenets in order to deliberately exacerbate conflict between Islam and the West. Others stick more stringently to Huntington's claim that the fault lines of international conflict stem from the inherent irreconcilability between the West and Islam. While Huntington acknowledges that it would be ill advised to force non-western civilisations to conform to western culture, he does so under the notion that each individual civilisation is firmly entrenched within its own deep-seeded cultural traditions and primordial allegiances. By doing so, Huntington cavalierly carves out vast entities in the form of civilisations whilst neglecting the sheer complexities that go into identity formation, the centrality of social subunits and the seminal role of socioeconomic and political conditions at a more grassroots level. Conflict within society is thus erroneously masked and civilisations are purported to be more or less uniform.

The myopic lens that guides the clash of cultures approach ultimately confounds our understanding of Islam, Muslim communities and of Political Islam by derailing the discourse away from the complex dynamics that shape the very terrain, on which conflict is bred, ideology is moulded and power is contested. Instead, we get a plethora of overarching generalisations and the arbitrary creation of civilisations via an inaccurate

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[60] Hourani, Albert. *A History of Arab Peoples*. London: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1991. Pg. 161. Print.

historical approach that depicts a diverse religion and equally diverse subset of communities as homogenous. Hence, although the clash thesis concedes the modernist foundations of Islamists it by and large fails to excavate the wealth of empirical data available for assessing the reciprocal relationship between modernity and Muslim societies due to its insistence on advancing the claim of civilisational conflict. Islam and Muslims are thus articulated as having a theocratic obsession with becoming the global hegemon. The vast entities created through the 'west versus the rest' paradigm facilitates a Manichean frame of thinking that contemporary proponents of the clash thesis continue to espouse.

The relevance of a cultural approach equally owes to the real-time events and actions undertaken by Islamists. Akin to Lewis and Huntington, many Islamist fundamentalists advocate a similar albeit inverted dichotomy between Islam and the 'idolatrous' West. In this version, arbitrary distinctions are drawn to reinvent history vis-à-vis assigning binding legitimacy to sharia and denouncing existing states as illegitimate and imported forms of governance.[61] Through human agency, sharia is conflated with the rule of God despite the fact that there exists no tangible basis in the Quran or the hadith that designates sharia as the "true Islamic system of governance."[62] In turn, fundamentalists engage in further revisionist history by classifying Christians and Jews as idolaters even though both monotheistic faiths are not traditionally nor historically viewed as idolaters given their status as 'people of the book' in Islam.[63] The use of such rhetoric feeds into the clash of cultures hypothesis as it fabricates history in the attempt to create an enemy

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[61] According to historian Ilya Harik, religious legitimacy in Arab states was originally derived through an imam-chief (Hijaz), or imam and chief state (Saudi Arabia), while other states such as Egypt and Tunisia achieved the legitimation of authority through bureaucratic military oligarchy and yet others were completely secular (Syria). These states (particularly the latter) are therefore often charged with lacking religious legitimacy in addition to failing to provide their populace with adequate socioeconomic rights in accordance to 'God's will' by Islamists. See: Harik, Ilya. "The Origins of the Arab State System." *The Foundations of the Arab State*. Ed. Ghassan Salame. London: Croom Helm, 1987. Pp. 19-46. Print.
[62] Tibi, Bassam. *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. Pg. 156. Print.
[63] Bottici, Chiara and Benoit Challand. *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations.* Abingdon: Routledge Advances in Middle East and Islamic Studies, 2012. Pg. 58-63. Print.

in the form of the idolatrous West. Human agency thus deliberately re-imagines Islam as a designated legal code whilst deceitfully empowering average men and transforming them into quasi-saints with the power to reject the modern nation-state through *fetwas* (religious decrees), to declare citizens as apostates (*takfiri)* and to outright deem governments to be illegitimate through the reinvention of the concept of *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic ignorance).

The premise that identity and culture entail fixed and unchanging concepts feeds into the Manichean frame of reasoning that drives the dichotomy between the West and Islam. Fundamentalists and proponents of the clash thesis both engage in austere ahistoricism in seeking to deepen the divide and fortify a divisive worldview of 'us' versus 'them.' Notably absent from the entire ordeal however is the seminal and fluid role of how social processes, conjunctural moments and dialectical relationships within the sphere of civil society contribute to the ideology and political strategy of Political Islamists. Moreover, as Bottici and Challand point out, not only does the clash thesis fail to distinguish between Political Islamists, fundamentalists and Muslims, it also misreads Islam by overlooking the stark reality that:

> Islam, a faith, is not a blueprint for fixed social action. It might be the drive for orthopraxy, that is, the respect for religious precepts at the heart of the faith of Islam which leads societies to see that even orthopraxy is not a good variable to explain a common model for social action throughout the Muslim worlds, given the variety of social forms to which orthopraxy could give rise.[64]

The promulgation of culturally derived analyses of Political Islam tend to reflect politically driven directives that often fail to take into account the nuanced nature of Political Islam. Analyses of this sort are not representative of the academic discourse on the phenomenon but rather of the wider debate pertaining to geopolitical security. The widespread dissemination of the clash hypothesis attempts to simplify conflict at the

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[64] Ibid., 63.

expense of unravelling the social and ideological complexities that underline Political Islam. The sedimentation of the clash of cultures outlook advances the shallow and misguided, yet immensely popular, notion that Islam and modernity are inevitably at irreconcilable odds. Even when we view the Political Islam through a civilisational prism, we do not get any semblance of insight into subunits or social forces.

The broad ideas behind the clash of civilisations thesis make it increasingly difficult to understand Political Islam, let alone an 'Islamic civilisation.' While broad ideas may drive action in geopolitics, foreign policy and even state interests, they fail to delve into the nuanced specificities that are critical to unravelling Political Islam. The fault lines of conflict are broadened and generalised around cultural inertia whilst the socioeconomic and political economic spheres are conflated and masked of their importance. This approach misrepresents the concreteness of social developments and power dynamics at the domestic level by treating social forces and subaltern classes as homogeneous in their dislike for the West. A clash of interests is thus framed as a clash between cultures.

1.3. In Between the Debate and Discourse

The existing literature on Political Islam oscillates between the political infused debate put forth by proponents of the clash thesis and those who seek to provide a more nuanced and academically grounded analysis of Political Islam. The former approach resonates amongst those who advocate a confrontational stance towards the advances of Political Islam. In turn, the confrontational approach is contested by the modernist school of thought, who implore a reading of the phenomenon which takes into account the multitude of socioeconomic and political factors that impact it. In between these two broad schools of thought lies the legacy of Sayyid Qutb's ideas, which continue to be disseminated by Islamists with the explicit aim of aiding the solidification of an Islamic identity in direct contradistinction the West as the 'other.' The proceeding subsections shall therefore delve into each of these loosely categorised schools of thought with the aim of highlighting the fissures that divide our understanding of Political Islam. To reiterate, these categories and any distinctions, are by no means intended to be rigid. Rather, they serve to provide an overview of the merits and pitfalls of the widespread

themes that actively shape contemporary readings of Political Islam. After having presented the requisite arguments, we can begin to make an argument for what is required to bridge the gap between the approaches so that we may arrive at a more conclusive understanding of Political Islam.

1.3.1. The 'Confrontationist' School of Thought

For the confrontationist school of thought, Political Islam comprises the vast array of monolithic fundamentalists[65] responsible for drawing the fault lines of conflict by purporting a worldview that promotes Islamic universality, their pursuit of unity between state and religion and an unrelenting hatred for western values.[66] It is therefore argued that Islamists must therefore be actively confronted and eradicated. In the event that neither proves attainable, they ought to be co-opted in order to minimise the harmful effects of an otherwise inevitable and irreconcilable clash between Islam and the West. For confrontationists, drawing distinctions and categorising Islamists represents a futile attempt at displaying political correctness. Instead, Islamists ought to be viewed for what they are – a monolithic entity that striving for a unified objective in the form of Islamic global hegemony. As a result, they reject the use of the term Political Islam and deem it unsound, ineffective and as causing unnecessary confusion on the basis that there are no discernable ideological distinctions to be drawn between Islamists.[67]

Many Islamists are steadfast in affirming the abovementioned claim by stating that the political sphere simply constitutes one of many facets inherent to the doctrines of Islam. Consequently, confrontationists argue that the only true distinction that can be drawn

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[65] Fundamentalism denotes a Christian term associated with a literal attachment to the Bible. Nevertheless, as Youssef M. Choueiri points out, there is a fundamentality to Islamic thought. For more see Martin Kramer's *Coming to Terms: Fundamentalists o*r *Islamists?* http://www.meforum.org/541/coming-to-terms-fundamentalists-or-islamists

[66] The most tangible of these claims, and one which can be uniformly applied to Political Islam, is that of secularism. It however comes with little surprise that religious political movements seek a political system that is not secular. See: Choueiri, Youssef M. *Islamic Fundamentalism: The Story of Islamist Movements.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010. Print.

[67] Kramer attributes the shift towards political correctness as a response generated by Edward Said's seminal works *Islam and the West* and *Orientalism*.

between Islamists is the methods utilised towards actualising their otherwise unified pursuit for Islamic universalism. This means that Islamists that denounce violence or to whom violence cannot be traced and even those who dedicate themselves to working within the existing structures of modern governance are simply concealing their true intentions and purposes in a concerted effort to dupe the West with a 'moderate' façade.[68] Yet, as Carrie Wickham cogently notes, such an approach overlooks the very tangible impact that politicised external arenas have on influencing the course of Islamist ideology.[69] Nevertheless, confrontationists maintain that the debate on Islamism must be understood in absolute terms due to the lack of civility and transparency of Islamists. The potential threat of Islamic universalism is met with a grossly simplified Clausewitzian response allegedly generated by Islamic enmity, hatred and primordially driven violence.

Accordingly, Martin Kramer regards the 'moderate axiom' as misguided and dangerous. He argues that it does not explain the failure of so called 'moderate' Islamists in condemning grave attacks of terror nor does it account for their secret engagement in militant operations through the use of proxies. Kramer supports this claim by citing the respective cases of Iran and Sudan. In these instances, Islamists secured political power and proceeded to display a severe lack of moderation. If anything, the actualisation of power by Islamists led them to concoct "even more elaborate rationales for denying it to others."[70] The confrontationist reasoning thus asserts that power must be denied to Islamists on the basis that power does not produce moderation whereas weakness does. The confrontationist school of thought places the emphasis on forcing Islamists into scaling back the core features of their overarching agenda – none more so than the pursuit of Islamic universalism.[71] The denial of power is thus consistent with state-led efforts that seek to weaken the advances of Political Islamists and acquiesce to the demands of

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[68] For more please refer to Martin Kramer's article on the evolution of phrases used to refer to Islamists. http://www.meforum.org/541/coming-to-terms-fundamentalists-or-islamists

[69] Wickham, Carrie. *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. Pg. 78. Print.

[70] Kramer, Martin. "Fundamentalist Islam at Large: The Drive for Power." *Middle East Quarterly* (June 1996). Pg. 43. Print.

[71] Ibid., Pg. 45

the State. The failure to acquiesce is accompanied by the threat of further insularity, state repression and even the very survival of Islamist organisations.

Largely absent from the confrontationist approach is the investigation of how power manifests, the ways in which it is contested and the fluidity with which it is shaped and reshaped within and across civil and political society. In fact, power is implied as being unidirectional and binary in that power dynamics are presumed to unfold at the state level and eventually trickle down upon social forces and the subaltern. Ultimately, the blanketing correlation to be drawn is that the Islamic quest for universalism exists independently of power dynamics and that Islamist ideology is impervious to the modalities of power as well as to being influenced by social and political engagement with non-Islamist social forces. It is in this way that the confrontationist school of thought confines itself to the premise that Islamist ideology is myopically fixated on attaining universalism. Unfortunately, such a claim hastily assumes that Islamists do not have to first cultivate consciousness and garner consent at the most immediate levels of civil society before they can even begin to rationalise any sort of agenda aimed at the pursuit of universalism – societal, globally, or otherwise.

The reduction of Islamist ideology and programmes runs parallel to the clash thesis in that it assumes that Islamists strictly adhere to and are guided by the doctrines of Islam. The fallacy in such an approach is that it treats Islam, the religion, as having its own 'brain' whilst also relegating the social and political spheres across the 'Islamic civilisation' to a status of intransigence. The failure to distinguish Islam from Islamism is further compounded by the decision to overlook the wide range of political, socioeconomic and ideological activities that not only make Islamism a modern social construct but also result in fractures within it. Instead, the politicisation of Islamists is deemed to be a temporary ruse to dupe the West into supporting the Islamist quest for power. As a whole, the cultural and ideological inertia attributed to Islamists hinders a deeper analysis of Political Islam. For instance, Daniel Pipes asserts that Political Islam is comparable to fascism given its dictatorial desire to instil medieval law and global

hegemony - both, which ironically deter it from being successful.[72] The failure is attributed to tenets of Islam leading Muslims towards a path of anomie. If Muslims wish to avoid this path, Pipes argues that they must embrace westernisation and secularism as Islam fails to provide an alternative method that can facilitate modernisation.[73] In other words, adherence to Islam allegedly produces an intransigent and socially impervious culture.[74]

While Pipes does acknowledge the recent moderate shift within Political Islam, he hastily dismisses it as being 'merely tactical and temporary.'[75] The foray into politics by Islamists and their growing support for pluralism and multiparty systems are viewed as a measured attempt to avoid further repression at the hands of the State. The refusal to even consider the merits of a potentially moderate Political Islam are squandered in favour of a culturally inert and state-centric analysis that outright rejects the possibility of political and social processes facilitating change to Islamist ideology and strategy. Instead, confrontationists cite the obfuscation surrounding the Islamist stance on personal rights and freedoms as proof of their lack of moderation. The promotion of democracy is likewise regarded as a ploy in order the buttress Islamist power within a nation-state system that historically has co-opted, repressed or excluded them.

It is not that the aforementioned charges pertaining to democracy and personal rights and freedoms lack validity but rather that the confrontationist dismissal of Islamist on such grounds is derived exclusively through the basis that Islamists are a fatalistic primordial

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[72] Pipes, Daniel. "Islamism with a Human Face?" *Daniel Pipes*. 20 May 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014. <http://www.danielpipes.org/14362/islamism-human-face>.

[73] Pipes, Daniel. *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009. Pg. 197-8. Print. (Pipes, In The Path of God: Islam and Political Power)

[74] This is in line with Jeanne Kirkpatrick's claim that the Arab world constitutes the only part of the world where the populace does not make rational decisions but rather fundamentalist ones. See: Diamond, Larry Jay. *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle To Build Free Societies Throughout The World*. New York: Time Books, 2008. Pg. 19. Print.

[75] Pipes, Daniel. *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009. Pg. 197-8. Print. (Pipes, In The Path of God: Islam and Political Power)

force hell-bent on achieving Islamic universalism at the expense of the 'enemy' West. In fact, the entire methodology of analysing Islam is entangled with a strict application of liberalism. The margins for what democracy, civil society and individual rights ought to entail are thus narrowly restricted to a very narrow and western reading. This can only prove troublesome when applying it to societies where concepts such as patriarchy and the subordination of women are regularised vis-à-vis successive uneven social processes that seek to sediment and reinforce existing power structures. To assert that the political traditions of the 'Arab world' historically find their basis in autocracy and passive obedience[76] without any semblance of an attempt to uncover the ways in which autocratic measures and passive obedience are recurrently cultivated and disseminated proves extremely problematic. That is to say that it is imperative to assess the role that social processes and power dynamics play in the dialectical relationship between Islamists and the State.

Instead, what we get with the confrontationist school of thought is an extension of the clash thesis insofar as that it recycles the same surface level approach that reduces the complexities that go into cultural and Islamist ideology so as to deem it absolutist, monolithic and untenable to moderation. As a result, Islam, Political Islam and Islamic fundamentalists become one in the same. Moreover, Islamism is deemed to be a microcosm of the wider debate represented by the supposed irreconcilability between Islam and the West with Islam assuming the role of "a militant, atavistic force driven by hatred of Western political thought, harking back to age-old grievances against Christendom."[77] Suffice to say, the confrontationist school of thought does not represent the discourse on Political Islam due to its failure to account for both historical and empirical realities that entail the intertwined nature of ideological variance, social developments and the political contestation of power. That said, the culturally rooted hypotheses advanced by confrontationists' gains resonance as a result of Islamic fundamentalism as espoused by the extreme views of Islamist ideologue Sayyid Qutb. A

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[76] Ibid.,
[77] Pipes, Daniel. "Political Islam Is a Threat to the West." *Islam: Opposing Viewpoints.* Ed. Paul H. Winters San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1995. Pg.192. Print.

brief exploration of Qutb's work, namely the concept of jahiliyya can help us understand why the cultural approach finds widespread support – from both proponents of the clash thesis and Islamists alike. It shall also enable us to then move towards introducing the modernist approach, which represents the actual discourse on Political Islam.

1.3.2. Jahiliyya and The Legacy of Sayyid Qutb

The actualisation of power by Islamists in Iran in 1979 marked a key moment whereby the prospect of attaining political power emerged as a tangible reality for Islamists. The Shi'ite success in Iran resulted in renewed zeal amongst Sunni Islamist organisations, many of which, supported the doctrines of Islamist ideologue, 'martyr' and father of Islamic fundamentalism, Sayyid Qutb. A decade and a half earlier whilst in prison, Qutb published his seminal *Milestones* – a doctrine that stressed the immediate need to establish a 'pure' and pious Islamic state in Egypt. Whereas his previous publications had focused predominantly on providing commentary on the Quran, Qutb an educator by trade, turned to a radical view in *Milestones* that called for combatting the impious and illegitimate state. Akin to the Indian Islamist Mawdudi before him, Qutb advocated the establishment of a state in which sovereignty would belong solely to God, albeit safeguarded in the care of a just ruler versed in God's law. In turn, government was to be comprised of Islamist jurists, private and public realms were to overlap and non-believers and women were to be entirely excluded from the political arena.[78] While Mawdudi envisioned the actualisation of the Islamic state to occur over a protracted period of time referred to as an 'Islamic revolution', Qutb, equipped with a considerably larger following and ripe political opportunity sought to expedite the process through the use of violence. To this extent, it has been argued that the severe and inhumane repression of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and of Qutb himself, drove him to promote radicalisation. However, while the brutal treatment of Qutb and the Brotherhood almost certainly contributed to his decision to advocate violence it was not the decisive factor in his shift towards a radical approach. Rather, it was the desire to break from the rapidly

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[78] Kramer, Martin. "Fundamentalist Islam at Large: The Drive for Power." *Middle East Quarterly* (June 1996). Pg. 43. Print.

disintegrating and vague political programmes of the Brotherhood that had rendered the organisation stagnant in the wake of Nasserist rule.[79]

The fact that Qutb's *Milestones* had to pass through state censors made it a certainty that Nasser was familiar with its contents. To this extent, Nasser and Qutb were well acquainted with Nasser at one point even offering Qutb the position of Minister of Education – which Qutb declined in favour of joining the Brotherhood in official capacity. Hence, by allowing the publication of the provocative *Milestones,* Nasser may have sought to strategically use its contents as justification for dismantling the Brotherhood once and for all. The specific contents in question were Qutb's declaration that the existing state in Egypt, and most states for that matter, constituted *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic ignorance) and that Muslims therefore ought to openly and violently combat the existing state on the basis of its illegitimacy in Islam.[80] Qutb's interpretation of *jahiliyya* did not however stop at combatting the state but extended to include all and any entities deemed to be engaging in barbarism.

The gargantuan scope of Qutb's *jahiliyya* thus put in its crosshairs anyone against the 'pure' form of Islam. This extended to large contingents of society that Qutb felt were masquerading as Islamic. The broad application of the term led to a shift in thinking amongst many within the Brotherhood that only further fractured the organisation's ideological and political direction. In turn, this deepened the divide between those who remained committed to a protracted approach aimed at the social reform of society, and those who, influenced by Qutb's religious instrumentalism, supported a radical and immediate approach to combat *jahiliyya* elements responsible for the corrosion of state and society in Egypt.[81] The younger generation of Brothers immediately took to Qutb's approach in an effort to break free from the passivity, political obedience and sparse

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[79] Choueiri, Youssef M. *Islamic Fundamentalism: The Story of Islamist Movements.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010. Pg. 63. Print.
[80] Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones.* New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2001. Print.
[81] The works of Qutb and specifically the context of jahiliyya are revisited in greater detail in Chapter 2.

social action that had come to define the organisation's growing insularity during the reign of Nasser.

Ultimately, Qutb's re-interpretation of *jahiliyya* served as an opportunity to take immediate action against the indiscretions of state and society. From a contextual perspective however, Qutb's rendering of *jahiliyya* deviated markedly from the historical and traditional understanding of the term. This is due in part to the fact that his re-conceptualisation of the term was a deliberate attempt aimed at exacerbating the dichotomy between 'true' Islam and the pervasiveness of the 'idolatrous' West. Qutbian *jahiliyya* provided the means to sever scriptural commonalities between Islam and contemporary Christians and Jews.[82] Qutb charged both faiths as having surrendered their religion in favour of becoming idolaters in spite of the fact that traditionally both Christianity and Judaism are regarded as monotheistic faiths in Islam. In order to understand how Qutb arrived at such a claim it is beneficial to consider the traditional meaning and application of the term *jahiliyya:*

> a temporal indication, as in expressions such as jahiliyya poetry, which indicates pre-Islamic Arab poetry. Yet, through time, the term has acquired a further and evaluative meaning, so that Ignaz Goldziher, an influential scholar of Islam in the nineteenth century, at some point disagreed with the conventional translation of jahiliyya as 'ignorance' and preferred the term barbarism (Buruma and Margalit 2004:105). According to this reading, Muslims believe that Muhammad was sent to uproot the idolatry of the barbarians and thus to wipe out not just ignorance of Islam but barbarism altogether.[83]

The word *jahl* was interpreted in direct contrast to *ilm (knowledge)* and understood temporally as applying exclusively to pre-Islamic Arab customs and behaviour. Pagan Arabia hence represented a time and place of ignorance until knowledge was bestowed

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[82] Bottici, Chiara and Benoit Challand. *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations.* Abingdon: Routledge Advances in Middle East and Islamic Studies, 2012. Pg. 58-63. Print.
[83] Ibid.,

upon it vis-à-vis the introduction of Islam. An excavation into the pre-Islamic history and literature of Arabs by the Abbasids would result in the term taking on a considerably more expansive meaning. In fact, it served as a means for identity building that enabled the differentiation between practices of Arabs prior to and after the arrival of Islam and also provided the links to a shared past.[84] The term thus evolved to incorporate attributes such as violence, indecency, animalistic instincts and profligacy. In the 12th century, Ibn Manzur would add to the definition by postulating *jahiliyya* as 'a state of mind' and the memory of a time when pre-Islamic Arabs favoured ancestry, tribal ties and tyrannical behaviour over safeguarding God and religious law.[85] Building upon this definition of the term, Ignaz Goldziher suggested that *jahiliyya* more closely resembled barbarism than it did ignorance. Yet, even with the implication of barbarism, the term still denoted a temporal indication of the early days of Islam wherein the customs of pagan Arabia presented a threat in the minds of Arabs.[86]

By contrast, Qutb's abstraction of *jahiliyya* is devoid of any temporal indication as it extends to cover contemporary governments, societies and the West. In fact, his application of *jahiliyya* towards the West represents a form of allochronism insofar as that it allows him to "place the West in another time" by accusing Christians and Jews of surrendering their religiosity and allowing "worldly rulers to encroach on the realm of God." [87] The application of *jahiliyya* in this way dismisses the historically and traditionally accepted fact that Christians and Jews are regarded as *ahl-al-kitb* (people of the book). The re-imagining of Christians and Jews as idolaters enables Qutb to frame the 'culture' of Islam as being subservient to God whilst reducing the West to being barbaric beasts subservient only to bodily and material needs.[88] Accordingly, Andrew March finds that the interpretative framework assigned to the Qutb's expansive understanding of *jahiliyya* is Manichean given that it everything from ideas to persons are

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[84] Ibid.,

[85] El Cheikh, Nadia M. *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015. Print.

[86] Ibid.,

[87] Bottici, Chiara and Benoit Challand. *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations.* Abingdon: Routledge Advances in Middle East and Islamic Studies, 2012. Print.

[88] Ibid.,

distinguished on the basis of being either un-Islamic or impurely Islamic.[89] Again, the blanketing usage of the term stems from Qutb's claim that *jahiliyya* is not restricted to historical periods in which specific conditions are prevalent but rather that it exists in every and any society where humans are subjugated.[90]

The provocative and controversial nature of *Milestones* catapulted its popularity and distribution across Arabic speaking countries so that by the time Nasser banned its publication it was not overly difficult to obtain key excerpts from the book. While Qutb was subsequently charged and executed for conspiring against the state, the content of *Milestones* proved so influential that it earned him the status of martyr amongst large swathes of society.[91] As a whole, Qutb's re-interpretation of *jahiliyya* is evidence of a modernist project aimed at framing the relationship between 'Islam and the West' as a cultural conflict. The deliberate reworking of the term however is evocative of a continuation of an ideological battle between political entities rather than a cultural conflict as suggested by the likes of Huntington and Lewis.[92] Hence, Qutb's writings ought to be understood as the use of religious instrumentalism vis-à-vis a concerted effort aimed at devaluing the modern nation-state system, foreign institutions and Western customs and practices. The instrumentalist nature of his writings do not stem from cultural incompatibility and are certainly not rooted in history, rather they represent the clash of ideal interests. It is therefore imperative to delve into the socioeconomic and political conditions that lie beneath the cultural façade purported to drive the alleged irreconcilability between Islam and the West.

The Qutbian doctrine constitutes the approach of radicals and fundamentalists that do not seek to work within the existing framework of political and civil society. The revisionist nature of their agenda lacks basis in both religion and history. Moreover, it this radical

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[89] March, Andrew. "Political Islam: Theory." *Annual Review of Political Science, Volume 18.* 2015. Pg. 103-123. Print.

[90] Qutb, Sayyid. *Fi Zilal al-Qu'ran*. Beirut: Dar al Shuruq, 1981. Pg. 5. Print.

[91] A number of events, including the ensuing Arab-Israel war would help increase support for the Qutbian doctrine.

[92] Gerges, Fawaz A. *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999. Pg. 24. Print.

Islamists that serve as the main reference point of the debate on Political Islam. Proponents of the Qutbian doctrine directly feed the clash of cultures narrative and push forward a Manichean understanding of Political Islam. It is with this that the confrontationist school treats Islamists as monolithic and advocates an approach to deter if not eradicate them. There is very little effort to account for the instrumentalism and ahistoricism that is present in approach of extremists. Likewise, the impact of ideological, political and social developments is largely left unaddressed. The confrontationist school instead feeds into the cultural conflict by creating vast entities that have no tangible basis in reality. Thus, instead of delving into power dynamics and social processes that transpire at the conjunctural level we get analyses on cultural intransigence and religious atavism.

Consequently, Islamist organisations are viewed as homogenous and drawing abstract distinctions is viewed as a futile activity given the covert, unreliable and contradictory disposition of Islamists.[93] Martin Kramer goes as far as to claim that "if there is anything more simplistic than lumping Islamists together, it has been the attempt to divide them into neat categories of 'reformist' and 'extremist.'[94] Distinctions are therefore deemed to be a fruitless endeavour given that Islamism, at its core, is allegedly driven by an irreconcilable hatred-infused quest to achieve Islamic universalism that has catapulted the fundamentalism into the "preference of a generation."[95] The Manichean approach ultimately brings ethno-politics to the forefront by appealing an "image of a world hostile to Western values and culture."[96] As a whole, the clash thesis and the confrontationist school of thought promote a debate that constrains our understanding of Political Islam and the discursive fields that truly impact it. The approach of confrontationists is often

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[93] Kramer, Martin S. "The Mismeasure of Political Islam." *The Islamism Debate*. Ed. Martin S. Kramer. Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1997. Pg. 161-173. Print.
[94] Ibid., 168.
[95] Kramer, Martin. *Arab Awakening and Islamic Revival: The Politics of Ideas in the Middle East*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996. Pg. 265-278. Print.
[96] Guibernau, Montserrat. "The New Radical Right." *Belonging: Solidarity and Division in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013. Pg. 82. Print.

imbued with political and policy driven implications that hinder a contextually rich analysis of Political Islam.

1.3.3. The 'Modernist' School of Thought

Thus far, this chapter has sought to address the various arguments that comprise the overarching 'debate' on Political Islam. The recurring theme within this debate is the alleged irreconcilable clash of cultures. As such, the parameters of the clash between cultures are measured on an international and civilisational scale. Proponents of this approach point to the supposed intransigence of Islamic culture, its fatalistic tenets and the atavistic hatred of the West as the driving causes of the irreconcilability. The vast entities forged through such an unfettered understanding of Political Islam overlook the significance of empirical variables. Analogous to the proponents of the clash thesis, radical Islamists espouse an equally, albeit inverted, cultural doctrine that pins the irreconcilability on the West's barbarism, idolatry and worship of materialism. Fundamentalists accuse everything from Western customs and morals to their forms of governing institutions as being inept, inefficient and foreign. The impasse between Islamic fundamentalists and proponents of the clash thesis fuels a Manichean methodology that only grazes the surface of the vast phenomenon that is Political Islam. As a whole, the debate sidetracks efforts aimed at deepening of understanding of Political Islam and detracts us from the genuine academic discourse on the subject.

The modernist school of thought presents us with a much more nuanced and contextual reading of the discursive structures that both shape and influence Political Islam. Namely, modernists do not confine nor reduce their analysis to the notion that the pursuit of Islamic universalism marks an intrinsic and irreconcilable component of Islam or of Muslim societies.[97] Instead, they engage in a markedly more conducive reading that implores the importance of taking into account the effects of globalisation and capitalism. In this regard, the analyses advanced by the modernist school of thought are presented as a reading of developments, often modular and mimetic, that originate from the

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[97] Gerges, Fawaz A. *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999. Pg. 33. Print.

international sphere. The remainder of this section therefore seeks to critically explore the modernist perspective, establish its main premises and highlight some of its key limitations. Upon having done so, we shall be better positioned to sketch out a conceptual framework that can assist us in unravelling key aspects of the vast phenomenon that is Political Islam.

The emphasis placed on globalisation, modernity and capitalism means that one of the principal features of modernist literature is the merit that it accords to socially derived explanations towards unravelling Political Islam. This approach also serves as a means to refute the socioeconomically devoid arguments put forth by proponents of the clash thesis. The words of revered sociologist Barrington Moore can help us to illustrate the modernist refutation of a wholly cultural approach:

> The assumption of inertia, that cultural and social continuity do not require explanation, obliterates the fact that both have to be recreated anew in each generation, often with great pain and suffering. To speak of cultural inertia is to overlook the concrete interests and privileges that are served by indoctrination, education, and the entire complicated process of transmitting culture from one generation to the next.[98]

The limitations of culturally derived analyses stem from the glaring failure to account for complex social processes and how they impact the concrete interests and privileges of diverse socio-political forces that contest power. The oversimplification of social forces into vast entities – whether in the form of civilisations, states or as monolithic groupings, makes it increasingly difficult to develop a clear understanding of the social dynamism that continuously produces fissures within the ideological and political strategies of social forces. The failure to account for the concrete developments that transpire on the conjunctural terrain where power is contested derails any meaningful understanding of how and why Political Islam continues to persist. Likewise, notably absent as a result of

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[98] Moore, Barrington. *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. London: Allen Lane, 1967. Pg. .486. Print.

creating vast entities is the actual perspective of Muslim communities and societies. For instance, the research of Graham Fuller and Ian Lesser finds that:

> Few Muslims…nourish any kind of concept of implacable hostility or the need for confrontation. The West is a daily reality for nearly all Muslims; it is a culture many of whose features Muslims admire: education, technology, concepts of liberty, respect for human rights, rule of law, and improved standards of living.[99]

Fawaz Gerges builds upon Fuller and Lesser's findings by suggesting that it is not the western way of life that Muslims find grievances with but rather it is that they oppose specific western policies associated with post-colonial imperialism that "perpetuate the West's dominance and Muslim societies' dependence and subservience."[100] Yet, even a reconnaissance into the aforementioned 'western policies' cannot provide us with the depth necessary to unpack the subservience endured by the subaltern at the grassroots level. The framework to analysing 'western policies' and their impact of Muslim societies is unequivocally confined to processes that occur within the international sphere. While this is helpful in unearthing the uneven and combined nature that such policies may have it nevertheless is still to broad. For instance, it certainly helps us uncover the discontent of Islamists in relation to western support for repressive regimes, military and economic intervention in the region and the West's unbridled support for Israel. However, it does not delve deep enough into the minutiae of local developments that impact the ideology and political strategy of Islamists as a result. The emphasis of the modernist school of thought is rooted in globalism and international capitalism, which makes it difficult to assess the extent of the uneven and combined impact that such policies have on Political Islamist organisations.

The uneven and combined nature of capitalism indicates that the impact of social policies varies on a state-to-state and society-to-society basis however mimetic it may be. An

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[99] Fuller, Graham E. and Ian O. Lesser. *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1995. Pg. 102-103. Print.
[100] Gerges, Fawaz. *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.

empirical approach that delves into the dialectical relationship between Political Islamists and the State therefore better equips us to gauge the grievances that arise as a result of 'western policies' that produce subservience. Only by understanding the terrain on which power is contested can we understand how social conditions influence the less than uniform ideology and strategy of Political Islamists. Hence, it is pertinent to investigate the milieu in which complex social processes unevenly unfold and impact societal forces. To state it differently, the combined effects of capitalism create mimetic conditions that must still interact with the temporal boundaries and specific ethico-political history of a given state. This tends to result in considerable variation in the relationships between social forces as well as for their respective strategies. It is therefore imperative that when assessing Political Islam that we distinguish between the dialectical relationships that Islamists hold with the respective state and the conditions that shape the terrain on which they seek to contest power.

The modernist school of thought is correct to assert that Islamists are neither monolithic nor exclusively fundamentalist in their approach to the West. The majority of Political Islamists primarily centre their efforts towards the pursuit of social reform. It is why John Esposito appeals for the crucial need to differentiate "between Islamic movements that pose a real threat and those that represent legitimate attempts to reform and redirect their societies."[101] The fallible assertion that Islamic universalism dictates and drives the actions of *all* Islamists recklessly implies that ideology is a phenomenon "frozen in time and space."[102] Ironically however, the modernist emphasis on globalisation and capitalism as the primary drivers of social relations means that ideology often takes a back seat and is not treated as a potential primary determinant.

Consequently, ideology is often relegated to a secondary role insofar as that it is passed over in favour of an understanding that exclusively frames Political Islam as being shaped by globalisation and capitalism. There is instead staunch advocacy for modernism

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[101] Esposito, John L., and John Obert Voll. *Islam and Democracy*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. Pg. 12-13. Print.
[102] Gerges, Fawaz A. "The Islamist Moment: From Islamic State to Civil Islam?" *Political Science Quarterly* 128.3 (2013): Pg. 403. Print.

and global economics as representing the prism that combats the pitfalls brought on by 'temptations of particularism'[103] and regional thinking towards the 'Middle East.' The modernist approach thus proceeds with a universalism rooted in international reason and shared global values that make the international system the primary unit of measurement. Comparatively speaking, the approach undoubtedly provides for a more cogent analysis of Political Islam. Its reliance on the international system errs on the side of caution as it often results in state-centric readings of Political Islam that resign ideology to the mere function of a tool utilised to attain desired ends.[104]

The dissemination of Islamic political strategy is conveyed as being entirely the product of universal concepts that have western roots.[105] Fred Halliday arrives at this conclusion by shifting from a Marxist outlook of uneven and combined development to a Weberian perspective whereby modernity and capitalism are said to contribute to the weakening of the state. In this line of reasoning, the rise of Islamism is not so much the war against the modern nation-state system but rather is the reflection of the historical absence of states in the Middle East. Halliday further suggests that nationalism, including its Islamic variant, is mimetic and modular due to being a product of modernity. Yet, as Toby Dodge points out, Halliday's acknowledgement that capitalism results in uneven development means that the very 'isms' he deems to be mimetic and modular are instead "reflections of the different effects of capitalism."[106] The assumption that nationalism or Islamism arise solely as a tool for attaining state-based domination of society and the promotion of interests within the international sphere is to overlook the seminal role that ideational agency plays in shaping value systems.

For modernists, value systems are described as a form of indoctrination aimed at justifying the actions and interests of autonomous elites. Islam is therefore used to

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[103] Halliday, Fred. *Rethinking International Relations*. London: Palgrave. 1994. Print.
[104] Dodge, Toby. *Fred Halliday: High Modernism and a Social Science of the Middle East*. International Affairs 87(5). 2011. Pg. 1141-1158. Print.
[105] Halliday, Fred. *Rethinking International Relations*. London: Palgrave. 1994. Print.
[106] Dodge, Toby. *Fred Halliday: High Modernism and a Social Science of the Middle East*. International Affairs 87(5). 2011. Pg. 1141-1158. Print.1149.

legitimise the rule of the elite whereas Islamism is posited as the modern attempt aimed at seizing said power away from elites. It is why Raymond Hinnebusch considers Islamism as representing a grass roots counter-hegemony that 'supersedes socialism as the ideology of protest for the deprived.'[107] Hinnebusch arrives at this conclusion by basing his interpretation firmly in Coxian hegemony – whereby the effects of the international system and capitalism operate in the form of transmission belts. In spite of the Coxian approach, Hinnebusch is correct to assert that the uneven and combined nature of development facilitates hybrid models in which institutions end up combining a mixture of capitalist and pre-capitalist features.[108] These hybrid models in turn produce networks of privileges that empower authoritarianism vis-à-vis an international financial system that calls for privatisation thereby enabling existing elites to monopolise the private sector at the expense of providing essential services to the polity.[109]

The failure of the elite to provide welfare services is said to contribute to the rise of cronyism, which creates an opening for Islamists to disseminate "patriarchal versions of civil society activism that could provide the social basis of semi-democratic regimes in which popular sovereignty would be checked by the sovereignty of God."[110] In turn, this opening encourages Islamists to ramp up their efforts to provide civil society with essential services such as healthcare and education so as to expand their social base and create an opportunity for "dependable personal ties to cut through poorly understood bureaucratic regulations and indifferent bureaucracies."[111] The state's failure to provide charitable and essential services contributes to the development of the Islamist social

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[107] Hinnebusch, Raymond. "Globalization, democratization, and the Arab uprising: the international factor in MENA's failed democratization." *Democratization* (22,2) 2015. Print.
[108] Ibid.,
[109] As C.E. Black finds: "If one thinks of modernization as the integration or the reintegration of societies on the basis of new principles, one must also think of it as involving the disintegration of traditional societies." See: Black, C.E. *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History.* New York: Harper and Row, 1966. Pg. 27. Print.
[110] Hinnebusch, Raymond. "Globalization, democratization, and the Arab uprising: the international factor in MENA's failed democratization." *Democratisation* (22.2) 2015. Print.
[111] Ibid.,

base, which may later serve as a platform for political participation. That being said, it is imperative that our understanding of the public sphere not be limited solely to agents participating in specific institutions.[112] As Olivier Roy argues, it is "on the terrain of the complex relations among the weakening state, supranational organisations, civil society, and the democratisation of authoritarian regimes that religious revivalism prospers."[113]

While globalisation and capitalism form the epicentre of the modernist analysis of Islamism,[114] they do incorporate secularism into their reading of Islamism. The ideological cultivation of 'Islam' is reciprocally tied to secularism insofar as that it is presented as an alternative means that can sufficiently alleviate the socioeconomic ills allegedly caused by secularism and globalisation. For instance, Qutb's propagation of an Islamic social base is presented as a 'realistic utopia' whereby Islam is transmitted, as a day-to-day ideology founded not so much in the past but in the ills of the present. It is not the yearning for a return to a past golden age that drives Islamist ideology but rather the ideological re-envisioning of 'Islam' in response to modern conditions.

Citing Charles Taylor's definition of secularity in *A Secular Age,* Katerina Dalacoura asserts that there are several "similarities between the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Western experience of secularity and secularisation as described by Taylor."[115] Taylor offers three definitions of secularity with the third being of particular importance to us:

[112] Eickelman, D. and Armando Salvatore. The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities. *European Journal of Sociology 43(1).* Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pg. 103-104. Print.

[113] Roy, Olivier. *Secularism Confronts Islam.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Pg. 65. Print.

[114] Islamists are very much modern contrary to Francis Fukayuma's claim that a non-modern referent results in Islamists being traditional. See: Akram, Ejaz. The Muslim World and Globalization: Modernity and the Roots of Conflict. *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition: Essays by Western Muslim Scholars.* Ed. Joseph E.B. Lumbard. Bloomington: World Wisdom, Inc. Pg. 238. Print.

[115] Dalacoura, Katerina. "The Secular in non-Western societies." *LSE Research Online,* Social Science Research Council, 11 February 2014. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/55776 Accessed on May 23 2015.

The shift to secularity in this sense consists, among other things, of a move from society where belief in God is unchallenged and, indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace.[116]

The inference is that according Islamists the opportunity to participate in politics may potentially lead to a moderating effect akin to the European experience of Christian democratic parties that emerged in response to liberalism. Initially theocratic and illiberal at the core, Christian political parties gradually evolved to reject illiberalism and intolerance as a consequence of having to derive legitimacy from the election ballot.[117] The reasoning as such is that increased political inclusion may create an opportunity whereby Political Islamists become more moderate. It is argued that the alternative, and current, approach of repressing and co-opting Islamists is dangerous in the long term as it exacerbates violence and increases the likelihood of de-politicising Islamists. The latter aspect is particularly worrisome as de-politicisation caters to conservative factions within Political Islamist organisations rather than the pragmatists who push for greater political engagement.[118] It also contributes to the 'old guard' to solidify their reserved political agendas and existing forms of hierarchical structures that stifle moderation.[119] The assertion put forth by the modernist school of thought therefore is that "the gradual transformation of modernist Islamists is consistent with what various scholars have been arguing about the more gradual, inexorable and perhaps structural trends that come with parliamentarisation."[120]

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[116] Taylor, Charles. "Introduction." *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard UP, 2007. Pg. 3. Print.

[117] Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*. Ithica: Cornell UP, 1996. Pg. 258. Print.

[118] Gudren, Kramer. "The Integration of the Integrists: A Comparative Study of Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia." *Democracy without Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*. Ed. Ghassan Salame. London: I.B. Tauris: 1994. Pg. 208-209. Print.

[119] Dalacoura, Katerina. *Islamist Terrorism and Democracy in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. Pg. 184. Print.

[120] Gerges, Fawaz. 2013. "The Islamist Moment: From Islamic State to Civil Islam? *Political Science Quarterly* (128.3). 2013. Pg. 389-426. Print.

That being said, Shadi Hamid cautions that it is crucial to distinguish between the varying degrees of illiberalism when discussing moderation and increased political participation for Islamists. Although structural trends associated with parliamentarisation may certainly produce a moderating effect, there are marked differences that must be taken into account. While the advent of liberalism preceded democracy in Europe, the same cannot be said for the Middle East. The battle for Islamists does not pertain solely to liberalism but rather is one that often challenges the very foundations of the state. This zero-sum approach to state building helps to explain why organisations allegedly committed to the democratic process may engage in illiberal acts akin to the democratic transitions witnessed in Latin America.[121]

As a whole, the modernist school of thought offers a considerably more nuanced understanding of Political Islam. The primary argument advanced is that uneven development and globalisation play increasingly important roles in setting the agenda and course of action pursued by Islamists. This notion is further corralled by the assertion that Islamism ought to be treated as a phenomenon consisting of disparate movements that seek to present Islam as a viable alternative to modern concepts such as liberalism and secularism, which are increasingly framed as universal truths. They further appeal to international reason rooted in global values that negate the argument that Islam and Islamism are irreconcilable with the West and with modernity. The claim is coterminous with the rejection of Islamism as a project myopically driven by Islamic tenets, fatalism and the desire for global Islamic hegemony. Instead, Islamism as postulated as the response to the combined effects of capitalism and globalisation that unevenly produce unfavourable policies and socioeconomic conditions. The resulting cronyism alongside the absence of critical social services produces societal antagonism and creates a social opening for Islamists. Those who engage in genuine efforts aimed at facilitating social reform must therefore be differentiated from those who do not. It is also why modernists argue that the opening of political space can prove beneficial in propelling the continued trend of moderation seen with Political Islamists.

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[121] Hamid, Shadi. *Temptations of Power: Islamists and Illiberal Democracy in a New Middle East.* New York: Oxford University Press USA, 2014. Print.

Between the debate and the discourse, the arguments and analyses that emerge tend to revolve around the themes of culture and modernity, respectively. The former set of arguments is rooted in a primordial, fatalist and realist analysis that postulates Islamism as being backwards and irreconcilable with the West. In comparison, the latter approach presents a more nuanced reading of Political Islam by assessing the tangible changes brought about by capitalism and globalisation. The modernist approach treats the international sphere as the causative force behind the conditions that facilitate the rise of Political Islam. While this is inevitably true and cannot be otherwise, an analysis wholly based in global economics struggles to adequately account for the possibility of ideology as a primary motivator. Likewise, it is not equipped on its own to address the historical conditions that impact the conjunctural terrain on which power is actually contested. Thus, the modernist approach needs to be buttressed by a dialectical and organic reading of how ideology and power dynamics unfold in society vis-à-vis the reciprocal relationship between Political Islamists and the hegemonic forces. By combining the international sphere with a grassroots reading of power dynamics, we stand to go beyond an understanding of why and how Political Islam manages to exist and move towards one that unravels the ways in which it manages to persist and cultivate itself as a viable ideological alternative. That is to suggest that there is more to the persistence of Political Islam than foreign policies or a desire to use ideology solely for the purposes of obtaining power. In addition to modernity, we must therefore consider the political platforms whereby social processes unfold and influence Political Islamists at the conjunctural level. Drawing parallels based on western experience and terminology cannot adequately capture important societal distinctions even if Political Islamist organisations such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood display parallels to the Christian democratic experience by making strategic adjustments to 'prevailing political winds.'[122] It is precisely why the concept of civil society marks a vital component in aiding us towards assigning ideology and power dynamics a more proportionate role in their impact on Political Islam.

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[122] Eickelman, Dale F., and James P. Piscatori. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1996. Pg. 132. Print.

1.3.4. Modernity, Civil Society and Ideology

The literature on Political Islam is presented in a polarising way that encourages a binary understanding of the phenomenon. On the one hand, cultural differences are presented as intransigent and irreconcilable whereas on the other, the effects of modernity and globalisation are postulated to produce modular and mimetic conditions that give rise to Political Islam. Often under-analysed in these approaches are the seminal roles that civil society and ideology play in shaping relations between social forces. The lack of emphasis on these areas is largely the result of ideology being treated as a complementary tool for acquisition of power and the portrayal of civil society as nascent and embryonic due to a rigidly liberal reading of the concept. The platform where power is contested is thus almost wholly inferred as residing at the State level. This encourages a state-centric framework that overstates the reach of the institutional apparatuses and distorts the ways in which social forces, including the hegemonic, actively compete to attain consent within the milieu of civil society. Moreover, the ostensibly omnipresent coercive apparatus, which reaps the benefits of fiscal health and access to international rent, is provided as evidence of the patrimonial logic that governs state institutions. The argument in a nutshell is that fiscal health and international rent provide sufficient capital to reinforce and sustain the security apparatus thereby reducing the possibility of quick regime change. The patrimonial nature of coercive institutions in turn limits the likelihood for political reform given that it would prove perilous for those in power.[123]

The suggestion is that power dynamics predominantly occur within the restricted structures of the State. It is within this environment that the coercive apparatus solidifies itself, authoritarianism excels and the development of civil society is obstructed.[124] The point of contention that emerges with such an outlook is that the coercive capacity of the state does not always correspond with efforts to demobilise society insofar as that some states may choose to nurture civil society through corporatism whereas others may

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[123] Bellin, Eva. "Coercive Institutions and Coercive Leaders." *Authoritarianism In The Middle East: Regimes ad Resistance.* Eds. Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005. Pg. 21-42. Print.
[124] Ibid.,

repress it on a selective and inconsistent basis.[125] Thus, although the pervasiveness of patrimonial institutions tends to reinforce authoritarian conditions, patrimonial institutions are by no means uniformly present across the Middle East.[126] The State must engage to some degree in activities within the sphere of civil society that are aimed at acquiring consent. An enquiry into geo-temporal subsets at the empirical level can help us gauge more clearly the relationship between power and consent as it unfolds within civil society. By honing in on the sphere of civil society we can also go beyond an analysis that focuses solely on the social costs associated with repressing mobilisation and incorporate an understanding of the ways in which counter ideologies such as those of Political Islam manage to flourish.[127] An investigation of social forces competing for power within civil society helps to uncover the conjunctural terrain wherein ideology operates as a constitutive feature of the social and political domain. It also provides us with tangible insight into how the pursuit of power can surface as an effect of ideology.[128]

Ideology can be "generated and sustained by intellectual, churches, social movements, political parties, armed forces and other power groups within civil society and the state."[129] The vast use of ideology indicates that the superstructure of civil society represents the organic and interwoven political theatre in which ideology is cultivated and disseminated and where consent is manufactured by means of the active contestation of power between social forces. In other words, there is an indissoluble and reciprocal link

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[125] Ibid., 30.
[126] In the case of Egypt, Nathan Brown emphasises that not only have state institutions have enjoyed considerable internal autonomy but that the institutional apparatus of the state is 'balkanized' rather than resembling a 'deep' state as is often postulated. The wide balkanized state, in Egypt is rife with an ideational attitude that tends to place itself above the political fray, which also happens to be a feature emblematic of Egyptian society. See: Nathan Brown. "Egypt's Wide State Reassembles Itself." *Foreign Policy.* 17 July 2013, http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/07/17/egypts-wide-state-reassembles-itself/. Accessed on: 18 July, 2013.
[127] Bellin, Eva. Coercive Institutions and Coercive Leaders. *Authoritarianism In The Middle East: Regimes ad Resistance.* Eds. Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005. Pg. 21-42. Print.
[128] Keane, John. Democracy and Civil Society. London: Verso Books, 1988. Pg. 234.
[129] Ibid.,

between the contestation of power, ideology and civil society. To rigidly apply liberal definitions that all but sever the interconnectedness between civil society and the state do not allow us to adequately capture the fluid power struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. The rendering of civil society in the Middle East as nascent also leads to an approach that often places Political Islamists as falling outside of the scope of civil society. Yet, as Augustus Norton points out: "to argue that popular political players are irremediably intransigent and therefore unmoved by the events in the real world is simply foolish."[130]

The rigid criteria used to define civil society across the Middle East obstructs our efforts in understanding the complex social interactions between Islamists and social forces, the degree to which Islamists are influenced by participant based politics and the extent to which their patronage networks and services contribute towards fostering the groundwork for a vibrant civil society.[131] It is therefore important to historically and holistically assess the conjunctural terrain on which power is contested in order to understand why Islamists may behave in a manner that is "deficient, corrupt, aggressive and hostile."[132] To assume, as Ernest Gellner does for example, that there is simply an overabundance of faith based Muslim societies and a lack of desire for civil society in unwise.[133] Akin to the charges brought against Gellner for his failure to account for power politics in his study of nationalism, so too can we postulate that studies of civil society and Political Islam would benefit from incorporating the impact that power dynamics, social processes and the role of ideology have in shaping social relations and ideology. Analogously, to assume that social forces operating within civil society ought to possess an inherent benevolence is far removed from reality. Although civil society provides the capacity for altruism, fairness and compassion it can equally be dragged down by the self-interest, prejudice and hatred of social actors.[134]

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[130] Norton, Augustus R. *Civil Society in the Middle East.* Vol. 1. Leidin: Brill, 1994. Pg. 23. Print.
[131] Ibid., 7-8.
[132] Ibid.,
[133] Ibid.,
[134] Ibid.,

A reading of civil society in the MENA region cannot simply seek to measure the associational autonomy of Political Islamists or to point out that a lack of civility only produces "feuding factions, cliques and cabals" without also considering the historical, social and ideational factors that contribute to shaping power relations.[135] Greater emphasis is required in unearthing the dialectical and reciprocal relations both within and between social forces across civil society. The political and ideological strategies that emerge from these relations shape civil society and the conjunctural terrain where power is routinely contested and conceded. In this regard, the focus is to merge the organic sphere of relations (globalisation, capitalism and modernity) with the conjunctural terrain (the superstructure of civil society) where programmes are cultivated, disseminated and in which power is ultimately contested. To assess conditions primarily at the international level or through an exclusively state-centric framework only conceals our understanding of the concrete developments that transpire at more immediate levels. It is at this immediate level that ideology can both drive and be driven by political objectives. Hence, it is pertinent to unpack the dialectical relationship between Political Islam and the State as it transpires within civil society.

