DEMOCRATIZATION AND ISLAMIC POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN MUSLIM-MAJORITY COUNTRIES:
EGYPT AND INDONESIA

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Abstract

The discussion concerning the prospects for democratization in Muslim-majority countries has been revived in recent years. It has been widely argued that the repression and exclusion of Islamic movements from the political process in Muslim countries breeds radicalism, while political engagement and inclusion, however, encourages moderation and compromise. The fact that only few Muslim states have been affected by the recent global wave of democratization has raised many questions concerning the impact of Islam and Islamic activism on democratization.

Does Islam or Islamic activism hinder democratization and strengthen authoritarianism in the Muslim-majority countries? Can democratization progress in Muslim countries without the full inclusion of the major Islamic forces in the formal political process?

This thesis attempts to tackle these questions by assessing the possibility of the correlation between Islam and democracy and the impact of Islamic political activism on democratization in Muslim countries. Focussing on Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world, and Egypt, the most populous Muslim country in the Arabic-speaking world, the thesis aims to unfold some of the important factors and conditions that have been, in some way or another, responsible for the success or failure of democratization in these two countries. To this end, the thesis examines the theoretical and historical evolution of Islamic political principles and the contemporary political developments and structures in Egypt and Indonesia. The role of Islamic political forces in facilitating or hindering the democratization processes in these two countries, especially during the last decade, is the primary focus of the thesis.

Taking an ideational evolutionary perspective, the thesis investigates Islamic history and thought, tracing the origin and development of some important political principles and precedents that correlate with modern democratic governance. In particular, it seeks
to verify whether or not the values of democracy can be articulated as fully compatible with Islamic doctrine.

Furthermore, the thesis examines the way in which the politics of identity and the conflict between secular nationalist and Islamic forces affected the development of national unity and democracy in Egypt and Indonesia in the post-independence era. The investigation pays particular attention to the means through which authoritarian regimes in Egypt and Indonesia managed to survive and delay democracy for a prolonged period of time, and how Islamic forces continued to re-emerge as the most robust and viable opposition forces, despite the long experience of suppression and exclusion they endured.

Most importantly, in light of its significant findings, the thesis assesses the possibility of the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood movement as an effective catalyst for democratic change in Egypt, given its impressive achievement at the 2005 legislative elections and the democratic platform it adopted. On the other hand, the thesis closely examines Indonesia’s post-Suharto democratization and evaluates the extent to which this process has been influenced by the active participation and inclusion of Islamic political forces. Finally, it considers the way in which Islamic actors might influence democratic stability and consolidation in Indonesia in the foreseeable future.
Declaration

This is to certify that

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD, except where indicated in the Preface,

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Louay Abdulbaki
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Glossary and Abbreviations (Arabic/Indonesian)

Abangan  Nominal Muslim
‘Adl  Justice
Ahlul hal wal ‘aqd  People of conflict and resolution (lit. those who have the
capacity to bind and loosen)
Al-ansar  The helpers or supporters
Al-Dubbat al-Ahrar  The Free Officers
Al-Jama’aat al-Islamiyah  Islamic groups
Al-muhajirun  The immigrants (in the city of Madinah)
Al-kharaj  Taxation
Al-khawarij  The dissidents
Al-Khulapha’ al-Rashidun  The Rightly Guided Caliphs
Al-Imamah  Imamate leadership
Al-masalih al-morsalah  The left-open public interests
Al-Qawmiyah al-‘arabiyah  Arab nationalism
‘Asabiyah  Blind loyalty to the tribe or lineage
ASU  Arab Socialist Union
Awqaf  Endowments
Azas tunggal  Sole basis
Bay’ah  Political contract or pledge of allegiance
Dawlah  A state
DDII  Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation (Dewan
Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia)
Din  Religion
DPD  Regional Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan
Daerah)
DPR  People’s Representative Council or Indonesian Parliament
(Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat)
DPRD  Regional House of People’s Representatives (Dewan
Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah)
EOHR  Egyptian Organization for Human Rights
Fatwa  Legal/religious opinion or decree
Fitnah  Sedition or internal fighting
Fuqahaa’  Islamic jurisprudents (sing. faqih)
Furu’  Peripherals
GOLKAR  Functional Groups (Golongan Karya)
Gotong Royong  Mutual Support and Assistance
GUPPI  Federation for the Improvement of Islamic Education
Halaqah  Study circle
HAMMAS  Collaborative Action of University Muslim Students
(Himpunan Mahasiswa Muslim Antar Kampus)
Hasab  Line of descent (also nasab)
Hijrah  Migration
Hizb al-Ahrar  Liberal Party
<table>
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<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td><strong>Hizb al-Ghad</strong></td>
<td>Tomorrow Party</td>
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<td><strong>Hizb al-Wafd</strong></td>
<td>Wafd Party</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hizb al-Wafd al-Jadid</strong></td>
<td>The New Wafd Party</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HMI</strong></td>
<td>Islamic University Students Association (<em>Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam</em>)</td>
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<td><strong>ICMI</strong></td>
<td>Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (<em>Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ijmaa’</strong></td>
<td>Broad consensus</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ijtihad</strong></td>
<td>Independent legal reasoning or reinterpretation of Islamic texts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ikhtiyar</strong></td>
<td>Selection of political leaders</td>
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<td><strong>Infitah</strong></td>
<td>Openness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Istibdad</strong></td>
<td>Despotism</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jahili</strong></td>
<td>Pre-Islamic or idolatry belief</td>
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<td><strong>Jahiliyah</strong></td>
<td>Pre-Islamic or ignorant society</td>
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<td><strong>Jomhur</strong></td>
<td>Mainstream or majority of Islamic scholars</td>
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<td><strong>KAMMI</strong></td>
<td>Action Committee of Indonesian Muslim Students (<em>Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia</em>)</td>
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<td><strong>Khalifah</strong></td>
<td>Caliph or head of state (lit. successor)</td>
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<td><strong>Khilafah</strong></td>
<td>Caliphate system of government (lit. succession or transfer of power)</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Kiiai</strong></td>
<td>Traditional Muslim religious leaders or teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KPU</strong></td>
<td>General Elections Commission (<em>Komisi Pemilihan Umum</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Madthab</strong></td>
<td>One of the schools of Islamic law (pl. <em>madthaahib</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Majlis al-Sha’b</strong></td>
<td>People’s Assembly or parliament</td>
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<td><strong>Marji’yyah</strong></td>
<td>Frame of reference</td>
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<td><strong>Ma’ruf</strong></td>
<td>Right</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Masyumi</strong></td>
<td>Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims (<em>Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia</em>)</td>
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<td><strong>MB</strong></td>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood (<em>al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MPR</strong></td>
<td>People’s Consultative Assembly (<em>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mufti</strong></td>
<td>Islamic jurist</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Murabbi</strong></td>
<td>Educator</td>
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<td><strong>Naql</strong></td>
<td>Primary Islamic texts</td>
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<td><strong>Nasab</strong></td>
<td>Line of descent (also <em>hasab</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nass</strong></td>
<td>Conclusive divine ruling</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NDP</strong></td>
<td>National Democratic Party (<em>al-Hizb al-Watani al-Dimograt</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NU</strong></td>
<td>Nahdlatul Ulama (Renaissance of Islamic Scholars)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PAN</strong></td>
<td>National Mandate Party (<em>Partai Amanat Nasional</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pancasila</strong></td>
<td>Five principles: <em>kebangsaan</em> (nationalism); <em>perikemanusiaan</em> (humanism); <em>mufakat</em> (deliberative democracy); <em>kesejahteraan sosial</em> (social justice); and <em>ketuhanan</em> (belief in God)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parmusi</strong></td>
<td>Indonesian Muslims’ Party (<em>Partai Muslimin Indonesia</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PBB</strong></td>
<td>Crescent and Star Party (<em>Partai Bulan Bintang</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI-P</td>
<td>Indonesia’s Democratic Party struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perti</td>
<td>Association of Islamic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PII</td>
<td>Indonesian Islamic Youth (Pelajar Islam Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PK</td>
<td>Justice Party (Partai Keadilan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKB</td>
<td>National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKS</td>
<td>Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNI</td>
<td>Indonesian Nationalist Party (Partai National Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priyayi</td>
<td>Aristocratic class of Javanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAC</td>
<td>Political Parties Affairs Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Islamic Union Party (Partai Sarekat Islam)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSII</td>
<td>Islamic Union Party of Indonesia (Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia Pedoman, Penghayatan dan)</td>
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<td>P4</td>
<td>Guidance to the Comprehension and Implementation of Pancasila (Pengamalan Pancasila)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qadi</td>
<td>Judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qutriyah</td>
<td>Territorial (state)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Revolutionary Command Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformasi</td>
<td>Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahifah</td>
<td>(Lit. paper) A historical document written by the Prophet known as the Constitution of Madinah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santri</td>
<td>Devout Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarekat Islam</td>
<td>Islamic Union (SI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shari‘ah</td>
<td>Islamic law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheikh</td>
<td>Islamic preacher or scholar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shirk</td>
<td>Polytheism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shura</td>
<td>Mutual consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sirah</td>
<td>Biography of the Prophet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunnah</td>
<td>Traditions and sayings of the Prophet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tagamumu'</td>
<td>Progressive National Unionist Party (Hizb al-Tagamumu’ al-Watani al-Taqadomi al-Wahdwawi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarbiyah</td>
<td>Islamic moral education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawhid</td>
<td>Monotheism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ummah</td>
<td>Muslim community (or universal community in general)</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Ulama</td>
<td>Islamic scholars (sing. ‘alim)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usrah</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usul al fiqh</td>
<td>Foundations of Islamic jurisprudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usul al-din</td>
<td>Fundamentals of religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wajib</td>
<td>Compulsory or religious obligation</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. General Background

The dawn of the twenty-first century has witnessed the revival of the discussion about the prospects for democratic transitions in Muslim-majority countries. The September 11 attacks on the United States and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq have brought the challenge of Islamic activism to the heart of this discussion. During the last decade, it has become widely recognized that indiscriminate repression and exclusion of the politically motivated Islamic movements from the political process in Muslim-majority countries “breeds fanaticism”, while political engagement and inclusion, however, encourages moderation and “give and take”. Accordingly, political violence and radicalism have, to a significant extent, found their fertile soil in authoritarian, repressive environments. Whereas few Muslim-majority states, most notably Indonesia, have managed to move ahead with the process of democratizing their political systems, Arab authoritarian rulers, however, have not been acting accordingly. They have rather disregarded all domestic and international appeals, standing firm against any genuine efforts for democratic reform. The peculiar conditions that enabled most Muslim rulers, amongst them almost all Arab rulers, to build resilient authoritarian

1 Naguib Mahfouz, “Brothers in the Parliament,” al-Ahram Weekly, no. 772, 8–14 December, 2005; Angel M. Rabasa et al., The Muslim World after 9/11, Santa Monica: RAND, 2004, p. 107; Graham Fuller and Ian Lesser contend that “it would be dangerous for Western policy makers to conclude that the crushing of these [Islamic] movements by the state represents a solution...” insisting that they “reflect deep-seated political, economic, and societal problems; repressed and underground, Islamic movements in turn tend to be viewed by much of the Muslim public as the only answer to their societies’ predicament.” Graham E. Fuller, and Ian O. Lesser, A Sense of Siege: the Geopolitics of Islam and the West, Boulder: Westview Press, 1995, pp. 165–166.
regimes that successfully defy “any linear model of democratization” remain a highly problematic issue in the literature on democratization.3

From the introduction of Sukarno’s “Guided Democracy” (1949–66) up until the fall of Suharto’s “New Order” regime in May 1998, the Indonesian political landscape had shared the most significant characteristics common to many Arab authoritarian regimes. During this period, studies on the prospects for democratization in Indonesia and the Arab world were discouraged as observers and political analysts became accustomed to the longevity of the rulers and the continuity of the authoritarian regimes in these two regions.4 Despite rigorous modernization and development projects carried out by Indonesian and Arab autocratic rulers, political reform remained largely aloof from Suharto’s New Order regime, and it continues to be so in most Arab countries. The fall of Suharto in 1998 triggered dramatic democratic transformations in Indonesia; free and fair general elections have been frequently held, new political parties have been formed, and the freedom of expression and the press has become largely guaranteed.5 By contrast in the Arab world, the persistence of authoritarianism, especially after the deaths (in 1999 and 2000) of King Hussein of Jordan, King Hassan II of Morocco, Amir Isa of Bahrain and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria, has disappointed many political observers who expressed optimism about the prospects for democratization.6 Hence, despite some political openings in a number of Arab countries, such as Jordan, Morocco, Egypt and Kuwait, political participation, according to the United Nation’s Arab Human Development Report, remained limited and the “transfer of power through the ballot box is not a common phenomenon”.7 What the Arab states “have in common”, according to a more recent report, “is that power is concentrated at the tip of the executive pyramid and that the margin of freedom permitted (which can swiftly be

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6 Volker Perthes (ed.), *Arab Elites*, p. 4.
reduced) has no effect on the state’s firm and absolute grip on power”.\textsuperscript{8} Why has democratization become a strong impulse in some Muslim countries, such as Indonesia, but effectively remained almost non-existent in the Arab world? Such a question is, in fact, a typical concern of democratization studies.

Although the urgent need for democratization in the Muslim world has been acknowledged and urged by many domestic and international observers, the rise of politically motivated Islamic movements has prompted some intellectuals and Western policy-makers to advocate their exclusion from the political process.\textsuperscript{9} Such an exclusionist stance, which ignores the rich diversity of Islamic manifestations and conceptions, has been justified on the assumption that Islamic political activism or culture rejects liberal and secular ideals.\textsuperscript{10} The extent to which the Indonesian democratization process has been affected by the active participation of various Islamic organizations and parties has been frequently discussed and disputed in the literature on Indonesia’s democracy.\textsuperscript{11} The impact of Islamic political activism on the transition and consolidation of democracy in Muslim-majority countries is a hotly disputed topic, especially with regard to countries in which Islamic movements have emerged as the most viable social and political forces that are striving for effective political participation.

The birth of modern Islamic movements goes back to the first three decades of the twentieth century. By the turn of the twenty-first century, these movements were firmly established as potent political forces in many Muslim countries. Though often simplistically depicted by the media as monolithic and static, Islamic movements are no less diverse than the political circumstances and conditions in which they have been


evolving; nor are they less dynamic than the constantly changing nature of political reality.\textsuperscript{12} Regardless of whether or not contemporary Islamic movements impede democratic transitions in their respective countries, considering their increasingly rising popularity and social strength, they will most likely play significant roles in the political process in many parts of the Muslim world in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, Islamic movements, especially since the attacks of September 11 2001, have been widely associated with extremism and, to a large extent, “regarded as dangerous and hostile”, as the international media and “policy makers in all countries have paid disproportionate attention to the violent organizations” that only make a small fraction of these vast and diverse movements.\textsuperscript{13} While violent groups, though small in number, can inflict enormous harm, they are less likely to make a large impact on the future of democratization in Indonesia and the Arab world. Consequently, this thesis is primarily concerned with the mainstream Islamic parties and organizations that have been unequivocally renouncing violence, pursuing the realization of their goals through peaceful means and striving for political participation. These forces are arguably expected to shape, in some way or another, the political future of many Muslim-majority countries, such as Indonesia and some Arabic speaking countries that have strong, politically-motivated Islamic movements.

Whereas secular nationalist forces have dominated the political scene in Indonesia and many Arab countries during most of the post-independence era, Islamic movements and organizations, on the other hand, have been increasingly evolving as the most conspicuous political opposition forces. Given the longevity, diversity and dynamic nature of the rivalry between Islamic movements and secular nationalist regimes in Indonesia and the Arab world, any investigation which aims at analyzing this contentious issue would be less than systematic unless the historical developments and social contexts were taken into careful consideration. Islamic movements are very diverse in their ideological and organizational outlook. With their dual characteristics as

\textsuperscript{12} Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, “Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the Middle East, and Indonesia,” \textit{The Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World}, Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, analysis paper no. 9 (October), 2005, p. IV.

socio-religious/sociopolitical organizations and their commitment to spreading a body of beliefs and practices, Islamic movements should not be treated as merely political players. In many cases, their diversified nature reflects certain political conditions. For instance, under different political structures and conditions many Islamic organizations have been relatively tolerated but not legally allowed to form political parties (the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood under Hosni Mubarak’s regime), were forced to either withdraw from politics or adopt the state’s secular ideology (Indonesian Islamic organizations under Suharto’s New Order regime), or were persecuted and utterly excluded from political participation (the Consultative Counsel of Indonesian Muslims or Masyumi of Indonesia under Sukarno and Suharto’s regimes; Egyptian and Syrian Muslim Brotherhood movements under ‘Abd al-Nasser’s and the Ba’thist regimes, respectively).  

Furthermore, since their establishment in the early twentieth century, the two mass Muslim organizations Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) have changed course in relation to their involvement in political activism many times. For example, despite their consistent focus on social, religious and educational activities, these organizations (or many of their prominent leaders) joined large political organizations (Masyumi and the United Development Party or PPP) and directly (NU) or indirectly formed or supported political parties (National Awakening Party or PKB and National Mandate Party or PAN). NU was actually registered as a formal political party during the Sukarno and Suharto regimes before Suharto’s decision to forcibly merge all Islamic parties into the PPP. Hence, the diverse Islamic movements, including missionary organizations that influence public perceptions and provide seedbeds for Islamic political activism, have indeed played, and will most likely continue to play, a significant role in the political development in Indonesia and the Arab world.

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15 Greg Fealy, “Islamic Politics: A Rising or Declining Force?”; Zifirdaus Adnan, “Islamic Religion: Yes, Islamic (political) Ideology: No!”
Consequently, any serious attempt at assessing the impact of Islamic activism on political development and democratization should not be limited to Islamic formal political parties that explicitly insist on the establishment of an Islamic state in their written platform. Such a narrow approach which fails to take into careful consideration the dynamic nature and diversified organizational outlook of Islamic movements would be less than systematic, to say the least.

1.2. Aims, Working Hypotheses and Research Questions

This thesis aims to examine the possibility of the correlation between Islam and democracy and the impact of Islamic activism on the democratization process in Muslim-majority countries. Focussing on Indonesia, the most populous Muslim-majority country in the world, and Egypt, the most populous Muslim-majority country in the Arabic-speaking world, the thesis seeks to unfold some of the important factors and conditions that have been, in some way or another, responsible for the success or failure of democratization in these two important Muslim-populated countries. The thesis is especially concerned with the way in which Islam and Islamic political activism influence particular patterns of political development and behaviour. Particularly, it seeks to explore the way Islamic political movements respond to repression and political exclusion and the strategies they adopt to effect political change under certain conditions.

In order to provide a systematic account of the extent to which Islamic structures and actors in Egypt and Indonesia have facilitated or obstructed the democratization process, the investigation not only probes recent political strategies and choices adopted by the relevant actors, but also historical and ideational developments and structures. Accordingly, it endeavours to pay due attention to the historical development and conflict between the secular nationalist and Islamic identities in order to explore how the dichotomy between these two influential currents affected national unity and democracy throughout the post-independence era.

To keep the research focussed and systematic, the study proposes to work on several hypotheses that guide the research questions. The main hypothesis, in light of which the thesis aims to develop and articulate its general conclusions, serves to link the various
parts of the thesis and hold them together as a coherent body. The related or supplementary hypotheses that support the main hypothesis are examined in different parts of the thesis. The findings and conclusions arrived at in light of these supplementary hypotheses help to make the research more systematic as they provide depth of relevant knowledge and, thus, reinforce the general conclusions of the thesis.

The main hypothesis is:

(1) that the materialization of an “Islamic democracy”, which upholds Islamic and modern democratic values and principles, is not an alien or remote possibility.

The supplementary hypotheses are:

(2) that the values of democracy can be articulated as fully compatible with Islamic doctrine where Islam is not inherently antithetical to democracy;

(3) that the repression and exclusion of Islamic activism, rather than representing a solution to Muslim societies’ predicaments, only exasperates tension and fosters extremism;

(4) that the democratization process will not likely progress in Egypt without the full inclusion of the socially rooted Muslim Brotherhood movement in the formal political process; and

(5) that the active participation of Islamic actors in the Indonesian democratization process seems to be consolidating, which demonstrates that neither Islam nor Islamic activism obstructs the process of democratic transition and consolidation in Muslim-majority countries.

The thesis attempts to test and verify these hypotheses by focusing on the following questions:

(1) Does Islam or Islamic activism hinder democratization and strengthen authoritarianism in Muslim-majority countries?
(2) In what ways did the promotion of a uniform nationalist identity affect national unity and democratic development in Egypt and Indonesia in the post-independence era?

Given the popularity and rootedness of Islamic movements in Egyptian and Indonesian societies, is it possible that a democratically stable political structure can be developed in Egypt and Indonesia with these forces forcefully suppressed and excluded from the political process?

Can democratization progress in Egypt without the full and formal inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the political process?

Will the Egyptian regime tolerate the possibility of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, the only viable opposition force in Egypt, becoming an effective catalyst for political reform?

In what ways have the mainstream Islamic actors and parties influenced the democratization process in Indonesia?

To what extent has the full inclusion of the Islamic parties in the formal political structure been favourable, or unfavourable, to the process of democratic transition and consolidation in post-Suharto Indonesia?

To what extent have the post-Suharto Islamic parties and leaders demonstrated a consistent commitment to the democratic rules of the game?

**Significance and Approach**

As the discussion of the literature in chapter three demonstrates, in their effort to explain the factors that lead to democratic transition at certain points in time, most studies on democratization typically tend to adopt either a structure-oriented or actor-oriented approach. Structure-oriented studies try to explain the democratization process in terms of cultural or social conditions that they believe to be favourable for democracy, while actor-oriented or transition studies focus on the choices and strategies
of political actors during a short period of political transition. In general, the
discussion of the literature shows that studies on democratization provide inconclusive
evidence of why some countries manage to go in a democratic direction and others do not. As such, explanations as to why no Arab countries, despite variations in the nature
of political institutions, forms of Islamic political activism, levels of modernization and
income per capita, have so far experienced a successful democratic transition are still
less than satisfactory. No systematic study has so far attempted to compare the Egyptian
and Indonesian political developments for the sole purpose of assessing the sort of
impact that Islamic activism makes upon the process of democratic transition, despite
striking similarities in social, historical and political structures between these two
countries, especially in the post-independence era.

While elements and factors that trigger democratic transitions may vary from one
country or region to another, this thesis assumes that it is difficult to assess, with a
representative degree of generalization, whether political actors or certain historical,
social or political structures/conditions are the primary factors responsible for the
success or failure of democratic development. Therefore, the study recognizes that an
approach which ignores or even relegates any of these factors to a subordinate category
will most likely be less than systematic. It has been suggested that a systematic analysis
of democratization requires a holistic approach which combines diverse “spheres of
analysis” in a way that allows comprehensive historical, cultural and social insights.

While insufficient in explaining the process of political transition, the actor-oriented
approach may gain analytic strength “when placed on some kind of structural
scaffolding that imparts a motif to political action”. Consequently, in order to be able
to provide a systematic investigation, this thesis takes an eclectic approach which
coalesces “actor-oriented” with “structure-oriented” analyses, acknowledging that

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“actors and their behaviour cannot be examined in a meaningful way devoid of structural and institutional contexts”.19

Accordingly, the investigation in the thesis combines three basic approaches. First, it takes an ideational approach as it traces the origins and developments of certain Islamic political ideas and precedents that correlate with modern democracy and shape the political attitudes and stances of contemporary Islamic political actors in various ways. Second, in order to provide a comprehensive insight into the development of various modern social and political structures that directly influenced democracy in Egypt and Indonesia, the thesis adopts a longitudinal historical approach, probing the development of modern nationalist identities and political structures in Egypt and Indonesia in the post-independence era. The third approach is the transitional or actor-oriented approach, where the investigation primarily focusses on the choices and strategies of relevant political actors concerning the struggle for democracy in Egypt and Indonesia during the last decade or so.

**Methodology**

Generally speaking, there are three predominant methods in the literature on democratization: many-country studies, few-country studies and single-country studies. The scope of countries involved in the analysis determines the level of conceptual abstraction required. In *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, for example, Samuel Huntington seeks to explain why and how democratic transitions occurred across the globe during the third wave of democratization which occurred between 1974 and 1989.20 Using a many-country comparative method with such a comprehensive scope, Huntington resorts to an extremely high level of conceptual abstraction in order to make his research manageable. As a result, as Landman indicates, most of the explanatory factors for democratic transitions that Huntington provides do not “receive more than impressionistic and anecdotal support”.

19 Volker Perthes (ed.), *Arab Elites*, p. 301.
which demonstrates the disadvantages and “limitations of qualitative global comparisons”. 21

Few or limited-country studies, on the other hand, require less conceptual abstraction as more intensive examinations of the cases under study can be attained by allowing the inclusion of contextual factors, such as history and culture. A good example of few-country studies is Najib Ghadbian’s *Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World*, which investigates the stumbling progress of democratization in the Arab world by surveying the region’s colonial history and providing a thorough examination of Arab identity and political development. Dismissing most arguments for and against the method of taking the Arab world as a single unit of analysis as “a reflection of ideological bias”, Ghadbian asserts that this method can be justified on empirical grounds. He argues that while authoritarian forms of government and Islamic resurgence are two common aspects shared, to varying extents, by almost all Arab countries, the choice of taking the Arab world as a unit within which these common trends are mainly investigated is empirically justified. 22

The third method, which, though to a lesser extent, has been adopted by some studies on democratization, is the single-country study. While it allows very intensive and in-depth analyses, this method is mainly useful for descriptive studies that facilitate the development of new classifications, testing of existing theories and production of new hypotheses. However, single-country studies suffer from lack of credibility in making generalizations applicable to other countries regardless of how “well intentioned and well designed” they are. 23 A good example of single-country studies is Anders Uhlin’s *Indonesia and the “Third Wave of Democratisation”: The Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World*. 24 In this in-depth case study, Uhlin examines the impact of the transnational diffusion of democratic ideas on the pro-democracy actors and discourses in Indonesia. Recognizing the limitations of this method, Uhlin asserts

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that his study of Indonesia does not “attempt at broader generalisations”. However, although he differentiates between “analytic generalization” and “statistical generalization” insisting that his study is intended to contribute to the former, by promising to come up with general inferences about “the process of diffusion” and the way “democratic ideas are diffused”, he does not seem to totally escape the problem of arriving at unsubstantiated generalizations.

1.4.1. The Method Adopted by This Thesis

This thesis adopts a limited-country qualitative case study method. The thesis conducts an in-depth investigation of two country cases, namely Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country, and Egypt, the most populous Arab country. By allowing the inclusion of detailed historical and contextual analyses, this method helps to maximize the advantages and minimize the weaknesses inherent in many-country and single-country studies. In fact, it allows the investigation to balance the trade-off relationship involved in case studies, where the inclusion of many cases comes at the expense of detail and depth of understanding, whereas the restriction of the investigation to a single case, however, provides weaker causal inferences. This method actually allows a broader generalizability by including two cases representing Arabic and non-Arabic-speaking Muslim countries. It also empowers the investigation by depth of detail which facilitates the exploration of “how the context is structured and how the key agents under study fit into it—interact with it and constitute it”. Moreover, the method of including two country-cases while adopting a longitudinal approach allows the inclusion of more sub-cases. Therefore, by examining the political developments in these two cases throughout the post-independence era, the thesis explores the strategies and attitudes of Islamic actors under six different political structures. Consequently, three political structures are examined in each country-case. In Indonesia, they include Sukarno’s Guided Democracy, Suharto’s New Order and the post-Suharto democratization process. With regard to Egypt, the study investigates

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25 Ibid., p. 5.
26 Ibid., p. 54.
27 Ibid., p. 3.
‘Abd al-Nasser’s Arab Nationalist Revolutionary regime, Sadat’s *Infitah* (openness) policy and Mubarak’s State-Controlled Liberalization. The later and most recent political structures of each country case, however, are given more considerable attention.

**1.4.2. Primary Sources**

The thesis utilized a large amalgamation of important sources of information and primary material, including Islamic primary texts and historical sources, as well as various relevant local and international organizations, news agencies and media outlets. The Islamic and historical sources that are used in the investigation include, but are not limited to, the *sirah* (biography) of the Prophet and *al-Khulapha’ al-Rashidun* (the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs), classical Islamic literature, particularly from the Abbasid era, and the writings of the pioneer Islamic reform thinkers of the nineteenth century. Modern history books on colonialism, Islamic movements and nationalism in Indonesia and the Arab world were also consulted in the investigation.

With regard to contemporary political developments, government policies, Islamic activism and other recent relevant developments in Egypt and Indonesia, a very wide range of sources was utilized. For example, original documents, such as the constitutions of Egypt and Indonesia, political and other relevant laws, political declarations and party platforms are analysed and discussed. In addition to the utilization of local and international human rights organizations’ and electoral observers’ reports, numerous informal interviews and discussions with political and human rights activists were conducted. Moreover, various media outlets provided valuable sources of information, especially local newspapers and magazines, such as *al-Masry al-Youm*, *al-Ahram Weekly*, and *al-Masryyoun*, of Egypt, as well as the *Jakarta Post* and *Tempo* of Indonesia. Other important sources, such as official internet websites of relevant political parties and Islamic organizations, also provided additional insight into the research.
Organization of the Study

The thesis consists of nine chapters including an introduction and conclusion, as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

The introduction provides a general background to the arguments of the thesis and particularly explains the research problem. It elaborates the aims and significance of the thesis, sets out several working hypotheses and research questions and discusses the methods and strategies employed by the study.

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework: Democracy and Islamic Activism

This chapter explores and critically discusses various conceptions and definitions of democracy and Islamic activism. It develops and adopts specific criteria that allow the investigation to provide a systematic evaluation of democratic governance based on empirical grounds rather than value laden or substantive conceptions. It also discusses various forms of Islamic activism and identifies the principle Islamic actors examined in the study.

Chapter Three: Democratization Studies: A Literature Review

This chapter provides a critical assessment of the literature on democratization. It identifies and analyzes the main theoretical approaches that dominate democratization studies, with special focus on studies concerned with Muslim countries, particularly Indonesia and the Arab world.

Chapter Four: The Possibility of Islamic Democracy

This chapter examines the relationship between Islam and democracy and evaluates the plausibility of the idea of “Islamic democracy” by exploring and discussing particular aspects of compatibility between Islamic and democratic values and principles. It particularly identifies political precedents and aspects that by and large correlate with
modern democratic governance in the formative history of Islam as well as in classical and modern Islamic thought and literature.

**Chapter Five:** Identity Politics and Authoritarianism in Egypt

This chapter examines the emergence of pan-Arab nationalism and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood movement as well as the Egyptian political structures in the post-independence era. It highlights some of the important factors that hindered democratic development in the Arab world, in general, and in Egypt in particular. The conflict between Islamic and Arab nationalist forces and the impact of this struggle on democracy in Egypt are particularly emphasized in this chapter.

**Chapter Six:** State-Controlled Liberalization without Democratization

This chapter examines President Mubarak’s fluctuating political liberalization strategy and the exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood from formal politics, especially after its emergence as the most potent opposition force in parliament in the 2005 elections. The chapter offers an assessment of the prospects of democratization in Egypt without the full inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood in the political process.

**Chapter Seven:** Democracy and the Politics of Identity in Indonesia

This chapter investigates the impact of identity politics on national unity and democracy in Indonesia. It examines the conflict between Indonesia’s nationalist and Islamic forces and the subsequent abortion of the early democratic process. Suharto’s promotion of a uniform, secular nationalist identity by coercive means and his suppressive and then accommodative policies towards Islamic forces are also discussed in this chapter.

**Chapter Eight:** Indonesia’s Democratization: From Transition to Consolidation

This chapter discusses and analyses the extent to which the active participation of Islamic actors in the political process has facilitated or slowed the Indonesian democratization process. This chapter also provides a critical assessment of the prospects and challenges of democratic consolidation and the role Islamic parties could play in this regard.
Chapter Nine: General Conclusions

The concluding chapter summarizes the significant findings of the thesis and evaluates the general conclusions arrived at in light of its working hypotheses and research questions. It also predicts future trends with regard to the processes of democratic development and consolidation in Egypt and Indonesia. In addition, it notes some of the broader implications of the findings for the Muslim world in general. Finally, specific recommendations about the need for further research in certain areas are provided.
Chapter Two

Conceptual Framework: Democracy and Islamic Activism

2.1. Introduction

Whether perceived as an ongoing process of socio-political transformation or as a sudden short-term political transition, democratization always refers to political changes that move towards democratic forms of government. Studying these political changes and assessing how close to democracy a certain political system is requires the development of an objective and coherent set of criteria for determining what constitutes a democracy, what characterizes a democratic regime and what makes a particular political system more democratic than another. Most importantly, these criteria in fact become even more indispensable when it comes to the determination of what forms of Islamic activism are or are not compatible with what kind of democracy.

The prospects of viable reconciliation between “Islamic activism” and democracy are another hotly debated issue, which largely stems from definitional problems and a lack of a universally acceptable conceptual framework. Although Islamic movements are significantly diverse and dynamic, Islamic activism, which generally refers to any Islamic-oriented activities and movements, is widely depicted as extreme and violent or hostile, especially in the Western media. However, recent scholarship on Islam and Islamic activism demonstrates a new development towards a deeper understanding and increased awareness of the sophistication and diversity of Islamic activism. It also shows a heightened alertness to the danger of depicting Islamism “as a monolithic ideological movement spreading from the centre of the Muslim world, the Middle East, to Muslim countries around the globe”.

Therefore, it has generally become recognizable that a new approach and “discriminating strategy that takes account of the diversity of outlooks within political Islamism” is urgently needed, as the tendency of

1 Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, “Between the Global and the Local,” p. IV.
“many Western observers and policymakers” to group “all forms of Islamism together, brand them as radical and treat them as hostile” is extremely misleading.²

While addressing these somewhat elusive conceptual issues remains of great importance for facilitating a cohesive conceptual framework for empirical investigations into the process of democratization, this chapter aims to facilitate the establishment of a coherent conceptual framework for the study of democratization in the Muslim world. Thus, before laying down the defining criteria and the form of Islamic activism adopted and examined in this thesis, this chapter discusses various conceptions and definitions of democracy and explores different forms of Islamic activism.

### 2.2. Conceptions and Definitions of Democracy

The predominance of democracy, in its various guises, as the most acceptable form of government, particularly after the demise of the socialist alternative, has been perceived by some scholars as the end of the history of political ideas. However, despite this somewhat uncontested acceptance, democracy remains one of the most contested and elusive concepts in modern social sciences. Therefore, the debate amongst political scientists over the essential constituents of the concept remains open. In particular, many idealistic and value-laden conceptions of democracy blur its practical dimension and often oversimplify its dynamic manifestations and variations, especially across historical epochs. An empirical examination and a close look at how actual democratic practices measure against normative expectations demonstrate that any attempt at providing a straightforward or absolute definition of democracy would be too simplistic. However, despite theoretical acknowledgements by many scholars and political scientists that democracy is an essentially contested or ‘appraisive’ concept, many intellectuals and policy makers adopt a value-laden discourse espousing democracy as a given or fixed concept.³ This is particularly the case when it comes to the discussion of the possible correlation between Islam and democracy and the possibility of Islamic

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political actors ever becoming accepted within the “community of democrats” without
discarding their Islamic-oriented political aspirations.

One of the most crucial points in this debate revolves around the issue of whether the
core element of democracy is the selection of political elites through elections, which
relegates the socio-economic and cultural realms to a secondary position, or it is rather
the power of the *demos/people* to have absolute control over their public space and the
process of decision-making. Generally, hardly anyone would dispute Abraham
Lincoln’s simple formulation that democracy is “government of the people, by the
people, for the people”. However, when it comes to the questions of who is included in
the concept of “the people”, in what way can every included citizen participate, and
what does rule encompass, sophisticated theorizations start to blur the clarity and
dislodge the straightforwardness of the concept. For Lincoln’s audience, the concept of
“the people” was exclusively reserved for white males, as women, Indians and Africans
were still utterly excluded from political participation. This is because the US
government, as Stephen Douglas insisted, “was established by white men for the benefit
of white men and their posterity forever, and should be administered by white men and
non others”. Even if we go back to the origins of democracy in the Greek city-states
around the 5th century BC, we find that the majority of the population, including
women, slaves and, sometimes, landless citizens were not allowed to participate in
voting, which indeed obscured the concept of “the people”.

As recently as 1971, Robert Dahl, in his book *Polyarchy*, argues that although “the
feminine half of the Swiss population is still excluded from national elections”, not
many people would dispute “the view that the Swiss regime is ‘highly democratic’”.

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He therefore contends that “polyarchy”\textsuperscript{10} hardly transcended to a “higher” stage of democracy anywhere, insisting, elsewhere, that since democracy “has meant different things to different people at different times and places”, it is questionable that we can “possibly agree on what it means today”.\textsuperscript{11} Consequently, rather than “meta-theorizing”, some scholars would argue that “problems that animate contemporary politics, including the continually contested question of what kind of democracy is most defensible” should be discussed.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{2.2.1. Maximal vs. Minimal Definitions of Democracy}

One of the most problematic issues is the determination of whether democracy is primarily a substantive way of life or rather a set of procedural rules. In this regard, two broad variants of conceptualization dominate most approaches to democracy: the “maximalist” definitions that stipulate “substantive” or comprehensive concepts encompassing social and economic aspects as defining criteria, and the “minimalist” or procedural definitions that are mostly concerned with the process of institutional arrangements.

Many scholars and political analysts alert us to the danger of associating democracy with elections, or what they call “the fallacy of electoralism”, arguing that elections, though necessary, are inadequate criteria for democracy, because, in addition to their vulnerability to manipulation, they “occur intermittently and only allow citizens to choose between the highly aggregated alternatives offered by political parties”.\textsuperscript{13} Many of the scholars who take this line of argument prefer maximalist, or expansive, definitions of democracy that emphasize broad substantive objectives according to which social and economic development are equated with democratic institutions. Democracy, according to the expansive definition, is “not simply about form or means; it is also about ends, which have to do with its inherent capacity to enhance

\textsuperscript{10} Dahl used the term ‘polyarchy’ as an alternative to democracy to protest that “no large system in the real world is fully democratized.” See ibid., p. 8.
Whereas maximalists reject procedural democracy on the ground that it fails to consider problems of social and economic inequalities, minimalists question the usefulness of maximalist definitions of democracy in empirical research. It is argued that by combining “substantive” all-encompassing concepts, maximalists conceptualize a democratic ideal the expectations of which transcend actual democratic experiences, depicting democracy as a panacea for all social ills.

With the continuous spread of the recent wave of democratization, scholars and analysts of democratic transitions are increasingly resorting to minimal and procedural definitions of democracy. They adopt this approach in order to meet the new conceptual challenge of applying the concept in various new settings, on the one hand, and to identify a dividing line that marks the end of the transition to democracy, on the other. According to the proponents of procedural definitions, who mostly follow the tradition of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert A. Dahl, democracy is a means that enables all citizens to participate in politics and effectively influence the outcome of the decision-making process. Schumpeter defines democracy as a method or a specific “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote”.15 Samuel P. Huntington draws the attention to the fact that “[s]erious problems of ambiguity and imprecision arise when democracy is defined in terms of either source of authority or purposes”.16 He emphasizes the fact that democracies “have a common institutional core that establishes their identity”, concluding that “[f]uzzy norms do not yield useful analysis. Elections, open, free, and fair, are the essence of democracy”.17

2.2.2. The Definition Adopted by This Thesis

The thesis basically adopts Robert Dahl’s conceptualization of democracy, which has been very influential in democratization studies since the publication of his book Polyarchy in 1971. His model has been found particularly instrumental for empirical research. By combining a broader conception of democracy with explicit institutional

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16 Samuel Huntington, The Third Wave, pp. 6–9.
17 Ibid.
requirements, this approach offers a precise analytical means which facilitates comparisons of completely different countries, and makes the distinction between democratic and non-democratic systems easier.\textsuperscript{18}

In his book \textit{On Democracy}, Dahl draws attention to the importance of distinguishing between ideals and actualities when discussing the concept of democracy.\textsuperscript{19} In order to make such a distinction clear, Dahl puts forward the question “what is democracy?”, which is primarily concerned with democratic ideals and goals, \textit{versus} the question of “what political institutions does democracy require?”, which seeks to identify the main elements of actual democratic governments.\textsuperscript{20} For the question of ideal, he provides five criteria of a democratic process against which the achievements of democratic institutions can be compared and measured: (1) “\textit{Effective participation}” that guarantees “equal and effective opportunities” for promoting or disseminating ideas and views on policies; (2) “[\textit{v}oting equality]” in regard to both casting and counting of votes; (3) “[\textit{e}nlightened understanding]” of applicable “alternative policies” and their likely consequences; (4) “[\textit{c}ontrol of the agenda]” must exclusively rest with the members as a whole; and, finally, (5) “[\textit{i}nclusion of adults]” (italics original).\textsuperscript{21} Although Dahl acknowledges that democratic ideals can never be perfectly realized and that “no state has ever possessed a government that fully measured up to the criteria of a democratic process”, he maintains that these ideal standards are useful, not only for measuring “the performance of actual associations that claim to be democratic”, but also “as guides for shaping and reshaping concrete arrangements, constitutions, practices, and political institutions”.\textsuperscript{22} For the question of democratic actuality, Dahl presents a more concrete institutional structure according to which the “minimal requirements” for a large-scale democracy must include six political institutions:

1) \textit{Elected officials} [Accordingly, representatives must enjoy constitutional control over the decision-making process].

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., pp. 28–29.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., pp. 37–38.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., pp. 29–42.
2) *Free, fair and frequent elections*… in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.

3) *Freedom of expression*… including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socioeconomic order, and the prevailing ideology.

4) *Access to alternative sources of information* [e.g. independent media].

5) *Associational autonomy*… including independent political parties and interest groups.

6) *Inclusive citizenship*. No adult permanently residing in the country and subject to its laws can be denied the rights that are available to others… (all italics are original).\(^{23}\)

Accordingly, the principle criteria for measuring and evaluating the democratic process in this study are *frequent, free and fair elections, inclusive citizenship, equality before the law, freedom of expression, independence of the media* and *associational autonomy*. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that, in democratic regimes, the political process should not be directly controlled by the military or one ruling party. Hence, whenever the political process and its outcome are not practically controlled by the majority of the populace through their democratically elected officials, a political system does not meet the criterion for democratization according to the conceptual framework of this study. This is simply because otherwise the whole process remains subject to the whims of the rulers who can virtually reverse it whenever it contradicts their own interests, without any fear of dangerous repercussions.

Only with such concrete criteria can the compatibility between democracy and Islam or any particular forms of Islamic activism be empirically measured. Given the vastness and diversity of Islamic activism, it is obligatory that we define the form/s of Islamic activism investigated in this study.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., pp. 85–86.
2.3. Defining Islamic Activism

Recent scholarship on Islam and Islamic activism demonstrates a new development towards a deeper understanding and increased awareness of the sophistication and diversity of Islamic activism. Many scholars have warned of the consequences of the misconception of Islamism “as a monolithic ideological movement spreading from the centre of the Muslim world, the Middle East, to Muslim countries around the globe”.24 Therefore, it has generally become recognizable that a new approach and “discriminating strategy that takes account of the diversity of outlooks within political Islamism” is urgently needed, as the tendency of “many Western observers and policymakers” to group “all forms of Islamism together, brand them as radical and treat them as hostile” is extremely misleading.25

The problem of understanding Islamic activism, as such, has largely been owing to lack of definitional clarity and sweeping or indiscriminate terminology. For instance, terms such as “Islamic fundamentalism”, “radical Islamism”, and “militant Islamism” have been used interchangeably, often with sweeping generalizations, in connection with extremism, fanaticism or terrorism. During the 1980s and 1990s some scholars sought to devise widely publicized labels, such as “Islamic fundamentalism” as a conceptual or analytical tool that could be used as “a comparative construct encompassing movements within [various] religious traditions”.26 However, many scholars have rejected the term “fundamentalism” for empirical and ideological reasons. On the one hand, the term blurs the variation and complexity of Islamic activism and reduces it to some kind of a stereotyping analogy “[b]ecause of its indiscriminate deployment by the media and similar circles”.27 On the other hand, it carries offensive connotations linked to American protestant literalism and inerrancy, which portrays all Muslims who “regardless of rite, sect, or piety, essentially believe in the inerrancy [and letter] of the Qur’an as the revealed word of Allah” as “fundamentalists”.28 Consequently, as the term

24 Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, “Between the Global and the Local,” p. IV.
“fundamentalism” has been discredited as a reliable concept or category for comparative scholarly research, scholars and political analysts are increasingly resorting to practical terms, such as “Islamic activism”, “political Islamists” or “Islamists”, which reflect the goals and consider the agendas of the diverse Islamic movements.29

Many scholars and political analysts, especially those who take a global or interregional perspective, tend to adopt a broader conception of Islamism which allows sub-categorizations in order to link the concept to local considerations and take into account the specific characteristics of different movements. The International Crisis Group (ICG), for example, has recently adopted a new definition according to which “Islamism” and “Islamic activism” are taken synonymously to refer to “the active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws, or policies that are held to be Islamic in character”.30 Distinguishing the Shi’ite from the Sunni streams of Islamic activism, the ICG identifies three distinctive forms within the Sunni stream:

_**Political:**_ the Islamic political movements… whose purpose is to attain political power at the national level… generally accept the nation-state, operate within its constitutional framework, eschew violence (except under conditions of foreign occupation), articulate a reformist rather than revolutionary vision and invoke universal democratic norms...

_**Missionary:**_ political power is not an objective; the overriding purpose is the preservation of the Muslim identity and the Islamic faith and moral order against the forces of unbelief…

_**Jihadi:**_ the Islamic armed struggle… internal (combating nominally Muslim regimes considered impious); irredentist (fighting to redeem land ruled by non-Muslims or under occupation); and global (combating the West) (italics original).31

An Islamist, according to this categorization, could be any person who falls within any of the above currents that are not necessarily mutually exclusive, especially with regard to the first two categories. By adopting this broad definition of Islamism, the ICG and


31 Ibid., p. I.
others have discarded the earlier narrow definition, which restricts the term exclusively to explicit political activism. According to the ICG, this approach helps to avoid presumptions which purport that “Islam per se [is] not political, whereas insofar as Islam is inherently interested in matters of governance, in fact it is”, or that “all forms of Islamism are equally political, whereas in fact, there are significant distinctions in this regard between those forms that privilege political activism, missionary activity or violence”. One of the important aspects of this approach is that it reflects the practical programs and activities of the relevant movements, rather than their ideologies. The term Islamist, as such, should not be exclusively reserved to Islamic political activists who adhere to a comprehensive ideology with a totalitarian vision of an “Islamic state”. An Islamist can be any Muslim who believes that Islamic teachings include elements that have to do with regulating social and political life. This conception, as Graham E. Fuller asserts, “embraces a broad spectrum that includes both radical and moderate, violent and peaceful, traditional and modern, democratic and antidemocratic”.

On the other hand, in their investigation of the diffusion of Islamic influence to Indonesia from Arab countries, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy argue that although the term “Islamism” remains useful in various cases, it does not seem very practical “as a label for those groups that do not see Islam as a political ideology and largely eschew political activism - even if their activism sometimes has political implications”. Bubalo and Fealy stress the importance of avoiding labels that brand “Islamists simply as radicals or moderates” and fail to distinguish the “more politically focussed” movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, from the “more religiously focussed” groups that may include violent groups, such as al-Qa’ida, and non-violent salafi or other missionary groups. Alternatively, they prefer the term “neo-fundamentalism”, formulated by the French scholar Olivier Roy, which does not seem to escape the weaknesses associated with the term “fundamentalism”, as will be demonstrated. While Islamists emphasize Shari’ah

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32 See, for example, Are Knudsen, Political Islam in the Middle East, p. 2.
35 Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, “Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the Middle East, and Indonesia,” p. iv.
36 Ibid., pp. iv–v.
rule or the establishment of an Islamic state and try to achieve their goal by peaceful political means, Bubalo and Fealy insist, neo-fundamentalists, who “broadly share a conservative, literalist approach to Islam”, basically “call for a return to what they argue are the essential tenets of the religion” and “tend to eschew political activism, or any form of organization”.37

Furthermore, Bubalo and Fealy also emphasize that there is a tendency to portray or misconceive Islamic activism in the Middle East as uniquely radical, while, despite its “long history of violent minority radicalism which owed little to external influences”, Islamic activism in Indonesia “is still regarded as predominantly tolerant and pluralistic”.38 Consequently, Bubalo and Fealy are inclined to recognize that relatively similar variants of Islamic activism exist both in Indonesia and the Middle East. For instance, they believe that “[e]lements of Muslim Brotherhood thinking helped the Islamist Prosperous and Welfare Party (PKS) play a positive role in Indonesian politics”.39 Moreover, they view the positive role that Indonesian Islamists have played in the democratization process as a reflection of “the growing understanding among Islamist parties around the world that to be successful they need to adapt their political programs to incorporate the everyday concerns of voters”.40

In any case, this discussion reflects a general recognition of the need for clear and discriminating categorizations that take into account the objectives and the strategies of different Islamic movements and organizations, especially with regards to violent groups that must never be confused with those who pursue their goal by peaceful means, be it political, social or merely spiritual. While it may be useful in particular cases, the term “neo-fundamentalism” will not be adopted in this study for empirical reasons. In addition to the shortcomings discussed above with respect to “fundamentalism”, this term blurs the distinction between violent and non-violent anti-democracy groups (where it includes salafi and jihadi-salafi), on the one hand, and excludes other non-violent anti-democracy groups, such as Hizb al-Tahrir, on the other.

37 Ibid., pp. 10–11.
38 Ibid., pp. 15–16.
39 Ibid., pp. vi; iv–v.
40 Ibid.
Therefore, the term does not seem to be appropriate in relation to democracy, which is the main concern of this thesis.