1.4. The Caliphate, Umma and Sharia

A key catalyst in the emergence of ideological programmes, Islamist or otherwise, is the rise of dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs in society.[136] The spread of dissatisfaction facilitates an opening for social forces to cultivate ideational platforms aimed at rectifying the societal antagonism(s). Naturally, a considerable degree of variation is bound to exist between social forces and the respective approaches they pursue to remedy dissatisfaction. In order for such efforts to gain momentum an awareness of the fact that society must undergo further disintegration if it is to emerge unshackled from the deteriorating conditions that produced dissatisfaction in the first

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[135] Ibid., 11.
[136] Watt, Montgomery W. *Islam and the Integration of Society*. London: Routledge, 1961. Pg. 82-85. Print.

instance is necessary.[137] Being cognisant that further disintegration is required is not however in itself sufficient towards procuring change and must therefore be accompanied by ideational complement. For instance, even utopian ideological programmes such as those derived from the concepts of Sayyid Qutb, which we explored earlier, recognise the need for disintegration at an early stage in the ideation process.[138] Where they tend to fail, as Qutb's 'realistic' utopia did, is in their ability to convincingly articulate ideational activity as being capable of reorganising society through a positive foundation of rebuilding that can secure the intersectional interests of society.[139] Hence, even though an ideational system may in its early stages garner considerable support for social reform by calling for unconditional support for a new leader or vanguard[140] to challenge hegemonic power, it cannot sustain support in the long run without buttressing its ideational complement.[141]

The ideational activities of the emergent rival discourse, if it is to truly contest the dominant ideology, must manifestly and coherently superordinate and subordinate the ends it seeks to attain. The ideology of the hegemonic force can, in such an instance, be regarded as the ideation of a minority that engaged in social adjustment in order to secure its own ideal interests.[142] The failure to ensure the interests of subordinate classes can thus be attributed to the dominant group's lack of awareness of the disintegration produced by its activities. The resultant dissatisfaction creates an environment whereby a crisis of authority becomes imminent.[143] As such, the super-ordination of a direct assault

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[137] The surfacing of dissatisfaction with 'traditional activity' creates an environment in which further disintegration is required in order to improve society vis-à-vis the loosening of ties with the dominant ideology. See Watt, Montgomery W. *Islam and the Integration of Society.* London: Routledge, 1961. Print.

[138] Watt, Montgomery W. *Islam and the Integration of Society.* London: Routledge, 1961. Pg. 82-90. Print.

[139] Ibid.,

[140] The Isma'ili (Nizari) movement under Hassan-al-Sabbah in the late 11th century bears resemblance with its dissatisfaction with the Seljuk and the subsequent capture and conversion of Alamat.

[141] Watt, Montgomery W. *Islam and the Integration of Society.* London: Routledge, 1961. Pg. 82-90. Print.

[142] Ibid.,

[143] Ibid., 82.

on hegemonic power cannot be sufficient without having incorporated ideological elements that assuredly safeguard the general interests and will of society. [144] A particularly conducive way that can help us to understand this is by distinguishing between historically organic ideologies and those that are "arbitrary, rationalistic and willed."[145] The former constitute the successful articulation of the fundamental elements that comprise the respective ideological discourses of subordinated groups within society whereas the latter tend to be far narrower, self-serving and myopic in scope. Historically organic ideologies are organic in the sense that they represent a unified arrangement of ideological elements so that the diverse interests and practices of different classes can be organised into a cohesive system of socioeconomic relations. The task of dissatisfied social forces in contesting hegemony and bringing about social reform is not therefore as straight forward as capturing state power but equally rests in their ability to cultivate an articulating principle that can absorb various subaltern elements so as to manufacture a new collective will.[146] The acceptance and adoption of this articulation principle is paramount to the success of an ideational system in being able to direct subsequent social activity.[147]

1.4.1. The Caliphate and Umma

There are a certain aspects within Islamist ideological programmes that we can draw upon to help us reveal the nuanced ways in which Islamists seek to utilise Islam as an articulating principle. By exploring the utilisation of 'Islam' we can also inch closer to determining whether such ideological programmes constitute historically organic ideologies or whether they resemble something closer to being 'willed' and arbitrary. The Islamist fondness of symbolising the caliphate and *umma* represent an ideal starting point for undertaking an analysis of key principles employed to articulate Islam, cultivate consciousness and secure consent. The respective symbols have been utilised at various

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[144] Ibid., 83.
[145] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 377. Print.
[146] Ibid.,
[147] Watt, Montgomery W. *Islam and the Integration of Society.* London: Routledge, 1961. Pg. 82-90. Print.

junctures of the Islamist ideological venture with the aim of harnessing links to 'Islam' as an articulating principle so that it may uninhibitedly be able to cultivate an exclusively Islamic worldview. The aforementioned themes thus serve the specific aim of generating legitimacy and support for Islamist ideational activity through its efforts to re-articulate societal interests. The symbolic value attached to the caliphate and *umma* lies in the notion that they are framed in direct contradistinction to the existing structures and institutions in place, which are purported to cause social antagonism.

The articulation of an Islamist worldview through symbolic references stems from the belief that it is necessary to cultivate support for the call to Islam (*Da'wa)* in order to reform individuals and society. The reform of individuals must precede any attempt to re-organise societal institutions. The reform of society thus commences, in the first instance, with the religious reform to return its members to a state of piety. The problematic however with the dissemination of symbolic themes, particularly ones as ahistorical as the caliphate and *umma,* is that they require an approach that goes beyond the religious reform of individuals in order to be successful. The fact is that the propagation of ideology must account for "distinct circumstances, ideas and material conditions."[148] The signification of themes as transcendental as the caliphate and *umma* are thus likely to be subordinated in favour of more perceptible and immediate ideational efforts that combat the social antagonisms imposed by the existing order of the day. The quest to signify such themes is further compounded by the challenges that accompany having to operate within the modern nation-state system. In other words, the decision to pursue a strategy that espouses the religious reform of society without tangibly putting forth a programme to reform the existing institutions or system of governance is likely to strain efforts aimed at securing intersectional interests. As Cox notes, while the modern nation-state has come to represent the intermediary "between the *telos* of Islamic peoples and the achievement of a

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[148] Cox, Robert. "Towards a post-hegemonic conceptualization of world order: reflections on the relevancy of Ibn Khaldun." *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics.* Eds. James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Pg.123-124. Print.

reunified Islam"[149] it has ultimately failed to attain absolute status throughout much of the Islamic world.

While it is difficult to discern what the allegedly unified *telos* of an entity as vast as 'Islamic peoples' entails, Cox is nevertheless correct in asserting the intermediary role of the nation-state and its failure to acquire absolute status in the 'Islamic world.' There are a number of contributing factors as to why this might be the case. The combined and uneven nature of capitalism, as previously discussed, offers insight into this failure as do the emergence of hybrid forms of capitalist modes of production alongside pre-capitalist institutions. Conversely, the role of historical factors and interscalar social processes has also played a role in creating 'fierce' states short on legitimacy. The unravelling of these causes reciprocally contributes to the dissemination of ideational activity undertaken by dissatisfied social forces with the aim of thwarting the modern nation-state from actualising absolute status. Hence, the incorporation of the aforementioned symbolic themes constitutes an effort to induce consciousness for the social antagonisms produced by the modern nation-state system and to cultivate consent for an alternative ideological worldview. In other words, the caliphate and *umma* are utilised as symbolic themes in the wider effort to sever the intermediary status of the modern nation-state system. However, difficulty arises in accomplishing the abovementioned vis-à-vis the caliphate and *umma* due to the fact that both encompass fluid concepts over the course of several hundred years rather than holding within them uniformly discernable historical experiences. It is therefore unsurprising that the Islamist utilisation of them has been accompanied by an absence of historical contextualisation.

The caliphate historically denotes reference to the root word of the term (*caliph)* conveying the rightful leader instead of being indicative of an all-encompassing institution.[150] Prominent historical accounts of the caliphate including those of Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq and Abd' al-Rahman al-Kawakibi thus tend to pertain to the reign of particular

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[149] Ibid.,
[150] Likewise, the *umma* historically constitutes the concept of broad solidarity and was accordingly subordinated in favour of more immediate social issues.

caliphs and their respective dealings rather than describe the caliphate as an institution or system of governance. Islamist claims to the legitimacy of the caliphate as an institution are in fact anachronistic as it was not until the Ottoman constitution of 1896 that the caliphate was officially designated the status of a transcendental Muslim institution.[151] Ali 'Abd-Raziq in his *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm* (Islam and the foundations of rule) asserts that the caliphate constitutes an aberration, a historical accident and that its dissolution ought to be regarded as an opportunity to return the religion back to the true teachings of the Quran and *sunna*.[152] Conversely, the fictional writings of al-Kawakibi introduce corrective measures to guard against the tyranny of the caliphate by suggesting that sovereignty ought to reside with the *umma* rather than the caliph, that the caliph inversely ought to pledge loyalty to the assembly and only be eligible to rule for a limited period of time.[153] Even more favourable writings on the caliphate such as the widely distributed work of Jurji Zaydan emphasise the caliph rather than a government. Zaydan's extensive work on the history of Islamic civilisation expounds the moral, humanist and cultural interests and qualities of various caliphs in a concerted effort to defend Islamic history against European charges of inferiority and barbarity.[154]

In addition to these accounts there are also a number of writings on the caliphate highlighting the rule of the four rightly guided caliphs. These accounts are however tend to be hagiographic in nature and thus idealise the piousness of Islam's golden age. An exploration of such writings does not provide for a nuanced historical analysis of the caliphate or *umma* in relation to the entirely modernist venture that is Political Islam.[155] The framing of the caliphate as a symbolic theme coincides with the rise of Arab nationalism and the solidification of the modern nation-state system. Hence, a more appropriate approach is to consider the ideological depiction of the caliphate by States seeking to consolidate power in the region. This assists us in dialectically deconstructing

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[151] Skovgarrd-Petersen, Jakob. "The Caliphate in Contemporary Arab TV Culture." Al-Rasheed, Madawi, Carool Kersten and Marat Shterin. *Demystifying the Caliphate: Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts* . Oxford: Oxford UP , 2015. Print.
[152] Ibid., 149.
[153] Ibid.,
[154] Ibid.,
[155] Ibid., 148

competing contemporary interpretations of the caliphate. A prominent and viable source for achieving the aforementioned is to consider the culture of state controlled Arab television. The distinct circumstances, conditions and histories of States in the region mean that the caliphate is treated differently in accordance with the ideological programme and policies of respective hegemonic forces.

For instance, Alawi rule in Syria has led to popular depictions of the caliphate wherein the role of religion is not emphasised. This owes to the minority religious element of the Alawi. Syrian television has instead treated the caliphate as a human institution by implicating the human elements of personal interest, manipulation and reasoning as guiding statecraft.[156] By contrast, the Egyptian state approach to the televising serials pertaining to the caliphate have allowed for greater religious undertones. The greater emphasis placed on religion is the result of a concerted effort to instil values and ideological policies as a means of combatting the proliferation of militant Islamism in Egypt. While distinct circumstances contribute significantly to interpretations of the caliphate there are nevertheless some broad modular themes that hegemonic powers in the region have sought to articulate in regards to the caliphate. These themes particularly deal with morality and the human creation of history. Taking these themes into account he fall of Baghdad is described as denoting a tragedy in terms of human loss but not so in terms of the fall of the caliphate. Likewise, the autocratic and social hierarchy imposed by the caliphs is portrayed at times as a service to human civilisation with the caliphate being styled as both an honour and a burden.[157] Though the interpretations vary in historical detail they predominantly seek to espouse a worldview that frames the caliphate with the goal of inculcating the viewership towards contemporary socio-political convictions upheld by the respective ideological programmes of hegemonic forces in the region.[158]

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[156] Ibid., 161
[157] Ibid., 151-152.
[158] Ibid.,

In accounting for these realities it becomes increasingly difficult to envision Muslim societies and states as belonging to a singular 'Islamic' history rooted in a caliphal system. That being said, the failure to adequately cultivate consciousness for symbolic themes such as the caliphate and *umma* does not entirely owe to their lack of institutional embodiment or tangibility over the course of 'Islamic' history.[159] The possibility of utilising each as ideological components that can be juxtaposed with the dissatisfaction created by the combined and uneven effects of modernity as well as hybrid systems of governance that facilitate corruption certainly exists. It is however a question of how effectively they can function as subordinated elements within an ideology that veers towards being arbitrary, rational and willed. To put it differently, the symbolisation of themes is possible given that belief in ideas is not contingent on having to produce historical accuracy or to even tangible demonstrate that they present a superior alternative to alleviating existing social conditions.[160] The successful signification of symbolic themes is thus highly contingent on the ability of the broader ideological programme to articulate itself in such a form that the polity accepts it as the truth.

The Islamist effort to cultivate consciousness for the caliphate and global community of believers as a historically viable alternative to the modern nation-state system should be seen as an attempt to disparage the latter for constituting an alien form of governance that caters only to the ideal interests of elites and foreigners.[161] These attempts however must take into account the pervasiveness of the dominant societal group's ideology across the superstructure as impacting their ability to superordinate the caliphate and *umma* as fixative elements of their ideological programmes. That is to suggest that the gradual sedimentation of Arab nationalism has been such that it latently plays a role in influencing the worldview of Islamists themselves and of the ideational direction they

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[159] Cox, Robert. "Towards a post-hegemonic conceptualization of world order: reflections on the relevancy of Ibn Khaldun." *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics.* Eds. James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Pg. 157. Print.

[160] Watt, Montgomery W. *Islam and the Integration of Society.* London: Routledge, 1961. Pg. 83-84. Print.

[161] Coser, Lewis A. *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context 2ⁿᵈ Edition.* Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc., 2003. Print.

choose to adopt. In fact, it is argued in the case study chapters that Political Islamists have shifted considerably away from the caliphate and *umma* towards a paradoxically nationalist framework that emphasises sharia. Nevertheless, Islamists must also be cognisant of geo-temporal realities stemming from the respective histories of states as well as the nature in which politics are organised at the local level.

In the absence of a stronger ideational complement, the signification of the caliphate as a symbolic theme is stripped of its piquancy upon interacting with the many complexities of the conjunctural sphere. It should also be taken into account that the task of toppling the existing ideology and worldview in place is a monumental task. An important element in harnessing consciousness and consent against a system that causes societal antagonism is to contest manageable ideological points of contestation. For example, in establishing Islam, the Meccan merchants and the Prophet quarrelled over a number of smaller but important contested points such as whether there or not there was an afterlife. The retroactive symbolisation of the caliphate and *umma*, as we shall uncover shortly, also often clash with the overall ontological framework advanced by Islamist ideological programmes. Although this does not entirely negate the symbolisation of the themes, it reduces the overall impact and role within the ideation process of Islam as an articulating principle. Analogously, the history of the state and the nature of society, even during the reign of the caliphate, varied considerably from state to state (*dawla*). Hence, the incongruity of local histories when combined with the disparate organisation of power can be seen as marginalising the symbolic effect of the caliphate and *umma*. This equally holds true in contemporary socio-political settings where the complex processes of ideation, even when buttressed by coercive measures, create an inimitably local and often divisive affair. The modular and mimetic conditions produced by modernity are thus not necessarily indicative of a unified ideological approach taking form.

1.4.2. Sharia

The limitations of the caliphate and *umma* as symbolic themes are intimately related to the ability of Political Islamists to successfully superordinate sharia as the articulating principle of their respective ideological programme. To state it differently, sharia

invariably operates as the chief element for Islamists in ideologically opposing worldviews that support a secular modern nation-state system.[162] Historically speaking, sharia is not monolithic and can exist in many forms. This is due to the fact that it is a legal system based on principles that are contingent on human interpretation to address what is permitted and forbidden within the community.[163] The articulation of sharia by does not necessarily infer that Islamists seek to install a caliphate but rather is indicative of their desire to actualise an Islamic order. An Islamic order ought to be understood as constituting the observable presence of Islam's legal principles within whatever political order of governance might be in place.[164] The call for sharia therefore does not automatically entail the establishment of a wholly religious government or the return of the caliphate.[165] It is instead an unwavering call for government inspired by religion. For instance, the earliest guides of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood both considered the existing constitutional parliamentary order as politically satisfactory for governance upon undergoing the necessary Islamic reforms.[166]

Sharia is a defining principle of Islamist ideology and their quest to actualise it politically is precisely what makes Islamists religiously guided political parties in the first instance. Moreover, the centrality of sharia to the Islamist project is such that according to Qutb, one need "not despair in the ability of the sharia to govern modern society" given that nothing has been overlooked in the creation of sharia.[167] It is partially for this reason that Hassan Al-Banna did not focus excessive energy on defining sharia. One the one hand Banna found the centrality of sharia as evident and self-explanatory and thus did not feel

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[162] Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2001. Print.

[163] Mohammed, Noor. "Principles of Islamic Contract Law." *Journal of Law and Religion* 6(1), 1998. Pg. 116.

[164] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 235. Print.

[165] In fact, few Islamists regard the re-establishment of the caliphate as a viable or desirable goal.

[166] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 237. Print.

[167] Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2001. Pg. 30. Print.

it required extensive elaboration. [168] On the other he operated within a political environment with markedly different circumstances in comparison to what was to follow 1952 onwards. Hence, a key aspect of Banna's strategy was to prevent divisiveness and retain Islam's flexibility in the project of ridding Egypt of colonialism. Nevertheless, it was evident that sharia served as a decisive part of creating a modern government guided by religious principles. This was due to the strong belief among Islamists that the separation of church and state constituted a foreign idea - one that resulted in creating 'spiritual half-castes and cultural mongrels.'[169]

Based on the aforementioned premises it can be said that the desired implementation of sharia does not instinctively nor obstinately entail setting up a caliphate or Muslim state. It is instead equally concerned with the social imperative of recovering and reforming society from developments that are alleged to have set it adrift.[170] While much of this rooted in the pervasiveness brought on by Western influence it is important not to discount the Islamist belief in the corruption of caliphal rule that followed the reign of the rightly guided caliphs. Many Islamists argue that the four main Islamic schools of jurisprudence, which emerged following the Hijra as epistemic study circles for pious scholars[171] ought to be re-examined in regards to how they have evolved in utilising the *sunna* as a means of legal doctrine.[172] The two main sources of sharia are the Qur'an itself and the *Sunna* (sayings attributed to the prophet). The former is the most authoritative and fundamental source that provides hundreds of verses concerned with legislation pertaining to *hudūd* (crimes against God)*, qisās* and *diya* (retaliation and compensation crimes, respectively) *and ta'zīr* offences (crimes that fit neither of the

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[168] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 237. Print.

[169] Ibid., 236.

[170] Ibid., 237.

[171] Hallaq, Wael. *Sharia: Theory, Practice, Transformations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pg. 70. Print.

[172] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 235-245. Print.

above categories).[173] The latter by comparison, once rooted in its epistemological foundations is said to have fallen victim to the fallibility of man's experience and inevitable corruption.[174]

That is to say that there is a resonating belief amongst many Islamists that sharia is not inclusive of the jurisprudence produced by the four schools of Islamic thought. The shift in tradition from *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) to *taqlid* (conformity to legal precedent) as we shall subsequently uncover has led to charges against the *ulema* from Islamists for failing to safeguard Islam and advance it in accordance with the times. As Mitchell correctly points out in his seminal work, the charge levied against the *ulema* denote a concerted effort by Islamists to renew Islam and to deny legists their jurisprudence (*fiqh)* vis-à-vis establishing themselves as "organisations that offer contemporary Muslim society freedom from tradition."[175] For instance, Qutb and others mandated a thorough academic re-investigation of the *Sunna* due to the inability of Islamic jurisprudence to develop following the failure of Islamic society[176]. In nullifying the *ulema's fiqh*, Islamists sought to establish the following: the claim that the application of the law ceases to apply in the absence of a true Muslim society; eliminate the arduous requirements stemming from legal tradition so as to make sharia easier to frame and develop; to assert the universality and flexibility of sharia; and to propagate an alternative discursive approach rooted in action so as to present themselves as the authority capable of facilitating social progress in the contemporary age and restoring a moral community as intended by God.[177]

The Islamist articulation of sharia as being inherently universal and flexible naturally invites considerable challenges given the clarity with which the Qur'an addresses certain

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[173] Hussein, Gamil M. Basic Guarantees in the Islamic Criminal Justice System. *Criminal Justice in Islam: Judicial Procedure in the Sharia.* Eds. Haleem, Muhammad A., Sherif, Adel O. and Kate Daniels. London: I.B. Tauris, 2003. Pg. 37-51. Print.
[174] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 238-240. Print.
[175] Ibid., 239.
[176] Ibid.,
[177] Ibid., 240-245.

punishments pertaining to criminal and commercial law. However, in alignment with the social and cultural imperative it has been argued that the focus ought not to be on the punitive measures but rather on the values that they intend to safeguard Muslim society from – adultery, usury, theft and so forth.[178] Hence, in championing sharia, Political Islamists sought to reiterate the primacy of God's law in actualising a genuinely moral society vis-à-vis criticism of the pseudo-Islamic governance by corrupt hegemonic forces and the co-opted ulema. Additionally, they sought to curtail fears regarding Quranic punitive measures in relation to *hudūd* punishments by highlighting the role of abrogation and historical restraint in administering punishments. That being said, the early articulation of sharia was more focused on generalisations so as not to encourage divisiveness within society. Herein, key Political Islamist thinkers including Husayn Hudaybi and Abdel Qader Awda maintained that much of the modern commercial and criminal law system inherited from foreign elements was actually in accordance with sharia and did not violate its general principles.[179]

The widespread Islamic revivalism of the 1970s across the MENA region has provided an opportunity for Political Islamists to 'double down' on sharia as the articulating principle of reforming society. In other words, the support for a society more in tune with Islamic morals has been accompanied by the opening of political space for Islamists to disseminate their ideology. The opening of this space however has resulted in several paradoxical implications. For instance, while it is argued by Political Islamists that sharia needs to be epistemologically approached, most organisations operate an environment wherein its membership is strictly inculcated with an ontological outlook so as to maintain cohesiveness and loyalty. Furthermore, by clearly defining what sharia entails larger organisations run the risk of being divisive and fracturing political support. Yet at the same time, a lack of clarity on defining sharia does little to curtail public concerns especially in light of the application of sharia by regimes in places such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Taliban in Afghanistan. It also enables factions and other Islamists to emerge

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[178] Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *Reasoning With God: Reclaiming Shari'ah in the Modern Age.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Print.

[179] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 240-242. Print.

as competitors by either charging organisations as being un-Islamic as in the case of the recent political emergence of *salafi*[180] parties or by those that proclaim a middle way (*wassatiya*) of reconciling Islam with modernity through coexisting universalisms.[181] Amidst these issues it has become increasingly certain that the politicisation of Islamists has brought sharia to the forefront of both the social and now political sphere in which they now operate.

1.5. The 'Signification' of Islam as an Ideology

In the first half of this chapter the merits and pitfalls of cultural and modernity based arguments on Political Islam were considered and it was postulated that any analysis on the persistence of the phenomenon would substantially benefit by proportionately accounting for the seminal role of ideology and civil society. Thus far, the present chapter has explored the ways in which ideational activities may emerge as a response to dissatisfaction and societal antagonism. The role of symbolic themes has also been investigated given that it manifests in the form of ideation, which is closely linked to the 'distinct circumstances, ideas and material conditions' that shape and are shaped alongside the history of the state. The ideological formations that materialise out of the aforementioned conditions must develop an ideational complement if they are to be successful, let alone historically organic. The ideation process for Islamists thus partly consists of the attempt to signify the themes of the caliphate and *umma* alongside sharia. These themes are often articulated in contradistinction to the modern nation-state with the aim of cultivating religious and social solidarity for an alternative mode of governance. If we recall back to the previous chapter, the abovementioned fits within the approach of Islamists engaging themselves within a battle concerned with the foundations of the state

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[180] The term salafi is complex and often overlaps as it can entail followers that are strict literalists, politically active or jihadis. They may emerge from any of the four schools of thought (*madhab*) or none at all provided that they are well versed in Islamic jurisprudence. However, in this thesis the term denotes that individuals or groups that are politically active in enforcing adherence to their strict interpretation of Islam in daily life.
[181] Baker, Raymond W. *Islam Without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006. Pg. 9-13. Print.

rather than with liberalism. This has, in many regards, led Political Islamists to attempt to establish Islam as a master signifier that complements their protracted approach to obtaining power.

The following section therefore aims to explore the conceptual underpinnings that reinforce the Political Islamist attempt to manufacture consent for an alternative, viable and counter-hegemonic form of governance. In particular, the seminal contribution of Bobby S. Sayyid on Islamist ideology is critically assessed in order to determine the extent to which Islamists successfully manage to propel Islam into a Lacanian master signifier quilted by the themes of the caliphate and *umma*. Upon having explored the possibility of Islam as a master signifier, the case is ultimately made that Islamists fall considerably short in their efforts to establish Islam as such. The failure in doing so is not indicative of empirical excess but rather the product of the complex social realities that coat the political and ideological application of Islam within the intricate sphere of civil society. To state it differently, the failure is reflective of the uniqueness of historical state formation, the varied organisation of the political sphere and of the social processes produced by local power dynamics – a combination which resigns Political Islam to a disparate and often discombobulated state of affairs. It would therefore benefit us at this juncture to turn to the conceptual underpinnings so that we can begin to unravel the ideational methods utilised by Political Islamists.

The Political Islamist pursuit to sediment authoritative status for Islam in political life entails an active and conscious effort to proselytize the belief that Islam provides an alternative and superior means of mitigating adverse social, economic and political conditions brought on by proponents of the modern nation-state. At its crux, the endeavour is wholly concerned with manufacturing an ideological programme capable of generating consent to actualise authoritative status for Islam in political life. The path to doing so involves Political Islamists establishing an ideological platform whereby dissatisfaction with existing social conditions can be signified through the presentation of 'Islam' as a viable solution. Yet, when viewed concurrently as a whole, the ideological utilisation of religion for the purpose of cultivating societal consent is hindered by the

inherent and paradoxical difficulties surrounding its political application. The inability or failure to actualise ideology is reflected back into Islam as an ideology rather than a religion, which in turn results in ideological inconsistency and variance both within and across Islamist organisations. The processes surrounding the political application involve the signification and dissemination of particular themes aimed at de-centring the modern nation-state system.

As with any ideological programme, it is less pertinent as to whether belief in said ideology is rooted in a set of unbiased facts that accurately correspond with reality. Rather, it is germane that the ideas stemming out of an ideological programme can be readily imposed and believed as factual. To put it in Lacanian psychoanalytic terminology, the imposition and interpretation of ideologically disseminated 'facts' and whether they are believed to be true is ultimately contingent on how ideology is interpreted and the extent to which it is truly followed.[182] The imposition of themes such as the caliphate, social solidarity, *umma* and sharia thus serve to stabilise the master node despite historically lacking institutional embodiment. In turn, given that the symbolisation of the aforementioned themes arises solely out of human activity, Islam as a religion is able to escape symbolisation. That is to say that it assumes an 'impossible-real' point of reference whereby it is present only in its effects and thus not something that can be totalised.[183] The caliphate and *umma* are therefore retroactively and reciprocally imposed to reflect the political objectives and social realities facing Political Islamists. The articulation of Islam as a master signifier entails cultivating a consciousness of Islam that can transcend all other nodal points and solidify it as the alternative means to actualise improved social conditions. Naturally however, the cultivation of religion into a master signifier is not something that can be 'freely' achieved, as it often requires authoritative measures. As Antonio Gramsci cogently points out:

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[182] Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Other Side of Pyschoanalysis Book XVII.* Trans. Russell Grigg. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008. Pg. 13. Print.

[183] Tomsic, Samo and Andreja Zevnik. *Jacques Lacan: Between Psychoanalysis and Politics.* New York: Routledge, 2015. Pg. 264. Print.

Religion and common sense cannot constitute an intellectual order, because they cannot be reduced to unity and coherence even within an individual consciousness, let alone collective consciousness. Or rather they cannot be so reduced 'freely' – for this may be done by 'authoritarian' means, indeed within limits that has been done in the past. – Antonio Gramsci[184]

Gramsci's comments allude to two noteworthy points concerning the Islamist venture to manufacture consciousness via religion. The first is that the process of constituting an intellectual order predicated on religion becomes inversed. To state it differently, every signifier is articulated and framed in a manner that reduces its interpretation to an Islamic frame or point of view. This process is then supplemented by the retroactive emphasis placed on religious precepts as a means of reinforcing the authority of Islamist hierarchical orders. The two tiers work in concert to emphasise Islam as a master node that 'quilts' together signifiers with the signified. The entire process is contingent on an unresolved and overriding societal antagonism or void that, in the first instance, created a political opening for social forces to emerge forth and voice their dissatisfaction vis-à-vis ideation. Islamists address the societal void by promulgating an ideological programme that is supplemented by substantive religious requirements that demand obedience and loyalty. The retroactive utilisation of religion in turn aids Islamists in their efforts to socially condition supporters towards an Islamic path to social reform. However, as Gramsci reminds us, the entire ordeal of reducing religion into a unified collective consciousness is difficult to accomplish 'freely.' Given that Islamists find themselves engulfed within contentious dialectical relationships with the respective elites in their society, they are by no means exempt from the abovementioned reality. The intermittent repression of Islamists is often accompanied by a shift towards reinforcing internal hierarchical structures as a means of entrenching organisational loyalty, secrecy and subordination.

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[184] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg.326. Print.

The utilisation of religion, particularly in the form of 'master signifier' should not however be regarded as the manipulation of religion solely for political purposes. Rather, it should be understood as the combination of efforts undertaken to combat societal antagonisms by developing an alternative ideological programme. Hence, the contest over the foundation of the state is reciprocally linked to the pervasiveness of a societal void that is exacerbated by existing conditions, power dynamics and a host of social processes. The ideological narratives to emerge thus both shape and are shaped by the integral nature of power relations. The retroactive application of religion further enables Islamists to retain their hierarchical power structures whilst simultaneously enabling Islam to maintain its specificity – even if it paradoxically strips meaning away from religion. To state it in Zizek's terminology, by retaining its 'itness'[185] factor the articulation of Islam escapes signification yet is still able to cultivate consciousness in the face of various contested meanings.[186] The ideological utilisation of elements such as the *umma* and caliphate as fixative components of Islam as an ideology assists Islamists in fortifying institutional mechanisms that latently indoctrinate and mitigate the divisiveness that inevitably surfaces as a result of multiple locally constructed meanings of Islam, the religion. The articulation of Islam in the form of a master signifier is suggestive of the Islamist attempt to cultivate consent for their respective programmes as representing an ideal path for social change across the spectrum.

1.5.1. Islam as a 'Master Signifier'

The ideational methods used to cultivate an Islamic worldview are dialectically connected to the western ideological 'imports' that they seek to displace and present as merely one of many options.[187] The method of cultivating such a worldview ensues by framing all social signifiers as ancillary to the nodal point that is Islam. (R. Butler 2004) Here, the relationship between signifier and signified is considered arbitrary as well as

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[185] Zizek, Slavoj. *Interrogating the Real*. Ed. Rex Butler and Scott Stephens. London: Continuum, 2005. Pg. 371. Print.

[186] Sayyid, Bobby S. *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism.* London: Zed Books, 2003. p. 46. Print.

[187] In spite of this, Islamists are still predominantly Manichean in their thinking. Ie., the only ideological alternative is an Islamic form of governance.

symbolic insofar as that it need not actually reflect reality, ascribe to facts or even be the best option for mitigating social ills. Instead, the meanings constructed by and for Islam hone in on cultivating the indisputable *belief* that Islam alone can rectify antagonisms within the signifying order that other signifiers repeatedly fail to resolve.[188] In such a rendering Islam both gives and is given meaning through its articulation of political and ideological terms.[189] The dissemination of Islam as a master signifier therefore marks the attempt to solidify Islam as the nodal point that is quilted by 'free-floating' signifiers such as the caliphate and *umma*.

Bobby S. Sayyid's seminal, albeit at times disputable *A Fundamental Fear* provides a comprehensive and unparalleled conceptual understanding of Islam as a master signifier. Sayyid applies a modified understanding of Saussurian linguistics to arrive at the conclusion that the emergence of Islam as a master signifier in Muslim communities corresponds directly with the societal void created by the abolition of the caliphate[190] and the subsequent decline of the hegemonic 'West.' The void created by the abolition of the caliphate is alleged to correspond with the gradual weakening of Western hegemony as denoting an undisputed ideological path of progress. The waning of Western hegemony, it is asserted, has facilitated the opening of social and political space wherein antagonisms have become more pronounced and counter-ideological programmes have been able to more readily surface. Sayyid equates the abolition of the caliphate and the decline of Western hegemony with the revival of Islamism and the emergence of Islam as a master signifier that quilts together all other signifiers vis-à-vis the cultivation of an

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[188] The primacy assigned to believing in ideology is equally important towards the pursuit of achieving goals. In other words, the emphasis of ideology is not in fact but in presenting ideology as fact: 'Believing is seeing.'

[189] Butler, Rex. *Slavoj Zizek: What is a Master-Signifier.* Lacan.com 2004. Web. December 12, 2016. http://www.lacan.com/zizek-signifier.htm

[190] Although it is undeniable that the abolition had important political and socioeconomic ramifications, Ali Abd al-Raziq argues that the structures of Islam are not political and that in spite of being bound by religion, Arabs differed in terms of various aspects of life including but not limited to politics, civil, social and economic. He states: "the state was variegated to the extent that Arab life dictated development of the concept of state and government." See: Abd-al-Raziq, Ali. *The Unity of Religion and Arabs.* Trans. Kamran Talattof. Cairo: Matba'at Misr, 1925. Pg. 81-89. Print.

alternative consciousness of daily life across Muslim communities.[191] Although the articulation of Islam in such a manner naturally strips away religious substance it is said to nevertheless provide Political Islamists with the crucial opportunity to utilise Islam as a means to "retroactively constitute the universe of meaning as a unified totality."[192] In other words, it is the emergence of this totality that enables Political Islamists to deny competing ideologies space while concurrently garnering support for social reform despite lacking their own concrete and transparent political programmes.

From a conceptual viewpoint Sayyid's contribution on Islamic revivalism is an attempt to conceptualise an approach whereby Islam denotes a single and unified entity. More importantly, his contribution helps establish the central and primary role of ideology instead of reducing it to a secondary political instrument. Sayyid views Islamic revivalism as derivative of a sequence of developments prompted by the abolition of the caliphate, the failures of Kemalism[193] as well as the waning hegemony of the 'West.' The caliphate is emphasised as the severing of the "sedimented link" between the state and Islam. The abolition is thus correlated with the opening of space for political forces to re-articulate Islam as a political discourse.[194] The re-articulation is however not evocative of multiple 'smaller' versions of Islam according to Sayyid. This is because the re-articulation is attributed to the 'void' created by the dissolution of the 'institution of the caliphate', which marked the moment in which the exclusion of Islam from the state enabled it to emerge as a master signifier.[195] The assertion therefore is that the caliphate

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[191] Sayyid, Bobby S. *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism.* London: Zed Books, 2003. Pg. 42. Print.
[192] Ibid., 48.
[193] Sayyid views Kemalism as identifying its policies with the west and holding the meta-narrative that westernization and modernisation are synonymous. Kemalism pushed Islam to the periphery and regarded it as an obstacle to modernisation. The antagonist for Islamists however is not Kemalism for Sayyid but the 'west' as it represents 'a denial of Islam, economic mismanagement, state repression, imperialism, cultural erosion.' See Sayyid, Bobby S. *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism.* London: Zed Books, 2003. Pg. 119. Print.
[194] Ibid., 78.
[195] Ibid., 55.

operates as a 'quilting point' that prevents Islam from assuming multiple meanings as suggested by the likes of Aziz al-Azmeh and Abdul Hamid El-Zein.[196]

Sayyid associates the recognition of the caliphate as an ideological cornerstone with the weakening of identity in Europe. He asserts that the decline of the West is indicative of the waning power and influence of Eurocentric ideology in dictating the discourses of modernity.[197] Citing Stuart Hall's pioneering work in the field of cultural studies Sayyid concludes that the 'West' as an analytical category has become a fragmented affair and that 'western' hegemony is no longer the unquestioned authority in setting universal criterion capable of centralising discursive horizons around the category of the 'west.'[198] Consequently, the 'de-centring' of the West marks the transition from a world in which modernity was the construct of Europe to a post-modern world in which there is an awareness that the 'west' has ceased to be the "unquestioned and dominant centre of the world."[199] He therefore implores that the debate on Political Islam be viewed not through a modern versus non-modern lens not rather as a project that seeks to articulate modernity through a narrative that deviates from Eurocentric perspectives.[200] Within this framework Islamism can be regarded as a 'moment within the discourse of the West' that cannot exist in the absence of suspicion against 'western meta-discourse.'[201] Sayyid compellingly argues that if we were to understand Islamism in traditional terms then we would also have to incorrectly regard the unavailability of rival discourses in the MENA region as an effect of not being modern. Islamism's relationship with modernity thus ought to be viewed as markedly dissimilar from that of other competing modern discourses[202] insofar as that Islamism differentiates itself by explicitly attempting to 'provincialize' the West as one of many centres.[203]

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[196] Ibid.,
[197] Ibid., 110.
[198] Ibid., 103
[199] Ibid., 109
[200] Ibid., 105.
[201] Ibid., 118
[202] Ibid.,
[203] Ibid., 129.

The emergence of Islam as a master signifier is attributed to the void created by the abolition of the caliphate and the gradual weakening of western hegemony. The subsequent proliferation of Political Islam has its foundations in the aforementioned although it is also said to coincide with the political success of Islamists during the Iranian revolution, which catapulted the belief that the success could be duplicated elsewhere. The assertion made by Sayyid thus is that Political Islamists are resolute in their efforts to articulate Islam as a master signifier that can quilt together all free floating signifiers and frame societal antagonisms in a manner that cultivates an alternative Islamic worldview. The noteworthy inference to be drawn is that the Islamist failure to cultivate sufficient consent for ideational activity is sufficiently offset by efforts aimed at de-centring the 'West' through actively denying space to oppositional discourses.[204] This indicates that Islamic revivalism and efforts to cultivate an Islamic worldview must formatively involve the local sphere or milieu in which ideational activity is most readily discernable.

1.6. Empirical Realities: Ideology and Power

There are a plethora of difficulties that emerge when making the assertion that an abstract 'Islamic worldview' applies to a scope as vast as *all* Muslim communities. Amongst the difficulties is the premise that Islam, or any other ideology for that matter, contains within it the 'transparent knowledge of truth.' The essence of ideology is to escape classification whilst retaining the ability to be propagated as truth. However, its universal application is designed to obscure the inherent and complex exercise of power by select individuals, blocs, ideological institutions and social forces. This means that it is essential to account for the integral histories of states in relation to how power dynamics evolve and how competing forms of *asabiya* manifest in an attempt to organise the political sphere. That is to suggest that the 'truth' in an ideology is inexorably connected to existing forms of power relations and the desire to alleviate the societal antagonisms that it produces. The entire process of articulating ideology as truth is also subject to a litany of complex material contradictions that shape the methods employed to contest or retain

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[204] Ibid., 86

political and economic power. The effectiveness of the latter is critical to the effectiveness of an ideological programme to be believed as truth. The success of an ideology is therefore ultimately contingent on its ability to be regarded as true so as to foster social unity and safeguard the general interests of subordinate groups. Hence, while a frontal assault on state power may result in the acquisition of power, it alone does not guarantee the retention of power over a prolonged period of time without buttressing it with ideational complement.[205]

This means that while ascribing a unified totally to Islam as a master signifier helps to advance our understanding of the initial rise of Islamists, it unfortunately does not sufficiently emphasise the irreconcilabilities between material contradictions. The signification of the caliphate and umma as quilting points thus overlooks the "globally articulated cluster of differences…unified by economic, political, cultural and ideological facts of dominance" and how they are unevenly reflected back into the process of historical state formation and geo-temporal power dynamics.[206] The signification of Islam as a master form obfuscates the centrality of power and the reciprocal interactions between historical factors, ideology and social processes that serve to produce incongruent conditions at the conjunctural level. To state it differently, the cultivation and indoctrination of Islam as a master signifier, may begin as such, but gradually takes on varied forms and practices that are intimately linked to a host of historical and localised realities. The point of deviation therefore is not that Islamists do not seek to manufacture Islam in the form of a master signifier but rather that the organisational and political strategies involved in doing so are subjected to specific histories, social processes[207] and material contradictions that override Islamist floating signifiers and quilting points such as the caliphate and *umma* so as to render Islam as a 'protean category'.[208] The use of the caliphate as a quilting point and continued antagonism sidesteps the disjointed views

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[205] The acquisition of power is neither absolute nor binary in the sense that Political Islamists must displace the state or hegemonic force. In this sense, the deterrence of oppositional discourses can potentially represent a sufficient form of power.

[206] Al Azmeh, Aziz. *Islams and Modernities*. London: Verso Books, 2009. Pg. 40. Print.

[207] It is through the interpellation of social processes owing to the dominant ideological discourse that fractures arise in the signification of quilting points such as the caliphate.

[208] Ibid.,24.

regarding it within Islamist programmes and its historical lack of institutional embodiment. As a result, local dynamics of power profoundly complicate, and ultimately deter efforts that aim to sediment Islam as a master signifier – within Islamist organisations, throughout society and certainly across *all* Muslim communities.

Sayyid's conceptual approach to unravelling Islamic revivalism constitutes a deliberate effort to avoid what he regards as the perils of empirical excess. In fact, Sayyid regards empirical based analyses of Political Islam as only helpful in producing an itemised list of challenges for the state. Unfortunately, this indirectly reinforces the notion of myopic state-centric approaches that dominate the discourse on Political Islam. The belief that the administrative-juridical and coercive apparatuses of the state, even in the most authoritarian of states, can sufficiently negate the need to cultivate societal consent within civil society is troubling. Analyses that take such an approach often overstate the coercive power of the state and reduce Political Islam's relationships and interactions with the state to a mere reactionary existence. Lost in this line of reasoning is the central role of the dialectical relationships between Political Islamists and hegemonic forces and how they heavily influence the tangible realities that shape daily life. Empirical studies on Islamist revivalism can aid our conceptual understanding by shedding light on the importance of power and ideology. They also can provide us with critical insight into how to gauge the factional dynamics at play within and across Islamist movements, both of which help to carve out notable differences in the ideological and political programmes of Political Islamists.

Although Sayyid puts forth a very compelling framework on Islam as a master signifier, the approach is ultimately hindered by the vague clarifications regarding the decline of the 'West' let alone the 'plutocracies' that constitute the 'West.' Likewise, it is uncertain as to what the parameters of the political space created by the dissolution of the caliphate and the failures of Kemalism constitute. If, as according to Sayyid, one of the key triggers for Islamic revivalism resides in the Islamist realisation that state power can be captured,

as was the case with the Iranian revolution of 1979[209] then it becomes essential to explore country specific historical and social conditions given that there is no universal formula for acquiring power. We therefore stand to benefit from honing in on the aforementioned themes in relation to the tangible impact they have on individual Political Islamist movements. That is to say that the decline of euro centrism as a hegemonic discourse cannot and should not be viewed as having evenly impact across *all* Muslim communities irrespective of the ways in which the proliferation of meta-narratives have allegedly fragmented European identity and its alleged onset of nihilism. Sayyid himself acknowledges this fact by stating that hegemony is always incomplete and spread unevenly through social relations that empower certain social institutions whilst excluding others.[210]

Sayyid's frequent and abstract references to 'western plutocracies'[211] as well as the ways in which the ideological decline of Eurocentric ideology as a hegemonic discourse have impacted Political Islam could benefit from a more concrete approach given that Sayyid deems the 'West' rather than a Kemalist crisis of authority to be the ultimate antagonist for Political Islamists.[212] The abstraction of Islam into a complete ideological discourse also proves troublesome, as confidence in the defunct caliphate and *umma* are not remotely as uniform across Muslim societies as Sayyid purports them to be.[213] In fact, it

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[209] Sayyid, Bobby S. *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism.* London: Zed Books, 2003. Pg. 48. Print.
[210] Ibid., 85.
[211] One might further assume from Sayyid's choice references to 'western plutocracies' and his stance against empirical analyses of Political Islam that his hegemonic discourse consists of a classical state-centric interpretation of hegemonic alliances at the international level as opposed to a more nuanced Coxian interpretation that seeks to deconstruct the nature of alliances both within and across supranational neoliberal institutions. Yet, even if this is not the case, Sayyid's abstraction of the vast category that is the 'west' obfuscates our understanding of the intellectual and political participants who vie for hegemony. To state it differently, a lack of clarity emerges insofar as that it becomes increasingly difficult to deconstruct the social processes and the alliances that employ ideology with the explicit aim of becoming hegemonic.
[212] Sayyid, Bobby S. *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism.* London: Zed Books, 2003. Pg. 119. Print.
[213] This can be contrasted on the opposite end by al-Azmeh's assertion that multiple Islams exist as there can be no single unified application of Islam. For al-Azmeh, Islam is

can be argued that the empirical realities created by power dynamics serve to fracture the signification of the caliphate and the cultivation of a transnational *asabiya*.[214] Thus, while the articulation of Islam as a master signifier provides us with a strong foundation in establishing some of the ways in which Islamists seek to utilise Islam as an articulating principle it does not enable us to unravel how they cultivate day-to-day consciousness. This requires an integral analysis that incorporates the dialectic between Islamist organisations, civil society and the respective state in question.

The configuration of power dynamics varies according to historical development and local social conditions that are tangibly shaped at the local level in spite of stemming from international relations, in the first instance. This process further devolves due to the impact that geo-temporal effects have on individual Islamist programmes hence Political Islam's attempt to retroactively articulate Islam so as to give it fixative authenticity in an environment of perpetual change.[215] Hence, while social conditions may be mimetic and modular at first glance, a nuanced and integral reading of power and ideological variations within Muslim societies can advance our perspective. As Fred Halliday points out:

> *What constitutes acceptable dignity or recognition varies from historical period to period, and from one society to another: what is tolerable in one place and time is not in another, leaving aside variations across gender.*[216]

The variance that Halliday alludes to is indicative that the retroactive application of Islam can be better understood if viewed in accordance with the key social developments that concretely unfold within civil society – the breeding ground for ideology and power

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constructed within the history of modernity. This abstraction however undercuts the phenomenon of Islam as well as that of Islamic societies. See: Mirsepassi, Ali and Tadd Graham Fernée. *Islam, Democracy, and Cosmopolitanism: At Home and in the World.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014. Pg. 108. Print.

[214] For instance, Dale Eickleman and others have similarly pointed out that societies such as those in Indonesia and Malaysia maintain distinctly different relationships with Islam than those in the Middle East.

[215] Al-Azmeh, Aziz. *Islam and Modernities.* London: Verso Books, 2009. Pg. 41 Print.

[216] Halliday, Fred. *An Encounter with Fukuyama.* New Left Review (193), 1992. Pg. 93. Print.

configurations. It is within this sphere that the reciprocal relationship between power and ideology jointly operate as primary motivators for Political Islamists and their protracted goal to cultivate Islam as a viable counter-hegemonic discourse capable of achieving authoritative status in political life. Thus, while the preliminary ideational efforts of Islamists are likely to be comparable to one another the process by which they seek to complement their ideological foundation is subject to case specific political, socioeconomic and historical experiences. The trajectory of an ideological programme is therefore intricately entwined to a plethora of complex and often contradictory dynamics that complicate efforts to articulate, cultivate and sediment Islamist ideology from being accepted as unequivocally and universally 'true.'[217]

The articulation of Islam as a master signifier is bound to a variety of social processes that are not static but are in fact sporadic. Hence, while the revival of Islamism is certainly attributed in part to the caliphate and the alleged decline of the 'West', it would be ill advised to develop an understanding of Islamism exclusively through these variables as they only offer limited insight into Islamism's continued prevalence. In other words, the value assigned to the caliphate and the decline of the 'West' is overstated as neither variable dominates 'Muslim society' on a daily basis as a chief antagonism. As Zizek puts it, the concrete universality of any signifier, master or otherwise, is negated in the event that it fails to add up or equal itself. This failure is then reflected back into the signifier thereby periodically changing it, suggesting that the failure in the signifier is internal, and not to be found externally.[218] The place to look for this internal failure is in civil society where power relations unfold and formatively impact ideational activity.

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[217] The argument as progressed by Bobby Sayyid, and owing to Zizek, is that there is something that not only creates but also "sustains the identity of a given ideological field beyond all possible variations of its ideological content." In other words, if there are many versions of Islam then there would be no need to invoke Islam repeatedly. See Sayyid, Bobby S. A Fundamental Fear. 2003. Pg. 44.

[218] Butler Judith, Laclau Ernesto and Slavoj Zizek. *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on The Left*. London: Verso Books, 2000. Pg. 99-100. Print.

1.7. The Reciprocity of Power, Ideology and Modernity

There is an organic relationship that conjoins ideology, power and modernity. It would be specious to regard these elements as being wholly distinct from one another just as it would be to view them as having equal impact. To do so, whilst tempting for methodological reasons, inhibits efforts aimed at unravelling the vast phenomenon that is Political Islam. The fluid nature of each of these elements may produce moments where one element appears to take precedence over another but this ought to be treated as a oscillating effect rather than an established pattern. It would be erroneous to reduce ideology as being secondary to modernity or to the effects of capitalism given that ideology itself plays an influential role in guiding the trajectory of modernity and capitalism. The ideology of a hegemonic bloc, especially if it is historically organic, is linked to the process of interpellation which itself influences competing ideologies. The reciprocal relationship between ideology and power operate as such that both drive and are driven by each other. This does not indicate that the two are equal but rather proportionate in relation to the historical, political and socioeconomic fabric of the conjunctural terrain in question.

The signification of Islam as a master signifier is invariably concerned with establishing authoritative status for Islam in political life. The venture to articulate and impose ideas through a master signifier is made possible due to the societal void created by dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs. This provides Islamists the requisite political opening to expedite their efforts to cultivate consciousness for a counter-hegemonic ideology. The challenges that unfold in establishing Islam as a nodal point stem from the abovementioned complexities that contour the reciprocal linkages between power, ideology and modernity. The quilting of symbolic themes is an attempt to embed the caliphate and *umma* as indisputable 'facts' and accepted realities across Muslim societies. These themes, in addition to lacking institutional embodiment, fall prey to the inherent complexities surrounding historical state formation and power relations, which ultimately impede them from becoming embedded within the social fabric of civil society. Hence, while power and social dynamics must initially stem from relations

pertaining to the international sphere, the inimitable interactions they undergo at more immediate levels produce malleable variations between Political Islamist organisations and their respective ideological programmes.

It is why Islam as a religion escapes signification whereas Islam as an ideology does not. The failure of the latter is attributed to shortcomings within Islamist programmes thereby prompting divisiveness and deviation from said ideology. Ideological variance is not however indicative of the presence of multiple smaller versions of Islam. Rather, it is indicative of the existence of multiple disparate Islamist organisations that have varied strategies. The political and social experiences of these organisations contribute to shaping the extent to which symbolic themes such as the caliphate or *umma* are emphasised. Thus, while the discursive language between Political Islamists may be similar the dialectical experiences are bound to vary from one organisation to another, within society, and across states. The arrangement or permutations of these empirical realities make it difficult to establish Islam as a master signifier through which all else is signified. As such, it would benefit us to explore the overarching discursive nature of Islamist ideologies prior to shifting our focus to the nuances of the conjunctural terrain.

1.7.1. 'Framing' Islam: The Umma, Ulema and The Floodgates of Ijtihad

The raison d'etre of Political Islam is indicative of its efforts to actively carve out authoritative status for Islam in political life. Accordingly, it constitutes the attempt to give Islam a commanding voice in matters pertaining to immediate daily social experiences and the bonds of fellowship that emerge vis-à-vis socio-political activity and inter-subjective allegiances.[219] The multidimensional and dialectic milieu in which these experiences and bonds are formed produce considerable ideational variation in how to mitigate social dissatisfaction. Thus, while the ideational and political strategies of Islamists are invariably interwoven to developments that originate in the international

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[219] Cox, Robert. "Towards a post-hegemonic conceptualization of world order: reflections on the relevancy of Ibn Khaldun." *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics.* Ed. James N. Rosenau, Ernst-Otto Czempiel. London: Cambridge UP. Pg. 149. Print.

sphere, they are reciprocally connected to, and concretely stimulated by, the immediate social conditions that impact the day-to-day lives of the polity.

It is thus the oft divisive and less than benign milieu of civil society where activity and interactions between social forces take formative shape.[220] A shared, albeit splintered, discursive language guides Islamist social activity on this conjunctural terrain. At its core, the discursive language of Political Islamists seeks to denigrate and de-centre positivist Westphalian influenced discourses propagated by hegemonic forces. The chief requisite clause concerns the articulation of Islam as an unparalleled solution for alleviating societal antagonisms, voids and dissatisfaction. Beyond this, it branches into elements that are contingent, broadly speaking, on the dialectical relationships and experiences that Political Islamist organisations maintain with the respective state and society. This means that the articulation of how to free Muslim societies from the chains and bonds of their hegemonic oppressors can unfold in a number of ways. The most **traditional**,[221] and popular, of these approaches evokes shades of classical realism insofar as that it develops its worldview by encouraging feelings of insecurity and mistrust towards the 'other.'

Organisations that advocate this stance promote Islam as a comprehensive political order[222] (*al siyasi al Islami)* built upon a perfect doctrine. This is then parlayed into a dichotomisation of the international arena into Islamic and non-Islamic entities with the explicit aim of establishing the former as an indivisible global community of believers united under a central governing body. While sovereignty is solely attributed to God, a divinely leader mirroring Hobbes' Leviathan is nevertheless tasked with administering God's will vis-à-vis a hierarchical system of governance. The supposed perceptibility of the *umma* within this system does not necessarily negate the existence of the state (*dawla)* but rather confines it to a secondary role that renders it tribal and parochial. The traditional approach typically tends to shun positivism, a posteriori knowledge and epistemology in favour of an ontological approach that wholly concerns itself with

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[220] It is on this conjunctural terrain that alliances are formed, ideological divisions arise, opponents are deliberately undermined and power is most readily contested.
[221] The use of the following terms and their descriptions: traditional, non-traditional and salafi-jihadi are not intended to be fixative or rigid definitions.
[222] All sorts of social interaction, social processes, economic developments, etc.

revealing answers from a perfect religious doctrine. The propagation of adhering to religious doctrine, or rather, the uncovering of meaning from a perfect religious text, is designed to cultivate support for the actualisation of a realistic utopia[223] which signals a Hegelian-esque end of history[224] by ushering in the rightful restoration of the Islamic political order.[225] In practice however, the over-reliance on treating religious texts as perfect doctrines that simply require the unveiling of information (*tafsir)* runs the risk of devolving into passivity and intellectual inertia.

By contrast, the **non-traditional** branch[226] that contributes to shaping Islamist discursive language implores a critical approach to revealing Islamic texts. Influenced by the likes of Muhammad 'Abduh, Muhammad Iqbal and to a lesser extent Ibn Taymiyya,[227] non-traditionalist Political Islamists envisage greater intellectual and rational activity through *ijtihad* (independent critical reasoning) in order to harmoniously reform Islamic intellectual thought and practices with the times. For instance, Ibn Taymiyya argued as far back as the 13th century that the fallibility of human judgment dictates that Islamic law must remain flexible in order to account for new evidence for which there may not yet be any precedence. The push for *ijtihad* constitutes an attempt to rationally expand the interpretation and interpolation of meaning so as not to confine it strictly to matters of precedence. The restriction of *ijtihad* dates back to the fall of Baghdad in the 13th century, which led the Abbasids to call for social solidarity, in part, by issuing decrees that restricted intellectual reasoning to matters of precedence (*taqlid)*. This was further accompanied by the co-option of the ulema into the governing system so as to exert societal cohesion and control. Ibn Taymiyya described the latter in the following terms:

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[223] Sayyid Qutb speaks of achieving realistic utopia in Milestones. His work is highly influential to many that fall within the traditionalist camp.

[224] Turner, John P. *Inquisition in Early Islam: The Competition for Political and Religious Authority in the Abbasid Empire*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013. Print.

[225] This creates a dichotomy akin to Benedict Anderson's 'us vs. them' that manifests itself in the form of *Dar al Islam* and *Dar al Harb* which roughly translate into that which lies within the realm of Islam and that which falls outside, respectively.

[226] It is important to distinguish that non-traditionalists constitute factions within organisations and independent Islamist writers for the most part. The former are influenced by the likes of Tariq Al-Bishri and Yousef Qaradawi.

[227] The polemics of Ibn Taymiyya at times made him a strict literalist and led to him being arrested on several occasions for anthropomorphism (tajsim).

"the custodians of religion have become elite and people are happy to 'slavishly imitate' rather than actively engage in independent reasoning."[228] These developments marked a critical shift away from the established belief amongst religious scholars that state initiated efforts to regulate the affairs of the material world ought to be deemed as toxic.[229]

The incorporation of the ulema into the state corresponded with the belief that it would inevitably become polluted. As noted by Ibn Khaldun in his observations on the decaying state, this resulted in a paradoxical, moral and ethical dilemma. Historically, the ulema had been tasked with championing the moral values of Islam and safeguarding them from the excess of rulers.[230] The co-option not only elevated their material status but also led to the narrowing of religious authority. Whereas the ulema had previously been comprised of a wide spectrum of 'men of knowledge' ranging from jurists, Sufis, theologians and philosophers, the co-option enabled jurists to monopolise control given their specialised knowledge of Islamic law.[231] This development was further exacerbated by the fact that the ulema predominantly represented the interests of the mercantile classes by building *networks* of relationships that served political self-interest.[232] While the networks were initially an offspring of under-developed state-society relations that produced poor integration and inadequate local infrastructure, the co-option intensified the path of the ulema towards becoming an elite and distinct religious class with a distinct discursive language. Hence, the co-option raised concerns not only in regard to the authenticity of the ulema as an ethical watchdog but also to the vitality of civil society.[233]

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[228] Sonn, Tamara. *Interpreting Islam: Bandali Jawzi's Islamic Intellectual History.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.
[229] The following Rumi quote captures the sentiment of the co-option of the ulema: " Whether it is the prince who formally visits him or he who goes to visit the prince, he is in every case the visitor and it is the prince who is visited." See: Arberry, A.J. *Discourses of Rumi.* London: Routledge Curzon, 1995. Pg. 13. Print.
[230] Khaldun, Ibn. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History.* Translated by Franz Rosenthal. New York : Pantheon Books , 1958.
[231] Ibid.,
[232] Ibid., 47
[233] Ibid., 45

The non-traditionalist attempt to reinvigorate *ijtihad* has largely proven unsuccessful due to a variety of reasons. The systematic sedimentation of the ulema[234] as a legal body over time coupled with the bureaucratic legacy of colonial state and the introduction of the printing press helped to produce a homogenising effect that monopolised Islamic symbolism and discursive debate.[235] More recently, the spread of Salafism backed by petro-dollars has led non-traditionalists to defend against the charges of *tajsim* (anthropomorphism) and for engaging in 'excessive' intellectualism that falls outside the scope of the 'precedence-guided' legal establishment that is the ulema. Although the authority of the ulema has certainly eroded over time, they have nevertheless been able to utilise their networks by traversing outside of their respective communities to retain legitimacy. This has enabled them retain sufficient moral influence and power in spite of their stringent, precedence driven and socio-spatially limited interpretations of religious law which have otherwise often proven inadequate in addressing host-community specific social issues.

Conversely, the application of locally derived interpretations of religious law runs the debilitating risk of stunting forthcoming generations by confining them to precedence that is largely inapplicable to the specific social processes that they seek to address.[236] The non-traditionalist attempt to accommodate modernity without losing the essence of Islam is hindered by the aforementioned. Likewise, the assertions that polarising the world into two spheres in invalid in modern times and that they *umma* merely constitutes a metaphysical concept have failed to garner widespread support within the discursive language of Islamists. As such, the non-traditionalist call for an epistemological approach

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[234] Ernest Gellner deems the ulema to represent 'high Islam' in that it is organised and institutionalised. He claims that the lower version of Islam, the Islam of tribes, is more mystic. Tribes therefore are said to aspire to the high culture of Islam. Yet, as Zubaida proves, historically, the ulema have been known to engage in whirling dervishes, partake in mysticism and so forth.

[235] Erast, Carl W. *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. Pg. 194. Print.

[236] Political Islamists and the ulema speak different languages of discourse. The ulema are committed to a historical tradition of interpretation in which fundamental texts find legitimacy whereas Islamists are anti-hermeneutical and their interpretations can only find legitimacy if they are denied as being new. See Roxanne Euben (1999, 86.)

and greater openness vis-à-vis cooperation and coexistence have increasingly led to institutional exclusion, the resurgence of *taqlid* and even the propagation of millennial notions of a forthcoming 'prince.'

The incremental but pronounced influence of the emergent **Salafi-Jihadi**[237] branch of the discourse can help to explain the fledgling inability of the non-traditionalist perspective from gaining traction. Broadly speaking, the salafi-jihadi position is one that espouses an evangelical approach that abhors foreign influences, is averse to compromise or collusion with the modern nation-state system and altogether dismisses the practice of *ijtihad*. It seeks to return Islam to a golden age by lobbying for the revival of the caliphate despite the fact that the symbolisation of the caliphate predominantly remains a 'hollow phrase'[238] across the vast majority of Muslim societies.[239] Although the salafi-jihadi approach ultimately falls outside the scope of this thesis due to its nature as a militant and extremist force, it is important to note that the movement has sought, in recent years, to take advantage of power dynamics by masquerading itself as a social force. Its penchant for violence and resistance to dialogue has however negated its attempts to prosper in cultivating consciousness and building alliances in its quest to contest the ideological and political hegemony of ruling blocs. It has nevertheless gained traction by developing clandestine cross-border networks that spread influence and disseminate ideology financed by petro-dollars.[240]

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[237] The likes of Abduh and Al-Banna were both proponents of Salafism in a much different context then the fundamentalist definition the term has taken on in contemporary times. Abduh in particular sought to retroactively apply and recontextualise Islam by reading modern virtues into the beginnings of Islam.

[238] Al-Rasheed, Madawi. *Demystifying the Caliphate.* London: C Hurst & Co Publishers, Ltd., 2013. Pg.91. Print. (Asad)

[239] Popular depictions of the caliphate in the form of films and television dramas in Egypt and Syria have painted the Caliphate in many ways, as an inspiration, as highlighting the dangers of unchecked absolutism, the pitfalls of despotism and tyranny and as an honour and burden in which autocracy is to be accepted as a fact of life.

[240] As we shall uncover in the case study, the socioeconomic and political conditions in Egypt during the 1950s led many exiled Brotherhood members to seek work in Saudi Arabia. Upon their return, these members had developed stringent salafist views that would signal a shift away from the varied elements, including Sufism, that had once contribute to shaping the Brotherhood's ideological outlook.

There are, of course, a considerable number of elements that overlap given the collective nature of the discursive language. Yet, there are also some elements between the branches the fail to gain ground. For instance, traditional groups that have a prolonged history of enduring state repression are quick to shun any shift towards adopting a violent approach. Conversely, Salafi-Jihadi accuse traditionalists for not being Islamic enough and for colluding with the state. In spite of projecting the same end goal Islamists often find themselves mired in conflict with one another. These conflicts denote an important internal power struggle that fractures the solidarity and ideational direction of Islamist organisations.[241] The local manifestations of these complex relations, amongst many others, are correspondingly reflected into Islamist ideational activity. The discursive language as a whole attempts to emphasise and super-ordinate certain aspects of ideology without the complete separation of others[242] so that each may retain relative autonomy as a constitutive part of the ideology akin to Benedetto Croce's dialectic of distincts.[243] The attempt to articulate 'Islam' as a comprehensive ideology through which everything else may be signified and given meaning is impeded by conjunctural realities. The subordination of elements such as the caliphate and *umma* ultimately strips them of their significance by turning them into a hollow phrase and metaphysical concept, respectively.

The unravelling of social conditions and power dynamics create a complex and contradictory conjunctural terrain that invariably impacts the articulation of 'Islam' and its ideational complement. The attempt to cultivate and propagate an organic ideology thus is not only subject to international developments and the individual histories of

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[241] While these rifts impede internal cohesion they do not hinder Islamists from placing their counterparts, the ulema, squarely into the line of fire. Islamists periodically contest the eroding authority of the ulema by charging them with conformism and complacency due to their inability to tangibly alleviate deteriorating social and moral conditions.

[242] E.g. the separation between the caliphate and kingly rule of dawlas. Both had rational justification as being historicised within Islam. See Cox, Robert. Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics. Pg. 150. Eds. Rosenau and Czempiel.

[243] Cox, Robert. Towards a post-hegemonic conceptualization of world order: reflections on the relevancy of Ibn Khaldun. Ed. James N. Rosenau. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 1992. Pg. 149. Print.

states but also to local power dynamics and the permeation of embedded ideological apparatuses. Moreover, the culture and traditions of Muslim societies are neither impervious nor intransigent so as to exist in isolation from these realities. Even Islam, the religion, cannot satisfactorily be analysed by solely observing its discursive practices. It is unfitting to assert, as Talal Asad does, that Islam only be assessed in accordance with its discursive practices. Asad argues that since religion is ultimately the product of discursive practices, its native voices are irreducible and thus not subject to the coercive constraints of sociological realities.[244] By excluding the possibility of a wider universal history his argument teeters towards relativism and pardons Islamists from criticism. The severing of Islam from a broader integral history as well as the conditions that shape the present is to detach it from modernity.[245] This however is an invalidation of history that stems from Asad's attempt to create a distinct other in relation to its western counterpart.[246] The discursive processes of religion and of Islamists firmly fall within the socio-political and ethical superstructure that comprises civil society and therefore ought to be analysed in relation to it – not in isolation from it. The separation of it is to avoid the relationship between Islam, Islamists and modernity.

The underlying rhetoric for a return to religion or to the past does not correspond with the inexorable trends that continually play a seminal role in defining, and over time, re-defining power relations and social conditions. It also does not account for the possibility that the ideological apparatuses of the hegemonic social force may be embedded within society. This would partially explain why Islamists increasingly seek to work within the confines of the political system, why they may paradoxically promote a subaltern nationalism in spite of vouching against such an ideology and perhaps why they have

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[244] Asad, Talal. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993. Print.
[245] Ibid.,
[246] Asad's argument is apologetic and promotes an uncritical understanding of Islam and Islamists. Similarly, his pupil, Sabah Mahmoud, in her discussion on the hyper-piety of Egyptian women promotes a comparable argument. Although her banal assertion that the hyper-piety of these women ought not to be judged by liberal terms is correct, she leaves no opening for a critical approach by facetiously confining any analysis of these women to the 'technologies of the self.' See Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

more recently lobbied for pluralism and democracy.[247] The discursive language of Islamists is irrevocably linked to these developments and thus cannot be analysed in absentia to them. The context as to why the traditionalist branch remains the most prominent, how the Salafists have made inroads into the political sphere and why the non-traditionalist are almost exclusively denied a voice rests in the conjunctural terrain that Political Islamists must navigate on a daily basis.

1.8. The 'Concreteness' of The Local

People aspire to the adventure which is 'beautiful' and interesting because it is the result of their own free initiative, in the face of the adventure which is 'ugly' and revolting, because due to conditions which are not proposed but imposed by others. – Antonio Gramsci[248]

A fundamental aspect of articulating Islam as an ideology lies in its attempts to distinguish itself from its liberal counterparts. This process involves framing oppositional liberal ideologies, including socialism and communism, as fragments of a broader western meta-discourse, which pervasively imposes itself on Muslim societies. Political Islamists thus seek to guard against any further concession of space to liberal ideologies by disseminating a narrative that paints Islam as a beautiful and free initiative which society ought to aspire to if it wishes to successfully eradicate the persisting antagonisms that shackle society. The proselytization of this narrative unfolds vis-à-vis the various interactive platforms of social activity with the aim of cultivating belief for the aforementioned as an unequivocal 'truth.' This does not however imply that Islamists

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[247] The Gaama't al-Jihad and Gaama't al-Islamiyya organisations are prominent examples of this. For decades, both organisations were renowned for their hard-line and violent stance against the state, non-Islamists and fellow Islamists. They severely criticised the Muslim Brotherhood for its diluted view of Islam due to Ikhwan's pragmatic and moderate stance. However, as of 2003, both parties revised their stance and shifted their ideology to move away violence, albeit in part to avoid state repression. For more, see: Hamzawy, Amr, and Sarah Grebowski. "From Violence to Moderation." *Carnegie Paper, No.* 20 (2010): Washington, DC. 3-5. Print.

[248] Gramsci, Antonio. *Quaderni del carcere*. Ed. Valentino Gerratana, 4 vols. Turin: Einaudi Editore, 1975. Pg. 2133. Print.

myopically seek to disseminate an overarching narrative. Rather, it is indicative of their diverse efforts to actively engage in the minutiae of daily experiences by seeking to manipulate and modify aspects[249] of it so that new forms of consciousness, common sense and consent for Islamist ideology and ideational activity may emerge. The efforts are predominantly confined to the gelatinous yet complex superstructure, which escapes the methodological rigidities that so often render it as a private, autonomous and benign terrain of activity.[250] That is to suggest that the superstructure constitutes a sphere wherein social forces, including those belonging to the state, compete for power through a combination of coercion and consent.

The coercion-consent dyad is evocative of the wide array of attempts by social forces to entrench political and ideological leadership within the superstructure. That being said, the coercion aspect of the dyad, while often a necessary element in the acquisition and retention of power, is neither sufficient as a stand-alone strategy nor an ideal means to embed ideology over a protracted period of time. Social forces vying for power must therefore consistently strive to garner consent for their ideological programmes and ideational complement in a constantly changing milieu. The overwhelming pre-eminence attributed to the coercive apparatuses of semi-authoritarian states in the MENA region is thus problematic as it clouds the complex dialectical nature of power dynamics within the superstructure. To state it differently, hegemonic forces, which comprise the state, actively seek to manufacture consent throughout civil society, albeit to varying degrees contingent on the combination of individual historical and existing social conditions.[251] It is why the coercion-consent dyad in contingent on the dialectical relationships between hegemonic and subaltern forces. An enquiry into the reciprocal nature of these relations allows us to shift the focus towards assessing the modalities of power and how it allows

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[249] Some aspects are privy to immediate engagement whereas others are not. The direction of ideational activity is contingent on the standing dialectical relationship between Political Islamists and the hegemonic bloc.

[250] Chapter 3 discusses the nature of civil society and the pitfalls associated with overly liberal definitions of it in greater detail.

[251] To reiterate, social impositions are a microcosm of interscalar power dynamics, however once appropriated to local circumstances and historical conditions, they materialise in a less than uniform manner.

particular social forces to carve out a larger space on the conjunctural terrain. By honing in on the modalities of power, we can avoid getting bogged down in an institutional examination of the juridico-administrative and security apparatuses which so often depict a state-centric narrative of power dynamics in the MENA region.[252]

It also permits us to explore the nuanced methods that social forces deploy in their attempts to manufacture consent in civil society. For instance, it enables for a more thorough examination of contentious social issues pertaining to areas such as education, cultural practices,[253] neoliberal reforms and the social impact of restrictions placed on associational autonomy.[254] The seesaw dynamic of such issues owe to the intertwining of organic and conjunctural moments that ultimately result in disparate attempts by Islamists to secure consent, formulate alliances and contest power. It is within this fluid social atmosphere that excluded social groups seek to manufacture consent for alternative programmes that can address existing impositions. Social processes should not be regarded as unidirectional given their reciprocal connection to the political and ideological contestation for consent by factional forces within a complex and gelatinous superstructure. Ultimately then, the relationship between hegemonic and subaltern forces such as Political Islamists is most readily discernible at the subnational and national spheres that encompass civil society.[255] It is critical to magnify the dialectical relationship between Political Islam and the state if we are to truly comprehend the ebb and flow of Islamist political and ideological strategies that seek to establish consciousness and consent for 'Islam' as a 'beautiful' pursuit capable of rectifying social antagonism.

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[252] The notion that a monopoly over violence produces 'strong' states in the MENA region is imprudent and clouds our ability to understand the ways such states utilise the sphere of civil society in order to retain their authoritarian resiliency.

[253] The contention over the hijab provides one striking example. It was widely disregarded as a cultural facet in the 1950s but came to be more commonplace in the 1970s. Likewise, the incorporation of sharia into the constitution reflects a comparable development that cannot be adequately assessed through an institutional analysis.

[254] For instance, the narrative pushed in regards to the divisive NGO ban in Egypt has been one that argues international interference and support for clandestine activity.

[255] Civil society ought to be viewed as the conduit through which political and ideological strategies are articulated, consciousness is cultivated, and power is ultimately contested.

For this reason it is also critical that we reassess the overtly liberal connotations associated with the concept of civil society. In relation to the MENA region, such outlooks can result in substantial complications as they foster a view that reduces civil society to an embryonic state and overlooks the centrality of power dynamics. It is therefore important to reach beyond the rigid scope of obscure categories that often get bogged down by attempts to measure rationality, civility and cultural compatibility through a west-centric lens. The framing of discourse through this lens has compelled Middle East scholars to reiterate the historical presence of civil society and to amplify its gelatinous character as a by-product of post-colonial reverberations. By framing the discourse exclusively around the categories of civility and pluralism we inadvertently shade the organic and reciprocal dialectic between Islamists and the State. Hence, although Saad Ibrahim is correct in pointing out that the question of whether Islamists can make vital contributions to civil society is overly academic, there nevertheless remains a glaring need to develop a deeper contextual understanding of the social aspects that contribute to the lack of civility amongst Islamists.[256] Moreover, a narrow liberal understanding disproportionately attributes excess power to the state, particularly in the MENA region.[257] This creates a state-centric approach that focuses on institutional apparatuses and overlooks the critical importance of the ways in which power unevenly emanates and shapes relations between social forces across the superstructure that is civil society. In order to avoid a state-centric approach, this research ventures to critically gauge the contributory power of Political Islamists by *dialectically* exploring the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood alongside the State and relevant social forces through a Gramscian analysis of hegemony within the milieu of civil society.

1.9. Political Islam's Flagship Organisation: The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood

The Brotherhood's flagship movement in Egypt is the focus of this research given not only its expansive reach and influence but also due to its longstanding and contentious

[256] Ibrahim, Saad. Civil Society in the Middle East:1.Ed. Augustus Richard Norton. London: E.J. Brill, 1994. Pg. 52. Print.
[257] Ibid.,

relationship with the State. As Olivier Roy points out, it would be hard pressed to envision the consolidation of democracy in the region, let alone a flourishing civil society, if Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood, who represent not only the oldest but also the largest mainstream Islamist movement in the Arab world, were to be excluded.[258] As such, the aim of the research is to explore the contributory power of Political Islamists within civil society by gauging their ideological and political strategies. This task requires that we explore and merge the organic and conjunctural terrains through a dialectical and holistic approach that empirically assesses the Brotherhood in relation to hegemonic forces in Egypt. It also means that we must present an alternative understanding of ideology and how it is manufactured in a way that has propelled the organisation into the chief counter-hegemonic force. In doing so, we must also present a civil society as a domain that is not autonomous but rather as one of power relations.

The emergence of the Brotherhood in Egypt as a civil society organisation in 1928 began as a project aimed at lobbying for social reform and rebuilding the inter-relationship between state and religion [259] that was surrendered with the dissolution of the caliphate.[260] It is with this that the organisation's founder and chief ideologue Hassan al-Banna sought to disseminate programmes that promoted Islam as an alternative solution to the rampant increase in secular and foreign ideologies in Egypt. Hence, Banna disseminated an understanding of Islam that placed it as the foundation for combatting the pervasive sociocultural effects of colonialism, the economic deterioration as a result of western interests and the liberation of Palestine.[261] While the origins of the movement were firmly rooted in combatting 'detrimental' western nationalism, pursuing eastern

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[258] Roy, Olivier. "Muslim Brotherhood, Other Islamists Have Changed Their Worldview." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 21 Jan. 2012. Web. 12 Aug. 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/muslim-brotherhood-other-islamists-have-changed-their-worldview/2012/01/10/gIQAZgjoEQ_story.html>.

[259] Abdelnasser, Walid M. *The Islamic Movement in Egypt: The Muslim Brethren and International Relations 1928-54.* London: Kegan Paul International, 1994. Pp. 31-33. Print.

[260] Ibid., 49.

[261] Ibid., 43.

independence and establishing an *umma* due to the defunct status of the caliphate,[262] the organisation's true objective has always revolved around the ideological goal of attaining *authoritative status for Islam in everyday life.*

There is a conceptual issue with analysing Political Islam through existing analytical approaches. That is not to say that measuring variables such as violence, civility and human rights records are not important in helping us understand the aims of Islamists but that analyses of such must be done in conjunction with the wider historical and social factors that impact Islamists. Conversely, attempts to pinpoint Islamists on a spectrum that seeks to measure their commitment to democracy vis-à-vis their ambiguous actions only provides us with an incomplete picture.[263] The ambiguous actions of Islamists need to first be understood in deeper form so as to account for embattled history of passive revolution in Egypt and how it has inimitably influenced the individual trajectories of Political Islamist organisations within the country. The creation and re-creation of various social processes, with each passing generation, alters the dynamics and the terrain on which social forces and the subaltern cultivate ideology, ethos and political strategy. It is these social processes that produce the ideological and political underpinnings that ultimately shape the dialectical relationship between social forces. These developments unquestionably stem from the international sphere, as modernists correctly point out, yet once they fuse with the specific histories of states, they create a set of conditions between social forces, civil society and the state that become inimitable.[264]

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[262] Ibid., 96.

[263] According to Polity Index, The Brotherhood's brief tenure in power during the 'Arab Spring' under the Morsi regime was not autocratic as it was publicly billed. The Freedom and Justice party scored a 2 whereas the mean was 2.18. The basis for the rating system was -10 marking autocracy and 10 marking democracy. Moreover, there were no tangible attempts to remove right to recourse during the brief tenure of the Brotherhood. The opposition was allowed to remain political, as speech and organisation were not threatened. See Hamid, Shadi and Meredith Wheeler. "Was Mohammed Morsi Really an Autocrat?" *The Atlantic,* Atlantic Media Company, 31 March 2014. http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/03/was-mohammed-morsi-really-an-autocrat/359797/.

[264] The gradual sedimentation of social processes and power dynamics that shape and re-shape the conjunctural terrain may eventually result in the push for radical change or as Charles Tilly refers to it as the first of multiple revolutions. Yet, as Rosa Luxemburg

The dissemination of alternative ideologies such as liberalism, socialism and communism under these conditions has produced dissimilar experiences of Islamism across the Middle East. The one constant however has been that the proliferation of Islamism has coincided with the respective failures of these ideologies. The benefits of considering the role of ideology as a primary motivator is that in enables us to better understand not only how power is contested by Islamists but equally how they deny it to other social forces. This method of enquiry is beneficial in that it highlights the more nuanced ways in which the Muslim Brotherhood has been able to cultivate consent and secure a strong social backing that allows it to present itself as the main alternative for social prosperity. A reading of the day-to-day ideological musings of the Brotherhood can provide a clearer understanding of how the organisation cultivates its ideas and seeks to disseminate a 'common sense' understanding that plays a crucial role in elevating its status towards that of a counter-hegemonic force.

In order to arrive at such a juncture, the case study of this thesis shall, in part, analyse the periodical *al-Da'wa* published by the Muslim Brotherhood between the years of 1976 to 1981 in Egypt. The expansive scope of the magazine offers us insight into the day-to-day ideology espoused by the organisation in a way that many of their official statements and speeches do not. During this time, the Brotherhood was relatively unimpeded from spreading its ideology by the state allowing the monthly publication to achieve a readership of 100000. The shoddily written and unstructured magazine offers insights on a vast array of topics including but not limited to historical stories about Islam, economics, the pitfalls of socialism and communism and geopolitical affairs. An analysis of *al-Da'wa* that is guided by the Gramscian themes introduced in Chapter 3 shall help us arrive at a firmer understanding of the ideological and political strategies utilised by the Brotherhood in their attempt to attain authoritative status for Islam in political and public life. A dialectical reconnaissance of the aforementioned presents an avenue to shed light on the political culture that shapes the conjunctural terrain in Egypt and the methods the

cogently pointed out, ultimate revolutionary success first requires a series or multitude of defeats.

Brotherhood utilises to spread its ideological programmes. An enquiry into al-Da'wa ultimately serves the purpose of putting into perspective how history, power dynamics and social processes reciprocally interact with social forces so as to produce conditions that enable Political Islam to establish themselves as the chief counter-hegemonic force.

1.10. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been multifaceted in that it has first sought to introduce the overarching themes that dominate the debate and discourse on Political Islam. The former, which is comprised by the confrontationist school of thought and the clash of civilisations thesis, puts forth an intransigent and primordial outlook of Islamism that fails to delve into critical social aspects that shape the phenomenon. It is instead geared towards influencing policy and worldviews towards the actions of Islamist extremists who espouse an equally ahistorical and revisionist understanding of Islam. By contrast, the modernist argument constitutes the tangible and nuanced literature on Political Islam as a phenomenon. It seeks to address the role that modernity, globalisation and capitalism have had in the creation and proliferation of Political Islam. This perspective places Political Islam within the frame of being a wholly modern movement that takes shape from international factors stemming from the global economy. Thus, it rejects the notion of an irreconcilable clash between cultures, of religious fatalism and instead warns against treating Islamism through a Manichean lens that facilitates a dyadic reading of vast entities labelled as the 'West' and 'Islam.' It instead argues that the communities and societies share global values that albeit western in origin can help to reconcile differences.

Although, the modernist approach offers us a substantially deeper reading of Political Islam its international framework can at times detract from the influential developments that occur at a more empirical level. It also runs the risk of reducing the central aspect that enables Islamists to proliferate to a secondary status. Ideology is often treated as a tool simply used to attain power – thereby skewing the importance that ideology has in shaping the desire to pursue power. Moreover, it also detracts from a stronger understanding of how ideology is used to deny power to others, which in turn, enables

Political Islam to solidify itself as the chief counter-hegemonic force. Moreover, the international perspective of the modernist approach does not always shed light on the civil society and the conjunctural terrain where ideology is put to use and power is most perceptibly contested. It is for these reasons that the latter half of the chapter sets out to explore the seminal role that ideology and civil society play in the emergence of Political Islam as a counter-hegemonic force.

The latter half of the chapter explores the role of ideology as constituting something greater than a secondary tool used to achieve the political objectives of social forces vying for power. It has critically been asserted that ideology and its ideational complement simultaneously shape and are shaped by social processes that unfold within the sphere of civil society. It is within the complex environment of the aforementioned that social antagonisms surface as a combined result of interscalar power dynamics and local histories. In terrains where antagonisms are more pronounced a crisis of authority is likely to develop and result in the proliferation of ideologically opposed subaltern forces. A crisis of authority occurs when the hegemonic bloc falters in safeguarding the general interests of society and thereby fails to maintain its ideological sway and consent. This creates an opening for subaltern groups to present alternative methods aimed at alleviating societal antagonisms. The articulation of such ideological programmes does not have to demonstratively offer the 'best' path but rather one that can widely be transmitted and believed as 'true.' The task of cultivating consciousness of the 'truth' is an arduous but necessary task that requires consistent ideational complement. Even social forces that seek to directly confront the hegemonic power must seek consent for subsequent ideational activity if they wish to retain power over the course of time. Hence, ideological programmes must super-ordinate certain objectives and subordinate others in a manner that can constantly satisfy the general interests and will of society. The unravelling of this immense process is ultimately what dictates whether an ideology comes to constitute something historically organic or whether it resembles an ideology that is arbitrary and willed.

The abolition of the caliphate, symbolic as it may have been, cannot adequately serve as a main antagonism of modern Islamists as asserted by Bobby S. Sayyid. The seminal insights of Sayyid consider the possibility of Islam as a master signifier and in doing so provide a nuanced and compelling account of Islamist ideology. The arguments advanced are valuable in that they help to establish the central role of ideology alongside power and modernity. However, in accomplishing the aforementioned feats, Sayyid's conceptual approach neglects the importance of how ideology impacts and is impacted in relation to ethico-political history and the daily realities of the subnational and national spheres. While it is understandable as to why Sayyid places the Islamist attempt to signify Islam firmly within the developments of the international sphere it is less clear as to why the conjunctural terrain is treated as merely empirical excess that has little to no bearing on the articulation of Islamist ideology. To state it differently, Sayyid is not incorrect in suggesting that mimetic and modular conditions influence the articulation of Islam and guide its articulation towards an alternative discourse of modernity. However, to overlook the organic convergence between the international sphere and conjunctural moments is to dismiss the complexities of geo-temporal differences and the reciprocal impact of local power dynamics.[265]

The complex realities of daily life at the subnational and national level are crucial in understanding Islamist ideology and its ideational complement. The developments on the conjunctural terrain are what lead Islamists to super-ordinate and subordinate various aspects of its strategy. It is here that we begin to see that local developments compel Islamists to subordinate the caliphate and *umma* in favour of a sharia driven paradoxical subaltern nationalism. As such, the symbolisation of both cannot be treated as quilting points in the attempt to establish Islam as a master signifier. The manifestations of both within the dialectic between the *dawla* and civil society reduce them down to a hollow phrase and metaphysical concept, respectively. It is why we must critically assess the reciprocal relationship between ideology and power dynamics through a frame that considers the interscalar alongside the ethico-political history of states. The fierceness of

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[265] It is precisely why Ibn Khaldun acknowledged that his study was applicable to the Maghreb but not so to other areas that fell under the Islamic caliphate.

states in the MENA region does not equate to them being strong.[266] The state must therefore work towards embedding its ideology within civil society with the aim of garnering sufficient consent so as to retain its hegemony. A strictly institutional analysis of coercive power is therefore not conducive to understanding the modalities of power than enable the dialectic between Political Islam and the state in the first instance.

Accordingly, it is necessary to magnify the central role of civil society as a conduit for transmitting the ideological and political strategies of vying social forces. It is also within this sphere that the differences in the discursive approach to articulating Islam as an ideology emerge. These differences exist not only between Political Islamists and the *ulema[267]* but also within Islamist organisations. Hence, a dialectical analysis of Political Islam can prove beneficial in unravelling the power dynamics that shape the reciprocal relationship between the state and Islam. It also assists us in re-imagining civil society as a sphere that is more robust and complex than the nascent descriptions attributed to it as it pertains to the MENA region. Moreover, it allows us to undertake a reconnaissance as to why Political Islamists have increasingly turned to a protracted political strategy partially focused on the denial of space to competing ideologies whilst avoiding getting bogged down by the rigidities of a strictly institutional analysis of power.

Ideology should not be considered merely as a secondary tool that is utilised to facilitate desired outcomes. Rather, it ought to be regarded as formatively shaping social relations and power dynamics in the contemporary age. As Max Weber notes "not ideas, but material and *ideal interests*,[268] directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the "world images" that have been created by "ideas" have, like switchmen, determined the

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[266] Ayubi, Nazih. *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East.* London: I.B. Tauris, 1995. Print.
[267] The ulema historically represented the moral guardians of society that maintained strong ties to the mercantile class. Their co-option into the state structure, the advent of the printing press and policies associated with colonialism and nationalism aided their monopolisation of speaking on behalf of Islam.
[268] Emphasis added.

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tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest."[269] It is therefore critical to approach ideology organically and reciprocally in relation to modernity and power. Even the retroactive utilisation of ideas is a modern dynamic that seeks to advance the cultivation of particular beliefs which contribute to the attempt of establishing Islam as a comprehensive ideology that provides an alternative understanding of modernity.

In this sense, the social conditions that have shaped the political strategy of Islamists towards the state do not necessarily constitute a hegemonic struggle in the classic sense of acquiring state power. The repressive coercive and ideological apparatuses of the state naturally play a role in Political Islamists seeking out a more nuanced approach that actively seeks to strip aspects of the embedded ideology put in place by both global and local hegemonic forces. However, the gradual shifts in Political Islamist approaches in the last several decades are indicative of them being paradoxically influenced by these ideologies vis-à-vis interpellation. Nevertheless, Islamists seek to mitigate this reality internally by instilling hierarchical power structures that indoctrinate and manufacture consent for an ontological worldview. The stagnation of *ijtihad* and empiricism can thus, at times, trap Islam as an ideology in captivity.[270]

That being said, the raison d'etre of Political Islam remains the active pursuit to achieve authoritative status for Islam in political life. The active pursuit partially entails denying competing discourses of modernity space and undermining them ideologically and politically. It is important to delve into the power dynamics that enable Islamists to restrict competing discourses. To argue that 'counter-cultural' approaches that combat hegemony are futile given the strength of authoritarian states in the MENA region as Hazim Kandil does is to oversimplify and overlook the sheer complexity and fluidity of

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[269] Weber, Max. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology.* Ed. Hans H Gerth & C.W. Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pg. 280. Print.

[270] The case of Nasr Abu Zayd comes to mind. A member of Al-Azhar, he was ostracized for the call to interpret the religious texts of Islam in relation to the history, culture and social conditions of the time it was written. He was deemed an apostate by a sharia court and forcibly divorced from his wife by court order as he no longer constituted a 'Muslim.'

power relations, ideology and the arduous task that hegemonic forces have in maintaining the consent of society.[271] Although, the coercive apparatuses of the state wield significant power in the MENA region they must still forge alliances and garner consent within civil society if they wish to retain said power.

There is an organic unity between ideology, power and modernity that create concrete social conditions at the local level, which naturally result in the fragmentation of power across society and amongst Islamists. There is as such a grave need to delve into the concept of hegemony so that we may better gauge how power is both formed and contested. This shall eventually enable us to develop a deeper understanding of Political Islamist organisations, their approach to ideology and political strategy. A dialectical reading of Political Islam and the state further enables us to put into perspective the nuanced ways that Islamists ideologically and politically contest hegemony, the seminal role of securing consent within an intricate sphere of social relations that is neither autonomous nor benign and the overall impact it has on creating disparate and fractured Islamist organisations.

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[271] Kandil, Hazem. Islamizing Egypt? "Testing the limits of Gramscian counterhegemonic strategies." *Theory and Society* (40.1). 2011.Pg. 37-62. Print.

Chapter II: Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction

Thus far, this thesis has sought to explore the key themes and concepts that formatively contribute towards shaping our understanding of Political Islam. It has delved into the popular debates and discourse on Political Islam in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon as well as to highlight the potential benefits of an alternative approach. Hence, it has been argued that the persisting influence of culture oriented arguments do not constitute the real discourse on Political Islam. Rather, they represent an over-simplistic reading that renders an understanding not only of Political Islam but also of Muslim societies as intransigent and atavistic. The assertion has been made that 'clash' based arguments are better understood as stemming from ideological efforts to retain partially true 'common sense' conceptions of the world that are often imposed, passively absorbed and uncritically accepted.[272] Consequently, it has been implored that efforts to comprehend Political Islam ought to be rooted in the far more critical and socioeconomically derived 'modernist' discourse. It is within this discourse that the many nuances and complexities of Political Islam begin to emerge in relation to socioeconomic and global developments. That being said, modernist analyses of Political Islam occasionally run the risk of assigning superfluous value to the international sphere as well as overstating the power of the authoritarian state. This is further accompanied by the tendency to reduce the function of ideology down to a complementary tool for attaining power.

It has therefore been implored that it is essential to reconsider the role of ideology as not merely a political tool but as something far more encompassing and reciprocally connected to socioeconomic and power relations. In other words, there is an organic unity between ideology, power and modernity that requires us to proportionately uncover how

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[272] Gramsci, Antonio. *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935.* Ed. David Forgacs. New York: New York University Press, 2000. Pg. 421. Print.

each is dialectically impacted by the others. This argument is then advanced that social forces manifest in response to social antagonisms and proliferate with the onset of a crisis of authority. The inability of the ruling class to maintain ideological leadership of society denotes a sign of its inability to articulate a programme that can sufficiently secure the general interests of the polity and therefore its consent. In turn, this prompts subaltern groups to undertake efforts to cultivate an articulating principle that can enable it to renegotiate the state of social relations and gain consensus in the form of a national-popular bloc. Suffice to say, the process of articulating and cultivating consent for an alternative ideological programme is complex and contradictory in that it seeks to break certain common sense conceptions whilst retaining others vis-à-vis the super-ordination of certain aims and the subordination of others. Moreover, it requires ideational complement if it is to truly emerge as a viable alternative to the existing ruling bloc.

It is with this in mind that the work of Bobby S. Sayyid seeks to advance the notion that the ideological efforts of Islamists denote an attempt to establish Islam as a master-signifier. In this rendering, Islamists cultivate an alternative conception of modernity that revolves around Islam as its master-node. To state it differently, it is through the master node of Islam that all else is framed and signified. This premise is accompanied by the caliphate, sharia and *umma* as Lacanian quilting points that connect the signified with the master signifier. Given that Islam operates as the master signifier it is asserted that failures in the signified are reflected back into the ideological efforts of Islamists rather than Islam itself. The ability of Islam to escape signification is thus what enables it to prevent competing liberal ideologies from gaining ground. Although Sayyid presents a compelling case, his conceptualisation of Islam is troubled by the empirical reality that neither the caliphate nor *umma* are able to gain sufficient traction as symbolic quilting points across Muslim societies.

The articulation of any ideology, whether it proves to be historically organic or is arbitrary and willed partially rests in the principles it seeks to super-ordinate and subordinate in relation to the conjunctural terrain. Thus, what Sayyid deems to empirical excess is in actuality the dialectic between organic and conjunctural moments that result

in the subordination of both the caliphate and *umma.* This coupled with the fact that the *raison d'etre* of Political Islam is to achieve authoritative status for Islam in political life means that it is essential to critically explore the sphere of activity wherein consciousness for ideology and ideational activity is cultivated and where the ideology of the dominant force is ultimately contested. Given that the sphere of relations for such activity can be no other than civil society, it becomes necessary to combat rigid liberal definitions that reduce civil society to a relatively autonomous sphere that produces spontaneous consent. Instead, it is argued that the state actively engages within this sphere with the aim of reproducing relations and maintaining consent for its ideology and ideational activity. It is with these empirical realities in mind that the concepts of Antonio Gramsci can help us to provide a nuanced alternative as to how we ought to approach the phenomenon of Political Islam. However, prior to doing so, it is pertinent to outline the research design and to justify the research methods utilised in this study.

2.2 Research Design

The design of this research is qualitative in nature and utilises both a thematic approach and a case study to arrive at findings. A qualitative study has been chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, a qualitative study is beneficial to this particular research given that it encourages a thoroughly reflexive process wherein the multitude of elements pertaining to Political Islam can be more interactively and accurately gauged. According to Hammersley and Atkinson, qualitative studies ought to be designed to be reflexive across the entirety of the project.[273] This is in marked contrast to quantitative studies wherein the research process is driven by an enquiry seeking to determine explanation or causation and thus often follows a controlled, fixed or linear progression. Comparatively speaking, the task of qualitative research is to advance understanding of phenomena and therefore its design should be to simultaneously and non-sequentially gather and interpret data; to develop and modify theory; refocus research questions and to address validity threats.[274]

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[273] Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography: Principles in practice.* 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 1996. Pg. 24. Print.
[274] Maxwell, Joseph A. "Designing a Qualitative Study." *The Sage Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods.* Eds. Bickman, Leonard and Debra J. Rog. 215. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998. Pg. 215. Print.

Hence, qualitative research mandates a design that is less restrictive and more interactive throughout the various processes and stages that comprise a study.

Moreover, a qualitative approach that empirically utilises knowledge so as to produce an accurate representation of phenomena[275] contains within it an implicit, if not altogether explicit research design.[276] That is to say that the design is neither fixed nor linear in the sense that its constituent parts are not bound by set directionality or to a particular typology. A central principle to designing a qualitative study is therefore the ability to devise an approach that harmoniously "governs functioning, developing or unfolding the arrangement of elements or details in a product or work of art."[277] To state it differently, a successful qualitative design must establish the goals and purpose of the study, select an appropriate conceptual framework, put forth open-ended inductive research questions and viable methods as well as test for validity. The entire process encompasses an interactive approach between the different stages and ought to be guided by ethical considerations throughout.[278]

From a practical standpoint, a qualitative study on Political Islam is highly conducive given that the complexity of the phenomenon has produced contested viewpoints pertaining to both its meaning and our broader understanding of it. An inductive approach thus enables us to critically engage existing literature whilst also being able to develop a nuanced conceptual understanding from the data gathered. The research approach is in sharp contrast to a controlled quantitative research design wherein the mechanisms to understand the various intricacies of social phenomena may be hampered by a more restrictive, conclusive and deductive approach. From a practical perspective research

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[275] Blaikie, Norman W. H. *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation.* 2nd ed., Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009. Pg. 94. Print.

[276] Yin, Robert K. *Case study research: Design and methods.* 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994. Pg. 19. Print.

[277] Frederick, C. Mish, et al. *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. 10th ed.* Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1993. Print.

[278] Maxwell, Joseph A. "Designing a Qualitative Study." *The Sage Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods.* Eds. Bickman, Leonard and Debra J. Rog. 215. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998. Pg. 216. Print.

seeking to address Political Islam must emphasise a flexible design if it is to bridge the gap within existing literature, develop a complementary conceptual understand and provide a thorough understanding of the vast phenomenon. A successful qualitative design provides a deeper and more descriptive avenue from which meaning and social phenomena can be sufficiently understood and conveyed.

Conversely, the intellectual goals of a qualitative study are multidimensional in the sense that it must simultaneously account for meaning, context, unanticipated phenomena and processes that lead to outcomes in order to arrive at a juncture whereby causal explanations may thoroughly be developed.[279] Whereas a quantitative inquiry is predominantly focused on explanation or causation, building an understanding of meaning – that is how the subjects of the study make sense of the real world and their experiences is seminal to qualitative analysis. Hence, meaning cannot be reduced to a binary function of true or false but rather constitutes the interpretative and complex processes that influence the behaviour, actions, events and situations that the participants or subjects of the study are actively engaged in.[280] The process of interpreting meaning is complemented by developing a contextual understanding of social phenomena. It is critical to contextualise how the subjects of a study are influenced to act and respond to specific context. In this regard it is helpful in the case of a phenomenon as vast and multifaceted as Political Islam to hone in on a context. A case study is beneficial in achieving the aforementioned given that it allows for the retention of individuality of analysis by focusing on unique circumstances that shape meaning and action. The contextual understanding gained can then carefully be extrapolated to develop a deeper understanding of the broader phenomenon that is Political Islam.[281] The exploratory and experimental investigation of Political Islam through a qualitative design also provides an avenue to bring to light unanticipated influences or phenomena that may otherwise be

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[279] Ibid.,221

[280] Maxwell, Joseph A. Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review* (62), 1992. Pg. 279-300. Print.

[281] Maxwell, Joseph A. "Designing a Qualitative Study." *The Sage Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods.* Eds. Bickman, Leonard and Debra J. Rog. 215. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998. Pg. 221. Print.

ignored by too narrow an approach. In turn, qualitative design can provide a platform from which new, grounded theories may emerge in relation to the unanticipated.[282] The open-ended and inductive nature of qualitative research emphasises processes, which serves as a critical aspect of being able to develop causal inference or explanations.[283]

Any successful qualitative study must include within it a conceptual framework. This framework serves as the backbone of the research. It is in simple terms the provisional attempt to explain what is occurring and why it is occurring.[284] In other words, the purpose of theory is to make sense of events and provide a model of understanding. Theorisation on events need not be all encompassing but it must hone in on particular aspects that can demonstrably provide novel or nuanced insight, which assists in deepening understanding of the wider phenomenon being studied. The conceptual framework should not be treated as merely a descriptive task. Rather, it is primarily a critical tool that is developed in relation to the direction of the overarching research design, the sedimented analysis stemming from prior theorisation on the phenomenon and from the existing research paradigms that shape researchers worldviews.[285] The latter is a manifestation of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that help to shape a study. The ontology of a study encompasses the broad assumptions pertaining to the reality of the world whereas epistemology entails the ways in which we understand said assumptions and produce knowledge about them. As a whole, ontology and epistemology result in the development of various research paradigms vis-à-vis the assumptions, methods and philosophical positions taken by researchers in a particular field or tradition. For instance, a researcher may adopt a single or combination of paradigms or traditions

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[282] Ibid.,

[283] Shadish, W.R., Cook, T.D, and Campbell, D.T. *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Print.

[284] Strauss, Anselm. Notes on the Nature and Development of General Theories. *Qualitative Inquiry* (1), 1995. Pg. 7-18. Print.

[285] Becker, Howard S. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. Pg. 141. Print.

such as phenomenology, neoliberalism or postmodernism depending on the nature of their study.[286]

The research paradigm chosen for this study is a combination of social constructivism and historical dialectical materialism. One of the key assumptions made in this research is the notion that Political Islam is neither primordial nor intransigent in its evolution. It is not the product of culture or driven by fatalistic thinking. Rather it is socially constructed, fluid and subject to change in relation to social processes. The tradition of social constructivism is further combined with historical dialectical materialism. The addition of the latter paradigm enables us to break from the ideological hegemony present in the existing literature and the assumptions, which are embedded within it.[287] Namely, a non-rigid Gramscian approach rooted in historical dialectical materialism provides an alternative and nuanced avenue to re-examine a number of premises that have bogged down Political Islam as either an entirely transnational phenomenon or state-centric phenomenon. A historical dialectical materialist paradigm thus complements the study by delving into the reciprocal nature of power relations that transpire between the international and national sphere, across the organic and conjunctural sphere, and between the base and superstructure.

2.3. Research Methods

This thesis is a qualitative study that thematically utilises a case study in order to critically examine key facets and provide a nuanced understanding of the vastly complex phenomenon that is Political Islam. The case study assesses the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood vis-à-vis its ideological mouthpiece *Al Da'wa* between the years of 1976-1981. As Stake cogently points out, a case study is a specific and complex integrated system comprised of boundaries and working parts.[288] Analogously, Yin regards it as an

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[286] Creswell, John. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997. Print.