### 2.3.1. Forms of Islamic Activism Investigated in This Thesis

For the purpose of this thesis, the categorization of Islamic activism posited by the ICG, namely the political, missionary and *jihadi*, appears to be more useful, though the different forms of political activism should also be distinguished. As such, this study identifies two forms of Islamic activism within the political category: formalist and non-formalist Islamic parties or movements. The criterion of whether or not an Islamic party or movement has the establishment of an “Islamic state” as part of its written platform or formal discourse will be used as a distinction between these two categories. In other words, Islamic politics, according to this conceptualization, includes both formalist and non-formalist Islamic activism and thinking. While the former emphasizes both the form and substance, the latter, however, emphasizes only the substance.

In addition to utilizing the ICG’s categorization, the conception of Islamism in this thesis also draws on the works of Fealy and Hefner. On the one hand, in relation to Islamic political parties, it somewhat echoes Fealy’s earlier conceptualization in “Islamic Politics: A Rising or Declining Force?”, where he analyzes the performance of Indonesian Islamic Parties at the 1999 general elections. In this study, Fealy identifies two categories of Islamic parties: “formalist” Islamic parties that emphasize Islam “as their sole ideological basis” and “pluralist” Islamic parties that adopt “national ideology”, but also employ “Islamic symbols and principles or draw most of their voters from a *santri* (pious Muslim) constituency”.41 After listing ten parties, of the 21 parties he identifies as Islamic, under the formalist category, Fealy concludes that pluralist Islamic parties should be included in the Islamic politics “because their electoral support was primarily based on their Islamic ideology”.42

On the other hand, as the longitudinal approach adopted in this thesis requires the investigation of Islamic activism within various political structures and settings, the study is not limited to the officially-registered political parties. Therefore the study

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41 Greg Fealy, “Islamic Politics: A Rising or Declining Force?,” p. 122.
42 Ibid.
draws on Hefner’s approach where, in *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, he maintains that “Muslim politics refers to any and all kinds of political actions based on a person’s conviction as a Muslim, whether or not the resulting behavior embrace the idea of an ‘Islamic’ state”. However, as it may imply that secular nationalist parties are non-Muslim or that they do not include Muslims in their membership or leadership boards, which is not the case, the term “Muslim politics” does not totally escape the unwanted haphazardness. For example, despite the inclusion of a very broad range of Indonesian “Muslim politics” in his investigation, by paying disproportionate attention to Muslim politics of some non-Islamic political parties, such as Golkar, and almost totally ignoring others, such as the PDI-P, both of which have many Muslim leaders and members and draw “significant support from Muslim voters”, Hefner does not seem to satisfy his proclaimed interest “in the politics and culture of the full Muslim community” (emphasis original). Therefore, although the investigation of Islamic actors in this study will extend beyond political parties and movements to include *da’wah* (predication) organizations, such as Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII; Indonesian Islamic Predication Council), the term Islamic politics or activism is more appropriate than “Muslim politics” for this study.

Specifically, Islamic actors examined in this thesis are drawn from the first two variants of Islamic activism stipulated by the ICG, namely political and missionary Islamic activism, whereas the *jihadi* form is excluded from the investigation. This is not to suggest that the *jihadi* groups do not deserve considerable attention; but, as they are increasingly becoming globally dispersed, they are less likely to have significant impacts on domestic politics and democratization in the Arab countries and Indonesia. The role of missionary activism on politics and democratization may appear to formalistic observers as trivial. However, the fact that, in many cases, particularly where measures of political openings and liberalization were introduced, newly formed Islamic parties have emerged as potent political forces, despite a long absence of formal Islamic political activism, clearly indicates that Islamic educational, *da’wah* and social welfare activism may very well serve as a seedbed of certain political ideas and activism.

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Consequently, while, as Bubalo and Fealy put it, “the line between strictly apolitical propagation and one that is either politically motivated, or has political consequences, is often blurred”, the role of missionary Islamic activism, in its various guises, in the diffusion of pro or anti democratic ideas or activism should not be simply dismissed or underestimated.

In regard to the Arab world, the investigation mainly focuses on Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood movement, which has been relatively tolerated but not legally recognized or allowed to register as a political party. Although smaller reactional Islamic groups, such as the Jihad groups and al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah (excommunication and migration), which emerged and faded at certain points in time, are not overlooked, the Muslim Brotherhood remains the only viable alternative for the politically motivated Islamic current in Egypt.

For the Indonesian case, on the other hand, the study primarily focuses on the post-Suharto Islamic parties, although other older and historical post-independence parties and organizations that played important roles in political development in Indonesia are also investigated. In particular, the thesis examines major Islamic parties that competitively contested the 1999 and 2004 general elections. They include the National Mandate Party (PAN), National Awakening Party (PKB), Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), Crescent Star Party (PBB) and the Suharto-era United Development Party (PPP). While these parties, with the exception of the PPP, were recently formed after the fall of Suharto’s New Order regime, the investigation traces their genealogy in the older Islamic social and da’wah movements from which the leadership and membership of these newly formed parties are primarily drawn. These movements include Indonesia’s two biggest mass organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (associated with PKB) and Muhammadiyah (dominates PAN), as well as the successor of the Masyumi party (banned by both Sukarno and Suharto), the Indonesian Islamic Predication Council DDII (associated with PBB) and the Muslim Brotherhood-oriented Tarbiyah (education) movement (associated with the PKS).

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46 Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, “Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the Middle East, and Indonesia,” pp. 20–21.
2.4. Conclusion

In general, this chapter has set out a cohesive conceptual framework and concrete criteria according to which the thesis assesses the theoretical compatibility between Islam and democracy and measures actual democratic processes and practices. This thesis, as such, adopts a procedural definition of democracy of which frequent, free and fair elections, inclusive citizenship, equality before the law, freedom of expression, independence of the media and associational autonomy are the essential elements and primary determinant factors. Consequently, the investigation presented in this study avoids substantive issues, such as the concept of social justice, and stereotyping terminology, such as ‘fundamentalism’ or ‘extremism.’
3.1. Introduction

The literature on democratization has flourished increasingly alongside the recent waves of democratization, especially since the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974. This important event triggered, according to Samuel Huntington, the third wave of democratization, which spread from Southern Europe (Greece, Spain, and Portugal) to several Latin American countries in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This wave also affected some East Asian states (South Korea and the Philippines) in the 1980s. The fourth wave of democratization (1989–2001) was far more global and overwhelmingly extensive, encompassing Central and Eastern Europe as well as many Asian, Latin American and African countries. The total number of countries affected by the fourth wave of democratization reached forty-seven around the globe; amongst them was Indonesia, the most Muslim-populated country in the world.

This chapter provides a critical discussion of the literature on democratization. It analyzes the major theoretical approaches predominant in this literature and assesses the explanation they provide about the success or failure of democratization, focusing on studies relevant to Muslim countries, in general, and Indonesia and the Arab world, in particular. It seeks to find some of the important strengths and weaknesses and aims to identify certain gaps that exist in the democratization literature.

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1 Huntington defines a democratization wave as “a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time.” He also includes in a democratization wave countries that experience a progress in “liberalization or partial democratization” even if they “do not become fully democratic.” Samuel Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, p. 15.

2 Renske Doorenspleet, Democratic Transitions: Exploring the Structural Sources of the Fourth Wave, p. 48.
3.2. Democratization: Conditions and Craftsmanship

Broadly speaking, there are two major approaches that dominate the democratization literature: The structure-oriented approach, such as modernization and political culture studies, and the actor-oriented or transition approach, which mainly focuses on the roles and choices of political actors during a short period of transition from autocratic to democratic forms of government. The former seeks to discover preconditions such as socioeconomic and cultural factors that supposedly determine or lead to the establishment and consolidation of democratic rule.\(^3\) This was the predominant approach during the 1960s and early 1970s. The latter approach, on the other hand, gives primacy to the roles and choices of political actors in the processes of political change.\(^4\) This approach has been predominant in the literature since the late 1970s and early 1980s as it developed alongside the recent waves of democratization.

Modernization and development theorists assert that increased degrees of economic prosperity, industrialization, urbanization and education promise enhanced levels of political participation and democratic development. They assert that economic development is a “precondition” for democratic transition and consolidation, because it leads to social transformations, such as the growth of the middle class and literacy levels necessary for the promotion of political representation, participation and government accountability.\(^5\) Modernization and development studies have been very influential in the literature on democratization since the publication of Seymour Martin Lipset’s book *Political Man*, in which he concludes that the level of modernization or development in a certain country determines its potential to become a democracy.\(^6\) After classifying some European, English-speaking and Latin American countries as stable/unstable democracies and stable/unstable dictatorships, Lipset draws a comparison between these countries in terms of their income per capita,

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industrialization, urbanization and level of literature, concluding that “the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy”.\textsuperscript{7} Other scholars have also tested Lipset’s hypothesis and claimed to have found substantial confirming results. Thus, “the more well-to-do the people of a country, on average”, Larry Diamond affirms, “the more likely they will favour, achieve, and maintain a democratic system for their country”.\textsuperscript{8} Yet empirical evidence, as many studies later concluded, has proved that the process of modernization can also “breed socioeconomic conflict and political instability”.\textsuperscript{9} Some scholars have charged the modernization theorists with overlooking the possibility that increased levels of development and rapid economic and social change may have negative impacts on political stability.\textsuperscript{10}

On the other hand, the extent to which cultural values and shared attitudes influence political change and behaviour has been the major concern of many political and social scientists. For instance, in their analysis of political behaviour and democratic transitions, some scholars of comparative politics tend to focus on culture as a primary explanatory variable. They emphasize that democratic political culture, e.g. negotiating, bargaining, accommodating and willingness for compromise, is a precondition for successful democratic transition. Political orientations, as they assert, are influenced by knowledge, feelings, judgments and opinions about political systems.\textsuperscript{11} Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba argue that the development of a new democratic system requires not only formal democratic institutions, but also a coherent political culture of which “the norms and attitudes of ordinary citizens are subtler cultural components”.\textsuperscript{12} In their study of Korea and Taiwan, Yun-han Chu, Larry Diamond and Doh C. Shin also assert that without sound commitments to democracy among the ordinary citizens, democratic

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\item \textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 31.
\end{itemize}
transition and consolidation is highly unlikely.\textsuperscript{13} In Samuel Beer’s view, political culture not only influences, but is also influenced by, interests, objectives and the mode of political change.\textsuperscript{14}

Many other scholars, however, insist that empirical investigation yields little support for the cultural hypothesis, thus rejecting cultural determinism or any hypothetical “preconditions to democracy”.\textsuperscript{15} In his attempt at the question whether “the whole world [can] become democratic?”, Larry Diamond convincingly argues that there is no “precondition to democracy other than willingness on the part of a nation’s elite to attempt to govern by democratic means”, insisting that “neither culture nor history nor poverty are insurmountable obstacles”.\textsuperscript{16}

Some political analysts have questioned the role of Islam in influencing Muslims’ conceptions of political legitimacy and democracy. Islamic political culture, some scholars argue, is unfavourable to democratic values and principles, particularly with regard to popular sovereignty, pluralism, tolerance, individual freedom and accountability.\textsuperscript{17} Samuel Huntington, for example, argues that Islam abhors new ideas and civil liberties. He maintains that not only has Islam “not been hospitable to democracy”, but also “political participation was historically an alien concept” to Muslim societies.\textsuperscript{18} Huntington makes this sweeping generalization without even investigating whether or not the countries that experienced successful democratic transitions had had long histories of “political participation” before proceeding with their democratic processes. Thus, many of Huntington’s conclusions do not appear to have received “more than impressionistic and anecdotal support”.\textsuperscript{19} Many studies, on

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Samuel Huntington, “Will More Countries Become Democratic?,” p. 208; also \textit{The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century}.
\textsuperscript{19} Todd Landman, \textit{Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction}, p. 146.
the other hand, have been more attentive to Islamic traditions that promote tolerance and openness. These studies emphasize the rich diversity of Islamic manifestations, applications and conceptions “of the nature of the state, Islamic law, the status of women and minorities”\textsuperscript{20} Consequently, any reductive generalization of cultural or Islamic influence on political behaviour in Muslim-majority states, it is argued, will be too simplistic, because it would certainly fail to reflect the profound complexity and wide variation of the reality of political culture in Arab and Muslim countries. A closer look at actual political landscapes in Muslim countries reveals that the relationship between Islam and the state or the role of Islam in political life ranges “from subordination of the state to Islam…to political accommodation…to political inclusion of Islam…to toleration…to ignoring Islam…to direct confrontation”\textsuperscript{21}

The role of culture and religion in shaping political realities, therefore, has been the subject of controversy in the literature on democratization. Whereas the relevance of some traits of political culture (e.g. negotiation, compromise and accommodation) for the process of democratization is generally acknowledged, empirical evidence demonstrates that democratic transitions sometimes succeed in the absence of sound democratic culture (e.g. Germany, Italy and Japan),\textsuperscript{22} which obscures the boundaries between political and cultural democratization. Hence, it is plausibly argued that democratization processes and democratic culture can develop simultaneously, or that political democracy begets democratic culture.\textsuperscript{23} Thus, elite-crafted democratization can be successful regardless of whether a democratic culture precedes the establishment of democratic institutions and procedures.\textsuperscript{24} As such, discussions and analysis that sought to unfold the extent to which cultural factors contribute to the contemporary democracy deficit in the Muslim world have not been conclusive.

\textsuperscript{22} Although democracy was imposed by foreign powers on Germany, Italy and Japan after World War II, it “surprisingly took hold and endured”, Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), \textit{Democracy in Developing Countries: Africa}, vol. 2, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988, p. xi.
Contrary to the structure-oriented approaches that predominantly focus on structural factors and seek to identify preconditions by analyzing existing democracies and comparing them to non-democratic political systems, studies that have been predominant in the literature on democratization over the past three decades are more concerned with the processes of political transition and the choices of political actors. Democratic transitions, according to this “process driven” or “actor-oriented” approach, are not merely determined by identifiable structural factors such as “economic development or societal complexity, as the earlier literature on the ‘social requisites of democracy’ put it”. Rather, it is a complex and uncertain process involving indeterminable consequences, elite fragmentation and dispositions as well as strategies developed through cost-benefit calculations. In other words, democracy is no longer viewed as an outcome of essential structures or preconditions. It is, as Doh Shin expresses it, “a product that can be manufactured wherever there is democratic craftsmanship”. Consequently, the human agency and the choices of individual decision-makers; craftsmanship, rules chosen, pacts, negotiations and circumstances of timing imposed, are the principal elements that should be primarily investigated, according to this approach.

Many of the researchers who adopt the transition approach in explaining the process of democratization draw on the works of Dankwart A. Rustow. In his widely cited article “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model”, Rustow draws attention to the fact that “the factors that keep a democracy stable may not be the ones that brought it into existence”, emphasizing that “explanations of democracy must distinguish between function and genesis”. Thus, Rustow’s rejection of the “preconditions” does not imply the denial of the importance of structural and cultural factors for the consolidation and

26 Renske Doorenspleet, Democratic Transitions: Exploring the Structural Sources of the Fourth Wave, p. 3.
28 Giuseppe Di Palma, To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions, pp. 8–9; Renske Doorenspleet, Democratic transitions: Exploring the Structural Sources of the Fourth Wave, p. 3.
stability of democratic regimes, nor the relegation of these factors to a minor category. However, what he appears to be more concerned about are the factors that help identify “how a democracy comes into being in the first place”.  

Based on his comparative analysis of the histories of Sweden and Turkey in the above-mentioned article, Rustow identifies four phases through which democracies develop and consolidate. First comes the phase of “national unity”, the only “background condition” recognized. In this phase a political identity becomes commonly shared by all citizens. Then the political community goes through an “inconclusive struggle”, which finally ends in stalemates, ultimately forcing the exhausted contesting elites to resort to compromise. This concludes the violent “preparatory phase”, giving headway to the “historical moment” of the “decision phase” where the first transition to democratic rule occurs. As such, the democratic rules of “conflict resolution”, according to Rustow, are born of historical social conflict rather than of particular structural variables. For, indeed, “a people who are not in conflict about some rather fundamental matters would have little need to devise democracy’s elaborate rules for conflict resolution”. The “habituation phase” is the fourth and final stage, which eventually develops through a period of practical experience where the political elites as well as the population at large maintain their confidence in, and become habituated to, democratic procedures.

There are few doubts that most contemporary democratic transitions went through Rustow’s “preparatory” and “decision” phases where the choices, attitudes and bargaining skills of the political actors are much more relevant to the process of democratization than determining structural and cultural factors. However, democratic transitions cannot be meaningfully understood without careful and adequate consideration or evaluation of the extent to which existing contextual and structural factors constrain and even, sometimes, determine the choices of political actors. In other words, if we are to adequately understand the process of democratization and grasp its underlying conditions we need to unfold not only “how the context is structured” and

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31 Ibid., p. 362.
32 Ibid.
developed, but also how “the key agents under study fit into it—interact with it and constitute it”.33

Furthermore, despite the fact that almost all contemporary political transitions are influenced, to varying degrees, by international factors,34 the extent to which these factors have influenced (in negative or positive ways) democratic development in the Muslim world and elsewhere has not been rigorously examined. Many Western governments, especially the US and to a lesser extent EU governments, have officially declared their commitments to prioritizing the promotion of democracy in their foreign policies. However, political analysts and observers have indicated that, in practice, these policies have not been pursued indiscriminately. Rather, it is argued, only when political changes are deemed to serve the interests of the dominant foreign powers is international support most likely to be conducive to democratic transition.35 Where democratic transitions, however, are believed to be dangerous for “too many established interests, or that [they] create too much insecurity and uncertainty”, they are, Laurence Whitehead insists, “less likely to receive effective international support”.36 However, despite wide recognition of the significant influence of external factors on democratic transitions, the literature on democratization has remained almost exclusively domestic.37 This is particularly true in relation to the earlier literature on transitions to democracy in Southern Europe and Latin America.38

In fact, the role of external and international factors in influencing regime change continues to be contested in the literature on democratization. Different studies and

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34 Laurence Whitehead argues that “[a]ll contemporary regime changes are affected to a significant degree by the international political context in which they occur” indicating that of “the sixty-one independent states classified by Freedom House as ‘free’ in January 1990… only three…seem to originate from domestic processes entirely separate from the international contexts,” Laurence Whitehead (ed.), *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 46; 3.
investigations have arrived at varied, and sometimes contradictory, conclusions. Some studies, for instance, have firmly concluded that external factors play only a marginal role, suggesting that political transitions “were largely to be explained in terms of national forces and calculations”. Other scholars, however, assert that “any bald relegation of external factors to a secondary or subordinate category is too simplistic”. The latter argument may indeed have strong foundation in relations to Arab politics. However, although vulnerability to external influences has always been evident, the literature on democratization in the Arab world has only paid lip service to international factors. The difficulties involving the investigation of the complex international relations and the wide range of external factors (international and regional actors, institutions and conditions) may have been the major obstacles to balanced systematic examinations paying adequate attention to external dimensions.

Few attempts have sought to provide a theoretical framework for investigating the extent to which international factors influence democratic transitions. Most of these studies generally tend to give a lesser emphasis to conditions or prerequisites than they do to contingency and chance. Lawrence Whitehead, for instance, offers a theoretical framework distinguishing three international dimensions through which international factors regarding democratization may be grouped and analyzed: “contagion through proximity;” control from some external powers; and consent in interaction between internal and external actors. Through this framework of analysis, Whitehead identifies groups of countries that share a geographical proximity where democratic transitions were experienced within a limited scope of time, arguing that democratization in one country encouraged or facilitated democratization in a neighbouring one by mere “contagion”. By “control”, however, Whitehead refers to “deliberate acts of imposition or intervention from without” where a dominant power directly influences the direction, speed and mechanisms of transmission. Whitehead, however, argues that the complex process of generating consent or securing “the positive support and involvement of a

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41 Ibid.
43 Ibid., p. 9.
wide range of [internal] social and political groupings” must be carefully and thoroughly examined in order to fully understand the process of democratization. Consequently, Whitehead arrives at an assumption which emphasizes the primacy of domestic processes over external factors.  

3.3. Democratization Studies on the Arab World

Despite the fact that actor-oriented approaches have been predominant in the literature on democratization, in general, most of the studies that attempt to address the challenges confronting democratic changes in the Arab world have by and large taken a structure-oriented approach and mostly been “sceptical about the prospects for democracy in this region”. While some studies mainly focus on cultural and religious factors that supposedly contradict democracy or hinder democratic transition, other studies even seek to discover certain essential qualities or intrinsic antidemocratic characteristics of Arabs to explain the persistent democracy “deficit” in Arab states.

Furthermore, many scholars and observers of Arab politics emphasize the importance of distinguishing between political liberalization and the process of democratization. Political liberalization, argue Brynen, Korany and Noble, may involve “the expansion of public space” and the initiation of some limited political openings that enable the citizenry “to engage in [relatively] free political discourse and to freely organize in pursuit of common interests”. Such processes, they insist, should not be confused with political democratization, mainly because the former can exist without the latter. Although political liberalization entails the relaxation of political repression, democratization not only facilitates effective and inclusive political participation, but it also “provide[s] citizens with a degree of real and meaningful collective control over public policy”. In addition, while almost totally state-controlled, the process of

44 Ibid., pp. 15–16.
45 Najib Ghadbian, Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World, p. 4.
49 Ibid., pp. 3–4.
political liberalization can be used for mere containment or cosmetic purposes and, thus, remains subject to revocation according to the whims of the rulers.

On the other hand, many studies draw attention to the fact that the diversity in the levels of modernization and economic development in different Arab states, which has proven its indifference to political development, renders the explanatory power of the modernization hypothesis, discussed above, irrelevant to the Arab region. Modernization projects carried out by many Arab rulers, Najib Ghadban indicates, did not result in democratic development. Rather than corresponding to the modernization theory, “political reality of the Arab world”, Ghadban insists, “witnessed the rise of authoritarianism in both its populist and patrimonial forms”. In addition, as Burham Ghalioun contends, by furnishing the state with new means of organization and control, modernization strengthens the state and increases society’s vulnerability by undermining its older sources of social cohesion.

Some analysts who tend to emphasize the link between authoritarianism and economic conditions in the Arab world use the concept of “rentierism” in their efforts to explain why there are weak demands for political participation and representation in rich oil-producing countries. The primary dependence of the “rentier” state on external earnings from petroleum exports rather than on taxation as the main source of government revenue, according to this theory, enables it not only to purchase loyalties and increase state coercive capacities, but also “to act autonomously from society”, which, in effect, makes it less vulnerable “to societal pressure”. On the other hand, despite great “variance in economic and demographic structures between Arab countries”, argues Luciani, generalizations about the Arab countries are “too often” found in the literature. Therefore, while many Arab states do not fit within the rentier state category, the debate about the empirical validity of the rentier thesis and the primary focus on rentierism as the foundation of authoritarianism in the Arab world has been

50 Najib Ghadbian, Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World, p. 8.
53 Giacomo Luciani, “Resources, Revenues and Authoritarianism in the Arab World,” p. 212.
inconclusive.\textsuperscript{54} In his recent article “No Representation without Taxation? Rents, Development, and Democracy”, in which he examines the link between rentierism and democracy using a cross-regional dataset, Michael Herb concludes that there is no consistent support for the claim that there is a net negative effect of rentierism on the prospects for democratization.\textsuperscript{55}

Furthermore, the absence of democracy in the Arab world has been linked by many social scientists to deep-seated cultural and religious values. Some analysts, for example, argue that Arab society is culturally intolerant and that Arab-Islamic culture is not compatible with democracy. They hold the claim that “the political traditions of the Arab world[,] which are the political traditions of Islam”, do not help to utilise “the organizing ideas of constitutional and representative government”.\textsuperscript{56} Nevertheless, some empirical investigations and survey works on various Arab countries have found no significant connections between the lack of, or support for, democracy and cultural/religious values. Consequently, these studies conclude with the assertion that cultural explanations are indeed misleading and of little use in understanding Arab politics.\textsuperscript{57}

In a very powerful critique of the political culture approach, Lisa Anderson indicates that the literature on Arab political culture offers an essentialist explanation of the authoritarian tendencies in the Arab world, where the impediment to democratization is treated as if it were due to congenital defectiveness. She draws the attention to some recent works that echo the racist scholarship passed “during the heyday of imperialism”, such as the works of John Entelis on Lebanon and North Africa where he portrays the

\textsuperscript{54} Michael L. Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?,” \textit{World Politics}, vol. 5, no. 3 (April), 2001.
“Arab personality” as “essentially negative and deficient”. Consequently, Anderson goes on to argue that in this literature “[n]ot only are Arabs thought to be dismal prospects for democratic politics, but they appear to be fairly dismal people all around: illogical, untrustworthy, passive before domineering rulers”. Although her investigation of the literature on political culture in the Arab world finds “very little concerns with testing and verification […], a marked willingness to make categorical statements without regard to evidence” as well as many “logical and epistemological flaws”, she does not dismiss the importance of the role of cultural values and attitudes in politics. Rather, she emphasizes that the impact of culture, its limits and context, should be very carefully assessed, suggesting that political culture is highly seductive and susceptible to distortion and bias.

Michael C. Hudson, on the other hand, argues that “[d]espite its untidiness and empirical difficulties, political culture is an important variable”, insisting that liberalization in the Arab world can not be “adequately explained without invoking political culture”. He contends that political culture is far more varied, complex and changeable than the “reductionist stereotyping” analyses postulate. Therefore, in order for the political culture approach to “be brought back in” carefully, argues Hudson, its “earlier weaknesses” must be addressed and “more sophisticated, less biased formulations of political culture(s) in Arab politics” need to be developed. After critically reviewing the literature on political culture in the Arab world, categorizing most scholars into two groups, “the reductionists and the empiricists”, Hudson derives a list of “epistemological lessons”. Some of his important suggestions include: “reductionist concepts and essentialist assumptions” should be avoided; subcultures, elite and mass cultures should be taken into account; ideologies, opinions, attitudes and collective values should be examined; group identities, orientations towards authority, and principles of justice and equity should be focussed on; and multifaceted

59 Ibid., p. 88.
60 Ibid., p. 89-90.
62 Ibid., p. 62.
methodology (utilizing texts, traditional narratives, comparative case studies and interviews and surveys) should be adopted.\textsuperscript{63}

On the other hand, elite-centred or actor-oriented studies that primarily emphasize the role of political elites in social and political change in the Arab world are not totally absent from the literature. Such studies, however, tend to over simplify political reality because they reduce the highly sophisticated process of social and political transformation to elite action, thus failing to adequately consider the influence of structural aspects and the contextual constraints they place on actors’ political choices. For instance, in a recent “elite-centred” edited book entitled \textit{Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change}, Volker Perthes relegates the profound influence of structural factors and the constraints they impose on political actors to a secondary category in the process of social and political change. Although the research project embarked upon by the participants gives primacy to the choices of political elites in effecting socioeconomic and political reality, Perthes concludes the investigations by acknowledging that “actors and their behavior cannot be examined in a meaningful way devoid of structural and institutional contexts”.\textsuperscript{64} Consequently, while insufficient in explaining the process of political transition, the actor-oriented approach may gain analytic strength “only when placed on some kind of structural scaffolding that imparts a motif to political action”.\textsuperscript{65} Indeed, structural scaffolding, in this regard, can include the tackling of socioeconomic, cultural and other political and social institutions, the influence of which on political aspirations may vary from one society to another.

Furthermore, the concept of civil society has been used by some political scientists as an analytical tool for the explanation of the lack of democracy in the Arab world. Many analysts, for example, relegate the durability of authoritarianism in the Arab world to the absence of a strong or “genuine” civil society, the emergence of which has been seen as an “early step towards full democratization of Arab political systems”.\textsuperscript{66} It has

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Volker Perthes (ed.), \textit{Arab Elites}, p. 301.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van de Walle, \textit{Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective}, p. 26.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Mustapha Kamel al-Sayyid, “The Concept of Civil Society in the Arab World,” in Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble (eds.), \textit{Political Liberalization & Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives}, p. 142.
\end{itemize}
been strongly argued that the modernization projects carried out by Arab regimes have been selectively unfavourable to democratization, because they did not facilitate the emergence of “modern” civil societies that effectively engage “in real democratic games”. Since democracy involves a “synergetic” or interactive “relationship between state and civil society”, where an effective and productive civil society can flourish, the Arab authoritarian nature of “civil associations [is] in a little position to inculcate values of democratic participation”. Mustapha Kamel al-Sayyid has identified three groups of Arab countries that impose different limitations and conditions with respect to freedom of association and civil society groups. In the first group, which initiated some liberalization processes (e.g. Egypt, Morocco, Jordan and Yemen), moderate degrees of freedom of association are guaranteed. In the second group, identified by al-Sayyid as “the radical regimes of the Arab world”, various civil society groups exist but remain heavily controlled by the regimes’ ruling parties. This group, according to al-Sayyid, includes Syria, Iraq (under Saddam) Libya and Sudan. In the third group, which includes the Gulf countries with the exception of Kuwait (and Bahrain after the constitutional amendments of 2002), no freedom of association is allowed. Although countries of the first group that embarked on political liberalization have relatively tolerated “an emergent civil society”, given the fact that these liberalization processes are the result of top-down measures and totally controlled by the ruling regimes rather than the result of the growth or pressure of civil society, no civil society that might effectively foster pluralism, counterbalance the power of the state, or even evoke “an image of a political order respecting the civil and political rights of citizens” exists in the Arab world. This is how, as most scholars of Arab politics would agree, the weakness of civil society is closely linked to the authoritarian nature of political systems in the Arab world.

On the other hand, the impacts of external factors on Arab internal politics have generally been acknowledged, thought not rigorously examined, in the literature on Arab democratic development and liberalization. Many scholars and observers of Arab politics believe that international support of authoritarianism, particularly Western support, has been a major obstacle to democratization in the Arab world. Eva Bellin argues that, contrary to other authoritarian states in other regions, the Middle Eastern and North African authoritarian regimes “did not see their sources of international patronage evaporate with the end of the Cold War nor with the United States’ subsequent reanimation with democracy”. Bellin insists that the two strategic concerns of “assuring a reliable oil supply” and “containing the Islamist threat” prompted Western powers “to persist in providing patronage to many authoritarian states in the region”. Similarly, Jason Brownlee emphasizes that the US foreign policy, while promoting democracy only where it serves its interests, was not favourable to pluralism in the Middle Eastern Muslim states, “especially when Israel, oil resources, and a perceived Islamic threat were involved”.

In an article which offers an assessment of the impacts of external factors on the process of democratization in the Arab world, Pete W. Moore advances five categories of external explanatory variables: (1) cultural diffusion and demonstration effects; (2) foreign governmental policies and aid; (3) non-governmental activities; (4) regional security environment and regional actors; and (5) international fiscal environment and policy. Firstly, with the lack of societal interactions and cultural exchanges between Eastern Europe and the Arab world prior to 1989 as well as the failure of the Algerian experiment with democracy, Moore contends, the demonstration effects exerted little influence on the potential occurrence of democratic contagion in the Arab region.

73 Ibid., pp. 32–33.
74 Ibid., pp. 32–33.
75 Ibid., pp. 32–33.
Secondly, Moore recognises the absence of Western coherent and direct political commitment towards democratization in the Arab world. However, he apologetically maintains that while Western governments’ pressures may facilitate a favourable environment for democratic transitions in the future and alleviate the general perception of Western hypocritical foreign policy towards the Arab world, they are incapable of enforcing political liberalization. Thirdly, Moore also draws attention to the significant role that external NGOs, such as human rights organizations, play in assisting Arab human rights activists by publicizing their plight and pressing Arab regimes to minimize repression and persecution of dissident groups. Fourthly, regional insecurity and external threats, particularly in relation to Israel’s conflict with many Arab states, have had huge negative impacts on the process of democratization in the Arab world, as Moore maintains. Not only has this sense of persistent insecurity hindered economic development, as excessive spending is devoted to security and defence, argues Moore, but also it has obstructed all efforts towards political representation while fostering the militarization of state–society relations. Finally, in relation to international fiscal environment and policy, Moore argues that the impacts of external rents, on the one hand, and the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, on the other, have been overemphasized in the literature, where they are regarded as the most powerful external factors influencing democratization in the Arab world. In general, although external economic forces have facilitated economic and political liberalization in some Arab countries, they cannot fully guarantee continuous advancement towards democratic transitions, as the process remains under the total control of the rulers who can reverse the entire process at any stage.

3.4. Democratization Studies on Indonesia

Most recent studies that attempt to explain the factors facilitating the democratization process in Indonesia tend to take an actor-oriented approach, mainly focussing on the transition period (1998–2004) known as the era of reformasi (reform). They predominantly emphasize the roles of the political and military elites, civil society activists, mass mobilization and “the actions of the market and its supporters” during

77 Ibid.
the Asian economic crisis, the dramatic event which led to the fall of Suharto and unleashed the reformasi movement with its core demands and challenges that sum up the “democratization of the political structure”. In his article “Indonesia: Transforming the Leviathan”, Anthony Smith, for example, focuses on the roles of the president, the military and “the people” (civil society organizations and parliament) in influencing supreme power and strategic decision-making. After exploring major stake-holders prior to and after the downfall of the New Order regime, Smith investigates the impact of the process of reformasi on the political structure and governance. He pays particular attention to the political stance of the elite formerly loyal to President Suharto and the reluctance of the military to take action against the students who held mass demonstrations demanding his resignation and pressing for radical political reform. Smith’s main argument is that although key aspects of Suharto’s authoritarian structure remained intact, the process of reformasi was successful in bringing about political pluralism as an evolutionary development within the existing constitutional framework, which provided a strong check on the return of dictatorship.

Many observers and researchers maintain that with its relatively steady democratization process, Indonesia’s experiment has a strong potential for becoming an exemplar of democratic transitions in Muslim-majority states in the foreseeable future. Indeed, Indonesian’s unexpected successful experience with the democratization process, as the literature shows, has already dispelled many myths and flawed assumptions that have previously influenced the literature on democratization in developing and Muslim-majority countries. One of these assumptions is that a rapid transition to democracy inexorably leads to chaos; or that development and modernization, a justification used by most authoritarian regimes to prevent rather than promote democratization, is a “precondition” of or conducive to democracy. In stark contrast to the predictions of modernization theorists, Olle Tornquist insists that it was not the socioeconomic development or modernization what triggered the Indonesian democratization process.

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79 Edward Aspinall and Greg Fealy (eds.), Local Power and Politics in Indonesia, p. 2.
81 Ibid., pp. 74–119.
Rather it was the political crisis of “despotic liberalism” and the actions of the market. In fact, “only accidentally”, argues Tornquist, “capital and Western governments”, especially with the IMF’s frustration with Suharto, “helped to do away with Suharto”. In fact, the case of instant Indonesian democratic transition prompted many analysts to acknowledge the “missing” prerequisites of democracy. As such, the argument that Indonesia “displays very few of the traits that political scientists have identified as propitious for the development of democratic political systems” has become widely acknowledged in the literature. Many scholars agree that contrary to most modernisation theorists’ calculations, according to which “the steady economic growth under the Suharto regime should have” led to democratic development, “it was the economic crisis that triggered the fall of the dictator” and ultimately gave way to the democratization process.

Moreover, the concept of the emergence of a new middle class as a primary explanatory factor with relation to Indonesian democratization is another contentious issue which has been largely disputed in the literature. Benedict Anderson, for example, gives primacy to the emergence of a new Indonesian middle class as an explanation of the Indonesian democratic transition. However, few scholars agree with this argument. Douglas Webber, for instance, asserts that, although the Indonesian middle class was very small in the late 1990s, the process of democratization occurred in Indonesia. Citing Barrington Moore’s famous formulation “no bourgeois, no democracy” and indicating Indonesia’s rank as the world’s 141st richest country in 1998, which makes it by no means very likely to democratize according to most modernization theorists,

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Webber concludes that the explanatory power of modernization theory has been proven to be very weak.\textsuperscript{87}

On the other hand, the cultural hypothesis posited by the literature on the preconditions of democracy also finds little evidence in the Indonesian democratization experiment. In fact, the new literature on democratization in Indonesia, and the Muslim world in general, demonstrates that, contrary to Huntington’s argument discussed above, “[r]ather than a specific religious culture, it seems clear that what is necessary for democracy is an appropriate civic culture, characterized by high levels of mutual trust, tolerance of diversity, and propensity for accommodation and compromise”.\textsuperscript{88} Webber draws attention to the fact that not only did the Muslim majority in Indonesia not prevent democracy, but, more importantly, the two main Muslim mass organizations, traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama and modernist Muhammadiyah, played an important role in facilitating rather than obstructing the democratization process in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{89} The importance of the role played by Muslim mass organizations in the democratization process is widely acknowledged by intellectuals and political analysts. For instance, in an article published in Inside Indonesia just before the fall of Suharto in 1998, Arief Budiman warned that if Amien Rais, the former leader of Muhammadiyah, did not “stick to his former position, namely to ask Suharto to step down and to create a coalition with the other two mass organizations [NU led by Abdurrahman Wahid and the Indonesian Democratic Party PDI led by Megawati]…the unification of the three biggest mass organizations is in limbo, together with the prospect of democracy”.\textsuperscript{90} What is really remarkable about Indonesia’s democratization is that it developed in tandem with the process of \textit{santri-ization}\textsuperscript{91} (Islamization) that began during the last decade of Suharto’s rule.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{89} Douglas Webber, “A Consolidated Patrimonial Democracy? Democratization in Post-Suharto Indonesia.”
\textsuperscript{90} Arief Budiman, “Friend or foe?” \textit{Inside Indonesia}, no. 54 (April–June), 1998, online (accessed on September 2, 2006) [available]: http://www.insideindonesia.org/edit54/budiman.htm
\textsuperscript{91} The term ‘\textit{santri},’ which was originally coined by American anthropologist Clifford Geerdz, refers to pious or practising Muslims in Indonesia, while ‘\textit{abangan}’ refers to those who are only nominal or non-
In one of the richest and most powerful studies of Islamic political culture and democracy in Indonesia entitled *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Robert W. Hefner alerts us to the danger of civilizational intolerance in the modern world, as posited by Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations”. He argues that there is “no definitive triumph of democratic ideals… the Indonesian experience should make us certain: that the desire for democracy and civil decency is not civilizationally circumscribed”. Refuting the over simplified image of Islam as inherently anti-pluralist and antagonistic to democracy, Hefner explores the role of Islamic movements in mobilizing support for political reform and promoting the democratization process in Indonesia. Thus, rather than explaining the democracy deficit in the Muslim world by cultural variables, the Indonesian democratization experience suggests that democratization studies must seek other pertinent factors, as “[d]emocratic ideals”, Hefner asserts, “are broadly appealing because they respond to circumstances and needs common across modern cultures”. In short, the Indonesian democratization experiment, according to Hefner’s conclusion, has proven that the cultural hypothesis posited by some cultural relativists lacks explanatory power.

Many scholars and observers of Indonesian politics who take on the transition approach in their endeavour to tackle the issues and forces that have influenced the Indonesian democratic transition regard civil society as a primary factor. Some of them argue that Indonesian civil society actors, particularly the student activists, have played a crucial role in the Indonesian democratization process. They insist that the students’ demonstrations that culminated in the occupation of the parliament buildings contributed to the division which occurred within the ruling elite and eventually encouraged the armed forces to abandon Suharto. For Olle Tornquist, however, “the students were very important but ‘only’ did away with Suharto”. Thus, although Tornquist acknowledges that “civil society and social capital may be fine as normative

practising Muslims. In this context, *santrization* is used to describe the process of drawing more Muslims to adopt a religious way of life. Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960.


Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, p. 221.

Ibid., pp. 220–221.


Olle Tornquist, “Indonesia’s democratization,” p. 179.
concepts”, he insists that they are not “effective analytical tools in studies of democratization”.97

The concept of civil society in Indonesia has been debated by intellectuals and political analysts. Azyumardi Azra identifies two main groups of scholars who have made significant contributions to the literature on the relationship between civil society and the state in Indonesia.98 The first group of scholars, which includes Mohammad Hikam for instance, perceives civil society as an “alternative” to the state or tends to place it “in opposition to the state, as a ‘counter hegemony’ or ‘counter discourse.’” On the other hand, the second group, most notably Nurcholish Madjid, treats it as “the ‘house’ where a variety of associations, groups, clubs, guilds, federations, political parties and the like become ‘a shield’ between society and the state”.99 In contrast to the former group, which confers no religious connotations on the concept of civil society in Indonesia, the latter asserts its rootedness in Islam, tracing its origin back to the formation of the first plural Islamic community of the city-state of Madinah established by the Prophet Mohammad in 622 CE.100 Despite their disagreements on the religious origin of civil society, both groups tend to acknowledge the important contribution of Islamic mass organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, in the development of civil society in Indonesia.101

The role of external factors in the survival for 32 years of Suharto’s authoritarian New Order was no less important than their role in its fall and in the subsequent processes of democratization in Indonesia. Despite the fact that the literature had been largely ignorant of the importance of the “role played by the USA in weakening democratic prospects” in Indonesia during the Cold War era, some researchers and observers of Indonesian politics became attentive to the shift in the attitudes of Western powers

99 Ibid., pp. 75–76.
100 For details on pluralism in the city-state of Madinah, see chapter four.
101 Azyumardi Azra, “Civil Society and Democratisation in Indonesia,” p. 76.
towards authoritarian regimes since the end of the Cold War era. While “Western democracies were much more concerned with securing their own strategic interests” rather than the promotion of democracy, the containment of communism had been a top priority in their foreign policy agenda; a policy under which authoritarian states, such as Suharto’s New Order regime, won continued and reliable support from the US and most European and Japanese governments. Douglas Webber argues, and many others such as Anders Uhlin agree, that in the post-Cold War era the Clinton administration, unlike its predecessors which had been staunchly supportive of Suharto’s regime, became less inclined to back its allied authoritarian regimes and “saw no need to ‘mollycoddle’ Suharto in the same way that previous administrations had done”.

3.5. Conclusion

To sum up, the literature shows that studies on democratization, both structure- and actor-oriented, are inconclusive and they provide little evidence on why some countries go in a democratic direction and others do not. Structural theories seem to have difficulties identifying the factors that trigger a transition to democracy at a certain point in time, while actor-oriented theories, on the other hand, fail to recognize the constraints that certain structures place upon political actors. For instance, modernization and political culture studies fail to explain why, unlike the Arab states, Indonesia has managed to make headway in democratization, despite the fact that it resembles many of the Arab states in the levels of modernization and development, in its overwhelmingly Muslim population and, most importantly, in the rise of Islamic political activism. Similarly, but with different contention, studies that take actor-oriented approaches tend to over simplify political reality, since they often reduce the highly sophisticated process of political transition to elite action, thus failing to adequately consider the influence that structural aspects and the contextual constraints place on actors’ political choices. Accordingly, explanations of why none of the Arab states, despite variations on the nature of political institutions, levels of modernization

and income per capita, has so far been successfully democratized are still less than satisfactory. Whereas the literature on the Indonesian democratization process generally tends to take actor-oriented approaches and focus on the transitional period (1998–2004), most of the studies that investigate democratic changes in the Arab world, however, have been predominantly structure-oriented with the absence of democracy erroneously linked to deep-seated cultural and religious values or to low levels of modernization and development.

Consequently, recognizing that “actors and their behaviour cannot be examined in a meaningful way devoid of structural and institutional contexts”,¹⁰⁴ this thesis bridges this identifiable gap in the literature by combining these two major approaches, taking into account historical, cultural and social factors as well as strategies and choices of relevant political actors.

¹⁰⁴ Volker Perthes (ed.), Arab Elites, p. 301.
4.1. Introduction

This chapter investigates the possibility of the theoretical correlation between Islam and democracy and the plausibility of the idea of “Islamic democracy”. Thus it seeks to assess the hypothesis that the values of democracy can be articulated as fully compatible with Islamic doctrine where Islam is not inherently antithetical to democracy. To this end, it explores and discusses some of what can be seen, and have been identified by many Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers and researchers, as democratic precedents and aspects in Islamic history and thought. The investigation is not meant to provide a comprehensive historical account of Islamic political thought. Nor is it intended to posit that Muslims have invented democracy, though democratic aspects and values, such as pluralism, tolerance of differences, mutual consultation, the right of the people to choose their rulers, political contract and consent, separation of powers, limits to state powers and justice, are not modern, let alone Western, creations. In fact, as the historical material examined in this chapter demonstrates, these concepts are rooted in Islamic history and thought. In particular, this chapter draws the attention to the extent to which certain Islamic political aspects and principles that by and large correlate with modern democratic values and governance, e.g. shura (mutual consultation), bay’ah (political contract or pledge of allegiance), ikhtiyar (selection) of political leaders, ijmaa’ (broad consensus) and limits of rulers’ power were actually realized in Islamic history.

The significance of these aspects for today’s Islamic politics stems from the fact that they are regarded by contemporary mainstream Islamic thinkers and movements as an authentic point of reference for substantive theoretical foundations of a pluralist inclusive Islamic democracy in which justice, equality before the law, religious
freedom and the value of pluralism are actually realized.\textsuperscript{1} Therefore, in highlighting some important aspects of correlation between Islam and democracy, this chapter aims to demonstrate how these aspects were developed or expressed in the formative era of the Muslim community, in Islamic classical literature, and in modern and contemporary Islamic reformist thought and movements.

\textbf{4.2. Democratic Precedents in the Formative Years of the Muslim Community}

In dealing with the issue concerning the relationship between Islam and politics or democracy, Islamic thinkers and movements usually refer to the Prophet’s engagement in public and political affairs when he founded the city-state of Madinah after his \textit{hijrah} (migration) from Mecca to Yathrib (re-named as \textit{madinatunnabi} – lit. the city of the Prophet, or simply Madinah) in 622. How or on what basis was the Madinan state established? Historical sources provide an important record of three historical events that tell us something about this process, especially in regards to its compatibility with democracy. Two of these events, namely the \textit{bay’ah} of al-‘Aqabah and the \textit{sahifah} (a written document often referred to as the Constitution of Madinah), formed the basis on which the Madinan state was founded. The third event, which is the process of \textit{khilafah} (succession or transfer of power) after the Prophet’s death, on the other hand, instituted the basic political principles that later became the foundation of Islamic political theory. The process through which the Madinan state was established started with the penetration of Islam into the city of Madinah and was completed with the transfer of power and the formation of the \textit{khilafah} (Caliphate) after the death of the Prophet in 632.

\textbf{4.2.1. Islam and the Formation of the Madinan State}

The penetration of Islam into the city of Madinah involved a comprehensive transformation of social and private spheres of life. It was more than a simple individual conversion from \textit{shirk} (polytheism) to \textit{tawhid} (monotheism). It was, rather, a total submission to the will of God, which involved a process of legitimating a new source of knowledge and authority in which the divine truth and law (\textit{Shari’ah}), which

“determine[s] morals, law, religious beliefs and ritual, marriage, sex, trade and society”, replaced traditional beliefs and conventional or ancestral precedence. This legitimization process was necessary or a pre-condition for the instigation of a novel process of sociopolitical transformation in Arabian society. Through this process, the existing tribal form of social organization based on the bond of ‘asabiyah (blind adherence to the tribe) was transformed into an intra-tribal social organization based on the religious bond of tawhid and the notion of ummah (universal community).

While the rapid spread of Islam in Madinah introduced to the city a new system of belief and source of authority, the two bay’ahs of al-‘Aqabah between the Prophet and the two biggest tribes of Madinah, al-Aws and al-Khazraj, laid down a set of values that underlay the substance of right and provided a formative framework for a law-based practice. Moreover, these two historic events, particularly the second bay’ah, established a formal contractual command–obedience relationship between the Prophet and the Muslims of Madinah. In the first bay’ah, which took place at al-‘Aqabah in 621, a group of twelve Madinan Muslims pledged before the Prophet not to associate anything with Allah; not to steal, or commit adultery or fornication, or kill their offspring, or forge calumnies; and that they would not disobey the Prophet in ma’ruf (right). This demonstrates that Islam was then starting to regulate some personal behaviour and social conduct. It was no longer limited to faith and worship. Yet, this bay’ah was still short of producing a law-based commitment. Not only it did not confer on the Prophet any executive powers, but also it was short of applying, in order to guarantee conformity and avenge violation, any coercive measures other than a promise that if they fulfilled their commitment they would enter Paradise hereafter, but if they failed “it is for God to punish or forgive”. While the values of al-‘Aqabah’s sanctions embodied conceptions of what was or was not desirable, they were able to provide a solid base for moral Justifications of the enforcement of a specific body of legal norms.

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5 Ibid.
A highly articulate, contractual command–obedience relationship between the Prophet and the Muslims of Madinah was established in the second bay’ah of al-‘Aqabah, which was a direct invitation for the Prophet to emigrate to Madinah and directly manage its public affairs. A large number of delegates, seventy three men and two women, set out to Mecca to meet the Prophet and pledge allegiance to him at al-‘Aqabah. This time the bay’ah conferred an explicit legitimacy to the Prophet as a spiritual and a political leader. It added to the first bay’ah some very important clauses that made commitment much stronger and more comprehensive. Obedience at times of both action and inaction (health and sickness) and providing full protection for the Prophet were the most important clauses of this bay’ah.⁶ By inviting the Prophet to their city and being willing to sacrifice their wealth, property and lives, the antagonistic tribes of al-Aws and al-Khazraj not only gave the Prophet their consent to govern their affairs, but they also explicitly offered their total submission to the will of God under the guidance of the Prophet. Hence, this bay’ah, in Bamyeh’s words, “spelled out a gradual intrusion into the life of two antagonistic tribes of a set of beliefs and a system of authority that ordained that from that point on, they would submit to Allah rather than to one another”.⁷ This explicit pronouncement of the new “system of authority” was formally put in writing in the constitution of Madinah after the hijrah.⁸

While the bay’ah formalized the Prophet’s position in the city of Madinah as spiritual guide and political leader, the sahifah, which is also referred to as kitab (a book) in the primary historical sources, harmonized different expectations and regulated internal relationships in the Madinan society.⁹ Many researchers prefer to call this document the constitution of Madinah, because it resembles modern constitutions in organizing multilateral relationships within society. The Madinan society at the time of hijrah comprised various tribal and religious groups. In addition to the non-Muslims, the Jews and Arab pagans, as well as the Muslims of al-Aws and al-Khazraj who became known

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as *al-ansar* (the helpers/supporters), a large number of *muhajirun* (immigrants), mostly from Mecca’s tribe of Quraysh, also constituted an important part of the Madinan society. Consequently, the Prophet drafted the *sahifah* document in order to strengthen the solidarity of the new community and prevent tribal conflicts or chaos.\(^\text{10}\)

Every group and tribe that existed in Madinah was mentioned by name and assigned their duties and rights by the *sahifah* without discrimination on the basis of religion or tribal affiliation. While the objective or expected outcome of any social contract is the harmonization of certain expectations between various parties, the *sahifah* can be considered as a formal social contract. It presented an agreement which specified names, places and definite expectations in the form of a written and binding document, with explicit regulations applicable to the special social and tribal composition of the Madinan society.\(^\text{11}\) Indeed, by writing this constitution, the Prophet provided sanction-based law-norms in an organizing document that codified the norms and values according to which behaviour was guided and expectations of what was or was not desirable were prescribed.