[287] Becker, Howard S. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. Print.

[288] Stake, Robert E. *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996. Print.

enquiry into the interrelationship between a contemporary phenomenon and its real life context.[289] The interrelationship and integrated nature of the components that comprise a case study are indicative of the notion that it ought to be undertaken through an intensive and holistic analysis of a phenomenon within a bounded context.[290] Thus, by honing in on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and its ideological mouthpiece, a case study approach can assist in drawing attention to the "complexity and contextuality' of Political Islam by allowing us to observe the "complex and conflictual" issues within a specific case.[291] The findings can then be carefully extrapolated in order to advance understanding on the broader phenomenon.

From an epistemic point of view a case study ought to be informed by constructivism due to the fact that qualitative researchers predominantly identify with the notion that knowledge is constructed.[292] In addition, it should also consist of a layer that accounts for and engages the reality construction of the readership. In other words, a case study entails accounting for multiple perspectives of the case in questions.[293] This sentiment is echoed by Merriam who asserts that qualitative research is often produced from the philosophical assumption that "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds."[294] The underlying point to emerge is that qualitative research consists of multiple layers of reality being constructed. This includes the researcher's preconceived construction of reality; its interaction with competing interpretations of the phenomenon at hand; and a final rendering of the study that produces a newly filtered interpretation.[295] Hence, the case study is informed in part by constructivism and complemented by a thematic analysis that critically explores the historical development, power dynamics and

[289] Yin, Robert K. *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002. Pg. 13. Print.
[290] Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998. Pg. Xiii. Print.
[291] Stake, Robert E. *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995. Pg. 16-17. Print.
[292] Ibid., 99.
[293] Ibid., 108.
[294] Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998. Pg. 22. Print.
[295] Ibid.,

social processes in impacting the changes and evolution of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood between the 1940s and 1970s. A thematic approach is useful given that it encourages researchers to draw upon a vast range of sources and information in a systematic manner. In turn, a thematic approach assists in discerning meaning and developing a richer more nuanced understanding about people, events and organisations.[296]

The primary research in this study is drawn from the *Al Da'wa* periodical disseminated by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood between the years of 1976-1981. The periodical offers an opportunity to thematically track the nuanced changes and gradual evolution of the organisation's political and ideological strategy following its reintroduction into the public eye. A critical analysis of the various themes covered in the periodical further offer a chance to analyse the Brotherhood's own perspective and version of events pertaining to its dialectical relationship with the State. The periodical also sheds light into the worldview and ideological programme created by the Brotherhood as a response to changing circumstances and an altered socio-political conjunctural sphere. The version of reality created by the Brotherhood throughout the periodical is then buttressed by dialectically assessing variations of said accounts with those provided by oppositional forces, including Nasser and Sadat. Given that the research design employs a historical dialectical materialist paradigm the periodical is also complemented by a conceptual analysis derived in relation to social processes and the political activity of the Brotherhood in its quest to expand consent for its ideological programme. As such, a considerable amount of data is also drawn from secondary sources including speeches, statements, newspaper articles and scholarly literature pertaining to the activities of the Brotherhood. The information and data derived from the methods is ultimately organised thematically in order to provide a nuanced conceptual interpretation that adds to our understanding of the phenomenon that is Political Islam. The proceeding sub-sections of

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[296] Boyatzis, Richard E. *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. London: Sage Publications, 1998. Print.

this chapter therefore seek to justify the benefits of the proposed research design and methodology.

2.3.1 Utilising A Gramscian Rhythm of Thought

The intent of *Chapter 3* is to develop a theoretical understanding of Antonio Gramsci's key concepts with the overarching objective of thematically applying them to the forthcoming case study of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Hence, the theoretical framework aims to demonstrate the interconnectedness of Gramsci's concepts so as not to fall victim to disproportionately applying certain elements at the expense of neglecting others. In fact, such an approach would be antithetical to the leitmotif with which Gramsci penned his concepts. Moreover, the decision to present a comprehensive account of Gramsci's concepts is undertaken in order to guard against the allure and novel trend of uncritically equating Gramsci's writings on war of position as sufficient evidence that Political Islamist movements constitute viable counter-hegemonic forces.

Arriving at such a notion first requires exhaustively considering a war of position strategy in relation to Gramsci's other concepts, particularly that of passive revolution. To envisage Political Islamist movements as viable counter-hegemonic forces also necessitates that we engage in an integral and dialectical history of the relationships that they maintain with their respective states. To do so otherwise is not only unwarranted but also neglects the complex and contradictory processes that go into shaping power dynamics between social forces. In other words, it is essential that the ideological programmes and political strategies pursued by social forces be explained historically and dialectically. The absence of other viable social groups in the form of counter-hegemonic forces cannot solely be attributed to the relative success of Political Islamists within the sphere of civil society. In fact, the Islamist denial of space to such groups may potentially pose long-term complications to the ability of Political Islamists to attain cultural hegemony let alone the prospect of capturing state power.

The fragmented nature of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* makes them multi-dimensional but it is important to keep in mind that his concepts are also "suggestive rather than conclusive."[297] While this is precisely the reason that we can apply his concepts to Political Islam, it is pertinent that we holistically engage with his concepts rather than selectively deploy those that appear to fit the puzzle. Gramsci's rhythm of thought is after all rooted in a historical dialectical materialism that sought to recover the true essence of the philosophy of praxis. By keeping this in mind, we can remain grounded in the fact that his concepts serve as a criterion of interpretation rather than as a concrete strategy for subaltern groups seeking to acquire power. The malleability of Gramsci's concepts makes them non-reductionist and non-dogmatic precisely by magnifying the historical and dialectical moments that organically unites the base with the superstructure, the international with the national, political society with civil society and so forth.

To reiterate, it is critical to account for the overarching rhythm of thought that underlines Gramsci's concepts when analysing Political Islam and whether its organisations can be deemed counter-hegemonic on the groups that they engage in protracted strategies and often operate as the most pronounced opposition to hegemonic forces in civil society. It would therefore benefit us to undertake a reconnaissance that gauges the historical, socioeconomic and political complexities that shape Political Islam's efforts to carve out an authoritative role for Islam in political life. The proposed method of doing so is by moving beyond the constraints offered by an institutional analysis of power and towards one that considers the modalities of power. An approach that considers the modalities of power provides greater flexibility in a number of key areas. First, it allows us to understand political action along Machiavellian lines as posited by Gramsci. That is, it allows us to break from negative conceptions of the state rooted in the exaggeration of its coercive functions. Further, it guards against overly rigid liberal conceptions of civil society that neglect analysis of the political space latently occupied by Political Islamists.

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[297] Anderson, Perry. The Heirs of Gramsci. *New Left Review* (100). July-August 2016. Print.

The benefit of pursuing this path of analysis is that it allows us to move away from state-centric understandings of Political Islam that reduce the phenomenon into a mere reactionary existence. It also enables us to illuminate an altered understanding of civil society, the space wherein Political Islam operates and thrives, as something more than a nascent and embryonic sphere. Gramsci's concepts enable us to elucidate the ways in which the political and civil sphere are organically linked and how the latter denotes a conjunctural terrain wherein the forces of opposition organise and contest the state vis-à-vis political and ideological leadership aimed at cultivating consciousness and securing consent. Likewise, it allows us to highlight the national point of departure through which Political Islamist ideology and strategy is shaped and takes on disparate forms.

2.3.2 The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a Case Study

It would be overly ambitious and unfeasible to attempt to apply a Gramscian approach to the whole of Political Islam given that one of the main premises of this thesis is the argument that Political Islam is comprised of various disparate movements. A Gramscian rhythm of thought therefore has to be applied on a case-by-case basis before it can be extrapolated into a wider analysis that can highlight potential themes that influence the trajectory of the vast phenomenon. This research therefore proposes a case study of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and its dialectical relationship with the Egyptian State. A dialectical enquiry into this relationship assists us in breaking from the monolithic argument and further enables us to uncover the nuances that go into shaping the ideological and political strategies of social forces that seek to reproduce particular material and social relations. It also helps us to illuminate the seminal role of the conjunctural terrain in exposing the complexities and contradictions that contribute to the ways in which social groupings organise, compete internally and against one another to establish political and ideological leadership.

The rationale for choosing the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a case study is relatively straightforward. The organisation is not only the oldest of its kind but it has also proven to be the most influential and prosperous in advancing its agenda. Moreover, it has a deep and drawn out history with the state of Egypt. The complex nature of this reciprocal

history has undoubtedly impacted the organisations composition, strategy, ideology and its relationship with the state and society. The aim is to therefore analyse these developments through a Gramscian approach that can ultimately provide a nuanced reading of how we ought to understand the Political Islam in relation to the organic and conjunctural sphere. The benefits of undertaking a case study are that they enable us to undertake a detailed critical analysis of the intricacies that shape Political Islam's flagship organisation so as to eventually provide a complementary avenue that can help understand the wider phenomenon.

Given that the case study is dialectical in nature it is important to outline the primary period of enquiry. The case study traces events and developments concerning two broad periods. The first of these periods originates from 1928 to 1952 and represents the formative years in which the organisation formed the core aspects of its ideological and political direction. During this period, we shall be able to assess how the organisation and State reciprocally acted in creating a particular socioeconomic and political environment that culminated in the onset of organic crisis that led to the 1952 Free Officers Coup. This first period of analysis is then built upon by a dialectical analysis of the impact that the ensuing passive revolution produced under Nasser. The conjunctural moments during this period helped to alter the terrain on which the organisation organised and the strategy it adopted in contesting power within civil society. The two periods as a whole are then reconciled with a critical analysis of Al-Da'wa magazine, the ideological mouthpiece of the Brotherhood that sought to retrospectively introduce its version of events during the aforementioned period whilst simultaneously attempting to establish itself through ideological leadership.

2.3.3 Al Da'wa Magazine (1976-1981)

The dialectical enquiry into the aforementioned periods is buttressed with primary research in the form of a holistic and interpretative analysis of the periodical Al-Da'wa. Namely, a critical analysis is advanced of the ideological platform with the aim of providing a critical understanding of the developments that preceded its publication. The periodical, which was circulated between 1976-1981 functions as a retrospective account

of the Brotherhood's self-reintroduction to society following an extended period of time wherein it was publicly maligned. The periodical consists of 81 issues, 77 of which are now only available in microfiche form at an extremely limited number of libraries. The publication was sanctioned under the reign of Anwar Sadat as part of his attempts to counter-balance the influence of Nasserists. Hence, while the magazine was granted considerable flexibility in criticising the Nasser era, scrutiny of the Sadat regime is for the most part curtailed, and in the few instances that it occurs, it is heavily veiled. Therefore, it is not an ideal platform to help us gauge the dialectic between the Brotherhood and Sadat regime.

Nevertheless, the periodical provides for a number of overarching themes that can help us understand the ideological and political strategy of the organisation. Although the content of the magazine is wide-ranging, eclectic and often unfocused, it still provides us with an uninterrupted look into the ideological themes and messages the organisation sought to advance with the aim of altering common sense conceptions of the world. In this sense, it is the attempt to develop and articulate its ideology as a comprehensive vision of Islam's role in society. There are a wide array of themes and subjects offered in the publication that range from a children's section, the origins of Islam, a questions and answers section, commentary on foreign affairs as well as a women's sections. There is also a radical stance taken against Israel throughout the publication's existence.

There is unavoidably a radical rhetoric towards certain topics as a result. This has led existing analysis on the magazine to trivialise the wider importance of the publication. The seminal studies of Gilles Kepel and Fuoad Ajami predominantly focus on the radical rhetoric of the magazine whilst overlooking the importance of the rest of its contents as an attempt to advance a comprehensive ideological programme. The most cogent study is perhaps that of Abdullah Al-Arian, who explores the major themes of the publication as an attempt to rebuild the organisation's intellectual base rather than simply dismiss it due to its radical stance against Israel and the United States. The aim therefore is to build upon the broad analysis of Al-Arian by undertaking a critical analysis of the periodical in relation to the dialectical relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the State. In

doing so, we can paint a clearer picture of the ideological programme put forth by the organisation in its attempt to re-establish itself as a social force. The non-rigid application of Gramsci's concepts further assist us in contextualising the ideology in the periodical with the dialectical developments that transpired on the conjunctural terrain during this period of time.

2.4 A Thematic Gramscian Approach

The thematic approach is two-fold. Firstly, it utilises the predominant themes present in the writings of Antonio Gramsci to help us contextualise our findings. Secondly, given the eclectic and disorganised nature of Al-Da'wa it is necessary to categorise the periodical into the pertinent themes it seeks to address. The advantage of a thematic approach lies in its ability to systematically take into consideration a wide array of information so as to magnify the importance of said information.[298] As a result, there are a number of closely related themes that we can non-rigidly apply in undertaking a reconnaissance of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. These themes assist us in forming a nuanced understanding of the intricate impact that power dynamics have on Political Islam. Gramsci's writings hence provide a number of themes entailing his concept of hegemony that can be utilised towards honing our understanding of Political Islam. As it pertains to this research, the principal Gramscian themes utilised are as follows:

- Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony
  - o This is the overarching concept that in connects Gramsci's overarching rhythm of thought. It is a project of empowering and emancipating the subaltern.
- Caesarism and Transformism
  - o There is evidence of both during the Nasser regime following his Caesarist intervention in 1952 to establish a new hegemonic power in Egypt. The changes pursued by Nasser to the social and political sphere can broadly be contextualised along the lines of the regressive-progressive dialectic.

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[298] Boyatzis, Richard. E. *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development.* London: Sage Publications, 1998.

- Civil Society
    - By understanding civil society through a Gramscian rhythm of thought, we can unravel the weak hegemony and attempted domination of social relations by the state during the period under analysis. In considering this sphere to be neither benevolent nor autonomous, we can see how the state and Muslim Brotherhood each attempt to cultivate 'spontaneous' consent through ideological leadership aimed at reproduced relations and enforcing conceptions.
- Coercion-Consent
    - The coercion-consent dyad is closely related to how we ought to understand civil society. Namely, it is the notion that power ought to be attained through the cultivation of consent vis-à-vis social institutions and only safeguarded by coercion in the last instance. The weak hegemony of the State in Egypt has amplified the coercion aspect but even as such, the state must produce some form of consent through social institutions if it is to retain power.
- Common Sense
    - The existing conceptions and worldviews formed by common sense denote to some level the ideology of the hegemonic group in power. Subaltern forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood work tirelessly to change these conceptions. However, subaltern forces are not exempt from uncritically accepting certain beliefs that are advanced by the ideology of the hegemonic force. For instance, while there has been a marked shift towards accepting the hijab as a dress there has been little efforts to combat the belief of patriarchal society. Likewise, the popular acceptance of democratic principles has resulted in an Islamist trend that retroactively incorporates such belief into their programmes.
- Crisis of Authority/Organic Crisis

- A crisis of authority occurs when the ideological and political programmes of the hegemonic force fail to satisfy the interests and will of the general population. This crisis was witnessed prior to the 1952 coup and produced a national-popular bloc that may have assumed power had the Brotherhood been more dedicated to building alliances within it.

- Ideological & Political Leadership
  - Ideological & Political leadership ultimately entails the primary function of social forces within the sphere of civil society. The task is to develop organic intellectuals and build alliances that can transcend an economic-corporate alliance. Again, this involves ideological leadership that can transform common sense into good sense and ultimately produce a national-popular will that can lead to a historic bloc.

- Passive Revolution
  - Passive revolution is perhaps the most pertinent theme as it pertains to the case study. The history of passive revolution and deflected passive revolution are primary sources of agitation amongst social forces and the subaltern in Egypt. Consecutive phases of passive revolution in Egypt have sought to co-opt and assimilate as well as to engage in restorative functions that fail to empower the population.

- Restoration-Revolution
  - The restoration-revolution dialectic is seminal to contextualising the strategy of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. There are a number of indications in Al-Da'wa that their reformative ideological approach is matched with a desire not to overturn state institutions but simply to reform them. The reformative aspects of their ideology and political leadership must be read as a constitutive part of their war of position strategy.

- War of Position & War of Manoeuvre

- o The history of passive revolution in Egypt has unfolded in such a way that it has marginalised support within the Brotherhood for engaging in a war of manoeuvre against the state. The Al Da'wa project under the guidance of General Guide Omar Tilmisani is ultimately an extension of Husayn al-Hudaybi's efforts to moderate the strategy of the organisation towards perpetual and protracted reform and away from Qutb's call for a frontal attack.

The aforementioned constitutes the main themes that shall guide the critical analysis of the case study. The proposed approach is beneficial in that it illuminates the organic interconnectedness between the different dialectical relationships at play. Further, it assists us in advancing an interpretation of Political Islam that takes on an interscalar and national point of departure. This helps us to magnify the dynamics of ideology, power and passive revolution that fundamentally help to shape the phenomenon. In turn, it also sheds necessary light on the fragmentation that local power dynamics produce within Political Islamist organisations and between social forces. While the aforementioned themes guide our critical analysis of the case study, it is also necessary to introduce a set of themes that pertain exclusively to Al-Da'wa magazine. Due to its scattered and varied presentation, it is helpful if we organise our approach so as to focus on the main motifs the publication sought to advance. Broadly speaking, these themes can be organised into four general categories:

- The Role of Islam in Society in Modernity
  - o The emphasis placed on Sharia
- Nasser, Revisionism to Expanding Intellectual Base
  - o Criticism of Al-Azhar
- Establishing Da'wa As a Political Strategy
  - o Reconciling fragmentation from within
- Historical Continuity and Hierarchical Structures
  - o Narrative to bridge the past with the present so as to create authenticity

2.5 Research Limitations

The nature of the research is such that it cannot adequately address the wealth of organic and conjunctural moments that have transpired since the resurgence of Islamism. Likewise, the emphasis was primarily placed on conjunctural moments so as to improve our insight into the oft-neglected sphere. This has meant that there are some economic considerations, particularly pertaining to peasants and the working class that could not be covered. Moreover, the insularity of the Brotherhood and its most recent bout with repression presented a number of difficulties in attaining further primary resources. In terms of Al-Da'wa magazine it is important to note that the research insights constitute a criterion of interpretation rather than an attempt to rewrite history. The magazine is in itself poorly organised with articles authored by hundreds of individuals, most of them with no professional or academic background in Islam, meaning that it is difficult to discern their status and influence within the organisation. Nonetheless, the individuals have been treated in a Gramscian sense of constituting intellectuals wherein everyone constitutes an intellectual but does not necessarily engage in intellectual activity on a professional basis.

2.6. Conclusion

The objective of this qualitative research study is to contribute to knowledge on Political Islam by providing a nuanced conceptual understanding of the vast phenomenon. The design and methods chosen offer an avenue that can help bridge knowledge gaps within existing literature by thematically focusing on power dynamics rather than getting bogged down in international or state-centric approaches that fall short in capturing the dialectical power dynamics that go into shaping Political Islam. Conversely, this study also seeks to dispel the malignant arguments put forth by the clash of civilisations thesis. The polarising thesis recklessly postulates a binary worldview that reduces the vastly complex phenomenon of Political Islam into an intransigent, primordial and atavistic force. The research design and methods set out in this chapter seek to contest this worldview as being inconsistent with the manner in which reality and meaning are constructed.

The thematic case study provides an appropriate method for contributing to knowledge on Political Islam. It holistically and dialectically analyses the power dynamics between the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the State in order to contextualise the political and ideological strategy of the organisation. The data is interpreted thematically in order to arrive at a nuanced conceptual understanding of Political Islamists seek to articulate ideology and garner consent with the aim of creating an alternative worldview and contesting hegemonic power. Hence, the design and methods provide a critical yet novel approach in understanding meaning and social phenomena by delving into the complexity of social processes through the ways in which they influence the behaviour and actions of Political Islamists. The research methodology is thus devised to contest the simplification of the phenomenon as something that is binary, state-centric and culturally inert. Rather, it is a complex phenomenon that ought to be interpreted as consistently being constructed and re-constructed vis-à-vis historical formation, dialectical relationships and shifting power dynamics.

Chapter III: Towards a Gramscian Analysis of Political Islam

3.1 Introduction

Oppressed people have always sought to escape their oppression through fantasy and dreams. Is not religion, the greatest collective adventure and the greatest 'utopia' collectively created by humanity, a way of escaping from the 'terrestrial world? - Antonio Gramsci[299]

The Political Islamist venture is paradoxical insofar as that it utilises the collective adventure that is religion to negate a complete escape from the 'terrestrial world.' The propagation of an ontological approach coupled with the innate function of daily worship in Islam complement the Political Islamist agenda to strategically curb desires of escapism and fantasy. The politicisation of Islam as an ideology produces a pursuit of a Qutbian 'realistic utopia'[300] wherein the articulation of Islam retains its collective utopian frame while bounding its practitioners to the antagonisms that accompany the mundaneness of daily life. The repudiation of epistemological inquiry is reinforced through an ontological approach that is systematically cemented into the hierarchy of organisations. As discussed in the previous chapter, the discursive practices amongst Islamists to cement this ideational approach oscillate in relation to the dialectical relationships that they maintain with state and society. It is within this framework that internal fragmentation ensues as to the appropriate political strategy to further cultivate consciousness and consent. In the case of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood the influence and legacy of Qutb's doctrine of confronting non-believers pose a significant internal

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[299] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from Cultural Writings.* Ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Tr. William Boelhower. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985. Pg. 373. Print.
[300] Sayyid Qutb's realistic utopia entails a paradoxical attempt to use the present to project the future.

challenge that clashes with their historically consistent political strategy of gradually reforming society.[301]

In turning to Antonio Gramsci and his seminal concept of hegemony, we stand to better understand the power dynamics that shape the relationship between Political Islamists and the State but equally how these dynamics internal impact and fracture cohesion within Islamist organisations. Moreover, his concepts provide us with an opportunity to develop a tangible methodology that stands to enrich existing narratives of Political Islam by providing a nuanced dialectical analysis of how it is shaped by power and ideology – and how we ought to understand its presence and role as a potential contributor to civil society without getting bogged down by rigid distinctions.[302] Gramsci's contribution towards restoring the philosophy of praxis through his concept of hegemony further equips us with the ability to uncover the organic and reciprocal links that shape ideology, social activity and power relations within the superstructure of civil society. The conceptual approach advanced by Gramsci can help to problematize the manner in which we assess the interactions and developments between hegemonic and subaltern forces without falling prey to cultural inertia, state-centrism or by having to treat social forces as unified in their ideological and political strategies.

The theoretical foundations laid by Gramsci ultimately allow us to deepen our understanding as to the interscalar nature of power and ideology. By honing in on the modalities of power we therefore are provided with a clearer understanding of what goes into the cultivation and articulation of Political Islamist strategies. In placing the

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[301] The work of Barbara Zollner covers the influence of Hudabyi in guiding the Brotherhood away from Qutb's combative approach. It is argued that in addition to Preachers Not Judges, Al-Da'wa magazine is very much an attempt to rectify and recover the image and direction of the Brotherhood.

[302] The platform on which consent and power are contested is ultimately that of civil society. Gramsci's departure from liberal interpretations of civil society that find it to constitutes an amalgam of free-flowing organic development in which the state serves merely as a regulating and coercive authority is also of noteworthy importance. Gramsci's postulation that asymmetrical development results in distinctive forms of civil society is seminal to unravelling the variation between Islamist ideologies and political strategies.

emphasis on hegemony we can also curtail narratives that disproportionately illuminate culture and religion, rigidly define civil society and treat Political Islam as a vast monolithic entity. The overarching objective in undertaking a Gramscian analysis of Political Islam is to re-conceptualise how both ought to be understood within the broader context of power relations between hegemonic and subaltern groups. The key as such is to unravel the complex interdependencies that shape social forces so as to unpack the components that stimulate Islamist activity and strategy without having to resort to over-emphasising cultural, religious and state-centric criteria.

As such, the theoretical groundwork advanced in this chapter is done so in order to develop a thematic approach of the plethora of concepts that constitute Gramscian hegemony so that we may non-rigidly engage them with Political Islam in the forthcoming case study. The breadth of ideas that comprise Gramscian hegemony necessitate undertaking a partially unconventional or stand-alone approach so that an adequate understanding of Gramscian hegemony can take shape prior to applying it to Political Islam. This chapter therefore details a variety of concepts that include passive revolution, economic-corporate phase, hegemonic bloc, the duality between coercion and consent, organic crisis, ethico-political history, civil society, Caesarism, intellectuals and common sense in arriving at a firm understanding of Gramscian hegemony. The mixture of these concepts helps to paint a nuanced canvas of the modalities of power, which in turn reciprocally influence ideological leadership – the mainstay of acquiring and contesting power.

3.2. Deploying a Gramscian 'Rhythm of Thought'

The initial chapter of this thesis explored the existing popular debates and critical discourse on Political Islam. While the latter provides the crux of what this thesis builds upon, the prevalence of the former should not hastily be dismissed in spite of its lack of academic merit due to the fact that it can help us gauge how we ought to think about the impact that interscalar developments owing to a universal history have on the cultivation of 'common sense.' The uncritical yet impressionable viewpoints posed by the clash

thesis in many ways run parallel to the indolent Islamist critiques that selectively denigrate the West and claim an Israeli conspiracy. Ultimately however, these viewpoints are replete with perforations that struggle to tangibly address the social antagonisms that concretely impact the quality of people's daily life at the subnational and national levels.

Consequently, the second chapter sought to shed light on the intricate and encompassing role of ideology and ideational activity so as avoid its reduction into a mere political tool for social forces in their quest for power. It is the aim of this chapter to continue along this line of reasoning by presenting a thorough theoretical understanding of Gramscian hegemony that can further elucidate the central role of power dynamics and ideology in guiding the dialectical relationship between Political Islamists and the state. By honing in on the conjunctural terrain we stand to unravel more concretely the conditions that contribute to the articulation of Political Islamist ideology and allow it to manufacture sufficient consent so that it can emerge as the predominant oppositional force in Muslim societies. The fragmented nature of existing analyses has to a large extent thwarted efforts to consolidate a more nuanced understanding of Political Islam's active role in civil society aimed at solidifying power. Such approaches have often isolated and projected individual factors such as culture, materialism and so forth as determining. Naturally, while this allows for a narrow base of analysis it nevertheless runs the risk of exacerbating our understanding of an already disjointed field.

The limitations stemming from these methods of inquiry have meant that agreement within the field has been relatively sparse. In the instances that agreements do emerge, they almost always implore the need for continuing along a conjunctural path in order to reveal the many complexities that shape and guide Political Islam. In this respect, Yale professor Andrew March correctly cautions that Political Islam ought to "be understood in the broadest sense possible as the range of modern political movements, ideological trends, and state-directed policies concerned with giving Islam an authoritative status in political life." [303] It is therefore imperative that we depart from the practice of

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[303] March, Andrew. "Political Islam: Theory." *The Annual Review of Political Science*. 18 (2015). 104-123. Print.

deconstructing reciprocally linked factors into separate or determining fields.[304] Instead, Political Islam must be approached as consisting of various disparate movements that employ tailored[305] ideological strategies in an attempt to carve out a core place for Islam in socio-political relations.[306] This allows us to refine our understanding of Political Islam by targeting the interwoven and organic web of factors[307] that shape Islamist discourse and the articulation of their respective programmes.

Hence, it is imperative to study the movements of people responsible for formulating and carrying out political and ideological programmes in relation to the uneven impact that power and its social processes produce – especially given that the impact of power on the formulators of strategy is rarely uniform. The fluidity of social processes further mandates that we refrain from the allure of neatly categorising political movements and their programmes.[308] Instead, the distinctive relationships produced by power dynamics necessitate that we steer our analysis towards a deeper socio-political historiography that created such conditions in the first instance. This better equips us in uncovering how the corrosion of social relations produce antagonisms that impact relationships between social forces as well as their internal dynamics. The proposed methodology to arrive at such a juncture revolves around utilising Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony and his overarching 'rhythm of thought.'[309]

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[304] G.V. Plekhanov provides a cogent example of how historico-social factors are abstractions that we convert into separate and determining factors to establish a hierarchy of factors. See Plekhanov, G.V. *The Materialist Conception of History*. Holicog: Wildside Press, 2008. Pg. 11-14. Print.

[305] Programmes tend to be particular to the conditions of how uneven development is politically articulated at the national level.

[306] The purpose is to shift away from what Halliday, Fred (2005; 195) describes as the "growing obscurity and simplifications that overlook historical and sociological analysis in favour of accepting broad religious and cultural conventions as independent forces."

[307] Plekhanov, G.V. *The Materialist Conception of History*. Holicog: Wildside Press, 2008. Pg. 11. Print.

[308] Categorizing movements as 'moderate', 'fundamental', etc. is bound to lead us down a slippery and paradoxical slope of analysis.

[309] The term 'rhythm of thought' is attributed to Adam David Morton (2007; 37-9) who describes it as "internalising Gramsci's method of thinking – about alternative social conditions of hegemony and passive revolution rather than embarking on an ahistorical or mechanical application of his theory." In essence, Gramsci's rhythm of thought consists

The complex and often contradictory developments that impact Political Islam suggest that it would be advantageous to assess the phenomenon through a re-conceptualised approach. An integral methodology that accounts for the historical dialectic materialism at work can help to illuminate Political Islam's interwoven relationship to political action, civil society and the uneven nature of historical development without succumbing to the temptations of having to assign determining value to individual variables. A Gramscian approach can guides us towards this course given it displays a heightened tendency to:

> Examine and interrogate phenomena from multiple points of view, from divergent angles and different sites, and in general in slow motion, his concepts, designed to grasp some of the complexities present in social processes, are as many-sided and multiple as ways of seeing.[310]

While Gramsci's writings can be attributed as dialectic and holistic, by no means are such features unique to his work alone. However, what distinguishes him from others in relation to this particular study is the combination of his rhythm of thought and the relevance of his concept of hegemony. The applicability of the latter stems directly from its ability to help advance our understanding of contemporary social relations without erring towards a path of oversimplification. The works of Antonio Gramsci provide a theoretically rich framework that is useful in understanding the complex relationship between hegemonic and subaltern forces. The relevance of his concepts to the study of Political Islam resides in their immeasurable value in integrally unpacking contemporary social relations. This is in direct contrast to Richard Bellamy's austere historicism[311], which deems Gramsci's concepts as unsatisfactory in assessing contemporary societies[312]

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of a critical and absolutist reflection of historical conditions by combining past and present forms of thought to gauge their impact towards shaping ideas and existing social relations – even if it produces mere residue. Also see: Femia, Joseph (1987; 124-127).

[310] Holub, Renate. *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism.* London: Routledge, 1992. Pg. 5-6. Print.

[311] Femia, Joseph V. *The Machiavellian Legacy: Essays in Italian Political Thought.* New York: St. Martins Press, 1998. Pg. 4-5. Print.

[312] In particular, against Stuart Hall's use of Gramsci to analyse culture in the UK.

by confining Gramsci into simply constituting an 'Italian thinker' writing about the Italian context of his time.[313] However, as Joseph Femia cogently notes, the residue of certain past ideas and social conditions is such that it transcends the particular historical context that it originally addressed and thus can serve to guide our understanding of contemporary social conditions. The concepts of Gramsci fit this description in that they account for "the specificity of different practices and the forms of the articulated unity they represent"[314] and thereby provide us with an alternative way of thinking about "how different forces come together, conjuncturally, to create the new terrain, on which a different politics must form up."[315]

The concept of hegemony eludes a strict definition due to the dialectic and integral historicist foundations that encompass Gramsci's 'rhythm of thought.' This does not imply that Gramscian hegemony lacks structure but rather that it does not solely reduce everything to a one-sided explanation stemming from overarching structural conditions. The concept is one that seeks to organically dissect the modalities of power and how it manufactures, maintains and reproduces 'spontaneous' consent. The latter is a particularly important facet that alludes to the dialectic between dominant economic classes and the subaltern marked by active efforts to produce meaning and disseminate values in order to secure the consent of society.[316]

Hegemony is therefore marked by a "relation, not of domination by means of force, but of consent by means of political and ideological leadership. It is the organisation of consent."[317] Gramsci's postulation of a dyadic relationship between coercion and consent is also of seminal importance as it departs from the classical liberal understanding of the

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[313] Bellamy, Richard. "Gramsci, Croce and the Italian Political Tradition." *Croce, Gramsci, Bobbio and the Italian Political Tradition.* Colchester: ECPR Press, 2013. Pg. 136. Print.

[314] Hall, Stuart. *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left.* London: Verso Books, 1988. Pg. 161-173. Print.

[315] Ibid.,

[316] Holub, Renate. *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism.* London: Routledge, 1992. Pg. 6. Print.

[317] Simon, Roger. *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction.* London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982. Pg. 22. Print.

relationship between state and civil society. Gramsci rejects a narrow definition of the state as comprising a solely coercive and juridical force by introducing a widened field of power relations sustained by a complex but organic unity between the base and superstructure wherein the procurement of consent via political and ideological leadership takes precedence. Given the scattered nature of Gramsci's writings it is worthwhile to elucidate the wider historical, political and cultural context that influenced his thought process and helped formulate his concept of hegemony. An investigation into these factors shall enable us to construct a fuller contextual understanding of how Gramsci arrived at his concept of hegemony. This shall then equip us with the foundation for presenting an alternative methodology that can sufficiently tackle the interwoven relationship between Political Islam, the state and civil society.[318] The remainder of this chapter therefore seeks to develop Gramscian hegemony in conjunction with his writings on civil society, the state and passive revolution prior to applying it to our discussion on Political Islamists operating at the grassroots level.[319]

To reiterate, the overarching aim is to develop a nuanced and thematic theoretical methodology that departs from the reified and rigid distinctions that so often embellish cultural variables, the coercive power of the state and under-emphasise the role of civil society in shaping power dynamics and social relations. The grand stage for Political Islam firmly takes place within civil society – a milieu that is organically connected to the base and plays a decisive role in guiding the direction of Islamist ideological and political programmes. Hence, a Gramscian methodology can assist us in unravelling the phenomenon given its ability to illuminate how ideology, power and consent reciprocally and proportionately operate alongside historical and social conditions to produce

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[318] In particular, it shall allow us to treat the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as an active and conscious political movement that horizontally and vertically contends for power via strategic political and ideological programs aimed at giving Islam a core place in political life at the national level.

[319] The notion is that the transnational function of Political Islam tends to develop its key characteristics at the domestic and national level. It is essential to critically assess the historical conditions and contemporary social processes that shape individual movements in their primary arena of action. Heeding, the advice of Adam Morton we ought to view such a process as nodal and inter-scalar rather than as a transmission belt.

disparate Political Islamist organisations. This is further aided by the "continuing relevance of his ideas and the immensity of his contribution to contemporary thought."[320] The fact that Gramsci's rhythm of thought is "neither dogmatic, nor unquestionably accepting of the categories of the past"[321] provides us with a malleable theoretical starting point for formulating a re-conceptualised approach of how we ought to understand Political Islam. Let us then turn to an exploration of Gramsci's concepts with the principal aim of applying his writings with elasticity to Political Islam, and in particular, to the forthcoming case study on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

3.3. The Motivations of Antonio Gramsci

The distinctiveness of Gramsci's concept of hegemony owes to his personal, political and social experiences that preceded it.[322] At a personal level, the Sardinian found himself deeply invested in understanding the roots and prevailing consequences of the Risorgimento's failure to sufficiently integrate the south following the unification of Italy.[323] This interest would only intensify with his enrolment to study philology at the University of Turin in 1911. In fact, the course of study would play a formative role in Gramsci developing a wider understanding of how linguistics and culture influence social processes and the modalities of power.[324]

Gramsci's stay in Turin coincided with the onset of *biennio rosso,* a two-year period marked by intense social conflict across Italy following the First World War. The ensuing social unrest led to heightened political and economic instability, which in turn resulted

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[320] Ives, Peter. *Language & Hegemony in Gramsci.* London: Pluto Press, 2004. Pg. Xi. Print.

[321] Howson, Richard and Kylie Smith. *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion.* New York: Routledge, 2008. Pg. 6-11. Print.

[322] Cox, Robert W. "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method." In *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations,* edited by Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 1993. Pg. 49. Print.

[323] It is important to take Gramsci's 1926 'Some Aspects of the Southern Question' into consideration as it marks the introduction of his concept of hegemony.

[324] Gramsci's cultural analysis tackled the importance of how language and literature can spark conflict between classes by reinforcing and perpetuating cultural differences and prejudices. See Peter Ives (2004; 33-6).

in the rise of workers unions and widespread factory strikes. Gramsci's active participation with the workers unions and factory councils was accompanied by the continued development of his intellectual thought. During this time he served as the lead editor of *L'ordine Nuovo*,[325] a radical leftist publication concocted to operate as the intellectual mouthpiece of the factory councils so as to help facilitate workers demands in a manner similar to that of the October Revolution in Russia. In addition to this, Gramsci was also deeply involved as a prominent member of the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) following its split from the Socialist Party of Italy (PSI) in 1921.[326] His active role as a joint leader of the PCI would see him align his thought more closely to the Bolsheviks. This signalled a shift away from his ardent support for prominent Italian intellectual and socialist sympathiser Benedetto Croce. Gramsci's involvement within the Communist International (Comintern) would subsequently include visits to Russia and prompt the maturation or so-called 'radicalisation' of his thought. As a result, he would heighten his criticism towards the PSI for its failures, charge Croce[327] as being the 'lay-pope' of Mussolini due to his overly liberal philosophy and ultimately become the leading oppositional voice against fascism until his imprisonment in 1926 – a decision justified by the fascist regime as 'cutting off the head' of the opposition.

The combination of these events and developments would invariably influence Gramsci's Prison Notebooks. As a whole, his personal and political motivations were fused with and fortified by his social aspirations, which Howson and Smith adeptly describe as 'deeply humanistic' and highly cognizant of historical circumstances in light of his "continual

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[325] The concept of hegemony would take form in the weekly publication during the factory council strikes. In July 1920, Gramsci would write that a "socialist revolution has to be founded on the patient and methodical work needed to build a new order in the relations of production." See: Simon, Roger (1982).

[326] The communist party was officially banned by the fascist regime but still operated as the lead resistance movement.

[327] While Benedetto Croce was not an official member of the party, he sympathised with them and with socialism. The public widely associated him as being a member and leader Filippo Turati referred to him as comrade. See: Rizi, Fabio Fernando. *Benedetto Croce and Italian Fascism.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pg. 19. Print.

insistence that social transformation cannot be possible without a deep understanding of the complex factors that go into making a person as well as the collective."[328]

3.3.1. The Risorgimento, Passive Revolution and Caesarism

"Abbiamo fatto l'Italia. Ora si tratta di fare gli Italiani." – Massimo D'Azeglio[329]

The abovementioned roughly translates into the following: "we have made Italy, now it is a question of making the Italians."[330] The unification or founding of a state constitutes a complex set of procedures bound to a plethora of social complexities. The potential mismanagement of such a delicate process runs the risk of generating perpetual social discord. The historical formation of modern nation-states in the MENA region offers a number of loose, yet perceptible, parallels[331] that are relatable to the difficulties of statecraft that Gramsci sought to address in regards to the social discord sowed by the Risorgimento in Italy.[332] The unification of Italy, particularly under the direction of Piedmont statesman Camillo Benso (Count of Cavour) produced a number of pervasive and lingering social conditions that Gramsci deemed to be elements of passive revolution. The usage of the term *passive revolution* was an adaption taken from Vincenzo Cuoco's history of the 1799 Neapolitan revolution, which Gramsci attributed as being part of the early stages of the Risorgimento.[333] Gramsci's use of the term sought to modify and

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[328] Howson, Richard and Kylie Smith. *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion.* New York: Routledge, 2008. Pg. 11. Print.

[329] D'Azeglio, Massimo. *I Miei Ricordi,* Florence: Einaudi Press, 1891. Print.

[330] In a passage of the notebooks, Gramsci criticises D'azeglio for not providing troops to Garabaldi. He deems both D'Azeglio and Cavour as less intellectual than Mazzini and both intent on preventing other social forces from gaining ground than actually uniting Italy.

[331] For instance, heightened sectarianism, passive revolution and the gelatinous nature of civil society.

[332] The histories of states are undoubtedly varied and unique but the process of statecraft may result in the incorporation of similar transformist policies and passive revolution.

[333] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 108. Print.

enrich the concept as a criterion of interpretation[334] that could assess the strategies of the Risorgimento as a historical situation whereby the establishment of new political formations emerge but fundamentally fail to reorder social relations.[335] The concept of passive revolution is derived partially from Marx's preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* and based on two main principles. The first being that social formations do not dissolve until after the productive forces to which they give rise cease to develop further and secondly that society cannot achieve new goals without first incubating the required conditions within its old form.[336] The failure to fundamentally reorder social relations when new forms of power formations emerge is therefore a constitutive aspect of a passive revolution.

The Piedmont led top-down unification of Italy resulted in a severe lack of integration between the industrialist north and the agrarian south. According to Gramsci, the conservative approach of Cavour along with his manipulation of international relations[337] was aided by his dialectic awareness of both his own and Giuseppe Mazzini's role[338] in the unification of Italy. Cavour's push for a restorative approach took advantage of Mazzini's lack of situational awareness so that his ill-timed initiatives proved advantageous to Piedmont.[339] Moreover, in comparing the unification of 1860 in Italy to the French Revolution, Gramsci found that unlike the latter, the former was passive in nature as it ultimately failed to garner sustainable mass popular support as the Jacobins

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[334] It has been suggested that the inexorable links between passive revolution and war of position indicated Gramsci's suggested method for the left. This however is not necessarily true as Gramsci asserts that the concept is an analytical tool for assessing the strategy of the Risorgimento.

[335] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 106-110, 175-185. Print.

[336] Ibid., 106.

[337] To successfully secure foreign intervention against Austria in lands Piedmont sought in order to bring them under its control.

[338] Mazzini advocated the unification of Italy through a revolutionary rather than restorative strategy that sought to empower the masses.

[339] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Print.

had achieved in France. In Italy, the myopia of political and ideological leadership exacerbated social conditions by seeking to passively secure legitimacy and thereby retain existing or old modes of governance through the use of '*transformist*' policies and the abuse of its coercive apparatus. As Gramsci points out:

> The previous ruling classes were essentially conservative in the sense that they did not tend to construct an organic passage from the other classes to their own, i.e., to enlarge their class sphere 'technically' and ideologically: their conception was that of a closed caste. The bourgeois class poses itself as an organism in continuous movement, capable of absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level. [340]

The conditions leading to the Risorgimento were shaped in part to a *restoration-revolution* dialectic whereby Cavour and Piedmont came to represent the former and Mazzini the latter. According to Gramsci, the restorative functions produced by the Risorgimento ought to dynamically be understood as a ruse of providence as postulated by Vico.[341] That is, the idea that men construct the world on the basis of a divine plan that is unbeknownst to them.[342] This is evident in the dialectic between Cavour and Mazzini that preceded the unification of Italy. For his part, Cavour was able to capitalise[343] given that he maintained an awareness of his own and the other's role whereas Mazzini, being a visionary apostle of sorts, failed due to his inability to be a realistic politician. [344] Likewise, following the unification, Prime Minister Agostino

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[340] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971. Pg. 260. Print.
[341] Ibid., 108-110.
[342] Vico, Giambattista. *The New Science.* Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1968. Print. Pg. 62.
[343] Cavour's awareness allowed Piedmont to take advantage of many instances such as having King Emanuelle II greet Garibaldi in Rome upon taking control of Rome as whereas Mazzini failed to conjure up support for a united Italy following the insurrection in Milan in 1848.
[344] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 106-112. Print.

Depretis' ability to retain power stemmed from his transformist strategy that successfully co-opted key figures of the opposition irrespective of their political and ideological stance as well as provided them and their constituents with occasional favours.[345] As such, Depretis facilitated a policy whereby the political programmes of 'opposed' parties converged over time in the spirit of 'nationalism.'[346]

The eventual yet corresponding rise of fascism was sowed from the restorative trend in Italian politics derivative of the aforementioned ruse of providence.[347] The failure of the Italian bourgeoisie to attain active popular consent due to their narrow political and ideological leadership signalled their inability to attain active popular consent and therefore provided for an unsustainable *national-popular* dimension[348] incapable of maintaining influence over every day social processes. As such, the conservative Piedmont effort constituted a restorative and reactionary attempt marked by a mixture of coercive and transformist policies[349] geared towards muting the voice of the subaltern by co-opting its intellectuals and leaders into the existing power structure.[350] The subsequent shift to fascism brought with it a brief phase constituting a frontal attack to conquer state power followed by the consolidation of power through a top-down modernisation of the economy that fractured the remaining political clout of both the bourgeoisie and organised working class. The marginalisation of the latter was evocative of a continuation of ruling class style policies supported by the old guard as well as landowners threatened by the rural population.[351] The social base for fascism however emerged in the form of

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[345] Ibid., 219.

[346] Ibid., 58.

[347] Ibid., 108.

[348] The term national-popular entails the ability of a social force to culturally mediate the interests of the masses through the formation of sustainable alliances with the subaltern classes. It is not to be confused with populism. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.Pg. 131-132, 421. Print.

[349] The discussion on passive revolution, transformism and Caesarism foreshadows the Nasser's policies, which shall be explored in depth in Chapter 5.

[350] Ibid., 58.

[351] Gramsci, Antonio. *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935.* Ed. David Forgacs. New York: New York University Press, 2000. Pg. 138-151. Print

the urban petty bourgeoisie, and in certain regions, the newly minted rural bourgeoisie. This development posed a fundamentally paradoxical issue given that while fascism managed to organise a social class previously "incapable of having any cohesion or unitary ideology" it lacked the inherent capacity to satisfy its ideological premises of conquering the state whilst managing to remain a rural phenomenon.[352] In other words, to conquer a state, an incoming force must sufficiently take control of those tasks that are essential to the functioning of society. In the Italian case, this meant that fascism had to be able to conquer the factories – a task Gramsci points out requires the working class as its social base, not the petty bourgeoisie class that fascism had amassed.[353] This led Gramsci to assert that fascism simply altered the means of conserving the old features of Italian politics by a modified method of unifying reactionary forces.[354]

Ultimately for Gramsci fascism signifies an altered form of another concept that he discusses at length, Caesarism. Fascism in similar in that it neither wholly constitutes reaction nor revolution. Instead, it is a modified manifestation of Caesarism in that it seeks to eradicate the power of the 'old bourgeoisie liberal forces' and the left whilst developing its social base through the right and subaltern masses.[355] By contrast, *Caesarism* marks the intervention of a third party into the restoration-revolution dialectic of passive revolution. This intervention is usually heralded by a 'great personality'[356] as a response to a potentially catastrophic stalemate between two parties that would otherwise result in the 'reciprocal destruction' of both without said intervention. The intervention of a third party may either take form as *progressive or regressive*. It is progressive in the event that it departs from the old social and political formation and moves towards a new and more inclusive form. Conversely, it is deemed regressive and reactionary if the third

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[352] Ibid.,139.

[353] Ibid., 137-151.

[354] . Ibid.,

[355] Gramsci, Antonio. *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935.* Ed. David Forgacs. New York: New York University Press, 2000. Pg. 248-249. Print

[356] It may also emerge in the form of coalition parties within parliamentary systems.

party operates as a restorative force seeking to reform' or retain old institutions and social formations.[357]

The aforementioned consequences that accompany passive revolution may emerge out of the mismanagement of two types of strategies aimed at contesting power: *war of manoeuvre* and *war of position*. The former represents a direct or frontal attack on the state in an attempt to seize power.[358] Such a strategy is effective in situations where the state exhibits a lack of "social, cultural, and economic activity" and "overwhelms social and political life" through its coercive apparatus.[359] It is the strategy attributed to the Bolshevik overthrow of Tsarist Russia. Namely, a war of manoeuvre allowed the Bolsheviks to swiftly contest state power but severely impeded their ability to adequately restructure state institutions due to lack of experience and expertise in reforming weak state institutions. Hence, the dictatorial functions of a workers' hegemony resulted in a Bolshevik party dictatorship that ultimately failed to integrate society at large and therefore jeopardised the chances of consolidating a robust hegemony in Soviet Russia.

By contrast, a *war of position* represents a protracted strategy that is often found in, but not necessarily exclusive to, advanced capitalist states. Any social force that seeks to become hegemonic in such states must initially go through an *economic-corporate*[360] phase that develops the consent within their own grouping by collectively promoting its economic interests. To be successful however, a social grouping seeking power must translate the abovementioned phase into moments of collective political consciousness

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[357] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 219-221. Print.

[358] Fontana, Benedetto. "The Concept of Hegemony in Gramsci." *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion.* Comp. Richard Howson and Kylie Smith. New York: Routledge, 2008. Pg. 91. Print.

[359] Ibid.,

[360] The economic-corporate phase precedes class-consciousness, which in turn precedes the interests of the collective. The latter is necessary to acquire hegemony and requires building alliances with the subaltern so as to promote a collective political consciousness. See: Gramsci, Antonio. A Gramsci Reader. 204-205; Gramsci, Antonio and Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Pg. 173-185.

akin to the manner that the Jacobins[361] did during the French Revolution. Here, the peasant masses were repeatedly able to have their demands heard in a progressive and qualitative manner thereby ensuring consent and a relatively strong hegemony that was inclusive of the subaltern. In the contemporary age, Peter Thomas postulates that the war of position has become the essential strategy, at least in the West, due to mass class-based politics, which increase the potential for counter-hegemonic movements to emerge in opposition to the state.[362]

The respective strategies manifest themselves in the ideology and ideational activity of competing social forces once the incumbent ruling bloc beings to falter in its ability to retain consent and thus its hegemony. The ruling bloc, depending on the particular state in question, consists of durable alliances made up of ruling classes and integrated subaltern groups that comprise civil society. The hegemony of the ruling class, which manifests itself through coercion-consent and ideological leadership results in the creation of a collective will. However, this collective will is contingent on active consent and therefore alliances within and outside of the bloc must be managed on a consistent and constant basis. The failure or mismanagement of such alliances can result in social discord thereby prompting the formation or proliferation of counter-hegemonic movements via competing political and ideological programmes that shall be discussed later in this chapter.

The ideological platform of Political Islamists alongside their existing dialectic with the their respective states provide for intriguing parallels to be analytically drawn in regards to a war of position strategy – in spite of the fact that their host states often lack an advanced economy and the presence of mass class-based politics.[363] The creation of modern nation-states in the MENA region has accompanied with it many aspects of

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[361] Gramsci attributed the Jacobins with the ability to carry out leadership in a manner that connected the masses organically to the dominant class so as to create a national-popular alliance.

[362] Thomas, Peter. D. *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism.* Leiden: Brill, 2009. Pg. 239. Print.

[363] The case study chapters shall converge Gramsci's concepts with the phenomenon of Political Islam in much greater detail.

passive revolution that Gramsci discusses. Hence, it is critical to assess the overarching ideological programmes of Political Islamists on a dialectical basis in regards to the conjunctural moments that shape social relations. The history of state formation in the region is distinct from that of the Risorgimento, yet the unravelling of concepts that Gramsci uses as a criterion of interpretation may equally be applied in order to develop a deeper understanding of the causes and effects that lead Political Islamists to increasingly pursue protracted strategies against hegemonic forces.