One of the most important features of this document, which comprises two parts containing about forty-seven clauses, is that it provided a framework for a pluralistic, multi-religious society. Religious tolerance and freedom of worship were guaranteed in the most obvious way in the document [clauses 25 to 33].\(^\text{12}\) All contracting parties became duty-bound to cooperate in defending the city-state against any external aggression [44]. They were also obligated to seek mutual advice and consultation, as relations should be founded on righteousness to the exclusion of sin [37]. More importantly, the document instituted the notion of *ummah* in such a way which incorporated non-Muslims as well. For example, clause [25], which unequivocally

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\(^\text{11}\) Ibn Ishaq, for example, describes the functions of this document by reporting that “the messenger of God wrote kitaab (a book) between *al-muhajirun* and *al-ansar*, in which he also made a peace agreement (*waada’a*) and a pact (*‘ahada*) with the Jews confirming them to their religion and properties and prescribing their dues and obligations,” see Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, edited by Mustafa al-Saqah, Ibrahim al-Abyari and ‘Abd al-Hafeedth Shalabi, vol. I, p. 501.

\(^\text{12}\) The clauses of the document mentioned here are reported by Ibn Hisham from Ibn Ishaq, for the full text see Ibid, pp. 501–504.
states that the Jews are “\textit{ummah} with the believers”, demonstrates clearly that the Jews were included in the Madinan political community and, thus, enjoyed an equal status with Muslim tribes regarding their rights and obligations.\footnote{This statement has been misinterpreted by some researchers. For instance, F. E. Peters understands it as though it includes the Jews within the \textit{ummah} of Muslim believers indicating that “the word \textit{ummah} was being used in a sense different from its Qur’anic occurrences”. See F. E. Peters, \textit{Muhammad and the Origins of Islam}, New York: State University of New York Press, 1985, p. 201. In fact, this interpretation not only contradicts the Qur’anic notion of \textit{ummah} as a community of believers, but also it conflicts with the notion stressed by this document in clause [2], which clearly excludes non-Muslims. The point is that clause [25] emphasizes that the “Jews are \textit{ummah}” on their own, and that they constitute or share “with the believers” a universal and unified political community or, in other words, political rather than religious \textit{ummah}.} This unity of the Jewish \textit{ummah} with the Muslim \textit{ummah} was based on the protection of common interests and defence of a common territory, which became “sacred for the people of this document” [39]. This is similar to a federal system that includes more than one community, in that the Jews had their own religion and law and Muslims had their own as well.

The significance of this document for today’s Islamic politics is that it sets out a precedent, which is regarded by many contemporary Islamic thinkers and movements as an authentic reference for building a pluralist, multi-religious society.\footnote{Hidayat Nur Wahid, former chairman of the Prosperous and Justice Party (PKS), an Indonesian Islamic party ideologically linked to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement, emphasizes that his party is committed to the Madinah Charter, which provides a basis for a plural and just society; see chapter eight for more details on the PKS; see also Hidayat Nur Wahid, “We Want to Change the National Leadership,” \textit{Tempo}, 19 April 2004, pp. 30–33; Elizabeth Fuller Collins and Ihsan Ali Fauzi, “The Successful New Party PKS is a Moderate Alternative to Radical Islamism,” \textit{Inside Indonesia}, online (accessed on 22 August 2006) [available]: http://insideindonesia.org/content/view/192/29/} Consequently, since this document inspires millions of Muslims, many of whom support or adhere to various contemporary Islamic movements and ideologies, there is no reason why it cannot be utilized for building a pluralist, inclusive Islamic democracy in Muslim-majority countries that have rooted, politically-motivated Islamic movements.

\subsection*{4.2.2. \textit{Al-Khulafa’ al-Rashidun} (the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs) and the Principles of Righteous Government}

The process of succession is even more relevant for Islamic politics today. There is no doubt that the Prophet combined both religious and political authority. After the death of the Prophet, however, any claim for divine authority became at best questionable. In fact, for Sunni Muslims who make over 85 per cent of all Muslims today, it is even heretical. The procedures according to which the Muslim community managed the
transfer of power instituted four important principles: *ikhtiyar*, *shura*, *ijma‘* and *bay’ah*. These political principles later became the foundation of Islamic political theory, particularly for the Sunni scholars.

The resolution of the question of *khilafah* or succession, which arose immediately after the death of the Prophet in 632, and the transfer of power produced a political authority which successfully managed to preserve the state and maintain the unity of the Muslim *ummah*. The basis on which this political authority was established differed from the one from which the Prophet derived his authority. The combined religious and political authority of the Prophet was based on the divine revelation, which was the ultimate source of truth and authority, as well as the contractual command–obedience relationship formalized through the covenants of al-‘Aqabah and the constitution of Madinah. The discontinuance of the divine revelation after the death of the Prophet, however, meant the termination of any direct or exclusive access to the ultimate source of authority. Despite the fact that the revealed message of God is preserved in the Qur’an and *Sunnah* (traditions and sayings of the Prophet), a consensus that confers on a certain Muslim leader or ‘*alim* (Islamic scholar; plu. *ulama*) an exclusive authority to interpret these sources has never arisen in Islamic history. Hence, without a clear and definite *nass* (divine ruling) in the primary sources of Islam about the *khilafah* or transfer of power, any claims for an exclusive right to political or religious leadership would be subject to contestation or questioning. The discussion held by the *Ansar* and *Muhajirun* at the meeting of the Saqifah of Bani Sa’idah provides a clear picture of the basis upon which the legitimacy of the *khilafah* was established.  

The available historical records indicate that at least three distinct political groups emerged immediately after the death of the Prophet. While the Prophet’s son-in-law and cousin Ali b. Abi Talib and his supporters of Bani Hashim (members of the Prophet’s family) were busy making arrangements for the Prophet’s funeral, the *Muhajirun* of the Meccan tribe of Quraysh, led by Abu Bakr and Omar b. al-Khattab, were concerned about the future of the state and the unity of the *ummah*. Therefore, they immediately joined the *Ansar* who assembled under the leadership of Sa’id b. ‘Ubadah at the Saqifah

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to discuss the issue of *khilafah*. Differences of opinion arose between these groups about who should be nominated for the leadership, and the issues discussed made it obvious that the resolution was not based on divine revelation, as will be demonstrated.

The *Ansar*, nominating the Khazrajite chief Sa’d b. ‘Ubadah for the office of *khilafah*, believed that since they were the native inhabitants of the Madinah and *katibah* (legion) of Islam, they had the right to rule and control their own city. The *Muhajirun*, on the other hand, were more concerned about the unity of the Muslim *ummah* and the survival of the young state. Therefore, realizing the fundamental importance of the consent of the broader Muslim *ummah*, Abu Bakr argued that “the Arabs would never give their consent or recognize any rule but that of the tribe of Quraysh”. This tribe, Abu Bakr insisted, was considered by the Arabs as the most “central [noble] in lineage and abode” amongst all tribes. The *Muhajirun* also believed that they had the right to rule, because they were the clan of the Prophet and the first to believe in Allah and his Prophet. The *Ansar*, alternatively, proposed a compromise and argued for the establishment of a joint rule where two ‘emirs’ would be chosen from both the Quraysh and *Ansar* to operate simultaneously or by alternation. The *Muhajirun* rejected this suggestion but comforted the *Ansar* by suggesting that no important matter would be decided upon without their consultation and approval. Thus, they maintained that “we are the emirs and you are the ministers”. Eventually, Omar nominated Abu Bakr, and the leaders of the *Muhajirun* and *Ansar* expressed their consent by giving the *bay’ah* pledge to Abu Bakr. This private or elite *bay’ah* was followed by a public *bay’ah* on the following day, when almost all the tribes and clans came in groups and pledged the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr. Although Ali and his supporters, believing that the *khilafah* should be hereditary in the Prophet’s family, initially rejected the process and outcome, they eventually gave their consent and submitted their *bay’ah* before Abu Bakr, whose leadership enjoyed a broad consensus among the Muslim *ummah*.

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19 Ibid., pp. 11–12.
Four basic inferences were later drawn by the Sunni ulama from this historical event:

1. The fact that the ummah was initially divided over the khilafah demonstrates that the issue was not predetermined by the Prophet. It was rather left to the people to decide upon on the basis of deliberative shura.

2. The discussion of the Saqifah focussed on political rather than religious issues since conviction and consent were not based on divine nass, but on rational reasoning and individual judgment.

3. The decision reached at the Saqifah meeting successfully resolved the conflict without any mass rejection or bloodshed, which demonstrates that the process of ikhtiyar (selection of the leader) was reached through a deliberative shura and, therefore, the outcome received a broad consensus as well as popular consent.

4. As the leaders sought the approval of the laypeople through the public bay’ah, the ummah was actually considered, though by implication, as the ultimate source of political legitimacy.

Consequently, four political concepts became the basic principles and yardstick for measuring the legitimacy and righteousness of leadership: (1) shura; (2) ikhtiyar of leaders by ahlul hal wal ‘aqd (people of conflict and resolution; lit. those who have the capacity to bind and loosen); (3) ijmaa’; and (4) bay’ah. These principles also provided the basis for the foundation of a cohesive theory of the Caliphate system, also known as the theory of al-ikhtiyar wal bay’ah (selection and contract of leadership), which was later developed and adopted by the predominant Sunni schools of thought. While these principles were implemented (with some variation in application) during the reign of the four consecutive successors of the Prophet, these successors became recognized by the Sunni Muslims as al-khulafa’ al-rashidun (the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs: r. 632/11–661/40).

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One additional and very important criterion of righteous government, which later became the minimal condition of legitimacy, is the conformity to the Shari’ah law. In his public inaugural speech delivered after the bay’ah, Abu Bakr, the first Rightly Guided Caliph (r. 632/11–634/13), highlighted the limits and conditions of his authority as follows: “I have been appointed to govern your affairs... If I do well, support me. If I mistake, correct me... As I obey God and His Prophet, obey me, but if I fail, I have no more right to your obedience”.23 This clearly gives the people, at least in theory, the right to monitor the performance of the ruler. It also entails that the ruler’s authority is conditioned by his adherence to the Shari’ah, being the law of God and the basis of justice. As such, if a ruler violates the Islamic principles of justice and/or the Shari’ah law, the bay’ah contract would, at least in theory, be null or dissolved, and the legitimacy of the ruler would, consequently, be at best questionable and subject to contestation.24

Although the companions of the Prophet did not literally follow one particular method of transfer of power during the reign of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, they consistently conformed to the four principles of righteous government and Shari’ah rule. The second Caliph, Omar b. al-Khattab (r. 634/13–644/23), was nominated by Abu Bakr after a broad consultation, which confirmed that he was overwhelmingly approved by the Ansar and Muhajirun. Before his death, however, Omar appointed a shura counsel of six widely accepted members, by whom the third Caliph, Othman b. ‘Affan (r. 644/23–656/35), was selected after three days of intensive consultation.25 The fourth Caliph, Ali b. Abi Talib (r. 656/35–661/40), though claimed by the Shi’ites as divinely chosen, refused to accept the bay’ah from those who immediately approached him after the murder of Othman, emphasizing that this issue must be decided by the elite of the ahlul hal wal ‘aqd. The bay’ah, therefore, was given to Ali in public in accordance with the four principles of righteous government.26

Regardless of whether or not the four principles of righteous Islamic government were ideally implemented during the reign of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, today they not only inspire millions of Muslims, but they also provide a motif to political action. Consequently, they can conceivably be utilized by Islamic political movements for building a pluralist, inclusive Islamic democracy.

4.3. Classical Islamic Thought and Political Theory

After the death of Ali in 661 the Umayyads and other Islamic dynasties established after them developed and maintained hereditary systems that violated the four principles of righteous government. Thus, the Umayyad Caliphs brought the ideal model of Islamic consultative government to an end. However, as they all ruled in the name of Islam and acknowledged, at least in theory, the supremacy of the Shari’ah as the ultimate source of law and authority, they met the minimal condition of legitimacy according to the traditional Sunni schools of thought. As such, from the outset the power of the state in Islamic history and thought was limited by the Shari’ah law. While, after the Prophet, no single individual, regardless of status, enjoyed an exclusive authority to interpret the Shari’ah, the door was open for the possibility of different interpretations. This empowered the ulama (Islamic scholars), after defining their role as interpreters of the Shari’ah, to control the legislative and judicial authority and restrict the power of the state. This was possible because the rulers, by violating the principles of righteous government, had lost their moral influence over the public, thus paving the way for the ulama to exercise this role.

With the marginalization of the role of the ummah or its respected elites (ahl al-hall wal ‘aqd) in shaping the political space, and the violation of the Islamic principles of righteous government, the rulers no longer symbolized the ideal model of Islamic leadership. This, initially, fostered the growth of violent opposition groups, particularly the Shi’ites who advocated a leadership from the Prophet’s family. The majority of the Sunni ulama, however, tried to maintain an autonomous stance that ranged between direct criticism and relative accommodation. Although their objections to the Umayyad’s policies were justified on the basis of their understanding of the Shari’ah, the ulama did not resort to, or even support, direct confrontation and armed struggle.
Their basic view was that tyranny was better, or rather less evil, than anarchy, because the latter would inevitably lead to the greater evil of *fitnah* (sedition; internal fighting); namely bloodshed and destruction. With their huge moral influence over the public and relative control of the legislative and judiciary powers, the *ulama* became a kind of shield between the state and society. This provided stability and “allowed the flourishing of the institutions of civil society like *al-awqaf* (endowments), schools, professional groups, and Sufi orders” that, especially after the decline of the caliph’s power and the rise of the sultans, “mitigated the arbitrariness” of the executive power of the rulers. As such, the formal institutions of the classical Islamic state were mainly concerned with the control of the coercive and executive dimensions of government; that is, defence and security/order or external and internal power struggles. Consequently, the idea of separation or limits of state power is not an alien concept to Islamic thought and politics, and so it can be utilized in Islamic terms for building Islamic democracy.

Furthermore, this context also facilitated the growth of a pluralist Islamic legal theory and gradually gave rise to a new discourse, which eventually led to the development of theoretical foundations of a cohesive political theory. In their efforts to provide a comprehensive account of *Shari’ah* law, the *ulama* articulated the bases of *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning) known as *usul al fiqh* (foundations of Islamic jurisprudence). This culminated in the development of the four Sunni *madthaahib* (schools of Islamic law; sing. *madthab*), Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’i and Hanbali, which were respectively founded by Abu Hanifah al-Nu’maan (d. 767), Malik b. Anas (d. 796), Muhammad b. Idris al Shafi’i (d. 820) and Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 855). Hence, by the eighth and ninth centuries (second and third centuries H) the four *madthaahib* had already been developed as “a composite science of law and morality” providing a comprehensive code of behaviour which “regulates in meticulous detail the ritual practices of the faith and matters which could be classified as medical hygiene or social

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etiquette-legal treatises”. Despite the fact that the modern and contemporary reform movements, as well as many independent reform-minded ulama, emphasize that Muslims are not obliged to follow one particular madhhab, these four schools of thought continue to prevail in many parts of the Muslim world today. The Hanbali madhhab, for example, is predominant in Saudi Arabia, the Maliki in North Africa, the Hanafi in Turkey, South Asia and many parts of the Arab world and the Shafi’i in South East Asia and Egypt as well as other parts of Africa and the Arab world. Recognizing the rights of individual Muslims to follow one, or a composite, of these madhaahib or any other independent interpretations, many Muslim reformist thinkers today draw the attention to this scope of freedom within Islamic law. They see it as a recognizable democratic aspect which fosters the development of pluralist legal theory.

On the other hand, a cohesive political theory was not elaborately developed until the eleventh century after the rise of the regional sultans and the decline of the emasculated Caliphs whose role became merely symbolic. This does not mean, however, that earlier discussions of aspects of government and political thought were absent from Islamic classical literature. In fact, such discussions could be found either in the voluminous works of the great fuqahaa’ (Islamic jurisprudents; sing. faqih) or in the numerous treatises written by other theologians and scholars for specific purposes. These works cover particular topics, such as the imamate, fiscal government or al-kharaj (taxation), al-siar wal hurub (biographies and wars) and others. The discussion

29 Ibid., p. 83.
32 Muhammad al-Ahwal (d. cir. 765), who was the first to write on the topic of leadership, wrote two books: al-Imanah (the Imamate) and al-Radd ‘ala al-Mu’tazilah fi Imamat al-Mafdhul (the Response to the Mutazilite on the Leadership of the Less Pious). Many other scholars including ‘Amr al-Jahiz (d. 798), Muhammad al-Za’iyyat (d. 805) and Abi al-Hassan al-As’ari (d. 941) also wrote on this topic. On fiscal and economic issues, Abi Yusuf (d. 798), the first Qadi al-Qudat (Chief of Judges) of Baghdad and a leading exponent of the Hanafi School, wrote the first of eight books on fiscal government with the same title Al-Kharaj (the taxes). Al-Amwal of Abi Ubeid al-Qasim B. Salam (d. 838) is another well-known title on the same topic. Many other aspects of politics and government were, directly or indirectly, dealt with in the classical literature. Apart from the massive literature, including sources on fiqh (jurisprudence), ‘Aqida (theology), akhlaq (morality) tafsir (exegesis) sirah (Prophet’s biography) and history, which deals with certain aspects of government and leadership, Nasr Muhammad Arief has identified more than 307 classical sources that deal exclusively with issues related to Islamic government and politics, twenty-two of which were written specifically on the topic of the Imamate in the first four centuries of the Islamic calendar. See Nasr Muhammad Arief, fi Masadir al-Turath al-Islami: Dirasah fi Ishkaliyyat al-Ta’im Qbta al-Istiqra’ wa al-Ta’isl [on the Sources of Islamic Heritage: Studies about the
of the Shi’ite imamah (leadership) theory, for example, was developed and articulated in the early Abbasid era as a result of the political conflicts between the followers of the descendents of Ali and the incumbents. It is important to differentiate between the earlier tashayyu’ (partisanship), which was mainly loyalty or support for Ali against Mu’awiyah b. Abi Sufian, the ruler of Syria and founder of the Umayyad Dynasty, and the sect of shi’ism, which later signified the adherence to the Shiite imamah theory. The former was a mere political support to Ali as the legitimate caliph who was chosen in accordance with the principles of righteous government. The latter, however, adhered to the comprehensive doctrine that fuses political leadership with divine right, as later articulated by Hisham b. al-Hakam and his disciples during the Abbasid era.\(^{33}\)

While most Sunni scholars consider the issue of khilafah/leadership as a political matter belonging to the furu’ (peripherals/disputable) that require ijtihad, the Shi’ite jurists argue that Ali was appointed as the legitimate Imam by divine decree, insisting that this issue is an integral part of the fundamental religious beliefs (usul al-din). The issue of imamah, they emphasize, “is not a matter of public interest, which can be left to the people who can accordingly choose or appoint their ruler. It is rather a fundamental pillar of din (religion) that prophets and messengers, peace and blessings be upon them, cannot neglect or consign them to people”.\(^{34}\) Hence, the Shi’ite scholars insist that the legitimate imams (leaders) are appointed by God through nominations made by the Prophet and, respectively, his nominated successors. Moreover, since they carry out the missions of the Prophets, these imams, according to the Shi’ites, are immune or free from sin. Thus, imams, for the Shi’ites, are not merely political leaders who seek legitimacy via worldly means, such as the people’s consent. They are, rather, divine beings who bestow true knowledge on humanity since their doctrinal pronouncements are infallible.\(^{35}\)

\(^{34}\) Abd al-Huseyn Sharaf al-Din al-Musawi, Al-Muraja’at fi al-Fiqh al-Shi’i [The Right Path on Shiite Jurisprudence], al-Najaf: Matba’at al-‘Adab, 1936, p. 130; Abi al-Fath al-Shahristani, al-Milal wa al-Nihal, p. 169.
predominantly populated by Sunni Muslims, it is beyond its scope to discuss the details of various Shi’ite theories of the *imamah*. It is worth mentioning, however, that the Sunni theory of *khilafah* is particularly descriptive as well as assertive of the legitimacy of the historical process of succession undertaken by the companions of the Prophet after his death. The Shi’ite theories of the *imamah*, however, primarily take a normative approach to what the companions of the Prophet were ‘ought’ or ‘obliged’ to do, but, due to bad intentions and personal interests, failed to do. Ironically, the Shi’ite theorists disregard the fact that even the Caliph Ali, whom they regard as the first divinely-legitimate *imam*, did not hold the office of Caliphate on the basis of divine right. Rather he followed the principles of the consultative system of leadership, as the historical sources discussed above clearly demonstrate.

The majority of the classical Sunni schools of thought asserted that conclusive evidence or *nass* about the process according to which legitimate authority ought to be established does not exist in the primary sources of the *Shari’ah*. Nor is there any specific and definite mention of the person who should be appointed to the office of Caliph. The *jomhur* (mainstream or majority of *ulama*) of the Sunni schools as well as the Mu’tazilite and Kharejite sects maintain that the authenticity and/or the interpretation of the available primary texts (*naql*) concerning the issue of leadership is disputable. Thus, as they insist, the matter is left to the people to decide upon by means of *shura* and *ijmaa’*. This, however, does not entail that the outcome of such rational decision is outside the realm of religion. In fact, by using reason to achieve the objectives of the *Shari’ah* within *al-masalih al-morsalah* (the left-open public interests), Muslims would be actually following the *Shari’ah*’s general directives and sanctions. Accordingly, as al-Eyji emphasizes in support of his argument with the opinions of various Islamic schools, appointing a leader is *wajib* (compulsory or religious obligation). Without a supreme leader or *imam*, Taqiy Addin Ibn Taimiyyah

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emphasizes, the most important objectives of the Shari’ah governance, namely
upholding religion, maintaining order and implementing justice, cannot be realized.\textsuperscript{38}

With the rise of the regional sultans throughout the Islamic world, the role of the
emasculated caliph became by and large symbolic. This in fact raised unprecedented
concerns about political and social order and the unity of the Muslim \textit{ummah}. These
important concerns eventually led to the development of a cohesive Islamic theory of
government. In \textit{al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah} (the Ordinances of Government), the Shafi’i
jurist Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi (d. 1058) presented the first comprehensive Islamic
political theory with the primary objective of rescuing the weakening Abbasid Caliphate, or at least preserving its symbolic role as a representative of the unity of the
Muslim \textit{ummah}.\textsuperscript{39} Al-Mawardi admits in his introductory chapter that he wrote this
book in compliance with the directives of the Caliph. Al-Mawardi’s thesis aimed to
limit the arbitrary power of the de facto rulers; the sultans and emirs who, while
continuing to pay nominal allegiance to the caliph, seized total control of many
provinces including the central political power. Consequently, he redefined, in terms of
the Shari’ah, the relationship between the caliph, on the one hand, and the sultans and
emirs, on the other.\textsuperscript{40} The fact that the caliph, when facing a crisis of legitimacy, turned
to Shari’ah, or more precisely to the \textit{ulama} as its interpreters and guardians,
demonstrates the crucial role played by the \textit{ulama} not only in providing legitimacy to
the rulers, but also in limiting their power.\textsuperscript{41} In fact, many other scholars followed this
trend which basically, while orienting the discourse towards the rulers, emphasizes the
supremacy of the Shari’ah and the obligation of all Muslims to obey their rulers. Abi
Bakr al-Muradi (d. 1095), for instance, wrote \textit{al-Isharah ila Adab al-Imarah} (the
Sign/Direction to the Ethics of Leadership) for the Emir of the Murabitun State in
Maghreb,\textsuperscript{42} and Abi Bakr al-Tartushi (d. 1126) wrote \textit{Siraj al-Muluk} (the Lamp of the

\textsuperscript{38} Ibn Taimiyyah, Taqiyy Addin, \textit{al-Siyasah al-Shar’iyah fi Islah al-Ra’i wa al-Ra’iyah} [the Lawful
Governance in Reforming the Shepherd and Flock], with introduction by Muhammad al-Mubarak, Beirut:
\textsuperscript{39} Abi al-Hasan al-Mawardi, \textit{al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah wa al-Welayat al-Diniyah}, Beirut: al-Maktab al-
Islami, 1996.
\textsuperscript{40} Antony Black, \textit{The History of Islamic Political Thought}, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{41} Marshall G. S. Hodgson, \textit{The Venture of Islam, vol. 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods},
\textsuperscript{42} Abi Bakr Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan al-Muradi, \textit{Kitab al-Isharah Ila Adab al-Imarah} [The Book of
Kings) in which he encouraged the Fatimid ruler to remain steadfast to *Shari’ah* and uphold the Islamic principle of *shura*.\(^{43}\)

According to al-Mawardi’s Islamic theory of political legitimacy, the rightful leadership is based on a contractual relationship between the rulers and the ruled. In the above mentioned book, he provides two ideally legitimate methods and a third nominally acceptable (less than ideally legitimate) method of establishing a contract of leadership. The ideal methods, as al-Mawardi emphasizes, are established either through the selection of the leader by the respected elite of *ahlu al-‘aqd wa al-hal*, or via the designation of a successor by the previous legitimate *imam*.\(^{44}\) Al-Mawardi here uses the terms *imam* and *khalifah* (caliph) interchangeably. For the third, which is the nominally legitimate method, al-Mawardi takes a realist approach as he justifies the status quo accepting the legitimacy of the de facto rulers who seize power by coercive means. He justifies the acceptance of this authority on the basis that this stance prevents sedition and/or anarchy and helps safeguard the “religious ordinances that must not be forsaken or vanished”.\(^{45}\)

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111), a very influential scholar who took a critical stance towards the unjust rulers and directed his discourse primarily towards the laypeople, expounded on al-Mawardi’s premise, rejecting sedition and anarchy and justifying the acceptance of the status quo on the realist jurisprudential basis that “necessities make permissible what are forbidden”.\(^{46}\) However, unlike al-Mawardi, al-Ghazali stopped short of explicitly legitimizing the arbitrary power of the de facto rulers. In fact, al-Gazali even went further to condemn the *ulama* who mix with and applaud the unjust rulers. He called upon them to abandon the courts and palaces of the tyrants, insisting that “the ignorant unjust sultan, whose coercive power protects him from being overthrown, as any attempts to replace him may trigger an unbearable *fitnah* or anarchy, must be left abandoned”.\(^{47}\) Al-Ghazali also held the *ulama* accountable for the corruption of both the rulers and ruled, indicating that “without bad judges and *ulama*

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\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 56.


\(^{47}\) Ibid., pp. 899–900.
the corruption of the *muluk* (kings) would be minimal” as the latter would avoid the condemnation of the former.48 Although obeying the unjust ruler is necessary for preventing anarchy, according to al-Ghazali, the arbitrary power of such a ruler remains illegitimate/un-Islamic and, therefore, loyalty must not be given to him as he is “either deposed [theoretically] or his actual deposition is *wajib*”.49

The emphasis on the supremacy of the *Shari’ah* continued and strengthened, even after the rise and expansion of the Mongol power and the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad (1258/556). However, the theoretical discussion on the process of the establishment of the contract of leadership became virtually unnecessary. Therefore, the Hanbali scholar Taqiy Addin Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), whose thought later inspired the eighteenth-century Wahhabi reform movement, continued the realist approach of the *ulama* in accepting the status quo within the limits of the *Shari’ah*. Nonetheless, he promoted a more practical and reformist orientation by endorsing *ijtihad* and using analogy.50 For Ibn Taymiyya, establishing justice is not only the most important objective of the state, but also it is the basis of its consolidation and victory. In this regard, Ibn Taymiyya argues that God “secures victory for the just *dawlah* (state), even if it were a disbeliever, but does not provide victory for the unjust *dawlah*, even if it were a believer”.51 In *al-Siyassah al-Shar’iyyah fi Islah al-Ra’i wa al-Raiyyah* (the Lawful Governance in Reforming the Shepherd and Flock), Ibn Taymiyya insists on the necessity of establishing a state authority, by whatever means, for preventing anarchy, preserving social life and advancing the spiritual and material wellbeing of the community. He argues that the religious obligation of “enjoining good and forbidding evil” cannot possibly be implemented without coercive power and the emirate. So is it the case for all other religious obligations, such as “performing jihad, justice, hajj…it is said”; as Ibn Taymiyya insists, “sixty years with an unjust leader are better than one night without a sultan [state authority]”.52

48 Ibid., pp. 916–917; al-Ghazali, *al-Tibr al-Masbuk fi Nasihat al-Muluk* [Ingots of Gold for the Advice of Kings], Cairo: Maktabat al-Jindi, no date.
In general, this chain of thought that dominated the classical Islamic literature defined the paradigm of the traditionalist Islamic political thought, which remained predominant throughout the Muslim world until the second half of the twentieth century, when modern Islamic movements influenced by the ideas of Egypt’s eighteenth-century reform movement began to influence the political scene in most Muslim societies.

4.4. Islamic Reform Movement and Modern Democratic Concepts

From the beginning of their encounter with modern Europe in the early nineteenth century, Muslim scholars and intellectuals recognized the gap between their stagnant societies, especially under the declining power of the Ottomans, and the advancing European power. Consequently, they sought to theorize on how to bridge this gap. Such intellectual efforts led to the rise of the modern Islamic reform movement, which called for modernization and political reform in the Muslim world in order to catch up with the West.

Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, most of the Muslim world, including almost the whole of the Arabic-speaking world, came under the rule of the Ottoman dynasty (1342–1924). The domain of Ottoman power extended from the Atlantic to the Euphrates and from Russia to the Sahara. The Ottoman Sultans eventually claimed the title of Caliph and recognized the supremacy of the Shari’ah, thus upholding the responsibility to execute its decrees. While controlling the executive power with its innovatively organized civil and military structures, the Ottomans gave the ulama, for the first time in history, an official status in the state’s bureaucracy. Hence, they established a religious structure with hierarchical ranks; e.g. Muftis (Islamic jurists) and Qadis (judges), headed by Sheikh al-Islam whose fatwa (legal/religious opinion or decree) was legally binding.53 The administrative and political innovation of the Ottoman Sultans enabled their dynastic regime to last longer than any other Islamic power. Therefore, “[b]y integrating the ‘ulama and the kadis [judges] into the politico-

legal system”, Ottoman rulers “in effect agreed to share power”.

Nevertheless, Islamic political thought, which had entered into a period of stagnation following the disintegration of the Abbasid Caliphate, did not start to revive until well into the nineteenth century. With the steady decline of Ottoman power and the rise of Western colonialism, which by the end of the nineteenth century had annexed and dominated many Ottoman territories, Islamic reformist thought grew into influential movements that later inspired the formation of many Islamic social and political organizations throughout the Muslim world.

Sheikh Rufa’a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi (d. 1873), one of the prominent ulama of al-Azhar University, was probably the first Muslim thinker to promote and authenticate in Islamic terms the modernization and reform movement in Egypt and other Islamic societies. In 1826, al-Tahtawi accompanied the first foreign mission of Egyptian students to Paris where he spent five years studying and observing the French society. The mission was sent by the ruler of Egypt Muhammad Ali, who embarked upon a comprehensive modernization project. Al-Tahtawi studied the French Revolution and Enlightenment thought. Upon his return to Egypt, he wrote his book Tahlis al Ibris fi Talkhis Paris (the Refinement of the Gold in Summarizing the Description of Paris), in which he documented his impressions and thoughts on post-revolutionary French society and included a translation of the French Constitution of 1781. He also translated Rousseau’s Social Contract as well as Montesquieu’s The Spirit of Law and Reflections on the Causes of the Rise and Decline of the Romans. In addition, he translated the French civil law and the document of the French Declaration of Human Rights.

In Manahij al-Albab al-Mesriyyah fi Mabahij al-Aadab al-‘Asriyyah (Methodologies of the Egyptian Intellectuals in Delectations of Contemporary Literatures), al-Tahtawi

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54 Ibid., pp. 207–219.
55 Hamid Enayat, Modern Islamic Political Thought, p. 52.
identifies many aspects of modern democratic and constitutional government and demonstrates, using classical Islamic arguments, how these aspects are rooted in Islam. In regards to the separation of powers, the rule of law and limits of the ruler’s authority, for instance, al-Tahtawi indicates that the ruling/governing power (he also calls it monarchical; *malakiyyah*) consists of three pillars: legislative, judicial and executive. He elaborates that, whereas the executive executes the law after the rulings of the *qadis* (judges), the legislative body enacts laws in accordance with the *Shari’ah* rules (*ahkam al-shari’a*). Consequently, al-Tahtawi concludes that the monarch’s power is conditioned by the law.  

Furthermore, al-Tahtawi argues that the modern conceptions of freedom and equality correlate with the Islamic notion of ‘*adl* (justice). He insists that ‘*adl* is the criterion according to which the legitimacy of the government is to be judged. As such, a ruler is judged to be just or righteous if he acquires and exercises power in accordance with the Islamic conception of justice, thus preserving the rights of the ruled through the implementation of the principle of equality.

Towards the turn of the twentieth century, the discussion and promotion of Islamic reform gathered momentum as more Ottoman territories and other Muslim countries fell under the direct or indirect control of Western colonial powers. Muslim scholars and thinkers increasingly recognized the weakness and malady of the Muslim world as well as the failure and incapability of the Ottoman Empire to protect its territories against foreign aggression. Hence, in their efforts to diagnose the ills of Muslim societies, the pioneers of the modern Islamic reform movement, particularly Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897), Muhammad Abdu (d. 1905) and Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakiby (d. 1902), while somewhat differing on emphases and details, generally identified three major ills that were afflicting Muslim societies and hindering their advancement: the misunderstanding and/or misimplementation of Islam, political *istibdad* (despotism/tyranny), and political fragmentation. Consequently, these reformist thinkers called for *ijtihad* (reinterpretation of primary Islamic texts), political reform and pan-


Islamism. They urged for the implementation of the Islamic principle of *shura* and advocated constitutionalism as a means to limit the power of the rulers, prevent tyranny and, ultimately, achieve justice. They insisted that the Muslim peoples have the right, or are rather obliged, to rise against injustice and tyranny.

In most of his work, al-Afghani puts more emphasis on pan-Islamism and the reform of the declining Ottoman Caliphate. He asserts the contractual relationship between the rulers and ruled, arguing that the ruler is only a trustee on behalf of the *ummah* to oversee its public interests and execute its law under constitutional limits. Thus, as long as the ruler conforms to these rules, his leadership remains legitimate. However, if he fails, al-Afghani maintains, it must be clear to him that he will most likely lose either “his head or crown”.60

On the other hand, Sheikh Muhammad Abdu, though following a similar method of reasoning, was more in favour of comprehensive and gradual religious, educational, economic and political reforms. Abdu argued that, in Islam, neither the *ulama* nor the temporal leaders enjoy any religious or sacred authority. He insisted that, regardless of position or status, no person can claim to have “control or authority over anybody’s conscience or belief”, arguing that religious leaders (*a’immat addin*) are but conveyers (*muballighun*) of what God has revealed, and temporal leaders (*a’immat adduniya*), including the Caliph, are but executers of God’s rules. Submission or obedience, therefore, is exclusively due to God, not to personalities or titles.61 Whereas the *Shari’ah*, according to Abdu, is the ultimate source of legislation, the *ummah* is the source of political legitimacy. Consequently, the ruler must be held accountable to and be appointed/dismissed by the *ummah* or its representatives (*ahlu al-hall wa al-’aqd*). Abdu was consistent in his promotion of parliamentary/representative system of

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government which he believed to be the only form in which the ummah can exercise its sovereignty or power.\textsuperscript{62}

Similarly, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakiby advocated constitutional government, political accountability, the rule of law and the necessity of religious reform. He was also an advocate of pan-Islamism, though under an Arab rather than Ottoman caliph. Al-Kawakiby, however, was indeed more confrontational and blatant than Abdu and al-Afghani, especially in his criticism of the Ottoman rule and the traditional ulama, whom he accused of supporting tyranny and undermining the Islamic principles of shura and ‘adl. He was also one of the most rigorous and assertive advocates of the idea that istibdad (tyranny) is the cause of Muslims’ backwardness and the source of all evils and ills.\textsuperscript{63} Although istibdad can be prevented through “constitutional shura”, al-Kawakiby argues, istibdad can also inflict an “electoral system or constitutionally-based government”. He therefore suggests that, since istibdad is a cultural and social phenomenon as much as a political one, “the only effective means to its complete eradication is the heightening of the conscience of the ummah through education and mobilization”.\textsuperscript{64}

In fact, the advocates of the late nineteenth-century reform/modernist movement were more comprehensive and rigorous in their approach than al-Tahtawi, and their ideas were far more inspiring than his earlier endeavour. Consequently, their influence immediately spread throughout the Muslim world from Indonesia to Morocco. Beside building on al-Tahtawi’s modernist syncretistic approach which combined Islamic and modern political thoughts and reasoning, these reformers drew on the seventeenth-century Wahhabi reform movement, the influence of which was, until then, limited to certain parts of Arabia. In this regard, they stressed the necessity of returning to the original Islamic teachings as pronounced in the Qur’an and exemplified by the Sunnah of the Prophet and his pious companions. Furthermore, their insistence on pan-Islam as

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 287.


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p. 531.
a means to the rise and unification of all Muslim societies against Western colonial aggression was particularly inspiring, especially as many Muslim societies and movements were already resisting colonialism and struggling for independence. The influence of the ideas of these reformers indeed proved to be far reaching and enduring as they eventually inspired the formation of many Islamic reformist organizations, such as the Muhammadiyah movement of Indonesia and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which still play very important intellectual, social and (direct or indirect) political roles in various parts of the Muslim world, as demonstrated in the subsequent chapters.

4.5. The Fall of the Caliphate and the Quest for an Alternative “Islamic State”

The abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 and the rigorous secularization projects carried out by the colonial and post-colonial nationalist regimes provoked fierce debates in many intellectual and political circles around the Muslim world. In Turkey, the Ottoman Caliphate/Sultanate system was replaced with a secular form of republic dominated by an authoritarian single party regime. This was one major step within a secular modernization project embarked upon by Mustafa Kamal “Attaturk” (the founding father of the Turkish republic). As they paid lip-service to democracy, Attaturk’s secularization measures, later emulated in many Muslim countries, were viewed by many intellectuals as a process of, in ‘Abd al-Wahab al-Masiri’s words, “secularization without modernization”. These measures included the abolition of religious organizations and Shari’ah courts, the adoption of Western-style clothing (women were banned from wearing the veil and men were forced to wear European hats), the replacement of the Shari’ah law with the Swiss civil code and the Italian penal code, and the adoption of the Latin alphabet to replace the Arabic script, the effect of which was to cut the younger generation off from the Islamic historical memory and literature. Such an aggressive destruction of many Islamic social and cultural structures incited ambivalent attitudes towards democracy and secularism in Muslim

societies. As a consequence, the dichotomies of Islamic versus secular and traditional versus modern began to occupy centre stage in Islamic politics and discourse.  

Initially, Muslims reacted in different ways to the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate. In the Arab world, three political leaders, King Fu’ad of Egypt as well as the two Arabian rivals Sharif Husain and Ibn Sa’ud, looked ambitiously at the empty position. They sought support from Islamic scholars and leaders in their efforts to re-establish a new Caliphate and replace the Ottoman Caliph. Political and religious leaders in various parts of the Muslim world held congresses and sent delegates in support of one or other of the nominees. In Indonesia, modernist and traditionalist Muslims who gathered at the All-Indies Islamic Congress were divided about whom to support.

It was within this heated context, specifically to undermine King Fu’ad’s efforts to occupy the position of Caliph, that an Egyptian scholar of al-Azhar, Ali Abd al-Raziq, published his highly controversial book *al-Islam Wa Usool al-Hukm* (Islam and the Fundamentals of Governance). Focussing on the formative phase of the Muslim community, Abd al-Raziq argues in this book that no religious, moral or practical needs support the re-establishment of the historic system of Caliphate. He emphasizes that the tenets of Islam have no relevance to politics and governance. Not only does Abd al-Raziq refute, by and large rhetorically, the basis upon which the legitimacy of the historic Caliphate was established, but he also claims that Islam is totally against such a “fabricated” political “fallacy”, which allows for the use of religion to justify tyranny and serve the interests of the sultans and kings. This argument shocked many Islamic scholars, who regarded it as a part of the war which the secularists who advocated the separation of state and religion were waging against Islam.

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67 See chapters five and seven for the discussion of the conflict between secular nationalist and Islamic forces in Egypt and Indonesia, respectively.
Although most Islamic movements and ulama were in favour of establishing a new Caliphate, they did not reject outright the political structures that emerged in their respective countries during and in the post-colonial era. Mainstream Islamic movements in Indonesia and the Arab world recognized, though in some cases not unconditionally, the legitimacy of their newly formed nation-states. Therefore, rather than insisting on striving for the re-establishment of an ideal Caliphate system, most Islamic movements participated, wherever possible, in the political process in their countries. Nevertheless, they prioritized the establishment of an Islamic state, or the Islamization of the existing nation-states through the institutionalization and implementation of Shari‘ah law within the established political structures, as demonstrated further in the subsequent chapters.

Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement, explicitly recognized the legitimacy of the parliamentary system which Egypt copied from Europe and on the basis of which it established its constitution. He emphasized that the foundations of this parliamentary system did not contradict the principles of the Islamic system of government.\footnote{Hassan al-Banna, Majmu‘at Rasa‘il al-Imam al-Shahid Hassa al-Banna [Collection of the Letters of Martyr Imam Hassa al-Banna], Beirut: al-Mu‘assasah al-Islamiyyah, 1984, p. 319; 322.} In post-independence Indonesia, Muslim organizations that merged under, or supported, the umbrella organization Masyumi participated in the political development and adopted democratic agendas, and were like many other political parties “willing to accept a pluralistic society”.\footnote{Ingrid Wessel (ed.), Democratisation in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto, Berlin: Logos, 2005, p. 8.}

However, as political power in most post-colonial Muslim countries fell under the control of secular nationalist despotic regimes, some Islamic thinkers rejected the legitimacy of the modern nation-state, especially in its rigorous secular and totalitarian form, such as the communist or socialist models. Many of the post-independence Arab nationalist regimes adhered to puritan revolutionary ideologies that were somewhat influenced by the ideals of Nazi, Fascist or communist revolutions. In many cases, the rejection of these regimes came in response to their persecution of Islamic movements, such as the case of the Muslim Brotherhood under Nasser’s Arab nationalist regime. Alternatively, these Islamic thinkers developed comprehensive theories and conceptions of an Islamic state, which somewhat resembled the modern totalitarian state. Examples of such comprehensive theories can be found in the works of Taqiyyuddin al-Nabhani,
founder of Hizb al-Tahrir (the Liberation Party), Abu al-A’la al-Mawdudi, founder of Jama’ati Islami (Islamic Society) of Pakistan, and Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood thinker who was sentenced to death by Nasser’s regime.

In his book *Nidhath al-Islam* (the Order of Islam), for example, Taqiyyuddin al-Nabhani provides a comprehensive theory of an Islamic political system with a provisional constitution of an Islamic state, claiming that he derived every detail of this constitution from the *Shari’ah*. However, al-Nabhani fails, in the most part, to support his claims and validate his theory by the necessary evidence from the primary sources of the *Shari’ah*.

The political articulation of Abu al-A’la al-Mawdudi, on the other hand, advocates a comprehensive conception of an “Islamic state” based on the comprehensiveness of *Shari’ah*. He asserts that the state in Islam “encompasses all aspects of human life” in a way which resembles the “communist and Fascist state”, but, unlike the latter two, it does not curb “the freedom of individuals” nor does it endorse “dictatorship or absolute authority”. Unlike al-Nabhanı, who focussed on reviving the historic Caliphate system with its power concentrated in the hands of a Caliph, al-Mawdudi presents a popular conception of an Islamic state, according to which the people are the source of legitimacy and power. He argues that the Qur’anic notion of khalifah does not refer to a single head of state, political leader or successor of the Prophet. It rather refers, al-Mawdudi insists, to all humans as vicegerents of God on earth. Al-Mawdudi emphasizes the role of the people, including the rank and file, in social and political life. He explicitly indicates that power in the righteous or legitimate Caliphate does not rest in the hands of one individual, family or class. It rather rests in the entire community, “as every individual in the community of believers shares the [power of] khalifah”. Consequently, al-Mawdudi’s conception of the Islamic state in this regard is not far from the spirit of democratic governance.

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74 Taqiyyuddin Nabhanı, *Nizam al-Islam* [Islam’s System], Jerusalem: Manshooraat Hisb al-Tahreer, 1953.
On the other hand, Sayyid Qutb’s conception of an Islamic state, which was mainly produced in prison where he spent ten years (1954-1964) before his execution with other Muslim Brotherhood leaders in 1966, became very influential in the 1970s. His dichotomist theory of jahili (infidel/bigotry) versus Islamic societies, whether intentionally or not, provided the theological and ideological basis for the justification of the use of force as a means for overthrowing what he described as the evils of the jahili system of the secularist regimes and for establishing an ideal Islamic state. Therefore, Qutb’s ideas inspired radical groups, such as al-Jihad and al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah of Egypt, which adopted violence as a means for achieving their goals. Democracy, for these groups, and the modern nation-state, in general, were seen as un-Islamic or jahili. In his book *Ma’alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones), which he wrote in response to President ‘Abd al-Nasser’s persecution of the Muslim Brotherhood members, Sayyid Qutb insists that there are only two mutually exclusive categories of society: Islamic and jahili. In order to combat the jahili system and bring the Islamic society to life, a well-organized and uncompromising Islamic vanguard (tali’ah) must be established. However, Qutb’s radical ideas were unequivocally rejected by many of the leaders and intellectuals of the Muslim Brotherhood.

As the subsequent chapters demonstrate further, mainstream Islamic movements and intellectuals in Indonesia and the Arab world do not adhere to, or wholly accept, the theories and ideologies of these above-mentioned Islamic ideologues and thinkers, though many of them do not directly criticize their ideas. Most contemporary Islamic movements and thinkers have instead, directly or indirectly, expounded on the approach of the late nineteenth-century reform movement in their efforts to preserve the Islamic identity and respond to modern challenges and needs of their societies. Whereas in Indonesia a new generation of pluralist Muslim thinkers has emerged, the influence of

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79 Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an influential Islamic scholar and Brotherhood theoretician, has criticized Qutb’s ideas, particularly his inclination to brand Muslim societies as jahili or infidel, see Yusuf al-Qaradawi, “Mudthakiraat al-Qaradhawi” [al-Qaradawi’s memoir], *IslamOnline.net*, online (accessed on November 8, 2006) [available]: http://www.islamonline.net/Arabic/Karadawy/part3/2003/11/article02.shtml

80 Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, “Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the Middle East, and Indonesia.”
which has been reflected in the programs of various newly formed Islamic parties, formalist tendencies remain the predominant characteristic of Islamic political thought and agenda in the Arab world.\textsuperscript{81} However, it might be reasonable to doubt that this amounts to a fundamental difference in terms of practical policies since, though they disagree on many issues, formalist and pluralist Islamic thinkers and parties emphasize the supremacy of Islam as “an essential frame of reference for all normative judgments.”\textsuperscript{82} Furthermore, both trends “share a view of Islam that emphasizes justice, human dignity and equality, the rule of law, the role of the people in selecting their leaders, the obligation of having a consultative form of government, and the value of pluralism”, recognizing that democratic values and basic rights are rooted in Islam.\textsuperscript{83} Consequently, in order to profoundly understand these trends and reveal their impacts on democratic development, a closer examination of their political ideas and practices is required. This is provided in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

4.6. Conclusion

The investigation in chapter has confirmed that political precedents and principles that, to a large extent, correlate with modern democratic governance are not absent from Islamic history and thought. As the examination has shown, there is an abundance of historical material that demonstrates that democratic aspects, such as pluralism, tolerance of differences, mutual consultation, the right of the people to choose their rulers, political contract and consent, separation of powers, limits of state powers and justice, are found not only in the discourse of the modern reform movement and classical Islamic literature, but also in the formative history of the Islamic community.

More importantly, these rooted Islamic principles that correlate with modern democratic values are providing an important source of inspiration for contemporary Islamic movements and political activism. In fact, many contemporary Islamic


\textsuperscript{83} Feldman, Noah, “The Best Hope,” p. 60.
political movements that appreciate the rootedness of modern democratic values in Islam are utilizing these principles as substantive theoretical foundations for a pluralist, inclusive Islamic democracy. In general, the findings of the investigation in this chapter confirm the hypothesis that the values of democracy can be articulated as fully compatible with Islamic doctrine where Islam is not inherently antithetical to democracy. Consequently, the possibility of the idea of establishing a pluralist society and inclusive Islamic democracy, which advocates both democratic and Islamic values, in Muslim-majority countries is not unfounded, at least theoretically.
Chapter Five

Identity Politics and Authoritarianism in Egypt

5.1. Introduction

One of the important factors that seriously hinder democratic development is the inability or lack of genuine will on the part of the principle political actors to be reflectively responsive to the aspirations and interests of the various social and cultural identity groups prevailing in their societies. This is particularly relevant during transitional periods, such as the early years of independence in many post-colonial societies where principle actors designed and established new political structures for their countries. The promotion of the interests or aspirations of one identity group while suppressing other socially rooted identities can be very detrimental to the development of national unity and democracy. Without a minimal consensus on national unity and identity, political stability can only be temporarily maintained through undemocratic and excessively coercive means. While Arabic and Islamic identities constitute the most salient components of the prevailing collective identity in contemporary Arab societies, it is very difficult to imagine the possibility of developing a democratically stable political structure where one of these rooted identity-components is forcefully suppressed. Though not mutually exclusive, nationalist and Islamic identities can be, and in many instances have been, used as an ideological basis or pretext for political suppression and exclusion for the sakes of national conformity and unity. This is particularly the case under the revolutionary Arab nationalist regimes that tried to suppress political expression of Islamic identity, as the examination in this chapter elaborates.

Taking a historical/longitudinal approach, this chapter sheds some light on the ideological and structural factors that have been responsible for or used by many Arab rulers as a pretext for hindering democratic development in the Arab world, with a
particular focus on Egypt. The first part of this chapter examines the emergence and development of the Arab-Islamic identity and, subsequently, discusses the revival of modern Arab nationalist and Islamic movements as well as the formation of the contemporary Arab *qutriyah* (territorial) state system. The impact of the struggle between Islamic and Arab nationalist forces on political development and democracy in Egypt is examined in the second part of this chapter. In this section, presidents Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasser’s and Anwar al-Sadat’s repression of political dissent, particularly with regard to the Muslim Brotherhood movement, is the main focus of the investigation. In the final analysis, the findings of the examination in this chapter facilitate the evaluation of the hypothesis *that the repression and exclusion of Islamic activism, rather than representing a solution to Muslim societies' predicaments, only exasperates tension and fosters extremism.*

5.2. Islam and the Expansion of Arab Identity

Within the first century of its inception, Islam fundamentally altered the life of the Arabs, changed the course of world history and transformed the social organization and political structures of many societies in and far beyond the Arabian region. By the time of the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632, that is twenty years after the introduction of Islam, the Islamization of the Arabian peninsula was almost complete. This Islamization process did not represent only a simple conversion from *shirk* (polytheism) to *tawhid* (monotheism). It triggered transformations that were indeed comprehensive in terms of their social, cultural and epistemological impacts involving no less than a profound process of legitimization of a new source of knowledge and authority; an enduring legacy which fundamentally inspires contemporary Islamic societies and political movements. This process transformed the life of Arabs at individual, social and political levels, transcending the *jahili* (pre-Islamic belief) system and the tribal form of social organization. Not only Islam did unite the divided Arabian tribes under one supra-tribal political unit, but also, more importantly, it dominated Arab societies and culture until the present day. It shook the core of the tribal bond of social organization to an extent that loosened the fortifications of the traditional society of *jahiliyah* (pre-Islamic society) and undermined its entrenchment against any novel changes. Accordingly, the basic social bond of *jahiliyah*, of which the blood relation of
‘asabiyah (blind loyalty to the tribe or lineage) was considered as the most important pillar,\(^1\) was transformed into a supra-tribal social organization based on the bond of tawhid, according to which the ummah replaced the tribe. Under the jahili system, the solid law of ‘asabiyah legitimated inequality “among already heterogeneous groups” and provided “a framework of ordered chaos, offering a minimal regulator of relations and duties between separately operating small herding groups”.\(^2\) Tribal solidarity and moral status, in both sedentary and Bedouin Arab societies, were primarily realized and determined through this conscious awareness of, with staunch adherence to, factual or fictitious lines of descent (nasab or hasab) from a common ancestor.\(^3\) In fact, the Qur’an undermined the tribal bond of ‘asabiyah by associating it with deviance, disbelief and bigotry or the ignorance of jahiliyah.\(^4\) Consequently, from its inception, Islam provided a sense of collective identity, which makes “no distinction of race and class”, cuts across tribal and communal divisions, transcending tribalism, ethnicity, village and kin-group, and facilitates the establishment of “a new social unity”.\(^5\) The Islamic Caliphate system established after the death of the Prophet enabled the Arabs to unify in one political unit, the domain of which stretched from the Atlantic in the west to China in the east within a remarkably short time.

Although the political expansion of the Arabs during the seventh and eighth centuries was very rapid, the spread of Islam beyond the Arabian peninsula, contrary to popular belief, was gradual. In fact, for centuries Muslims constituted minority groups in most Muslim-controlled areas. In Egypt and Iraq, for example, Muslims did not reach the fifty per cent threshold until the tenth century; that is three hundred years after the arrival of Islam. In Syria, on the other hand, Islamization was even slower, as it took

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\(^2\) Mohammed Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam*, p. 44.

\(^3\) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, *Kitab al-Aghani*, vol. 1, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1973, p. 72. Ibn Khaldun argues that even during the first phase of Islamic expansion when many people began to be identified by their cities or places of residence (e.g. al-Basri or al-Dimashqi for a person from Basra or Damascus), the bond of ‘asabiyah remained strongly intact. He emphasizes that such identification with places was only secondary or supplementary to their primary identification of nasab. It was later, Ibn Khaldun points out, when Arabs were mixed with non-Arabs through marriage that ‘asabiyah became an exclusive characteristic of Bedouin tribesmen, see Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun*, p.130.

\(^4\) Qur’an, 48: 26.

almost six hundred years (c. 1200) for Muslims to reach the fifty per cent margin. As the political expansion of the Arabs began to slow down not long after the transfer of power from the Umayyad Caliphate to the Abbasids in 749, the unified Muslim rule declined and eventually disintegrated. The process of Islamization, however, remained unaffected and continued to thrive in many areas, both within and outside the domain of Islam. In some of the areas that came under Muslim rule for many centuries, Muslims remained among the minority groups until the present day, as is the case with India. However, in other areas, even where Muslim-Arab control had never been extended, Islam was embraced and eventually became the religion of the majority among the native population. This is the case for Indonesia, the most populous Muslim-majority nation in the world today.7

In the Middle East and North Africa, the spread of Islam was also accompanied by the process of Arabization. The Arabic language, in the Middle East and North Africa, eventually became the lingua franca and “medium of a culture”, which “expressed itself in literature and in systems of law, theology, and spirituality”.8 Although many pre-Islamic Arab communities and tribes existed in Greater Syria (Syria, Lebanon, historic Palestine and Jordan), relatively full Arabization only took place after the spread of Islam in these areas. The North African countries of Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania also went through varying degrees of Arabization.9 Accordingly, the Arabic-speaking world today has come to encompass an area that stretches from the Atlantic coast of North Africa in the west (Western Sahara and Mauritania) to the Arabian Sea (Oman) and Iraq in the east, and from the Mediterranean Sea and Syria in the north to Central Africa and Yemen in the south. It covers an area of

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7 See chapter seven for more details.
9 Somalia, Djibouti and Comoros Islands are current members of the League of Arab States and adopt Arabic as their official language, though they have not been fully Arabized. Iraq and the Arab Maghrib, especially Algeria and Morocco, also include substantial minorities of Kurds and Berbers, respectively. The League of Arab States includes the following twenty-two member states: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros Island, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. See LAS (the League of Arab States), online (accessed on August 19, 2006) [available]: http://www.arableagueonline.org/IAS/index.jsp.
14.2 million square kilometres, which makes it larger than Canada (10 million), the United States (9.6 million) or China (9.6 million). The combined population of the Arab countries was estimated at 300 million in 2002.\(^\text{10}\)

According to historian Philip K. Hitti, although the term ‘Arab’ had primarily an ethnic connotation linked to pre-Islamic Arabia, after the spread of Islam and the Arabic language the term acquired a linguistic and more extensive meaning. The term, therefore, came to refer to any Arab-speaking person “regardless of original race or nationality”, as Hitti contends.\(^\text{11}\) Hitti, furthermore, suggests that “[i]t may be an arbitrary but nevertheless useful expedient to limit the term ‘Arab’ in our modern usage to its linguistic significance, reserving the term ‘Arabian’, in its ethnological sense, to the people of the Arabian peninsula”.\(^\text{12}\) Hence, over history, Islam and the Arabic language have come to bestow on Arabs a sense of supra-ethnic collective identity and unity. While Arabic mainly represents a source of supra-ethnic ‘linguistic’ identity, Islam provides a unifying ideology or a sense of universal unity. For the modern Arab qutriyah (territorial) state system, this supra-national consciousness or “sense of identification that cuts across state boundaries and supersedes, on the ideological level, local consideration” has become a major source of legitimacy crises, which, not only hinder democratic development, but also challenge the foundation of the contemporary Arab state, as will be further discussed.\(^\text{13}\)

5.3. Arab Nationalism (al-Qawmiyah al-‘Arabiyah)

The origins of the Arab nationalist movement go back to the 19th and early 20th centuries. It began as an apolitical cultural and literary movement, mainly aiming at the assertion of the notion of cultural unity among the Arabs of the Middle East, but it eventually evolved into a cohesive political and ideological movement. Historically,

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\(^\text{12}\) Ibid.

Arab nationalism developed through three phases: revival, politicization and ideological consolidation. Phase one was primarily literary and cultural revival characterised by the promotion of an Arab identity distinct from the Ottoman Turks. In phase two, the movement gained a secular inclination and was politicized by liberal thinkers who advocated the separation of state from religion and called for more Arab autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. During these two phases, the movement was mainly limited to the Arab part of Asia, which was still under Ottoman control. Therefore, Western colonial powers which, at that time, dominated North Africa supported Arab nationalists in Ottoman controlled areas and encouraged Arab self determination and secession from Ottoman rule. The third phase, however, started after World War I when, as a result of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, the rest of the Arab speaking territories, mainly almost all of the Arab part of Asia, fell under the control of Western colonialism. During this phase, which was marked “with a great mistrust… leading even to hostility and open revolts against the Western ‘liberators’ of the Near East”, Arab nationalism developed into a cohesive political ideology, with the creation of an independent and all-encompassing Arab nation-state as its ultimate goal.14

When European colonial powers started to penetrate the Arab societies during the 19th century, almost the whole of the Arabic speaking world had been under the Ottoman rule for nearly four hundred years. By the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the whole of North Africa, from Egypt to Morocco, fell into the grip of European colonization. Algeria and Tunisia became formal French settler colonies, while Egypt was eventually turned into a British Protectorate. Later, by World War I, Libya was subjected to Italian military rule and Morocco was divided between the French and the Spanish. After consolidating their complete control over the key ports and resources of the formally Ottoman-controlled North African part of the Arab world, European powers, particularly France and Britain, driven by the fervour of colonial competition, sought to extend their domain to the Arab part of Asia. Unlike the western colonizers, Ottomans shared with the overwhelming majority of Arabs the profession of Islamic faith. Arabs, therefore, did not see the Ottomans as foreign rulers. Thus, drawing no distinction between speakers of Arabic and other languages within the

Empire, Arabs, in fact, saw themselves as participants in the Ottoman Islamic empire and were comfortably reconciled to their position. However, Western-educated Arab Christians were not content with this attachment to Ottomans and sought to establish an Arab cultural identity distinct from the Ottoman Turks. The idea started, as Bassam Tibi asserts, during the 19th century when French Catholic and American Protestant missions decided to adopt the Arabic language as the main medium of their missionary work in Ottoman-controlled Greater Syria. They employed Arab-Christian scholars to translate and edit their religious texts and teaching materials and encouraged the revitalization of the Arabic language.  

Western-educated intellectuals initiated the Arab literary revival, where they began producing an abundance of literature on Arabic language and culture, hailing the Arabs’ past and calling for the restoration of the ‘golden age’ of the Arab civilization, which preceded the Ottomans. Syrian Christian scholars, such as Nasif al-Yaziji (1800-1871) and Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1983), were the most prominent pioneers of the Arab literary revival. Al-Yaziji, who worked for the American missionaries and edited their religious text books, produced many books and treatises on philology, logic, medicine and history, in addition to his famous odes. Al-Bustani also worked in American missionary schools, where he taught Arabic. One of the most important writings of al-Bustani is the well-known Arabic dictionary *Muhit al-Muhit*. In order to revive interest in the Arabic language and indigenous culture, al-Bustani emphasized the beauty of Arabic literature and invoked the “feelings of national pride” by elaborating and praising the shared legacy of Arab civilization and culture. In 1847, both al-Yaziji and al-Bustani worked together to form the first literary society in the Arab world, *Jam’iyat al-Adab wal-‘Ulum* (the Society of Literature and Sciences). Although the society was not long-live, since its membership was exclusively restricted to European and Syrian Christians, it in fact stimulated national consciousness and inspired the foundation of other national societies. In 1857, a more inclusive national society, known as *al-Jam’iyah al-‘Ilmiyah al-Suriyah* (the Syrian Scientific Society), was founded in Beirut. Ibrahim al-Yaziji, Nasif’s son, was a prominent member of this society. He

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wrote the first explicitly Arab nationalist ode, which he recited in the society’s secret meetings, beginning with “Awake, ye Arabs and arise”. The establishment of Arab journalism also took place during this period. Al-Bustani, for example, published *Nafir Suriyah* in 1860 and *al-Jinan* from 1870 until 1886. On the other hand, secret societies, joined by people of different confessions and encouraged by France, began to emerge in Syria. Paris, as Bassam Tibi indicates, “became the centre of Arab nationalist propaganda”.

Furthermore, the Western educated and Francophile intellectuals eventually generated a wealth of literature emphasizing the importance of social and political reform based on secularization and modernization. With the introduction of *Tanzimat* (reform) by Sultan Abdulhamid II, which strengthened Turkish control over the empire and restricted the freedom of the press and criticism, many Syrian intellectuals moved to Egypt, particularly after Egypt fell under British colonial domination. The British, in fact, encouraged the migration of Syrian intellectuals to Egypt by providing them with many incentives and advantages, such as government jobs and press freedom, especially with regard to the criticism of the Ottoman rule and propagation of Western ideologies. Albert Hourani elaborates in some detail the contribution and influence of Syrian Christian writers, journalists and publishers in spreading Western secular values and way of life in Egypt, in particular between the 1880s and World War I. Mostly educated in French and American missionary schools as well as being graduates of European universities, these Syrian intellectuals became profoundly influenced by Western secular ideas. Coming from a Christian background, secularists such as Shibly Shmayil, George Zydan, Faris Nimr and Farah Anton were amongst the most enthusiastic advocates of modern secular values and Western ideologies. As Albert Hourani indicates, unlike their Muslim peers, these Christian individuals did not feel, by

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accepting Western ideas, that they had something fundamentally important to sacrifice.\textsuperscript{21}

Taking advantage of the freedom of speech they enjoyed under British colonialism as well as the availability of newspapers and other means of publication in Egypt, the secular elite began to criticize the role of religion in social life, introducing and advocating modern philosophies such as Darwinism, Marxism, individualism and liberalism. More importantly, they argued that Western civilization and “the European sciences were of universal value; they could and must be accepted by the Arab mind” and that “a system of social morality” could be derived from them.\textsuperscript{22} Although the Arab cultural revival and “national feeling began to take secular form” by the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the movement had not assumed a political objective or been based on a cohesive political ideology. Therefore, even though political despotism was criticized, there were no explicit demands for the separation of the “Arab nation” from Ottoman rule and no serious “questioning of social organization”.\textsuperscript{23} The Arab literary and cultural movement, nevertheless, “provided the logical base for political revival… [and] constituted the basis of national identity”.\textsuperscript{24}

With the rise of the influence of the Young Turk movement by the turn of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, especially with its ascendance (1908) and overthrow and replacement of Sultan Abdulhamid II in 1909, the Arab national awakening began to turn into a political movement. Initially, the Young Turks secured the support of many Arab-Ottoman military officers by promising the establishment of a constitutional multi-national system, in which equality without any racial, ethnic or religious discrimination would be guaranteed. However, once in power, the Young Turks revealed their Turanian nationalist ideology and embarked on a ‘Turkification’ program, promoting Turkish language and culture throughout the Empire.\textsuperscript{25} The Turkification policy, in effect, only led to greater demands for Arab autonomy and the staunch affirmation of the Arabic language as a distinct cultural value for Arabs. As such, the new policy met with strong

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 121.
\textsuperscript{22} Albert Hourani, \textit{Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939}, p. 247.
\textsuperscript{23} Bassam Tibi, \textit{Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change}, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{24} Hisham Sharabi, \textit{Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years 1875–1914}, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1970, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{25} Zeini N. Zeine, \textit{Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism}, pp. 73–74.
resistance from Arab leaders, notables and intellectuals (Muslims and Christians alike), and thus the Arab nationalist movement started to consolidate and receive a great stimulus. A plethora of clandestine societies were formed within and outside the Ottoman territories, most notably, *al-Jamʿiyah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Fatat* (the Young Arab Society), founded by Syrian students in Paris (1911); *Jamʿiyat al-ʿAhd*, founded by Arab officers in Constantinople (1913); *Hizb al-Lamarkaziyah al-Idariyah al-ʿUthmaniyyah* (the Ottoman Decentralization Party), founded by Syrian exiles in Cairo (1912); and *Jamʿiat al-Islahiyah* (the Reform Society) of Beirut (1913). Yet, the predominant aims of these societies were still primarily administrative decentralization and Arab cultural autonomy within multi-national Ottoman rule.

In order to secure the support of European colonial powers, the Arab nationalists tried to distance themselves from the cause of Egyptian and other Arabs of North Africa who were struggling for independence from European colonialism. This concern, which was to change later when the Arab part of Asia fell under French and British control, was obvious at the first Arab conference convened in Paris in 1913. Bassam Tibi claims that the participants at the 1913 Arab conference agreed “that the ‘Arab nation’ only included the Arabic-speaking portion of the Ottoman Empire” and that “[i]t was only in the writings of Satiʿ al-Husri that the term ‘Arab nation’ was later extended to include the whole of the Arabic-speaking world”. However, many of the participants in the conference made observations that clearly implied, directly or not, that the Arabic-speaking people/s constituted a nation. Abd al-Ghani al-ʿArisi, a prominent participant, argued in his speech that the Arabs, from the perspectives of all German, Italian and French political philosophers, “have all the features” that warrant their “claim to be a community (jamaʿa), a people (shaʿb), and a nation (umma)”. Even the statement of the chairman of the conference, ‘ʿAbd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi, in his interview with the *Le Temps* newspaper where he limited the concern of the conference to the problem of the Ottoman Arabs, did not imply, as Tibi claims, that other Arabs were excluded from the concept of ‘Arab nation’ as perceived by the participants. Al-Zahrawi’s statement, moreover, has nothing to do with the issue of defining the ‘Arab nation,’ nor is it

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27 Ibid., p. 111.
28 Ibid., p. 112.
29 Ibid., p. 111.
concerned with a grand nationalist objective, such as the secession of Arab territories from the Ottoman state, let alone the establishment of a nation-state which encompasses all Arabs. It rather reflects the specific political objectives of the conference which mainly focussed on political reform within the empire, decentralization and more representation of Arabs in the central government.\textsuperscript{30} In fact, al-Zahrawi’s conception of ‘Arab nation’ was made clear in many of his writings and commentaries, especially in \textit{al-Hadara} newspaper, where he explicitly called upon all Arabs, including Egyptians and other North Africans, to awaken from their long sleep and unite.\textsuperscript{31}

The French-backed Arab nationalist elite were, at this point, by no means capable of mobilizing mass public support. Even the campaign of arrests and executions that the Turks waged against the nationalist leaders during World War I did not provide sufficient motivation for the Arab masses to rally behind the nationalist cause, which, by then, was already starting to advocate separatist aspirations. The first explicit demands for independence began to emerge after the execution of several nationalist leaders against the background of the confiscation by the Turks of secret documents from the French embassy in Beirut. The documents uncovered connections between some of the nationalist leaders and France during World War I, in which Turkey entered into an alliance with Germany against Britain and France.\textsuperscript{32} It actually needed the involvement of the traditional leader Sharif Husayn of Mecca for the Arab masses to be mobilized against the Turks. Husayn, the Grand Sharif of Mecca, was convinced by the British, through the famous “Husayn–McMahon Correspondence”, to lead an Arab revolt against the Turks on the condition that an Arab kingdom would be established after the war.\textsuperscript{33} Although the pretensions to link the Arab revolt to nationalist aspirations are questionable, as Husayn was motivated more by his desire to re-establish an Arab-Islamic Caliphate, the revolt, however, represented “the first organized political

\textsuperscript{30} Najib Ghadbian, \textit{Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{32} Zeini N. Zeine, \textit{Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism}, pp. 102–103.
\textsuperscript{33} The promise was made explicit in a letter written, on October 24, 1915, by the British High Commissioner in Egypt Sir Henry McMahon which was sent to Sherif Husayn during the First World War. In a series of letters from 1915 to 1916 McMahon managed to attract Arab support against the Ottoman Empire.
action”, which successfully unified the national and traditional forces and mobilized thousands of Arabs against the Turks.34

With the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in Istanbul by Mustafa Kamal in 1924, which was a symbol of Islamic unity, and its replacement with a secular nationalist regime, the lines between Islamic and secular Arab nationalist trends began to take a sharper form. In fact, since then, most of the contemporary political history of many Arab countries has been marked by the dichotomy and struggle between the Islamic and secular nationalist forces. Prior to World War I, the line between secular nationalists and Islamic reformists was not sharply drawn. For example, disciples of Sheikh Muhammad Abdu, most notably the two Syrian Islamic reform scholars Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakiby and Rashid Ridha, had much in common with the Syrian secular intellectuals, and they cooperated with them in many ways. They all advocated the “reorganization of society on the basis of national loyalties” and called for political reform within the Ottoman Empire.35 Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakiby’s criticism of the Ottoman tyranny and his promotion of the establishment of an Arab Caliphate were hailed by many secular nationalist intellectuals who saw al-Kawakiby as a pioneer Arab nationalist. When the Ottoman Decentralization Party was founded in 1912, Islamic reform scholars, such as Rashid Ridha, and pioneer Christian secularists, such as Shibly Shmayil, joined together and cooperated within the party.36 Ridha also participated with Faris Nimr, a prominent Christian secular intellectual, in the negotiations about Arab independence that were conducted by the Allied authorities during World War I.37

However, with the abolition of the institution of the Caliphate, which caused a huge shock for many Arab and Muslim thinkers, the polarization of Islamic and secular nationalist trends and the dichotomy between traditional and modernist forces began to occupy centre stage in the intellectual and political arenas. Although the Turkish secular republic, which replaced the Caliphate/Sultanate system, was dominated by an authoritarian single party regime, the Arab secular elite praised the Turkish revolution and promoted its imitation in the Arab world. Ali Abd al-Raziq, a renowned Azhari

35 Albert Hourani, The Emergence of the Modern Middle East, p. 122.
37 Albert Hourani, The Emergence of the Modern Middle East, p. 122.
scholar whose work is extensively quoted by secular intellectuals, harshly criticized the Islamic Caliphate system and dubbed it as amoral and anti-religion. In contrast, Rashid Ridha viewed the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate and the secularists’ propagation of the separation of state and religion as “worse than the Crusades wars” against Islam.\textsuperscript{38}

### 5.4. The Qutriyah (Territorial) State and Arab Nationalist Regimes

One of the most important factors that obstructed democracy and allowed the authoritarian ruling elites to manipulate and use Arab nationalist ideology as a ground for promoting the creation of an alternative pan-Arab political structure was that the post-colonial political structures in the Arab world were not designed to reflect the cultural and “social identities underlying them”.\textsuperscript{39} Indeed, as Helms argues, “[f]rom the perspective of the indigenous populations, there was little historical rationale” in the formulation of the borders of the present Arab states as many of them “were linear, as if drawn with a ruler, determined by Europeans to further their own ends”.\textsuperscript{40} With such artificial political structures unfavourable to the feeling of collective community, “which does not conflict with other subnational or supranational communal identifications”, the development of political legitimacy and national unity became an extremely formidable task.\textsuperscript{41}

Despite their promise to support and maintain the independence of the Arabs in the regions to be liberated from the Turks, the British and French concluded a secret agreement, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), according to which the Arab region would be divided between the two colonial powers after the war. The British government also issued the Balfour Declaration (1917), which promised the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Accordingly, after a short period of tentative independence, which lasted until 1920, the liberated Arab region disintegrated under the mandate system. The mandate system avowed that the Arabs of the Middle

\textsuperscript{38} Rasheed Ridha, *al-Manar*, vol. 26, 21 June, 1925, p. 100.


\textsuperscript{40} C. M. Helms, *The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, London: Croom Helm, 1981, p. 188.

East, though considered by the League of Nations as civilized, “were not ready to have
even mini-nation-states and that others (i.e. Britain and France) would decide on the
timing and form of such political organization”.\textsuperscript{42} Thus, authorized by the League of
Nations as mandatories, France controlled Syria and Lebanon, while Britain dominated
Palestine, Iraq and Transjordan. Consequently, drawn up entirely by the colonial powers
to suit their imperial interests without any concern for local considerations, the borders
that divided this region were not perceived by the indigenous population as legitimate.\textsuperscript{43}

Furthermore, the advent of full-scale colonialism, which brought both the North African
and Asian parts of the Arabic-speaking world – with the exception of the Arabian
peninsula – under direct European domination, provided the Arabs with a shared cause
to fight for as well as a common enemy to unite against. From the 1920s, the Arab
nationalist movement started to develop into a more cohesive anti-western-domination
movement and “rallying point of Arab unification”.\textsuperscript{44} By the 1940s, with the arrival of
the socialist ideology, pan-Arabism developed into an established doctrine characterized
by Arab-nationalism, socialism and unity. Utilizing pan-Arab rhetoric and socialist
discourse, President Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser and Michel ‘Aflaq, a principal ideologue of
the Ba’th party, skillfully promoted a comprehensive revolutionary ideology primarily
characterized by the advocacy of Arab and social unity. In their powerful message,
Nasserism and Ba’thism addressed, though by and large rhetorically, the needs and
aspirations of both the masses and intellectual elites. On the one hand, Ba’thism and
Nasserism reinforced the common cultural values of the lay people “assuring them of
the worth of their heritage, their brotherhood, and their destiny as a community in the
face of foreign domination”.\textsuperscript{45} On the other hand, they also “offered an equally
important message” to the Western-educated classes, asserting “that westernization did
not need to conflict with their fundamental identity as Arabs”.\textsuperscript{46} With its transition to
Nasserism and Ba’thism, Arab nationalism took its final revolutionary form, ultimately

\textsuperscript{42} Bahgat Korany, “Alien and Besieged Yet Here to Stay: The Contradictions of the Arab Territorial
pp. 60–61.
\textsuperscript{43} Zeini N. Zeine, \textit{Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism}, pp. 125–126.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 126.
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\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
becoming the most influential political paradigm in the Arab world, particularly in Egypt and Syria between the 1950s and 1970s.

Three major groups of states emerged in the Arab World during the colonial and post-colonial eras; the republican nationalist states (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Algeria), the monarchical states (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco) and the intermediate states (e.g. Lebanon, Kuwait and Yemen). Despite the fact that the deeply rooted Islamic ideals continued to influence Arab societies and provide a major source of inspiration for the populace, Islam ceased to be a major player in official politics in most post-independence Arab states. Islam was, to varying extents and with few exceptions, systematically excluded from political life, especially under the revolutionary nationalist regimes. In order to mobilize public support, Arab nationalist leaders, most notably Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser (Egypt), Ahmed Ben Bella (Algeria), Hafez al-Assad (Syria), and Mo’ammr al-Qaddafi (Libya), resorted to nationalist and socialist ideologies as primary sources of inspiration. Therefore, these leaders embarked on a vigorous project of systematic inculcation of such revolutionary ideologies in the public mind, manipulating all public means and state apparatuses, especially the mass media, schools and universities. Because inclusive democratic institutions allowed for the participation of traditional and religious social forces, which could jeopardize the revolutionary goals of ‘the nation,’ as projected by the revolutionary nationalist leaders, people had to “forget their rights for political participation regulated by liberal forms of democracy”. Ironically, the ‘secular’ nationalist rulers did not refrain from manipulating religious occasions and symbols to legitimize their authority in the eyes of the public and contain resentments of traditional religious groups. Consequently, despite their realization that religious influence is deeply rooted in Arab societies, the secular nationalist rulers who controlled “[t]he entire cultural space, especially as represented by the mass media… paid lip service to Islam” as well as to democracy.

Furthermore, realizing the importance of mobilizing human and natural resources for effective modernization, most post-independence Arab nationalist regimes adopted puritan revolutionary ideologies and projects which were greatly influenced by Western ideals and experiences of disciplined puritanism, such as the Nazism, Fascism and Communism. This was especially the case for the Nasserist regime in Egypt and the Ba’thist regimes in Syria and Iraq. These revolutionary regimes embarked on vigorous secularization and modernization projects that were based on ‘pure’ Arab nationalism and socialism. Thus, paying lip service to democratic development which requires co-existence and compromise among political adversaries, these despotic regimes resorted to the use of emergency laws and suppressive policies, including naked and excessive use of force, political persecution, physical torture and, in many cases, summary executions. Under the secularization measures adopted by these and other Arab nationalist regimes, traditional Islamic institutions and constructs came under systematic onslaught in the name of modernisation. As Aziz al-‘Azmeh asserts, these modernization projects alienated religious influence by secularizing time (replacing the lunar/Islamic calendar linked to religious occasions with the Western calendar), space (in regard to borders and localities), knowledge (by making natural and historic knowledge the points of reference instead of religious sources) as well as politics. Moreover, as al-‘Azmeh emphasizes, these regimes replaced the *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) scholars and *Shari’ah* judges with lawyers and civil judges, sheikhs (Islamic preachers) with teachers, *Shari’ah* schools and kuttabs (traditional schools) with modern institutions and universities.\(^{50}\) Many traditional Islamic institutions were either closed down (e.g. al-Zaytouna Institute of Tunis) or, to a certain extent, secularised. For instance, the Islamic university of al-Azhar in Egypt, into which many secular faculties and subjects were introduced, was put under the direct control of the presidential office of ‘Abd al-Nasser.\(^{51}\) Furthermore, *Shari’ah* courts were either dissolved or marginalized, *awqaf* (endowment) institutions and Islamic non-governmental organizations were nationalized and banned or outlawed. The mass-based

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Islamic movement al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (the Muslim Brotherhood) of Egypt was hit hard and forced to go underground where many of its leaders were executed and thousands of its members imprisoned and tortured by the Arab nationalist regimes of ‘Abd al-Nasser in the 1950s/1960s and Hafiz al-Asad of Syria in the 1970s and 1980s.\textsuperscript{52}

On the other hand, while pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism, the predominant aspirations of modern Arab societies, pushed “away from the legitimacy” of the Arab qutriyah-state, which failed to encompass the entire ummah (as Muslim community or Arab nation) in its domain, post-independence Arab nationalist regimes did not “unconditionally accept the legitimacy of their own statehood”.\textsuperscript{53} With its semi-secular rhetoric and orientation, the Arab nationalist discourse emphasized the notion of ummah as the basic tenet of the ‘legitimate’ or ideal Arab nation-state, despite the fact that the term ummah “has throughout the Islamic era referred to the universal Muslim community” and not just the Arabs.\textsuperscript{54} In fact, all members of the League of Arab States (LAS) today explicitly insist on their Arab-Islamic identity, categorically affirming that although “[v]arious ethnic, linguistic and religious groups inhabit” the Arab world, “Islam and the Arabic language constitute its two predominant cultural features”, and thus they unquestionably consider the Arabs as “part of one nation”.\textsuperscript{55} Consequently, as the borders of most contemporary Arab states were arbitrarily drawn by European colonial powers without regard to the geographic, historic or demographic characteristics of the region, the fierce disputes over ideological considerations apparently polluted the political landscape and hindered democracy in most Arab states.\textsuperscript{56}

However, with their repressive policies and persistent failures, the Arab nationalist regimes’ legitimacy was rendered extremely fragile in the eyes of the people. In fact, with the failure of the nationalists to fulfill any of their ‘grand’ promises, particularly with regard to Arab unity, the liberation of Palestine, social justice and economic development, “the goal[s] for which democracy was to be sacrificed”, people lost their

\textsuperscript{52} Muhammad Hafizth Diab, Sayyid Qubh: al-Khitab wa al-Aydologya [Sayyid Qubh: Discourse and Ideology], Beirut: Dar al-Tali’ah, 1988, p. 57.


\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55} LAS (the League of Arab States), “Arab Civilization - Introduction to the Arab World.”

\textsuperscript{56} C. M. Helms, The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia, p. 188.
faith in their regimes and began to question their credibility.\textsuperscript{57} Moreover, acting as ‘enlightened’ despots and arrogating to themselves the authority to represent the ‘general will’ or public interest without the genuine consent of the people, the nationalist rulers as well as their secular modernization projects fell well short of the dreams and aspirations of the public. Therefore, they lost the competition for the political imagination of the people, who soon “began to discover how scandalously unscrupulous politicians could misuse democratic process”; thus “[d]emocracy lost its meaning to the majority of the people”.\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{5.5. \textit{Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun} (Muslim Brotherhood) of Egypt}

Broadly speaking, modern Islamic activism in Egypt developed in three phases and under three political structures that fundamentally influenced the relationship between the state and Islam or society in general: the pre-independence phase under a British dominated quasi-constitutional monarchy (1922–1952); the post-independence revolutionary phase under President Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasser’s Arab nationalist regime (1952–1970); and the post-revolutionary phase under Sadat’s \textit{infitah} (openness) (1970–1981) and Mubarak’s state controlled liberalization system (1981–). This part of the chapter discusses the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood (\textit{al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun} or MB) movement and state–society relations in these three eras. It also examines the political structures of Nasser’s and Sadat’s regimes, the legacy of which President Hosni Mubarak has built upon in order to maintain his personal authoritarian rule and prevent meaningful democratization, as elaborated and discussed in chapter six.

In 1922, the British, who had occupied Egypt in 1882, granted the Egyptian people partial independence under the national pressure mainly exerted by the nationalist Wafd Party (Hizb al-Wafd). The British colonial authority actually established a puppet constitutional monarchy, which remained subordinate to the British through their High Commissioner and the advisors that they appointed in key positions within the Egyptian government.\textsuperscript{59} Thus the British effectively maintained control and military presence in

\textsuperscript{57} Najib Ghadbian, \textit{Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World}, p. 36.  
Egypt until 1954. During the 1920s, the Egyptian political landscape was predominantly fuelled by nationalist inspirations and patriotic feelings. Traditionalist and reformist Islamic scholars and leaders were also preoccupied with their promotion of the re-establishment of an Arab-Islamic Caliphate, especially after the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, as already discussed in chapter four.

A few years after the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, namely in March 1928, and after several abortive attempts to re-establish an Arab-Islamic Caliphate, the society of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) was founded by a small group led by Hasan al-Banna, a schoolteacher influenced by the ideas of Sheikh Rashid Ridha. Under the leadership of al-Banna, from 1928 until 1949, despite facing several hindrances particularly after World War II, the MB maintained rapid growth and was able to establish a strong social base. Initially, Hasan al-Banna, the first General Guide of the MB, channelled his efforts towards building membership-based support, promoting religious and moral reform and providing social services. The MB carried out its activities mainly through the establishment of new branches around which mosques, schools, clubs and, later, medical centres were built. Its first branch was established in the city of Isma'iliya, which was “a focal point” of British as well as “foreign ‘economic occupation.’” This was where “not only the British military camps” were located, “but, equally hateful to Banna, the Suez Canal Company; complete foreign domination of the public utilities; and the conspicuously luxurious homes of the foreigners overlooking the ‘miserable’ homes of their workers”.

In 1932, the MB established its first branch in Cairo, where its membership began to grow rapidly. During the 1930s, the movement spread both in rural and urban areas and its membership became highly diverse, incorporating urban labourers, peasants, civil servants and students. Despite some hindrances and tribulations with the government during World War II, the MB continued to grow and, by 1949, it had established about

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two thousand branches all over the country, in addition to its external branches in other Arab countries, such as Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and other North African Arab states.\footnote{Ishak Musa Husaini, \textit{The Muslim Brethren: The Greatest of Modern Islamic Movements}, pp. 13–18; Najib Ghadbian, \textit{Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World}, p. 60.}

In addition to its consistent focus on social and religious activities, the MB, once it secured the support of the masses during the late 1930s, eventually started to engage in political activities. For instance, it organized public demonstrations, criticized the British-controlled Egyptian regime and demanded social reform. With its rising influence, the organization openly criticized the British domination of the country and demanded an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops through the utilization of its several publications, including magazines, newsletters and pamphlets, and the organization of public rallies and national conferences.\footnote{Mahmud ‘Abd al-Halim, \textit{Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun: Ahdaath Sana’at al-Tarikh}, vol. 1, pp. 115–122; 247; 277; 370.} During the 1940s, the MB increased its pressure on the successive governments calling them to end all kinds of cooperation with the British unless complete evacuation of British troops took place. They led public rallies and demonstrations that forced some governments to resign for failing to be responsive to the people’s demands in “speed[ing] up the achievement of national rights and the independence and unity of the Nile Valley”.\footnote{Ishak Musa Husaini, \textit{The Muslim Brethren: The Greatest of Modern Islamic Movements}, p. 19.} The Egyptian regime and the British authorities retaliated repressively by banning many of the MB’s meetings, confiscating its publications, arresting many of its leaders, preventing it from contesting parliament seats and, finally, on December 8, 1948, dissolving the organization. In 1942 al-Banna was forced to withdraw his nomination as parliamentary candidate or face the possible dissolution of the MB and deportation of its leaders. In 1944 he was also prevented from entering the parliament by the British troops, who directly interfered in the election process in the Isma’iliya constituency, an MB stronghold in which al-Banna was contesting a parliamentary seat.\footnote{Mahmud ‘Abd al-Halim, \textit{Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun: Ahdaath Sana’at al-Tarikh}, vol. 1, pp. 296; 327–328; Richard P. Mitchell, \textit{The Society of the Muslim Brothers}, pp. 27–29.}

After the World War II, the confrontation between the MB, on the one hand, and the Egyptian regime and British authority, on the other, intensified dramatically. The Wafd
Party, which was the only political party with a genuine mass support, lost most of the popularity it previously enjoyed, because of its cooperation with the British during the war. Thus, the MB emerged as the single most powerful social and political force after the war. In 1946, as al-Banna was performing Hajj in Mecca with an MB delegation, the regime stepped up its attack on the organization confiscating its newspaper and arresting many of its leaders, including its secretary general. As popular unrest and turmoil increased, the government retaliated more repressively and, in many instances, opened fire on student demonstrators, killing and injuring many people.

The confrontation became open to all possibilities during the second cabinet of Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi, who launched a sweeping campaign against the MB. The Palestinian problem, especially after the resolution on partition adopted by the United Nations in November 1947, exacerbated the tension between the government and the MB. The MB embarked on a mobilization campaign inspiring “resistance to Zionism”. After urging all Arab governments to declare jihad and act immediately to help the Palestinian people, Al-Banna initiated, with other Muslim leaders, the formation of “a ‘Committee of the Nile Valley’ to collect money and arms for the ‘volunteers’ now being recruited to save Palestine”. Al-Nuqrashi became increasingly alarmed by the influence of the MB and started to air his suspicions that the Brotherhood was planning a revolution. He accused the organization of involvement in several violent incidents, especially after the Egyptian police confiscated from the MB a large number of arms gathered for the volunteers who were preparing to participate in the armed resistance in Palestine. On December 8, 1948, al-Nuqrashi issued the military order (no. 63), under which he disbanded the organization, closing all its branches and centres throughout the country and confiscating its assets and publications. The government also imprisoned thousands of MB leaders and members and liquidated their businesses. Furthermore, on December 28, 1948, the situation culminated in the assassination of Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi. The response of the regime was extremely violent: it incarcerated a large number of MB members “in concentration camps, and wreaked vengeance on their

67 Ibid., p. 37.
69 Richard P. Mitchell, The Society of the Muslim Brothers, p. 56.
persons, properties and families”\textsuperscript{71} With the murder of Hasan al-Banna on February 12, 1949 by the secret police, the regime erroneously believed that the organization was totally eradicated and done away with forever.

However, it soon became evident that, by the time of his assassination, al-Banna had already laid down the foundation of a durable structure of a novel form of Islamic activism. Not only had al-Banna’s organization spread in many Arab countries, but also his ideas provided an important source of inspiration for the formation of many other Islamic movements throughout the entire Muslim world. In Egypt, the MB leaders chose Hasan Isma’il al-Hudaybi, a respected High Court judge, as the new General Guide of the organization. Despite its formal dissolution by the state under different regimes and the imprisonment and persecution of thousands of its members, especially under ‘Abd al-Nasser’s regime, the organization managed to persist and endure hardships, and during the 1970 and 1980s it re-emerged as the most potent and viable opposition force in Egypt.


After the 1947 war in Palestine, a small cadre of army officers, some of whom were associated with the MB, established a secret organization within the army known as the Free Officers (\textit{al-Dubbat al-Ahrar}). Their initial goals were to liberate Egypt from British domination, overthrow King Farouk and his corrupt regime and launch comprehensive social, administrative and economic reforms.\textsuperscript{72} On July 23, 1952 the Free Officers staged their successful bloodless coup, where they managed to overthrow the existing regime and take control of the country. With its strong ties with the Free Officers, the MB had a period of political freedom under the revolutionary regime lasting from 1952 until 1954. Initially, the revolutionary regime released the MB members from prison, allowing them to reorganize and resume their activities. However, when Lieutenant Colonel Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasser emerged as the “strong man of the revolution” after dissolving all political parties and eliminating his rivals within the Free Officers’ movement, he turned to the MB and changed course in terms of its

\textsuperscript{71} Ishak Musa Husaini, \textit{The Muslim Brethren: The Greatest of Modern Islamic Movements}, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{72} Phelps Christina Harris, \textit{Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood}, p. 196.
relationship with the regime. Unable to co-opt the MB, however, once his control over the country was solidified, Nasser dissolved the organization, arrested and tortured thousands of its members and executed six of its prominent leaders.\(^{73}\)

Rather than speaking in the name of their movement or the army, the Free Officers declared the revolution as a representative of the will of ‘the nation’. After arresting the top army officers known to be loyal to King Farouk, within three days the Free Officers deposed the King and assumed total command of the country. Five months later, in December 1952, the parliamentary system was officially abolished with the abrogation of the 1923 constitution, and a three-year transitional period under the leadership of General Muhammad Naguib was declared. General Naguib became the first president of Egypt with the proclamation of the republic in June 1953.\(^{74}\)

With his wide connections within and outside the Free Officers movement, Nasser managed to assume control over the movement and emerged as the most powerful leader amongst his colleagues, who had diverse and inconsistent political inclinations. The Free Officers did not have clear guidelines or a specific program to be carried out after the execution of their revolution other than their vague comprehensive reform agenda.\(^ {75}\) On the one hand, Nasser agreed with the MB members to uphold Islamic rule and restore the civil parliamentary political system after cleansing the country from the corrupt politicians and British collaborators and agents. Simultaneously however, Nasser, as it appeared later, secretly promised his communist and left-wing Wafdist colleagues to implement a radical socialist agenda. As early as 1944, Nasser had had links with the MB, where he played an important role in establishing the first MB cell within the army. He also participated in providing military training for MB recruits who had volunteered to take part in the war in Palestine or planned and carried out attacks

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\(^{74}\) Phelps Christina Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 196.

\(^{75}\) Ibid.
against the British troops in Egypt. Ironically, Nasser was also involved with several officers in a communist cell linked to the Free Officers movement.\(^{76}\)

Although General Naguib was chosen to preside over the newly installed Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the highest authority through which he had to exercise his power, Nasser was able to hold absolute control of it. He managed to exclude the MB officers from the RCC’s leadership and played one party against the other within it. During the transitional period, Nasser, who held the office of Deputy Prime Minister, was busy strengthening and enlarging the domestic security apparatus, maintaining a firm grip on it, persecuting and hunting down the ‘enemies’ of the revolution and eliminating his rivals and their loyalists in which many “[u]nreliable officers… were exiled or imprisoned”.\(^{77}\)

Nasser and his colleagues rejected political pluralism and viewed political parties as divisive and a dangerous threat to the goals of the revolution. Democracy for them, as such, was a lower priority which had to be sacrificed in order for the core objectives of the revolution to be fulfilled. They believed that party politics was divisive for “the body politic” and that only a strong charismatic leadership could establish national discipline and mobilize the nation to carry out the revolutionary project they envisaged.\(^{78}\) Consequently, a legal decree was issued, on January 17, 1953 dissolving all political parties. One week later the parties were replaced by one mass organization, the Liberation Rally, through which the regime managed to mobilize popular support and maintain control over society.\(^{79}\) Initially, the MB escaped dissolution by withdrawing its registration as a political party and deciding to operate as a non-political association. Realizing the strength of the MB as the largest organized popular force remaining in the country, Nasser tried to co-opt it by offering its leaders three ministerial posts and pressing them to merge their organization with the government-

\(^{79}\) Phelps Christina Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 214.
controlled Liberation Rally. The MB leaders refused to participate in a military
government and demanded that the officers must hold free elections, reinstate the
parliamentary democratic system and return to their barracks to perform their original
role, as they had agreed with Nasser before the instigation of the revolution. However,
Nasser insisted that free elections would bring back the corrupt politicians and
jeopardize the goals of the revolution.  

On February 14, 1954 Nasser introduced a decree signed by the Revolutionary
Command Council dissolving the MB. According to Hussein Mohammad Ahmad
Hammudeh, a former member of the Free Officers, Nasser found out that General
Muhammad Naguib was planning, with the support of the MB, to use his legal authority
as the legitimate president of the country and dismiss Nasser and his colleagues from
their positions. General Naguib, according to Hammoudeh, was also planning to
dissolve the Revolutionary Command Council and restore democracy and parliamentary
rule. Consequently, Nasser and his colleagues in the Revolutionary Council forced
General Naguib to resign from office on 23 February. However, with the good
reputation and popular support that General Naguib enjoyed, the MB, utilizing its
branches throughout the country, was able to mobilize mass demonstrations, forcing the
return of Naguib within one week. The demonstrations continued until Naguib
announced that he would form a widely representative body to act as a temporary
parliament and prepare a draft constitution promising that parliamentary life would be
reinstated within the transitional period prescribed earlier.

Within a few days, Nasser started a sweeping campaign against his opponents arresting
not only MB’s prominent members and top leaders including the General Guide al-
Hudaibi, but also socialists, Wafdist, communists and many military officers known to
be loyal to Naguib. After consolidating his control over the military and security
apparatus, depriving the leaders of the weaker political parties of their political rights,
silencing journalistic political criticism and institutionalizing military rule, Nasser was

al-Da’wa, 1993, pp. 24–27; Husein Mohammad Ahmad Hammudeh, Asrar Harakat al-Dubbat al-Ahrar
wa al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, pp. 162–164.
83 Ibid., p. 31.
ready for his “final showdown” with General Naguib and the MB, the only remaining opponents with considerable popular support. Nasser started his final attack by utilizing the Liberation Rally, which he firmly controlled. Demonstrations were organized by the Liberation Rally denouncing the MB and the return to parliamentary rule. In a move designed to appear responsive to popular demands, elections were delayed indefinitely and Nasser formed his military cabinet. The moment for the final attack came after an alleged assassination attempt against Nasser as he was addressing a large crowd in Alexandria on 26 October, 1954. Within only a few hours, thousands of MB members were located and arrested, even before any formal investigation. The swift and highly prompt action taken by the police against MB members throughout the country and Nasser’s extremely effective rhetoric were clear indications that the assassination attempt was premeditated. The MB and many other observers saw this highly organized action as an indisputable proof that the assassination attempt was carefully orchestrated by Nasser who successfully used it as a pretext to destroy the MB and get rid of General Naguib for good.

Regardless of whether or not the assassination attempt was a fabrication, there is no doubt that the event was utilized to the utmost by Nasser, as his reaction against the MB was uncompromisingly brutal. Thousands of its members were severely tortured, many were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment and six of its respected leaders were executed. President Naguib, on the other hand, was accused of conspiring with the MB against the revolution and plotting to assassinate all members of the Revolutionary Council. He was deposed and placed under house arrest on November 14, 1954. Nasser also utilized the event to mobilize the Liberation Rally behind him. Thus, with the destruction of the MB and elimination of Naguib, Nasser managed to consolidate his control over the country, emerging as a populist authoritarian leader.

By maintaining an absolute grip on the army, security apparatus and administration, Nasser was able to cultivate “a regime of fear” and build a client–patron corporatist system, organizing interest groups along functional lines and advocating a supra-

national agenda based on revolutionary socialist and pan-Arab nationalist ideologies.\textsuperscript{86} With his charismatic leadership and strong rhetorical skills, he entranced the Arab public beyond the Egyptian boarders, advocating Arab unity and promising regional, social and economic development. Nasserist revolutionary pan-Arab ideology became very influential throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Democracy and political participation had to be sacrificed, or at least delayed, political criticism discouraged and all resources mobilized to serve the grand goals of the revolution as perceived and dictated by Nasser. All sectors of society and state, including “[g]overnment ministers” and top military officers, “were there to listen” to his lengthy speeches and to receive instructions and guidance. As Tawfiq al-Hakim, a well known Egyptian writer, said, “He [Nasser] would make speeches without any trouble lasting for hours in which he made us into heroes under his leadership and made the great states around us into dwarves. We applauded with wonder and pride”.\textsuperscript{87}

Consequently, from 1954 until Nasser’s death in 1970, the media, intellectuals, professional syndicates, civil servants and other elements of Egyptian society became no more than loyal uncritical propaganda tools of the regime.\textsuperscript{88} However, failing to deliver any of its projected goals and promises, especially with the collapse of the unification with Syria (1958-1961), the shocking defeat in the 1967 war against Israel and the worsening economic conditions, Nasser’s regime began to lose its popularity in Egypt and the Arab world. The hopes for pan-Arab unification and socialism, for which democracy had been sacrificed, were severely damaged. Many researchers and political analysts believe that the 1967 Arab defeat by Israel marked the ‘eclipse’ of Arab nationalism as the dominant ideology and “paved the way for various Islamic movements and ideologues to formulate an alternative to the crisis of the nation/state and the social and political vacuum resulted from the defeat”.\textsuperscript{89}

Moreover, the stiff repression of political dissent and criticism and the imprisonment and torture of thousands of MB members were to have unforeseen consequences for Egyptian society. In fact, both the failures and the repression contributed equally to the stimulation of radical reactionary ideologies and the subsequent emergence of violent groups. Nasser’s indiscriminate political persecution and oppression of Islamic activism forced the MB to go underground and encouraged the radical elements to search for an alternative way of expressing their ideas and aspirations. This resulted in the emergence of smaller clandestine Islamic groups. It was under these circumstances that, as Hsan Hanafi says, the prison psychology or mindset of the oppressed intellectuals and the secret groups was developed and nurtured in Egypt as well as elsewhere in the Muslim world.\(^9^0\) This is best exemplified in the development of Sayyid Qutb’s thought as expressed in his latter writings, which were mainly produced in prison during the 1950s and 1960s. His ideas immediately inspired the emergence of various violent groups that came to light, especially in 1970s. Qutb, a very influential Islamic thinker, was sentenced to ten years gaol in 1954, and was finally executed in 1966 after enduring severe torture by Nasser’s regime.\(^9^1\) His ideas, intentionally or not, provided an ideological basis for the justification of the use of force as a means of overthrowing the jahily (infidel or idolatrous) secularist regimes and replacing them with an Islamic state. According to Qutb’s theory of jahiliyah as elaborated in his book \textit{Ma’alim fi al-Tariq} (Milestones), which was written in prison as a response to Nasser’s persecution of the MB, there are two mutually exclusive categories of society: Islamic and jahili. In order to be able to combat the jahili system and bring the Islamic society to life, a well-organized Islamic vanguard must be prepared.\(^9^2\) This idea inspired some Islamic groups, such as \textit{al-Jihad} (holy war) and \textit{al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah} (excommunication and migration) of Egypt, to define their role in terms of transforming the jahili society to an Islamic one by means of force, which led to engagements in fierce and frequent bloody struggles with political authorities.\(^9^3\)


\(^9^2\) Sayyid Qutb, \textit{Ma’alim fi al-Tariq} (Milestones), pp. 11–12.