3.4. Selected Sources and Usage of Hegemony

Prior to Gramsci's engagement on hegemony, the concept was predominantly associated with Lenin, the Bolsheviks and the Comintern. However, as Derek Boothman points out, the term had also been prevalent within early 20th century Italian socialist circles, albeit in a drastically dissimilar context. For Italian socialists, the term referenced irredentist claims in the Adriatic following the reunification of Venice from Austria.[364] The term denoted the ancient Greek understanding of hegemony as voluntary alliances, often militaristic in nature, between groups of city-states and vassals.[365] Citing the joint leadership of Athens and Sparta during the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides and Herodotus both respectively regarded the term as representing a "military and political alliance of autonomous states."[366] While Gramsci acknowledged the abovementioned understanding as partially representative of the rise of American power and the history of subaltern states, he nonetheless sought a more inclusive understanding of the term.[367]

Taking Gramsci's rhythm of thought into account, it would not be a stretch to suggest that he recognised, just as Robert Cox has pointed out, that the ancient Greek understanding denoted an archaic concept, in part, due to its simplicity in postulating a

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[364] Boothman, Derek. "The Sources for Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony." *Rethinking Gramsci.* Ed. Marcus Green. Oxon: Routledge, 2011. Pg. 56. Print.
[365] Fontana, Benedetto. 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', in Richard Howson and Kylie Smith(eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. New York: Routledge, 2008. P. 81. Print.
[366] Ibid.,
[367] Boothman, Derek. "The sources for Gramsci's concept of hegemony." In *Rethinking Gramsci.* Ed. Marcus Green. Oxon: Routledge, 2011. Pg. 56. Print.

state-centric[368] approach of dominance as a sufficient condition of hegemony.[369] Gramsci sought to develop hegemony as a more comprehensive concept that incorporated uneven economic and historical development alongside the complexities of social processes readily discernable at the sub-national and national level. Thus, while he was aware of the applicability of his concept at the international level[370] by alluding to the active and inextricable relationship between internal forces, international forces and of a country's geopolitical position in regards to hegemonic systems, he nevertheless sought to assess the impact of the international through its national characteristics. As Gramsci states:

> The international situation should be considered in its national aspect. In reality, the international relations of any nation are the result of a combination which is 'original' and (in a certain sense) unique: these relations must be understood and conceived in their originality and uniqueness if one wishes to dominate them and direct them. To be sure, the line of development is toward internationalism, but the point of departure is 'national' and it is from this point of departure that one must begin. Yet the perspective is international and cannot be otherwise.[371]

As we shall uncover in our discussion on Benedetto Croce and ethico-political history, Gramsci was averse to the abstraction of ideas. He correspondingly held the opinion that hegemony could not correctly be understood by abstracting the international as something causal. Instead, he asserted that a practical perspective was required in order to understand "how the processes of capitalist objectification produce contemporary social

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[368] Cox's seminal work on hegemony in international relations signals a shift away from realist based interpretations of hegemony and towards a more inclusive understanding of hegemonic blocs operating and dictating IPE within the sphere of international relations in the form of hegemonic blocs within supranational institutions and organizations. Ie. The IMF, World Bank, EU, UN, etc.

[369] Cox, Robert. 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory.' Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 1981 (10). Pg. 139. Print.

[370] Anderson, Perry. The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci. *New Left Review* (100), 1976. Print.

[371] Antonio Gramsci. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 240. Print.

reality" and the "production and reproduction of social life."[372] It is here that we can heed the advice of Gramsci in regards to Political Islam. While Political Islam undoubtedly possesses transnational characteristics, it does so reciprocally in relation to developments at the national and grassroots level. Thus, while enquiries into international notions of hegemony may offer insight into the phenomenon, we must heed Adam Morton's advice and view the relationship as nodal, interscalar and ultimately as a national point of departure if we are to arrive at a fuller perspective on Political Islam.[373] By focusing the case study primarily as an assessment of the production and reproduction of *daily* social life vis-à-vis a dialectical enquiry, we stand to develop a nuanced perspective of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood at the subnational and national levels whilst also accounting for broader implications associated with international aspects of hegemony. This shall enable us to uncover more freely the variations in the ideological and political approaches of Political Islamists.

Gramsci's historiographical exploration of the links between internal and international conditions as it pertained to Italy was partly influenced by Bolshevik conceptions of hegemony. In an effort to overthrow the Tsars in Russia, Lenin and the Bolsheviks propagated views championing the necessity of a political and economic battle against the state.[374] Lenin, an important source of inspiration[375] for Gramsci's concept of hegemony, understood the term as a "tactical alliance between the working class and other exploited groups directed at both the political absolutism of the Tsars and the

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[372] Rupert, Mark. "Alienation, Capitalism and the Inter-State System: Towards a Marxian/Gramscian Critique." *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*. Ed. Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Pg. 84-86. Print.

[373] Morton, Adam D. *Unraveling Gramsci: Hegemony and Passive Revolution in the Global Political Economy.* London: Pluto Press, 2007. Print.

[374] Anderson, Perry. "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci." *New Left Review (100)*. 1976. Pg. 7-15. Print.

[375] Norberto Bobbio claims Gramsci's concept more closely resembles Stalinist hegemony due to Lenin's lack of use of the term. Derek Boothman accurately refutes the claim by citing the state-as-force, the 1848 Permanent Revolution, and numerous translations by Gramsci of Lenin's work. See Boothman, Derek in Marcus Green (2011; 56).

socioeconomic supremacy of the ruling groups." [376] The actualisation of Leninist hegemony ultimately resulted in Bolshevik rule whereby a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' or tactical alliances against enemy classes came to take precedence over 'cultural' objectives. In fact, Lenin viewed culture as ancillary to political objectives given that hegemony could not be acquired without first acquiring official state power in Russia. Nevertheless, Lenin's version of hegemony as a dictatorship of the proletariat coupled with the theory of the state-as-force, the 1848 doctrine of permanent revolution and the ancillary role assigned to cultural objectives would influence Gramsci's venture to "complement"[377] Leninist discourse through his own polemic on hegemony.

3.5. Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony

Gramsci's concept of hegemony is distinct from his peers in that he sought to study the "strength and resiliency of modern bourgeois society."[378] In doing so, Gramscian hegemony epitomises the dialectic between coercion and consent, political and civil society, law and freedom, politics and morality and so forth.[379] By delving into these attributes, we can facilitate a discussion that gauges Gramsci's departure from Leninist hegemony, the ways in which he sought to remedy the philosophy of praxis against the charge of economic reductionism whilst still developing an overarching understanding of how power dynamics serve to advance our understanding of Political Islam. Hence, the key features of Gramscian hegemony, though dispersed and provisional in many regards, can nevertheless be considered to broadly constitute:

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[376] Fontana, Benedetto. 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', in Richard Howson and Kylie Smith(eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. New York: Routledge, 2008. P. 84. Print.

[377] Gramsci, Antonio. *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Ed. Derek Boothman. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1995. Pg. 357. Print.

[378] Cox, Robert W. "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method." In *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations* , by Stephen Gill. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press , 1993. Pg. 49. Print.

[379] Antonio Gramsci. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 170. Print.

The dyadic relationship between coercion and consent, the organic convergence of political and civil society owing to complex socioeconomic processes, uneven historical development, and the sociocultural dynamics of manufacturing consent through the construction and dissemination of political and ideological leadership.

The dialectic between coercion and consent signals an immediate departure from Marxist and Leninist conceptions of the State. The dialectic rejects a negative conception of the State as an exclusively coercive or repressive force tasked with regulating private activity within society.[380] In Gramsci's integral state, we find that the function of consent drastically alters how we ought to view the State. The integral state is described as follows:

> The state is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its domination but manages to win the active consent over whom it rules."[381] In other words, state power is "hegemony armoured by coercion.[382]

The emphasis on consent moreover marks a shift away from Lenin's overvaluation of political objectives at the expense of cultural elements. It also reduces the importance that Lenin attached to attaining state power through a war of manoeuvre. Instead, Gramscian hegemony constitutes not a dictatorship but an actual hegemony of the proletariat[383] insofar as that it attaches critical importance to the function of consent – and in doing so

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[380] Fontana, Benedetto. 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', in Richard Howson and Kylie Smith(eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

[381] Gramsci, Antonio. *Quaderni del carcere.* Ed. Valentino Gerratana. Turin: Einaudi, 1975a. Q15§10. Print.

[382] Fontana, Benedetto. 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', in Richard Howson and Kylie Smith(eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

[383] Cox, Robert W. 'Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method'. In *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations,* edited by Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 1993. Pg. 51. Print.

assigns a redeeming character to the concept of the state. Active consent denotes the requirement of fortifying the transformative functions that allow political society to retain hegemony.[384] These constitute the socioeconomic, cultural and educational elements that organically result in the convergence of political and civil society due to their centrality to attaining hegemony through consent. The state thus encompasses an "ensemble of socioeconomic and political-cultural relations" wherein "modern or western civil society is the product of the cultural, economic and political activity of the liberal bourgeoisie" with the state serving as the educator and bearer of socio-political values that emanate from the dominant groups.[385]

In other words, the production and dissemination of moral, intellectual and cultural values supplant coercion as the primary means of capturing power through a reaffirmation of the state and civil society as organically interwoven components wherein distinctions between the two only serve methodological purposes.[386] In addition to his integral State, Gramsci provides a narrower conception of the state that remains a prevalent feature of contemporary neoliberal discourse. Here, the state and civil society constitute distinct and separate entities. The state functions solely as the "guarantor of peace, security, and order" via its administrative, juridical, and military functions.[387] Civil society as a consequence comes to reflect the private sphere marked by economics, morals and ethics. The rigidity of such narrow criteria ignores the critical importance of the unique formation and geo-temporal development of individual states by abstractly categorising the descriptive features that constitute a state.

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[384] Political Society constitutes the State in its administrative, juridical, and military function for Gramsci.

[385] Fontana, Benedetto. 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', in Richard Howson and Kylie Smith(eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

[386] Gramsci, Antonio, *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.. Print.

[387] Fontana, Benedetto. 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', in Richard Howson and Kylie Smith(eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

The failure to account for nuanced variations in historical, economic and social structures can have debilitating effects. A lack of historiographical insight impairs our ability to distinguish between varying power dynamics and social environments. It also clouds our capacity to differentiate between Political Islamist ideologies – and concede that blanket strategies can be relatively ineffective in achieving desired results. Hence, when Lenin remarked on the success of the Bolshevik ouster of the Tsars he stressed the incomprehensibility of the 'Russian constitution' in replicating similar results elsewhere. The abstraction of analysis is similar to the abstraction of ideational strategies in that the failure to account for the history and spirit that imbues individual states and societies is bound to produce mutated results.

Gramsci's awareness of these pitfalls guided him towards an integral and absolutist approach that sought to account for the historiography of states. He emphasised the importance of state formation or rather the 'starting point' wherein force and economics play a formative role in the establishment of social relations. The inherent differences between states further led him to postulate that in the West, organic development meant that the state was stabilised by the 'sturdy' structure of 'fortresses' found in civil society and thus resembled a function closer to that of a 'night watchman.' In contrast, the enlarged and omnipresent nature of the state in the East[388] meant that civil society was primordial and 'gelatinous.'[389] From these broad observations, Gramsci implored the necessity of undertaking "an accurate reconnaissance on a national scale"[390] of states. Similarly, it is important to consider a deeper reconnaissance of modern state formation in the MENA region if we are to accurately unravel the parameters that shape the ideological and political strategies of Political Islamists.

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[388] This is in reference to the eastern parts of Europe.
[389] Gramsci, Antonio. *Quaderni del carcere* (1975). Ed. Valentino Gerratana. Turin: Einaudi, 1975a. Q§688. Print.
[390] Gramsci, Antonio. Antonio Gramsci. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Print.

3.6. The Coercion-Consent Dialectic and Ethico-Political History

Thus far we have foreshadowed the coercion-consent dialectic and Benedetto Croce's concept of ethico-political history. These two elements are paramount to Gramsci's alternative approach to understanding not simply political change but also the very essence of power dynamics and the avenues of political action available to subaltern forces. A 'reconnaissance of a national scale' thus necessitates a deeper approach that goes beyond "simply studying political change in one country and only at the level of the state" as it is "not enough to ensure a complete and comprehensive understanding of developing a project for hegemonic change."[391] To state it differently, the effects of historical state formation in unison with uneven and combined development which stem from the international sphere must be weighed alongside the material conditions and subnational complexities that shape political and social interactions within the sphere of civil society. In order to accurately gauge the dynamics of such a vast scope of elements, politics must be conceptualised as a distinct form of action. Gramsci's writings on the coercion-consent dialectic seek to accomplish this very feat.

Gramsci's coercion-consent dialectic is evocative of Machiavelli's 'general formulation regarding the nature of power and politics as the synthesis of force and consent, incarnated in the figure of the centaur.[392] The Machiavellian metaphor of the centaur – a mythical half man, half horse creature serves as inspiration for the duality between coercion and consent that is required by ruling classes to remain hegemonic.[393] For as Machiavelli states: "a prince must know how to use both natures, and that one without the

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[391] Matsuda, Hiroshi and Koichi Ohara. 'Hegemony and the Elaboration of the Process of Subalternity.' In *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion.* Ed. Richard Howson and Kylie Smith. New York: Routledge, 2008. Pg. 61. Print.

[392] Fontana, Benedetto. 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', in Richard Howson and Kylie Smith(eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Pg. 89. Print.

[393] Gramsci, Antonio. *Prison Notebooks: Volume III.* Ed. Joseph A Buttigieg. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Pg. 278-279, 283. Print.

other is not durable."[394] Building upon Machiavelli's metaphor of the centaur, Gramsci asserts that the mechanisms of force and dictatorship are assigned to the political sphere or the legal state comprised of its coercive apparatus. Conversely, the mechanisms of consent exist within the sphere of civil society in which a collection of private organisations including the church, trade unions, and media operate alongside an underlying economic structure.[395]

Thus, unlike Marx and Hegel, for whom civil society is designated as the sphere of economic relations, for Gramsci, civil society represents the field in which consent is actively sought after through the manufacturing and dissemination of political and ideological programmes.[396] Moreover, the political and societal spheres are organically and reciprocally linked and any distinctions between the two serve methodological purposes only.[397] Ultimately, the coercion-consent dialectic means that civil society is a field in which political action is carried out by a plethora of social forces and alliances, whether dominant or subaltern – and not solely as an expression of an economic base but equally as a result of those social processes which enable the contestation of hegemony within civil society in the first instance.

Gramsci's coercion-consent dialectic marks a departure from classical liberal interpretations of civil society and the state. It is also significantly dissimilar from the view of Italian intellectual Benedetto Croce to whom Gramsci is partially indebted to for the integral historicism facet of hegemony. Whereas Gramsci regards the two spheres as organic and coterminous, Croce firmly separates them. The state is viewed as purely political and the arena of force while civil society comprises the sphere of autonomous

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[394] Machiavelli, Niccolo. *The Prince and The Discourses*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950. Pg. 64. Print.

[395] Antonio Gramsci. *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1995) Pg.167 Q10§15. Print.

[396] Fontana, Benedetto. 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', in Richard Howson and Kylie Smith(eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Pg. 89. Print.

[397] Gramsci, Antonio. *Quaderni del carcere*. Ed. Valentino Gerratana. Turin: Einaudi, 1975a. (1975; Q4§38). Print.

moral activity – free from the threat of state interference.[398] Croce's concept of ethico-political history can offer us deeper insight into his separation between the two spheres. Croce employed the concept, in part, to charge Marx with an economic reductionism that overlooked the importance of moral and cultural activity. The concept consists of a four-tiered approach through which the historical evolution of art, philosophy, economic practice and moral action cumulatively form and determine history.[399] The strength of the concept is in its flexibility towards assessing the "quality of actions performed and to the meaning which they acquire in historical development" through an approach that does not reduce human action to a legal-centric lens.[400] The pitfall is that it combines distinct elements abstractly and does so without taking into consideration the starting point in which force contributes to the process of state formation.

By rendering the development of moral history exclusively to an autonomous civil society, Croce's take on historical development is deemed by Gramsci as representing a "prefabricated history where the ideology stems not from a political content but from a form and method of struggle."[401] Croce's pre-establishment of abstract overriding norms thus negates any meaningful attempt to gauge the impact of political content and activity on ideology. Gramsci criticises the concept for being "speculative and ultimately tautological"[402] and echoes the way Engels described Marx on Hegel, by criticising Croce for walking on his head instead of his feet. Yet, even though Gramsci regarded ethico-political history as "a mechanical and arbitrary hypostatization of the aspect of hegemony, of political administration, of consensus, in the life and the development of the activities of the state and civil society" Gramsci nevertheless recognised the benefits of the concept. In order to avoid the reification present in Croce's concept, Gramsci

[398] Bellamy, Richard. "Gramsci, Croce and the Italian Political Tradition." *Croce, Gramsci, Bobbio and the Italian Political Tradition.* Colchester: ECPR Press, 2014. Pg. 136-147. Print.

[399] Finocchiaro, Maurice A. *Gramsci and the History of Dialectical Thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Pg. 16. Print.

[400] Croce, Benedetto (1946; 69). Quoted in Howson and Smith (2008;7). Print.

[401] Maurice A. Finocchiaro (1988; 11-27). Print.

[402] Mansfield, Steven R. "Gramsci and the Dialectic: Resisting "Encrocement." *Rethinking Marxism* (6.2). 1993. Pg. 220. Print.

tinkered with the concept so as to deploy it "as an 'empirical canon' of historical research, always to keep in mind in the examination and understanding of historical development."[403]

The utilisation of the concept as a component of Gramscian hegemony has led Maurice Finacchiaro to assert that Gramsci's extension of Croce's concept is in itself conceived abstractly and lacks concreteness.[404] Such a charge however fails to account for the weight assigned to the organic role of the state and civil society, to power and the complex social processes that emerge from it – all vis-à-vis a dialectical method that whilst owing partially to Croce stresses the centrality of both moral and *political* leadership.[405] The coercion-consent dialectic is thus seminal in that it alters how we ought to view political action alongside economic structures and the consent of the masses in light of historical formation.[406] Though Gramsci maintains the integral aspect of Croce's ethico-political history in his concept of hegemony, he "conceptually reconfigures it to become the moment of the Integral State and of hegemony as the highest synthesis"[407] wherein coercion and consent and political and civil society are dialectically fused.[408]

Gramsci has drawn the ire of liberal minded commentators for postulating that the state and civil society are organically intertwined. For instance, Richard Bellamy advocates a Crocean separation between ethics and politics on the grounds that to do so otherwise would espouse "the sort of governmental morality that afflicted fascism and Stalinism."[409] Gramsci is likely to also have his critics amongst the liberal school of thought as the concept of hegemony assigns the state a significant role within civil

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[403] Maurice A. Finocchiaro (1988; 11-27). Print.
[404] Ibid.,
[405] Howson and Smith (2008; 9). Print.
[406] Morera, Esteve. *Gramsci's Historicism: A Realist Interpretation.* London: Routledge, 1990. Pg. 61. Print.
[407] Howson and Smith (2008; 10). Print.
[408] Ibid.,
[409] Richard Bellamy (2014; 164).

society that can potentially result in extreme state domination.[410] The potential of such does not however erase the very formative links that bind social force in their competition for acquiring consent within civil society. Croce himself was an ardent support of Mussolini's fascist regime until 1924 when he criticised Italy and chief fascist philosopher Giovanni Gentile by stating that fascism in Italy reflected a lack of moral will and national consciousness.[411]

In regards to moral will and national consciousness, Gramsci's interpretation of Machiavelli is worth noting. While Croce regarded Marx as the Machiavelli of the proletariat due to the supposed separation of politics from morals,[412] Gramsci in seeking to reconstruct authentic Marxism, perceived Machiavelli as a 'moral politician', not a vulgar one that subordinated 'means to and end.' Gramsci's adaptation of the political party as the 'modern prince' according to Derek Boothman represents the moment in which "the sides come together as equals with, for Gramsci, an interchange of personnel between the "prince-as-party" and the people so that, tendentially, substantial differences become erased and fusion between them is obtained."[413] The organic unity between state-civil society and base-superstructure are posed in such a way that charges that reduce Marxism to a vulgar economic theory are combatted by the capacity to produce moral will and national consciousness.

For Gramsci, the organic relationship between the base and superstructure creates the possibility for the formation of a historic bloc. The historic bloc[414] vertically unites

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[410] As Marcia Landy (1986; 49-51) notes: "Gramsci does not deny the coercive aspects of power, but because he is consistently aware of the oppressed as well as the oppressor, he is driven to name and analyse specific strategies which bind subaltern groups to their rules as well as to serve to produce opposition. Moreover, the role of culture in producing and reproducing social and economic relations of production are prominently derived from his experiences of Fascism and the culture of the Mezzogiorno.

[411] Ibid.,

[412] Ibid.,

[413] Boothman, Derek (2008; 63).

[414] Gramsci describes the historic bloc as the constituting the reciprocal and dialectical unity between hegemonic forces and the subaltern, between the base and superstructure, the masses of people and intellectuals, and so forth.

political and economic forces whilst simultaneously managing a horizontal alliance between classes and subaltern groups through the cultivation of a national-popular will. Gramsci cogently describes the varying aspects of the bloc through the following metaphor:

> A collective consciousness, which is to say a living organism, is formed only after the unification of the multiplicity through friction on part of the individuals; nor can one say that 'silence' is not a multiplicity. An orchestra tuning-up, every instrument playing by itself, sounds a most hideous cacophony, yet these warm-ups are the necessary condition for the orchestra to come to life as a single 'instrument'.[415]

Gramsci's analysis is unequivocally rooted in class dynamics, which has prompted post-Marxists such as Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Norberto Bobbio to question the applicability and effectiveness of collective class action in organising political mobilisation in the contemporary age. In fact, they deem the 'unification of the multiplicity' derived through class-consciousness as illusory. The overarching assertion made is that social unity is unsustainable and therefore 'antithetical to real democracy.[416] Laclau and Mouffe therefore push Gramsci as a proponent of radical democracy given the 'antiquated' nature of Marxism.[417] Moreover, they assert that an empty-signifier is needed to unite diverse social actors into a 'single identity' capable of articulating populist discourse.[418] The departure from Gramsci's adherence to the necessity of a class-based struggled is accompanied by the postulation that identity within the 'historic bloc' only surfaces *a posteriori* and thus eliminates the need to group on the basis of class.

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[415] Gramsci, Antonio (1995; Q15§13).

[416] Ibid.,

[417] Laclau, Ernesto and Chantel Mouffe. *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics.* London: Verso Books, 1985. Print.

[418] Howarth, David. *Ernesto Laclau: Post-Marxism, Populism and Critique.* London: Routledge, 2014. Pg. 14. Print.

As a result, the likes of Laclau and Mouffe champion a struggle along populist lines motivated by socialism rather than a class-based struggle. This can perhaps be attributed to their reading of Louis Althusser's 'overdetermination' which leads them to an idealist political philosophy whereby the 'social whole' ends up "having no relation to a determinant real…almost totally fixed by the relations between its elements, yet always susceptible to hegemonic manipulation and change."[419]

The overarching presence of Islam as a nodal point in the MENA region poses significant challenges to the fortification of an empty signifier and thus towards any potential of a 'single identity' carved out of the active promotion of conflicting interests. The 'passive piety' of a generally religious society is coupled with the 'active piety' of those seeking to establish Islam as a fixed component of political life.[420] This is only further complicated by the alternative worldview espoused by Political Islamist ideology and its aim of gradual social reform. A struggle along populist lines is thus susceptible not only to manipulation by hegemonic forces but also to the availability of political opportunity by Islamist forces, many of which excel at curbing the proliferation of competing subaltern discourses from emerging in civil society. The dynamism of internal and external factors mean that the ideational interests and desires of social forces are often reflected through partial interests. For Islamism, such a process is often reflective of its chief ideologues as well as the upper echelons that dictate decisions within Islamist organisations. In contrast, the prospects for developing a collective identity for the wider polity, particularly in authoritarian MENA states, is often contingent on the cultivation of 'imagined solidarities' – material, political, moral or otherwise.[421]

Alliance building and the merging of ideal interests around broad nodal points are often loosely forged on the basis of generalised ideas associated with nodes such as Islam,

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[419] Lewis, William. "The Under-theorization of Overdetermination in the Political Philosophy of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe." In *Studies in Social and Political Thought, 2005(11)*. Pg. 14. Print.
[420] Bayet, Asef. "Islamism and Social Movement Theory." *Third World Quarterly* (26.6) 2005. Pg. 891-908. Print.
[421] Ibid.,901-903

democracy and so forth. Yet, even this cannot completely safeguard the multiplicity of divergent views from falling victim to domination by power social fragments within said multiplicity. Indicative of this notion is Political Islam's ability to dominate counter-hegemonic discourse and prevent the unity of a genuine multiplicity of discourses from reaching beyond the sanctioned parameters of Islamist ideological programmes.[422] At the root then, Political Islam seeks to rival hegemonic discourses as not a mere aspect of it but in the sense that it seeks to establish an alternative worldview. Hence, it is not multiple versions of Islam that arise, only a multiplicity of fragmented ideational interests stemming from existing power dynamics.

The repressive nature of existing social dynamics makes it increasingly difficult for agonsim to emerge as a moderating effect. The approach to unravelling Political Islam should not solely be viewed in terms of how rapidly a collectivity can emerge to challenge political power. Instead, it ought to investigate the modest success of Political Islamists in facilitating social change within civil society, value systems and social behaviour through a protracted war of position strategy. The spontaneity that Laclau and Mouffe associate with the multiplicity is less prevalent and less able to produce divergent discourses given the state of power relations in the MENA region. In Egypt for instance, the success of the Muslim Brotherhood in Islamising society in the 1980s and 1990s helped to shape social attitudes insofar as that many believed a reformist approach towards existing political arrangements could facilitate positive change.[423]

Thus, perhaps distinctions based on class cannot result in a social transformation that is synthesising and organic to the whole. However, in Egypt the milieu of civil society and power relations have helped to produce a feeling of precariousness that has been quite impactful in shaping social attitudes and opinions.[424] The tendency of Post-Marxists to paradoxically postulate, in a non-essentialist manner, that consensus is not wholly achievable and that democracy ought to evolve along a more radical notion that fosters

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[422] Ibid.,
[423] Ibid.,
[424] Guy Standing makes an argument for the rise of a precariat class in this regard.

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dissent and difference may be true of certain societies but is undoubtedly more difficult to achieve in more restrictive environments such as that of Egypt.

Having accounted for these arguments, our exploration into the Brotherhood's attempts to combine the spiritual and practical to contend for political power aims to steer clear of a rigid application of Gramsci's concepts in relation to class while also avoiding a wholly Marxist analysis that reduces political contestation to purely economic derived forces. The environment of power relations in which Political Islamists operate within make it increasingly difficult to sustain social unity and thus we ought to carefully consider the extent to which the Brotherhood is capable of articulating a wide range of identities in unison with its own political and ideological programmes. Once we have applied Gramsci's non-reductionist and non-dogmatic rhythm of thought towards understanding the complex and dialectic nature of conflict over power, we can further consider the arguments of post-Marxists that followed Laclau and Mouffe in relation to Political Islam. In particular, we can delve into whether violence and antagonism can be transformed into 'agonism' through the promotion of democratic political action and through ethico-political principles[425] in the Brotherhood's attempts to contest power.

We can heed the words of Edward Said who describes Gramsci, as cited in Matsuda and Ohara, as having "recognized that subordination, fracturing, diffusing, and reproducing, as much as producing, creating, forcing, and guiding are all necessary aspects of the elaboration of hegemony."[426] By further expanding upon these themes, we can then shift the discussion towards intellectuals and the subaltern and trace the manner in which the state not only retains power but equally how it *concedes* it to movements that become politically active and seek to challenge hegemony through a variety of social and cultural processes. In turn, this allows us to explore social forces and their efforts to work towards producing an autonomous historical consciousness capable of challenging and leading a

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[425] Mouffe, Chantel. *On the Political.* London: Routledge, 2005. Print.

[426] Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* New York: Random House USA Inc., 1979. Pg. 21-23. Print.

struggle to free itself from hegemonic principles that are imposed but not always accepted.[427]

3.7. Civil Society, Counter-Hegemony and Intellectuals

For Gramsci, civil society is conceived in a drastically different manner from its customary liberal interpretation. This is a direct result of his expansive definition of the state, which in turn is shaped directly by the coercion-consent dialectic. Gramsci departs from the widely held belief that civil society entails spontaneous organisation by autonomous groups operating freely and without threat of state intervention. Instead, he views civil society and political society as coterminous spheres. In contradistinction to Lenin, hegemony must precede state power and therefore the state cannot confine itself solely to its juridical functions. Rather, it must vie for and compete for active consent of its political and ideological programmes within civil society if it wishes to retain hegemonic power. This means that Gramsci assigns civil society to the superstructure[428] whereas for Marx, economic activity dictates the anatomy of civil society at the base level. In other words, it is material relations and the development of productive forces that shape and ultimately define the state and nation for Marx.[429] In contrast, Gramsci believes that:

> Between the premise (economic structure) and the consequence (political organization) relations are by no means simple and direct; and it is not only by economic facts that the history of a people can be documented. It is a complex and intricate task to unravel its causes and in order to do so, a deep and widely ranging study of all spiritual and practical activities is needed.[430]

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[427] Gramsci, Antonio. *Quaderni del carcere.* Turin: Einaudi Editore, 1975. Q16§12. Print.
[428] The superstructure comprises amongst other things, education, family, religion, politics, mass media, etc.
[429] Bobbio, Norberto. "Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society." In *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*. Ed. John Keane. New York: Verso, 1988. Pg. 82. Print.
[430] Ibid., 86.

Whilst Gramsci does not deny the underlining importance of economic activity, he assigns relative weight to the importance of ethico-political activities in shaping political and ideological relations and thereby hegemony. In this way, Gramsci moves beyond the base-superstructure model and towards the more inclusive historic bloc in which "material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely didactic value."[431] Conversely, ideology and politics play a substantial role in shaping social processes and power relations whereas the juridical and military apparatus of the state serves as the 'armour of hegemony.' From this we can establish that civil society for Gramsci is defined as political society + civil society.[432] Ultimately then, civil society is the milieu where social transformation can be actualised. It is an arena that is based on the dynamic relationship between the development of political and ideological leadership, the contestation of acquisition of hegemony, and the pursuit of active consent. Moreover, in addition to the juridical-administrative apparatus, the formative components of civil society are referred to as "the ensemble of organisms commonly called private, such as trade unions, churches, cultural clubs, newspapers, political parties, etc."[433] According to Marcus Green, this means "political society and civil society are not two separate spheres but rather that they comprise an organic unity, for they are both elements of modern society."[434]

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[431] Gramsci, Antonio. Gramsci, Antonio. Antonio Gramsci. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 377. Print.

[432] Perry Anderson (1977) finds issue with the three conflicting definitions that Gramsci provides for the state and civil society. The three definitions that appear throughout the fragmentary nature of the Prison Notebooks encompass that 1) the state is civil society, 2) There is a balanced relationship between state and civil society, and 3) the state is political society + civil society. While there is certainly overlap and inconsistency in these definitions, it is essential to note that Gramsci was less concerned with defining institutional power and more focused on modalities of state power. Thus the definition of political society + civil society remains apropos in accurately gauging the modalities of state power.

[433] Gramsci, Antonio. *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Ed. Derek Boothman. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995. Pg. 167. Print.

[434] Green, Marcus E. "Gramsci cannot speak" in *Rethinking Gramsci.* Ed. Marcus E. Green. London: Routledge, 2011. Pg. 72. Print.

This does not automatically imply that the relationship between political and civil society is of equal nature. It would be useful to turn to a lengthy but nevertheless useful quote from Joseph Buttigieg, which cogently illuminates this point:

> Civil society is not some kind of benign or neutral zone where different elements of society operate and compete freely and on equal terms, regardless of who holds a predominance of power in government. That would be the liberal view, which misleadingly portrays the formal restraints imposed upon the use of force held in reserve by the governmental apparatus of the state as a boundary line that demarcates the separation between state and civil society. The pervasiveness of this liberal view is such that it has often skewed discussions of Gramsci's theory of hegemony and his concept of civil society – specifically those discussions that highlight the distinction between coercion and consent between political society and civil society. In reality, Gramsci's writings expose how domination of political society and leadership of civil society actually reinforce each other, how the power of coercion and the power to produce consent are intertwined. To be sure, Gramsci does distinguish between political society and civil society but does so primarily for the purpose of analysis since the apparatuses of one are quite different from the apparatuses of the other.[435]

In arriving at his definition of civil society, Gramsci was partially inspired by Hegel's conception of civil society. Hegel allocates economic relations to the sphere of civil society in addition to incorporating a number of voluntary social structures that for Gramsci resemble trade unions that appear in Hegel as "the private woof of the state.' Hegel further regards civil society as the intermediary between the family and the state in that it consists of administrative and corporate structures and judicial machinery.[436] The point of departure for Gramsci is that the economic structure serves as the underlying

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[435] Buttigieg, Joseph A. Gramsci on Civil Society. *boundary 2* (22.3) 1995. Pg. 27. Print.
[436] Bobbio, Norberto. "Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society." In *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*. Ed. John Keane. New York: Verso, 1988. Pg. 73-100. Print.

form of both political and civil society rather than the defining feature of civil society.[437] Ultimately then, civil society is a realm of hegemony for Gramsci. In fact, it becomes the "active and positive stage of historical development" in which ideology supersedes institutions as the primary agent of history and is exercised through the hegemony of a dominant group protected by the coercive apparatus of the state.[438] As a result, ideological programmes are manufactured and disseminated through those institutions that fall within the sphere of civil society. A key area of focus must then be to investigate how 'common sense' is cultivated across the social sphere. It is here that ideological programmes and ideational activity fuses with political objectives so as to politicise subjects with the aim of reproducing or altering the state of social relations.[439]

3.7.1. Intellectuals and Common Sense

The role of intellectuals is integral in determining the manner in which social and power relations between vying forces unfold. For Gramsci, intellectuals operate as de facto deputies of the dominant group and are tasked with generating consent amongst the masses for the activity and nature of social life as put forth by the dominant group. This primary task is cushioned by the legal enforcement of discipline by means of the coercive apparatus so as to prevent or mitigate crisis in the event that intellectuals fail to secure consent.[440] The distinguishing factor in Gramsci's conception of an intellectual rests in the notion that intellectuals are not an exclusive category; everyone is an intellectual. To be precise, "all men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals."[441] What Gramsci means by this is that outside of their professional roles, all men participate in some level of intellectual activity whether in the area of moral conceptions, taste, philosophy, and so forth. Hence, all members of

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[437] Antonio Gramsci (1995; Q10S15,167).

[438] Bobbio, Norberto. "Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society." In *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives.* Ed. John Keane. New York: Verso, 1988. Pg. 82-88. Print.

[439] Landy, Marcia. *Culture and Politics in the work of Antonio Gramsci.* Boundary 2 14(3), 1986. Pg. 49-70. Print.

[440] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections From The Prison Notebooks.* Ed. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 12. Print.

[441] Ibid., 9-20

society contribute towards either sustaining or modifying a given conception of the world.[442]

This is indicative of Gramsci's belief that all social groupings organically produce stratums of intellectuals that are responsible for uniting its members by organising its social, economic and political awareness. Social groupings and the intellectuals they produce are therefore the products of historical continuity, which emerge out of the structures that preceded it.[443] Within these formations, intellectuals may arise as either organic or traditional. Those who reproduce ideas by actively constructing, persuading and organising are unrestrained by class allegiances and therefore deemed to be organic given their ability to bring together a wider spectrum of society. Traditional intellectuals by contrast are those who remain firmly entrenched within the narrow interests of their respective social grouping. Social groupings that seek to become dominant must therefore move towards producing organic intellectuals whilst recruiting and assimilating those that remain ideologically traditional.[444]

The difficulty for subaltern groups in accomplishing the aforementioned rests in the fact that the dominant class possesses the tools to coerce leaders and intellectuals, co-opt them into a particular strategy, and equally to officially decree "a counter-group's party, press and rights of association and assembly illegal."[445] Hence, subaltern groups must constantly strive towards developing ideological consciousness internally so that they may produce organic intellectuals who in turn can permanently raise political awareness across society. The success in being able to do so serves as an integral step towards challenging the weakened hegemony of the ruling bloc by garnering consent for an alternative ideological programme.

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[442] Ibid.,
[443] Ibid.,
[444] Ibid.,
[445] Green, Marcus E. "Gramsci cannot speak" in *Rethinking Gramsci.* Ed. Marcus E. Green. London: Routledge, 2011. P. 73. Print.

Hence, if we treat civil society as the sphere of hegemony, we can delve into how social forces seek to exert ideological and political consensus in moulding the consciousness of the subaltern.[446] A vital dynamic that underlines this process is the fact that the distribution of power across civil society occurs in an uneven, less than spontaneous and autonomous manner. It is through a variety of complex and dynamic mediums, whether it is mass media, literature, education, or intellectual leadership that the dominant class influences institutional practices to manufacture consent. The penetration of institutions deemed private and autonomous ultimately serve as a breeding ground for manufacturing consent. It is in this regard that the common sense of individuals is latently influenced so as to veil whether consent is attained freely or spontaneously.

For Gramsci common sense partially entails the passive and uncritical absorption of contradictory conceptions of the world. The acceptance of these common sense conceptions contributes to their misrepresentation and the misconstrued understanding that they are unalterable aspects of reality. However, given that there is often a modicum of truth within these conceptions, Gramsci equates them as being the folklore of philosophy rather than dismissing them. Implicit consent results in the entrenchment of common sense in a manner that draws broad parallels to Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser's concepts of governmentality and interpellation, respectively. Both Foucault and Althusser highlight the importance of state institutions in attaining conformity and consent through governmentality and interpellation. The distinction, in relation to Gramsci, rests in the ways that forces condition the population. For Foucault, the process is paradoxically achieved through 'the conduct of conduct'[447] whereas for Althusser the ideological state apparatus[448] is responsible. In other words, political parties, culture, arts, sport, the church, media, and so forth influence and shape, what Gramsci, refers to as common sense. It is pertinent to note here that the non-coercive elements of hegemony

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[446] Esteve Morera. *Gramsci's Historicism: A Realist Interpretation* (1990; 61).

[447] That is to guide conduct towards a particular or preferred outcome rather than to coercive an adversary. See: Foucault, Michel. *Dits et écrits IV*. Ed. Daniel Defert and Francois Ewald. Paris: Gallimard, 1994. Pg. 237. Print.

[448] Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001. Pg. 154-5. Print.

are uneven relations of power that are both flexible and often camouflaged and thus offer the most effective protection' against a war of manoeuvre.[449] Thus, the hegemonic content of political and ideological leadership exercised by the dominant class implicitly influences the day-to-day beliefs of individuals. Consequently, the acquiescence or unmitigated acceptance of such beliefs hinders the development of political and ideological awareness, or in Gramsci's terms, of good sense, and thereby perpetuates the marginalisation of the subaltern by preventing them from establishing an alternative political and ideological programme that can contest the dominant class.

In turn, this restricts civil society and stifles the production of organic intellectuals as the existing political leaders and intellectuals are absorbed[450] into the hegemonic programme of the dominant class under the guise of reform. The reformist strategy is detrimental in that it seeks to keep intact the existing hegemony of the dominant class and suppress the laborious but necessary efforts to instil an alternative programme that is capable of raising awareness, intellectual development, and re-educating the subaltern on a mass scale. In order for subordinated classes to emerge as viable counter-hegemonic movements they must therefore persistently work to develop political awareness. This involves assessing the changes within the economic sphere that result in their subordination, articulate a stance by making demands against said formations, find effective methods of challenging the control of the dominant group by forming alliances, gain consensus within said alliances and ultimately if their demands are not met, work towards organising a social and political formation that can eventually replace the existing formation.[451] The lofty task is a painstakingly drawn-out process that exists within a dynamic reality marred by uneven, complex and contradictory structures of non-coercive power that must nevertheless be captured in advance of any attempt to take state power. The arduous road to actualising a historic bloc that can safeguard the general interests of society whilst minimising the function of coercion is thus only possible

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[449] Buttigieg, Joseph A. Gramsci on Civil Society. *boundary 2* (22.3) 1995. Pg. 27. Print.
[450] Gramsci accuses Croce of serving a national function by steering the southern subaltern classes away from rebellion and towards reformism. As a consequence, Gramsci accuses him of reinforcing state power and authority.
[451] Green, Marcus E. *Rethinking Gramsci.* London: Routledge, 2011. Pg. 76-9. Print.

through the active management of ideological apparatuses that exist within the sphere of civil society. Naturally, the process varies on a state-to-state basis owing to the historical development of the state and civil society in question. As it pertains to the Italy of Gramsci's time, he found the cultural decay of civil society to be devastating:

> Hence impoverishment of cultural life and the petty narrow-mindedness of high culture: sterile erudition in place of political history, superstition in place of religion, the daily newspaper and the scandal sheet instead of books and great periodicals. Ordinary everyday fractiousness and personal conflicts instead of serious politics. The universities and all the institutions that developed intellectual and technical skills were impervious to the life of the parties and the living reality of national life, and they created apolitical national cadres with a purely rhetorical and non-national mental formation.[452]

To reiterate, hegemony must then be acquired culturally and socially prior to any attempt to contest state power. This is indicative of the seminal role that is required of ideological and political leadership in the painstaking process of converting cultural and ideological passivity into the mass re-education of the subaltern. The successful attainment of transforming common sense into good sense must be met with a viable political programme that can sufficiently satisfy subaltern forces. It is only when these functions have been fulfilled that a group ought to compete for state power – where it then has to once again work perpetually in satisfying the above conditions.

3.8. Gramsci and Political Islam

At this juncture, it is important to critically consider the handful of writings that have sought to apply the concepts of Antonio Gramsci to the study of Political Islam. At the crux of the forthcoming literature is the Gramscian concept of cultural hegemony. In fact, the writings predominantly utilise the concept as *the* exclusive framework for assessing

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[452] Gramsci, Antonio. *Prison Notebooks: Volume II*. Edited by Joseph A. Buttigieg. Translated by Joseph A Buttigieg and Antonio Callari. Vol. II. III vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Pg. 106. Print.

the Islamist venture of contesting power. There is however considerable variance in both the scope and rigidity with which the concept has been applied to the study of Islamism. In certain instances it has been treated as a definitive guide for contesting power whereas in others it as been relegated to a futile method for dislodging authoritarian power. Hence, it is beneficial to flesh out the varying ways that existing commentaries have understood and applied Gramsci to Political Islam. In doing so, we stand not only to critically evaluate the Gramscian contribution to Political Islam but also to formulate an assessment of the respective contributions towards the study of Political Islam.

The work of Rupe Simms constitutes one of the earliest writings to directly apply a Gramscian framework to Political Islam. In an article entitled *'Islam is Our Politics': A Gramscian Analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood (1928-1953)*, Simms correctly asserts that Gramscian theory provides a 'distinctively effect' method in bringing to light the political implications associated with both liberatory and oppressive ideologies.[453] In examining the Muslim Brotherhood Simms proposes that his research extends Gramsci's ideas into a field (religious movements) that Gramsci himself did not seriously consider.[454] Although Simms does not himself elaborate on the abovementioned claim, it can be presumed that he is referring to what Gillian Kennedy cogently alludes to being Gramsci's treatment of the Catholic Church as an intellectually traditional and co-opted force.[455] The historically propitious social standing of the Church and its eventual co-option into the Mussolini state would lead Gramsci to regard the religious institution's intellectuals as being traditional and to deem its ideological strategy as far too abstract in being able to cultivate consciousness in the form of a tangible counter-hegemonic programme.

By contrast, Simms postulates that subordinated religious movements possess the very real capability of being able to disseminate coherent ideological programmes so as to

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[453] Simms, Rupe. "Islam Is Our Politics": A Gramscian Analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood (1928-1953). *Social Compass* (49.4). 2002. Pg. 563-852. Print.
[454] Ibid., 564
[455] Kennedy, Gillian. *From Independence to Revolution: Egypt's Islamists and the Contest for Power*. London: Hurst & Company, 2017. Print.

emerge as a viable threat to hegemonic forces. This is in line with Thomas Butko's findings, who asserts that "a Gramscian theoretical framework helps to demonstrate that the contemporary Islamic theorists, most specifically, seek to project Islam as a revolutionary ideological system through which to construct a unified and disciplined organisation."[456] Simms develops his argument by utilising the concept of cultural hegemony wherein the dominant class is said to dominate social and cultural institutions as a means of compelling the subaltern to accept that their subordination is natural and ought not be resisted. This is the notion that control of the superstructure enables the hegemonic power to persuade exploited masses through common sense conceptions to acquiesce to the existing status quo.[457] The conceptions disseminated and superimposed upon the masses are ultimately derivative of the selfish and narrow interests of elites.[458] It is from this framework that Simms postulates that the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood as a religious movement constitutes a counter-hegemonic force.

That being said, Simms develops his hypothesis through a surface level analysis of the reciprocal impact of power dynamics between the Muslim Brotherhood and British hegemony in Egypt from 1928 to 1953. The selected period of study is apropos given that it coincided with several socio-political developments at the international and national level that contributed to an eventual crisis of authority in Egypt. These developments include the dissolution of the caliphate, the armed campaign in Palestine, the Second World War and the gradual intensification of anti-colonial sentiment in Egypt, which eventually resulted in a crisis of authority. Simms details the shifting hegemonic policy that took Egypt from a veiled protectorate wherein a degree of freedom was granted in allowing Egyptians to conduct their own political affairs[459] to a full protectorate whereby the British came to dominate Egypt through coercive force in order to secure their

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[456] Butko, Thomas J. Revelation or Revolution: A Gramscian Approach to the Rise of Political Islam. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (31.1). 2004. Pg. 41. Print.

[457] Simms, Rupe. "Islam Is Our Politics": A Gramscian Analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood (1928-1953). *Social Compass* (49.4). 2002. Pg. 565. Print.

[458] Butko, Thomas J. Revelation or Revolution: A Gramscian Approach to the Rise of Political Islam. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (31.1). 2004. Pg. 43. Print.

[459] Simms, Rupe. "Islam Is Our Politics": A Gramscian Analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood (1928-1953). *Social Compass* (49.4). 2002. Pg. 567. Print.

economic interests in Suez.[460] The strategy incorporated British efforts vis-à-vis its traditional intellectuals to produce a worldview that validated British imperialism. The paternalistic attitude and inferior portrayal of Egyptians by traditional intellectuals sought to justify imperial occupation through the ruse of preparing the unsophisticated country to learn how to govern. Although Simms is correct in his assertion of the aforementioned his analysis would be better served by demonstrably elucidating this dialectic. Instead, he briefly combs over the legacy of Alfred Milner and Evelyn Baring, Earl of Cromer, in fracturing Egypt during the years of the veiled protectorate.[461]

The analytic generalisations advanced by Simms lead him to arrive at the conclusion that British imperialism played a decisive role in the Muslim Brotherhood's ability to emerge as a counter-hegemonic force. Accordingly, he cites the Brotherhood's charges against British imperialism for violating the teachings of the Qur'an, subverting the viability of the economy and delegitimising the authority of the state.[462] He further builds up the Brotherhood as a powerful religious organisation consisting of organic intellectuals that effective advanced its counter-western ideology so as to politicise the masses. Simms posits that the "overt and often violent activism" of the Brothers constituted a strategic expression to legitimise itself and its liberatory ideology as a means of "galvanizing the masses and unifying much of the Arab world."[463] Moreover, he claims that the "interests of the poor" helped drive the organisation's vociferous criticism of parliament and Egyptian capitalists for having disenfranchised the masses and tyrannising workers and peasants. These assertions are then buttressed by detailing the ensuing hegemonic response towards the Brotherhood it in the form of repression, confiscation of publications and monies, sweeping arrests and the official disbanding of the Brotherhood's branches by the Royal Palace at the behest of the British.[464]

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[460] Ibid., 568
[461] Ibid., 568-569.
[462] Ibid., 570.
[463] Ibid., 573.
[464] Ibid., 570-572

Suffice to say, there are a number of issues with the analytical generalisations made by Simms. Perhaps the most glaring of these is the claim that the Brotherhood's ideology was able to galvanise the masses and unify much of the Arab world. As the case study shall show, the Brotherhood's efforts fell considerable short in both regards. It would also appear that the overt and violent activism Simms speaks of is in reference to the Brotherhood's armed involvement in the conflict in Palestine and the British presence in the Suez Canal. Again, it would be a far-reaching stretch to suggest that the involvement of the Brotherhood's secret apparatus, in these affairs was tantamount to galvanising the masses, let alone unifying much of the Arab world. The popular support for the Brotherhood in such affairs cannot be said to stem wholly from its dissemination of its Islamic ideology but rather owes to the broader discontent with imperial policies that inexorably produced an organic crisis in Egypt. Analogously, if Simms is instead speaking of the political rallies and clashes that ensued following WWII, than he has grossly overestimated the strategic and intermittent involvement of the Brotherhood in such affairs. While the Brotherhood certainly voiced their displeasure against the capitalist classes the organisation did very little to empower the tyrannised workers and peasants let alone incorporate their interests into their political efforts. In fact, the organisation opportunistically sought to work alongside the government when possible in ensuring its own religious interests. The paradoxical nature of the Brotherhood's ideological strategy is such that while it gave off an appearance of being carried out by organic intellectuals it nevertheless consistently came up short in its ability to forge sustainable alliances with the subaltern and secure intersectional interests. Thus, while Simms is correct to assert that the Brotherhood utilised religion to emerge as a counter hegemonic force he attributes far greater success to the organisation than history has shown.

Simms contribution is nevertheless seminal as it cogently demonstrates the ability to utilise a Gramscian theoretical framework to analyse Political Islam. This is due to the fact that Gramsci enables us to "situate and construct the proper environment through

which revolutionary activity can occur."[465] It is through creating this environment that we can unravel Political Islamist efforts to ideologically cultivate Islam as a form of political protest against hegemonic forces – both domestically and internationally.[466] Akin to the approach of Simms, Thomas Butko similarly emphasises the importance of the superstructure in shaping common sense conceptions and worldviews. Control of the superstructure by the hegemon means that Islamists must endeavour to formulate an organic ideology that is capable of unifying divergent interests if they are to sufficiently challenge the educational content disseminated and the overarching environment of intellectual development created by hegemonic forces.[467] It is therefore the terrain of civil society wherein the Political Islamist venture must invariably hone its efforts and energy. The intervention of ideas within a concrete reality in turn is what invariably enables them to become an autonomous force capable of challenging the status quo and instilling an alternative worldview. The ideological activity carried out by Political Islamists within civil society should not be primitively be reduced to or equated solely with the desire to capture political power. Instead, the Political Islamist venture must also be understood along the lines of its desire to actualise a new society and a new morality by actively intervening in reality.[468]

The new morality and society sought by Islamists is directly linked to their ability to construct an active counter-hegemonic force that can topple not only the political and economic structures in place but equally the social structures that are in place. This requires crafting a coherent and long-term strategy within the collective yet dispersed setting of civil society wherein individual changes to common sense conceptions can be exacted.[469] Political Islamists utilise their discourse which is shaped by ideas pertaining to the ubiquity of Islam as a means to contest and alter the conceptions imposed upon the masses by the narrower, often material interests of hegemonic forces. However, this in

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[465] Butko, Thomas J. Revelation or Revolution: A Gramscian Approach to the Rise of Political Islam. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (31.1). 2004. Pg. 42. Print.
[466] Ibid., 41.
[467] Ibid., 47-49.
[468] Ibid., 42-51.
[469] Ibid.,45.

itself must be supported by a number of related developments. Butko correctly points out that in order to produce revolutionary activity a successful ideological programme must be able to secure the intersectional interests of society, establish a unified organisational structure, develop a coalition of actively committed individuals and facilitate interaction between the masses and leadership. The complexity of the aforementioned further requires an astute and dedicated political leadership that is harmoniously in tune with the aspirations of the masses so as to avert disintegration. It goes without saying that revolutionary activity to dislodge a hegemonic bloc is an incredibly arduous and drawn out process. The sheer complexity of it is what predictably relegates Political Islamists to focus their efforts to the domestic sphere in creating a new man, a new morality and a new social fabric vis-à-vis the contestation of political power.[470] It is this latter notion that leads Butko to correctly implore that Political Islamists should be viewed as counter-hegemonic movements rather than merely as religious groups solely or narrowly concerned with doctrinal matters.

Contrastingly, Hazem Kandil takes issue with the application of a Gramscian theoretical framework as a means to explain Political Islam. He explains that Gramscian cultural hegemony is not a two-step process wherein a war of position precedes a war of manoeuvre but rather a simultaneous process. In discussing the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood he thus argues that as their cultural counter-hegemonic project gained prominence at the expense of the diminishing secular worldview of the State, Islamists ought to have been able to mobilise the masses and ascend to power. Instead, the State was able to repress the organisation without ever having to defend itself against the worldview disseminated by Islamists.[471] Kandil proceeds to postulate that while Islamist counter-hegemonic strategies may succeed in culturally uniting society against hegemonic power they shall remain ineffective and subject to heightened repression as long as they are unable to challenge the coercive apparatus of the state.[472] He defends this perspective by evoking Nico Poulantzas's critique of Gramsci wherein the latter asserts

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[470] Ibid., 50-60.
[471] Kandil, Hazem. Islamizing Egypt? "Testing the limits of Gramscian Counterhegemonic Strategies." *Theory and Society* (40.1). 2011. Pg. 54. Print.
[472] Ibid., 40.

that it is precarious to underestimate the state's repressive functions at the expense of its activity in shaping ideological relations. This is due to the fact that at the most fundamental and material level repression constitutes organised physical violence to the body.[473] Yet, as Peter Thomas points out, Poulantzas's critique of Gramsci overlooks the integral state wherein power is not only understood in relational terms but equally the notion that the acquisition of political power by counter-hegemonic forces necessitates modifying the relation of forces and "dislocating the mutual reinforcement of coercion and consent" as a means of neutralising the hegemonic apparatus of the ruling class. In order to accomplish this, the elaboration of an alternative hegemonic project that can deprive the hegemon of its social basis is essential.[474]

When we account for the aforementioned it becomes apparent that undermining the consent of the hegemon and its apparatuses must initially transpire within civil society. It is only with the erosion of consent that a crisis of authority becomes imminent and manoeuvres for state power may surface.[475] The inability of the Brotherhood to capture power as mentioned by Kandil thus must be understood in relation to its ideological programme and its relative failures in depriving the ruling class of its social basis. Gramsci's theorisation on cultural hegemony offers us an avenue to unravel the complexities involved in capturing state power. Hence, it can also critically assist us in ascertaining how and why counter-hegemonic attempts may fail in doing so. In a certain sense, the reasoning advanced by Kandil is banal and myopic. While he accounts for the difficulties faced by the Brotherhood in exposing the contradictions of the regime such as those pertaining to the co-existence of Islam and secularism, he seemingly does not equate them with the failings of the ideological framework advanced by the organisation.[476] The penetration of the organisation into media sources, professional syndicates, Al-Azhar, schooling and even the incorporation of leftist themes are not

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[473] Ibid., 57.

[474] Thomas, Peter. "Conjucture of the Integral State?: Poulantzas's Reading of Gramsci." In *Reading Poulantzas*, by Alexander Gallas, Lars Bretthauer, John Kannankulam and Ingo Stutzle, 279-289. London: Merlin Press, 2011.

[475] Ibid.,

[476] Kandil, Hazem. Islamizing Egypt? Testing the limits of Gramscian Counterhegemonic Strategies. *Theory and Society* (40.1). 2011. Pg. 47. Print.

explored in relation to the organisation's internal factionalism, its unwillingness to forge alliances with subaltern groups, or lack of effort to sufficiently dispel fears associated with its articulation of sharia as well as its inability to disconnect itself from the existing social order as contributing factors in its inability to forge a unified national-popular collective will capable of eradicating the existing social order.

The utilisation of Gramscian theory to study Political Islam is an enquiry concerned not only with the nuances of how Islamists seek to capture power but equally about developing an understanding of how power is denied to them and how they seek to deny it to other subaltern groups. It is a critical exploration into the complex conjunctural terrain of relations wherein the forces of opposition organise their ideology and political strategy as a means of contesting power. Kandil's assertions reduce this enquiry down to the institutional functions of the repressive state apparatus thereby leaving little flexibility in unravelling the many complexities of the phenomenon. This is troubling when taking into consideration that Political Islam ought to be situated as Daniel Atzori postulates within a 'grid of historically situated praxes' that are contingent not on abstract beliefs but on particular development.[477] The social processes involved in this development are encapsulated by the 'cross-fertilisation' between "western-style modernity and the worldview of Islamism."[478] These processes are further influenced by the overlap of narratives pertaining to Islam espoused by various social actors including the State, the Muslim Brotherhood and other groups.[479] The Political Islamist project to capture power therefore should not be simply reduced to its failures in subverting the coercive apparatus of the State but instead ought to be understood as a key facet in how we can understand contemporary Islamic identities in relation to the "specific and historically situated contexts in which they develop."[480] Atzori is correct to note that organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood serve as both agents and products of the aforementioned process

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[477] Atzori, Daniel. *Islamism and Globalisation in Jordan: The Muslim Brotherhood's Quest for Hegemony.* London: Routledge, 2015. Pg. 55. Print.
[478] Ibid.,
[479] Ibid.,
[480] Ibid.,

and in doing so bring to light the ambitions and frustrations of key segments within society.

The inability to sufficiently express the aspirations of grievances of supporters and the subaltern has resulted in the continued evolution and mutation of Political Islamist ideology. The expressions of Political Islam are consistent with the creation of multiple or hybrid modernities and therefore cannot solely be confined to a binary understanding of its moderate and extremist strands.[481] The work of Gillian Kennedy is seminal in this regard as it extends a Gramscian framework to develop an understanding of the rise of the progressive and reformist paradigm within Political Islam by analysing groups such as Tayyar al-Masri and their alliances with seculars and leftists.[482] Herein, she convincingly highlights the difficulties faced by progressives in translating their intellectual discourse into mass support due to internal issues such as a lack of nationwide organisation and external issues such as the crippling poverty in Egypt.[483] Yet, in spite of this Kennedy argues that the rise of progressives is indicative of the burgeoning new frames through which Islamic identity is being articulated.

She succinctly makes the point the *jahiliyya/hakimiyya* dyad present in Qutb's vanguard ideology served as a severe limitation in attempts to achieve lasting consent of the dispersed wills of the Egyptian populace.[484] Moreover, her analysis of the sharia-infused ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood correctly points how it lacks the necessary flexibility in quickening the evolution of the organisation over time.[485] In turn, the relative shortcomings of the organisation in cultivating a collective will is said to have resulted in internal factionalism, fragmentation and eventually the rise of a new Islamist paradigm. Although she is correct in making the abovementioned assertions in regards to the ideological stagnancy of the organisation, Kennedy's claim that the writers of Al-

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[481] Kennedy, Gillian. *From Independence to Revolution: Egypt's Islamists and the Contest for Power.* London: Hurst & Company, 2017. Pg. 10. Print.
[482] Ibid., 15.
[483] Ibid., 162-163.
[484] Ibid., 51.
[485] Ibid., 86.

Da'wa sought to advance the idea of state reconciliation and a tacit alliance is questionable.[486] The absence of explicit criticism against the Sadat regime, as we shall uncover in the case study, was certainly not grounds for the promotion of state reconciliation. The degree of freedom allotted by Sadat to the organisation in publishing Al-Da'wa coincided in part with its desire to re-establish its base, the reframing of its ideology and to present its version of events that transpired during the Nasser era. Likewise, the condemnation of Qutb by Tilmasani, which she speaks of, is highly debatable considering Qutb is frequently championed as a martyr in the publication.[487] As a whole however, Kennedy cogently points out that the ideological stagnancy of the organisation has resulted in divisions – divisions that, as Gramsci notes, impede the ability of oppositional forces from unifying in their quest to attain hegemony.

The forthcoming case study seeks to build upon many of the themes established in the aforementioned literature by presenting a nuanced analysis of the dialectical relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the State and situating it within a contextualised historical analysis of the organisation's ideological mouthpiece in Al-Da'wa magazine. The incorporation of the latter contributes to advancing the existing literature on Political Islam by providing critical insight into the implications stemming out of the framing, evolution and eventual stagnancy of the ideological strategy espoused by the organisation during the selected period of study. The themes presented in the periodical can be utilised to contextualise a historical understanding of the organisation's ideological approach and its interaction with contemporary developments.

3.9. Conclusion

The concepts of Antonio Gramsci are embodied by a rhythm of thought that makes them non-rigid, many-sided and malleable. They moreover constitute a historical dialectic materialist approach that hones in on the reciprocal and organic linkages between historical state formation, social relations and power dynamics. Although his concepts were developed with the aim of analysing the modalities of power in the Italy of his time,

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[486] Ibid., 77.
[487] Ibid., 83.

they nevertheless possess a pliability that allows us to utilise them towards a reconnaissance of contemporary developments elsewhere. As such, Gramsci's efforts to recover the philosophy of praxis are indicative of the indissoluble dialectic that organically enmeshes the base with the superstructure, coercion with consent, the international with the national and so forth.

Furthermore, his concepts serve as a criterion of interpretation to unravel the nature of power dynamics as they pertain to social relations between hegemonic and subaltern forces. They are not, and should not be treated as, a matter-of-fact strategy of how social groups can attain power. The approach of Gramsci is unmistakably rooted in class relations and thus postulates the central task of empowering the masses vis-à-vis constant political and ideological leadership within the less than 'spontaneous' sphere of civil society. It is after all within this milieu of relations that intellectual activity is developed in order to contest contradictory conceptions of common sense. It is also within the superstructure that consensus must be formulated and attained by social forces that aspire to mitigate social antagonisms and capture state power.

The framework of this current chapter has therefore sought to offer an in-depth understanding of Gramscian hegemony as well as the related concepts that help shape it. For instance, the concept of passive revolution is integral in helping us carve out an understanding of the nature of relations between social forces and the subaltern. Moreover, it enables us to historically put into perspective how the political and ideological strategies of hegemonic forces shape the terrain of civil society. In the Italian case, passive revolution resulted in a set of social conditions that produced a weak hegemony reliant on restorative policies of transformism and co-option. The restorative features of a war of position strategy were such that they facilitated the sedimentation of cultural and social impoverishment across the superstructure.

The failure to foster subaltern alliances so as to sufficiently satisfy the national-popular will contribute to exacerbation of social conditions, of common sense and the sturdiness of civil society. Equally, they facilitate domination, which is a weakened and

unsustainable form of hegemony. The latter often resigns the dominant group into abusing the coercive functions available to it both in political society and through the social institutions that comprise civil society. The abuse of these functions transpires in an effort to retain power but ultimately edges towards producing a crisis of authority that often proves detrimental to the longevity of the dominant social force. To avoid such a fate, it is essential that social forces meticulously develop and utilise political and ideological leadership within the sphere of civil society so as to secure culture hegemony prior to making any attempt at state power. For Gramsci, this process is most likely to be satisfied through a prince-as-party strategy that arduously strives to foster positive relations between hegemonic and subaltern forces. To reiterate, it is therefore seminal that social groups exact their ideological leadership to develop organic intellectuals that can seam together the masses by converting common sense conceptions into good sense and consensus.

The reading of Gramsci advanced in this chapter entails treating his concepts as a national point of departure that is reciprocally and organically tied to interscalar and nodal developments. It is not a Coxian understanding that treats the national and subnational terrains solely as the recipients of neoliberal developments stemming from the international sphere that are passed down through transmission belts. In other words, it is not that the international sphere of relations does not produce combined and uneven, it does. Rather, it is to indicate that there is a national point of departure wherein geo-temporal differences, historical state formation and conjunctural moments contribute towards shaping relatively distinct experiences. It is therefore necessary to persistently connect organic moments that are relatively permanent and evocative of the whole system to conjunctural moments, which is precisely where the forces of opposition organise. That is to say that there is an organic and reciprocal connection between the base and the superstructure. The superstructure is not an autonomous sphere that spontaneously produces consent. Instead, it is a sphere in which the coercion-consent dialectic is perpetually at work with the explicit aim of reproducing ideas and social conditions that either sustain or contest the power of vying social forces.

Having developed a thorough understanding of Antonio Gramsci and his concepts, the thesis shall now shift gears and introduce the case study. The historical dialectic materialist approach advanced by Gramsci allows for such a reading of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood precisely because his rhythm of thought is non-dogmatic, non-reductionist and malleable. The aim is to therefore thematically utilise the concepts covered in this chapter so as to non-rigidly apply them to understanding the case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The alternative approach, it shall be argued, offers a nuanced way of understanding the dialectical relationship of the Brotherhood with the State and its efforts to cultivate consensus for a competing ideology through its ideological platform in Al-Da'wa magazine.

Chapter IV: The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the State; A Dialectical Enquiry

Although it is true that the grid of 'surveillance' penetrates every corner of life, it is equally important to discover why society as a whole is never completely dominated by it.
– Michel de Certeau[488]

4.1. Introduction

The various manifestations of Islamism that prop up within civil society are indicative of the complex and contradictory set of outcomes owing to organic and conjunctural moments. The prominence attributed to the former category is understandable given that the organic is constitutive of the "whole system (of governance) and is relatively permanent."[489] As a consequence, the latter category is predominantly framed in a manner that subordinates it to the organic. The relegation of conjunctural moments can however prove problematic in that it risks obfuscating the 'equally real terrain' on which oppositional forces organise with the aim of altering the nature of relations that shape the organic system. It is therefore essential to discourage the supremacy of one moment over the other so as to produce a methodological separation of what is an otherwise intertwined relationship.

As was explored in previous chapters, there is a heightened tendency to methodologically confine Political Islam within intransigent and reactionary frames that sequester our understanding and limit our approach to the vast phenomenon. It is pertinent that relative weight be assigned to the conjunctural so that we may bring to the surface the formative role of dialectical relationships between Political Islam and the State. These relationships help us to amplify how the ideology, activity and strategies of each reciprocally impact not only each other but also society and towards shaping the relations of reproduction.

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[488] Certeau, Michel de. *L'invention du quotidian* Paris: Arts de faire, 1980. Print.
[489] Gramsci, Antonio. *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935.* Ed. David Forgacs. New York: New York University Press, 2000. Pg. 427. Print.

Magnifying the activity that takes place on the conjunctural terrain allows for a historiographical analysis of key socio-political developments and how they distinctively impact relations between the state and subaltern as well as between the national and international sphere. A dialectical enquiry thus assists us in bringing to the forefront the nuances within and across Political Islam. As such, the conjunctural terrain should be treated as the essential space within civil society where ideological and political strategy is cultivated, honed, deployed, hampered and subjected to change, reconstituted and so forth.

A dialectical approach additionally enables us to integrally delve into the importance of power dynamics, particularly at the domestic level, without having to compromise or overstate either moment (organic and conjunctural) so as to render blanketing assessments of Political Islam.[490] A reconnaissance into the dialectical relationship between the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the State necessitates that we account for both historical and contemporary developments so that we may extract the ideological and political subtleties that ultimately differentiate Islamists from one another. The objective is to therefore utilise the conceptual framework addressed in Chapter 3 in a non-rigid manner and apply it to the case study of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. By treating the conjunctural as a real terrain[491] we can more freely navigate the subtle qualitative differences that contour the political strategies and ideology of the Brotherhood with increased clarity and historical perspective. Although such an approach is admittedly conceptual in nature, it nevertheless provides us with the essential tools to excavate and extricate the intricate nature of the modalities of power that shape interactions between social forces without falling prey to oversimplification.

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[490] Namely, state formation and the reproduction of mimetic and modular conditions attributed to modernity and global capitalism.
[491] Gramsci, Antonio. *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935.* Ed. David Forgacs. New York: New York University Press, 2000. Pg. 427. Print.

A Gramscian conceptual approach presents us with a 'criteria of historical interpretation rather than archetypal political forms.'[492] By dialectically assessing the integral history of Egypt in relation to the Muslim Brotherhood we can account for the reciprocal relationship between forces vying for power as alternating moments of one and the same process as opposed to having to resign counter movements to a wholly reactionary status. It also permits us to dissect the plethora of fissures that prevent the procurement of uniformity within hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs. These fissures can be better understood through the 'tug-of-war' that perpetually influences the internal and external expressions of power and ideology. The criteria to interpret these fissures and formations ought to therefore be explored thematically as consisting of alternating moments with the dialectics of revolution-restoration, coercion-consent and international-national. It is the shifting of power and ideology encapsulated within these processes that shall allow us to gauge the changing socioeconomic and political configurations in relation to the methods through which social forces organise, operate and contest hegemony within civil society.

For instance, while the policies and social processes enacted under Nasser make for a markedly dissimilar socio-political terrain than that of his predecessors – the residue from the historical and social conditions that preceded the Nasserist state have important implications that cannot be overlooked. The initial aim of this chapter is to therefore thematically explore the pertinence of conjunctural moments and adjoin them to the organic features that comprised the 'system' of governance that eventually gave way to the Nasserist state and passive revolution. The decades that preceded the 1952 palace coup are central to understanding how certain socio-political developments pervasively penetrated the core of the Egyptian political system. Put differently, the gradual social entrenchment of nationalism and modernism alongside rampant anti-colonial fervour was complicated by the failures of elites, The Muslim Brotherhood and intellectuals to adequately cultivate consent for a national-popular bloc. This, in conjunction with the pervasiveness of a pre-modern continuity (economic and institutional) and the lack of opportunity for subaltern self-actualisation were to be the seeds for the ensuing organic

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[492] De Smet, Brecht. *Gramsci on Tahrir: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Egypt.* London: Pluto Press, 2015. Pg. 35-36. Print.

crisis which itself would prove detrimental for the development of civil society and the prosperity of the Egyptian political system. The sedimentation of the abovementioned conditions, particularly in the absence of an organic revolution, has meant that the legacy of remnant features continue to reverberate in Egypt. An analysis of the modalities of power, especially during this formative period, assists us in painting a canvas of how organic and conjunctural moments influenced the trajectory of socioeconomic and political relations that ensued between the Brotherhood and the Nasserist state.

The current chapter is structured so as to first consider the origins and relatively auspicious rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in relation to the socioeconomic and political terrain that preceded the arrival of the Nasserist state. To this extent, the chapter delves into the burgeoning ideology and political strategy of the organisation under the guidance of Hasan al-Banna. This phase is then reciprocally explored in contradistinction to the plethora of social policies carried out under the directive of the colonial-monarchic bloc. It is argued that this period contributed to the emergence of the *effendiya* movement, the missteps of the Wafd party whilst ultimately giving rise to an organic crisis. A critical exploration of period assists us in exposing the fundamental changes in power dynamics that in turn influenced the trajectory of social relations, ideological narratives and the political strategies of social forces that produced a non-cohesive national-popular bloc unwilling to empower the subaltern. Furthermore, an analysis of this period sheds light on the omnipresence of modernity and the rise of nationalism as an ideology stemming from the international sphere. It is the amalgamation of these developments that ultimately facilitated an organic crisis and produced resultant changes to the system of governance in Egypt so as it alter both the organic and conjunctural sphere.

Upon having covered these themes, the chapter shifts its exploration to the advent of passive revolution, which accompanied the ascendance of Gamal Abdel Nasser to power. It is during this seminal period that we are able to uncover the sprawling impact that regressive, restorative and coercive social policies had on the sphere of social relations. It is during this period that the dialectical relationship between the Brotherhood and the State took on considerable changes so as to impact the strategy of both parties. An

exploration into these shifts enables us to more accurately gain perspective into the nuanced nature of the Brotherhood's ideological and political programmes. It is also during this formative period that we stand to better understand the ways in which nationalism, culture and modernity are latently reflected into society vis-à-vis the ideology of the hegemonic force so as to produce noticeable alterations to the conceptions and worldviews held by the populace, including the Muslim Brotherhood. By emphasising the dialectical relationship between the Brotherhood and State we stand to gain insight into an organisation that is otherwise largely reticent and secretive concerning its political position. The combination of the two periods under analysis provides us with essential insight into how organic crisis and passive revolution contributed to the changing trajectory of the Brotherhood's ideological and political strategy.

4.2. From Al-Banna to Al-Da'wa

The proceeding case study endeavours to explore the dialectical relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian State. In doing so it aims to holistically track historical and social processes alongside corresponding conjunctural developments. This is done as a means of unravelling the ideological and political strategies utilised by the Muslim Brotherhood in its quest to attain authoritative status for Islam in daily life. This rigorous method is essential given that the organisation's *raison d'etre* is at its core invariably ontological. As Brynjar Lia notes, the Brotherhood's emphasis on "work, action and deeds" supersedes its attention to 'intellectual exercises.'[493] An investigation into the organisation's political and ideological strategy as well its ideational activity thus necessitates a contextualised historiographical enquiry into its organisational capacity, its political activity and equally its dialectical relationship with competing social and subaltern forces. It is through this approach that we stand to formulate a clearer understanding of not only the Brotherhood's ideological tracts but also of its evolution and mutation over time.

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[493] Lia, Brynjar. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise Of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928-1942.* Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998. Pg. 10. Print.

In setting the historical dialectic between the Brotherhood and State the case study engages in a comparative analysis between the foundational ideology espoused by its charismatic leader Hasan Al-Banna during the organisation's auspicious rise to eminence and the ideology of the organisation following its re-introduction into society after a prolonged period of repression. This is done in order to critically assess and contrast the impact that social processes and conditions had in shaping early ideational activity with the developments that followed the organisation's expulsion from society. The failures of its initial ideology are thus contrasted with the re-formulated ideological frames that emerged upon the Brotherhood's re-introduction into Egyptian society during the period of Islamic revivalism. The content of Al Da'wa magazine is therefore investigated as it served as the ideological mouthpiece of the organisation's leadership in re-articulating its revised ideological strategy.

The comparative approach enables us to historically situate ideological activity in relation to markedly different conjunctural terrains. The ideology formulated and disseminated under Banna and that which was advocated by (Al Da'wa) the ideological mouthpiece of Tilmisani and the Brotherhood's leadership provides valuable insight into the subtle shifts in the organisation's strategy. It allows us to gauge the modifications undertaken to make a relatively non-divisive strategy more divisive and authoritative, to observe the discarding of Sufi elements in favour of stricter Salafi interpretations, to bring to light the reconciliation attempt with Qutbists and the decisiveness in re-articulating sharia in bolder terms. The favourable conjunctural terrain during the penning of Al Da'wa highlights the organisation's leveraging of Islamic revivalism to re-establish its own base at the expense of forging alliances with subaltern forces. Equally, it offers an uninterrupted look into the Brotherhood's version of events that resulted in its expulsion and subsequent break with Banna's ideological tract. By situating the comparison between Banna and Al Da'wa within a Gramscian theoretical framework the aim is to elucidate the environment wherein revolutionary activity occurs. A historical reconnaissance into the conjunctural terrain where the forces of opposition organise ultimately enables us to postulate that the evolution of the Brotherhood's ideology is marred by stagnation and caught in between the revolution-restoration dialectic.

4.3. A Prelude to Passive Revolution

The Muslim Brotherhood emerged in 1928 in response to a series of social and political developments that can be better understood in relation to the organisation's primary objectives at the time of its inception. The organisation came into being as a result of mounting social tensions between the society and the colonial-monarchic bloc. Acting under the belief that Egyptian society had been led astray by governing forces, the Brotherhood set out to spread 'the call" or *Da'wa* as a means to gradually reforming society. The consensus amongst the Brotherhood's leadership was that the pervasive presence of foreign elements was the chief instigator of growing social and religious fragmentation. The organisation thus set out to re-integrate society through a protracted strategy aimed at conjuring up support for the re-establishment of the caliphate alongside the repudiation of colonial efforts to consolidate the modern nation-state system in Egypt. The belief that colonialism and the nation-state system were the predominant cause of mounting social and economic frustrations was not unique to the Brotherhood alone. In fact, large swathes of the populace maintained a similar worldview given the military presence of the British in Suez, their concession of Palestinian lands to Israel and the vast discrepancies in employment opportunities and wages across bureaucratic institutions wherein the most prominent positions were reserved for the British.[494]

Amidst growing antagonism against colonialism, Hasan al-Banna founded the Brotherhood in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia. The charismatic chief ideologue would actively campaign for the return of the caliphate on the grounds that its revival represented the symbolic return of the 'inter-relationship between state and religion.'[495] In as much as the call to restore the inter-relationship between state and religion inferred a rejection of the secular western nation-state as an imported, divisive and thus ineffective solution for the perils facing Egyptian society, it equally denoted an effort to "raise the spirits, to invoke the consciousness of the people and to awaken their inherent

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[494] Abdelnasser, Walid Mahmoud. "A Historical Background." *The Islamic movement in Egypt: perceptions of international relations, 1967-1981*. London: Kegan Paul International, 1994. 31-33. Print.
[495] Ibid., 34.

emotions" so that they may re-discover the universal path derived from morality and mutual co-operation.[496] This stance was accompanied by the belief that the solipsistic and supercilious tendencies of the western model of governance increasingly produced feelings of abandonment, alienation and isolation in the orient[497] – a claim maintained to this day by many contemporary Islamists throughout the region.[498]

Hence, the organisation operated under the ideological premise that the universality of Islam provided a 'system and mode of work' that could effectively provide an alternative means to rectify the plethora of ills facing society. The strategy carved out of this belief emerged in the form of *Da'wa* – to spread the call of Islam. This entailed the gradual social reform of society vis-à-vis its re-Islamicisation. The rediscovery of Islam hence entailed widespread efforts to re-introduce 'forgotten' Islamic fundamentals as the cornerstone for rehabilitating the individual, the family and society by returning Egypt back to a state of piety. The reclamation of an Islamic society in Egypt was in turn considered the stepping-stone for paving the path to revitalising the *umma* and Islamic universality.[499]

The increasing social tumult and anti-colonial sentiment in the 1930s created a corresponding social space from the Brotherhood's ideology to prosper. Banna, a trained schoolteacher, would frequent coffee shops in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia and persuasively spread an elongated version of the abovementioned doctrine. Banna and his six co-founding members would advance the view that Muslims 'had lost their way' and that the waning western system of governance was exacerbating this reality. An ensuing opportunity in 1932 would lead Banna to relocate the Brotherhood headquarters to Cairo where an even larger and politically motivated audience awaited. During this period, the

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[496] Al-Banna, Hasan. *The Complete Works of Imam Hasan al-Banna.* Our Message In A New Phase. Print. 3-13.

[497] Ibid., p.8

[498] Tibi, Bassam. "The Crisis of the Nation-State." *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. 114-118. Print.

[499] Al-Banna, Hasan. *The Complete Works of Imam Hasan Al-Banna.* Our Message in a New Phase. 3-13. Print.

hegemonic force tolerated the organisation given that it primarily remained apolitical due to its staunch belief in religiously driven social reform.[500] The lack of state intervention enabled the organisation to rapidly expand its base so that by 1938 it operated over 300 branches and maintained an estimated membership anywhere between 50000 and 150000.[501] That said, the failed Arab revolt of 1936 in Palestine would result in heightened political instability across the region and greatly influence the Brotherhood's decision to remain apolitical.

Akin to Rashid Rida's[502] views on westernisation and colonialism, Banna and the Brotherhood would intensify their political dissent against the British presence by organising rallies and disseminating anti-British sentiments through pamphlets and publications. The decision to politically engage would have mixed results for the organisation. On the one hand, its political involvement in local and foreign matters (Palestine) led it to garner vast popular support. Contrarily, the success propelled the Brotherhood into a noteworthy and controversial decision in 1941, when its leadership decided, for the first time, to field political candidates in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. The decision marked a significant moment for the organisation, not simply because it drew the ire of the British and resulted in the brief exile and imprisonment of Banna and other ranking members[503] but more so because the foray into politics ignited a longstanding internal debate concerning the *raison d'être* of the group. From its inception, the Muslim Brotherhood was divided into two camps in regards to whether it ought to concentrate its efforts solely towards spreading the message of Islam across civil society or whether it ought to capture political space from which it could then raise the stature of its Islamic message. While Banna himself teetered back and forth between the

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[500] Heffelfinger, Chris. Radical Islam in America: Salafism's Journey from Arabia to the West. Washington: Potomac Books, Inc. 2011. Print.
[501] Ibid.,
[502] Rida promulgated Salafi sentiments in his monthly magazine al-Manar. He was a proponent of advancing an Islamic state and one of his chief beliefs was that colonialism contributed to the detrimental nature of Muslim societies. As a result he encouraged a return to the fundamentals of Islam rather than blindly following Islam as he charged the conservative and complacent ulema with doing.
[503] Heffelfinger, Chris. *Radical Islam in America:* Salafism's Journey from Arabia to the West. Washington: Potomac Books, 2011. Print.

two options, he never explicitly turned down the opportunity to work alongside existing power structures. In fact, he withdrew the organisation from the 1941 parliamentary elections in exchange for stricter legislation on alcohol and prostitution.[504]

4.4. Banna's Letter to King Farouk

The preoccupation of the British in WWII and its immediate aftermath meant that it operated in reduced presence in Egypt. This enabled the Brotherhood to amass considerable support so that by 1947 it was able to catapult itself into the largest and most organised civil society organisation in Egypt. The culmination of the war forced the British to scale back their presence in Egypt insofar as that its main presence would be confined to the strategic region of the Suez Canal. For the Brotherhood this development was taken to denote the changing of tides and mark the 'writing of the wall.' This is particularly evident in the candid letter that Banna would pen to King Farouk[505] imploring him to capitalise on the impending yet imminent organic change awaiting the international sphere and Egypt by taking firm measures to establish a genuine Islamic nation. Banna placed emphasis on the transitional period and the pertinence of establishing a united Islamic front derived from religious legislation and spirit.[506] He warned for the pressing need to safeguard against the perils that face nations during transitory phases by putting forth two necessary conditions that must be met. The first, however predictable, was to liberate Egypt from its political bonds so that it may recapture its sovereignty and independence. The second was to use this newly acquired freedom to reconstruct the country and set it on course towards 'social perfection.'[507] Fittingly, Banna recommended an Islamic methodology citing its universality, virtuosity, sanctity and stability as advantageous to the declining Western model and its weakening political and social foundations.[508]

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[504] Ibid.,
[505] The letter was also forwarded to Farouk's Prime Minister and various kings, princes, rulers, civic and religious leaders in countries constituting the 'Islamic world.'
[506] Al-Banna, Hasan. "Toward the Light." *The Complete Works of Imam Hasan Al Banna.* Pg. 6. 1947.
[507] Ibid., 5.
[508] Ibid.,

The plea for implementing an Islamic approach stemmed from the growing belief that it provided the necessary means to eclipse the detrimental, chauvinistic and literal nationalism of the West. Hence, it was postulated that the application of policies derived from Islam could seamlessly balance nationhood and common good whilst simultaneously providing a greater sense of purpose.[509] If anything, this united front proposed by Banna was a re-imagination of a considerably more religious caliphate insofar as that he lobbied for the reinforcement of armed forces and the introduction of Islamic posts within the military and across bureaucratic institutions. These changes were to be further fortified by the regulation and monitoring of personal conduct of employees so as to erase any discernable distinctions between private and professional life. In a nutshell, the argument was that Islam ought to be understood and employed in its truest sense – as a comprehensive and universal way of life that imposes itself upon all worldly and ethereal matters.[510]

The drawn-out letter justified the above on the basis that in order to harness and consolidate sovereignty and achieve prosperity, developing nations must urgently address a wide range of complex interests through a truly comprehensive method. The most pressing of these needs for Banna was the procurement of a capable military force in order to ensure the safety of the nation. This was to then be buttressed through the active promotion of science, scholarship and physical health – all under the auspices of Islam. The proportional weight assigned to the abovementioned themes by Islam, it was argued, is what made Islam the most viable approach to good governance for Banna.

The emphasis placed on an Islamic mode of governance can also be partially attributed to the dyadic interpretation Banna attributed to the 'fundamental sources of renaissance.' In

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[509] Ibid.,

[510] In his writings titled 'On Youth' Banna deems Islam to be the following: "1. Creed as well as worship, 2. Homeland and nationalism, 3. Behaviour and matter, 4. Culture and law, 5. Leniency and harshness.' He goes on to say that: "Islam combines the Practical as well as Spiritual aspect of life" and in this sense is "1. Both Religion and State, 2. Both Scripture and Sword." See: Al-Banna, Hasan. "Oh Youth" *The Complete Works of Imam Hasan Al-Banna.* Pg. 18. Print.

the West, these sources purportedly originated from science and technology whereas in the East (Islamic world) the sources were less susceptible to moral decay given that they were unequivocally derived from Islam. The ubiquity of Islam as a religion, Banna warned however, ought not to be confused with the men of religion – the ulema. The conservative approach of the co-opted ulema is derivative of a network historically associated with the corporate and political interests of the mercantile class[511] and thus hampered by self-driven actions.[512] This did not however suggest that Banna sought the abolition of the ulema but rather that they ought to be reformed in accordance with the correct utilisation of Islam. As a whole, Banna promoted the viewpoint that governing through the fundamentals of Islam would provide for an unparalleled opportunity for renaissance in the Islamic world. Hence, it was by following the righteous fundamentals of Islam that a prosperous state capable of producing genuine tolerance, deep faith, piety and a higher moral purpose that the polity could aspire to and be inspired by could emerge.[513]

Banna's letter to King Farouk offers key insights into the early ideological and political strategy of the Brotherhood. There is from the onset a willingness to work within the existing power structure. This is further aided by the heightened attention given to institutional reform as a means of gradually moulding the social fabric of the nation. In turn, these themes are reinforced by the emphasis placed on the Islamicisation of the military. As such, there are significant parallels between Banna's recommendations and the Ottoman circle of equity albeit with Banna pushing for the return of a caliphate that is considerably more religious. The circle of equity has no necessary sequence apart from the first and last instance and can be described as follows:

There can be no royal authority without the military

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[511] Cornell, Vincent J. 'Ibn Battuta's Opportunism' in *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop.* Eds. Miriam Cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. Pg. 47.

[512] Banna, Hasan. "Toward the light." *The Complete Works of Imam Hasan Al-Banna.* Print.

[513] Ibid.,

There can be no military without wealth
The flock produces wealth
The Sultan cares for the flock by promoting wealth
Justice requires harmony in the world
The world is a garden, its walls are the state
The support of the state is Islamic law
There is no support for Islamic law without royal authority[514]

The path for governance put for by Banna ultimately constituted a protracted project to be carried out in unison with the existing state so as to arrive at a religiously enriched caliphate. The Brotherhood's willingness to work alongside the State was by no means novel but rather indicative of their continuation of a pragmatic political strategy of gradual reform. The war of position strategy hence marked a restorative approach aimed at moulding institutions towards a desired outcome rather than dismantling them through innovation. The long-term strategy thus was to gradually construct an alternative hegemony by working within the confines of existing structures. The strategic position to pursue social form hints at two important points. Firstly, the Brotherhood, at least officially, did not view uprooting the structures and institutions of governance by means of a rapid revolution against the state as a fruitful endeavour. Secondly, and more telling, is that in spite of a war of position strategy, the organisation preferred a top-down approach that did not seek to empower the subaltern masses. Much like Piedmont, it sought a restorative strategy aimed at enacting change from above. The preference for this approach would reverberate with the ensuing organic crisis that took shape.

That being said, the choice of the leadership to pursue the aforementioned strategy was not reflective of the entire organisation. In spite of various accounts that claim organisational homogeneity and support for Banna, there is reason to believe that key factions with the organisation disagreed with both the protracted strategy and the attempt to work alongside the state. As Barbara Zollner cogently points out, Banna's choices did

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[514] Itzowitz, Norman. *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition.* New York: A.A. Knopf Inc., 1973. Pg. 88. Print.

not go unchallenged by the more radical and semi-autonomous elements within the organisation.[515] The mounting fragmentation within the organisation was such that at the time when Banna penned the aforementioned letter to King Faruq, the Brotherhood had already been operating a clandestine wing known as Nizam al-Khass (special apparatus) for close to a decade. In spite of Banna publicly denouncing violence, the secret paramilitary apparatus was tasked with covert armed action to complement the Brotherhood's political and ideological agenda. Formed in 1940, the wing emerged in response to the failures of the Arab revolt in Palestine four years earlier.[516] While its primary task was to combat the colonial presence, it had also been linked to assassination attempts and socially disruptive operations highlighted by an alleged plot to overthrow the monarchy in 1948. This would lead to an official decree, by then Prime Minister Al-Nukrashi, that dissolved the Muslim Brotherhood. The decision would prompt a veterinary student, and member of the Brotherhood, to assassinate the Prime Minister just weeks later in an act that Banna deemed as contrary to Islam. Less than two months later, the founder and chief ideologue of the Brotherhood would himself be assassinated in an act of retribution purportedly commissioned by the monarchy.

The forthcoming years would send the Brotherhood into an ideological and political tailspin. The growing societal perception of the organisation as a violent body was compounded by heightened internal fragmentation and the glaring void in leadership following the assassination of Banna. Hassan Al-Hudabyi[517] would eventually be appointed as the second general guide in a strategic move aimed at curtailing negative popular perceptions associated with the organisation.[518] The appointment would however do little to quell the internal rift, as Hudabyi's call to disband the secret apparatus would

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[515] Zollner, Barbara. *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan Al-Hudaybi and Ideology.* London: Routledge Studies in Political Islam, 2009. Print.

[516] Abdelnasser, Walid Mahmoud. *The Islamic movement in Egypt: perceptions of international relations, 1967-1981.* London: Kegan Paul International, 1994. Pg. 36-37. Print.

[517] Hudabyi was not only an Al-Azhar graduate but he was also a judge, supporter of the monarchy and opposed to violence.

[518] Heffelfinger, Chris. Radical Islam in America: Salafism's Journey from Arabia to the West. Washington: Potomac Books, Inc. 2011. Print.

go unheeded. This was further exacerbated by the fact that the mounting socio-political discord in Egypt encouraged factions from the Brotherhood to unofficially participate alongside social forces in a war of manoeuvre against the colonial-monarchic bloc.[519]

The pursuit of frontal attacks aimed at disrupting and overthrowing the state can be best described as constituting the onset of organic crisis in Egypt. In Gramscian terms, an organic crisis can be described as the emergence of contradictions within the economic structure that systematically permeate into to superstructure. Put differently, an organic crisis is the moment in which the hegemonic bloc fails to uphold its recognition and acceptance from economic classes. The failure to retain hegemony results in the withering away of social alliances thereby creating an opening for subaltern forces to challenge hegemony and facilitate rapid political realignment.[520] Understood in this way, the internal shift towards a war of manoeuvre strategy by factions of the Brotherhood emerged as a truly viable option only with the declining hegemony of the colonial-monarchic bloc. The defining conjunctural moments during the organic crisis leading up to the 1952 Palace coup thus have important implications on the direction of the Brotherhood alongside the emergence of a new system of governance and hegemony in Egypt.

4.5. A Restorative Political Strategy

Prior to shifting gears to the impending organic crisis in Egypt, it is important to expand on a few noteworthy points. Firstly, the strategy outlined by Banna in the aforementioned period displayed no indication of empowering the masses through a bottom-up emancipatory approach. Instead, it denoted a top-down form of political and ideological leadership that sought to empower Islamic leadership by emphasising the necessity of institutional reform. The proposed form of political action sought to keep the existing governing structures in place but to gradually reform the functions of bureaucratic and

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[519] Abdelnasser, Walid Mahmoud. *The Islamic movement in Egypt: perceptions of international relations, 1967-1981*. London: Kegan Paul International, 1994. Print.
[520] Gramsci, Antonio. Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections From The Prison Notebooks*. Ed. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Print.

social institutions so as to sediment central authority. Hence, the suggestive measures entailed support for the fortification of an Islamic central authority through which the social and moral behaviour of the masses could be guided, if not, altogether controlled.

The suggested reforms further advocated a regressive form of change by calling for the merger of the private and public life of government employees. While to line of reasoning was undoubtedly aimed at engraining Islam's status as universal in both aspects of life, it undoubtedly erases the check of accountability – resigning the masses into passive and coercive acceptance. The notion that the reforms were to be buttressed by the creation of Islamic posts within the military further indicates the passive and restorative nature of the changes Banna sought to enact. The entire programme was justified around the necessity to immediately act to consolidate a new system given the impending and imminent changes that awaited Egypt.

At no point during the proposed reform is there any suggestions offered as how to improve the immediate socioeconomic plight and daily living conditions of the masses. There is little emphasis placed on how the peasant and working classes are to be integrated into the new form of governance other than the notion that Islam inherently possesses the capability to usher in an era of renaissance. There is instead attention devoted to the necessity of reforming Al-Azhar as a social institution so that it may correctly guide the masses into improving their social and moral being. As a whole, the suggestive measures put forth are done so as a national project with international desires in having Egypt revive and lead the *umma*. Moreover, they depart considerably from the organisation's initial strategy of *Da'wa,* which is to spread 'the call' through the social reform of people as opposed to political engagement.

It is important to note that while the aforementioned suggestions constituted an end goal that most within the organisation were in support of – there was considerable fragmentation as to the strategy that ought to be employed in arriving at such a juncture. Banna's willingness to work alongside the government was not universally received across the ranks of the organisation. The internal fragmentation manifested itself in a sort

of iron triangle of strategy. There were those who remained dedicated to the original strategy of exclusively spreading the *Da'wa* so as to first capture cultural hegemony. Correspondingly, others implored greater political engagement so as to achieve tangible progress in the short term. Whereas the first two strategies represented a war of position approach the rising influence of the secret apparatus brought with it support for a frontal attack against the state. This strategy would eventually come to be epitomised by Qutb's *jahiliyya*.[521]

The internal fragmentation negatively impacted the cohesiveness of the organisation and as we shall so in the forthcoming sections it served to fracture the organisation's ability to develop ideational complement in the wake of ensuing social developments. In terms of the former, the inability to develop ideational complement for both the war of position and war of manoeuvre strategies espoused by internal factions significantly limited the organisation's ability to capitalise on key events by fostering sustainable alliances. To some extent however the latter reality came to denote a prominent feature of the superstructure in Egypt – wherein subaltern and social forces maintained limited dialogue with one another and instead preferred to communicate with hegemonic forces.

4.5.1. Banna's Alliance Building

An essential component of constructing a viable counter-hegemony force resides in the active and consistent effort aimed at fostering alliances so that the intersectional interests of the subordinated classes can converge into a national-popular will. It is imperative that these efforts be unrelenting so as to account for the inherently fluid nature of intersectional interests. The efforts to arrive at such a juncture require the pursuit and maintenance of alliances through organic intellectuals that can weave the aspirations and frustrations of the various subordinated groups in society into a unified collective will. The articulation of competing interests and the cultivation of alliances thus require the dissemination of a historically organic ideology that can raise consciousness for an

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[521] To recall back to our discussion on Qutb in chapter 1, it is important to note that his formulation of a war of manoeuvre strategy emerged not as a result of the torture he received but from his desire to break from the complacency and lack of tangible progress the organisation had made during its first two decades of existence.

alternative worldview by uniting the interests and struggles of the subaltern against the pervasiveness and antagonisms created by hegemonic forces. The effective formulation of alliances is therefore contingent on obtaining the consent of the subaltern for the ideational and political activity that accompanies a counter-hegemonic programme. Shifting consent away from the passive acceptance of conceptions and worldviews propagated by the narrow interests of the ruling group in turn reduces the social basis of hegemonic apparatuses and exposes its control of political society to a frontal attack. This section therefore endeavours to consider the alliances that Banna sought to build and the subsequent impact that his efforts had on the Brotherhood's attempts to position itself to capture the state through its political and ideological leadership.

The successful articulation of a counter-hegemonic ideology involves the complex task of cultivating consent for a worldview that ought to be invariably removed from the conceptions advanced and entrenched in society by the hegemonic force. Counter-hegemonic forces must therefore unambiguously distance themselves from the passively accepted worldviews espoused by the hegemon whilst simultaneously working to destroy them from with the existing social structures that continually perpetuates them. In confronting this reality in Egypt, Banna strategically approached the alliances and relationships that he chose to foster – perhaps none more so than the alliance he sought with King Farouk and the Royal Palace. Farouk's accession to power in Egypt in 1936 would be celebrated by the Brotherhood during their fourth general conference wherein they met to celebrate his coronation.[522] In signalling his pursuit of amicable relations Banna publicly bestowed upon Farouk the titles of 'righteous King' and 'commander of the faithful.'[523] Simply put, Banna sought Farouk as an ally in legitimately installing an Islamic society in Egypt. The hope resided not only in Farouk's initial popularity but also in his education under respected Azhar alum Sheikh Mustafa Al-Maraghi and the fact that his advisor Ali Mahir was Prime Minister and head of the royal court.[524] Banna's

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[522] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 14. Print.
[523] Kramer, Gudrun. *Hasan Al-Banna.* Oxford: Oneworld Publishers, 2010. Pg. 59. Print.
[524] Cook, Steven A. *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 201x. Pg. 29. Print.

desire to make inroads was furthered by the fact that both Al-Maraghi and Mahir were pro-religious and anti-Wafd.[525]

What is particularly revealing about Banna's approach within a Gramscian framework is that his decision to pursue an alliance with King Farouk and the Royal Palace is that it draws similarities to the Piedmont intervention during the Risorgimento. That is to suggest that Banna envisioned a top-down elitist approach in the restricting of the political and social institutions of Egypt. To this extent Anwar Sadat asserted that Banna rejected a potential merger with an unknown clandestine group on the grounds that the social standing of the Brotherhood as a mass movement bestowed upon it the exclusive right to lead the efforts against the British and to drive national reform.[526] Although, Sadat's account is difficult to confirm due to issues of objectivity, there is ample reason to believe that Banna sought reform by working alongside the monarchy rather then the revolutionary means presented by the Free Officers. Banna would thus pursue working alongside the status quo rather than attempting to demolish it. In fact, the alliance with Ali Mahir would result in significant dissent from within the Brotherhood as many regarded Mahir as using the Brotherhood as an instrument to fight the Wafd.[527] Banna's hopes of achieving a top-down reform of Egypt would hit a decisive snag amidst the commencement of war campaigns in North Africa with the onset of World War Two. British concerns that Egyptian parliament refused to declare war on Germany and that it fostered pro-axis sentiments led them to persuade King Farouk to appoint Mustafa al-Nahhas and his anti-axis Wafd party to parliament.[528] While King Farouk initially pushed for a coalition government he would eventually cave after the tank display of military might that the British parked outside of his palace. The coercion of Farouk and to come

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[525] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 18. Print.

[526] Ibid., 31

[527] Ali Mahir was the cause of considerable dissent within the Muslim Brotherhood as many within the organisation regarded Mahir as using the Brotherhood as an instrument to fight the Wafd. See: Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 18. Print.

[528] Cook, Steven A. *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 201x. Pg. 39. Print.

extent of Al-Nahhas would be lead many within nationalist camp to regard both as traitors and puppets of the British. It was with this that the relationship between the increasingly active political Brotherhood and Palace tailed off.

In the midst of the aforementioned development Banna would seek out new relationships and expand the scope of the Brotherhood's activities both at home and in Palestine. In 1940, Banna would arrange to meet with second lieutenant Anwar Sadat and fellow officer Abd al Munim Abd al Rauf, both of whom represented the growing frustrations of a clandestine group of military officers. Sadat further revealed that Banna divulged sensitive information pertaining to the Brotherhood's stockpiling of arms for the military wing of the Brotherhood. In turn, Sadat would express to Banna the mounting frustration of officers with the existing state of corruption and political polarisation in Egypt which eventually led to a hush-hush agreement between the two to 'trickle down' arms to the organisation.[529] Prior to his arrest in 1942 Sadat met a final time with Banna wherein he divulged further information about his dissident military group and its operations to exact revolution in Egypt. The enthusiastic Banna however, in Sadat's opinion, was not wholly committed to the prospect of the Brotherhood serving as 'popular support' to the Free Officers Movement in liberating Egypt.[530] Rather, according to Sadat, Banna sought to have a meeting arranged for him to meet with the King so as to reassure ease the King about the Brotherhood's views on Islam.[531] There is thus reason to believe that Banna sought not to build popular alliances in reforming the State.

The ensuing appointment of Mustafa al-Nahhas and the Wafd party would require a more complex approach from Banna in order to build an alliance. Although the secular and liberal-minded Wafd propagated national interests and spoke on behalf of the masses, the elite members within the party belonged to landed interests and the effendiya. The appointment of the party to parliament would impact its popularly as many nationalists

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[529] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 24-26. Print.
[530] Ibid.,
[531] Ibid., 40-41.

felt the Farouk and the Wafd succumbed Egypt's sovereignty to the British.[532] Banna who had opposed the leftist party used the opportunity of public outcry against the Wafd and Farouk to announce the Brotherhood's decision to participate in upcoming elections. The Wafd having long deliberated how to address the growing social standing of the Brothers opted to negotiate legislation on banning the sale of alcohol and prostitution rather than persecute the Banna and the Brotherhood. The negotiations proved favourable as al-Nahhas who had earlier that year banned the Brotherhood from publishing permitted them the 'freedom for the movement to resume full-scale operations" which included resuming of publications and meetings.[533] Moreover, the negotiation served to portray Banna as a 'martyr' insofar as that he gave up his candidacy in favour of Islamic reforms.[534]

The relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and Wafd would from this point forward remain unstable and oscillate between periods of amicability and repression. For instance, al-Nahhas should again close down all Brotherhood branches except for its headquarters in 1942 while in 1943 a faction of Wafd ministers would voice their support to the ideas propagated by the Brothers. According to Mitchell, this was a sign not only of the growing fragmentation between the left and right wing of the Wafd who respectively saw the organisation as an abomination and as a useful instrument against the proliferation of communist ideas but also of the Wafd's recognition of the Brotherhood's increasing power within society.[535] In fact, growing public frustrations would lead the Wafd to seek out a popular front alongside communists that enlisted students and industrial workers into the National Committee of Students and Workers and called them to strike on 21 February 1946. Prior to the strike, which would at any rate turn in to a bloodbath against the police and British forces, a delegation from the

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[532] Cook, Steven A. *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 201x. Pg. 39. Print.
[533] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 27. Print.
[534] Ibid.,
[535] Ibid.,

committee sought out the support of Banna only to astonishingly be informed that the Brotherhood was not ready.[536]

In a decade marred by political instability and increasing violence, Banna consistently rejected potential alliances as demonstrated with Sadat and the Free Officers and later on with the Wafd and Communists. He resolutely declined these alliances on the basis that he neither wanted to be led by the Free Officers and Wafd nor cooperate with those who were ideologically communist. He instead focused solely on establishing the Brotherhood as the leading force in society and sought to work alongside monarchy in what inevitably suggests the maintenance of the existing status quo. The shunned alliances are revealing in regards to his intentions, as a coalition between the above-mentioned forces provided for tangible opportunities to decisively mobilise the masses against the British and Royal Palace. For good measure, his decisions resulted in increased dissention from within the Brotherhood, which contributed to him losing control of the military apparatus he consented to in 1940 when he began stockpiling arms. The loss of control would signal increased violence in society and eventually lead to his assassination and the dissolution of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The organic crisis that would engulf Egypt in the years to come thus meant that the Brotherhood's ideological and political leadership failed. Although the ideology was not divisive it was nevertheless invariably elitist and reformist rather than revolutionary. Understood through a Gramscian point of view it can be discerned that Banna's counter-hegemonic strategy was incapable of creating a sustainable national-popular will. This failure stemmed not as much from the ideology considering that many within the ranks of the organisation were supportive of forming alliances so as to displace the existing hegemonic forces. Rather, it originated with the non-inclusive political leadership of the group that sought to reform state and society to an Islamic ideal through a vanguard that preserved the status quo. Banna's activity during this period suggests that the organisation would likely have engaged in restorative changes to the system indicative of passive revolution. The ineffective political leadership of the Brotherhood in developing

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[536] Ibid., 45

crucially important alliances that satisfied the intersectional interests of society would eventually succumb it to heightened pressure and exacerbate revolutionary efforts to displace the colonial-monarchic bloc. It would equally contribute to the aggravation of the on going organic crisis in Egypt that would drag out until the interventionist Caesarism of Nasser and the Revolutionary Command Council staged a revolutionary coup.