After the death of President Nasser in 1970, Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat, then Vice President, ascended to the presidency. As Vice-President and member of the Revolutionary Command Council who had been loyal to Nasser throughout his reign, Sadat’s takeover initially symbolized regime continuity. Although the centre of power was dominated by several influential figures, each of whom was more powerful than Sadat himself, Sadat quickly managed to consolidate his control. He eventually introduced changes that altered Egypt’s domestic politics and state–society relations. Once the purging of his rivals of their institutional powers was complete, Sadat embarked on an ambiguous reform project characterized by the economic policy of *infitah* (openness) and a tightly state-controlled, multi-party political system. He released Islamic activists imprisoned during the Nasserist era, thus allowing the re-emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood, disbanded the government’s sole mass political vehicle the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), and allowed the registration of political parties.\(^94\)

Initially, Sadat’s political measures appeared to be moving in a genuine democratic direction. However, as soon as the potential threat of his political rivals who depended upon Nasser’s legacy was dispersed and new potential political forces emerged, Sadat reverted to repressive containment strategies, by and large preserving the essence of personal authoritarianism and preventing any genuine democratization or effective political participation.\(^95\)

Although Sadat was a member of the RCC, he was not a very influential player, as he did not have direct control over the regime’s coercive or hegemonic apparatuses. Therefore, in order to consolidate his control, he had to deal with a plethora of threats, mainly from several powerful Nasserites, such as Ali Sabri, Sha’rawi Gum’ah and General Muhammad Fawzi, who controlled the centre of power, including the regime’s political organization ASU, the security and intelligence services and the armed forces.\(^96\) Sadat managed to build a power-base of support, utilizing the unpopularity of


Sabri and other Nasserites who were associated in the public mind with the bad image of the coercive apparatuses. He skillfully organized and launched his “Corrective Revolution” in 1971. In a brief showdown, Ali Sabri was dismissed after attempting to arrange a mass opposition against Sadat in the ASU and the police force. Failing to “appeal to any mass support” and due to lack of “unity of purpose amongst themselves”, Sadat’s opponents were outwitted; the confrontation culminated in their arrest and subsequent trial, where ninety-one of them were sentenced.97 One after another, Sadat’s foes, along with their associates, were purged from their influential positions and institutional bases.98 This did not mean the marginalization of the role of the coercive apparatuses of the state in defending the regime against potential political rivals. It was, rather, a mere transfer of the leadership of the ASU, the military and the security services from the hands of Sadat’s foes into the control of his own loyalists.

While the ASU was not under his total control, Sadat initially sought to erode its power by encouraging various political tendencies already within it to openly express themselves, thus stimulating the development and articulation of competing factions within the ASU.99 Consequently, three political wings, representing the right, left and centre, emerged and were eventually allowed by Sadat to legally register as separate political parties. The centre was represented by Egypt’s Arab Socialist Party (Hizb Misr al-‘Arabi al-Ishtiraaki), the left by the Tagammu’ (Hizb al Tagammu’ al Watani al Tagadomi al Wahdwawi or Progressive National Unionist Party) and the right by the Liberal Party (Hizb al-Ahraar). This major shift from a single-party to a multi-party system was, as Mohamed Sid-Ahmed said, “part of a larger political switch in the direction of the West, particularly the United States”.100

In addition to utilizing corporatist structures and using pre-emptive and containment strategies, Sadat tried to balance his opponents by playing one group against the other and resorting to sources of public legitimation for his policies. Therefore, in order to

98 Kirk J. Beatie, Egypt During the Sadat Years, pp. 40; 49; 62–72.
counterbalance the threatening influence of the leftists and Nasserites, Sadat released Islamic activists from prison and allowed the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood to re-establish their organization, though without any legal recognition. They were also allowed to resume their da’wah (propagation) and social activities. Sadat also tried to develop a public image as a pious Muslim. He therefore embarked on a “grand design of building a novel modern state – the ‘state of science and faith’ (dawlat al-‘ilm wal-iman) – in which he was to be the ‘believer president’ (al-Ra‘is al-mu‘min)”, but in the final product, his state satisfied “neither science nor faith”.  

During the 1970s, a number of smaller student Islamic groups (known as al-Jama’aat al-Islamiyah) and clandestine organizations were already proliferating in university campuses and elsewhere through extensive local and familial networks. When Sadat released the MB members from prison, they tried to co-opt the smaller Jama’aat groups. Most Jama’aat activists, however, were more inclined to the radical ideas of clandestine organizations such as al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah and other jihad groups inspired by Sayyid Qutb’s ideas. The Brotherhood’s efforts to moderate or attract the student Jama’aat largely failed. This was partly due to a generational gap where most of these activists were in their twenties while the MB leaders were in their fifties and sixties. Moreover, as Sadat refused to permit the formation of an Islamic political party and grant any legal recognition to the MB movement, the young, enthusiastic Jama’aat activists became increasingly convinced that the MB’s gradual and peaceful approach was not capable of generating a viable alternative or effective opposition force. The Brotherhood insisted that the “regime deliberately encouraged the rise of the militant groupings in order to fragment the Islamic trend and weaken the ability of the Muslim Brothers to assert leadership over it”.  

The Jama’aat groups that primarily mushroomed in university campuses ultimately rejected the MB’s gradual, moderate approach, preferring the revolutionary approach of the clandestine organizations. When the regime banned the university Jama’aat groups in 1979, many of their activists adopted violence as a means to overthrow Sadat’s regime and started to form alliances.

with other violent clandestine organizations, such as _al-jihad_ groups, one of which later claimed the responsibility for Sadat’s assassination in October 1981.\(^\text{103}\)

In 1977 and 1978 Sadat took an unpopular course of action in both domestic and foreign policies in the face of mounting popular opposition, to which Sadat responded by tightening his control and curtailing political liberties. Most importantly, these measures included government cuts to food subsidies, which instigated mass riots, and the initiation of peace negotiations with Israel in 1977. With the failure of the Misr Party to counterbalance the opposition pressure, especially with the re-emergence of the New Wafd Party (\textit{Hizb al-Wafd al-Jadid}) in May 1978, Sadat decided to tighten his control on power by further curtailing political liberties and purging political opposition. The regime introduced the Political Parties Law of 1977 (Law 40/1977), according to which political parties planning to participate in the political process had to be screened by the Political Parties Affairs Committee (PPAC).\(^\text{104}\) Under this law, the Nasserites and the Muslim Brotherhood, then the largest opposition groups, were prevented from formal political participation. Sadat finely announced his decision to launch his own political party in order “to fill the political vacuum and shut the door in the face of the old political forces – an allusion to the Wafd – that ‘seek to destroy our new democracy.’”\(^\text{105}\) In 1978, as soon as Sadat’s new party, the National Democratic Party (\textit{al-Hizb al-Watani al-Dimoqrati} or NDP), was officially declared, around 250 members of Majlis al-Sha’b (People’s Assembly or parliament) hurried to join the party. As the voices of opposition continued to rise, Sadat followed Nasser’s example by resorting to oppression and naked force, imprisoning thousands of political activists, including Nasserites, leftists and Islamists. With this authoritarian structure and sharp repression of any opposition to regime policies, Sadat’s new party, the NDP, easily won a sweeping majority in the 1979 elections, securing 347 out of 390 seats in the People’s Assembly. In October 1981, about one year after his election as the NDP’s first


\(^{104}\) Under the political parties law, the PPAC, created in 1976, was given the authority to: (1) cease the activities of any political party; (2) cease the publications/newspapers of any party; (3) overturn the decisions/actions of any party in violation of the national legal statutes (Article 17/3); and (4) deny any person’s affiliation to a political party and/or prevent any person from partaking in any political activities (Article 6, Law 33,1978), see the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, “The Situation of Human Rights in Egypt, Annual Report 1999–2000,” Cairo: EOHR, 2000.

\(^{105}\) \textit{Al-Ahram Weekly}, “Born at the Centre.”
chairman, Sadat was assassinated and Hosni Mubarak, Vice-President and Deputy Chairman of the NDP, assumed both Egypt’s presidency and NDP’s chairmanship.  

The constitutional transfer of power to Mubarak was very smooth as, contrary to his predecessor, he did not face any direct power struggle or immediate threats within the regime, though he had to deal with a legacy of political/ideological disillusionment and socio-economic problems. Hence, in terms of consolidation of personal power, Mubarak did not need to introduce any significant changes to the formal political structure. He preserved the multi-party system and cautiously continued the process of state-controlled liberalization as a means to obtaining a degree of public legitimacy. He initially promised to commit himself to democratic governance, releasing many political prisoners, including Islamists, who had been imprisoned by Sadat. However, though relatively reducing the role of the military in government, Mubarak relied heavily on the security apparatus and military courts to control and contain political opposition via the state of emergency and other restrictive participatory laws.  

In regard to the Muslim Brotherhood, although it remained legally prohibited from forming a political party or acquiring any formal recognition even as a social organization, it was tolerated to an extent which did not allow it to emerge as an effective catalyst for political change. However, with its consistent gradual/moderate approach and skilful utilization of the margin of freedom it was permitted, the MB eventually managed to materialize as the single most powerful opposition movement, especially in the People’s Assembly, where it finally won 88 seats (20%) in the 2005 partly free legislative elections, as discussed in the next chapter.

5.8. Conclusion

The rival relationship between Islamic and Arab secular nationalist forces characterized much of contemporary Arab politics, particularly in Egypt. This conflict was deeply divisive, since it created what has been identified as an “identity crisis” in many parts of the Arab world. The investigation in this chapter has shown that the hostility between secular nationalist and Islamic forces obstructed democratic development in the Arab world, particularly in Egypt.

106 Ibid.
The colonial legacy in the Arab world did not facilitate the development of a minimal level of consensus over collective identity as the region was fragmented by the competing colonial powers without regard to local considerations. This legacy, in fact, led the Arab nationalist movement to experience heinous setbacks because, while independence was eventually achieved, it failed to establish its ‘ideal’ nation-state and obstructed the Arab qutriyah state from developing a sense of collective identity or national unity, which is vital for the progress of the democratization process. Indeed, both pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism, the predominant aspirations of post-independence Arab societies, pushed away from or undermined the legitimacy of the Arab qutriyah state. Consequently, for the post-independence Arab nationalist regimes, democracy was a lower priority and had to be sacrificed or delayed in order to commit more resources and energy to the grand objective of achieving Arab unity and establishing the ideal Arab nation-state.

‘Abd al-Nasser’s revolutionary regime promoted a unitary nationalist identity through coercive and authoritarian means and harshly suppressed political expression of Islamic identity. He used pan-Arab and socialist ideology as a ground to stifle political dissent and pluralism, dissolving all political parties and banning the Muslim Brotherhood movement and persecuting its members. Although Sadat introduced some political liberalization measures that initially appeared to be moving towards genuine democratization, as soon as he managed to consolidate his personal power, he reversed the process and restricted the arena of tolerated political activity. Sadat also resorted to the previous policies of political repression and containment as well as the suppression of the political expression of Islamic identity. On the whole, Sadat preserved the essence of personal authoritarianism and prevented any genuine democratization or effective political participation. Arab nationalist forces that dominated the political scene in post-independent Egypt used the nationalist ideology as a ground for curtailing individual and political freedoms, suppressing pluralism and political dissent and obstructing the democratization process. Both Nasser’s and Sadat’s repressive policies resulted in the emergence of radical ideologies, such as Qutb’s thought, and violent groups, such as al-Jihad and al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah.
In sum, the repression and exclusion of Islamic activism and the persecution of Islamic actors in the name of national unity and uniformity only helped to exasperate the tension between the nationalist and Islamic forces and fostered the emergence of radical ideologies and the proliferation of underground activism and extremism.
Chapter Six

State-Controlled Liberalization without Democratization:

The Prospects for Democracy in Egypt

I see much concern over the success of political Islam groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood, in the recent elections. This concern is exaggerated. It is better to have the religiously minded in parliament than underground. Exclusion breeds fanaticism, whereas inclusion encourages give and take. Once in parliament, political Islamists will have to bring their policies into the public domain. And their views would be subject to debate and assessment. It is good for the religiously minded to become accustomed to the political game. And it’s good for the public to know what the Islamists are about.

The religious trend, in my opinion, should be allowed to have its own party (Naguib Mahfouz).¹

6.1. Introduction

One of the most salient features of Egyptian politics under President Hosni Mubarak’s regime is the ‘creative,’ albeit paradoxical, mixture of democratic and authoritarian elements. Ever since his ascendance, President Mubarak has been eager to portray himself as a reform-minded and democratic ruler. As long as his personal power is secured, he tries to buttress the legitimacy of his regime through the introduction of limited political openings and the implementation of state-controlled political liberalization measures. However, whenever a challenge which could potentially threaten or effectively limit his personal power seemingly or actually emerges, Mubarak reverses the liberalization measures by implementing restrictive and emergency laws

¹ Naguib Mahfouz, “Brothers in the Parliament.”
and using coercive means. On the other hand, the relative independence of the judiciary has been perceived by some analysts as a positive sign of a maturing or ongoing “democratization based on the rule of law”. Yet, the persistence of the state of emergency, introduced in 1981 after the assassination of Sadat, and the regime’s dependence on restrictive participatory laws and coercive means to control and contain political opposition and activities have been the main insurmountable obstacles to any meaningful democratization. Despite the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood movement has managed to skillfully manoeuvre the limited political openings and utilize the margin of freedom permitted, especially with its remarkable performance in the 2005 elections where it emerged as the largest and most powerful opposition block in parliament by far, the movement remains outlawed to the present day.

Given the popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, can democratization progress in Egypt without the full and formal inclusion of this movement in the political process? Will the Egyptian regime tolerate the possibility of the Muslim Brotherhood, the only viable opposition force in Egypt, becoming an effective catalyst for political reform? A closer look at the regime’s response to the MB’s unexpected success in the 2005 legislative elections helps us develop a plausible picture of Egypt’s political future and democratization prospects. By dealing with these questions and problems this chapter aims to assess the hypothesis that the democratization process will not likely progress in Egypt without the full inclusion of the socially rooted Muslim Brotherhood movement in the formal political process.

To this end, this chapter discusses and evaluates the extent to which the regime’s containment and coercive strategies render the fluctuating and state-controlled political liberalization measures hypocritical and useless for meaningful democratization in Egypt. First, the examination draws attention to the constitutional imbalance and defects that, by providing extensive presidential powers, in fact legalize personal authoritarianism, allowing the president to maintain absolute domination and control over the whole political process. In this regard, particular attention is given to the 2007 constitutional amendments. Second, the chapter investigates the way in which the

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Egyptian regime utilizes the emergency status and restrictive laws and other coercive and containment techniques to emasculate and control political parties and to regulate political participation and activities. Third, the investigation elaborates the regime’s manipulation and use of parliamentary elections as a means of providing façade legitimacy, where it has designed electoral rules and processes to guarantee its desired outcome, thus maintaining the ruling NDP’s (National Democratic Party) absolute dominance in the People’s Assembly. Finally, the 2005 legislative elections are investigated with greater depth of detail and analysis as they provide a concrete test for the regime’s limits of tolerance and democratic credentials.

6.2. Egyptian Pharaonic Presidency and Imbalanced Constitutional Powers

The extensive constitutional rights given to the presidency in Egypt render the balance of power between the executive, legislature and judiciary extremely uneven. In fact, these all-encompassing constitutional rights enable the presidency to remain “the most dominant force in contemporary Egypt”. The current Egyptian constitution was introduced in 1971 and has been subjected to important amendments, especially in 1980, 2005 and 2007; the latter two have been the subject of heated discussions in the political, intellectual and academic circles in Egypt and abroad.

Of the 211 articles included in the Egyptian constitution, 59 articles (28.6%) are especially concerned with the president and his rights, whereas only 18 articles (8.6%) are devoted to the Egyptian people and eight articles (4%) to the judiciary. According to the constitution (articles 141 and 143), the president appoints and dismisses the prime minister and his deputies, the ministers and their deputies, the civil and military officials, and the diplomatic representatives. The president is not only the Head of State (Article 73) and assumes and exercises executive power (Article 137), but also he is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (Article 150) as well as the Head of the Supreme Council, which “supervise[s] the affairs of the judiciary organizations” (Article 173). Moreover, according to the constitution, the Egyptian president also

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4 An English translation of the Egyptian Constitution is available on the official website of the Office of the Prime Minister, online (accessed on May 2, 2007) [available]: http://www.egyptiancabinet.gov.eg/Constitution/Egyptian_Constitution.asp.
presides over the National Defence Council (Article 182) and is considered as the Supreme Chief of the Police Authority (Article 184). Article (136), under which the president can only dissolve the People’s Assembly after a public referendum, was one of the 34 articles amended in the controversial 2007 amendments. In fact, with the 2007 amendments, the president has been given the right to dissolve the parliament unilaterally. Moreover, the president has the right to dissolve the Shura Assembly (Article 204) and to appoint one third of its members (Article 196). He also possesses the right to promulgate laws, object to them (Article 112) and grant amnesty or commute a sentence (Article 149).

The Egyptian constitution clearly asserts the principles of freedom of the press, printing, publication and mass media (Articles 48, 206 and 208). It also guarantees the independence of the judges (Articles 165 and 166), who shall be subject to no other authority but the law, ensuring non-interference of the executive in trials and the irrevocability of the status of judges (Article 168). However, by giving the president the right to proclaim a state of emergency (Article 148), the constitution allows the president to bypass judicial authority and the normal courts, which undermines the effectiveness and autonomy of the judiciary and severely restricts the freedom of the press. In addition to the state of emergency, the regime utilized the State Security Courts, also maintained by the constitution (article 171), in developing an alternative or parallel system of jurisdiction. The president continues to maintain his dominance over political and state institutions, using his sweeping constitutional power and abundant emergency and other laws that regulate the emergency status and other special courts that are vaguely defined by the constitution.

Despite the fact that the constitution clearly states that “the proclamation of the state of emergency shall be for a limited period” (Article 148), the current state of emergency has been in force continuously since 1981, with the emergency provisions renewed regularly. This alternative system of emergency justice allowed the violation of citizens’ essential rights that are guaranteed by the constitution. Some of these violations include “arbitrary detention, torture or other ill-treatment and unfair trials”, substantially

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curbing “the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly” and allowing the trial of civilians before military and emergency courts.\textsuperscript{6}

Despite all the constitutional defects and imbalances, the judicial authority has increasingly demonstrated a promising degree of independence.\textsuperscript{7} This is especially evident with regard to the Supreme Constitutional Court. By issuing several rulings censuring some human rights violations and rejecting a number of unconstitutional legislative procedures and other electoral laws, the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court not only demonstrated an exceptional degree of autonomy compared to other Egyptian state-institutions, but also proved its ability to challenge the executive authority. Therefore, the Egyptian opposition forces have been putting more confidence in the judiciary and increasingly resorting to it as a means of challenging the regime. As Bahgat Korany indicates, by the late 1990s, the judiciary has in effect facilitated “the establishment of about half of the 14 political parties…after their demands have been rejected by the Political Party’s Committee”.\textsuperscript{8} In fact, under Mubarak’s regime, the Political Parties Affairs Committee (PPAC) has declined all prospective party applications, with only a few exceptions. Up until the year 2000, when the establishment of the National Accord party was approved, the PPAC had rejected approximately fifty political party applications.\textsuperscript{9}

On the other hand, in many cases, court rulings have been blatantly ignored by the executive authorities and security forces.\textsuperscript{10} For example, not only did the PPAC suspend or freeze several legal parties,\textsuperscript{11} but also the government ignored many court rulings that allow frozen parties to resume their political activities; this will be discussed in more detail in the following section. Many other court rulings are constantly ignored by executive authorities. On 24 April, 2007, for instance, the government ignored for the third time a Cairo Criminal Court order acquitting Khairat Al-Shater, the Deputy leader

\textsuperscript{7} Eberhard Kienle, A Grand Delusion: Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt, p.45.
\textsuperscript{9} Maye Kassem, Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{11} Maye Kassem, Egyptian Politics: Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt, p.58.
of the MB, as well as ten other political detainees and ordering their immediate release from detention, condemning the government’s charges as politically motivated. Attorney Abdul Moneim Abdul Maqsoud insisted that, although the government continues to show its disrespect of the judiciary, the civilian court rulings attest the independence and fairness of the Egyptian justice system and that the detention of the MB leaders is legally groundless. Accordingly, although the Supreme Administrative Court rejected the regime’s decision to transfer civilians to the Military Courts on May 8, 2007, the MB’s prediction that the government would likely disregard the civilian court order and refer the cases to military trials to ensure a guilty verdict proved not to be erroneous.12

Between 2003 and 2005 the Egyptian government introduced some liberalization measures and laws. On June 16, 2003, the Egyptian People’s Assembly approved two new government-proposed legislations (laws 94 and 95 of 2003) respectively, authorizing the establishment of a National Council for Human Rights and scrapping Law 105 of 1980, under which the State Security Courts were established.13 Although security crimes under the new legislation have to be tried in ordinary criminal courts, the regime maintained the State Security Emergency courts that try cases of violations of the emergency law and reinstated the exceptional powers given to the Public Prosecution through amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedures under Law 105 of 1980.14 On the other hand, though significantly limited and superficial, the liberalization measures that preceded the 2005 parliamentary elections ended up with unexpected results that shocked the regime when the presence of the MB in parliament was

bolstered to an unprecedented level. As a result, the regime has become more cautious of the MB’s strength and increasing popularity. The government sought to stiffen its repression against MB members by coercive and legal means. The reactions of the regime started with the tightening of the restrictions on the MB’s activities, increase in the arbitrary arrests of its members, and confiscation of their businesses and private properties; this culminated in the controversial 2007 constitutional amendments.

The amendments to thirty four articles of Egypt’s constitution, initially proposed by President Mubarak, were approved by parliament in a single vote on March 20 and, one week later, by popular referendum. The opposition forces, particularly the MB, boycotted the referendum, which ended with a very low voters’ turnout not exceeding ten per cent threshold, according to some independent sources. Although official authorities declared that the turnout was 27 per cent, non-governmental sources put it at less than five per cent. According to the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR), the average national voting was between two and three per cent of registered voters. The EOHR, moreover, reported many violations, such as bribes, lack of phosphoric ink and “forging of the voting results”, insisting that “the absence of the judicial supervision over the whole voting process paved the way for the manipulation of the people’s will, and raised suspicions around the fairness of the voting process”.  

While hailed by the government as an important step towards democratization, the amendments have been criticized by opposition forces and human rights organizations, who have insisted that they will infringe on human rights protections, curtail individual freedoms and restrict political activity. Opposition forces described the amendments as “a constitutional coup and a deathblow to the margin of democracy in Egypt”. Independent political analysts and international human rights organizations have also criticized the amendments, considering them, at best, as “politically motivated”. In a

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special report released on 11 April, 2007 under the title “Egypt – Systematic Abuses in the Name of Security”, Amnesty International warned that “the constitutional amendments and the planned anti-terrorism law will be used to further stifle peaceful political dissent, as well as cement patterns of serious abuses by security forces”.\textsuperscript{19}

The amendments not only propose a new anti-terrorism law, which, by giving the security forces sweeping powers of arrest and surveillance, effectively entrenches the state of emergency, but they also reduce the role of the judges in supervising elections and referendums. In addition, the amendments allow the Egyptian president to dissolve the parliament unilaterally and bypass ordinary courts. Amendments to Articles (179), (88), (5) and (136) have been described as the most controversial aspects of the constitutional changes.\textsuperscript{20} Charged by the opposition with paving the way for constituting Egypt as a police state, Article (179) provides for the trial of civilians in military courts and evasion of the procedures stipulated in Articles 41, 44 and 45. These procedures that are now undermined by the amendments guarantee protections against (1) arbitrary arrest; (2) restrictions over individual freedom; (3) search without judicial warrant; (4) and violation of the private life of citizens.

Amendments to Article (88), on the other hand, remove provisions for judicial supervision of elections and referendums as formerly stipulated. This reverses the Supreme Constitutional Court’s ruling in 2000, which ordained that, according to the constitution, electoral process must facilitate judicial oversight of all polling stations. In the 2000 and 2005 parliamentary elections, as will be discussed in detail later, judicial supervision help to minimize electoral fraud and violations. According to the new amendments, judicial supervision will be replaced by an electoral commission. By giving the president the power to unilaterally dissolve the parliament in the case of unspecified “necessity”, amendments to Article 136, in effect, further entrench the constitutional imbalance of state powers. This, moreover, paves the way for Egypt to “follow the precedent established in several other Arab countries, where parliaments have been dissolved frequently”, especially if, at some point in the future, the ruling

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

NDP fails to maintain absolute majority in parliament, in which case politics may likely “become increasingly contentious”.  

The political motivation of the amendments is blatantly inscribed in Article (5), which obviously targets the Muslim Brotherhood, by banning the establishment of Islamic-oriented political parties. According to Article (5), not only are Islamic political parties denied any legal recognition and excluded from political participation, but also, more importantly, the pursuit of any political activities on the basis of religious marji’yyah\(^\text{22}\) (frame of reference) is not permitted. Thus, the amendments clearly give the government “the constitutional right to accuse any civil religious institution or civil organization of involvement in religiously inspired political activity”.\(^\text{23}\) While the “real objection is not to the role of religion in politics”, as the ruling NDP does not refrain from using religious symbols, many political analysts recognize that, within the context of “an ongoing campaign of arrests and financial investigations, the revisions constitute the regime’s response to the Brotherhood’s impressive showing in the 2005 parliamentary elections”.\(^\text{24}\)

6.3. Non-Competitive Multi-Party System

The status of political parties and the electoral laws provide a clear picture of political reality and can be utilized as an empirical test of political reform and democratization process. Although parties are not the only political actors in democratic systems, they remain essentially important for democratic governance. The functions that parties provide in democratic systems cannot be overstated, especially with regard to responsive policy formulation, government accountability and expanding political mobilization, participation and education. During electoral campaigns, in competitive multi-party systems, “parties aggregate policy demands and generate rival programmes for governmental action”, which enables citizens to participate, directly or indirectly, in political discussions and policy making and compels elected officials, who aspire for re-

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\(^{21}\) Ibid.  
\(^{22}\) The term Islamic marji’yyah (frame of reference) is very common in the political discourse of the MB, and it is repeatedly used in the contemporary Islamic literature in general.  
\(^{24}\) Nathan Brown, Michele Dunne and Amr Hamzawy, “Egypt’s Controversial Constitutional Amendments.”
election, to be more responsive to public demands. This function renders “publicly visible the process by which a plethora of group demands are aggregated into more or less coherent and manageable policy programmes”. While legitimate governments in multi-party democratic systems are established through electoral competitions, unless the freedom of political parties to organize, nominate parliamentary candidates and campaign for elections is equally unhampered, political elections and outcomes cannot be considered as democratic or free and fair. The means through which the Egyptian regime ensures that opposition political parties remain effectively marginalized in order to maintain the ruling National Democratic Party’s unchallenged dominance in the People’s Assembly attests to the kind of political reform espoused during President Mubarak’s reign.

Mubarak’s regime has preserved and built upon the non-competitive multi-party system, which emerged as a result of the disintegration of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) during the late 1970s and was formally legalized with the enactment of the political parties’ law in 1977. In fact, the Egyptian regime under Mubarak re-entrenched the authoritarian structure of this system by imposing new restrictions on political life whenever deemed necessary for preserving the status quo. While legal recognition remains the main obstacle preventing important social forces, most notably the MB, from entering formal party politics, government interference in the internal administrative affairs of the legal opposition parties ensures that they remain fragmented, co-opted and/or alienated from the people. In cases of overt political dissent, opposition parties can also face dissolution or have their political activities frozen, as will be demonstrated.

The Egyptian regime legally controls political activities through the political parties’ law (Law 40 of 1977 and Law 177 of 2005), which vaguely governs the criteria

26 Ibid.
27 See chapter five for more details.
28 Egyptian State Information Service, online (accessed on April 24, 2007) [available]: http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Politics/party/background/04070100000000001.htm
according to which political parties are formed and allowed to conduct their political activities. According to this law (article 8), in order to receive legal recognition, political parties are required to obtain the approval of a political parties affairs committee. The law (article 4) stipulates that, for a political party to be legally recognized or permitted to continue conducting its political activities, its objectives, policies and programs must not diverge from the virtues of preserving national unity, social peace, the socialist and democratic system and the socialist gains. It also specifies that the party should not be formed on the basis of ethnicity, race, sex or religion. Accordingly, the Political Parties Affairs Committee consistently utilizes the vagueness of this law to restrict channels of political participation by rejecting party applications and halting the operation of legal opposition parties.  

Although the number of political parties under Mubarak’s regime has increased from five to twenty four legal parties, most of which remain virtually ineffective, only five party licenses were approved by the PPAC. The rest of the parties had to struggle in legal courts to obtain recognition, while tens of other proposed parties have been denied legal recognition. In January 2007, twelve of the political parties that have been fighting in Egyptian courts for legal recognition, most notably the New Wasat and pan-

online (accessed on April 26, 2007) [available]: http://www.aswatna.net/subtitles.php?main_titles_id=30; also see the official website of the Egyptian People’s Assembly, online (accessed on April 26, 2007) [available]: http://www.assembly.gov.eg/EPA/ar/Levels.jsp?levelid=176&levelno=3&parentlevel=132


31 The political parties that have been approved by the PPAC include: The Green Party (Hizb al-Khudr: approved in April 1990); National Reconciliation Party (Hizb al-Wifaq al-Qawmi: approved in April 2000); Tomorrow Party (Hizb al-Ghad: approved in 2004); Democratic Peace Party (Hizb al-Salam al-Dimuqraty: approved on July 4, 2005); and the Democratic Front Party (Hizb al-Jabha al-Dimuqratyah: approved on May 24, 2007). For more details on Egypt’s political parties, see the Egyptian State Information Service website, online (accessed on April 13, 2007) [available]: http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Politics/party/parties/.

32 The following parties were established/reestablished by legal court rulings after their applications were rejected by the PPAC: Egypt Arab Socialist Party (Hizb Misr al-‘Arabi al-Islahiri) (established in 1976, but frozen in 1978 and reestablished by court ruling in 1985); the Nation’s Party (Hizb al-Ummah) (established by the Supreme Administrative Court ruling on June 25, 1983); The New Wafd Party (Hizb al-Wafid al-Jadid) (established in 1978 and frozen and reestablished by court ruling from the Supreme Administrative Court in 1983); The Democratic Unionist Party (Hizb al-Itihadi al-Dimuqrati) (established by court ruling in April 1990); The Arab Democratic Nasserist Party (al-Hizb al-‘Arabi al-Dimuqraty al-Nasiri) (established by court ruling from the Supreme Administrative Court on April, 19, 1992); The Social Justice Party (Hizb al-‘Adalah al-Ijtima’iyyah) (established by ruling from State Council on June 6, 1993); Social support Party (Hizb al-Takaful al-Ijtima’i) (established by court ruling from the Administrative Judiciary Court on February 5, 1995); Egypt 2000 Party (Hizb Misr 2000) (established by court ruling from the Administrative Judiciary Court on April 7, 2001); Democratic Generation Party (Hizb al-Geel al-Dimuqraty) (established by court ruling from the Administrative Judiciary Court on February 9, 2002). For more details see ibid.
Arab Karama, had their libel against the PPAC’s rejection of their applications refused by the Supreme Administrative Court. According to the court, the decision to uphold the PPAC’s recommendations was based on Law 177/2005 (issued in July 2005), which amended some provisions of the political parties’ law (Law 40/1977). Ironically, the new amendments were only adopted after the rejection of the parties’ applications and while their appeal was being considered by the court. These amendments stipulated that, in order for an application for a new party to be considered, a notice in writing shall be submitted to the chairman of the PPAC signed by at least 1000 founding members (instead of 50 in Law 40/1977). It also specifies that the founding members shall be drawn from at least ten governorates with no less than fifty members from each, a condition which further restricts political participation and makes the establishment of new political parties even harder. Abu al-‘Ela Madi and Hamdin Sabahi, heads of the New Wasat and Karama parties respectively, criticized the court’s decision as politically motivated and called for the removal of the PPAC, which, as Sabahi insists, is totally “owned” by the ruling NDP. In other words, the PPAC has been used as a means by which the government selects its own opposition. Accordingly, it appears that, with the exception of al-Ghad Party of Ayman Nour whose extensive connections were an important factor in gaining the PPAC’s approval, only marginal parties that lack popular support and are less likely to pose any challenge to the ruling NDP receive the approval of the PPAC.

Moreover, legal parties also face huge pressure from the government, and in cases of overt dissent they could risk being suspended or having their political activities frozen. The PPAC suspended seven legal parties, four of which are still frozen. In many cases, such as the case of the Labour Party, the government ignored many court rulings ordaining the lifting of the ban on frozen parties and allowing them to resume their

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33 Both the New Wasat and Karama parties have been applying for recognition since the 1990s, see Al-Misri al-Youm, “Mahkamat al-Ahzab Tarfudhu 12 Hizban “Daf’atan Wahida”...Abrazuha al-Wasat wa al-Karamah” (the Political Parties’ Court Rejects 12 Parties in “One Batch”… the Most Prominent of which are the Wasat and Karama), Issue no. 938, January 7, 2007.
34 Ibid.
35 The memberships of some of the parties approved by the PPAC do not even exceed tens or a few hundreds: Egypt Youth Party (75 members); Free Social Constitutional Party (200 members); The Greens Party (263 members); and National Reconciliation (al-Wifak) Party (185 members). See the Egyptian State Information Service website, online (accessed on April 18, 2007) [available]: http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Politics/party/parties/
36 Maye Kassem, Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule, p.58.
political activities. In fact, between May 2000 and November 2001, Egyptian authorities ignored 11 rulings from the courts ordering the lift of the ban on the Labour Party and its mouthpiece, *al-Sha’ab* newspaper.\(^{37}\)

### 6.4. Parliamentary Elections: Autocratic Façade Legitimacy

Because elections provide a means by which all citizens of a polity can participate in and largely influence the outcome of the political process, they are considered as a cornerstone of democracy. They facilitate the most effective conflict-resolution by enabling individuals to exercise their right to choose their representatives “by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote”.\(^{38}\) As such, in addition to allowing for effective political participation and alteration of governments, elections provide legitimacy to the rulers who become representatives of the popular will.\(^{39}\) Consequently, in order to justify their claim for legitimacy, most autocratic rulers recognize the importance of elections and feel the need to regularly hold flawed votes that are designed and implemented in a particular way which guarantees their desired outcome.

The Egyptian regime under Mubarak has maintained this tradition, which was instigated by President Sadat during the 1970s. Thus, the electoral rules and processes have been cunningly shaped to always guarantee absolute domination by the ruling NDP in parliament, where opposition presence is only tolerated to an extent which never allows it “to embarrass the government or significantly affect policy”.\(^{40}\) While manipulation and emasculation of opposition political parties, as discussed above, has been the smooth and untroubled part of this strategy, the utterly repressive exclusion of other “strident voices” and social forces, particularly the rooted Islamic forces, has proved

\(^{37}\) The parties that are currently frozen include: The Labour Party (Hizb al-‘Amal) (established in 1978); The People’s Democratic Party (Hizb al-Sha’b al-Dimuqrati) (established in 1990); Young Egypt Party (Hizb Misr al-Fatah) (established in 1987); and the Social Justice Party (Hizb al-‘Adalah al-Ijtima’iyah) (established in 1993), see *al-Misri al-Youm*, no. 1057, January 6, 2007; also the Muslim Brotherhood’s official website, online (accessed on April 26, 2007) [Available]: [http://www.ikhwanonline.net/Article.asp?ID=12932&SectionID=0&Searching=1]; The Egyptian State Information Service website, online (accessed on April 19, 2007) [available]: [http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Politics/party/parties/]; also see Holger Albrecht, “How Can Opposition Support Authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt,” p. 383.


costly and unsustainable. In this regard, the blatant de-liberalization policies of the 1990s convinced the regime of the danger of unqualified repression. This experience showed the potential of such policies to radicalize some segments of social and Islamic forces by driving them to seek alternative violent means of expression. On the other hand, the political reforms of the 2000s, though very limited, allowed the mainstream non-violent Islamic trend, led by the MB, to emerge as the only viable opposition force in Egypt. In fact, with its impressive success at the 2005 parliamentary elections, the MB has become the only influential parliamentary opposition block in the face of the governing NDP. Despite the fact that the regime has always targeted the MB by inflicting on it the tightest restrictions in terms of political participation and repressive exclusionist policies, the organization managed to maintain its autonomy by preventing infiltration by the regime, thus remaining outside its control. It also demonstrated its ability to form coalitions with other political parties, where it adopted clear pro-democracy agenda and cooperated with other opposition forces in pushing for effective democratic reform.

Since the 1980s, the MB has been eager to provide an effective alternative opposition and seek legal recognition and formal political participation while avoiding direct confrontation with the regime. To this end, the organization resorted to forming electoral alliances with legal political parties or fielding independent candidates as an alternative way to formal party politics and as a legitimate course for entering the People's Assembly and influencing government policies. In addition to participating in almost all parliamentary elections under Mubarak's regime, the MB became actively involved in civil society institutions taking control of several student unions and professional syndicates, most notably the Bar Association and the Doctors Syndicate. During the 1980s, the MB participated in parliamentary elections by forming alliances with the New Wafd Party (1984) and the Socialist Labour and Liberal parties (1987). In the former elections, the first conducted under Mubarak’s presidency, the alliance won a total of 58 seats, eight of which went to the MB. In the latter, the tripartite alliance,

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41 Six parliamentary elections have been held in Egypt since Mubarak's ascendance to power; in 1984, 1987, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005. With the exception of the 1990’s election, which was boycotted by the main opposition parties, the MB contested parliamentary seats in all legislative elections.

which was known as “The Islamic Alliance”, gained a combined total of 62 seats with 36 seats going to the MB. The ruling NDP secured an absolute majority in both elections, as it has always done since its instigation, winning 87 per cent (394 seats) and 78 per cent (339 seats) of the 444 contested seats, respectively.

Both the 1984 and 1987 elections were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Constitutional Court as they prevented or impeded individuals from contesting as independent candidates. Accordingly, in both cases, the People’s Assembly was dissolved before completing its term, and the 1987 and 1990 elections were held prematurely. According to the electoral law, under which the 1984 elections were organized, parliamentary candidature was accepted on the basis of party list, hence, excluding independent candidates from participation. The revised electoral law, under which the 1987 elections were conducted, combined party-list with the independent candidacy system, but did not solve the problem. This led to the total abolition of the party-list system in 1990. Although the revised electoral law allocated 48 seats for independent candidates in the 1987 elections, a condition requiring each independent candidate to win a minimum 20 per cent of the total vote in his/her respective constituency prevented many genuine independents from entering parliament and provided more room for government fraud. Hence, 38 of the 48 independent seats went to candidates affiliated with the NDP. The electoral law also required that, in order to be eligible to enter the People’s Assembly, a political party must win at least eight per cent of the national vote. This condition, accompanied by “widespread government fraud and intimidation”, prevented most opposition parties, with the exception of the above-mentioned alliances, from making their way into the People’s Assembly in the 1984 and 1987 elections.

However, the considerable gains of the opposition in the 1987 elections, particularly with regard to MB’s emergence as the largest opposition block in the People’s Assembly (a more than four times increase in the number of seats from the previous elections), prompted the regime to reverse its political liberalization process. The

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regime became more openly repressive towards political opposition and less tolerant towards voices of dissent and criticism of government policies. On the other hand, to the dismay of the regime, the performance of the MB deputies in the People’s Assembly impressed their friends and foes alike. Though small in number, MB members in many cases managed to influence government policies, especially “with regard to the state-controlled mass media, public education, and social affairs”, where their moderation and their gradualist approach “surprised many sceptical observers” and enabled them to gain “growing respectability even among their most dedicated rivals”. The reaction of the regime, which did not abandon its authoritarian tendency, was not unexpected. MB members became increasingly exposed to regular intimidation and persecution by the security forces.

As the 1989 Shura Council elections drew nearer, waves of arrests, especially targeting MB activists, were waged by the security forces. This became the norm during election campaigns under Mubarak’s regime. Although opposition parties were allowed to take part in the elections of the Shura Council for the first time since its creation in 1980, the government seemed determined not to allow voices of dissent into the upper house. Thus, all of the contested seats were secured for the ruling NDP, which led opposition forces to become more sceptical about the whole process and to reconsider their view on participating “in future elections without minimum guarantee of fairness”. Accordingly, with the regime failing to offer any guarantees of free and fair elections, all opposition parties with the exception of the Tagammu’ Party decided to boycott the 1990 parliamentary elections. President Mubarak himself justified his new stance towards democracy and political reform by stating that “democracy cannot be achieved overnight”. Moreover, in a speech at a joint parliamentary session of the People’s Assembly and Shura Council on December 15, 1990, at its inauguration after the 1990 legislative elections, Mubarak directly criticized the opposition for boycotting the elections and described their choice as unconstructive and a negative retreat from their national obligations, emphasizing that there was no impartiality in questioning the electoral process as no discrimination between the majority NDP and minority

46 Najib Ghadbian, *Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World*, p. 92.
47 Maye Kassem, *Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule*, p. 27.
opposition candidates was encountered. The latter claim was by and large true, but mostly because, with the main opposition boycotting the elections, there was no real competition and thus no need for fraud or serious violations.

The 1995 parliamentary elections was one of the most criticized elections conducted under Mubarak’s regime. In fact, the 1990s were marked by the departure of the regime from its “dual strategy of suppression of radicals and co-optation of moderates”, where the regime, as a reaction to the insurgence of radical Islamic groups, tightened its security measures indiscriminately cracking down “on moderate Islamists (especially the Brotherhood)” and closing “some of the windows…opened in the late 1980s”. The MB decided to participate fully and heavily in the 1995 elections, nominating about 160 candidates. As it proved its strength by controlling many professional syndicates and numerous other social associations, many observers looked at the MB as “a political force to be reckoned with”. However, in order to deprive MB candidates of any electoral chances, the security forces launched waves of arrests against the MB’s prominent members and leaders, utilizing the emergency status and military courts, especially as election time drew closer. The results of the elections were hardly unpredictable. The ruling NDP secured an absolute majority in the People’s Assembly winning 417 of the 444 contested seats, while only thirteen seats went to the legal opposition parties and a lone seat to the MB.

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48 Egyptian State Information Service, President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak’s address at the inaugural joint parliamentary session of the People’s Assembly and Shura Council, online (accessed on May 12, 2007) [available]: http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Politics/PHInstitution/President/Speeches/000001/0401010200000000000641.

49 As a result of the boycott of the elections by the main opposition parties, the Tajammu’ was able to make its first gain under Mubarak’s regime winning six seats in the 1990 legislative elections. The NDP won 348 seats, while 83 seats went to independent candidates, fifty-six of whom were affiliated with the NDP.

50 During the 1990s, Egypt witnessed the bloodiest confrontations between the regime and the militant Islamic groups, namely the Jihad and Jama’a Islamiya groups that were founded during the 1970s, as demonstrated in chapter five. According to some estimates, by 1997 when the Jama’a Islamiya initiated a ceasefire and denounced violence, the clash had resulted in about 1,300 casualties on both sides. See Diaa Rashwan, Transformation among the Islamic Groups in Egypt, Cairo: ACPSS, 2000.


52 Al-Ahram Weekly, “Politics in God’s Name.”

53 Ibid.

54 The Wafd’s share was six seats; the Tajammu’ five; the Liberals one; the Nasserists one; and thirteen seats went to independent candidates. The NDP initially won a total of 318 seats. However, the NDP
With the Supreme Constitutional Court ruling that the constitution demands full judicial supervision over the voting system, which entails the presence of members of the judiciary in both central and auxiliary polling stations in all parliamentary elections, many observers expected the 2000 elections to be the most free and fair elections conducted under Mubarak’s presidency. For the first time, regime-loyal civil servants were prevented from manipulating the voting process, thus minimizing electoral fraud and rigging. According to the court ruling, Article 88 of the Constitution stipulates that, in order to guarantee impartiality and fairness, “veritable rather than formal” judicial supervision over the voting process in parliamentary elections is necessary.  

With their long experience with the regime’s repression and electoral fraud, opposition leaders were not as optimistic as independent observers. While implementing comprehensive judicial supervision is an important step for limiting electoral fraud and rigging, Ayman Nour and Ali Fath El-Bab, former Wafd and MB representatives in the 1995-2000 People’s Assembly, insisted that without other accompanying liberalizing measures the supervision might not produce free and fair elections. They maintained that they were concerned about the intentions of the regime about the actual implementation of the process.

Indeed, the opposition’s concerns were not in vain as the reform of the voting system did not entail preventing government interference and disruptions. The new measures merely led the regime to switch its manipulating techniques from direct interference in ballot counting and processing inside poll stations to blatant obstruction outside the stations and in surrounding areas. In fact, as the election campaign approached, the regime stepped up its security and coercive measures, particularly intensifying its crackdown against the MB. Abdel-Moneim Abdel-Maqsoud, an MB lawyer, asserted that the number of those arrested during the election campaign reached approximately 1,600, while 2,400 more were already incarcerated under the emergency law.

actually held 417 seats as 99 out of the 114 successful independents, many of whom were former NDP members who failed to have their names on the party’s official list, joined the party after the elections. See Gamal Essam El-Din, “Unaccountably independent,” al-Ahram Weekly, issue no. 252, 21–27 December 1995; The Estimate, “Egypt’s Parliamentary Elections: An Assessment of the Results.”


According to the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, during the election period, the regime, utilizing the emergency status, arrested about 500 activists and supporters of opposition and independent candidates, including candidates’ proxies and sympathizers.58

Furthermore, the techniques used by the security forces to block voters from getting into the polling stations were even more blatant and extensive. Independent observers and human rights activists reported numerous incidents where police forces surrounded ballot stations, forcefully blocking voters and attacking journalist photographers and poll watchers, while “only buses packed with NDP supporters were permitted to reach the polling stations”.59 In the constituencies of Al-Raml (Alexandria), the government initially ignored a court ruling ordering the cancellation of the elections after security forces arrested all of the proxies of Jihan El-Halafawi, an MB candidate, including her husband. However, only when it appeared that El-Halafawi and another MB candidate were most likely to win the two contested seats of the constituency, were the elections abruptly cancelled.60 Numerous other violations and harassments were reported in other places, especially those contested by MB candidates, such as El-Manyal, Kerdasa, Hawamdeya, Doqqi, El-Gamaleya and Helwan. In almost every constituency, the police remained in control of who should or should not be permitted to get access to the polling stations.61 Therefore, with such extensive interference and manipulation, “the methods were so extreme that the elections did little to enhance the regime’s democratic credentials”.62 The most important lesson that the opposition learned from the 2000 parliamentary elections was that full judicial supervision does not necessarily produce fully free and fair elections, at least as long as the emergency law remains applicable.

Consequently, as always had been the case, with a large number of ‘independent’ candidates joining or rejoining the NDP, the final results of the 2000 elections were favourable to the government, despite the loss of an ineffective number of seats to the minority opposition. Thus, although the official candidates of the ruling NDP initially won only a minority of 170 seats (about 38 per cent), 218 members of the 256 winning ‘independents’ were formerly affiliated with the NDP or joined the party after the elections, increasing its official share of the seats to 388 (85.5 per cent). Hence, the NDP maintained its absolute majority in the People’s Assembly, though with 29 seats down from the 417 seats won in the 1995 elections. On the other hand, 17 of the winning independents went to the MB, not a bad show considering the repressive conditions it went through and its previous sole seat of the 1995 elections. The legal opposition parties, however, performed very poorly, with only four of the eleven contesting parties managing to make their way into the People’s Assembly, winning a combined total of 17 seats. While the Wafd and Tagammu’ parties won seven and six seats respectively, only two seats went to the Arab Nasserist Party and one to the Liberal Party (see table 1).  

Furthermore, of the remaining 37 independents, two were identified to have non-MB Islamic background and four or five were affiliated with the Nasserist Party.

6.5. The 2005 Legislative Elections: MB’s Success as a Test for the Regime’s Tolerance and Democratic Credentials

As with the 2000 parliamentary elections, the 2005 elections were scheduled to run in three stages starting on November 9, 2005, and ending on December 7, 2005. This process was necessary to allow the judiciary to supervise the electoral process, as there were insufficient judges to monitor all ballot stations throughout the country simultaneously. With over 32 million registered voters, over 7,000 candidates competed for the 444 elected seats in the People’s Assembly. Despite widespread intimidation and interference by security forces in order to help the ruling NDP maintain its absolute majority in the People’s Assembly, the MB managed to make large and unprecedented gains. The first stage covered eight governorates with 10.7 million registered voters,

64 The Estimate, “Egypt’s Parliamentary Elections: An Assessment of the Results.”
while the second and third stages covered nine governorates each with 10.5 and 10.6 million registered voters.65

In its efforts to avoid government persecution and avoid provoking the ruling party as much as possible, the MB tried not to present itself as an alternative to the regime. Therefore, the movement contested only one-third of the parliament’s seats, fielding a total of 150 candidates with the modest expectation that, after the rigging of the votes by the regime, 50 would make it to the People’s Assembly, as Mohamed Habib, deputy of the supreme guide of the MB, explained to al-Ahram Weekly prior to the elections.66 However, in order to ensure that its gains came at the expense of the NDP rather than other opposition forces, the MB cooperated with opposition parties, especially the United National Front for Change, which was formed about one month before the elections by the Wafd, Tagammu’, Nasserist and eight other smaller political parties. They hoped that together they would be able to attain their target of one-third of the parliament’s seats, which would enable the obstruction of any undesirable or restrictive constitutional amendments by the regime. Accordingly, the movement refrained from contesting in certain constituencies in favour of other opposition candidates. It also adopted an electoral platform promoting a reform agenda, which emphasized points of agreement with the opposition, particularly with regard to democratic free and fair elections, the rule of law, good governance, citizenship, and constitutional legitimacy. Although the movement maintained the expression of its Islamic identity through its distinctive slogan “Islam is the Solution”, it emphasized the concept of partnership rather than dominance by adding the new slogan “Together for Reform”.67

The 2005 elections were remarkable in terms of competitiveness and outcome. For the first time since the 1952 revolution, the government’s absolute domination of the

67 Ibid.
People’s Assembly appeared to be at risk, as the ruling party’s two-thirds majority required for total control of parliament was threatened by the significant progress made by the MB in the first stage of the elections. According to Egypt’s constitution, constitutional amendments can only pass with a minimum two-thirds majority vote in the People’s Assembly. Accordingly, while the NDP’s majority in parliament was an unchallengeable certainty, the opposition aimed for the more realistic target of challenging NDP’s two-thirds majority in order to be able to prevent any government-proposed constitutional amendments that would reverse liberalization policies or further curtail political rights and freedoms. However, with the MB’s success in the first stage, where it managed to double the number of seats it held in the outgoing parliament (an increase from 17 to 34 seats), the government reverted to its usual coercive and repressive strategies against opposition forces, particularly the MB, in the second and third stages of the elections.  

Although only 145 (33.5 per cent) out of the 432 officially-listed NDP candidates won seats in the final results of the elections, with 166 independents rejoining the NDP, the ruling party managed to level its share to 311 seats (71.9 per cent) in the final outcome. Despite violations, rigging and intimidation, as will be shown, the MB won 88 seats (around 20 per cent of the total seats or 55 per cent of the MB’s 150 fielded candidates). Non-affiliated independents and opposition parties collectively won around 36 seats, only nine of which went to the opposition parties, with six to the Wafd, two to the Tagammu and one to al-Ghad (see table 2).

The first stage of the elections, in which 1,635 candidates competed for 164 seats, was of particular significance as it included important governorates such as Cairo, Giza, and al-Menoufiya, where Egypt’s most renowned candidates compete. Therefore, the performance of a particular political force in this stage or in these three particular governorates largely determines, or at least gives a strong indication of, the direction of the election results. Sixty-eight of the NDP’s 164 candidates and 34 of the MB’s 50 candidates who competed in this stage won seats. The combined number of seats won

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70 Gamal Essam El-Din, “Unexpected Results?” *al-Ahram Weekly*, issue no. 768, 10–16 November, 2005.
by the legal opposition forces did not exceed eight seats, one of which went to the al-Ghad Party and six to the United National Front for Change. The remaining 54 seats were won by independent candidates, some of whom later joined the NDP.\footnote{Al-Masryyoun, “Suqut Muḥin li Shakhṣyyaṭ Taʿarīkhyyah wa al-Ikhwan ‘Unwaan al-Mu’ārādhah fī Mīsīr” (A Humiliating Defeat for Historical Figures and the Brotherhood is the Opposition’s Headline/Banner in Egypt), November 15, 2005; Shaden Shehab, “Mixed Messages,” al-Ahram Weekly, no. 769, 17–23 November, 2005.}

Although violations and irregularities were numerous, most observers agree that the first stage of the 2005 elections was one of the most, if not the most, free since the 1952 revolution. Intervention by the security forces, for example, was kept minimal and political arrests did not occur. The opposition and independent press enjoyed unprecedented freedom of criticism of the government’s policies. Independent observers and human rights groups, on the other hand, reported many transgressions, such as overlooking erroneous electoral registers, mass-transportation (especially of government employees) for collective NDP voting, vote-buying, bribery, thuggery (baltaga), rigging ballot boxes and obstructing scrutineers from attending canvass of vote.\footnote{Salaah Bdeywi, “Tahdith Aaliyaṭ al-Tazwir wa ’al-Hiyyad al-Iyjaabi” li Jihaaz al-Amn wa Ihbaat ‘Aamaal al-Islaah” (the Modernization of the Rigging Tools, the “Positive Neutrality” of the Security Apparatus, and Public Frustration about Reform’s Hopes), al-Masryyoun, November 10, 2005; Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, “Future Parliament”?–Not Yet! EOHR Report on Parliamentary Elections 2005 Results,” December 14, 2005, online (accessed on May 11, 2007) [available]: http://www.eohr.org/report/2005/re1214.shtml.} According to the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, in many constituencies, especially in the Giza and Cairo governorates, public buses were used to transport government employees, women and elderly people en masse where they were illegally issued new election IDs to vote in the wrong constituencies in favour of NDP candidates. Moreover, the EOHR reported that despite numerous register problems, such as the existence of erroneous, repeated and deceased person’s names, the Parliamentary Elections High Committee (PEHC) and the Interior Ministry failed to take any measures to review the registers.\footnote{Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, “Future Parliament”?–Not Yet!...”}

6.5.1. The Second and Third Stages of the Elections: Shift in Tactics

With the MB emerging as the real winner in the first stage of the elections, many political analysts and observers questioned the government’s unusual tolerance towards the MB. Some political analysts speculated that an under-the-table deal between the
NDP and the MB had been arranged. Others, however, insisted that the government was only sending a message to the West, particularly the US, that democratization in Egypt would only bring the MB to power; something that Western policy makers would not appreciate. The message was not in vain as it kept Western criticisms of the electoral process during the second and third stages as minimal as possible. Most observers agree that the electoral gains of the MB in the first stage of the elections convinced the government that, unless the course of the elections was forcefully redirected, the opposition’s gains may seriously threaten the NDP’s absolute dominance in the People’s Assembly. Consequently, the government did not wait too long to clear the speculations about its limits of tolerance towards the MB and other opposition forces. In fact, the shift in the government’s tactics towards the MB was blatant and full scale in the second and third stages. Security forces were the primary player in hindering the MB’s progress, arresting hundreds of MB members, cordoned off and closed hundreds of ballot stations, especially in areas known to be MB strongholds, and giving armed thugs a free hand to bully non-NDP voters, particularly MB members and supporters. Most ironically, superintendent judges who were legally entrusted with the responsibility of supervising and facilitating the fairness of the elections were not immune from police harassment and abuse. Independent observers and media correspondents also had their share and, in many cases, were violently attacked by security forces and thugs hired by NDP candidates.

The second stage, in which 1,778 candidates contested 144 seats, took place on November 20 and covered the nine governorates of Alexandria, al-Buhayrah, al-Isma‘iliyah, Bur Sa‘id, al-Suways, al-Qalyubiyah, al-Gharbiyah, al-Fayyum and Qina. While only 23 seats were determined in the first round of the second stage, 121 seats had to be contested by 242 candidates in 68 constituencies in the run-off vote on November 26. This made the second stage’s run-offs intensely competitive. However, despite all the restrictions, vote-rigging and violations, the MB was still able to top up its parliamentary gains by 42 seats, increasing its share in the second stage to a total of

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74 Shaden Shehab, “Mixed Messages.”
75 Mujahid Melyji, Omar al-Qalyubi and Muhammad Rashid, “Unf Ghair Masbuq fi al-Jawlah al-Thaaniyah wa Rumuz Kabirah fi Taryqiha ila al-Suqut” (Unprecedented Violence in the Second Round and Big Symbols are in their Way to the Defeat), al-Masryyoun, November 20, 2005; Mustafa El-Menshawy, “Change in tactics”; Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, “”Future Parliament”?-Not Yet!...”
76 seats (17%). The third stage started on the first of December and covered the remaining nine governorates of Al-Daqqahliyah, al-Sharqiyah, Kafr al-Shaykh, Dumyat, Suhaj, Aswan, al-Bahr al-Ahmar (Red Sea), South Sinai and North Sinai. 1,770 candidates: 1529 independents, 136 NDP, 49 MB and 56 other opposition candidates, contested 136 seats representing 68 constituencies. Only nine seats were determined in the first round, eight of which went to the NDP and one to the New Wafd Party. The remaining 127 seats had to be contested in the run-off vote on December 7.

From the first day of the second stage of the elections, observers were sure that the government had decided to reverse the limited democratic measures and obliterate the margin of freedom and tolerance demonstrated in the first stage. This became obvious with the arrest of 400 MB members, many of whom were agents of MB candidates, in the early morning of the first day of the second stage. According to independent sources, NDP candidates also hired gangs and thugs who cooperated with the security forces in order to terrorize MB members and opposition activists. In Alexandria and al-Qalyubiyah governorates, for example, NDP thugs working under police guidance attacked MB members and supporters using knives and sticks. As the MB managed to overcome the government’s coercive measures and gain more seats in the second stage, oppression and violence by security forces reached an unprecedented level during the third stage. In order to hinder the MB’s progress, the security forces arrested and detained 898 MB activists in the early morning of the third stage’s first round. About 344 of the detainees were representatives of MB candidates and influential campaigners. For instance, 11 agents representing Shafiq al-Deeb, an MB candidate, were arrested in Meet Gamr Constituency in al-Daqqahliya. According to Ikwan Online, by December 4, the number of MB detainees had reached 1,286, most of whom

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76 Mahmud Msallam, “Hasaad al-Marhalatain: 195 Maq’adan lil Watani wa 76 lil Ikhwan wa 4 lil Wafd wa 2 lil Tajammu’” (Harvest of the two Stages: 195 Seats to the National (NDP), 76 to the MB, 4 to the Wafd and 2 to Tajammu’) al-Masryyoun, issue no. 533, November 28, 2005.


were from Suhaj (350), Dumyaatt (230), al-Daqahliya (209) and al-Sharqyyah (130).\footnote{Muhammad al-Sharif, “1286 Mu’taqalan lil Ikhwan ‘ala Thdimmat al-Marhalah al-Thaalithah” (1286 of MB Detainees on Third Stage’s Dispraise), \textit{Ikw\-
\textit{an Online}}, December 4, 2005, online (accessed on May 21 2007) [available]: http://www.ikhwanonline.net/Article.asp?ID=16435&SectionID=0&Searching=1.}

Although some of the detainees were released after a few days’ detention, more than one thousand MB activists were still held in prison after the final round of the elections.\footnote{Muhammad al-Sharif, “Alf Mu’taqal wa 15 Shahid wa 345 Musab.. Hasad al-Intikhaabat” (One Thousand Detainees, 15 Martyrs and 345 Wounded.. Elections’ Harvest), \textit{Ikw\-
\textit{an Online}}, December 10, 2005, online (accessed on May 21, 2007) [available]: http://www.ikhwanonline.net/Article.asp?ID=16591&SectionID=0&Searching=1.}

\textbf{6.5.2. Elections with Undesirable Voters: Police Violence against Voters}

The second and third stages of the elections witnessed the most blatant violations and oppressive strategies against voters. The aggression of the security forces and the NDP’s thugs targeted not only MB and opposition activists, but also any voters not known to be NDP loyalists, in general. In order to deter non-NDP voters from casting their votes, hundreds of ballot stations were cordoned off and shut down and voters were violently attacked by police and NDP thugs.\footnote{Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, “‘Future Parliament’?-Not Yet!...”}

According to the EOHR, in many constituencies only NDP voters were allowed to vote, while 496 stations were closed off during the second stage run-offs.\footnote{Ibid.} Furthermore, during the third stage, more than 470 polling stations, mostly in areas considered as MB strongholds, were closed by security forces. The EOHR reported that 120 polling stations in the governorates of al-Sharqiyah (40), al-Daqahliyah (30), Dumyatt (25) and Kafr al-Sheik (25) were closed in the first round of the third stage. In the run-off vote, moreover, the number of closed stations in the same governorates as well as in Souhag and Northern Sinai amounted to 350. According to MB sources, 434 ballot stations in areas that supported MB candidates were closed by security forces in the final run-off.\footnote{Muhammad al-Sharif, “Ghalq 434 Lijnah fi 5 Muhafazdaat Zdahirat al-T’aadah” (the Closure of 434 Ballot stations in 5 Governorates in the Afternoon of the Run-off), \textit{Ikw\-
\textit{an Online}}, December 7, 2005, online (accessed on May 22, 2007) [available]: http://www.ikhwanonline.net/Article.asp?ID=16517&SectionID=0&Searching=1.} MB and other non-NDP supporters were also prevented from having access to the polling stations in other places, such as the Abu Hamaad constituency of Al-Sharqia Governorate and the second constituency of North Sinai Governorate, whereas NDP voters enjoyed unrestricted
access.\textsuperscript{86} In al-Khayyaat constituency, where the clashes between security forces and voters who were trying to access the stations left tens of wounded people, only 19 of the eight thousand registered voters were able to access the polling stations to cast their votes.\textsuperscript{87} Many other violations, such as tempering with ballot boxes and erroneous registers, also occurred in the second and third stages. In some incidents, such as with the Dar al-Salam constituency of Souhag, illegal mass proxy votes in favour of NDP candidates were also reported.\textsuperscript{88}

As a result of police brutality in preventing non-NDP voters from getting access to the ballot stations, especially in the third stage’s run-off, the 2005 elections turned out to be the most violent and the bloodiest elections in Egypt’s history. Some observers described the areas surrounding the ballot stations as battlefields.\textsuperscript{89} Frustrated voters determined to cast their votes were violently confronted by security forces that blocked the roads leading to the stations. The violent clashes between voters and police caused the death of 11 civilians, nine of whom were opposition supporters killed by police gunfire during the run-off votes on December 7. Other casualties amounted to over 1,000 wounded, many of whom were severely injured and left with permanent disabilities.\textsuperscript{90} On the first round of the third stage, Baltim Public Hospital, for example, received 182 people wounded in the face and chest by rubber bullets; two people died and two others completely lost their eyesight.\textsuperscript{91} According to human rights organizations and independent observers, voters were beaten with sticks and fired on by security forces. Tear gas bombs were also used by police to disperse the crowds of people trying to enter the cordoned off stations.\textsuperscript{92} For example, Gomaa Saad al-Zeftawy,

\textsuperscript{86} Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, ““Future Parliament”?-Not Yet!...”; also “Future Parliament Victims.”
\textsuperscript{89} Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, “After the elections.”
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
the first victim in round one of stage three, was shot in the neck and died immediately as he was attempting to cast his vote at Resq Hamamu Primary School polling station. In this station, as the EOHR reported, voting did not take place because security forces blockaded the station and randomly fired tear gas bombs and guns to prevent voters from entering the station. Similar incidents were repeated during the run-off elections on December 7, particularly in the Duman, al-Daqahlia and al-Sharqia governorates, where nine would-be voters (three in each governorate) were shot dead by police.

Many reporters indicated that some of the hired thugs were released from prison by police on the eve of the elections specifically to terrorize voters, as happened in Duman where one of the thugs captured by voters confirmed it.

6.5.3. Pre-Determined Outcome and Rigging of the Ballot Boxes

Al-Masyuon newspaper reported that, in order to prevent the MB’s gains from exceeding the 90-seat threshold and to secure the two-thirds majority for the NDP, the government issued ‘secret’ orders instructing the rigging of the ballot boxes in the third stage. Besides continuing to cordon polling stations, the new, blatant strategy was to announce the defeat of MB candidates without regard to the balloting results, as happened in the Bander al-Mansur, Duman and al-Duqy constituencies. In the Bander al-Mansur constituency, for instance, the judicial committee, which was supervising the constituency’s elections, declared that the contested seats were won by MB candidates Dr Yusri Hani and Saber Zaher. However, after the judges left the counting station, security forces blockaded the station while the head of the station declared Muhammad Ibrahim al-Disuqy, an independent candidate who had joined the
NDP, as the winner, despite the fact that he only received 500 votes against 11,000 and 11,100 votes for the MB candidates Hani and Zaher, respectively.  

Judicial monitor Nuha al-Zaini, deputy of the Administrative Prosecution Authority, witnessed a similar case in Damanhur where she participated in the judicial supervision of elections. In a statement published in *Al-Masry al-Youm* newspaper on November 24, 2005, al-Zaini declared that after witnessing the counting of the votes where Dr Jamal Hishmat, an MB candidate, was ahead of his rival Dr Mustafa al-Feqi, a prominent NDP candidate, by at least 18,000 votes, the election results were rigged in favour of the latter. She emphasized that, to her surprise, the head of the station declared Dr al-Feqi as the winner of the contested seat after conducting a secret recounting without judicial supervision or any other independent monitoring while the counting station was closed and cordoned off by security forces. According to Judge Mahmud al-Khudeiry, head of the Alexandria Judges’ Club, the report of the fact-finding about the rigging incident confirmed Judge al-Zaini’s testimony, where 137 of the 160 judicial superintendents who supervised the constituency’s poll stations supported her claim with sufficient evidence.

### 6.5.4. Aggression towards Judicial Superintendents and Independent Observers

Violence and aggression by police and NDP’s thugs were not limited to opposition activists and voters; judges, who were legally responsible for the supervision of the election process, as well as independent watchdogs and media fieldworkers had their share of police aggression and attacks by thugs. Seventy-six such incidents against judges were reported by the EOHR alone. Ahmed Mekki, Cassation Court Deputy Chief, emphasized that as “judges intervened to help voters get to the polls, police

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ordered thugs to wreck havoc on the voting process”. For example, Emad Shafiq Oun, a superintendent judge, and lawyer Ahmed Abdel Khaleq, a head of a vote-counting station, were beaten by police officers in al-Sharqiyah and Kafr al-Sheikh, respectively. The latter had his left hand broken and was denied access to the counting station by the security forces. In al-Daqahliya Governorate, six judges walked out of poll stations in protest against electoral violations and police interference. The board of the Cairo Judges Club openly criticized the Parliamentary Electoral Commission (PEC) for failing to put into effect any of the electoral guarantees promised by the government. Furthermore, the judges also threatened to discontinue their supervisory role if electoral violations, especially with regard to voters’ access to poll stations, continued in the third stage’s run-offs.

Media field workers as well as human rights activists and other independent observers were also harassed and, in some instances, beaten and kidnapped. Harassment of media representatives and journalists particularly increased after Al-Jazeera, the BBC and other news agencies repeatedly displayed images of voters covered with blood and security forces using sticks, tear gas-bombs and gunfire against voters. Images of thugs threatening voters with swords and machetes were also broadcasted by many TV stations. In the first constituency of the governorate of Kafr al-Sheikh, the al-Jazeera Channel team were detained and had their tape covering the election process damaged by security forces. Many other media workers were banned from filming or shooting and had their equipment damaged by police. Such incidents, as the EOHR reported, happened to correspondents of the BBC and the Dubai TV Channel as well as to journalists representing *al-Masry al-Youm* and *al-Karamaa* newspapers and *al-Mawqef al-Araby* magazine. Reporters of the latter two were also beaten. Some observers were even kidnapped by NDP thugs.

99 Mustafa El-Menshaw, “Change in Tactics.”
100 Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, ““Future Parliament”?–Not Yet…”
101 Mona El-Nahhas, “Will It Be Different This Time?”
102 Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, ““Future Parliament”?–Not Yet…”
6.6. Final Evaluative Remarks

As the information above demonstrates, the 2005 elections did little to enhance the Egyptian regime’s democratic credentials. Despite some gains made by the MB, the regime’s staunch determination to manipulate and control the elections’ outcome indicates that the prospects for democracy in Egypt remain bleak. Judicial supervision over the voting system did not guarantee fully free and fair elections as the regime merely redirected its manipulative techniques from direct interference in ballot counting and processing to blatant obstruction outside polling stations. However, with the increase of the opposition’s presence in the 2005 People’s Assembly, comprehensive judicial supervision proved to be an important step as it relatively limited electoral fraud and rigging. In order to effectively produce fully free and fair elections, this step must be accompanied with other liberalizing measures, particularly with regard to lifting of the emergency status and easing of restrictive participatory laws. Considering the 2007 constitutional amendments that removed provisions for comprehensive judicial supervision of elections and entrenched the emergency status by making provisions for new anti-terrorism laws, the gears of democratic reform appear to have been put into reverse. Consequently, the regime’s demonstrated limits of tolerance towards serious opposition forces, especially with regard to the MB, indicate its lack of commitment to political reform.

Moreover, the elections also demonstrate the insignificance of the legal opposition parties and their inability to appeal to broader constituencies. Thus, they are less likely to effect a political change in Egypt, at least in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, the MB’s impressive progress in the elections, despite the regime’s intimidation and oppression, reflects the success of its gradual approach in winning the hearts and minds of the people. Therefore, the MB remains the only viable opposition force in Egypt, which clearly indicates that without the full inclusion of the MB in the political process, democracy is less likely to progress and take root in Egypt. Will the Egyptian regime tolerate the possibility of the MB becoming an effective vehicle for political reform? For now, the regime’s reaction to the MB’s rising popularity as well as the MB’s determination to exercise its right to political participation, as the 2005 elections demonstrate, do not give a clear picture of the future of democracy and political reform.
in Egypt. In fact, considering the fact that Mubarak is about to reach the age of 80, in order to have a clear picture of Egypt post-Mubarak, we may need to wait and see how the process of succession will proceed. If his son Jamal manages to succeed him by another regime-controlled presidential election, then Egypt may very likely endure another long-lasting ‘pharaoh’.

6.7. Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that as long as the Egyptian regime is determined to cling on to the emergency status and use the security apparatus as a means to manipulate the political process and exclude or eliminate potential rivals, the future of democracy in Egypt will remain unpromising. The continuous suppression and exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood from formal politics did not do away with their popularity and social support. The Brotherhood’s peaceful and gradual approach has, rather, proved to be effective as it managed to maintain a steadily rising support base, eventually emerging as the strongest and only viable opposition force.

Mubarak’s limited political openness, which has always been marked by ostensible commitment to multi-party politics and inconsistent tolerance of political dissent, initially managed to present a façade of ongoing or ‘maturing’ democratization. The relative independence of the judiciary and its ability to challenge, though to a limited extent, the power of the executive, made it at some point appear as a “protector of due political process” and potential catalyst for “democratization based on the rule of law”.103 However, the regime’s unswerving determination to maintain the state of emergency and restrictive participatory laws as well as its consistent reliance on the security apparatus and military courts to control and contain political opposition, disappointed many former optimists. The regime in fact is not showing any positive signs that it may consider yielding its absolute control over the political process, especially with regard to guaranteeing the total domination of its ruling NDP in parliament. Thus, throughout his 27 years in office, so far, Mubarak has maintained a long tradition of accompanying political openings with restrictions that prevent any genuine democratization or effective political participation. This is particularly the case.

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in relation to the regime’s approach towards the Muslim Brotherhood movement, the only effective political opposition but which remains outlawed to the present day.

The Muslim Brotherhood movement, in fact, managed to skillfully manoeuvre the political process and utilize the limited margin of freedoms available. This has become particularly evident with its impressive success in the 2005 elections where it managed to win 88 seats in the People’s Assembly, emerging as the largest opposition block in parliament by far. Therefore, the Muslim Brotherhood has now become a potential driving force for political change. To what extent will the Egyptian regime tolerate the possibility of the Muslim Brotherhood becoming a catalyst for political reform in the foreseeable future? The regime’s response to the Brotherhood’s unexpected success in the 2005 legislative elections, especially with regard to the ongoing waves of arrests and the introduction of more restrictive laws that further entrench the authoritarian elements of the regime, provides a dim picture of Egypt’s political future and democratization prospects.

To sum up, it is very reasonable to argue that without the full and formal inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood in the political process, the prospects for democracy in Egypt will remain bleak. Consequently, the findings of this chapter confirm the argument that unless the popular Islamic political forces actively and freely participate in the political process, democratization is less likely to transpire and proceed in Muslim-majority countries. This assessment is further examined and verified in chapters seven and eight where the Indonesian case is thoroughly investigated.
Chapter Seven

Democracy and the Politics of Identity in Indonesia

7.1. Introduction

Political structures are less likely to consolidate and endure in normal circumstances unless they reflect the social conditions underlying them, as these structures do not develop in a free and unbounded space. Although political actors can manipulate and often, to a certain extent, craft the architecture of the political structures of their societies, they do not act within unrestricted social spheres or with unhampered freedom of choice. Political structures are actually designed to reflect the social and cultural identities underlying them. They are built on, and influenced by, already existing religious, social and cultural paradigms and contexts that shape collective identities, interests and values that together constrain the choices of political actors. Therefore, while these structural factors and social conditions develop over an extended period, the investigation in this chapter takes a historical/longitudinal approach as it examines the formation and development of Indonesian national identity and political structures prior to the fall of Suharto’s New Order regime.

In what ways did the promotion of a uniform nationalist identity affect national unity and democratic development in Indonesia? This chapter looks closely into this question as it attempts to examine the extent to which the suppression of political expression of Islamic identity affected democratic development in Indonesia.

The first part of this chapter investigates the formation of Indonesian national identity and the subsequent creation of the Indonesian nation-state, emphasizing the role of Islam and the impact of Dutch colonialism on these processes. The second part examines the development of post-independence political structures, focussing on the struggle between Islamic and secular nationalist forces under Sukarno’s Old Order and Guided Democracy (1945-1966) and Suharto’s New Order (1966-1998) regimes. This
chapter also elaborates the factors that helped Sukarno abort the early democratic experiment of the 1950s, in spite of the fact that the principal political players “were willing to accept a pluralistic society”. More importantly, the investigation pays particular attention to Suharto’s comprehensive and coercive secularization project, which sought to emasculate political parties, suppress political expression of Islamic identity and eliminate all ideological alternatives to the state ideology of Pancasila (five principles). The extent to which this project discouraged pluralistic expression and restricted the “arena of permissible political activity” is particularly discussed and evaluated.

7.2. Islam and Dutch Colonialism: The Formation of Indonesian Identity

The formation of Indonesian national identity was the most important development in the struggle for independence and the subsequent establishment of the modern Indonesian nation-state. While the first half of the twentieth century was characterized by the rise of national consciousness and struggle for independence, the second half was mainly marked by the strive for a unified Indonesian identity, national unity and democracy. The formation of Indonesian identity was facilitated mainly by the spread of Islam across the East Indies archipelago and the common struggle against Dutch colonial domination. Therefore, Islam and colonialism played an important role, directly and indirectly, in the Indonesian national awakening. Whereas Islam provided a source of collective character that the overwhelming majority of Indonesians have come to identify with, Dutch colonialism played a significant role in defining Indonesia’s “territorial extent and creat[ing] an environment in which nationalist forces could ultimately develop” when, for the first time in history, the archipelagic islands were brought together under one central authority. Thus, the all-encompassing colonial control of the Indonesian archipelago had, wittingly or unwittingly, contributed to the development of Indonesian nationalism, which culminated in the war of independence and the establishment of the modern nation-state.

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1 Ingrid Wessel (ed.), *Democratisation in Indonesia after the Fall of Suharto*, p. 8.
Although historians disagree on the precise timing and method of Islam’s penetration into the Indonesian Archipelago, they generally acknowledge that Islam had existed in the islands before the end of the thirteenth century. Local cultures and politics were significantly influenced by archipelagic and cross-regional trade, especially around coastal ports that connected trade routes between China, India and Arabia. Prior to the arrival of Islam, commercial activities facilitated the diffusion of Hinduism and Buddhism and made the establishment and survival of kingdoms and city-states possible. Unlike the modern nation-state system, which is predominantly characterized by its centralized power and defined territorial boundaries, political organization in the pre-modern archipelago remained largely loose, and political units exerted tributary control over a vague geographical area. The Hindu-Javanese kingdom of Majapahit, which claimed suzerain authority over vassal states on Sumatra, the Malay peninsula and Kalimantan, never enforced centralized authority on the outer islands. Nevertheless, its commercial predominance and manipulative control of trade routes and activities in, and to some extent beyond, the north coast of Java during the fourteenth century, was virtually unchallenged.

With the intensification of commercial activities and the increased number of Arab, Indian and Chinese Muslim merchants in Indonesian ports, especially when Muslims dominated the Indian trade route, Islam began to spread extensively along coastal areas. Historians indicate that the Malay kingdoms began to be transformed into Islamic sultanates as early as the thirteenth century, as shown by the adoption of the rank of sultan by some rulers dated to the reign of Sultan Malik al-Salih of Samudra, whose tombstone was dated to 1297. With its conversion to Islam, Malacca started to attract Muslim traders and was subsequently developed as a dynamic commercial power and a centre for Islamic diffusion throughout the archipelago. Other coastal kingdoms and principalities, such as Demak, Jepara, Tuban, Madura, Surabaya and later Moluccas and

6 C. M. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300*, p. 17.
8 John D. Legge, *Indonesia*, p. 54.
Celebes began to embrace Islam and, eventually, Islamic sultanates were established and *Shari'ah* law was, to various degrees, implemented in many places.\(^9\) Whereas some smaller kings preserved the Indic title of raja, by the fifteenth century all major Muslim rulers of the archipelago had adopted the title of sultan.\(^10\) Abhorring hierarchical structures and paying no heed or merit to race and class, Islam not only changed the relationship between the rulers and ruled, but also provided a source of common identity that “could cut across communal divisions”, transcending ethnicity, village and kin-group and potentially facilitating the establishment of a new kind of supra-ethnic unity. Islam also downgraded the ruler’s role from the ‘god-king’ to the “practical function as local head of the *ummah*, and beyond it a broader commitment to the Islamic world at large”.\(^11\)

The spread of Islam in the archipelago was, however, gradual and its adoption by the various islands and communities was far from complete or consistent. Differences between the areas and provinces that were profoundly affected by Islam and those areas where Islam was nominally adopted soon became identifiable. For example, in most coastal principalities, especially “outside the area of the ethnic Javanese” such as west Java, Aceh, west Sumatra and south Sulawesi, where the indigenous population was least exposed to Hindu-Buddhist civilization, Islam flourished extensively in a purer form and profoundly affected the social and political life of these societies.\(^12\) However, in the areas that were previously influenced by Hindu-Buddhist traditions, particularly in Java, Islam was more or less adapted to the prevalent culture, creating a heterodox mélange of pre-existing and Islamic beliefs. The implications of such ‘uneven’ Islamization were still evident in the post-colonial period, as witnessed by the *santri-abangan* (devout-minimal) divide in Java.\(^13\) On the other hand, even though it was very gradual and initially characterized by mysticism and syncretism, the process of Islamization continued to expand, drawing closer towards purer orthodox teachings.


\(^12\) John D. Legge, *Indonesia*, p. 56.

\(^13\) Ibid.; Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali*. 
During the twentieth century, not only did the number of Indonesians who travelled to Mecca and Egypt for pilgrimage and study considerably increase, but also cross-national communication between Muslim countries, especially in regard to the distribution of Islamic publications, intensified rapidly.\(^{14}\)

### 7.2.1. Islamic Resistance against Dutch Colonialism

Islam and resistance against colonialism were the most important aspects that most of the natives of the archipelago’s scattered islands had shared, and gradually become conscious of, during the colonial era. When the Dutch ships started to arrive in 1596 Islam had a history of almost three hundred years in Indonesia. The Dutch faced fierce resistance during the colonial history of Indonesia, especially after the expansion policy, which was not completed until Vogelkop of West Irian was brought under direct Dutch control in 1919–1920.\(^{15}\) Rebellions and disturbances occurred in many regions, such as Ambon, Kalimantan, Lombok, South Borneo and Banten. Prolonged wars in west Sumatra and central Java also demonstrated the nature of the challenge that confronted Dutch colonialism and the sort of resistance their expansion had to face throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\(^{16}\) The Padri War (1821–1837) and the Java war (1825–1830), although they represented modern versus traditional Islamic socio-political power, showed “the appeal to Islam” as a clear “potential source of unity” where “Islam became the symbol of opposition to the Dutch”.\(^{17}\) The Padri movement was established by pilgrim returnees who were influenced by the Arabian Wahhabi Islamic reform movement, and brought the earliest modern Middle Eastern influence to Minangkabau, with the aim of purifying society from un-Islamic traditional elements, such as gambling, opium and tobacco smoking, cockfighting and, most importantly, loyalty to the infidel, the Dutch colonizer. The Java war, on the other hand, was led by the traditional crown prince of Yogyakarta, Diponigoro, who proclaimed himself as the protector of Islam and was regarded by his followers as “the Ratu Adil, the Just Prince.

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who would overthrow the foreign infidel”. 18 Many of the nineteenth century anti-colonial rebellions were also supported and mobilized by networks of Islamic Sufi tariqahs (orders). The rebellions of Lombok, South Borneo and Banten were of that kind. The Banten rebellion (in west Java) particularly was one of the most popular rebellions, in which the Qadiriyya as well as the Naqshbandiyya Sufi orders played a significant role. 19

The struggle between the Ottoman Empire and many Western powers also fuelled the hostility amongst many Indonesian Muslims against the Dutch, who represented an oppressive colonial power that posed a dangerous threat to Islam. Popular rumours often spread in many parts of the Indies that the Sultan of Rum (the Ottoman Caliph) would send an expedition to rescue the Indies from the rule of the oppressive infidel and bring them under the rule of an Islamic Caliph. Until the 1870s, when it became involved in a long bloody war with the Dutch, Aceh managed to maintain its independence and keep the Dutch out of its territory. When it appeared to the Acehnese that the Dutch interference was inevitable, they appealed for military support from the Ottoman Sultan Abdulaziz, who was unable to help. 20

The Dutch colonial government became increasingly aware of the connections between Indonesians and the Muslim world and realized the danger and threat of Islam to their authority and dominance in Indonesia. Therefore, they attempted to isolate Indonesian societies from the rest of the Islamic countries and tried to prevent Indonesian pilgrims from travelling to Mecca. However, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1867, communications improved and contacts with Islamic countries, especially with Egypt, increased. 21 Furthermore, when the British colony of Singapore altered its policies and started to permit pilgrimage traffic to Mecca, more Indonesian pilgrims began to travel to Mecca via Singapore. 22 Christian Snouck Hurgronje, a Dutch researcher, conducted a study of Acehnese when he visited Mecca in 1884-1885. Disguised as a Muslim

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18 Ibid., p. 125; C. M. Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300, pp. 133–134.
19 Martin van Bruinessen, “Origins and Development of the Sufi Orders (tariqah) in Southeast Asia.”
convert, he came into contact with Acehnese and other Indonesian hajjis and “discovered considerable communities of Indonesian pilgrims closely in touch with events in Aceh and anxious for the victory of Islam over the infidel Dutch”. When he became a principal advisor to the Dutch colonial government on Islamic and Indonesian affairs in 1891, Snouck Hurgronje submitted a report suggesting that in order to destroy the Islamic resistance in Aceh, the colonial government should utterly crush the ulama (Muslim scholars who lead the guerrilla resistance) and establish alliance with the secular adat chiefs. The Dutch carried out these policies but it was not until 1912 that they managed to put an end to the guerrilla war. Many historians consider the establishment of the boundaries of the Indonesian modern nation-state as a direct consequence of the Aceh war, arguing that although “the Dutch did not create Indonesia”, they effectively defined “its territorial extent and create[d] an environment in which nationalist forces could ultimately develop”.

In the meantime, increasing numbers of Indonesians travelled to Mecca and Cairo, not only for pilgrimage this time, but also for study. Many of those who studied in Cairo and Mecca during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries later came to be the leaders of the Islamic modernist reform movements in Indonesia. For example, Sheikh Muhammad Djamil Djambek, who studied in Mecca and returned in 1903, and Hajji Rasul (Abdul Karim Amrullah), who returned in 1906, established the Adabiyah School. This was one of the first modernist schools that taught Arabic language and introduced Egyptian text books as well as subjects such as geography and history. These developments were going on when Egypt was witnessing the birth of the most significant Islamic reform movement led by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Sheikh Mohammad Abdu, whose influence rapidly spread throughout the Muslim world. Even Indonesian secular nationalists believed that these prominent Islamic reformist figures played a significant role in the awakening of the Indonesian people. In his famous essay “Nationalism, Islam and Marxism”, Sukarno wrote:

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23 Ailsa G. Thomson Zainu’ddin, A Short History of Indonesia, p. 132.
26 Ibid., 161.
27 See chapter four for details on the Egyptian modern Islamic reform movement.
Like the break of day after the darkness of night, like the close of the dark ages, two great figures lit up the Moslem world in the nineteenth century. These two figures, whose names will forever be inscribed in the history of Islam, were Sheikh Mohammed ‘Abduh, rector of Al-Azhar University, and Al-Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, two champions of the pan-Islamic movement, who awakened and regenerated the Moslem peoples all over Asia from their state of darkness and decline.  

7.2.2. Indonesian National Awakening

Despite the fact that Islam started to penetrate the Indonesian archipelago as early as the thirteenth century, the first three decades of the twentieth century mark a starting point in Indonesia’s awakening and national consciousness. The rise of Islam’s political power during the first two decades was the first step towards the development of the modern Indonesian national identity, which constituted the most important element in the war of independence and the establishment of the nation-state. By the early 1930s, the nationalist movement had emerged as a leading political force in Indonesia.

Indonesian national identity was mainly characterized by the prevailing Islamic culture as well as its hostile attitude towards the Dutch colonial power. Unlike European nationalism, which was a mainly bourgeois political struggle aimed at augmenting the economic strength of the middle class with political control, Indonesian nationalism was a movement of resistance against an oppressive foreign ruler and monopolizing colonizer. Indonesian nationalism was, in other words, a struggle against a capitalist imperial power rather than a struggle against a feudal structure. It is important to stress that capitalism in Indonesia was also identified with foreign interference and domination. For example, in 1927 Sukarno called upon the Indonesian Marxists to join the nationalist movement, insisting that Marxists must stir up “the feelings of nationalism in the heart of Indonesian workers, since most capital in Indonesia is foreign capital”.  

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29 Ibid., p. 59.
Indonesian secular nationalism was not, until 1927 when the first Indonesian national party was founded, an end by itself for any mass-based political movement. It was, rather, mixed influences mainly based on Islamic culture and Islamic principles of social justice. Therefore, there was no clear line in Indonesian history that separated the traditional Islamic resistance against the colonial government from Indonesian modern nationalism, as will be demonstrated. Nevertheless, there was a bridging period that transformed traditional Islamic resistance into modern nationalism, greatly influenced by the Islamic modernist and reform movements led by Islamic organizations, such as Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah.30

By the turn of the twentieth century, with the arrival of the influential Islamic reform movement and after a long experience of resisting colonial control under the banner of Islam, Indonesian Muslims started to develop a new “form of more institutionalized movements”.31 As such, a vast number of educational, social, economic and political organizations sprang up all over Indonesia. Although this new development was not limited to the Islamic movement since the socialist movement was also starting to take form, non-Islamic organizations initially failed to achieve mass support. The Javanese organization Budi Utomo (the ‘High’ or ‘Glorious’ Endeavour), which was founded in 1908, was one of the earliest Javanese-national movements in Indonesia, but its membership was not open to non-Javanese until 1931.32 Budi Utomo failed to win mass support and remained primarily a priyayi (aristocracy) organization. This was primarily due to the fact that the social and cultural aspects promoted by Budi Utomo, which ignored Islamic principles, did not appeal to the people. Budi Utomo leaders underestimated the socio-political power of Islam and, at a time where the “revival of Islam had become a common ideal for millions of Moslems”, failed to recognize that ideals based on Islamic concepts and principles had huge impacts on the Indonesian masses.33

32 Ailsa G. Thomson Zainu’ddin, A Short History of Indonesia, pp. 172–173.
33 H. M. B. Vlekke, Nasantara: A History of Indonesia, p. 349.
The modernist Islamic organization Muhammadiyah, on the other hand, was founded in 1912 by Kyai Hajji Ahmad Dahlan, who had studied in Mecca for several years. Muhammadiyah was mainly a religious movement inspired by the Wahhabi Islamic reform movement which had spread from Saudi Arabia to many parts of the Islamic world. It was also influenced, though to a lesser extent, by the Egyptian Islamic reform movement of al-Afghani and Abdu. Consequently, Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic reform or modernist movement, sought to purify society according to the commands and teachings of Islam by going back to the original sources of Islam, the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet, as interpreted directly rather than by the four traditional schools of Islamic Shari’ah.\textsuperscript{34} It tried to abolish many of what it considered superstitious customs and to loosen the bands of tradition.

It is important to differentiate the Arabian Wahhabi reform movement, which was almost exclusively concerned with religious issues, from the Egyptian reform movement, which put somewhat equal emphasis on both religious and political issues. While both movements called for the purification of Islam from un-Islamic traditional elements, their interpretation of the Islamic texts differed significantly. The Wahhabi movement stressed a textual interpretation that concentrated strictly on the form or the literal meanings of the religious texts. The Egyptian reformist movement, however, stressed contextual understanding of Islam, which made it open to different interpretations and flexible in accepting modern political concepts and ideas. Therefore, unlike the Wahhabi movement which was purely religious, the Egyptian Islamic reform movement was political, economic religious. A doctoral dissertation, which was presented at the IAIN of Jakarta, conducted a comparative study about the similarities and differences between Muhammadiyah religious opinions and Sheikh Muhammad Abdu’s ideas and found that the influence of Abdu’s teachings on Muhammadiyah was not as huge as commonly believed. According to the dissertation, “In many cases the

Muhammadiyah put more emphasis on the paramount importance of \textit{naql}, the sacred texts, while Abdu preferred to rely more on the faculty of reason, or '\textit{aql}'. \footnote{Taufik Abdullah, “The Formation of a New Paradigm? A Sketch on Contemporary Islamic Discourse,” in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), \textit{Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Politics}, Arizona: Arizona State University, 1996, pp. 71–72.}

Although Muhammadiyah, whose support mostly came from the urban Muslims, was mainly non-political and mostly concentrated on social missionary activities such as establishing clinics and schools, it influenced Indonesia’s political life in direct and indirect ways. In many instances, Muhammadiyah participated in the formation of political parties and alliances. Furthermore, by purifying and strengthening the Islamic roots of Indonesian society, Muhammadiyah ultimately provided a fertile seed-bed for modernist Islamic political parties. \footnote{B. J. Robertson and J. Spruyt, \textit{A History of Indonesia}, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1967, p. 201.} The membership of Muhammadiyah continued to grow steadily and today it is the second largest non-governmental organization in Indonesia. Within thirteen years of its establishment, namely in 1925, Muhammadiyah had established fifty-five schools, two clinics, one orphanage and one poorhouse with about 4,000 members. By 1938, it controlled 1,774 schools, 834 mosques and 31 public libraries. \footnote{C. M. Ricklefs, \textit{A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300}, p. 163.} Other relatively recent studies indicate that Muhammadiyah has three million active members and about thirty million sympathizers, and it runs 20,000 schools, sixteen universities, 21 academies, nine general hospitals, hundreds of clinics and 10,000 mosques. \footnote{A. Karel Steenbrink, “Muslim-Christian Relations in the Pancasila State of Indonesia,” \textit{The Muslim World} (USA), vol. LXXXVIII, no. 3–4 (July–October), 1998, p. 325; TAPOL, \textit{Indonesia: Muslims on Trial}, 1987, p. 5.}

Moreover, the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union; SI) also was one of the earliest Islamic organizations to be established in Indonesia in modern times. In fact, SI was the first organization to gain mass following in Indonesia. It adopted an ideology firmly based on modernist or reformist Islamic ideas and principles. While Muhammadiyah was a purely religious movement, SI was concerned with, in addition to Islamic issues, economic and, later, political matters. It was first founded in 1911 by Hajji Samanhudi as an anti-Chinese trader’s organization under the name Sarekat Dagang Islam (Islamic Trade Union), with the primary aim of protecting the interests of Indonesian Muslim
traders against the Chinese who were privileged by the Dutch colonial government.\textsuperscript{39} In 1912, under the leadership of Tjokroaminoto, the organization adopted the name Sarekat Islam with the objectives of “the promotion of commercial enterprise…the organization of mutual economic support…the promotion of the intellectual material well-being of the Indonesians…and…the promotion of Islam”.\textsuperscript{40} By 1919, with very rapid growth, SI claimed a membership of two million people throughout the islands.\textsuperscript{41} Although SI declared that it had no intention of engaging in any anti-government activities, the colonial government did not trust the organization and refused to recognize it at national level, recognizing only the local branches as independent units. However, as soon as it secured the support of the rural masses, the \textit{santri} (pious) Muslims and the lower \textit{priyayi} (aristocratic class of Javanese) classes, SI started to engage in political activities, demanding administrative reforms. Initially, the Dutch took a conciliatory stance and, in 1916, established the Volksraad (People’s Council), in which selected representatives of major population groups could deliberate and offer advice to the government.

SI was the first important vehicle for the anti-colonial nationalist movement. The symbol of Islam in the organization’s name reflected the sense of self-consciousness and the awareness of a collective Indonesian national Identity and unity. This collective identity was to be confirmed by the shared will to resist the outsider: the ‘other’ or the non-Muslim Chinese and Dutch. In other words, “to be Muslim was to be Indonesian”,\textsuperscript{42} or “Indonesians are Muslims, Chinese and Dutch are not”.\textsuperscript{43} Christians, likewise, were associated with the Christian Dutch coloniser who privileged the Christian population in many ways. In 1938, for example, Christian schools, Protestant and Catholic, received almost one million guilders in government subsidies, whereas Muslim native schools received only 7,500.\textsuperscript{44} Considering the fact that about ninety per cent of Indonesians were Muslims, and that the government’s money was mostly raised

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 350.
\textsuperscript{41} C. M. Ricklefs, \textit{A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300}, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{42} John D. Legge, \textit{Indonesia}, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{43} C. M. Ricklefs, \textit{A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300}, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{44} Ailsa G. Thomson Zainu’ddin, \textit{A Short History of Indonesia}, p. 175.
from taxing Indonesian Muslims, one can imagine the amount of anger and discontent such discriminatory policies could cause.

Furthermore, SI tried to appeal to Indonesian Muslims from all walks of life by combining Islamic principles with modern European ideologies, such as liberalism and socialism. Although this enabled the SI to gain the support of people from different backgrounds and strata of society, including modernist and traditional Muslims, socialists and liberals, it nonetheless created a tug of war within the organization itself. The socialist members, for instance, constantly tried to pressure the leadership of SI to take a more radical line, demanding the adoption of “a radical and revolutionary program for the overthrow of Dutch rule and the establishment of a socialist state”.\(^45\) As the moderate members of the party were increasingly alienated, the socialists of Semarang grew rapidly and started to oppose parliamentary action and attack the leadership of the Central Sarekat Islam for cooperating and participating with the Volksraad, which possessed only advisory powers.\(^46\) However, the leadership of the party, which was still controlled by Tjokroaminoto and Salim, who tended to be cautious, did not respond to the demands of the Semarang socialists and refused to use the terms “socialism” and “revolution”, insisting on using “moral violence” and “passive resistance”.\(^47\)

In 1920 SI started to suffer a rapid decline. Dissatisfied with Tjokroaminoto’s mild ideology and cautious policies, the socialists founded the Partai Kommunis Indonesia (PKI).\(^48\) On the other hand, Muhammadiyah members accused the party of ignoring Islamic principles, while secular nationalists claimed that the party was neglecting national issues and not fighting hard enough for independence.\(^49\) After joining the Comintern (international communist movement) in 1920, the PKI created a suspicion that the socialists were anti-religion. Therefore, SI introduced “party discipline”, forcing the socialists to choose between SI and PKI while granting exceptions to


\(^{48}\) C. M. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300*, p. 158.

Muhammadiyah members. As a result, the party suffered its first split and many of its members, especially the members of the Semarang branch, preferred to stay with the PKI.

As it lost its socialist members, PI (renamed in 1921 the Partai Sarekat Islam or PSI) started to take a more Islamic line. Trying to unite all Muslim organizations and regain the support of the masses, PSI organized the first Kongres Al-Islam Hindia (All-Indies Islamic Congress) in 1922, to which representatives of Muslim organizations were invited. Muhammadiyah was the major organization taking part beside the PSI. Hajji Abdul Wahab Chasbullah of Surabaya and kiai Asnawi of Kudus were among a number of ulama that represented unorganized traditionalist Muslims. The first All-Indies Islamic Congress discussed many religious questions, especially the conflict between reformist and traditionalist currents. The reformists were accused of dividing the ummah by subverting the four traditional madhabs (Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, and Shafi’i) and of arrogating themselves the authority to interpret the Shari’ah. The reformists, on the other hand, claimed that the backwardness of the Muslim world was the result of the widespread adherence to medieval madhabs advocated by the traditionalists. Although they agreed to acknowledge both reformist ijtihad and traditional madhabs, conflicts between these two groups continued to rise in the following All-Indies Islamic Congresses. For example, the question of re-establishing an Islamic Caliphate, after the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate by Mustafa Kamal of Turkey in 1924, and the efforts of the two Arabian rivals, Sharif Husain and Ibn Sa’ud, to re-establish a new Caliphate also divided traditionalist and reformist Muslims.