4.6. Organic Crisis, Insurrection and Makings of The National-Popular Bloc

The wartime period produced a boom in industrial employment that nevertheless would be short lived and rapidly dissipate post-1945 due to a lack of demand and the increased mechanisation of industries. The failure of the Egyptian economic system to meet the basic demands of workers further exacerbated the existing imbalance between the exponential influx of rural labourers on the one hand and the increasing scarcity of new employment opportunities on the other.[537] For instance, Joel Beinin, a leading authority on labour movements in Egypt, describes the growth of industrial capitalism in Egypt during this period as failing to provide any modicum of hope to the proletariat for liberation. Beinin goes as far as to argue that industrial capitalism contributed to porous work conditions, deteriorating malnutrition levels, illiteracy rates and deplorable living conditions.[538] In fact, the pseudo-capitalist system advocated by the colonial-monarchic bloc did very little to alleviate feudal conditions and hence severely restricted available avenues for recourse against hardship endured by the proletariat. To disrupt the hegemonic bloc, the proletariat thus took to carrying out strikes. The amalgamation of these conditions signalled in an organic crisis and the makings of a national-popular bloc that actively sought to contest hegemony in Egypt. Predictably, the embryonic national-popular bloc represented a poorly organised and highly fragmented collection of loose

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[537] De Smet, Brecht. *A Dialectical Pedagogy of Revolt: Gramsci, Vygotsky, and the Egyptian Revolution.* Leiden: Brill, 2015. Pg. 154. Print.
[538] Beinin, J. and Zachary Lockman. *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam and the Egyptian Working Class 1882-1954.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. Print.

alliances between the likes of the industrial bourgeoisie, various independent economic actors, factions from the Muslim Brotherhood and the 'new' effendiya.[539]

For its part, the effendiya, while not a social force by or in itself, constituted an important element of the national-popular bloc.[540] The etymology of the term effendi, which can be traced to Greek origins, originally conveyed the meaning of 'master, seigneur' and was therefore primarily attributed as a title for dignitaries.[541] Yet, at the turn of the 20th century in Egypt, the effendiya came to more closely resemble a social category, not of dignitaries, but of urbanised individuals with a foreign education belonging to the nascent middle class.[542] It would not however be apropos to describe the effendiya strictly in terms of an economic class given that the emerging middle class in Egypt during this time consisted of a diverse collection of groups from across the sociocultural spectrum. Instead, the effendiya were evocative of the growing cultural divide between the *mutarbashun* (tarboosh-wearers') and *mu'ammamun* (turban-wearers').[543] Representative of the former, the effendiya held secular views, often spoke foreign languages, were driven by social status and sought to incorporate foreign ideas pertaining to modernity into Egyptian society. By contrast, the latter constituted those who were more traditional in their ideology and approach to culture and society. The *mu'ammamun* preferred to undertake religious based Azhari education, were less inclined to seek out bureaucratic careers and maintained an outlook consistent with Egyptian society prior to the British occupation of 1882.[544]

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[539] Effendiya or effendis denotes a sociological conceptual category constituting cultural status derived from categories pertaining to dress, manner, formal education (western) and occasionally occupational status within the state bureaucracy. See: Ryzova, Lucie 125.

[540] De Smet, Brecht. *A Dialectical Pedagogy of Revolt: Gramsci, Vygotsky, and the Egyptian Revolution.* Leiden: Brill, 2015. Pg. 155. Print.

[541] Ryzova, Lucie. "Egyptianizing Modernity through the "New Effendiya." *Re-envisioning Egypt 1919-1952.* Ed. Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy J. Johnson and Barak A. Salmoni. Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 2012. Print.

[542] Ibid.,

[543] Ibid., 129.

[544] Ibid.,

The growing discord between the two middle class groupings was accompanied by the rise of nationalist fervour aimed at guarding Egypt against the perils of colonialism. The effendiya, predominantly of a provincial and rural background[545], came to resent the British for occupying well-paying careers and positions of prestige. The effendiya experience and exposure to Cairene high society would place them in the presence of the rich and powerful yet confine them to remaining poor and miserable men of a middle class background.[546] The nationalist movement for independence following the First World War eventually created an opening for many of the effendiya to transition into positions of prominence following official independence in 1923.[547] During this period, the *mu'ammamum* lost further clout with the emergence of the Wafd movement – a nationalistic and liberal minded political alliance between the landed gentry and the effendiya.[548] The appeal of the movement gained traction due to its pursuit to carve out a national identity unique to Egyptians alone.[549] Under the leadership of Saad Zaghloul,[550] the Wafd successfully drafted a constitution for a post-colonial Egypt helping the movement catapult itself into the largest political party in Egypt following the 1923 parliamentary elections.

The ensuing power triangle between the Wafd, the monarchy and British residency would, over the course of the next decade and a half, undo the party. The acquisition of political power forced the Wafd to dial down their anti-colonial vitriol, tolerate the foreign presence and acquiesce to incoming King Farouk's treaty with the British in 1936. The Wafd's relaxing of its anti-colonial agenda, which had helped vault it into

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[545] Though the effendiya were urban and worked as professionals and civil servants they were the sons of rural landowners, mostly middle but sometimes large, and maintained ties to their rural beginnings.

[546] Ibid.,

[547] Dalacoura, Katerina. *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights*: *Implications for International Relations*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007. Pg. 98. Print.

[548] Ibid., 98.

[549] The Wafd had been more powerful up until this point that the Brotherhood ever had. The organisation's failures to actualise liberalism contributed to the rising influence of the Brotherhood.

[550] Zaghloul was influenced by the liberal-minded Mohammad Abduh and sought to advance his vision of striking a harmonious balance between modernity and Islam.

power in the first instance, while detrimental to its popular support was not however the party's most glaring misstep. Rather, it was the failure to deliver on economic and land reforms that most crippled support for the party's agenda of liberal and democratic reform. Given that the composition of the Wafd consisted predominantly of the landed gentry and an urban elite (formerly the effendiya) that retained strong rural ties, it was not in the ideal interests of the party to undertake sweeping economic or land reform. The social reformers of the Wafd, who sought to utilise their western education, mannerisms and ideas to establish an Egyptian national identity into one synonymous with secular liberalism fell drastically short thereby creating an opening for alternative ideologies.[551] The liberally influenced social programmes of the power triangle, in particular efforts to improve literacy rates, access to higher education and university, while successful, were negatively impacted by the shortcomings of the economic system. The deterioration of economic conditions, as discussed earlier, contributed to the growing displacement of the middle class as well as the new generation of effendiya[552] – who emerged more so than ever as a 'have-not' social grouping.[553]

To return to our discussion of the organic crisis that emerged following the Second World War, it becomes increasingly apparent that the aforementioned conjunctural developments contributed to the fragmented affair that was the national-popular bloc. The bloc's lack of ideological cohesiveness and its disoriented war of manoeuvre strategy were dealt a significant blow by the Brotherhood's on and off participation. This was particularly debilitating given that the Brotherhood's success in supplanting the Wafd as the most organised social force stemmed from its extensive grassroots reach and ability to mobilise youth.[554] In fact, the breadth of the organisation's activities extended from

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[551] Ryzova, Lucie. "Egyptianizing Modernity through the "New Effendiya." *Re-envisioning Egypt 1919-1952*. Ed. Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy J. Johnson and Barak A. Salmoni. Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 2012. Pg. 128. Print.

[552] It is this new 'have-not' effendiya that would comprise the key faction of the subaltern alongside peasants, farmers and the workers unions.

[553] Ibid.,

[554] The Wafd did not emphasise mobilising the youth as part of its strategy. The elite and landowning composition of the Wafd meant that its interests did not lie in mobilising the youth.

providing access to education, healthcare and welfare to organising sporting and charity events such as building mosques. In addition, the organisation was also actively involved in matters of media and political lobbying.[555] Thus, the non-committal stance of the largest and most organised civil society organisation proved to be a significant impediment to the prosperity of the national-popular bloc. The Brotherhood's official policy of advocating a war of position strategy was however not the sole reason for its sporadic participation in the bloc. Rather it was the combination of its paradoxical rejection of nationalism and its apprehensive approach towards subaltern self-determination that prevented it from fully committing to the national-popular bloc.[556]

Although the Brotherhood's anti-colonial stance was even more pronounced than that of the Wafd, the organisation's brain trust considered the troubled socioeconomic atmosphere of Egypt not as a result of a political economy dependent on capitalism but rather as a by-product of cultural and religious foreignness.[557] Hence, capitalism was regarded as a foreign instrument used by the colonial-monarchic bloc to subordinate the masses.[558] The espousal of this pre-capitalist ideology led the organisation towards a path where it sought to safeguard Egypt's pre-capitalist social forms by lobbying for the nationalisation of natural resources and participating in the trade union movement to help facilitate land reform and labour legislation.[559] The Brotherhood's political approach to addressing modern forms of exploitation and alienation revolved primarily around debate, elections and meritocracy thereby structurally placing the organisation within modern lines in spite of its pre-capitalist ideology.[560] This political platform was however hindered by its underwhelming support for the self-determination of subaltern classes, namely the workers movements. While the Brotherhood called for a state-led economy

[555] Dalacoura, Katerina. *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights*: *Implications for International Relations*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007. Print.
[556] De Smet, Brecht. *A Dialectical Pedagogy of Revolt: Gramsci, Vygotsky, and the Egyptian Revolution*. Leiden: Brill, 2015. Pg. 151-157. Print.
[557] Ibid., 151.
[558] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973. Pg. 220-2. Print.
[559] Dalacoura, Katerina. *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights*: *Implications for International Relations*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007. Print.
[560] Ibid.,

and an interest-free Islamic financial system to spur industrial growth, it did not extend support for an autonomous workers movement nor did it participate in strikes or demonstrations against locally owned companies.[561] By rejecting an autonomous workers movement and only intervening against foreign businesses, the Brotherhood's role in the workers movement proved detrimental and in many ways represented the continuation of colonial-monarchic policies.[562]

The Brotherhood's effort to combat colonialism paradoxically steered its strategy towards national lines despite its official rejection of nationalism as a foreign ideology. That is not to say that the desire for a caliphate and united *umma* did not constitute goals but rather that both had to be subordinated for the immediate and foreseeable future. While the official strategy of the organisation constituted the gradual reform of society, factions within the organisation equally sought the pursuit of an immediate Islamic state. Moreover, the failures of the liberalism project in Egypt created a precarious socioeconomic environment wherein the spread of conservative Islamic sentiment presented a popular alternative. In fact, the rise of Islamic feeling was such that even prominent organic [563] intellectuals like Taha Husayn and Husayn Haykal had to incorporate Islam into their writings – an ominous sign that Islam's emergence as a political force within Egypt.[564] The inability of the organisation to agree upon a protracted strategy, especially following the assassination of Hasan al-Banna signalled the onset of an internal crisis over strategy. The organisation's rise to prominence meant that it had to reconcile its original aim of spreading the call of Islam with the call for political activity especially in light of growing support for a more direct approach in line with the war of manoeuvre strategy of the national-popular bloc.

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[561] De Smet, Brecht. *A Dialectical Pedagogy of Revolt: Gramsci, Vygotsky, and the Egyptian Revolution.* Leiden: Brill, 2015. Print.
[562] Ibid.,
[563] It can be argued that the emergence of Islam contributed to the shift of these two intellectuals from traditional to organic. In the 1920s both had appealed to the elites whereas in the 1930s they transitioned their work to appeal to the masses. See C.D. Smith *The Crisis of Orientation: The shift of Egyptian intellectuals to Islamic subjects in the 1930s.* 382-410.
[564] Dalacoura, Katerina. *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights: Implications for International Relations.* 3rd Edition. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007.103-4. Print.

The appointment of Hudabyi as General Guide represented a deliberate attempt to repair the public image and perception of the Brotherhood as a violent movement. Internally however, the appointment served to increase fragmentation between the reformist camp and the more radical elements of Nizam al-Khass. Hudaybi publicly supported the pro-British king and opposed any notion of revolutionary action aimed at overthrowing the regime.[565] Furthermore, his call to dissolve the secret apparatus would go unheeded, as would the instruction to refrain from participating in revolutionary action against the regime.[566]The intermittent participation of the Brotherhood in the national-popular bloc was evocative of the narrow and seemingly irreconcilable goals of various social actors loosely aligned under the desire of toppling the colonial-monarchic bloc in Egypt.[567] In spite of its lack of experience, organisation and general direction, the protests, strikes and riots undertaken by the national-popular bloc produced sufficient social unrest so as to disrupt the regime come January 1952. Yet, instead of being able to capitalise on these developments, the Brotherhood's noncommittal stance on empowering the subaltern meant that the national-popular bloc was unable to depose the regime. The ensuing stalemate created a precarious situation that would ultimately pave the path for Caesarism and passive revolution in Egypt.

4.7. Passive Revolution and Nasserism

The 1952 Free Officers Movement that culminated in the rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser is predominantly framed as either a coup or a revolution. However, given the contradictory results it produced, it is beneficial to assess the phenomenon through an alternative lens. The events of July 23, 1952 were preceded by a prolonged struggle between the shoddy national-popular bloc and the colonial-monarchic regime that had come to a relative standstill. It was only with the intervention of the charismatic Nasser and the Free

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[565] It is important to note that the risk to openly take a stance against the colonial-monarchic bloc presented far too great a risk given the advances the Brotherhood had made in establishing itself as a viable counter-force.

[566] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Print.

[567] Notably, the peasantry was glaring absent from the national-popular bloc.

Officers that King Farouk would abdicate his throne and the old assemblage of power would fall. The Muslim Brotherhood with whom the Free Officers maintained an amicable relationship supported the intervention of Nasser. The belief amongst the Brotherhood was that the elimination of the faltering hegemonic bloc would finally create an environment wherein they would have the inexorable opportunity to participate in political life without fear of imprisonment or state retribution. The changing political configuration in turn would enable the organisation to capitalise on the socio-political inroads they laboriously carved out in opposition to the state during the past decade. Much to the dismay of the Brothers, Gamal Abdel Nasser sought to move in a different direction in his quest to consolidate power and address the plethora of issues facing the nascent state.

The Nasserist intervention produced a phenomenon that was neither wholly coup nor revolution. The contradictions in the political and social strategy of Nasser that surfaced can be understood through Gramsci's concept of Caesarism. An understanding along the theoretical lines of Gramsci can prove seminal in explaining the concrete realities that unfolded and have invariably contributed to shaping the reproduction of relations for the last several decades. Again, to reiterate, the absence of intervention in a political stalemate between two parties that are unable to reconcile their differences can prove detrimental to their existence and the severe degradation of relations. In such an instance, the intervention of a third party so as to prevent the abovementioned outcome denotes Caesarism. This third party tends to emerge in the form of a charismatic leader though it may occur in the form of a political party. The outcomes from the intervention can accordingly be measured through a number of dialectic relationships. These consist of progressive-regressive, restoration-revolution and qualitative-quantitative.

The various contradictions present in the Nasserist intervention can perhaps be alternatively understood through the concept of Caesarism so as to shed light on the nuanced nature of the phenomenon as neither wholly a coup nor a revolution. For instance, Nasser's intervention can be understood as progressive in the sense that it stood in support of the masses against the colonial-monarchic bloc. It was therefore a bottom-

up process that through its nationalist programme promoted the general interests of the subaltern classes. This was reflected in Nasser's policies to enact land reform measures, to raise the living wages of workers and to focus on improving the educational and welfare system. Yet, at the same time these reforms would prove not to be wholly emancipatory for the subaltern in the long term. This was due in large part to the fact that the Nasserist intervention redirected the revolutionary process towards authoritarian control instead of allowing the national-popular bloc to organically come into existence. The decision to seize authoritarian control denoted a contradiction especially given that Nasser had formed a cult of personality and was widely supported.[568] As such, the decision to consolidate authoritarian control teetered towards the restorative end of the restoration-revolution spectrum.

The measures taken to reinforce the role of the state were accompanied by qualitative changes to the social formations that can be simultaneously described as revolutionary and contradictory. It was revolutionary in that Nasser brought to Egypt for the first time civil and social institutions. These ranged from mass trade unions and professional syndicates to organisations specifically for women and children as well as schools and universities.[569] At the same time these qualitative changes were contradictory due to the fact the State tightly controlled and regulated activity within this newly created sphere. The contradictions of the Nasserist intervention of 1952 and the subsequent policies it produced can partially be explained by the looming economic factors that accompanied the formation of the new state.

One of the main underlying implications of the successful intervention was that it gave Egypt exclusive control over its economic policy and decisions.[570] The reality however, at least in the initial year, was that there was no semblance of an economic plan let alone a direction apart from the notion that the state ought to assume leadership in modernising

[568] De Smet, Brecht. *A Dialectical Pedagogy of Revolt: Gramsci Vygotsky and the Egyptian Revolution.* Leiden: Brill, 2015. Print.
[569] Ibid., 170.
[570] Hussein, Mahmoud. *Class Conflict in Egypt: 1954-1970.* London: Monthly Review Press, 1973. (Wahba 1994)

Egypt.[571] Upon assuming power, the Nasser regime inherited a relatively weak public sector that it moved to repair in coordination with private sector industrialists. To this extent, the enactment of Law 178, otherwise known as the land reform law, was evocative of the contradictory measures taken by the Nasser regime. While the law alleviated the immediate conditions of peasants and workers its underlying focus was to address the industrialisation of Egypt. Hence, it stipulated that agricultural surpluses from the countryside were to be re-invested so as to facilitate urban growth. The initial consequences were two-fold in that the reforms only marginally improved the livelihood of peasants and industrial workers whilst at the same time dealing a blow to the clout of merchants and landlords.[572]

The micromanagement and 'policing' of the industrialists by Nasser would draw their ire and impair the partnership so that by 1956 it would reach an impasse. These developments however coincided with Nasser's victory regarding the Suez Canal against colonial and foreign powers. The victory would bring with it pageantry and unprecedented support for Nasser both at home and across the region. The Nasser regime would capitalise on this opportunity by immersing itself deeper into the economic arena by sequestering foreign capital, nationalising much of the banking system and issuing five year economic plans.[573] The sedimentation of the state and its presence thus came to mean that the contradictions that accompanied the Caesarist intervention of 1952 would come to resemble a passive revolution. That is to suggest that the progressive and qualitative measures enacted to promote the interests of the subaltern were tempered by the actions of the state in taking a top-down approach towards facilitating change and eliminating structural dependence of the economy. This was exacerbated by the pervasive presence and guidance of the state within the newly created social institutions that sought

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[571] Wahba, Mourad M. *The Role of the State in the Egyptian Economy: 1945-1981.* Reading: Ithica Press, 1994.

[572] Abdel-Fadil, Mahmoud. *The Political Economy of Nasserism: A Study in Employment and Income Distribution Policies in Urban Egypt, 1952-72.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975. Print.

[573] Rucco, Roberto. *Gramsci in Cairo: neoliberal authoritarianism, passive revolution and failed hegemony in Egypt under Mubarak, 1991-2010.* PhD Thesis: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012. Pg. 102-105. Print.

to promote civil society. Ultimately, the military's foray into statecraft would take on a form that can be described in the following ways: it drew in the subaltern classes but failed to substantively empower them, it created a new class in the form of the military bourgeoisie and it produced a new category of intellectuals that uncritically accepted and spread its ideology as common sense. The end result thus came to represent a passive revolution wherein the capitalist forms of production shifted from one authoritarian form to another.

The widespread popular consent of Nasser would propel anti-Islamist fervour across the country and enable the charismatic leader to enact a set of reforms pertaining to the historic social institution of Al-Azhar in 1961. The reforms proposed significant changes that in effect altered the very composition of the institution. First, the budget of the university and its charitable contributions (*wafq)* were brought about state control. The change meant that professors and imams came to constitute government employees that received their salary from the state. Furthermore, the reforms altered the internal election system of the university by stipulating that the grand sheikh would become a presidential appointee. For added measure over control of its content the reforms altered the Islamic model of the university by forcing it to implement western styles degrees. Within two years of the reforms being implemented Al-Azhar came to denote a state institution firmly under the influence and watchful eye of the Nasserist state.[574]

4.8. The Failing Political and Ideological Leadership of The Muslim Brotherhood

There is a wealth of analysis concerning the state-led socioeconomic impact during the aforementioned period. The period is unequivocally important in formatively shaping the modern institutions as well as the terrain on which conjunctural moments transpire. Yet, while accounts on this period are invariably important in understanding contemporaneous socioeconomic and political relations, it is pertinent that we do not reduce analysis down to a wholly state-centric understanding. Hence, instead of rehashing such lines of enquiry, the aim of this section is to consider the wider implications of the

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[574] Morsy, Ahmed. "An independent voice for Egypt's Al-Azhar." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.* July 13 2011. Web.

aforementioned period in relation to the cultivation of worldviews by political and ideological leadership. The utilisation of a Gramscian rhythm of thought is again beneficial in that it enables us to theoretically put forth an alternative understanding of concrete realities that must be explained. The emphasis is thus to illuminate the central function of ideology as something that both shapes *and* is shaped by the reproduction of relations.

The failure of the Brotherhood to unite the national-popular bloc during the crisis of authority that preceded Nasserist rule requires explanation from an ideological perspective, as does the inability of the organisation to forge a sustainable alliance with the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) headed by the Free Officers. It is helpful here to draw back to the foundational principles of the organisation so that we may adequately address the aforementioned points. The existence and purpose of the Brotherhood was described by Banna in the following way: "a salafi call, a sunni approach, a sufi truth, a political institution, an athletic group, a scientific and cultural society, an economic organisation and a social idea."[575] The portrayal of the organisation in the abovementioned way was a direct result of historical circumstances, which dictated the social environment at the time. Namely, the dissolution of the caliphate brought with it widespread debate as to the role of Islam in society. The intellectual framework that therefore shaped the core principles of the organisation thus comprised an inclusive approach that sought an inclusive approach to unite all Muslims under the umbrella of an Islamic association.[576]

The registration of the Brotherhood as a charitable organisation geared it towards exclusively spreading a message of Islamic unification vis-à-vis social structures rather than through engagement in politics. The *salafi* and *sufi* elements in the abovementioned quote denoted completely distinct ideas from what they would evolve into under the

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[575] Al-Banna, Hassan. *The Complete Works of Imam Hasan Al-Banna.*

[576] Tammam, Hossam. *The Salafization of the Muslim Brother: The Erosion of the Fundamental Hypothesis and the Rising of Salafism within the Muslim Brotherhood: The Paths and the Repercussions of Change.* Alexandria: Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2011. Pg. 7. Print.

Sadat years. Salafism neither denoted sectarian disagreement within Islam nor did it promote divisiveness by rejecting the ideas and beliefs of those that fell outside of the religion. Instead, it ventured to comprehensively reconcile differences between Islamic sects and to extend the reach and appeal of Islam across all aspects of society.[577]

Correspondingly, the *sufi* element served as a vital component of the auspicious beginnings of the organisation. It espoused and centralised the role of social activism whilst shunning involvement in divisive dogmatic debates. The *sufi* component promoted the spirituality necessary for the early success of spreading the message of Islam by strengthening bonds of fellowship. When taking into consideration Banna's early education and exposure to *Sufism* it can be said that the incorporation of Sufism was wholly driven by ideological and religious belief rather than it being some sort of tool explicitly utilised for the sole purpose of actualising societal gains. In fact, there was a fundamental belief that Sufism ought to serve as a spiritual guiding force for all Muslims.[578] It was therefore no surprise that the educational and cultural curricula of the Brotherhood consisted in considerable part of *Sufi* writings and books. As Hossam Tammam points out, even the chief position of general guide was sensitively crafted to reflect the spiritual authority of the position rather than connote a competitive position of leadership.[579] However, the Sufi elements that had played such an immeasurable role in catapulting the organisation to early success were to rapidly come undone at the seams by the social and political implications surrounding colonialism and the organisation's impending foray into politics.

It would be erroneous to consider the shift away from Sufi elements as wholly reactionary to the social impositions posed by colonialism. The complexities and contradictions that arose out of the original ideological and intellectual framework advanced by the Brotherhood can equally help us to uncover the fragmentation of ideology within the organisation. The initial period wherein the intellectual framework

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[577] Ibid., 8.
[578] Ibid., 9.
[579] Ibid.,

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sought to articulate an all-encompassing vision of Islam can be understood as the organisation's attempt to produce organic intellectuals. The decision to refrain from divisive and dogmatic debates was an explicit attempt to advance the universality of Islam as the articulating principle of the organisation. In this sense, the intellectual framework of the organisation was geared towards developing organic intellectuals with the aim of transcending social differences between Muslims.

In the time span where the *Da'wa* constituted the uncontested strategy of the organisation, the Brotherhood was able to prosperously unite its membership and organise its social, economic and political awareness. There was a deliberate attempt to maintain historical continuity with the caliphate model, albeit in a markedly more religious rendering. During this period the reproduction of ideas could therefore be said to be unrestrained by class allegiances and therefore relatively organic. Social and charitable works further enabled the organisation to organically expand its social base so as to ideationally complement its intellectual framework. However, the growing pervasiveness of colonialism (both at home and abroad in Palestine) alongside the failing liberalism project of the Wafd would create a social environment that fostered fragmentation within the organisation and across society. The Brotherhood's abstention from divisive and dogmatic issues could no longer remain the norm especially given that its overarching aim was to translate its social gains into an Islamic state.

The organisation had been able to advance its ideology by primarily focusing on spreading 'the call' as a civil society organisation. Its growing popularity and larger role within society however meant that it would have to engage more deeply in politics[580] if it sought to retain its gain and play a formative role in shaping the future of Egypt. Hence, the intellectual framework that had guided the initial ideological and social activity would have to develop additional layers in addressing the political complexities of the superstructure in Egypt. The contradiction thus was that while the organisation produced organic intellectuals it did so within the limited capacity of its original objective of spreading the *Da'wa.* It's foray into politics presented a considerably different and

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[580] This is in addition to its armed resistance against colonial forces and in Palestine.

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complex reality. On the one hand its ideological strategy was influential enough to force intellectuals such as Tanya Husayn and Husayn Haykal to acknowledge Islam in their writings, while on the other hand, it was inherently confined in its ability to secure sustainable alliances with social groups that fell outside of an Islamic orientation.

There are two noteworthy considerations regarding the aforementioned development. The changing social circumstances produced fragmentation with the organisation over its direction. The debate over whether to fully engage in politics or to remain a solely social organisation widely divided the membership. The divisiveness over the strategic direction irreparably fractured the organisation and led to immeasurable losses with the arrival of the Nasser regime. The inability to develop intellectuals capable of organising the social, political and economic programme of the group let alone across society can partially be explained vis-à-vis the contradictions between the organisation's intellectual framework and its war of position strategy. The war of position strategy, or protracted effort to win cultural hegemony prior to assuming state power signalled one particularly noticeable red flag. The strategy entailed reforming society through restorative and regressive measures as described in Banna's letter to King Farouk. There was little to no indication that it entailed creating progressive structures and institutions. The strategy outlined the reform of existing governmental and social structures so as to consolidate them into a stronger Islamic variant. This was suggestive of a pre-modern continuity to be carried out through a narrow top-down approach aimed at reforming the relations of reproduction. Hence, although the social progress made vis-à-vis its intellectual framework helped in loosening the chains of some common sense conceptions and worldviews regarding Islam, the war of position strategy failed to adequately address the material interests and needs of subaltern classes. The failures of uniting and leading the national-popular bloc were rooted in these contradictions and ultimately contributed to their inability to foster sustainable alliances with liberals, the effendiya and the subaltern masses.

The internal fragmentation that began under the guidance of Banna would come to a boiling point in the years following his assassination. The heightened clandestine activity of the Brotherhood's armed wing brought with it negative consequences for the

organisation. While the armed activity of the secret apparatus had been tolerated as a form of resistance against colonial forces, its expansion into assassination plots against prominent Egyptians would bring with it widespread negative consequences. The convening of the RCC thus came at a time when the Brotherhood was reeling both internally and in its popular perception. The appointment of Hudaybi as general guide was made with the explicit aim of improving the negative perceptions of the organisation that had started to spread across society. Hudabyi however moved to disband the secret apparatus and distance the Brotherhood away from political engagement.[581] His attempts however would go unheeded and result in further internal fragmentation.[582]

In turn, the negotiations between the RCC and Hudabyi would prove perilous for the future of the Brotherhood. Hudabyi's failure to declare his support for the revolution, his disagreement over the land reform bill and his inability to disband the secret apparatus would draw the ire of Nasser and the Free Officers.[583] The mediation efforts by Sayyid Qutb between the two sides would put forth an alternative option to resolve the dispute. The proposal for a liberation rally by Qutb called for the introduction of an Islamic programme that would, under the leadership of Nasser, educate society to live in accordance with Islamic law.[584] As the rally was to constitute an Islamic organisation Qutb proposed that the Brotherhood be absorbed into the new formation on the grounds that there would not be a need for additional Islamic organisations. While Nasser and the RCC were amenable to the plan, Hudabyi rejected the idea on the grounds that the Brotherhood should not be incorporated into the structure of an external political force.[585] The mounting hostilities between Hudabyi and the RCC would reflect back into the

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[581] Hudabyi's insistence that the organisation should cease political activity and return to social outreach was accompanied by his declaration that the Brotherhood did not entail a political party. The organisation would vote on the latter issue and confirm its status as a political party. It would in accordance with the government's demand formally register itself as a political party.

[582] The feud between Hudaybi and al-Sanadi over the disbanding of the secret apparatus would prompt supporters of each side to reach out to Nasser to resolve the dispute. See: Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Print.

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[584] Ibid.,

[585] Ibid., 456

organisation by heightening the discord between factions. The ensuing university campus clashes in 1954 between Brothers and the failed assassination attempt of Nasser would lead Nasser to officially ban the organisation and arrest Hudaybi, Qutb[586] and thousands of other members. The failed political and ideological leadership of the organisation would mark the onset of its repression at the hands of the state and the loss of social clout it had accumulated.

4.9. Conclusion

The outcomes of conjunctural events during this formative period of history in Egypt must be approached dialectically. The socio-political environment that enabled the Brotherhood to establish itself as the most organised counter-force in society was in itself influential in contributing to the alteration in conditions that paved the path for the Nasserist state to emerge. The emergence of the Nasserist state brought with it a series of complexities and contradictions that in many ways continue to impact the socio-political and economic milieu in Egypt. The reverberations from the institutions and structures developed under Nasser influence the reciprocal nature of interactions between social forces and the subaltern. In addition, the developments during this period of time facilitated fundamental changes to the organic system.

The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood brought with it an ideological programme that was shaped by the debates of the time. The early intellectual framework and social outreach strategy was geared towards dislodging the colonial-monarchic bloc. The early success of the organisation helped to facilitate the abovementioned reality. However, in doing so it exposed itself to a volatile political terrain that it had little experience in addressing. The strategy to engage in political activity led to a series of complications and contradictions within the organisation. First, the intellectual framework it created proved inadequate in addressing the demands and divisiveness that came with political engagement. In turn, this reality was reflected back into the organisation due to the fragmentation it created.

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[586] Qutb joined the organisation in 1953 following the disputes between the RCC and the Brotherhood. There was a convergence of thought between Hudaybi and Qutb that shall be addressed in the following chapter.

The call to spread Islam through the gradual social reform of society was therefore counterbalanced by the political necessities that accompanied the crisis of authority within Egypt.

The failing hegemony of the colonial-monarchic bloc sowed the seeds for change. The inability of the Brotherhood to capitalise on this reality stemmed from maintaining a political programme that sought to restore old forms of governance that ought to be regarded as regressive. The belief in this strategy brought with it a certain unwillingness to empower and support the interests of the subaltern. As such, the organisation only intermittingly and strategically participated in the national-popular bloc's war of manoeuvre strategy against the colonial bloc. The lack of commitment to revolutionary measures on the part of the most organised counter-force in society meant that the organic crisis would lead to an impasse.

The ensuing stalemate was only resolved with the Caesarist intervention of Nasser and the Free Officers. The intervention initially provided the Brotherhood another opportunity to participate in shaping the new Egypt. The irreconcilable differences between Hudabyi's and Nasser and within the Brotherhood hence led to a detrimental outcome for the Brotherhood. In turn, Nasser engaged in a series of revolutionary changes that were bottom-up, progressive and qualitative. The changes offered a glimpse of hope that the polity might be empowered through the mass creation of social institutions and land reform. This was however contradicted by the policies Nasser enacted to develop and modernise the economy. His success against colonial forces brought with it a cult of personality that did not necessitate the dictatorial presence the state came to assume across the base and superstructure. As a whole, the Nasserist intervention and development of the state thus constituted a passive revolution.

It was only with the staggering of the economy and the disastrous failures of war in 1967 that the weak hegemony of the Nasserist state would start to crack. The death of Nasser and the ascension of Sadat to power would bring with it a deflected passive revolution. The fortification of structures and institutions that Nasser developed for modern Egypt

thus came to represent the field for interactions, power dynamics and reproduction of relations. The unforeseen passing of Nasser further meant that Sadat would have to counter-balance Nasserists with another social force if he was to consolidate power. This coupled with the relative failures of pan-Arabism; the 1967 and 1973 wars and Sadat's capital accumulation strategy would create an opening for the resurgence of the Muslim Brotherhood – who by this time had reconstructed and fortified their ideological and political strategy whilst in prison.

Chapter V: Al Da'wa and The Reconstructed Intellectual Framework (1976-1981)

5.1. Introduction

The death of Nasser, a spiralling economy and the immeasurable blows to the morale of the Egyptian people driven by the events of 1967 and 1973 signalled an impending shift in the state of social conditions. The discursive chains of ideas of the Nasser era that sought to reproduce social and material relations through pan-Arab and socialist ideology had suffered an immense set back. In other words, the social trenches and fortifications[587] that Nasser sought to create through the introduction of mass social institutions posed significant complications for the incoming Anwar Sadat. These structures had been dominated by Nasserists and hence would prove to be a thorn in his side in his quest to consolidate power. Hence, Anwar Sadat, the self-proclaimed 'believer' president strategically moved to free imprisoned Brothers and allowed those in exile to return to Egypt. The objective as such was to cautiously let the Brotherhood act as a counterweight to Nasserists, secularists and leftists.

The changing social environment marked the re-emergence of Islam wherein it was framed as a means to reinvigorate waning social morale. Again, these changes cannot be said to owe to any single development but rather to the complex and combined failures of the discursive chains produced by the node of Nasserism in reproducing social relations. The dominant ideas of Arab socialism had simply become less able to recruit people across the vast theatre of consent constituted by the superstructure. Along with the organic developments of 1967 and 1973, the inability of these ideas was heightened by their inability to reproduce labour and material conditions of production. That is to say that the dominant ideas and elements of Arab socialism were no longer sufficient in being

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[587] Such were they that Nasser even came to 'control' leisure time through his immensely popular radio station the Voice of Arabs which was introduced in 1953 and progressed to broadcast fifteen hours per day by 1962 and almost 24 hours by the 1970s. See Cull, Nicholas, Holbrook David and David Welch. *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present.* Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2003. Pg. 15-17. Print.

able to recruit society to author its narrative and provide consent for it. In essence, this was concurrently reflected in the failure of Nasser's mass social institutions, which constitute the superstructure and act as the theatre of consent.[588]

The decisions enacted by Sadat to merely alter the dynamics within certain social institutions (namely universities) cannot be said to denote the progressive and qualitative changes that are required to fortify the structures of civil society. The sparse structural changes put forth hence marked a deflection of passive revolution insofar as that Sadat was unable to absorb his opponents – industrialists, capitalists, Islamists and so forth. The deflected nature of his passive revolution was thus accompanied by the opening up of Egypt's economy (*Infitah)*. The opening marked a capitalist accumulation strategy that did not sufficiently redistribute wealth nor progressively alter the social relations of reproduction and thereby reduced the strategy to a deformation of hegemonic politics.[589]

The capitalist accumulation strategy enabled the wide bureaucratic state and existing social groupings including the Brotherhood to exert significant influence over the economy. For their part, the Muslim Brotherhood was a beneficiary of the capitalist accumulation strategy. The 1954 imprisonment was accompanied by the expulsion of thousands of other Brothers to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This was partially due to the influence of Osman Ahmad Osman,[590] a multimillionaire power broker that was educated and influenced in part by Hasan Al-Banna. Osman, who dropped his membership after graduating from university would go on to become the successful head of contracting companies across the region. He would in 1954 convince Nasser that the Muslim Brotherhood would present less of an impediment to his regime if they were to be offered

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[588] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections form the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Pg. 377. Print.
[589] Thomas, Peter D. *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism* . Leiden : Brill , 2009. Print.
[590] Osman was also arguably the second most powerful individual during the Sadat era.

well-paid work opportunities in the Saudi and Kuwaiti branches of his contracting companies.[591]

During their exile in the Middle East, many Brothers would come to be influenced by salafi trends; a fact alluded to in the previous chapter. These trends would transform into beliefs and as Hossam Tammam points out it would have a marked impact away from the *sufi* elements that had initially constructed its call:

> On the ideological level, there was an obvious change in the Brotherhood's overall paradigm that ruled for over half a century. Such a change distanced the group from an inclusive framework of arbitration to a *salafi* framework that gives priority to issues related to 'aqida purity and to all what that entails of disagreement and clashes between the different streams and ideologies, and the practices which are seen as disagreeing with Qur'an and sunna. This means that the Brothers who were always known to accept the different cultural components of society are today heading towards a total separation from the Brotherhood's heritage.[592]

The ideational complement of this ideological shift would take shape in the form of the organisation's close ties to the returning network of Islamic businessman, many of whom, at some point had belonged to the organisation. These men and their businesses would prosper with the opening of the economy under Sadat's *infitah*. The Islamic businesses that they set up, such as banks, investment and construction companies, provided the Brotherhood an important network. The networked relationships the Brotherhood maintained with these businesses and individuals provided an important facet of their ability to advance their ideological and political leadership as more complex than just

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[591] Beinin, Joel. "Political Islam and the New Global Economy: The Political Economy of Islamist Social Movements in Egypt and Turkey." *French and US Approaches to Understanding Islam* . France-Stanford Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, 2004. 1-51.
[592] Tammam, Hossam. "The Salafization of the Muslim Brother: The Erosion of the Fundamental Hypothesis and the Rising of Salafism within the Muslim Brotherhood: The Paths and Repercussions of Change." *Biblioteheca Alexandrina*, 2011. Pg. 40. Print.

being able to recruit 'the educated modern middle class.'[593] As Beinin points out, in Upper Egypt, these networks played an integral role in being about to "recruit and mobilise the poor, unemployed and private sector tradespeople and service workers."[594]

The core composition of the organisation would come to constitute a considerably stronger economic and political variant than the one that had been on the verge of being expunged in 1954. While this newly minted social formation would inevitably turn against the very state that had empowered it, it would along the way manage to firmly establish a framework for its ideological and political leadership – a formation that would remain relatively intact at least until the events of the uprisings of 2011. The political and ideological leadership was fortified on a number of levels. Firstly, it was aided by the fact that the *infitah* helped to strengthen an Islamic component that benefitted the Muslim Brotherhood. As pointed out by Joel Beinin and Uthman Ahmad Uthman, "eight of the eighteen families who dominated Egypt's private sector were affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood"[595] and a vast number of these families had private enterprises that were connected to society such as "real estate and currency speculation, which may have constituted as much as 40 per cent."[596] From the arrival of Hudabyi and followed by his successors in Umar Tilmisani and Mustafa Mashhur, the hierarchical structure of the Muslim Brotherhood as associated with landed families and old money.[597] It is arguably why Hudabyi had quarrelled against Nasser's land reform proposal of restricting land-ownership to 200 acres rather than the 500 that Hudabyi allegedly preferred.[598] These developments in turn led Robert Springborg to postulate that the leadership structure of

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[593] Beinin, Joel. "Political Islam and the New Global Economy: The Political Economy of Islamist Social Movements in Egypt and Turkey." *French and US Approaches to Understanding Islam* . France-Stanford Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, 2004. 1-51. Print.
[594] Ibid., 4.
[595] Ibid., 12.
[596] Uthman, Uthman Ahmad. *Safahat min tajribati* . Cairo : Maktab al-Misri al-Hadith , 1981. Pg. 359-364. Print.
[597] Imam, Samia Sa'id. *Man Yamluk Misr? Dirasa Tahliliyya li-usul Nukhbat al-infitah al-ijtima'iyya 1974-1980.* Cairo: Dar al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi, 1987. Pg. 280-309. Print.
[598] Khatab, Sayed. "Al-Hudaybi's Influence on the Development of Islamist Movements in Egypt." *The Muslim World* 91 (Fall 2001): 456. Print.

the Muslim Brotherhood upon its return was run by an *infitah* induced bourgeoisie that bought the organisation with its resources.[599]

This social formation would in time turn against the state that had permitted its return to politics. The factors owing to this can be attributed to the instability of social structures and the deflected passive revolution that failed to create a substantially new vision for the reproduction of social and material relations in Egypt. It equally owes to the volatility of the oil-based revenue that served as the underlying driver of this phase and of the neoliberal impositions placed on Egypt by the International Monetary Fund.[600] Yet, in spite of what would be its eventual economic decline, the organisation had by this time managed to sufficiently quell the internal fragmentation that had shaped its earlier existence. This was due to the fortification of internal structures[601] and the re-framing of

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[599] Springborg, Robert. *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1989. Pg. 236. Print.

[600] Beinin, Joel. "Political Islam and the New Global Economy: The Political Economy of Islamist Social Movements in Egypt and Turkey." *French and US Approaches to Understanding Islam* . France-Stanford Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, 2004. Pg. 6. Print.

[601] The information available on the recruitment policy of the Brotherhood, albeit limited, serves to highlight the highly selective and complex methods the Brotherhood has rigorously formalised as a result of recurring state repression. Initially, potential members tend to be hand picked, often at an early age, and on the basis of their piety – a process that can last upwards of a year. This drawn out process is followed by the recruit working towards becoming a *muhib* (follower) for a period that lasts between six months to four years. The phase of becoming a muhib involves a lengthy and drawn out educational process focused on improving one's morality. If a "follower" displays improvements and is deemed to be ready for the next stage, he is promoted to the position of *muayyad* (supporter) which lasts between one to three years.[601] During this stage of membership, the supporter is not permitted to vote but may participate in predisposed activities such as recruiting, preaching, and undertaking a rigorous memorization of the Quran and studying al-Banna's writings. If successful, the recruited member shall than proceed to become a *muntasib* (affiliated). This affiliation to the Brotherhood allows the recruit to engage in a series of activities tied to Ikhwan divisions such as those pertaining to labour unions, professional syndicates, and university unions. Upon satisfying the powers that be, the next stage towards becoming a full member is that of a *muntazim* (organizer). During this stage, the recruit in question is subjected to undertaking lower levels of leadership and is tested vigorously to ensure his loyalty. Tests of this manner usually involve Ikhwan impersonating state security in attempts to extract information out of the unaware recruit. If the recruit is successful in displaying his loyalty to the Brotherhood,

its intellectual framework. This was in turn aided by the ideational complement that came in the form of the networks the organisation had developed with the private Islamic companies that emerged following their return to Egypt. The banking and investment companies provided co-investment and profit sharing as opposed to charging deposit and interest fees which are not permitted according to sharia. In general, Islamic movements in Egypt during this time came to be financed by the "recycled earnings of workers through informal currency transfers and exchange networks" of the wealth the exiled had produced during the petroleum boom.[602] The amalgamation of these developments was fuelled by the salafi discourse the Brotherhood had adapted during its stay in the Gulf. Hence, the debates shifted towards divisive issues focused on purity and sharia. As we shall see, the ideological mouthpiece of these developments sought to address issues pertaining to issues such as music, costumes, art and literature. Again, as Hossam Tammam points out, the shift in ideological discourse introduced by the Brotherhood was coupled by the Islamic openness in Egypt during the 1970s and therefore created an environment wherein the cultural components and historical and geographical differences of Egypt were negated at the expense of the Brotherhood's ideological focus on issues of *aqida* purity that demolished debate aimed at promoting pluralism and difference.[603]

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he is then promoted to *ach'amal* (working brother).[601] The entire process of becoming a full member can eclipse a decade if one wishes to "vote in all internal elections, participate in all of the Brotherhood's working bodies, and compete for higher office within the group's hierarchy." According to Trager, the drawn out recruitment process dates back to the founding of the organization in 1928 but was only formalized in the late 1970s following repeated crackdowns and infiltration of the group by the state. Overall, the recruitment policy serves as a key cog in the Ikhwan wheel that allows the organisation recourse to promote the overarching Islamic identity and solidarity of its membership in times of hardship, lack of consensus, and state repression. See: Trager, Eric. "The Unbreakable Muslim Brotherhood." *Foreign Affairs*. N.p., 1 Sept. 2011. Web. 30 Sept. 2014. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68211/eric-trager/the-unbreakable-muslim-brotherhood>.
[602] Beinin, Joel. "Political Islam and the New Global Economy: The Political Economy of Islamist Social Movements in Egypt and Turkey." *French and US Approaches to Understanding Islam* . France-Stanford Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, 2004. Pg. 7. Print.
[603] Tammam, Hossam. "The Salafization of the Muslim Brother: The Erosion of the Fundamental Hypothesis and the Rising of Salafism within the Muslim Brotherhood: The Paths and Repercussions of Change." *Biblioteheca Alexandrina*, 2011. Pg. 40. Print.

5.2. Sadat, The Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Da'wa

The unanticipated passing of Nasser would bring with it significant shifts in the socioeconomic and political environment of Egypt. Nasser's death came at a time when the country was unquestionably reeling morally and politically from the Arab defeat to Israel. Moreover, it also came at a time wherein Nasser's nationalisation policies and pan-Arab aspirations were stumbling. Although Nasser's policies initially brought with them a substantial growth rate of roughly seven per cent per year, this number would dwindle down to three per cent by 1965.[604] Nasser who had sought to eradicate Egypt's economic dependence on external forces initiated a nationalisation project that would restructure class relations by creating a state bourgeoisie at the expense of landlords and merchants whilst simultaneously failing to substantially improve conditions for peasants and workers. By the end of his first decade it had become relatively clear that due to issues stemming from the organic sphere, his policies had fallen short of doing away with Egypt's structural economic dependence. Instead, the pervasiveness of state nationalisation and the creation of a state bourgeoisie normalised authoritarianism alongside mounting external debt and an accumulating budget deficit.[605]

The state inherited by Sadat was thus ripe for a shift in relation between class forces. However, rather than opt in favour of revolutionary changes to restructure material and class relations Sadat opted for a restorative approach reflective of passive revolution that reverted power relations to the sort of pre-modern continuity that preceded Nasser. The driving force behind the economic liberalisation of Sadat's neoliberal *infitah* was to rearrange the economic sphere in order to attract foreign and private investment, gain access to western technology and to create jobs for the Egyptian workforce by driving consumption and raising revenues.[606] Analogously, Sadat facilitated changes to the

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[604] Ikram, Khaled. *The Egyptian Economy, 1952-2000: Performance, Policies, Issues.* London: Routledge, 2006. Pg. 85. Print.

[605] Rucco, Roberto. *Gramsci in Cairo: neoliberal authoritarianism, passive revolution and failed hegemony in Egypt under Mubarak, 1991-2010.* London: PhD Thesis: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012. Pg. 103-105. Print.

[606] Ibid.,

political sphere by expanding it into a monitored five-party system amidst the growing trend of Islamic revivalism in Egypt. The combination of the changes would create for a broader opening for the Muslim Brotherhood to benefit economically and politically. However, it is important to note that the projects undertaken by Sadat under *infitah* were not focused on ensuring long-term development and as such tended to focus on areas such as tourism and construction.[607] Thus, while the policies drove consumption they alarmingly did not produce jobs nor attract significant foreign capital thereby increasing the reliance on foreign rent. They also resulted in the re-emergence of the pre-1954 liberal bourgeoisie and the formation of a new crony capitalist business class.

It was in this political and socioeconomic environment that the Muslim Brotherhood moved to re-establish and re-frame the hegemonic project that Nasser had all but crushed two decades earlier. These conditions were favourable, as Sadat did not make it a priority early on to persecute Islamists or their ideology. Rather, he sought to co-opt them into his *infitah* and use them as a counter-weight to leftists and Nasserists whilst maintaining a watchful eye on their actions. The Brotherhood for their part embraced the somewhat amicable relationship as it gave them an unprecedented opportunity to rebuild their social base and convey their ideology to the masses whilst benefiting economically. For the most part, the magazines attacks on Sadat were veiled and framed to emphasise the impact of the *infitah* on policy issues of the day. Moreover, the critiques of the West and particularly Israel in Al Da'wa served as a means to discredit Sadat's peace with Israel and to sway the masses towards the Brotherhood as a credible oppositional force to the State until it was finally shut down in late 1981 when Sadat took repressive measure against Islamists and secularists alike.[608]

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[607] Ibid.,

[608] As Saad Eddin Ibrahim notes, Sadat's allies advised him as early as 1979 to crack down on the Brotherhood and Islamists. During the meeting, Osman Ahmad Osman, a confidant of Nasser, Islamic businessman and former Brother retorted, "Would you prefer, perhaps, the communists? Sadat responded to the crackdown request by dismissing the ally and stating that "I am not the Shah of Iran and our Muslims are not Khomeinists." See Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. Egypt's Islamic Militants. *MERIP Reports* 103. 1982. Pg. 5-14. Print.

5.3. A Brief Contextual Background to Islamic Magazines

The publication of the monthly periodical, although formally sanctioned by the authorities, commenced without any official acknowledgment of its re-emergence as a Brotherhood product. It resurfaced vis-à-vis a publishing license held by Salih al'Ashmawi, who founded the magazine following Banna's death. Under the editorship of Sayyid Qutb the magazine sought to disseminate the organisation's views during the turbulent lead up to its dissolution and expulsion. However, Ashmawi also utilised the magazine to voice his dissent against Hudaybi's position towards the Revolutionary Command Council.[609] Ultimately, Hudabyi won out and Ashmawi was ousted taking with him the publishing license to Al- Da'wa and saving him from the wrath of Nasser. The magazine ceased publication and Nasser imprisoned both Qutb and Hudabyi. For decades he maintained the minimum requirements to retain the license and in 1976 put aside his differences with the Brotherhood so as to revive the magazine. The arrival of the 1976 Al-Da'wa, under the editorship of General Guide Umar Tilmisani would in a number of ways build upon the intellectual framework that Qutb and Hudabyi sought to propagate.