The decline of the PSI continued through the 1920s and 1930s. As a result of the modernist–traditionalist conflicts, Hajji Abdul Wahab and other traditionalist ulama founded (in 1926) the Islamic movement of Nahdlatul Ulama (Renaissance of Islamic Scholars or NU), which became the largest Indonesian Muslim organization. This was a

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51 Ailsa G. Thomson Zainu’ddin, A Short History of Indonesia, p. 188; H. M. B. Vlekke, Nusantara: A History of Indonesia, p. 368–369.
52 See chapter four for more details.
major setback for the PSI because many of its traditionalist members joined the new organization. On the other hand, the nationalist members of the PSI were far from satisfied with its involvement in what they considered as wasteful supra-national issues at the expense of the very important national problems, such as independence and national unity. Therefore, in 1927 they joined the newly founded Partai National Indonesia (PNI), which was the first secular nationalist movement to advocate boldly the establishment of an independent Indonesian nation-state as its ultimate objective.\(^{54}\)

Furthermore, in 1929, the PSI decided to give up its emphasis on pan-Islamism in favour of Indonesian Islamic nationalism adopting the name Patai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII). It also implemented “party discipline” against Muhammadiyah members who, like the traditionalists of Nahdlatul Ulama, turned away from politics to concentrate more on religious, educational and social concerns.\(^{55}\)

The question of cooperation and non-cooperation with the colonial government as well as the conflict between secular and Islamic nationalism were the most important issues over which Indonesian political forces were divided. Therefore, the efforts to unite all Indonesian national movements under the Association of Political Organizations of the Indonesian People (PPPKI), which was founded in 1928, also failed. In 1931 PSII withdrew from the organization, after intense debates between leaders of PSII and PNI, within PPPKI.\(^{56}\) As the division of the Islamic groups hindered the PSII’s efforts to concentrate on resisting colonialism and fighting for independence, the secular nationalists began to take the lead in the struggle for the establishment of an Indonesian independent nation-state. PSII tried to regain its influence by organizing “Insular Congresses” and a “Pan-Indonesia Congress”, but this was not possible after alienating “the support of the rural kiyai and ulama” and losing the urban-based Muhammadiyah.\(^{57}\)


7.3. Independence and the Formation of the Nation-State

In 1942, during World War II (1939-1945), Indonesia fell under the control of the Japanese. Within three and a half years of Japanese occupation, the nature of Indonesian politics changed dramatically. Both nationalist and Islamic organizations cooperated with the Japanese, who promised to grant full independence to Indonesia. The Japanese not only allowed the establishment of Indonesian military bodies, but they also provided them with military training. While the nationalists established the Volunteer Army of Defenders of the Homeland, Muslim organizations that merged under the umbrella organization Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia (Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims or Masyumi) formed their military wing Hizbullah (the Party of God). These organizations were the main forces that led the War of Independence (1945-1949) against the Dutch, who were determined to re-occupy the country after the surrender of the Japanese and the subsequent declaration of Indonesian independence in 1945.58 Initially, Masyumi’s support and leadership were mainly drawn from Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, with Kyai Hajji Muhammad Hashim Ash’ari, the head of NU, its first leader.59 This Islamic unity eventually changed as, with the withdrawal of NU in 1952, Masyumi became primarily a representative of the modernist Islamic trend.

The ideological struggle between the secular nationalist and Islamic forces intensified during the discussions within the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence (Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia-BPUKI) authorized by the Japanese in March 1945.60 The secular and Islamic groups were divided over the question of the national identity and ideological basis of the state, especially with regard to the legal status of Islam in the state. Whereas the Islamic leaders insisted on an Islamic identity for the new, overwhelmingly Muslim populated state, the nationalist leader Sukarno, concerned about the Christian minority of the “outer islands who threatened to leave the…republic”, proposed his concept of Pancasila as a compromise formula of a culturally neutral identity, which overarched

58 Ailsa G. Thomson Zainu’ddin, A Short History of Indonesia, pp. 212–216.
the vast cultural differences of the heterogeneous population. The five principles of *Pancasila* include: (1) nationalism manifested in the unity of Indonesia (*kebangsaan*); (2) humanism or internationalism (*peri-kemanusiaan*); (3) deliberative democracy (*mufakat* or *democrasi*); (4) social justice or well-being (*kesejahteraan sosial*); and (5) belief in God (*ketuhanan*). Since these principles did not include any reference to the status of Islam or the Muslim majority in the state, Muslim leaders were not satisfied. The dispute was resolved when they reached an agreement called the Jakarta Charter, under which Muslim leaders accepted a pluralist republic in return for the condition that the state would be based upon the belief in one God, “with the obligation of those who profess the Islamic faith to abide by the Islamic laws”.

However, as the secular nationalist leaders were favoured by the Japanese and, thus, given political and administrative advantages over the Muslim leaders, they managed to manipulate the BPUKI and, later, the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence (*Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* or PPKI). Consequently, the secular and other Christian members of the PPKI pressed for a more secular constitution and reconsidered the endorsement of the Jakarta Charter and the position of Islam in the state. Therefore, after the election of Sukarno and Hatta as President and Vice-President respectively, the reference to the Jakarta Charter was omitted from the preamble of the constitution, which was adopted one day after the proclamation of independence announced by Sukarno in August 17, 1945, about one week after the surrender of Japan.

After the fall of the Japanese, however, the Dutch reoccupied the country. It took almost four and a half years of armed struggle and negotiations – until December 27, 1949 –

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63 TAPOL, *Indonesia: Muslims on Trial*, pp. 1–2.


for Indonesians to achieve full sovereignty with international recognition. Initially, the Dutch handed over sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (RUSI), established after an agreement was reached with the Dutch at a round table conference held at The Hague. The federation of the RUSI, comprised of the Republic of Indonesia and other fifteen Dutch-created states, was soon transformed into a unitary state. On August 17, 1950 a new provisional constitution was adopted, upon which the Republic of Indonesia was established. The question of the Jakarta Charter, which was not reinstated or resolved, and the ‘formalization’ of the status of Islam set the agenda for the future of Islamic politics and democracy in Indonesia. It caused formidable conflicts between the nationalist governments and the Islamic groups who felt betrayed by the secular nationalist leaders and sought to reinstate the Jakarta Charter by democratic means or parliamentary decision.

7.4. Sukarno’s ‘Guided Democracy’

Whereas the first half of the twentieth century was characterized by the rise of national consciousness, which inspired the ‘revolution’ or the war of independence and culminated in the formation of the nation-state, the second half of the century was to be identified more with the struggle for national unity and democracy. After the demise of colonialism, which brought various groups together for the common goal of independence, Indonesians were left with a very fragile notional unity. This condition proved not to be very favourable for the establishment and consolidation of a democratic form of government. On the one hand, the long experience with Western colonialism led to the association of capitalist exploitation with liberalism and fostered strong communal and traditional hierarchical relations. On the other, pro-democracy political elites and voices of equality, basic rights and political freedoms and participation were neither absent nor weak. In fact, the main political parties, including the then most influential Islamic party, Masyumi, adopted democratic platforms and

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agendas. Indonesia’s political elites, and even “the ordinary people, were willing to accept a pluralistic society”.

Although from the outset President Sukarno demonstrated his distaste for pluralism and tried to establish a single-party system, pro-democracy leaders initially managed to allow the development of a multi-party pluralist system. Therefore, from independence and through most of the 1950s, the leaders of the newly independent republic were determined and able to establish parliamentary democracy. This remained the case as long as Sukarno and his supporters remained weaker than the political parties. However, once Sukarno became powerful enough through the support of the army and other radical nationalists and communists, these efforts were virtually aborted. Sukarno was able to replace the democratic constitution of the 1950 with the old constitution of 1945, which put strong executive powers in the president’s hand. This enabled Sukarno to dissolve the Constituent Assembly in 1959 and legitimize his concept of Demokrasi Terpimpin (Guided Democracy) in order to complete the perceived goal of the ‘revolution’.

From the declaration of independence in 1945 until 1955, when the first parliamentary elections were held, the Indonesian political system was based on a multi-party non-elected parliament. The 236 members of the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (People’s Representative Council or DPR) were basically chosen from the political parties and appointed to act as a provisional parliament until elections could be conducted. Initially, Masyumi emerged as the single most influential party and, thus, was given 49 seats in the DPR. This was the highest number a single party held in parliament. The other three most influential parties were the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), the Partai Nahdlatul Ulama (after 1952) and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). During this period until the introduction of Sukarno’s Guided Democracy in 1959, the main

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68 Ingrid Wessel (ed.), Democratisation in Indonesia after the Fall of Suharto, p. 8.
71 A conflict over the distribution of positions between traditionalist and modernist members resulted, in 1952, in the disaffiliation of the traditionalist NU from Masyumi and its proclamation as an independent political party, see Herbert Feith, The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962, pp. 235–236; TAPOL, Indonesia: Muslims on Trial, p. 6; Martin van Bruinessen, “Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia,” p. 119.
Indonesian political streams, all of which (with the exception of communism) continue to exist and dominate the political scene today, were reflected in the ideologies and platforms of the political parties. They included, as Herbert Feith and Lance Castles report, radical nationalism, Islam (traditionalist and modernist), communism, democratic socialism and Javanese traditionalism; the latter two were not represented by any of the four largest political parties, though they influenced most of them.\(^\text{72}\) While democratic socialism influenced Masyumi and the PNI, Javanese traditionalism influenced the three parties that formed the government coalition under Guided Democracy, the PKI, the PNI and NU.\(^\text{73}\)

Indonesian political elites predicted that any national elections would produce an absolute majority for the Islamic group, especially before 1952 when Masyumi combined modernist and traditionalist Muslims and performed very well in some regional elections. Therefore, nationalist and other secular parties continued to obstruct or delay the conduct of the general elections until September 1955.\(^\text{74}\) The results of the 1955 elections, however, did not produce a parliamentary majority that would enable any of the contesting parties to form a stable government. Despite the fact that Islamic parties, including Masyumi, NU and the PSII, managed to double the number of their seats in the parliament, winning 114 out of 257 (43.5 per cent of the total vote), they failed to control the majority as predicted earlier. The four largest parties, Masyumi, the PNI, the PKI and NU, were sharply divided along ideological and social lines. Hence, with these parties controlling nearly 80 per cent of the parliament’s seats, political polarization and conflicts continued to destabilize the political system so that chaos remained the predominant characteristic of the parliamentary democracy period. During this period, governments rose and fell rapidly as, within seven years, seven cabinets were formed, with Masyumi playing a leading role in most of these coalition governments.\(^\text{75}\)

The Islamic and secular nationalist groups within the Constituent Assembly became more polarized, sharply divided and mutually exclusive as they discussed the formal


\(^{73}\) Ibid., pp. 13–14.


\(^{75}\) TAPOL, *Indonesia: Muslims on Trial*, p. 6.
status of Islam and ideological basis of the state, especially in their efforts to draft a new permanent constitution between 1956 and 1959. Both groups appeared by and large exclusionist and took an antagonistic stance in this ideological debate. Secular nationalists and other Christians, for instance, insisted that Pancasila, rather than Islam, must be adopted as the ideological basis of the state, because it presented a basis for national synthesis acceptable to different religious groups. For the Islamic group, however, Pancasila represented a secular and obscure ideology alien to the Muslim community, which constituted the overwhelming majority of the Indonesian population. Hence they argued that, as Islam provided a comprehensive ideology and source of inspiration for the Indonesian people, it must be adopted as the ideological basis of the state.\textsuperscript{76} As a two-thirds majority vote in the Constituent Assembly was necessary to pass a resolution, which was not possible considering the results of the 1955 elections, the political conflict appeared to be heading towards an inevitable stalemate. This demonstrates clearly that Indonesians were far from reaching a minimal consensus on the basis of the state. At the same time, it also shows that Pancasila was not regarded by the Indonesian society, or at least by a substantial community represented by Islamic groups, as a symbol of national unity. Rather, for the Islamic groups, Pancasila “became anti-Moslem property”.\textsuperscript{77}

Since the contesting parties were committed to democratic means, there is no evidence that this ideology-oriented political disagreement obstructed the day-to-day running of the state or posed a serious threat to national security and unity. However, President Sukarno did not wait for the conflict to be resolved democratically. From the outset of the discussions about the permanent constitution, Sukarno began to prepare and look for the appropriate moment for the implementation of his revolutionary vision of Indonesia’s political future. Therefore, as early as 1956, Sukarno was already launching his fierce attacks on the political parties and parliamentary system, seeking to undermine their legitimacy in the eyes of the military and the general public. This was evident in two of his 1956 speeches. The first was delivered in a meeting of youth delegates from the political parties on October 28, while the other was presented at a

\textsuperscript{76} Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (eds.), \textit{Indonesian Political Thinking: 1945–1965}, p. 219.

congress of the teachers’ union two days later. In these speeches, Sukarno denigrated the parties as corrupt, self-serving and a disruptive “disease” which was “worse than ethnic and regional feeling”. He, moreover, argued that in order for Indonesia to come out of its instability and demoralization, all political parties must be buried and transformed “into a unity of revolutionary forces”. He also proposed his concept of “Guided Democracy”, asserting that he did “not want to become a dictator” and that he was “really a democrat”. A few months later in February 1957, Sukarno questioned the efficiency and suitability of the parliamentary democracy system for the Indonesian society. He insisted that this was “an imported democracy…not Indonesian” and “not in harmony with the soul of the Indonesian nation”, claiming that it was the source of instability and all other “excesses”. Alternatively, Sukarno proposed the formation of a Gotong Royong (Mutual Support and Assistance) cabinet which “should include all political parties” and a “National Council” which, in his words, “should include representatives of or people from functional groups in our society…[a]nd, God willing, I myself will lead this National Council”.

Within two months, in May 1957, Sukarno was already busy implementing his policy of transforming the parliamentary democracy system into a presidential “Guided Democracy” system. He started by forming a National Council, under his chairmanship, with its objective of offering policy advice to the cabinet “whether such advice is requested or not”. By July 1959, Sukarno had signed a decree ending the parliamentary system with the effects of dissolving the Constituent Assembly and reinstating the 1945 Constitution. This was clearly in contrast to his 1956 and 1957 speeches where he asserted that he had no intention of violating “the position of the parliament…the product of elections in which all Indonesians” took part, or of transforming the system into a dictatorship. In 1960, he completed the implementation of his vision of Guided Democracy by dissolving the elected DPR and restricting the

79 Ibid., p. 32.
80 Ibid., p. 84.
81 Ibid., pp. 85–87.
84 Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (eds.), Indonesian Political Thinking: 1945–1965, pp. 82; 85.
number and activities of the political parties, completely eliminating and banning those that were determined to defy him and oppose his adjustments and policies, such as the Masyumi and the PSI. Sukarno’s fierce action against Masyumi and the PSI was also justified, especially for the army leadership, by the complicity of some of their leaders in the PRRI rebellions of South Sulawesi and Sumatra.

The most influential groups under Guided Democracy were the president, with his nationalist supporters, the army and the PKI. In order to establish himself as the centre of political power and maintain absolute control over the state, Sukarno sought to provide the institutional and ideological bases of his Guided Democracy system and find a balance between the antagonists of the powerful right wing of the military and the communist party. He emphasized the doctrine of Nasakom (nationalism, religion and communism) and introduced its “ideological counterpart” based on the idea of “returning to the rails of the revolution” and overthrowing liberalism which “had disastrous consequences” for the instruments of the revolution and the state. Although Sukarno did not entirely eliminate all political parties, he was eager to deprive them of any capacity or “right to control major policy decisions”. As they were forced to adopt and carry out “the Program of the Revolution”, the parties’ influence and effectiveness was considerably weakened and the final vestiges of political opposition were virtually eliminated. The Muslim traditionalist NU, taking a pragmatic stance, was still allowed to participate in the system, though ineffectively, as a primary representative of religion in the Nasakom coalition.

Sukarno’s Guided Democracy not only demolished the then fledgling democratic process, but also it failed to provide social and political stability to the young

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85 Robert W. Hefner, Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia, 2000, p. 44.  
independent state. Instead of establishing a stabilizing balance between the military and
the communists, Sukarno’s complex policies escalated the tension and increased the
hostility and polarization between these desperately competing powers. With its ability
to mobilize and gain the support of the peasantry, especially in many parts of Java, the
PKI added a class conflict to the already existing political tension. This further
complicated the conflict as many land owners of the NU were drawn towards the
military-led anti-communist camp. The situation culminated in the 1965 attempted coup
and the subsequent massacres that claimed over 500,000 lives, mostly communist
members and sympathizers. 91 This tragic event started in the early morning of the first
of October, 1965. A group of young leftist troops from the Presidential Guards, led by
Lt. Colonel Untung, allegedly accompanied by members of the PKI’s youth
organization, kidnapped and killed six senior military officers. After occupying some
important sites in Jakarta, the group declared that they had seized power. 92 This paved
the way for General Suharto, after aborting the coup within 24 hours, to take control and
move swiftly against the communist party. 93 By early 1966 the communist party was
destroyed and Suharto effectively became the supreme political leader of Indonesia. He
skillfully seized power and established his authoritarian New Order regime, retaining
absolute control over the country until 1998.

7.5. The Authoritarian Structure of Suharto’s New Order Regime

After taking power, Suharto immediately began restructuring the political system and
establishing a more politically stable, absolutist regime. Therefore, he, with the help of
other army generals, set out to complete the unfinished business of Guided Democracy.
This entailed the complete destruction of democratic institutions through the
emasculating of political parties and the consolidation of the state’s dominance over all

Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia,
92 There is insufficient evidence about what exactly happened during the event or who was behind it.
While some researchers argue that the Untung group eliminated the military officers in an attempt to
abort a planned coup, others maintain that Untung moved against them because they organized a Council
of Generals to seize power after Sukarno’s death, see Damien Kingsbury, The Politics of Indonesia,
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 49; Raj Vasil, Governing Indonesia: The Development of
Indonesian Democracy.
93 William Liddle, “Media Dakwah Scripturalism: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in
New Order Indonesia,” p. 336.
spheres of society. To this end, Suharto unswervingly strengthened the role of the ABRI (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia or Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia) and the government bureaucracy in political life, restricted the number of political parties and, especially in his efforts to depoliticize Islamic organizations, forced all political and social organizations to adopt Pancasila as their sole ideological basis (*azas tunggal*).\(^9^4\) Military and security committees were established for the purpose of screening and scrutinizing political candidates running for state-controlled elections. Associational autonomy and freedom of speech, the press and organization were largely curtailed.\(^9^5\)

7.5.1. Emasculation of Political Parties and Electoral Manipulation

Through his skilful restructuring strategies and interventions in internal party policies, Suharto effectively managed to dismantle and tightly control political parties. Besides the banning of the communist PKI, the Masyumi party was never allowed to be re-established throughout the New Order era, though its leaders were eventually released from prison. Thus, from the beginning, Suharto and his fellow generals were able to rid themselves of the two most socially rooted political parties that had the potential to pose a serious threat to their authoritarian regime or limit its ability to have absolute control over the country. As early as 1966, and contrary to all expectations, the regime diminished all hopes for Masyumi’s rehabilitation or the return to the 1950s parliamentary system. The regime was unequivocal in affirming its commitment to the 1945 constitution and the protection of Pancasila. It made it clear that any deviation “from *Pantja Sila* and the 1945 constitution as which has already been done by the Communist Party Revolt in Madium, *Gestapu*, Darul Islam/Islamic Army of Indonesia and Masyumi” will not be tolerated by the military.\(^9^6\)

The New Order regime was determined to exclude the modernist Muslim Masyumi party and its leaders, who proved to be highly influential political actors, from the


\(^9^5\) Ingrid Wessel (ed.), *Democratisation in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto*, p. 9.

political process. This was one part of its efforts to eliminate any potentially viable opposition forces. Therefore, in order for a modernist Muslim political party to be approved, the regime insisted that it must exclude former Masyumi leaders from its leadership ranks. As such, only when the ‘acceptable’ leadership of Muhammadiyah’s Djarnawi Hadikusumo and Lukman Harun was agreed upon in February 1968, was the formation of the Partai Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslims’ Party or Parmusi) finally approved by the regime. The imposition of this condition was meant to deprive the party of Masyumi’s strong social base. When Parmusi elected the prominent ex-Masyumi leader and former Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Roem as chairman in its first congress held in November 1968, the decision was rejected by the regime. Later, in 1969, in “an internal but government-backed ‘coup’”, Jaelani Naro, who was known to be close to Ali Murtopo (a military officer and close adviser to Suharto), managed to take control of the party. In 1971, Suharto intervened and appointed Mintaredja as chairman of the party. Furthermore, when Parmusi activists turned to the highly respected ex-Masyumi leaders to garner public support prior to the first New Order elections held in 1971, almost 75 per cent of the party’s candidates failed to pass the screening process implemented by the regime. These candidates were regarded as Masyumi loyalists and thus rejected as disloyal to the regime. Consequently, only “the accommodationist rump of the old Masyumi party” was allowed to take leadership roles in the new modernist party.

Purged of its Masyumi identity, Parmusi was effectively deprived of any access to the mass base it hoped to represent. Former and highly respected Masyumi leaders, prohibited from any involvement in party politics, decided to concentrate on missionary activism and founded its da’wah council, the Indonesian Council for Islamic

99 In order to ensure that critics of Suharto family’s business did not get access to the parliament, the New Order authorized the Directorate General of Social Politics of the Ministry of Home Affairs to subject all candidates to a screening process known as litsus, see William, R. Liddle, “Regime: The New Order,” in Donald K. Emerson, Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Policy, Economy, Society, transition, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999.
101 TAPOL, Indonesia: Muslims on Trial, p. 8.
Propagation (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia or DDII) under the leadership of Mohammad Natsir.\textsuperscript{102} Muhammadiyah also was dissatisfied with the blatant manipulation of Parmusi by the regime. Therefore it withdrew its support from the party and rejected its “claim to be the heir to their old party” Masyumi.\textsuperscript{103} As a result, Parmusi was effectively cut from its social base and, hence, performed poorly at the 1971 state-controlled elections, receiving only 5.4 per cent of the national vote (down from the 20.9 per cent of Masyumi’s share in the 1955 elections).\textsuperscript{104} Although NU maintained its presence in parliament, winning 18.67 per cent of the vote (in 1955 18.4 per cent), with the military-backed Golkar (Functional Groups) controlling 62.8 per cent, the role of the political parties in government was rendered effectively trivial (see tables 3 and 4).

In 1973, Suharto introduced further measures for the emasculation of political parties. He forced the nine existing political parties to merge into two coalition blocs. With this drastic step, Islamic political expression was restricted to a single government-approved party since the four Islamic political parties, NU, Parmusi (renamed Indonesian Muslims; MI), PSII and Perti (Association of Islamic Education), had to merge under the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party or PPP). Rather than strengthening the PPP, the intention was to keep it weak by creating constant internal divisions among its constituent parts. Initially, NU, with its 62 seats in parliament, became the predominant element in the PPP. While NU’s chairman, Idham Chalid, took on the presidency of the PPP, Parmusi’s Mintaredja became the chairman. The conflict between traditionalist and modernist elements continued within the PPP, culminating in

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\textsuperscript{103} Sidney Jones, “The Contraction and Expansion of the ‘Umat’ and the Role of the Nahdatul Ulama in Indonesia,” p. 10.

\textsuperscript{104} According to the election law passed in November 1969, the parliament (DPR) consists of 360 elected members and 100 appointed members, while the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR) incorporates the whole membership of DPR in addition to 207 military and functional group members appointed by the president, 131 members elected by provincial government and 10 members appointed from the less successful parties. Accordingly, 22 per cent of the parliament and 33 percent of the Assembly were appointed by the government. However, the percentage of the appointed members of the DPR and MPR varied throughout the New Order. For example, the MPR consisted of 60 per cent nominated representatives, while only 40 per cent of representatives were chosen through elections. For the DPR, however, 20 per cent of the members were appointed. As the MPR had the power to select the president, Suharto maintained a firm grip on it.
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1984 with the withdrawal of NU from the PPP and from politics in general.\textsuperscript{105} On the other hand, the other five parties (three secular nationalist and two Christian) had to merge under the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI, Indonesia’s Democratic Party). Golkar, however, was not subjected to these reconstruction measures. In fact, the government did not consider Golkar as a political party. It preferred to call it an “election-participating organization”, arguing that, while political parties represented certain sections of society and were divisive, “Golkar represented the interests of the whole nation and was, therefore, unifying”.\textsuperscript{106}

The government’s political machine, Golkar, was not only exempted from the merger, but it was also given many other advantages over political parties. In addition to the measures that insured constant internal rifts within political parties, many sections and members of the bureaucracy, such as “ABRI members, all civilian employees of the Defense Ministry, Judges and Public Prosecutors…” as well as other public servants were prohibited from joining political parties.\textsuperscript{107} The New Order used corporatism as a means for creating “a façade of ‘representational’ organizations” in which government employees were obliged to observe ‘monoloyalty’ towards the government and pressured to join or support Golkar.\textsuperscript{108} Retired military officers also provided an important source of leadership corps at national, provincial and local levels.\textsuperscript{109} As such, Golkar was used by the regime as a vehicle for establishing a military-bureaucratic political organization to maintain its power and consolidate its control over the nation.

Moreover, whereas political parties were prohibited from organizing below the regency level and from attempting to attract the population outside the periods of election campaigns, Golkar benefited from the military’s territorial command structure, which was used to promote and enhance Golkar’s image and garner popular support by various means, especially in relation to containing and co-opting Muslims. By having access to government funds, particularly Suharto’s presidential assistance funds, Golkar was able to send civil servants to Mecca for Hajj, co-opt many of the ulama, offer funds for

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[106] Ibid., p. 41.
\item[108] Ingrid Wessel (ed.), *Democratisation in Indonesia after the Fall of Suharto*, pp. 8–9; Kenneth E. Ward, *The 1971 Elections in Indonesia: An East Java Case Study*, pp. 11–12.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
mosques and *pesantren* and create “its own Muslim platform” GUPPI (Federation for the Improvement of Islamic Education). In addition, local army officers sought to establish cordial relations with local Muslims by offering donations for the construction of new mosques. Consequently, it was not difficult for Golkar to secure a confident majority vote for Suharto’s regime in all elections throughout the New Order era, when its share of the national vote ranged from 62.8 per cent to 74.5 per cent (see table 4).

7.5.2. Anti-Pluralist *Pancasila-ization* and Suppression of Islamic Activism

Despite the merger of the parties and all other emasculating measures, PPP was not yet completely driven to the margin of Indonesian politics, especially after its fairly good progress at the 1977 elections where it received 29.3 per cent of the national vote. Therefore, Suharto sought further interventions and restrictions on Islamic politics. With its unambiguous Islamic identity and established mass base, PPP provided a competitive ideological alternative to the state ideology of *Pancasila* and a viable opposition to the New Order regime. Suharto realized that the only way to sideline the PPP was to deprive it of its appealing identity and isolate it from its mass base. Therefore, he embarked on a comprehensive program aimed at the promotion of the ‘*Pancasila-ization*’ of society and the de-politicization of Islam and Islamic organizations. Simultaneously, he sought to exacerbate internal rifts between traditionalist and modernist camps within the PPP.

The ‘*Pancasila-ization*’ program started in 1978 with the regime’s “massive campaign to socialize Pancasila” through the inculcation of its ideology in all sectors of society. This involved the inclusion of *Pancasila* in the educational curriculum and the introduction of what was known as the P4 courses (*Pedoman, Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* – Guidance to the Comprehension and Implementation of Pancasila). Under this program, students, civil servants, professionals and the masses at large were to be subjected to indoctrination courses in *Pancasila* principles. The P4 program was designed as two-week courses that focussed on *Pancasila*, the 1945 Constitution, and the state policy on the national development, encompassing all aspects of social and political life. It was basically meant to develop national cohesiveness and

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‘consensus’ regarding the state ideology of *Pancasila* to the exclusion of alternatives. Therefore, it discouraged any pluralistic expressions and critical discussions about *Pancasila*, the principles of which, as prescribed by Suharto’s regime, defined the “arena of permissible political activity”. The program was approved by a decree of the MPR on 22 March, 1978. However, the PPP, particularly its NU members, opposed the decree and walked out of the MPR in protest. Later, in March 1980, Suharto questioned the commitment of some unnamed groups (in reference to the PPP) to the national ‘consensus’ on *Pancasila* and warned that these groups were “seeking to change Pancasila”. Suharto by then was preparing for his attack to eliminate the final vestige of any ideological rivals to *Pancasila*, especially with regard to Islamic political expression. NU’s frustration with Suharto’s policies became obvious with its explicit refusal “to endorse Suharto for a third term or confer on him the title of ‘Father of Development’” at its 1981 national conference.

With NU remaining by far the strongest element within the PPP and displaying a strong potential for united action, Suharto realized that further intervention in PPP’s internal politics was required in order to sideline NU’s influence, if not divide NU itself. Accordingly, on October 27, 1981, Jaelani Naro, who was regarded by many respected ex-Masyumi leaders such as Natsir and Roem “as a government lackey”, manipulatively restructured PPP’s list of candidates for the 1982 elections. The list excluded most of NU’s parliamentarians, who were known as government critics, and relocated seven of NU’s seats to MI, so that NU no longer held the majority of the PPP’s seats in parliament. NU leaders were, as a result, split into two camps. The first group favoured the withdrawal of NU from the PPP and politics entirely. This group included Abdurrachman Wahid and other *kiai* (traditional Muslim religious leaders or teachers) associated with the *pesantren*-based community. The second group preferred to maintain NU’s involvement in the PPP and politics. This group mostly consisted of

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those who held political positions in the PPP, such as Idham Chalid, who was even suspected of his involvement in the “complicity in the candidate list manoeuvring”.\textsuperscript{115} It was suspected that Idham Chalid “sent a list of his protégés to MI leaders” prior to Naro’s decision since “all of the dropped candidates” were known for “their enmity towards” Chalid. As NU leaders could not reverse Naro’s decision, they initially threatened to withdraw from the PPP. Although the PPP’s share of the vote in the 1982 elections dropped only slightly (down to 27.78 per cent), with most opposition members of NU driven out of parliament, Suharto managed to undermine its ability to take any collective and independent political action.

Nevertheless, Suharto’s plan to suppress Islamic political expression was not yet complete, particularly with regard to the ideological dimension of his campaign. As the new political environment in parliament had become favourable, Suharto decided to launch his final attack to eliminate all ideological alternatives to \textit{Pancasila}. At this stage, he first declared his intention to enforce \textit{Pancasila} principles as \textit{azas tunggal} (sole basis), not only for political parties, but also for social organizations, including Muslim organizations. On 16 August, 1982, Suharto asserted in his address to the DPR that “[a]ll social and political forces have to assert that their sole ideological basis is \textit{Pancasila}”.\textsuperscript{116} In 1983, the sole basis law was passed by the MPR. This was followed, in 1985, with another law enforcing the use of \textit{Pancasila} symbols. The PPP complied with the laws, declaring \textit{Pancasila} as its sole foundation and replacing its Islamic symbol of the Ka’bah with one star (the symbol of \textit{Pancasila} includes five stars), in 1984 and 1987 respectively.\textsuperscript{117}

In 1984, NU decided to withdraw from the PPP and return to its original approach of 1926 as a social and religious organization.\textsuperscript{118} It also complied with the \textit{azas tunggal} requirement, accepting \textit{Pancasila} as its sole basis. However, NU’s withdrawal from party politics did not represent a principled political stance. It was, rather, resentment


\textsuperscript{116} Bachtiar Effendy, \textit{Islam and the State in Indonesia}, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., pp. 50–51; Faisal Ismail, “Pancasila as the Sole Basis for All Political Parties and for All Mass Organizations: an Account of Muslims’ Responses,” p. 14.

toward and rejection of the handicapping restrictions of the New Order political structure. In 1992, Abdurrahman Wahid, for example, emphasized that “NU’s freedom of ‘political’ movement has been heightened outside the formal structure of New Order politics”.  

After the compliance of the political parties with the sole basis law, the regime sought to enforce this law on social organizations. To this end, the parliament passed two new laws in 1985 obligating all community organizations to include Pancasila as the sole basis in their constitutions. As a result, Muslim organizations either suffered a split, e.g. HMI (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam or Islamic University Students’ Association), or refused to comply with the government’s decision and preferred to go underground, e.g. PII (Pelajar Islam Indonesia or Indonesian Islamic Youth; formally associated with Masyumi). This, in fact, resulted in the proliferation of the halaqah or usrah (discussion/educational circles or cells; a strategy adopted from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement) groups and the rise of the tarbiyah (education/indoctrination) movement in university campuses in the 1980s, as will be discussed further. Consequently, the centre of Islamic political opposition and voices of dissent shifted from the formal political parties to a new form of informal and, in some cases, secretive Islamic missionary activism mostly based in university campuses. It was these informal actors, rather than the formal political parties, who later took a prominent part in the student-led reformasi (reform) movement, which culminated in the fall of Suharto’s New Order regime and the subsequent instigation of the Indonesian democratization process, as demonstrated in chapter eight. In addition, it was from these and other Islamic missionary movements and organizations that the post-Suharto, newly formed Islamic political parties were to draw their skillful leadership and membership support, as the investigation in chapter eight demonstrates.

7.6. From *Pancasila-ization* to Islamization: The Response of Islamic Actors and Suharto’s Return to Islam

Although Suharto’s policies of repression and manipulation managed to formally depoliticize Islamic organizations and emasculate Islamic political parties, they could not weaken or indefinitely marginalize the rooted socio-political strength of Islamic activism. Suharto’s policies, in fact, instigated various countervailing trends, resulting in the proliferation of new waves of heterogeneous Islamic missionary activism imbued with political implications. The most influential players within these trends were the *da’wah* (Islamic propagation) and *tarbiyah* (Islamic moral education) movements. The former started early in the 1960s and 1970s when Suharto prevented ex-Masyumi leaders from participating in party politics. The latter, which operated underground or with a low profile in and around university campuses, developed in the early 1980s and started to gain prominence later after the introduction of the *azas tunggal* law and its imposition on all social organizations, including Muslim students’ organizations.

7.6.1. *Da’wah* Islamic Activism

While they remained prohibited from taking any direct roles in the newly formed Islamic party Parmusi or from any involvement in party politics after their release from prison in the 1960s, former Masyumi leaders decided to devote their energy to missionary activism with the objective of Islamizing the Indonesian society and state from the ground up. To this end, the former Masyumi leader Mohammad Natsir, along with other senior members of Masyumi, founded the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation (DDII) in 1967. The DDII initially focussed on conducting and publishing religious speeches and sermons, but soon it began to air some fierce criticisms against the New Order regime. With Natsir’s extensive international connections, DDII managed to establish close relations with Saudi Arabia and quickly became the Indonesian representative of the Jiddah-based Muslim World League (*Rabitat al-’Alam al-Islami*).\(^{121}\)

The financial support received from the Muslim World League and some of its subsidiary agencies, such as the International Islamic Relief Organization, the Committee of Islamic Charity and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), as well as other private non-government charities such as the infamous charity of al-Haramein, enabled the DDII to carry out important social, educational and da’wah programs. These programs included the establishment of new Islamic schools, hospitals, orphanages and mosques, as well as the distribution of free copies of the Qur’an and other Islamic books. The DDII also sent students to study in the Middle East through scholarships funded by the Muslim World League.

Preoccupied with its primary concern of emasculating political parties and controlling Islamic political expression, the New Order did not object to the DDII’s propagation activities, at least initially. In fact, the New Order encouraged the promotion of personal piety and religious observance, affirming DDII’s exclusive da’wah mission. However, the regime remained sceptical towards ex-Masyumi leaders’ activities, keeping them under close observation. Hence, when the DDII started to criticize the New Order policies in 1974, the regime immediately banned its daily Abadi, sending a clear message of its uncompromising stance against all kinds of dissent. However, rather than effecting a total de-politicization of Islam, the New Order’s repression and restriction of Islamic political expression entailed the “removal of Muslim political activity from the vulnerable and by now pointless arena of party politics to the more salient one of broader social action”.

The DDII played an intermediary role in introducing the thoughts and ideas of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Jama’ati Islami of Pakistan to Indonesia. It started to spread and popularize these ideas through the translation and publication of influential texts, utilizing a network of Muslim preachers and mosques to make such material available to the public. The publications of the DDII included the writings of Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Egyptian MB movement, Mustafa al-Siba’i (whose book

122 In 1974, DDII carried out a systematic campus-based program, in which some of Indonesia’s best-known Muslim scholars and activists, most notably Amien Rais, participated, see ibid, p. 7.
123 Ibid.
124 Robert W. Hefner, Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia, p. 111.
Islamic Socialism was banned), the leader of the Syrian MB, and Abul A‘la al-Mawdudi, the founder of Pakistan’s JI. They also included some of the very influential works of the Egyptian and Syrian intellectuals Sayyid Qutb and Sa‘id Hawwa, respectively. These propagation activities were particularly inspiring for the younger generation, especially university students amongst whom the DDII expanded its influence through the implementation of a systematic project known as ‘Bina Masjid Kampus’. The project primarily involved the building of mosques and Islamic centres in places near university campuses, such as the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, Andalas University in Padang and Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta. The project also provided Islamic training and distributed its monthly journal Media Dakwa in campus mosques throughout the country. Consequently, as university campuses were one of the most important da‘wah targets for the DDII, Indonesian universities experienced the most rapid expansion of Islamic activism in Indonesia under the New Order.

7.6.2. The Emergence of the Tarbiyah Movement

In 1978, during the run-up to the presidential elections, students held rallies and protested against the re-election of President Suharto. Student council leaders at major public universities across the country also dared to criticize Suharto and issued statements calling for his replacement. Suharto later retaliated by banning all political activity on university campuses through the introduction of the Campus Normalization Act of 1978. He also eliminated all university student councils throughout the


country. As a result, students turned to mosques and Islamic centres at nearby universities. A plethora of new student groups gradually began to mushroom off campus. Imaduddin Abdu rahim, an activist of the Salman Mosque, for example, attracted the students of the Institut Teknologi Bandung (Bandung Institute of Technology, ITB) with his influential sermons inspired by the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood. Imaduddin owed his Brotherhood-inspired ideas and influence to Anwar Ibrahim’s Islamic student movement, ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia); he taught in Malaysia in the early 1970s. Imaduddin played an important role in the proliferation of halqa (study circle) activities in university campuses through the development of a program called Training of Da’wah Fighter (Latihan Mujahid Dakwah). This program provided Islamic courses with the aim of training new cadres capable of undertaking da’wah activities in university campuses. Eventually, study and discussion groups on many topics, both political and religious, developed in university campuses throughout Indonesia in the 1980s.

With the introduction of the azas tunggal law in the early 1980s, many Muslim leaders and preachers strongly rejected and criticized the president’s use of Pancasila as a tool to suppress political dissent. Muslim preachers often delivered sermons at mosques condemning the replacement of Islam with Pancasila. This sense of defiance and discontent culminated, in September 1984, in the Tanjung Priok massacre, which was one of the worst mass killings to occur in Indonesia under the New Order. According to some reports, troops armed with automatic rifles fired at the demonstration, which was provoked by the desecration of a mosque by local military personnel, killing and injuring hundreds of unarmed civilians. The scale of the massacre shocked many people. Members of what was known as the ‘Petition of Fifty’ group, for example,

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131 The ‘Petition of Fifty’ was issued by fifty signatories in 1980. It was directed to the parliament condemning the president’s use of Pancasila as a tool to suppress political dissent. The signatories included prominent Muslim leaders, former ministers, retired generals as well as representatives of various political inclinations. David Jenkins, *Suharto and His Generals: Indonesian Military Politics 1975–1983*, pp. 162–173.
called for an immediate investigation. The regime, however, responded oppressively, arresting hundreds of people. The brutality of the ‘Tanjung Priok’ massacre deterred public criticisms or demonstrations against the azas tunggal law and contributed to the compliance of most Muslim organizations with this law. Muslim organizations, such as HMI and PII, faced formidable internal conflict where they were required to give up Islam as their fundamental principle according to the new law. One faction of HMI, which suffered a split on this dilemma, decided to go underground and formed the Council to Safeguard HMI (Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi or MHI MPO). PII also went underground, refusing to comply with the laws and preferring dissolution rather than accept Pancasila as its sole basis.

The crack down led these underground organizations to adopt a new da’wah strategy in order to avoid surveillance. This resulted in the proliferation of the secretive halaqah and usrah (lit family; a strategy adopted from the Muslim Brotherhood movement) groups. This marked the beginning of a new form of Islamic activism and the rise of what has been recognized as the tarbiyah movement in Indonesia. According to this strategy, Members were encouraged to invite potential followers to attend small halaqahs organized separately in campus mosques. Those who displayed commitment and regularly attended their halaqah were then invited to attend the more secretive usrah organized in members’ houses. An instructor called murabbi (educator) led each halaqah or usrah and acted as a mentor for the members of the group, disciplining them and providing moral guidance and Islamic education. After acquiring the necessary knowledge and experience, every member was expected to become a murabbi and eventually form his own new halaqah or usrah. Emphasizing personal piety and discipline, these study circles relied, in the most part, on Muslim Brotherhood sources;

132 Ibid.; TAPOL, Indonesia: Muslims on Trial, pp. 16–17.
133 Ibid.
134 Martin van Bruinessen, “Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia,” p. 132.
at least one network of these circles adopted the name *Ikhwan Muslimun*, linking itself directly to the Egyptian Brotherhood movement.\footnote{Ibid., p. 133; James J. Fox, “Currents in Contemporary Islam in Indonesia.”}

Hence, *halaqahs* and *usrahs* proliferated rapidly and the *tarbiyah* movement soon became active in most Indonesian universities and beyond. Activists of the *tarbiyah* alumni continued to organize study circles and recruit new members in other places, such as mosques and companies where they worked. By the 1990s, the *tarbiyah* movement had emerged as one of the strongest forces of Islamic activism; its cadres started to play an important role in the elections for positions in the student bodies eventually dominating student politics throughout Indonesia. The influence of the movement became visible with its establishment of two of Indonesia’s most active Islamic student organizations, the Action Committee of Indonesian Muslim Students (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia* or KAMMI) and Collaborative Action of University Muslim Students (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Muslim Antar Kampus* or HAMMAS). Utilizing the networks of the *tarbiyah* movement, these organizations played a significant role in the mobilization of the students who led the protests that culminated in the resignation of President Suharto, as is demonstrated in chapter eight.

The networks of the *tarbiyah* movement also provided a strong base for the establishment of the Justice Party (PK) after the fall of Suharto. In fact, at the time of its establishment by 52 *tarbiyah* activists in August 1998, the PK claimed to have chapters in 21 of Indonesia’s then 27 provinces, 200 district branches and 200,000 active cadres.\footnote{Ibid.}

### 7.6.3. Suharto’s Return to Islam

The success of Suharto in emasculating political parties and suppressing political expression of Islam eventually proved to be only temporary, as exclusionary political structures that fail to reflect the main social and cultural identities within society can only survive through coercive means. While coercion and intimidation are necessary for the survival of authoritarian structures, they cannot transform or change socially rooted identities. With almost all Islamic organizations and activists devoting their energy to *da’wah* and missionary activities, Islamic influence as a source of social and moral...
guidance grew rapidly. For many Indonesians, Islam became “an alternative to the political arena”\(^\text{137}\). Thus, the Islamization of society from the bottom up proved more effective than Suharto’s coercive secularization from above. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, Indonesian society was witnessing an unprecedented wave of Islamic revivalism. Observance of Islamic rituals increased dramatically and the spread of Islamic consciousness and popularity became clearly visible, where not only the number of Muslims attending mosques and wearing distinct Islamic clothing rose considerably, but also the performance of “Islamic activities, such as prayers and studies” in public places like hotels and government departments became common.\(^\text{138}\) Furthermore, the seemingly apolitical da’wah propagation began to bear fruit when its political consequences started unfolding with Suharto and his Golkar party, recognizing its social strength, suddenly changing course towards Islam and taking an accommodative stance.

Whether for genuine adherence to Islam, for political responsiveness to societal pressure or for the mere purpose of counterbalancing the power of some segments of the army, President Suharto reversed his suppressive policies by taking accommodative rapprochement measures towards Islam and Muslim leaders. Some of these important measures included: the strengthening of the authority of Islamic courts (especially in regard to marriage, divorce, reconciliation and inheritance) in 1989; the foundation, in 1990, of the influential Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), which set up its Islamic newspaper, Republika, and its think-tank, the Centre for Information and Development Studies; the establishment of an Islamic bank in 1991; the annulment of the prohibition of the wearing of the hijab (headscarf) by female students in public schools in 1991; and the abolition of the state lottery in 1993. Suharto’s return to Islam was even evident in his private life through his performance of hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) with his family in 1991.\(^\text{139}\)


\(^{139}\) Ibid.; Bachtiar Effendy, Islam and the State in Indonesia, pp. 195–196; Robert W. Hefner, Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia,
If we add to these developments the ‘santrinization’ process that the government party Golkar went through, as demonstrated in the next chapter, we can conclude that Suharto’s suppression of political expression of Islamic identity only helped strengthen its social base. Furthermore, although the total share of the vote of Islamic political parties in the post-Suharto elections was about six per cent less than its share in the 1955 elections, if we consider the Islamic portion of Golkar’s vote and constituents, which indeed if added to the vote of Islamic parties makes it over 50 per cent of the national vote, it would not be an overstatement to say that despite decades of suppression, emasculation and intimidation, the socio-political power of Islam was strengthened under Suharto’s New Order.

7.7. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the question of Indonesian national identity played a central role in both the struggle for independence and the development of the political process in post-independence Indonesia. The spread of Islam and Islamic movements throughout the Indonesian archipelago provided the substance of collective values and aspirations and, thus, significantly contributed to the formation of Indonesian identity. Whereas Islam provided an ideology of resistance against the foreign rule, the all-encompassing Dutch colonialism contributed to the establishment of the national boundaries of the independent Indonesian nation-state. In the post-independence era, both Sukarno and Suharto sought to suppress the political expression of Islamic identity, instead promoting a sense of Indonesian-ness or uniform Indonesian nationalist identity through various coercive and authoritarian means. They managed to use the conflict between Islamic and secular nationalist forces as a pretext for the termination of or the delay of democracy. Thus, they built authoritarian political structures that lasted for almost fifty years, despite the fact that most Indonesian political elites and parties, including the mainstream Islamic forces, preferred a pluralistic parliamentary political system and were largely willing to play by the democratic rules.

141 See chapter eight.
Suharto, in particular, considerably restricted the arena of tolerable political activity using *Pancasila* as an ideological basis for the promotion of a uniform nationalist identity and the suppression of the political expression of Islamic identity. This demonstrates that although “[p]olitical structures can be designed to reflect the social identities underlying them”, political actors can manipulate and use them “as the grounds for promoting new identities”. However, transforming socially rooted identities is not an easy task. Therefore, advocates of the political expression of Islamic identity did not lose political salience in Indonesia despite many years of authoritarian and hegemonic inculcation of a unitary secular nationalist identity. In sum, the repression of political expression of Islamic identity and promotion of a uniform nationalist identity did not represent a viable solution for the development of national unity and democracy. In addition, the exclusion of the Islamic opposition forces from the political process only helped strengthen their social roots.

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Chapter Eight

Indonesia’s Democratization:

From Transition to Consolidation

Democratization will not proceed in Indonesia until it is actively supported by the Islamic community and until the values of democracy are explicitly articulated as compatible with Islamic doctrine.¹

8.1. Introduction

The resignation of President Suharto on 21 May, 1998, which came after a series of demonstrations and riots, marked the end of four decades of authoritarian rule and the start of the transition to a constitutional multi-party political system and instigation of the democratization process. Indonesia’s transition to democracy involved a series of liberalizing constitutional amendments and legislative political reforms. These liberalizing measures and reforms fundamentally altered the political process and structure of government. Most notably, they resulted in the proliferation and empowerment of political parties, including Islamic parties and forces that had previously been suppressed by Suharto’s New Order regime. Since then, Indonesia has successfully managed to hold two peaceful, free and fair legislative elections, in 1999 and 2004, and three peaceful rotations of presidential power: B. J. Habibie (1998-1999), Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001), Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001-2004) and Susilo

Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–). The latest president was directly elected by the people for the first time in Indonesia’s history after constitutional amendments abolishing the role of the People’s Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat or MPR) in choosing Indonesia’s president. Consequently, with the fall of Suharto’s New Order regime, Islamic and other secular and nationalist parties have become able to freely organize, mobilize citizens, recruit leaders, present candidates at elections, build coalitions, play key roles in legislative institutions and facilitate to a regree the accountability of the elected to the electors. As such, in addition to the constitutional and legislative reforms, political parties and elections provide a very helpful empirical tool for measuring the extent of the depth of Indonesia’s democratization. More importantly, the post-Suharto, inclusive democratic system allows the conduct of an empirical test which provides a clear picture of what Islamic parties are about by exposing their practical choices and political strategies in a fully free and democratic atmosphere. In other words, this unimpeded political landscape allows us to test the extent of the genuineness and sincerity of the commitment of the Islamic actors to the rules of the democratic game, especially when the outcome is not in their favour.

Although the contribution of Islamic leaders and actors to the fall of Suharto’s New Order regime and to the subsequent democratic transition is widely acknowledged by political observers, the rise of Islamic political parties in the post-Suharto era raised much concern and scepticism about the prospects and challenges of democratic stability and consolidation in Indonesia. In what ways have the mainstream Islamic actors and parties influenced the democratization process in Indonesia? To what extent has the full inclusion of the Islamic parties in the formal political structure been favourable, or unfavourable, to the process of democratic transition and consolidation? And to what extent have the post-Suharto Islamic parties and leaders been demonstrating a consistent commitment to the democratic rules of the game? By answering these questions the investigation in this chapter will be able to test the hypothesis that the active participation of Islamic actors in the Indonesian democratization process seems to be consolidating, which demonstrates that neither Islam nor Islamic activism obstructs the process of democratic transition and consolidation in Muslim-majority countries.