The introduction of the magazine was reflective of the era insofar as that there was a widespread effort by both state and society to redefine the role of Islam in the modern age. Hence, Al-Da'wa was not the only Islamic periodical to get exposure in society. In fact, it was one of three prominent periodicals, with the other two being *Al I'tisam* and *Minbar al-Islam*. The former was published by the salafi Jamiyya Shariyya organisation under the tutelage of Ahmad Isa Ashur and Imam 'Abd al-latif Mushtahiri. Its predominant focus was to achieve socio-political transformation vis-à-vis addressing ritual and theological issues.[610] By contrast, the Ministry of Endowments Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs issued *Minbar al-Islam*. While this constituted the state's efforts to frame Islam, overtime as the legitimacy of the state came to be challenged due

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[609] Al-Arian, Abdullah. *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat's Egypt.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pg. 181. Print.
[610] Rock-Singer, Aaron. "A Pious Public: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt, 1976-1981." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, July 2015. Pg. 429. Print.

to issues including the bread riots, fraudulent elections and the peace process with Israel, the periodical refrained from coming to the aid of Sadat by openly advocating for his policies.[611]

These magazines ultimately served the purpose of helping to shape religious subjectivities during a period wherein Sadat sought to mitigate the gains of Nasserists whilst at the same time monitoring the internal debates transpiring within Islamist organisations.[612] In essence, the respective publications were intimately tied to the public religious educational system, which firmly fell under state control. Hence, while the state issued *Minbar al-Islam* sought to reinforce Sadat's message of social peace and political obedience, *Al-Da'wa* and *Al I'tisam* were more confrontational on the issue by questioning the state's control over these institutions for its own ideal ends.[613] As a whole, these publications provided an opportunity for the religious elite to preach on public piety, which had become one of the chief societal tropes in trying to recover morale. It also enabled the religious elite to frame their subjects by honing in on answering a set of modern questions[614] pertaining to religion that public religious education simply did not address.

It is equally worth nothing that the economic liberalisation of the *infitah* encompassed an underlying shift towards acquiring western technologies, which in turn played a prominent role in the emergence of the respective periodicals. The policy helped to facilitate the era of Islamic revivalism that was already underway by providing cheap and efficient print technology to mass communicate and disseminate Islamist material. For the Brotherhood, print media was additionally effective given their association to prominent businessmen and Islamist sympathisers such as Uthman Osman Uthman. The influx of money from advertising space[615] helped to ensure that Al Da'wa produced an

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[611] Ibid.,

[612] Ibid.,

[613] Ibid., 435.

[614] Such as sexual frustration and masturbation, women in the workforce, etc.

[615] Over the course of 81 issues published between 1976-1981 more than half of the advertisements belonged to three private companies: al-massara real estate, Al-Sharif

easily readable, organised and well presented periodical in comparison to its competitors. As a whole, print media provided Islamists with a means of propagating their ideology on a grand scale in comparison to years past when it had no effective means to counteract Nasser's success in controlling leisure time vis-à-vis the state run Voice of Arabs radio station. Likewise, the low cost and accessibility to print media immensely contributed toward Islamist efforts to compete against the waning monopoly of the ulema by providing an avenue to create and disseminate alternative modes of knowledge and learning on Islam. As Al-Arian astutely points out, the diminishing role of the ulema coincided with the proliferation of lay Islamic activism through print media. The proliferation of lay activism by Islamists served to influence the common sense perceptions of the masses and to reinforce the identity that Islamists had carved out for themselves.[616]

5.3.1. Demographics

The emergence of public piety did not solely stem from a public loss of morale. Rather, it was accompanied by social developments that led to the exponential increase in literacy and university educated members of society. From the fall of the colonial-monarchic bloc to the first publication of Al-Da'wa in 1976 the demographics within Egypt changed considerably. There was a noticeable increase in urban areas wherein the population almost doubled from 23 per cent to 44 per cent. Likewise, whereas university student enrolment in the year Nasser took power stood at 142,875, by the time of Sadat's assassination those figures had swollen to 563,750.[617] The large student population and corresponding failure of the *infitah* to create jobs akin to the statist policies of Nasser meant that the frustrations of students continued to mount. Thus, the Islamist students that Sadat empowered as a counterweight to leftists and Nasserists began to grow weary. Amidst Islamic revivalism, these students further felt alienated due to the inability of Al

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plastics and a foreign car dealer. See: Al-Arian, Abdullah. *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat's Egypt.* Pg. 183.
[616]Al-Arian, Abdullah. *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat's Egypt.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pg. 178. Print.
[617] Erlich, Haggai. *Students and University in 20th century Egyptian Politics.* New York: Taylor and Francis, 2005. Pg. 175-200. Print.

Azhar to offer than Islamic guidance suitable for the modern era. It therefore came with little surprise that 40 per cent of the readership of the non-state[618] periodicals was accounted for by students from predominantly urban centres such as Cairo and Alexandria.[619] The core readership of the Islamist periodicals is particularly telling considering that it predominantly constitutes an educated, literate and aspiring urban middle class.[620] A contributing factor to this reality owes to the retention of Nasserist social structures by Sadat - an evocative feature of passive revolution. The educational reforms and statist policies undertaken by Nasser promoted the migration of peasants and the middle class to urban areas in search of education or sustainable work. Rather than carry out a fundamental restructuring of these social forms Sadat chose to retain and exacerbate them with neoliberal policies and consumption strategies thereby evoking passive revolution. In turn, the frustrations and dissatisfaction of middle class university students and white-collar workers created an auspicious opening for the Muslim Brotherhood to shape their ideology by engaging them to play a role in redefining Islam in the modern age and ultimately mobilising them against the state.[621] The absence of the working class and rural peasantry from this project is evocative of the Brotherhood's inability to be inclusive by promoting intersectional interests of the subaltern through the cultivation of a historically organic ideology. In seeking to replenish its social base and cultivate consciousness for its ideology the organisation instead opted for a narrower approach to capture key elements of the print-privileged urban middle class.[622]

The co-opted student population would go on to become an integral part of the Brotherhood's revival and its push for public piety across Egyptian society. In fact, the organisation would successfully assimilate prominent leaders such as Abou Moneim Aboul Fotouh, Essam El-Erian and Abul Ela Madi and their student unions into its organisational structure over the course of the years that Al-Da'wa remained in

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[618] Even the state issued Minbar al-Islam had a 34% student readership.
[619] Rock-Singer, Aaron. "A Pious Public: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt, 1976-1981." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, July 2015. Pg. 431-433. Print.
[620] Ibid., 445.
[621] Ibid.,
[622] Ibid., 446.

publication.[623] Many of the students had visited the imprisoned Brothers and were supportive of their struggle so much so that they aspired to be like them and bring revolutionary change to Egypt. Hence, Al-Da'wa provided a supplementary role in recruiting them over divisive issues and giving them a sense of purpose in how they ought to understand and make sense of Islam in the modern era. That being said, during this period of 'public piety' the Brotherhood still had to contest against the restorative authoritarian social institutions maintained by Sadat. These institutions, particularly that of the media, remained unquestionably dominated by the state. Apart from print media, the Brotherhood had no real means to contest common sense perceptions and worldviews being circulated about Islam and them by the state's traditional intellectuals on television, radio and in daily newspapers. The publication of Al-Da'wa thus had to rely on kiosks and newsstands as the main conduit to advance their ideological and political framework.[624] Impressively enough, the organisation was able to attract an estimated monthly readership (60000-80000)[625], which more than doubled the readership of competing magazines despite Al Da'wa not offering domestic subscriptions.[626]

5.3.2 The Themes of Al-Da'wa

The themes promoted in Al-Da'wa collectively represent the active efforts of the Muslim Brotherhood to re-construct and combat the common sense conceptions propagated to the masses about itself and equally in relation to the individualistic nature of Islam. The excommunication of the organisation by Nasser further meant that it sought to articulate its reconstructed ideology, which by this point differed considerably from the ideological

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[623] The merger would not publicly be announced and the relationship was kept secret so that the Sadat regime would not crack down on the organisation. The Islamic student union would splinter into three factions of which one would join the Brotherhood and the other two would adopt a more radical and violent approach under the tutelage of Shukri Mustafa's Takfir wal-Hijra and Muhammad Abd-al-Salam Faraj's Al Jihad. The former was involved in kidnappings and the latter responsible for the assassination of Anwar Sadat.

[624] Rock-Singer, Aaron. "A Pious Public: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt, 1976-1981." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, July 2015. Pg. 429. Print.

[625] Ibid., 435

[626] Subscriptions would have provided the state with a list of Brotherhood, which would have proven detrimental to spreading their message.

framework laid down by Banna, as being historically continuous so as to build its legitimacy. However, as we have already uncovered, the ideology was arbitrary and willed as it only incorporated a particular class dynamic of society. However, the fact that it was undertaken in an era wherein conditions to promote an understanding of the role of Islam in relation to the social, economic and political sphere were propitious. This, along with the Brotherhood's experience during its exile, contributed to the articulation of an increasingly divisive and substantially rigid ideology unsuitable for cultivating consciousness in the form of a national-popular will.

While there are a number of themes that are addressed by the periodical the most high-spirited are first and foremost those pertaining to the suppression of the organisation that followed its suppression by Nasser. Herein, the contributors of Al-Da'wa seek to construct an organic passage by drawing parallels between its ideology and the formative years of Islam. Many of the articles that appear are therefore keen on depicting the humble and pious reaction of the organisation in the face of its unwarranted suffering. The recurring focus on this theme is carried out not only with the aim of correcting the public image assigned to it by hegemonic forces but also to cultivate legitimacy for its ideational activity by relating its experience to that of a readership frustrated with the vile misdeeds of the state. Naturally, its defence is buttressed by a rhythm of thought that denies any room for self-criticism or self-awareness. The charges against the organisation that do surface in the periodical are re-framed to emphasise the heroism and struggle of the organisation to emancipate the nation from the wrongdoings of the state.

A second theme that predominates throughout the periodical is the precise attention attributed to the role of Islam in modern daily life. This theme serves two overarching purposes: firstly to contest the version of Islam propagated by the state and the traditional religious establishment in the form of Al Azhar and secondly to assign itself the status of the sole societal force capable of providing a comprehensive vision of Islam in the modern age. As such, an eclectic mix of articles address issues pertaining to the social problems of the day and how adherence to the sharia and devotion to religious practices

serve to mitigate the pervasive societal *ignorance*[627] by instilling the patience and discipline necessary to create a strong, pious and fortified Islamic society. From a Gramscian point of view the articulation of ideology in such a form is divisiveness and not conducive in unifying the aspirations and needs of the subordinated classes of society so as to be able to challenge the hegemonic force. Moreover, the articulation of this theme marks a drastic shift away from Banna's approach, which actively sought to avoid dogmatic issues so as not to fracture the potential unification of society in overthrowing colonialism. That being said, the historical conditions that accompanied the Brotherhood's ideology pertained may have required such an approach whereas the social conditions in Egypt during the period of Islamic revivalism actively promoted the theme of locating the meaning of Islam in the modern era. Hence, the writers of Al-Da'wa capitalised on its opportunity to establish itself as an oppositional force by directing veiled critiques against the State and the negative impact of its *infitah* policies.[628] It predominantly did so by divisively bringing sharia into the debate as the unparalleled solution to political and policy ills without convincingly trying to allay public fears associated with the full implementation of sharia.

It is these overarching themes that are intertwined across the periodical so as to guide its narrative and articulate the Brotherhood's ideology. For instance, in the inaugural issue of the periodical, General Guide Umar Tilmisani describes the existence of the Brotherhood's constitution as having five main facets. According to Tilmisani, the organisation exists first and foremost to educate the populace and especially the youth on Islam. This is followed by the unabashed, yet consistent claim made in most ideological programmes, that the Brothers reveal only the truth and implore the masses to constantly support it in all conditions. The third facet of the organisation's purpose is revealed as the organisation of people and directing them in how to lead their lives. This is complemented by defining their role as cautioning against the cloaked veil of secularism

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[627] The term ignorance is intentionally and indirectly framed in Al-Da'wa in direct contradistinction to the *jahiliyya* of Qutb with the aim of instilling a peaceful approach.
[628] In addition, a number of articles also critique the West and Israel as a means to criticise Sadat's peace process thereby again trying to establish popular credibility for the Brotherhood as an oppositional force.

that alienates Muslim youth from its religion. Lastly, Tilmisani fortifies the existence and legitimacy of the organisation by proclaiming that in their role as educators the Brotherhood bases itself in God and his books.[629]

In a subsequent article on the interpretation of the meaning of history, Issam-al-din-al-Aryan doubles down on Tilmisani's statements by stressing four critical components required in establishing a vanguard that can facilitate an Islamic awakening. The first two components pertain to dress; the women must wear the veil and the man must sport an untrimmed beard and white gallabieh. The reasoning for these two suggestions is that they mark a resistance against the west and signal the first steps required to returning the people to Islam. These are then complemented by early marriage and adherence to public prayers of holidays. These points are advanced as necessary steps in realising a vanguard of the *umma*.[630] The steps constitute a complete shift away from Banna's ideology and from the manner in which he defines the organisation. Moreover, they implicitly imply an unwillingness to work alongside subordinate forces that may not necessarily uphold such values as being compulsory.

In a corresponding article the reader is informed about the chief enemies of Islam, which are as follows: "jewry, crusade, communism and secularism."[631]However, as Abdullah Al-Arian's cogent study on the Sadat era reveals, the emphasis that others such as Kepel have placed on such writings trivialise the matter in a way that only reveals a partial picture of the periodical's aims. Al-Arian is correct to assert that the periodical aims to construct a call, or rather to refine its ideological framework, to recruit an intellectual base so as to expand its influence and societal reach.[632] The attacks on the abovementioned 'enemies' equally pertain to the Brotherhood's desire to gain credibility in latently branding itself as the chief counter-hegemonic force in society. Al-Arian

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[629] Kepel, Gilles. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet & Pharaoh.* Berkeley : University of California Press, 1985. Pg. 129. Print.
[630] Ibid., 157.
[631] Ibid., 112.
[632] Al-Arian, Abdullah. *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat's Egypt.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pg. 184. Print.

implores the need to look beyond the radical rhetoric of foreign policy articles that regularly appears in the sixty-odd page magazine on a monthly basis. Articles that espouse such undertones were not necessarily uniformly agreed upon given the individualistic Islamic tone present throughout the life of the magazine.[633] Al-Arian further attributes this to the framing mechanisms as seeking to cover as vast an array of domestic and social issues impacting Egyptians as possible.

For instance, in the 50th issue of the periodical, a reader conveys a question to General Guide Tilmisani as to why America receives stringent criticism in Al-Da'wa but the Soviet Union is not attributed the same level of criticism. Tilmisani's response is both concessionary and revealing in that he concedes that America is slightly more civilised due to being 'people of the book' whereas the Soviets are infidels for the atrocities and massacres they have committed in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Tilmisani concludes by stating that he washes his hands from the communist pot of water – a revealing notion regarding the state of local affairs.[634] That being said, while there is considerable attention given to foreign affairs, the main themes do not heavily factor into the aims and objectives of the periodical. It is therefore beneficial to look at the plethora of related articles so as to deduce the main themes and what their underlying intent constitutes within the periodical.

Al-Arian is correct to suggest that Al-Da'wa constitutes an attempt to construct a call aimed at recovering the intellectual base of the organisation. The construction of this call can be witnessed in the main themes that emanate throughout the magazine. These themes, it is argued are framed around the articulating principle of the sharia as the essential component in making sense of Islam in the modern era. The variety of articles as such broadly constitute critiques against the failing educational system in Egypt, the benefits of an Islamic economic system, the evils of communism and socialism, the social role of Islam in the modern age and the Brotherhood's version of events that transpired during the Nasser era. The combinations of these themes are presented in a manner that

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[633] Ibid., 185.
[634] Al-Da'wa. No. 50.

attempts to frame them as denoting historical continuity. The ideology of the Brotherhood is related and compared as far back as to the origins of Islam so as to draw a parallel between the possibilities of re-establishing the true Islam through patience and dedication (rather than violence) in spite of how difficult a task it may appear. This is then buttressed by the organisation's assertion that a protracted strategy within civil society that focuses on social reform is necessary and that it is important to remain persistent and patient in the face of constant persecution, anguish and torment.

The modern reconstruction and fabrication of the aforementioned notion however is not true. While Al-Da'wa's advancement of a protracted strategy against the state may seem to constitute a continuance of an old trend, its ideological framework and ideational complement during this time is entirely a product of organic and conjunctural events that transpired from 1952 onwards and culminated in the Islamic revivalism of the 1970s. As we shall see from the next section, the ideological approach of the organisation during this period of time completely abandoned the non-divisive and alliance building elements that had guided its strategy as a social force that under Banna sought to promote openness and unity rather than division and dogma. The ideological framework of Al-Da'wa thus marks a decisive turn towards entrenching the hierarchical, conservative and political objectives of a party driven by sharia and determined to actualise its role in modern society.

5.4. The Reframing of Ideological and Political Leadership

In the fifth issue of the magazine, Mahmoud El-Shazli presents the reader with a story entitled 'And the lines have met.' The story details a fictional tale about the plight of an innocent and humble young man named Marzouk Abdel Jaleel.[635] Marzouk, a married man with a young child, works as a door-to-door copper plate cleaner. Unfortunately for Marzouk, the invention of aluminium plates has made life even more difficult and driven him to the verge of destitution. We are informed that he travels daily from village to village in search of copper plates to shine, almost always to no avail. Almost instantly,

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[635] Al-Da'wa, No.5.

we learn that Marzouk has not tasted meat in over five years – presumably since the birth of his child. Meat has become a rare commodity for the poor and is almost always only available at funeral services. The richer the deceased, the more meat there is to be had at the service. The thought of having to equate meat to funerals is something that greatly saddens Marzouk, yet the smell of it from surrounding houses has an irresistibly intoxicating effect on him.

One day whilst Marzouk is out seeking work in a neighbouring village he happens to come across a funeral gathering where meat is bound to be available. Naturally, hordes of people rush to the service. However, at this particular service in order to receive meat the patrons are informed that they shall be categorised into five separately seated parties. The categories are said to be as follows: 1) peasants 2) labourers 3) intellectuals 4) bourgeoisie 5) nationalist-capitalist. Upon informing the organisers that he is a copper cleaner there is great confusion as to which table to seat Marzouk. Unable to decide, the organisers ask him to patiently wait outside. Following a lengthy period of deliberation it is agreed that Marzouk ought to be placed in the capitalist category. The organisers proceed to ask Marzouk for a piece of identification so that he may register. However, on this instance he does not have his identification present and is instead asked to sign a paper. Upon finally having signed it is brought to his attention that there is no meat left and that having signed he must pay a fee. Limited on funds Marzouk abandons the thought of indulging in meat and decides to return to his home.

On his journey home he encounters an acquaintance and sits down to have a cup of tea and cigarette with him. It is during this time that Marzouk and his friend, a clothes ironer; spot a woman and her young child selling off the last of their furniture. It is brought to Marzouk's attention that the woman's husband, a lawyer, disappeared six months ago after making an off-the-cuff joke about the war in Yemen whilst in a room full of lawyers wherein the windows were shut. The man's wife has patiently and loyally awaited his return whilst refusing to leave to village or even to seek work because her priority is to raise her child. This leads the ironer to sombrely state, "Those who cannot speak are blessed because they cannot be taken by the law." The people at the tea venue proceed to

collect money on behalf of the woman and her child with Marzouk unhesitant to part with the last ten pounds to his name.

Marzouk sets off for home to his wife and child where they each proceed to have a modest serving of fava beans in what is described as a derelict apartment devoid of any furniture. The family converses about an old sheikh who has been ill and begins to salivate over the thought of having meat if the sheikh is to pass away soon. The thought of wishing someone to die saddens Marzouk and bring him to the verge of tears – at which point he buries his feelings and decides to pray. Shortly thereafter, a great deal of commotion is heard outside which leads the family to assume that the Sheikh might be dead. Upon getting up to enquire into the cause of the commotion, the police kick in the front door of Marzouk's apartment and promptly arrest him. At the police station, Marzouk is asked to classify his occupation. He cannot, so he informs the investigators that he has been told he is a capitalist. The investigators instruct Marzouk to wait outside whilst they deliberate what category a copper cleaner falls under. Upon summoning him back into the room, he is interrogated for being a member of a secret organisation found to be plotting a coup against the government.

Astounded and confused, Marzouk is informed that the authorities found proof that he signed up to the secret organisation. Without being given a chance to explain the situation, he is hastily taken away and tortured with a hot metal rod as a means of extracting a confession. Marzouk's pleas of innocence go unheeded and he is informed that if he does not confess they shall take his nails out and release the dogs on him. Whilst this situation is unfolding, in the background a massive poster on the wall states the following text: "Keep your head up brother, the age of hypocrisy has passed." Eventually, a beaten, bruised and bloody Marzouk gives in and agrees to confess. He has to repeatedly ask the investigator what his response to the questions should be. Having finally made his confession, the police instruct Marzouk to sign an agreement stating that he provided his confession without any pressure of force. He is then promptly taken to a train station without being told where he is headed. The story ends with Marzouk

contemplating whether he shall ever be able to see his wife and child again prior to shutting his eyes.[636]

The aforementioned story of Marzouk Abdel Jaleel appears as a rarity in a periodical that can otherwise be described as repetitive, poorly written and at times shoddily organised.[637] Admittedly, stories in general appear infrequently unless they pertain to a retelling of the origins of Islam. Yet, what is particularly remarkable about the story of Marzouk Abdel Jaleel is how it effectively and simultaneously captures a number of prominent and recurring themes and developments that the periodical seeks to emphasise – many of which continue to resonate in the public eye to this very day. The framing of the story effectively captures many of the social antagonisms that the large segments of the population have against the military authoritarian hegemonic forces in Egypt. The story covers issues of corruption, police brutality, the ineffectiveness of the economic system, the role of women in society, the transgressions of the authoritarian regimes and the perceived innocence of the masses. As such, it has hypothetical ought of have appealed to subordinated groups across Egypt.

However, given the broader scope of the periodical it is safe to assume the story would fail to sufficiently attain the consensus of the popular masses. This is not due to the fact that the story moonlights as an anecdote for the perceived innocence of the Brotherhood in light of its violent repression under Nasser. Rather, it is due to the fact that the story is in part latently framed to denote the benefits of a sharia system without discussing particulars as it is often advocated throughout the course of the periodical. Nevertheless, there are a number of effective ideas in the story that are worth elaborating on. For instance, the detail that Marzouk lacks an occupational title can be seen to serve as an indirect critique of the *infitah* policies that while increasing consumption and liberalising the economy failed to produce jobs. This in turn resulted in the creation of an informal work market in Egypt wherein an increasing number of individuals were forced to seek

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[636] Ibid.,

[637] Barring articles written by prominent Islamists including but not limited to Umar Tilmisani, Yusef Qaradawi, Mustafa Mashhur and Muhamad El-Ghazali.

out work for cash. Much like Marzouk, they lived in derelict urban slums and were on the verge of being destitute. The story, which was published in 1979, also coincides with the rigged elections of that year that resulted in public frustration with the corruption of the Sadat state. It is however, as the reference to the Yemen war alludes to, predominantly a critique directed at the Nasser government for its unfair and unwarranted repression of the Brotherhood. In this sense the Brothers are framed as a society of humble men able to quell their frustrations and anger by turning to prayer as Marzouk does. They uphold piety and are unhesitant in parting with the last of their money for a greater cause. In this sense, the widow in the story and particularly her loyalty and unwillingness to abandon her husband or child in favour of work appeals to the patriarchal value reinforced in Al Da'wa of women's roles as the educators of Egypt's future generations. By contrast, the State is painted as the promoter of hypocrisy by claiming to be Islamic yet engaging in corruption and murder instead of following the Islamic sharia. Ultimately, the story of Marzouk effectively conveys the key themes that the periodical seeks to advance and many of the beliefs and frustrations of its readership.

There are additionally a number of articles that address the illegal arrests and torture of the Muslim Brothers during the reign of Nasser but that also extend to Sadat. For instance, in issue 55 we are informed about the torture case of Badr Adin Abdel Chelibi who was tortured to death by three suspected officers. We are told that in the legal proceedings of the Chelibi case, which took place in February 1980, the jury abstained from punishing the defence. The article abruptly ends by offering a parable that states: when the sun disappears, evil things transpire without fear in God.[638] Contrastingly, in another article, the reader is informed of a police invasion that resulted in the arrests of four Muslim Brotherhood students for writing Islamic laws on a wall. The Brothers were eventually released but not before the reader is informed that the police commander sought to jail them with prisoners and that they started praying whilst in prison. Upon being released, the Brothers were informed by the local authorities that they should not break the law considering that they are better versed in it than anyone else.[639]

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[638] Al-Da'wa, No. 55
[639] Al-Da'wa No.46

Corruption is a widespread theme throughout the periodical. For instance, in issue 11 there is an article titled 'what are the real secrets in the assassination of Sheikh al-Banna?" The article begins by claiming that the assassination was a birthday present for King Faruq. It then shifts the blame to the Free Officers and Nasser by accusing them of lightening the prison sentences of the three culprits. Moreover, it undertakes an interview with Banna's secretary wherein it emphasises the ability of sharia to make the faithful calm and to prepare it for the mercy of God.[640]

Conversely, the vitriol directed towards Nasser is particularly telling in issue 61 wherein author Jabr-al-Rizq tells the reader that the last word in the age of Nasser and his rule have yet to be heard. Here, Rizq alludes to secret documents that have yet to see the light of day. These alleged documents, it is said, detail a plethora of heinous crimes committed by Nasser, the misery he created for the *umma*, his destruction of the economy and the terrible fate he brought to those who built the Aswan dam.[641] The list however is topped by the claim that his most harmful policy was to prevent Al-Azhar from teaching Islam due to his desire to eliminate religion.[642] As it pertains to Al-Azhar, an article in the 65th issue tells the reader of how Al-Azhar used to be a fortress of Islam and stand against the rule of bad rulers. Whereas once upon a time it used to lead revolutions against occupations, it is charged with colluding with and bowing down to Arabic leaders of the contemporary age.[643] The attacks however are not solely reserved for Al-Azhar as it pertains to education. Ismail Abduh speaks of secular education and tells us that it is a completely foreign concept and leads people astray by teaching topics such as evolution.[644] In fact, Sheikh Mohammad Ghazali shuns the entire idea of secularism along with minorities. He states that there are no minorities in Islam due to the fact that it treats its minorities as equals. He goes on to state that the Coptic population is the

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[640] Al Da'wa No. 11
[641] Al-Da'wa, No. 61.
[642] Ibid.,
[643] Al Da'wa, No. 65.
[644] Al Da'wa No. 3.

happiest in the world and that they should be obliged to follow sharia - yet in the same issue he paradoxically asserts that Arabs have no equal in relation to God.[645]

In issue number 65 it is postulated that education must address current needs and problems by bringing back 'real hard study' that results in knowledge creation. The proposed suggestion is to elevate the number of jobs for teachers along with their salaries.[646] In the same issue, Abd Sami al-Masri writes about the development of the ideology of the Islamic economic system – a prevalent theme throughout the five years of publication. Here, the reader is informed that the medium of Islam is mercy for all and that sharia is the beacon that lights the path. Sharia bases its faith in God and therefore the goal of an Islamic economic system is to ensure that work is fair and that there is balance in society.[647] Elsewhere in the periodical, Dr Amara Najeeb extends similar claims about the sharia by stating that the basic needs are already known from the Quran and that sharia provides for these. According to Najeeb, sharia provides the basic economic needs of the Islamic economical system. To elucidate these points she uses a food metaphor akin to Mahmoud El-Shazli in the story of Marzouk El-Jaleel. The metaphor used in this instance is that the people are hungry for nourishment and that it is important to balance the needs of the body and mind. Sharia provides basic needs but people reject them whereas sinners offer non-basic needs and the people accept them.[648]

Beyond this, questions surrounding women are raised in a manner that reflects how the widowed woman in the story of Marzouk Al-Jaleel patiently waited for her husband to return rather than seek out work. Zainab Al-Ghazali, first lady of the Sisterhood, informs the reader in one of her articles that women are being lazy by working instead of raising their children and fulfilling their husband's needs. In the eyes of Ghazali, the woman has a firm and clear message from God and that is to organise the house, meet her husband's needs and raise children. She goes on to say that the most divine message is for women to prepare men for country politics and to prepare girls to be good wives and mothers. She

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[645] Al-Da'wa No.77.
[646] Al-Da'wa No. 65
[647] Ibid.,
[648] Al-Da'wa, No.1

concludes by making the claim that the man has fulfilled his duty but the women has veered of course in hers.[649] The claims of Zainab Al-Ghazali are peculiar given her role as the head of the Brotherhood's female wing, which would have to some extent led her to neglect the very duties that she so passionately describes. Similarly, in the 32nd issue, Saad Abdel Sharif enlightens the reader in regards to the benefits of women staying at home. He reasons that by keeping women at home, families can eliminate the expenses of having to pay for nannies and that traffic will become less congested. Moreover, Sharif claims that it has the added benefit of keeping women in good health and creating more work opportunities for men.[650] Elsewhere, another author adds that the key to happiness for a woman is to remove stains from laundry and to separate the fine china and crystal ware.[651]

There are also a number of articles that discuss issues pertaining to arts and clothing which are equally if not more divisive. In issue 77, the reader is informed of student refusal to adopt the Islamic dress as mandatory. Herein, it is claimed that the media is against Islam and that women's rights pertaining to the hijab do not require discussion because it is an order from God. In the same issue, Abu Isa of Al-Azhar writes in response to a magazine advertisement for a salon of women with hijab by retorting: 'who told you Muslim women will allow you to touch their hair and body with your dirty hands?'[652] The majority of topics and issues covered in al-Da'wa seek to advance a divisive attitude towards non-Islamist thought. The intellectual framework advanced is increasingly salafist and ceases to resemble the intellectual framework that constituted the Brotherhood's more inclusive agenda under Banna. The divisive and aggressive matter-of-fact nature of the intellectual framework in Al-Da'wa marks the distinct trajectory taken by the organisation upon its return to civil society following decades of repression and its gradual shift to stricter salafi interpretations of the role of Islam in daily life.

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[649] Al Da'wa No.38
[650] Al Da'wa No. 32
[651] Al Da'wa No.21
[652] Al Da'wa No 77.

The strict salafist overtones are accompanied by the publication's clear and measured development to hone strategy to replenish its internal ranks, rebuild its intellectual base and attract middle class student masses hungry for revolutionary action into their organisation by demonstrating to them the role of Islam in the modern era. Although the Brotherhood during this period maintained a war of position strategy the content of its ideological programme as espoused by Al Dawa is indicative of its inability to appeal to subordinate groups such as seculars and leftists that fall outside of its ideological compass. While there was limited fragmentation internally, Al-Da'wa's approach towards other subaltern groups assumed a non-inclusive and divisive role thereby hindering their opportunities to form tangible alliances through a historically organic ideology capable of challenging the widespread antagonism against the authoritarian state. These processes were exacerbated by the deflective passive revolution of Sadat and equally by the continued existence of the social structures and institutions left behind by Nasser.

5.5. Conclusion

Al-Da'wa ultimately served as the ideological mouthpiece of the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership structure. Upon its re-integration into society and politics the organisation set out to correct the common sense conceptions that had been disseminated by hegemonic forces during its absence. It sought to construct a historically organic passage to the first generations of Islam as a means to legitimise its ideology as a comprehensive Islamic vision for modern society. In doing so, it was successfully able to replenish its ranks with new cadres largely through appealing to the educated urban middle class university population that had become embittered with the state of hegemonic affairs in Egyptian society. Its relative success in recruiting this new base was aided by propitious conditions that were nevertheless complex and contradictory. The *infitah* policies that promoted neoliberal capitalist accumulation and consumption vis-à-vis the opening of the economy to private investors alongside a social revival of Islam in Egypt created, at least initially, tangible opportunities for the organisation to exert its influence. Herein, the organisation forged an alliance with prominent business that sympathised with their cause as a means

of financing the magazine as well as their ideational activity in the form of social and charitable work.

Having said that, the changing socioeconomic and political environment did not denote a progressive break from the conditions created by the Nasserist state in that it did not sufficiently rearrange class relations. The policies of Sadat instead restored class relations to their old form. Prior the Nasser's intervention the base of the Brotherhood under Banna consisted of the petite bourgeoisie, university students, the lower-middle class and urban migrants. Sadat's restructuring of the economy once again made much of this base once again available to the Brotherhood. However, in doing so Sadat created a new class of powerful state linked crony capitalists whilst not substantially increasing job opportunities available to the public. The changes therefore constituted a deflected passive revolution that wherein power brokering did not encompass promising conditions for alliance building between subaltern forces. Rather, these conditions served to predominantly redistribute capital amongst the nouveau middle class and the state regime at the expense of the masses – many of who became reliant on the informal job market created by Sadat's policies. The Brotherhood and Islamic bourgeoisie capitalised on these conditions whilst they were able to. However, the divisive ideology that they put forth was such that it while it helped to replenish their own ranks it made little to no effort in being inclusive of subaltern classes such as industrial workers, rural peasants, secularists, leftists and therefore impeded the viability of its counter-hegemonic programme.

The success of Al Da'wa in re-framing the ideology of the Brotherhood is ultimately paradoxical. One the one hand it was effective in its primary goals of replenishing its ranks, articulating itself as an authority on Islam in the modern age and developing credibility to reassert its position as the leading oppositional force within society. However, its intellectuals operated in a traditional sense by promoting divisiveness through a stricter salafi interpretation of the role of Islam in daily life and the articulation of sharia. The organisation also made limited efforts to build alliances with subordinated groups that fell outside of its ideological framework and its class grouping. Thus, while it was able to flesh out a long-term strategic intellectual framework for itself and its

followers it did so by reinforcing a conservative hierarchical internal structure so as to shield itself from potential repression at the hands of the state. The literature advanced by Al-Da'wa is evocative of its non-revolutionary political strategy. In this sense the divisive themes advanced exacerbated differences between social groupings rather than encouraging alliances that may have produced a national-popular will. This is further reflected on its emphasis on sharia as its articulating principle. The leadership of the Brotherhood used Al-Da'wa as its ideological and political mouthpiece to consistently emphasise sharia as the primary means to reform state institutions and structures rather than advocating for a more revolutionary approach aimed at dismantling the entrenched institutions of the state.

The spread of cheap print media enabled the organisation to fortify its ideology and political direction and moreover its understanding of how it viewed itself. Ultimately, the new internal understanding that the Brotherhood carved out marked a clear and distinct shift away from its early years under Banna. In essence the organisation viewed itself as a vanguard for achieving authoritative status for Islam in the modern age for a stricter salafi interpretation of the role of Islam in daily life. In the process of emerging as the leading voice of a more pious and religious Egypt the internal composition of the Brotherhood's leadership structure became increasingly conservative, inflexible, authoritarian and hierarchical. The entrenchment of these structures aided the fortification of a loyal base with a clear sense of the organisation's raison d'etre but not in its ability to foster alliances outside of its own narrow interests. The complex and contradictory environment in which the ideology was created is further indicative of its failure to resemble a historically organic ideology. The proliferation of print media, Islamic revival and neoliberal policies of the 1970s allowed the Brotherhood to reinforce its image of itself and of Islam in a manner that greatly hindered its ability to interact outside of the Islamist community by engaging in dialogue with subordinated classes that fell outside of its ideological worldview. The content of Al-Da'wa thus contributed in the solidification of the organisation's increasingly solipsistic view of itself as the vanguard for a reformed Islamic society thereby perpetuating a lack of self-criticism and self-reflection, which

deterred it from seeking out revolutionary alliances with the subaltern vis-à-vis a historically organic ideology capable of truly contesting hegemonic power.

Conclusion

Key Findings

The concepts explored in this thesis have aimed to provide an alternative and nuanced theoretical approach to assist us in interpreting the phenomenon that is Political Islam. Hence, while the understanding advanced is invariably theoretical in nature, it is important to keep in mind that the primary task of theory is to provide us with the tools necessary to gain perspective on concrete realities. The Gramscian approach applied to Political Islam has therefore sought to accomplish the aforementioned task by remaining as non-rigid and non-dogmatic as possible. The criterion of interpretation that Gramsci's concepts provide us has as a result helped us to develop a number of key insights regarding Political Islam.

The overarching and guiding insight is that it is seminal to approach Political Islam through the widest frame possible as the collection of active people and modern movements that are dialectically connected to state-led policies that unfold within the superstructure. That is to say that the benefits of assessing the phenomenon of Political Islam through a historical dialectic materialist approach allows us to illuminate the organic synthesis between complex, contradictory and seemingly different elements. The reciprocal nature of these elements can be understood through the various dialectic processes that unite the organic with the conjunctural, the base with the superstructure, coercion with consent, progressive and regressive change and revolutionary processes with restorative ones. A reconnaissance into these developments further means that it is necessary to take into consideration historical development and passive revolution alongside a modified interpretation of civil society. An integral reconnaissance of this nature does not indicate that these elements are equal but rather that they must be attributed proportionate weight.

In Chapter 1, the pervasiveness of cultural based arguments was considered in relation to the more progressive and nuanced modernist discourse. The point was advanced that the former ought to be treated as inadequate and simplified insights that fail to capture the complexities of the phenomenon. The inference that we can draw at this juncture is that these arguments in some ways constitute the sort of uncritical and passively accepted conceptions and worldviews insofar as that they are folkloric and only provide sliver of insight into Political Islam. Conversely, this point is equally applicable to the set of arguments advanced by Islamism and the state-led propaganda machines in relation to the West and Israel. In turn, the chapter found that while the modernist discourse offers a much stronger and considerably more valid outlook of Political Islam, its focus on the organic sphere, global neoliberalism and state-centric analysis can at times bog down our understanding of Political Islam. The main assertion made in regards to this point was that it would be helpful to emphasise the role of ideology and power dynamics at the conjunctural level as playing a bigger role in shaping Political Islam.

In the following chapter, it was postulated that the role of ideology ought to be considered more critically. Ideology it was argued constitutes the active efforts to organise social, economic and political interests of social groups. It must be accompanied with ideational complement if it is to expand its reach of influence, produce social solidarity and emerge being capable of sufficiently satisfying the general interests of society. The fracturing of ideology of dominant groups occurs when the aforementioned interests cannot be satisfied. In turn, this produces social antagonism and creates an opening of space in society for subaltern groups to emerge. The postulation that Islamists frame their ideology as a master signifier was also addressed and it was found that the 'quilting points' of the caliphate and *umma* cannot emit the necessary symbolism due to empirical complexities and therefore tend to be subordinated within the ideological programmes of Islamists. As a result, it was further argued that if we are to truly comprehend Political Islam and its ability to deny competing liberal discourses space within civil society then we must explore the concreteness of the conjunctural terrain where the forces of opposition organise.

Upon delving in to the conjunctural sphere it was found that the ability of Islamists to deny opposition discourses space within civil society cannot wholly be attributed to their ideological and political leadership. Rather, it is the combination of conjunctural and organic moments that ensued in passive revolution, which produced the requisite conditions for the aforementioned claim. That being said, the protracted strategies or war of position approach of Political Islamists need to be understood dialectically and historically. In the case of Egypt, this enquiry helped us to unravel the dialectic contradictions that led to the foundation of the modern state. The mixture of progressive and restorative policies created an environment that enabled the state to dominate both civil and political society. The mea culpa of the Brotherhood was that its intellectual framework and political strategy were not capable of organically uniting the interests of the subaltern masses. The original strategy of social outreach clashed with the necessary political involvement in a rapidly changing social environment. The Brothers squandered multiple opportunities to lead Egypt as the organisation found itself marred by extensive fragmentation and dwindling popular support.

However, the social institutions that were erected by the relatively qualitative and progressive policies of Nasser would give into the regressive strategy to only nominally improve the conditions of the masses. The contradictory policies of Nasser would nevertheless pave the path for the Brotherhood to return and strategically capture key elements of the mass civil society institutions he left to the control of Sadat. In an effort to counterbalance Nasserists and recover from the failures of pan-Arabism and two morally devastating wars, Sadat granted the return of the Brotherhood to political life. The Brotherhood's return would be accompanied by its strategic advancements in transforming universities into fortresses of Islam and later in capturing professional syndicates. These advancements came with a reformulated political strategy and a fortified reticent internal structure. The strategy whilst still a protracted one was by this point shaped by very strong salafist undertones that influenced the Brotherhood during its exile abroad.

The ideological mouthpiece of the organisation came in the form of a monthly periodical Al-Da'wa. This magazine sought to reformulate 'the call' of Islam by framing its content in the form of historical continuity, a retrospective telling of historical events so as to provide its side of the story during the Nasser era and equally to its new articulating principle; sharia law. The sufi trends that had kept the Brotherhood out of divisive and dogmatic issues were nowhere to be found. Whereas in its early years the organisation had strategically discouraged Islamic dresses and beards so as not to create differences between the Egyptian masses, the periodical regularly reiterated issues of this sort. The nature of the magazine sought to authoritatively advance the piety of Islam over other ideologies. Hence, although the Brotherhood strengthened its intellectual framework to respond to the times it yet again failed to organically construct a passage that could sufficiently organise and merge the interests of the subaltern masses – a failure that has undone the Brotherhood repeatedly since.

Gramsci, The Muslim Brotherhood and The Morsi Government

At its inception in 1928, the Society of Muslim Brothers could be described as a social and charitable organisation that actively sought to 'launch a revolution against the passivity' of the Islam popularly accepted by the masses as espoused by the religious establishment.[653] The revolution against passivity entailed defining Islam as constituting a ubiquitous system applicable across all time and space. The universality assigned to Islam corresponded with Banna describing his society of brothers as representing a 'salafiyya message, a sunni way, a sufi truth, a political organisation, an athletic group, a cultural-education union, an economic company and a social idea."[654] The aspirations and frustrations of the organisation in its early years were firmly rooted in the steady social reform of society so as to guide it towards a new morality imbued within the spirit of 'true' Islam. Thus began the arduous and tumultuous mission of the Muslim Brothers to give Islam an authoritative voice in daily and political life.

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[653] Lia, Brynjar. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise Of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928-1942.* Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998. Pg. 10. Print.
[654] Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pg. 14. Print.

It took in excess of eighty years but in 2011 the organisation, much to its own surprise; found itself in a position to finally actualise its vision. What originated as a small protest organised by youth groups on January 25th to voice resistance against police brutality transformed into a full-fledged uprising and culminated with demands for the resignation of Hosni Mubarak. The Brotherhood, initially tentative and partially dismissive of these demonstrations due to fear of repression, would eventual participate once it became apparent that the unrelenting protests displayed no signs of ceasing. Immense public pressure would eventually force Mubarak to step down and dissolve parliament thereby prompting the military to assume temporary guardianship of the state until popular elections could be held. In June of the following year, the Brotherhood would ascend to the office of the presidency – an office whose authority that had otherwise remained unchallenged since being erected by Nasser and entrenched by Sadat and Mubarak. Yet, as it has been widely documented, the ascension of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood into government under its handpicked candidate and Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohamed Morsi, would be short-lived. The brief tenure would come to an abrupt end in early July 2013 vis-à-vis a popularly supported coup d'état.

In spite of only governing for one year, there are a number of takeaways, analytically speaking, that we can ascertain from developments that landed the Brotherhood in power. The most apparent of these is arguably the glaring inability of the organisation to successfully cultivate consciousness in the form of a *national-popular will.* The failures of the Brotherhood, the most organised counter-hegemonic force in the country, to harness the national-popular movement by drawing other subaltern forces into its broader alliance is particularly telling. The aspirations and frustrations that set off the 2011 popular uprisings constituted a battle for *karamat* (dignity) and thus entailed widespread frustration against the hegemon and its fortified structures and institutions. The gruesome death of Khalid Said, an early poster child of the uprising, at the hands of the police in 2010 was encapsulated by disgust against the violence and corruption of the Mubarak state. How then did the environment that had passionately protested for the cessation of violence and corruption mutate into one where large contingents of the public

enthusiastically called for a coup against the Brotherhood and paradoxically acquiesced to the violent repression that ensued against the organisation? The answer is partially rooted in the ideological stagnation of the Brotherhood and its long-standing inability to cultivate a historically organic ideology by forging alliances with social forces whose interests fall outside of the organisation's own.

A historically organic ideology ought to be able to successfully articulate the fundamental elements of the various ideological discourses that comprise the aspirations and frustrations of subordinated groups in society. In this sense, it is the unification of the aforementioned ideological elements by means of incorporating the diverse interests and practices of the subaltern into a cohesive system of socioeconomic relations. The successful articulation and incorporation of intersectional interests in turn give rise to the conditions necessary to unhinge the social basis of the hegemonic apparatuses in place. Namely, the consolidation of alliances within the terrain of civil society make it possible to delegitimise the social basis of the hegemonic force and render its political structures contestable. The Brotherhood however was not in any position to accomplish the aforementioned given its arbitrary and divisive ideology which was still firmly rooted in the themes advanced in Al Da'wa and its equally poor ability in messaging. Its inability to communicate its messages, a function of its lacking capability to develop sustainable alliances, meant that it was unable to allay the trepidation propagated regarding the Islamicisation and 'Ikhwanisation' of Egypt.

The Brotherhood's quick decision to support the call for elections early in the uprisings is rooted in two key reasons. The organisation was interested in de-politicising the public due to the fact that historically it has maintained an ambiguous and suspicious stance towards popular mobilisations, particularly ones that it does not control. Moreover, given its unparalleled organisational capability it was relatively certain that it could successfully contest elections as it had proven two decades earlier. Yet, the interim process initiated by the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) in the lead up to elections perhaps deliberately dragged out what should have been the swift capture of political society had the Brotherhood's ideology not have been arbitrary and willed. The

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ensuing period therefore was indicative of a lack of consensus between political forces with issues of identity rising to the forefront. The foundations of the new state were thus inevitably being built on unstable ground with issues pertaining to the constitution and role of sharia permeating the debate. Herein, the ideological polarisation was exacerbated by the Brotherhood's lack of power sharing and inclusivity towards other political actors. It alienated potential allies and denied political space[655] to others in the democratic project by appointing loyalists and pursuing policies unilaterally.

Ultimately, the Brotherhood's glaring inability to produce a viable counter-narrative in light of rhetorical charges of dictatorship, dehumanisation and being labelled as transnational traitors were part of its *mea culpa.* The Morsi government opted for due process over actively seeking to build alliances so as to carve out a sustainable national-popular will wherein the Brotherhood's struggle could have come to be seen as the struggle of the masses. This failure was further exacerbated by its reformative approach, which can be elucidated through the *revolution-restoration* dialectic that accompanies *passive revolution*. The notion here is that rather than opt for a bottom-up revolutionary approach through the cultivation of an emancipatory national-popular will, which may have potentially dissolved existing social formations and alleviated societal antagonism, the Brothers instead opted for a restorative approach. They sought to reform and retain old institutions and social formations rather than build new parallel institutions. Hence, to a large extent, the Morsi government sought to maintain the status quo rather than to dismantle the state. Admittedly however, even if they had sought a revolutionary approach, success would not have necsesarily been guaranteed. In Gramscian terms, the Brothers did not have an inclusive and historically organic ideology that would have been able to capture political society.

A revolutionary approach would have required the tall task of cultivating a bespoke national-popular will in the midst of a politically charged transitory stage. In other words, in choosing the street and revolution the conservative Brothers would have had to directly contest the deeply engrained political culture of Egypt. The Brotherhood however has

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[655] The Muslim Brotherhood did not however deny them the right to recourse.

never been a revolutionary force with a revolutionary agenda and following decades of repression it is hard pressed to believe that they might have had the agency of contesting the deep bureaucratic state that managed to irrespectively bring them down in the end. The Brothers, with their conservative approach to politics, took their democratic appointment to mean that they had the legitimate and unequivocal right to advance their personal agenda and policies without having to continually[656] work towards maintaining alliances[657] and ensuring the consent of the various subaltern forces in an otherwise heterogeneous state. In the end, Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood were *traditional intellectuals* in the sense that they were unwilling to advance a historically organic ideology and reluctant to build alliances in order to alter the *common sense conceptions* and worldviews that the political military authoritarianism of Egypt spent decades cultivating.

That being said, the Muslim Brotherhood should be viewed as constituting a nationalist political party as opposed to a strictly Islamic one. The Society of Muslim Brothers is by any stretch of the imagination a massive organisation replete with competing factions. It is also simultaneously an internally authoritarian in nature, which has meant that its directives come almost exclusively from its conservative learning guidance bureau. The input and suggestions of middle and lower ranks have often been passed over and ignored, as was the case when Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh and others joined the organisation in the 1980s and implored greater interaction and dialogue with non-Islamist subaltern forces; or the Wasat affair in the mid-1990s when Abou Elela Mady and others defected from the organisation for its lack of political initiative; and similarly following 2011 when the younger generation of reformers implored a more inclusive and revolutionary approach to the uprisings. Suffice to say, the ethos of control that governs the actions of the organisations has led to a failure in being self-critical, revising failed policies and disposing of its failed leadership.

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[656] To become a hegemonic bloc and maintain hegemony it is essential to continually incorporate the changing needs and interests of the subaltern.

[657] The Morsi government was particularly intransigent towards leftists and secularists.

As passive revolution has once again engulfed Egypt, the Brotherhood has found itself subject to heightened defections and unprecedented repression which continues to play out in public thereby making it more effective by instilling within the masses common sense perceptions and worldviews that disparage and denigrate the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamism. Yet, the masses in Egypt like much of the MENA region maintain strong Islamic values indicating that Islamism still has a role to play in the politics of the region. Although radical elements of Islamism have propped up elsewhere in the region it is unlikely that the Brotherhood will follow suit since its teachings have not included or instilled violence as a means for upwards of half a century. Rather, in Egypt there is a growing trend of 'new' Islamists organisations. These new groups promote a more inclusive programme supportive of populism, a more open interpretation of sharia and are willing to work alongside competing social forces. However, they are hindered by an extremely restorative and restricted civil society as advanced by the regressive Caesarist policies of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and therefore lack the capacity to organise nationally on the level of the Brotherhood in years past. This has entrapped the new wave of Islamists somewhere in between the restoration-revolution dialectic. By contrast, the Brothers under heightened repression are faced with an absence of central leadership that could potentially in the future be filled by its young reformers who adopt a more inclusive outlook. After all, in spite of all of their failures, if there is one aspect that the Brotherhood has proven time and time again it is their ability to develop and maintain a dedicated loyal base.

Future Recommendations

The primary recommendation pertains to the broader phenomenon of Political Islam. Namely, it is that a Gramscian approach towards individual movements elsewhere can offer us considerable insight by assessing passive revolution, the pertinence of civil society and overall a historical dialectic materialist approach to explaining the complexities and contradictions that come to define them. By engaging in such approaches we can see the fractures within their ideological and political leadership as well as the restrictions posed on the sphere of political activity that have accompanied passive revolutions in most MENA region states. An enquiry of this sort helps to explain

why greater political space and participation has not emerged for Islamists in spite of their gradual moderation and willingness to work within the system. As Carrie Wickham notes:

> The cumulative record of reformist leaders' rhetoric and behaviour, including their increasingly emphatic calls for change in the Brotherhood's agenda and practices during intragroup discussions removed eye, places enormous strain on the plausibility of the claim that their push for reform was nothing more than a form of subterfuge designed for external consumption.[658]

Conversely, to equate the internal reform of Political Islamist organisations as a façade or ploy deliberately aimed at garnering western sympathy and support fails to account for the substantial growth in activity of the Brotherhood within civil society. Nor does it account for the leftist internal rift within these groups – such as the expulsion of several members who sought to create a political party called the Al-Wasat Party in the 1990s.[659] Simply put, there is an increasing trend towards genuine efforts internally within many of these organisations to democratise and to engage in dialogue with liberals. These trends suggest that the inclusion of Political Islamists within the political sphere of activity is consistent with the inexorable changes that come with participation in parliamentary politics. The inability for structures of greater inclusion to appear needs to be studied more closely through a dialectical approach.

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[658] Wickham, Carrie. *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. Pg. 73. Print.
[659] El-Ghobashy, Mona. "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37.3 (2005). Pg. 386. Print.

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