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2 Ibid, p. 5.
8.2. Reformasi and the Dramatic Downfall of Suharto’s Regime

The sudden and unanticipated fall of Suharto in May, 1998 was a decisive moment in Indonesia’s history. Multiple factors had contributed to this event. The devastating Asian economic crisis, which “triggered an even bigger economic crisis in Indonesia”, was considered by some observers as the primary instigator of “the process that eventually toppled” Suharto’s regime.\(^3\) There are no doubts that the crisis, to say the least, was one of the most important contributing factors that provided the impetus for many Indonesians to challenge the status quo and demand radical reforms. Failing to recover the falling rupiah and get the economy back on track, Suharto’s government submitted to the IMF’s conditions, which included reductions in subsidies and curbs on favouritism, especially with regard to companies controlled by Suharto’s children and allies. The failure of the New Order government to regain investors’ confidence in Indonesia’s economic reforms, especially after Suharto’s re-election by the MPR on March 10, 1998 triggered a series of large, anti-government, student-led demonstrations that spread from Jogjakarta and Jakarta to many other cities.\(^4\)

The anti-Suharto demonstrations, which instigated the reformasi movement, expanded rapidly, producing snowballing effects that dramatically swelled the number of Indonesians who supported the students’ cause.\(^5\) With the clash between student protestors and police at Jakarta’s prestigious Trisakti University on May 12, the demonstrations began to turn horrifically violent, spreading throughout west Jakarta and then beyond. Four students were shot dead and 35 wounded by police gunfire during the clashes. In the following few days, the violent riots sparked by the Trisakti killings, according to an Asiaweek investigation, turned many areas into war zones, especially in


\(^4\) According to Marcus Meitzner, the economic crisis that ultimately led to Suharto’s fall developed through several phases. He emphasizes that the crisis started with the massive devaluation of the rupiah in mid-August 1997 and was deepened by financial shocks accompanied with rumours about Suharto’s failing health as well as by the massive student reaction to the failing economy in December 1997 and late February 1998, respectively. Finally, as a result of the IMF’s conditions which included reductions and/or abolition of subsidies, the crisis culminated in the popular riots in Medan in May 1998, subsequently leading to Suharto’s resignation. See Marcus Meitzner, “From Suharto to Habibie: The Indonesian Armed Forces and Political Islam during the Transition,” in Geoff Forrester, (ed.), Post-Suharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos? Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing, 1999, pp. 66–76.

ethnic-Chinese dominated neighbourhoods which suffered the most from the destruction and violence.\(^6\) Hundreds of stores, businesses, vehicles and other private property were destroyed, burned and looted. The *Asiaweek* investigation estimated that a total of 1,188 people were killed, 40 malls, 2,470 shops and houses and 1,119 cars were looted, burned or destroyed.\(^7\) Most of the dead were looters who got trapped in the fires. Horrified by the intensity of the damage inflicted, “almost every important Muslim leader on the national scene”, including those who supported the student demonstrations, “condemned the riots”, and “local mosques used their loudspeakers to dissuade the looters from their work, but their efforts were only sometimes successful”.\(^8\)

While unequivocally condemning the targeting of the ethnic-Chinese minority, Muslim figures, particularly Amien Rais and Abdurrahman Wahid, the former leaders of Muhammadiyah and NU respectively, overtly supported the reformasi’s demands. Arguably, by maintaining wide public support, these two prominent Muslim leaders, who later formed with Megawati and the Sultan of Jogjakarta the Ciganjur Group which promoted gradual reform,\(^9\) played an important leading role in stabilizing the democratic transition.\(^10\)

The events began to unfold dramatically as the New Order elite began to disintegrate with the occupation of the parliament by student demonstrators. Some of Suharto’s former allies started to abandon him while parliament leaders advised him to resign or face possible impeachment.\(^11\) Although Suharto promised to introduce political reforms and conduct new parliamentary elections while affirming that he would not seek another term in office, about 3,000 students refused to evacuate the parliament buildings unless Suharto stepped down. Under this tremendous pressure, particularly with the military

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\(^7\) Susan Berfield and Dewi Loveard, “Asiaweek Investigation.”


leadership supporting the transfer of power to Suharto’s Vice-President B. J. Habibie, Suharto finally resigned on the 21st of May after receiving assurances about his personal and his family’s safety. Initially, some of the students who remained in the parliament compound rejected Habibie’s takeover. However, with thousands of the members of the Muslim youth organizations rallying in support of Habibie, the students began to break up and evacuate the parliament. Lacking ideological cohesiveness, an organizational base and unifying political leadership and agenda, the student movement became increasingly marginal. Therefore, although the students succeeded in attracting allies and obtaining support sufficient to force Suharto’s resignation, the leadership of the reformasi movement was transferred into the hands of a network of influential leaders, and the democratic transition henceforth developed through political pacts amongst a group of Indonesian elite. As such, the Indonesian democratization process took an ‘evolutionary’ path, which “was quite disappointing for the reformasi total agenda of the students”.

From the early stages, Islamic leaders and activists were key players in the reformasi movement, and their active role continued through the unfolding of the democratization process. They actively participated in escalating the pressure on Suharto to step down as well as in the subsequent political and legislative reforms. Amien Rais, for example, was one of the first Indonesian leaders to explicitly call for Suharto’s resignation. With his overt criticism of Suharto and support of the students’ political demands for genuine democratization, Rais became widely known as the father of reformasi; he provided “the very intellectual leadership that the highly diversified student movement so desperately needed”. Although Abdurrahman Wahid was late in joining the opposition forces and withdrawing support for Suharto, many NU activists participated in the students’ anti-Suharto demonstrations. Islamic groups and organizations, such as Khairu Ummah and Ma’had al-Hikmah, took part in the establishment of KAMMI (the Action Committee of Indonesian Muslim Students), under which they rallied in support

of the reformasi movement. Consequently, by providing “leadership and a pool of followers” which rallied in support of reformasi, “Islamic movements and organizations did play important roles in the protests and demonstrations” that toppled Suharto’s New Order.\textsuperscript{16}

8.3. From Grass-Roots Reformasi to Top-Down Democratization

As mentioned earlier, after the fall of Suharto the role of the student movement became less prominent and the reformasi movement became mainly a top-down process of political transition controlled by a network of nationally recognized leaders. The most remarkable achievements of reformasi during the transitional phase of democratization were primarily realized through a series of constitutional amendments, a number of new statutes, and legislative revisions which governed the new political processes and restructured the state institutions. These amendments and revisions particularly modified the structure of Indonesia’s representative and legislative institutions on national, regional and local levels. They also removed restrictions on political participation, permitted the formation of new political parties and enhanced the electoral rules and process. Other important reforms also included the guarantee of the freedom of expression, associational autonomy and independence of the media. Taking an incremental approach to reform, it took the Indonesian political elite about five years of deliberation, trial and revision in order to complete the process of democratic transition. Most importantly, the process involved four constitutional amendments.\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{17} These amendments are: the First Amendment of 19 October 1999; the Second Amendment of 18 August 2000; the Third Amendment of 9 November 2001; and the Fourth Amendment of 11 August 2002. See People’s Consultative Assembly Republic of Indonesia, “The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia: As amended by the First Amendment of 1999, the Second Amendment of 2000, the Third Amendment of 2001 and the Fourth Amendment of 2002,” the official website of the People’s Consultative Assembly Republic of Indonesia, online (accessed on July 27, 2007) [available]: http://www.mpr.go.id/index.php?lang=en&section=uud1945_iframe&id=1&judul=THE%201945%20CONSTITUTION
8.3.1. Constitutional Amendments

Thirty one out of the thirty-seven articles of the 1945 Constitution were somehow affected by the new amendments. The 1945 Constitution, which was reinstated by President Sukarno in 1959 after nine years of parliamentary democracy under a provisional constitution,\textsuperscript{18} had numerous defects and discrepancies. Not only did the 1945 Constitution fail to provide the checks and balances that enable meaningful separation of state powers, but it also empowered the presidency with extraordinary emergency powers. For instance, it provided for an unspecified number of additional representatives of functional groups in the MPR to be prescribed by statute, thus allowing the president to hand-pick these representatives and maintain a substantial military presence in the legislature. Therefore, under the 1945 Constitution, the MPR was rendered largely ineffective, and the formal sovereignty of the people as stipulated in clause two of Article (1) remained for the most part meaningless.

However, with the fall of the strong president in 1998 and the disintegration of his former allies, the MPR emerged from the crisis as a major player in the ensuing democratization process. Most of all, it facilitated the peaceful rotation of presidential power three times, before the introduction of direct presidential elections. The MPR was able to force Suharto’s successor, President Habibie, to withdraw from the presidential race when it rejected his accountability speech on October 19, 1999, after the legislative elections. New Islamic political forces, on the other hand, emerged as major players within the MPR after the 1999 elections. For instance, Amien Rais, who formed his political vehicle PAN, was elected as the MPR’s Chairman, and his Central Axis, a coalition of Islamic parties, played a decisive role in the election of Wahid as Indonesia’s fourth president on October 20, 1999.\textsuperscript{19} The MPR also impeached Wahid, after he lost the support of most of his former allies, in favour of his vice-president Megawati Sukarnoputri. Consequently, the elimination of the possible re-emergence of a new presidential dictatorship was one of the most important achievements that allowed the democratic transition to maintain consistent and steady, though somewhat slow, progress.

\textsuperscript{18} See chapter seven for more details on Sukarno’s reintroduction of the 1945 Constitution.
During the transitional phase of democratization, reform efforts were primarily focussed on reconstituting the composition of the MPR, the DPR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat or the House of People’s Representatives) and the DPRDs (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah or Regional House of People’s Representatives), the separation of powers, and the codification of new political laws. The enhancement of the electoral system, the facilitation of political participation, and the decrease and later total elimination of non-elected parliamentary members were also priorities. In addition to transferring significant powers from the centre in Jakarta to the provinces, regencies and municipalities, the powers of the legislature and judiciary were enhanced at the expense of the executive, particularly with regard to the powers accumulated in the office of the presidency. The amended constitution (the constitution henceforth) stipulates that the “MPR shall consist of the members of the DPR and the members of the DPD [Dewan Perwakilan Daerah or Regional Representative Council] who have been elected through general elections” (Article 2), thus eliminating all of the former non-elected representatives. The constitution also empowered the MPR with “the authority to amend and enact the Constitution” (Article 3; also Article 37), while it gave the DPR new unprecedented powers, such as “the right of interpellation (interpelasi)” and investigation in addition to holding “legislative, budgeting and oversight functions” (Article 20A).

On the other hand, the offices of the president and vice-president have become limited to two five-year terms (Article 7), and they both “shall be elected as a single ticket directly by the people” (Article 6A). Whereas the president’s power to freeze and/or dissolve the DPR has been revoked (Article 7C), the dismissal of the president and/or the vice-president from office is rendered very difficult and limited to specific circumstances where it requires the support of the DPR (Article 7A) as well as the approval of both of the MPR and the Constitutional Court (Article 7B).

Concerning political elections, a combined system of party-list and individual-candidacy was created. While the members of the DPR and DPRDs are elected on a party-list basis, individual candidates contest DPD seats (Article 22E). The constitution

20 “The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia: As amended by the First Amendment of 1999, the Second Amendment of 2000, the Third Amendment of 2001 and the Fourth Amendment of 2002.”
stipulates that all of the members of the DPR, DPD and DPRDs, as well as the president and vice-president shall be elected “in a direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair manner once every five years” (Article 22E). The constitution also guarantees the independence of the judicial power (Article 24) and the protection of basic human rights and individual freedom and dignity, adopting the principles stipulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights almost entirely (Article 28 to Article 28J).

Furthermore, with regard to the relationship between state and religion, Article 29, which stipulates that “the State shall be based upon the belief in the One and Only God”, remained unchanged. While this confirms a fundamental principle of Islamic belief, that is the Oneness of God or *tawhid*, most Islamic parties and forces accepted the current constitution as being in harmony with Islam and satisfactory for preventing any forceful (or anti-Islamic) ‘secularization’ attempts. Consequently, most Islamic forces found the bid of some formalist Islamic parties to reinstate the Jakarta Charter into the constitution unnecessary, and the formalists’ effort was unsuccessful, as will be discussed further.

### 8.3.2. Presidential Decrees and Parliamentary Legislations

The democratic transition and constitutional reforms were also facilitated or supplemented by a number of presidential decrees and instructions as well as a series of DPR legislations. These decrees and legislations primarily sought to enhance the democratic credibility of the national and regional representative institutions and to remove New Order authoritarian legacies, particularly with regard to the previous restrictions on the formation of political parties and the fairness of the electoral process.

From the early days of his presidency, President Habibie, taking into account the pressures that brought Suharto down, acted responsively with regard to the demands of the *reformasi* movement. He introduced new, important measures, opening up and democratizing the political system. From the outset, President Habibie departed the status quo camp and expressed his intention to call for premature free and fair elections in his attempt to present an image of a reformist leader. By declaring that he had no intention to serve the rest of Suharto’s term and proposing to hold new elections in 1999 rather than in 2002 (parliamentary elections) and 2003 (presidential elections), he
managed to defuse charges against the legitimacy of his presidency. Remarkably, Habibie led a reformasi government which, to a large extent, managed to liberalize the political process at a time when the status quo and Suharto loyalist forces were still very strong and highly determined in their effort to prevent any meaningful reforms. In the process, Habibie’s government freed many political detainees, lifted restrictions on the media, and managed to pass new laws on elections and political parties, ending Suharto’s three-party system and opening up the field for free and fair electoral contests. Using his presidential power and utilizing his political influence over the Golkar party, which then controlled both the DPR and MPR, Habibie embarked upon a cautious campaign against corruption, collusion and nepotism, known as KKN (korupsi, kolusi, nepotisme). Within a few months, for example, over twenty per cent of the Suharto loyalist members of the MPR were replaced with pro-reformasi members either by voluntary resignation or forced removal. About 229 both appointed and elected members of the Assembly, including seven of Suharto’s family members, were ousted from their seats in the MPR. Furthermore, as the number of MPR seats was reduced from 1000 to 695, “the proportion of directly (66 per cent) or indirectly (29 per cent) elected representatives more than doubled, from 43 per cent to 95 per cent”. In addition to the fact that the number of appointed military representatives (who were later eliminated) in the DPR was reduced from 75 to 38, military personnel were prohibited from taking positions in the bureaucracy while serving in the armed forces.

Reforms on election laws can be considered as the most important achievements of Habibie’s government and certainly amongst the most important steps that facilitated Indonesia’s democratic transition. On January 28, 1999, the parliament passed three political laws that provided the legal basis for the 1999 elections. They included Law

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21 Suharto’s family members who were ousted from their seats in the MPR included his eldest daughter Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, younger daughter Titiek Prabowo, sons Hutomo Mandala Putra and Bambang Trihatmodjo, daughter-in-law Halimah Bambang Tri, half-brother Probosutedjo and cousin Sudwikatmono. According to the then Golkar Deputy Chairman, Irsyad Sudiro, the action represented a demonstration of Golkar’s leaders’ “political commitment to take steps in purging Golkar of corruption, collusion and nepotism,” see AsiaWeek, “Suharto’s Family Members Ousted by Indonesia’s Ruling Party,” August 7, 1998, online (accessed on May 18, 2007) [available]: http://www-cgi.cnn.com/ASIANOW/asiaweek/98/0807/feat6.html


No. 2/1999 concerning political parties, Law No. 3/1999 concerning general elections and Law No. 4/1999 on the composition and membership of the MPR, DPR and DPRDs. The draft of these laws was prepared by the Minister of Home Affairs Syarwan Hamid with the assistance of a group of academic experts (known as the Team of Seven) in accordance with the instructions of President Habibie. Habibie’s instructions came after an MPR session, held from November 11 to 13, 1998, which codified Habibie’s proposal to conduct the 1999 elections and decreed that political parties that meet the legal requirements should be able to contest elections freely. It also removed the provision for ideological uniformity (azas tunggal) formerly imposed on political parties and social organizations. Accordingly, though still prohibited from adopting ideological platforms that contradict Pancasila principles, political parties are no longer required to adopt Pancasila as their sole basis. In addition, the 1999 election law provided for the establishment of an independent General Election Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum or KPU), the membership of which would include representatives of “parties contesting the June elections plus five government appointees”.

Despite some defects, the three political laws passed by the parliament provided a strong basis for a multi-party system and, by and large, free and fair elections. Consequently, the political laws were broadly accepted by the major parties and all political leaders who agreed to participate in the elections under the rules stipulated in them.

With regard to general elections, the Election Law replaced the former proportional representation system with a mixed district-proportional system. In a proportional representation system, the successful candidates are taken from party lists in proportion to the percentage of the total vote won by their party. However, in a pure single-member district, or “winner takes all” system, candidates are elected directly by their constituents. The latter system facilitates more accountability than the former, as voters know their candidates, whereas the former prevents the loss of vote encountered in the

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latter, which is especially important for the smaller parties. In order to resolve this trade-off relationship, the Election Law which regulated the 1999 elections stipulated that 76 per cent of the legislators would have to be chosen under the district system, while 24 per cent would be allocated through proportional representation.

8.4. The Proliferation of Islamic Political Parties and their Role in Facilitating the Democratization Process

With the removal of the restrictions on the formation of political parties, a plethora of new parties, amongst them numerous Islamic-oriented parties, emerged. The number of newly formed parties reached 141 before the 1999 elections. However, after legal and factual verification by the Election Commission Formation and Preparation Committee (P3KPU or the Team of Eleven), only 48 of these parties met the requirements stipulated in the political parties’ law and thus were able to contest for parliamentary seats in the 1999 elections. According to Law No. 2/1999, for a political party to be allowed to participate in the 1999 elections, it had to have branches in nine of the then twenty-seven Indonesian provinces as well as in half the districts in those provinces. In addition, the law also prescribed that a party must win two per cent of the seats in the national parliament or three per cent of the seats in regional legislatures to be eligible to compete in the following elections in 2004.

Furthermore, the removal of the *azas tunggal* condition, according to which political parties and social organizations were forced to adopt *Pancasila* as their sole basis, inspired the emergence of a large number of Islamic-oriented parties. These parties explicitly adopt Islam as their ideological basis, use Islamic symbols to attract Muslim votes and/or rely heavily on Islamic social or *da’wah* organizations for electoral support. About 21 out of 42 newly formed Islamic parties were amongst the 48 parties that met the legal requirements for participating in the 1999 legislative elections. This,

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26 The Team of Eleven was an eleven-member interim advisory committee appointed by the minister of home affairs and led by the highly respected Islamic scholar Nurcholish Madjid. Its aim was to verify whether each of the registered parties satisfied the election law’s criteria and, accordingly qualified for participation in the 1999 election. For more details, see Edward Masters, “Indonesia’s 1999 Elections.”


28 See chapter seven for details and discussion on the enforcement of *azas tunggal*. 
in fact, prompted many observers to raise concerns and doubts about the future of the democratic process and consolidation in Indonesia. Some observers, for example, began to question the role that Islamic parties would play in a fully inclusive multi-party system. Some people suggested that the prospects for democratization would be bleak and that the Indonesian society would be prone to inter-communal violence, even “among the Muslims themselves”. However, contrary to many pessimistic expectations, Muslim leaders and Islamic parties played a constructive role in facilitating and stabilizing Indonesia’s peaceful transition to democracy. In fact, Indonesian Islamic parties, both formalist and pluralist, participated in building political alliances, contested elections in a peaceful democratic manner and always accepted the outcomes of parliamentary elections and legislative deliberations, as the investigation demonstrates further.

With the exception of the PPP, which was one of the three Suharto-era political parties alongside Golkar and the PDI-P (formerly PDI), the newly formed popular Islamic parties were founded by former leaders and activists of Islamic social organizations and da’wah movements, such as NU, Muhammadiyah, DDII and the campus tarbiyah groups. The latter two in particular are more or less influenced by, and have contributed to the diffusion of, Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood ideas and forms of activism of the 1980s. In fact, the new Islamic parties not only drew their skilled leadership from these and other less prominent Islamic movements and organizations, but they also relied heavily on them for membership and electoral support.

Five of the seven most popular parties in the 1999 elections and of the eight most popular parties in the 2004 elections, including the Suharto-era PPP, were overtly Islamic or Islamic-oriented parties. Therefore, as these parties have been, and will likely go on, playing a significant role in Indonesia’s political process, they merit special

31 For a detailed discussion on Islamic activism and the categorization of Islamic parties adopted in this study, see chapter two.
32 See chapter seven for details about these movements and organizations.
attention. While the three older parties are discussed in chapter seven, more attention is given here to the newly formed popular Islamic parties that contested the 1999 and/or 2004 elections. They include the National Mandate Party (PAN), the National Awakening Party (PKB), the Crescent Star Party (PBB) and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). The latter deserves particular attention as it is the only Indonesian party which managed to obtain significant growth in the 2004 elections. Considering its impressive performance in social and anti-corruption activities and programs, the PKS will most likely further increase its share of the vote and may even emerge as one of the two largest Islamic parties in the coming election of 2009.

8.4.1. National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional or PAN)

In August 1998, after a few unsuccessful attempts to form a broad alliance with Islamic modernist organizations such as the DDII and KISDI, Amien Rais, assisted by a group of anti-Suharto reform activists, founded his political machine the National Mandate Party (PAN). Rais was viewed by many Indonesian and foreign observers as a leader “who could unite some of the more disparate elements of modernist politics”. 34 However, he declined initial offers to take the leadership of either of the two modernist parties PBB or PPP, both of which declare Islam rather than Pancasila as their ideological basis and compete for the support of the modernist Muslim community.

In his efforts to appeal to the broader national electorate and present an image of a liberal and pluralist leader, Rais included non-Muslims, especially Christian-Chinese, in PAN’s leadership and promoted ideological pluralism rather than adopting a formalist Islamic agenda. 35 PAN, as such, adopted Pancasila as its ideological basis. However, although PAN’s MPR members rejected the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter into the constitution, they argued in favour of a legislative provision that advocated the enforcement of religious obligations on each respective religious group. Had this been passed by parliament, it would have reinstated the Jakarta Charter in a more comprehensive manner that treated all religious groups equally. Consequently, the official approval of Pancasila as the ideological basis of PAN does not represent an

insensitivity to, or even subordination of, Islamic aspirations. Rather, as Rais himself asserted, it signifies the belief that the five principles do not contradict Islamic tenets.\textsuperscript{36} Furthermore, while Rais’s party primarily relied on Muhammadiyah for party cadres and electoral support, Islam remained its predominant characteristic. Therefore, PAN has been closely associated with, and dominated by, the modernist Muslim community, especially members of Muhammadiyah. This makes it more appropriately situated within the Islamic camp, and thus it should be included in the category of Islamic parties rather than the nationalist or secular camp.\textsuperscript{37}

Despite the fact that PAN was one of the few Indonesian parties to develop a political platform, albeit one lacking clarity and detail, its performance in both the 1999 and 2004 elections remained far below Rais’s initial expectations. PAN’s political platform advocated political reform, economic and social development and gender equality, in addition to its commitment to purging corruption and reducing the military’s role in politics.\textsuperscript{38} Before the 1999 elections, Rais expressed his hopes of attracting the support of 90 per cent of the modernist community and 25 to 30 per cent of the national vote.\textsuperscript{39} However, PAN was only able to receive 7.12 per cent of the total vote in 1999. In the 2004 elections, PAN’s share of the national vote even dropped slightly, where it received 6.44 per cent. Since its support base is spread rather than intensely concentrated in particular populated areas, which minimises its loss of votes encountered by the single-member district system, it managed to increase its number of seats from 34 to 53. This enabled it to maintain its strength as the fifth largest Indonesian party in both the 1999 and 2004 parliaments (see tables 5 and 6).

8.4.2. The National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa or PKB)

Despite the fact that four of the post-Suharto parties attempted to represent the traditionalist Muslim community and cultivate votes from NU members, the National Awakening Party (PKB) managed to emerge as the NU official party. The PKB mainly represents the mainstream traditionalist Muslim constituency, especially in East and

\textsuperscript{36} Adam Schwarz, \textit{A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia’s Search for Stability}, p.393.
\textsuperscript{38} Marcus Mietzner, “Nationalism and Islamic Politics,” p. 188.
\textsuperscript{39} Adam Schwarz, \textit{A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia’s Search for Stability}, p. 394.
Central Java. This is due to the charismatic leadership of NU’s Chairman Abdurrahman Wahid, who threw all his weight behind of this party.

In the wake of Suharto’s downfall, the discussion about NU’s return to the political arena was revived amongst its prominent *kiai*. While initially rejecting the proposal on the basis that it could undermine NU’s original socio-religious mission, Wahid eventually approved the formation of an NU-based political party which would represent the interests of the traditionalist Muslim community. The PKB was founded in July 1998 by Wahid’s loyalist members of the NU and under his personal direction. Therefore, PKB’s adoption of *Pancasila* as its official ideological basis largely reflects Wahid’s pluralist political and religious views. Wahid’s ideas, in fact, have influenced NU’s tendency to consistently promote *Pancasila*, especially since the 1980s, as the most viable national ideology which serves both Islamic and national interests and guarantees social peace and stability in Indonesia.

However, *Pancasila* from the perspective of NU’s and PKB’s leaders is not a secular ideology, as some Western Indonesianists would argue, placing all Indonesian parties that adopt *Pancasila* as their ideological basis within the secular nationalist camp. *Pancasila*, which contains “substantive religious values”, from NU’s perspective, “has appropriately lived up to the thinking tradition of NU, connecting religious values to empirical reality, as an effort to appreciate the existing tradition and culture”. Also, despite the fact that the PKB aspires to be viewed as a non-sectarian party which welcomes non-Islamic elements within its leadership board and membership base, while predominantly dominated by NU members, it primarily represents the traditionalist

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40 A number of rival factions within NU formed four parties attempting to contest for the support of NU members. These parties include: National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa – PKB) under the chairmanship of Wahid-backed Matori Abdul Jalil; the Muslim Community’s Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Umat – PKU), established by members of Wahid’s family under the leadership of his uncle (and rival) Yusuf Hasyim; the Muslim Scholars’ Awakening Party (Partai Nahdlatul Ulama – PNU), under the leadership of Syukron Makmun; and the United Indonesian National Solidarity Party (Solidarits Uni Nasional Indonsia – SUNI), under the leadership of Abu Hasan, who previously formed a rival NU board with the support of a group of former NU officials. See, Marcus Mietzner, “Nationalism and Islamic Politics,” p. 177–181.


42 Abdul Mun’im DZ, “Pancasila as Certain Choice for NU,” NU Online, July 01, 2006, online (accessed on 21 August 2007), [available]: http://www.nu.or.id/page.php?lang=en
Islamic community in Indonesia. As such, as in the case of the modernist or Muhammadiyah-dominated PAN, the PKB should also be included within the category of Islamic parties rather than in the secular nationalist camp.

Due to the continuing involvement of many NU leaders with Golkar and the PPP alongside the establishment of other NU-affiliated parties, especially by Wahid’s rivals and disloyal members, the PKB was unable to incorporate or attract the support of all NU’s elements. Therefore, its electoral achievement remained far below its initial expectations of winning over 20 per cent of the vote. In the 2004 elections, the PKB maintained its former position as the largest Islamic and third largest Indonesian party, receiving 10.57 per cent of the national vote (down from 12.61 per cent in the 1999 elections). However, with its 52 seats, the PKB remains the third Islamic (after PPP and PAN) and the sixth Indonesian party in parliament (see tables 5 and 6). This loss of vote/seats is due to the fact that PKB’s main support base is largely concentrated in East and Central Java while it remains weaker or non-existent in many other regions.

8.4.3. The Crescent Star Party (Partai Bulan Bintang or PBB)

The Crescent Star Party (PBB) was founded by activists and leaders of Islamic da’wah movements and organizations in July 1998. In particular, members of the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation, (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia or DDII) which was founded by former leaders of the banned Masyumi party in 1967, played a prominent role in the establishment of the PBB. The PBB aimed to reclaim the heritage of the old Masyumi, which was one of Indonesia’s strongest political parties during the 1950s, in its attempt to attract the majority of the Islamic vote. According to Farid Prawiranegara, deputy of the party’s first chairman, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, and son of a former prominent leader of the old Masyumi, Syafruddin Prawiranegara, PBB is “continuing the grand idea of Masyumi”. However, despite the fact that it courted three other small Masyumi-descendent parties, namely the Islamic People’s Party (PUI), the Indonesian Islamic Political Party of Masyumi (PPII Masyumi) and the New


Masyumi Party, the PBB only managed to pass the two per cent electoral threshold in the 1999 elections, receiving 2.81 per cent of DPR seats (13 seats); an achievement which it failed to maintain in the 2004 elections where it won only 11 seats. Thus, in terms of the national vote, it dropped from the sixth largest party in 1999 to the eighth in 2004. In terms of DPR seats, it only ranks number ten (see tables 5 and 6). In May 2005, the party replaced its former leader, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, with Malem Sambat Kaban, who is currently serving as Minister of Forestry.

The PBB adopts Islam as its official ideological basis and supports the enforcement of Shari’ah law, not only through deliberation and parliamentary legislation, but also by constitutional formalization. Its leaders explicitly promote the re-introduction of the Jakarta Charter into the constitution. This prompted many people to question PBB’s genuine commitment to democracy in fear that its insistence on “making Islam as the basis of the state” may destabilize or obstruct the democratization process, as happened to “Indonesia’s early experiment with democracy” in the 1950s.\(^45\) However, from its early days, PBB’s activists made their position on democracy very clear, insisting that “the focus on strengthening democracy is consistent with Islam” and that “democracy is not simply a tool to achieve something. It’s something that we have to live by”.\(^46\)

Accordingly, despite its unsuccessful attempts to include the Jakarta Charter in the constitutional amendments, as mentioned above, the PBB has always accepted the outcome of the democratic rules and shown respect for democratic decision making and processes. Although the PBB has established branches throughout Indonesia, given the emergence of the PKS as the fastest growing Islamic party, the PBB is less likely to increase its share of the Islamic vote or to appeal to the broader Indonesian constituency in the 2009 election.

8.4.4. The Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera or PKS)

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) was founded in July 1998 and contested the 1999 elections under the name Justice Party (Partai Keadilan or PK). While in the 1999 election it failed to meet the two per cent electoral threshold required to qualify for participation in the 2004 election, the party was reconstituted as the Prosperous Justice

\(^46\) *Jakarta Post*, “PBB Carries on the Masyumi Torch.”
Party in April 2003. Whereas the PKB and the PAN primarily rely on the historical mass-based Islamic organizations NU and Muhammadiyah, respectively, the PKS represents relatively new social forces. These forces are basically rooted in smaller Islamic da’wah groups and Campus Preaching Organizations (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus or LDK) that developed during the 1980s and 1990s in response to Suharto’s repressive policies towards Islamic activism, especially on university campuses.\(^{47}\) In fact, most of the founders and leaders of the PKS are former campus tarbiyah (Islamic moral education) activists who took part in the establishment of the United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students (KAMMI), under which they participated in the 1998 protests that brought Suharto down.\(^{48}\)

Though lacking charismatic or nationally recognized leadership, where it was initially led by 37-year-old Nur Mahmudi Isma’il, the PKS managed to attract the support of thousands of well-educated young Muslims. Its main membership and electoral support are drawn from university students and alumni, da’wah organizations and urban professionals. With the limitations of, firstly, not having a high profile personality who could attract adequate publicity and, secondly, lacking time to formulate and publicize a well developed political program for the 1999 election, the PKS was only able to win 1.36 per cent of the national vote and hold seven seats in parliament. However, during the period leading to the 2004 election, the PKS managed to cultivate the image of a clean, visionary, policy-oriented and Muslim-based party. In 2003, the leaders of the PKS declared that the party was sustaining considerable membership growth. Therefore, convinced that this would most likely lead to an increase in electoral support, the PKS’s leaders confidently asserted that their party would pass the three per cent electoral threshold in the 2004 election, in which, as they announced, the party was intending “to campaign on a platform of combating corruption, violence and injustice”.\(^{49}\)

\(^{47}\) See chapter seven for details.


Interestingly, in the 2004 election, the PKS achieved an impressive success where it managed to increase its share of the national vote to 7.34 per cent and its number of parliamentary seats to 45 (more than six-folds increase, see tables 5 and 6), thus exceeding most expectations.\(^{50}\)

Moreover, for several important reasons, the PKS has been hailed as one of the strongest democratizing forces in Indonesia. Most importantly, contrary to most other Indonesian parties that are mainly linked to charismatic leaders rather than platforms and policies and are plagued with patrimonialism and corruption, the PKS, in addition to its clear political program, emphasizes merit rather than primordial loyalties and adopts a consistent anti-corruption approach. Although, similar to other parties, it seeks to increase its membership base, the PKS considers itself as a cadre rather than a mass party. Therefore, in admitting new members, it takes a selective approach which “is very strict about morals”, staunchly avoiding those who may potentially “tarnish the party”.\(^{51}\) The PKS actually regards its emphasis on morality as part of its anti-corruption program, viewing the heightening of public morality as a means through which corruption can be minimized.

In order to maintain its clean image, the party refrains from power sharing and refuses to accept ministerial positions. The party refused such offers under both Wahid’s and Megawati’s presidencies. Its first chairman, Nur Mahmudi Isma’il, for instance, had to resign from the party’s leadership when he took the position of the Minister of Forestry and Plantations in Wahid’s cabinet. Similarly, its second leader, Hidayat Nur Wahid, resigned from his position in the party when he was elected as the head of the MPR after the 2004 legislative elections. This clearly shows “that positions of power in the party are not personalized; and in fact promotion in the party ranks appears largely based on merit”.\(^{52}\) With regard to military reform, the PKS’s position was very clear in advocating the end of the military’s involvement in politics when its leaders called for


\(^{51}\) Hidayat Nur wahid and Zulkieflimansyah, “The Justice Party and Democracy.”

\(^{52}\) Martin van Bruinessen, “Post-Suharto Muslim Engagements with Civil Society and Democratisation”; Elizabeth Fuller and Ihsan Ali Fauzi, “The “Prosperous Justice Party” PKS in Indonesia.”
the return of the military and police “to their roots as professional institutions”, insisting that “a person holding both military and civilian positions can do neither job well”.  

On the other hand, although the PKS formally adopts Islam as its official ideology and justifies its approach to political reform in Islamic terms, it believes that Islam and its self-declared Islamic identity do not contradict democracy or the party’s commitment to national unity. While it adopts a gradual approach in its endeavour to introduce Shari’ah law through public conviction and deliberative legislative change, the party does not advocate the enforcement of Shari’ah by the constitution. When the PPP and PBB proposed the re-inclusion of the Jakarta Charter into the constitution, the PKS did not support this proposal. Its leaders justified their position by referring to the Madinah Charter, or the constitution of Madinah, which provides a strong basis for a pluralistic society and protects the rights of non-Muslim citizens.  

Membership in the PKS is also open to non-Muslims, and its executive boards include many non-Muslim members, especially in provinces that have non-Muslim majorities, such as Papua. Consequently, with its demonstrated tolerance of non-Muslims and consistent commitment to “procedural democracy”, the PKS has been regarded as “one of the very few forces in the political arena that may seriously contribute to a gradual democratization of the country”. The PKS has also been described as a “centrist Islamic party” which provides “a moderate alternative to radical Islamism”.

8.5. Older Political Parties in the Post-Suharto Era: Golkar’s Responsiveness to Islamic Aspirations

As discussed in chapter seven, under Suharto’s New Order, all of the then existing political parties, with the exception of Golkar, were forced to merge into two coalition blocs. Whereas four Islamic parties merged under the United Development Party

54 Hidayat Nur wahid, “We Want to Change the National Leadership,” pp. 30–33; see chapter four for details about the constitution of Madinah.
55 Hidayat Nurwahid and Zulkieflimansyah, “The Justice Party and Democracy.”
56 Martin van Bruinessen, “Post-Suharto Muslim Engagements with Civil Society and Democratisation.”
(Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or PPP), three secular and two Christian parties had to merge into the Indonesian Democratic Party (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia or PDI). Golkar, originally a federation of functional groups and NGOs, was exempted from the merger and turned into an electoral machine by Suharto, who utilized it to consolidate his control over the political process. Throughout the New Order era, Golkar maintained its absolute dominance over the parliament, winning all of the six New Order parliamentary elections. The PPP and PDI always came second and third, respectively (see table 4). In the first post-Suharto elections of 1999, the newly formed PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan), in which Megawati’s faction of the old PDI was reconstituted, emerged as the largest Indonesian party, receiving 33.74 per cent of the vote (153 seats). Golkar, for the first time in its political history, came second winning 22.44 per cent of the vote (120 seats). In the 2004 elections, however, the PDI-P’s share of the national vote dropped dramatically to 18.53 per cent of the vote (109 seats), coming second after Golkar, which also suffered a slight loss of votes, receiving 21.58 per cent (though it increased the number of its seats to 128). The PDI-P’s loss was largely due to the disillusionment of many Indonesians with Megawati’s presidency and to the emergence of the Partai Democrat (PD), the electoral machine of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), which mainly attracted secular support, receiving 7.34 per cent of the national vote (55 seats). The PPP, on the other hand, maintained its position as the fourth largest party (third in terms of seats) in both the 1999 and 2004 elections, respectively winning 10.71 per cent (58 seats) and 8.15 per cent (58 seats) (see tables 5 and 6).

The extent to which the Suharto-era political parties demonstrate their willingness to incorporate Islamic elements within their leadership boards and/or openly respond to Islamic aspirations varies considerably. Whereas the overt Islamic identity of the PPP, which re-adopted Islam as its official ideological basis after the fall of Suharto, and the PDI-P’s purely secular identity are unambiguous, the case of Golkar is much more complicated. Although Golkar’s original mission was primarily aimed at promoting economic development and stability rather than a specific ideological program, Islamic and secularist trends within the party sought to drive its agenda in different directions. In fact, from the 1970s, Golkar tried to attract Muslim support and court Muslim intellectuals and leaders. Therefore, it was eager to promote an image of itself “as the
organization of Muslims” by creating the Federation for the Improvement of Islamic Education (GUPPI) and funding various Islamic projects.\textsuperscript{58}

Moreover, during the 1990s, as President Suharto turned to Islam and started courting Islamic leaders, Golkar intensified its efforts to accommodate Islamic aspirations. This was most evident in its involvement in, and sponsorship of, many Islamic projects and activities, such as building new mosques and participating in Islamic events and celebrations. Most notable was the foundation of the Suharto-sponsored association of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia or ICMI), a very influential modernist Muslim organization initially headed by the then Minister for Research and Technology, B. J. Habibie.\textsuperscript{59} By the late 1990s, Golkar was dominated by Muslim intellectuals, most of whom were alumni of the Islamic University Students’ Association (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam or HMI) and/or ICMI members, who promoted Muslim interests and facilitated Muslims’ access to the bureaucracy and other state institutions.\textsuperscript{60} In the post-Suharto era, the Muslim faction dominated the leadership of Golkar, with Akbar Tanjung (former chairman of HMI) emerging as the first democratically elected chairman of Golkar after defeating Army General Edi Sudrajat.\textsuperscript{61} In addition, President Habibie, whose Islamic credentials were widely acknowledged, was Golkar’s initial presidential candidate for the 1999 presidential election. As Megawati emerged as the strongest presidential candidate, with her party coming first in the 1999 parliamentary elections, Golkar joined the Islamic parties’ coalition, the Central Axis, in supporting the election of President Abdurrahman Wahid. Consequently, it should not be surprising that, as some researchers emphasize, Golkar has turned into one of the most credible successors of Masyumi, particularly in the post-Suharto era.\textsuperscript{62} As evidence shows, Golkar “was able to reposition itself and won the support of many modernist Muslims” of former Masyumi stronghold areas, such as South Sulawesi, where the Golkar-dominated local governments have been

\textsuperscript{58} TAPOL, Indonesia: Muslims on Trial, pp. 9; 15.
\textsuperscript{59} Adam Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia’s Search for Stability, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{60} Martin van Bruinessen, “Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia,” pp 117–154.
\textsuperscript{61} During Golkar’s national convention in August 1998, a rift occurred within Golkar as a result of the polarized competition for the party’s leadership between the Islamic-oriented and secularist camps. With the Islamic-oriented wing taking control over Golkar’s leadership, a group of secularists who supported General Edy Sudrajat, former chairman of the Indonesian Armed Forces, preferred to leave Golkar and established their own party, the Justice and Unity Party (Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan or PKP). This in fact has further strengthened the influence of the Islamic-oriented wing within Golkar.
\textsuperscript{62} Dwight Y. King, Half-Hearted Reform, p. 134.
promoting the implementation of *Shari’ah* law. Golkar’s current chairman, Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, who is known as one of the proponents of *Shari’ah*, also comes from South Sulawesi.

Yet, Golkar is seldom associated with Islam. In fact, most observers who attempt to analyze the Indonesian national vote or assess the performance of Islamic parties versus secular parties at national elections tend to group Golkar together with the PDI-P within the secular nationalist camp. Others even include all Muslim-based parties that adopt Pancasila as their official ideological basis, such as PAN and PKB, in the same category with the overtly secular PDI-P which largely ignores Islamic aspirations in its practical agenda, let alone its political discourse. Such ‘formalistic’ categorization does not provide an accurate picture of the underlying factors that inspire political action in Indonesia. While *Pancasila* is justifiable in Islamic terms as it promotes the basic pillar of Islamic faith, *tawhid* or the belief in One Almighty God, it should not be treated as a basis of secularity or non-secularity of political parties. This, however, is not to suggest that Golkar is an Islamic party. Rather, it should be noted that although Golkar’s platform is overtly nationalist, its practical agenda explicitly incorporates Islamic aspirations. Therefore, while Golkar successfully attracts substantial portions of Islamic as well as secular votes, it is inaccurate to include it in either camp. On the other hand, while drawing the party closer to Islam, the Islamic elements within Golkar were simultaneously successful in distancing it from Suharto’s former repressive policies, which mostly targeted Islamic opposition, and in promoting a new image of a reform-oriented party.

Moreover, considering the results of most surveys of public attitudes, Golkar’s Islamic leaning appears to be in response to an increasingly growing religiosity and Islamic observance in Indonesian society. The rise of Indonesian Islamic consciousness, which preceded and continued alongside the process of democratization, has been verified and supported not only by the proliferation of Islamic parties and votes, but also through other forms of evidence, such as mass surveys and opinion polls. According to two

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mass surveys conducted in 2001 and 2002 by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society, State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat-Universitas Islam Negeri or PPIM-UIN), Indonesian society is demonstrating far higher levels of Islamic consciousness and Shari’ah-mindedness than previously thought. In the 2001 survey, 63 per cent of the participants agreed with the statement that “the state must implement Islamic law for all Muslims”, and 58 per cent supported the proposition of “Islamic governance in Indonesia based on the Qur’an and Sunnah under ulama leadership”. In 2002, the number of participants who supported the latter statement rose to 67 per cent.  

In democracies, opinion polls and public surveys provide important policy guidelines for politicians and political parties that consistently seek public support, especially in, but not limited to, election campaign periods. The processes of free and fair elections compel politicians, who always aspire to be re-elected, to “become more responsive to mass preferences”, where “democracy itself evolves to become increasingly responsive”. Consequently, the rise of Islamic consciousness and “self-expression values” is increasingly transpiring voters’ behaviour, which will certainly lead political parties and politicians to be more responsive to popular demands and Islamic aspirations alike. This is not to suggest that the majority of Indonesian Muslims cast their vote primarily on the basis of Islamic ideology or rhetoric. Rather, it appears that voters are becoming more aware of policy implementation, showing more interest in how parties respond to their practical needs and normative aspirations on a policy level than in ideological foundations. In other words, Indonesian Muslims want to see how their politicians endeavour to implement the Shari’ah in a way which serves the basic needs of the people as well as the national interest, regardless of whether or not the party formally adopts Islam as its ideological basis. Providing social services and fighting corruption are two important elements that the PKS consistently tries to address in both Islamic (theoretical) and practical terms; this indeed has considerably heightened both its Islamic and democratic credentials. While statically sticking to its

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pure secularist orientation and, at the same time, not paying enough attention to responsive policy formulation, the PDI-P suffered substantial electoral loss in the 2004 elections. On the other hand, Golkar’s incorporation of Islamic aspirations, particularly at local levels, helped minimize the loss of its electoral support, which otherwise would have gone to other modernist Islamic parties, and enabled it to re-emerging as Indonesia’s strongest party in the 2004 elections.

8.6. Indonesia’s Democracy: An Assessment and Future Trajectory

The investigation so far has demonstrated that Indonesia’s political elites, including prominent Islamic leaders and activists, have indeed been successful in pushing the country in a democratic direction. However, the quality and stability of Indonesian democracy is still under discussion, especially by students of democratic consolidation who raise many critical and suspicious questions. How deep has Indonesia moved along the democratic route? To what extent has Indonesia managed to consolidate its democratic process? Most importantly, while “only democracies can become consolidated democracies”, 66 has Indonesia actually completed its political transition and thus deservedly earned the title ‘democracy’, so that the analysis can be turned to focus on aspects of democratic consolidation?

As they involve very complex and important issues, these kinds of questions, which are typical in democratic consolidation studies, are imbued with some weaknesses. Whatever one’s preferred answer to the above questions might be, it appears that one of the problems inherent in the study of democratic consolidation is that it involves an assertive assumption that a clear line which separates the transition phase of democracy from its consolidation phase can be definitively established. The problem becomes even paradoxical when students of democratic consolidation adopt a substantive/maximalist conception of democracy, 67 in which case the concept of ‘consolidation’ loses its value. For if democracy in a particular country advances to a point where all violations of

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67 See chapter two for detailed discussion on conceptions of democracy and the framework adopted by this thesis. The discussion presented here on democratic consolidation should be taken as a continuation of the discussion presented in chapter two, especially with regard to the theoretical framework adopted in this study.
rights and the rule of law are completely eliminated beforehand, that is before ‘consolidation’ can be considered, then what would be left to be studied about ‘consolidation’? One way to overcome this weakness and minimize the problem is to adopt concrete criteria for evaluating the process of democratic transition and quality of democracy. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a thorough investigation and detailed assessment of the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia, the challenges that are still, or may potentially be, confronting the future of democratic stability and institutionalization deserve some attention. This consideration is especially important in relation to the role that Islamic forces may arguably play in this regard in the foreseeable future.

But before assessing the extent to which Indonesia’s democracy has been consolidated, the completion of Indonesia’s democratic transition has to be addressed and verified. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan emphasize that the transition to democracy in a given country

is complete when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government de facto has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies de jure.  

According to these criteria, Indonesia today enjoys the main attributes of a democratic country. The political process in post-Suharto Indonesia, as the investigation above substantiates, has been predominantly characterized by the establishment of frequent, free and fair elections, effective elected officials, separation of powers, inclusive suffrage, freedom of expression, independence of the media and associational autonomy. Moreover, there is wide agreement amongst political observers and analysts that democracy in Indonesia has actually entered its consolidation phase. The 2004 parliamentary and direct presidential elections, in fact, have been considered as the start

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of the process of democratic consolidation where the democratic electoral process and peaceful alternation of power have become established practices. Prior to the 2004 elections for example, the Asia Foundation conducted an opinion poll in order to assess the political culture of the Indonesian electorate, concluding with the assertion “that democracy has begun to take root in Indonesia”.

Electoral credibility, according to the Asia Foundation’s report, was no longer a real concern at that stage as the priority had to be redirected towards the promotion of democratic consolidation. Other scholars, such as Azyumardi Azra, also consider the 2004 elections as the end of the transitional phase of Indonesian democracy. Indonesia’s democratic transition has undoubtedly been completed, at least from a procedural perspective. The rise of Islamic consciousness and the proliferation of Islamic political parties did not obstruct the Indonesian democratization process. Rather, and contrary to many pessimistic expectations, Islamic political actors not only helped facilitate and stabilize the democratic transition, but they also played a leading role in this process.

The extent to which Indonesian democracy has been consolidated and institutionalized, however, is another issue which requires some further elaboration. What are the main characteristics and ideal criteria of a consolidated democracy according to theorists of democratic consolidation? What do we find when we evaluate the degree to which Indonesian democracy actually fulfills or approximates the criteria stipulated by these theorists?

Generally speaking, scholars of democratic consolidation have sought to develop, not without some turbulence and confusion, specific criteria that help evaluate the degree to which the democratic process and practices in a given country are consolidated and institutionalized. According to Adam Przeworski, democracy can be regarded as consolidated when it “becomes the only game in town [where] no one can imagine action outside the democratic institutions [and] all the loser wants to do is to try again within the same institutions under which they have just lost”. In such a political

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70 Ibid, p. 28.
atmosphere, Przeworski insists, “all relevant political forces find it best to continue to submit their interests and values to the uncertain interplay of the institutions”. Two primary elements can be identified in these criteria: the elimination of all other alternatives that may compete with the democratic system and the consistent commitment and unreserved submission of all important political actors to the democratic rules of the game, even when the outcome is not favourable to them. Carsten Schneider and Philippe Schmitter adopt similar criteria, but they also add the likelihood of developing “mutual trust and reassurance among the relevant actors” where the process of “contingent consent” becomes institutionalized; that is, an established or accepted part of the political structure. They also include the condition that one or more rotations of power should occur before consolidation is considered.

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, on the other hand, even extend the notion of ‘institutionalization’ beyond the political and elite-behaviour domain incorporating public attitude as an indicator of democratic consolidation. According to Linz and Stepan, democracy is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion, even in the midst of major economic problems and deep dissatisfaction with incumbents, holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life, and when support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or is more or less isolated from prodemocratic forces.

However, despite its empirical usefulness, Linz and Stepan’s conception of a consolidated democracy includes several aspects that make the distinction between non-consolidated and consolidated democracies largely obscure. On the one hand, they disqualify regimes in which all violations of the rule of law or individual rights are not totally eliminated from the rank of democracies, even if they fulfill the “institutional requirements for [free and fair] elections in a polyarchy that Robert A. Dahl has set forth”. On the other hand, when they clarify some of the qualifications of consolidated

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73 Ibid.
75 Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, “Toward Consolidated Democracies,” p. 16.
76 Ibid, pp. 14–15; for a detailed discussion of Dahl’s conception of polyarchy, see chapter two.
democracies, they emphasize the persistent possibility of democratic break down, the existence of different (unspecified) types of consolidated democracies and the improvability of the quality of democracy in consolidated democracies, stipulating “a continuum from low-quality to high-quality democracies”. The problem is that one finds it difficult to differentiate between a democracy, that meets Linz and Stepan’s criteria, and a consolidated democracy, especially of a low-quality kind.

However, although “democratic consolidation” remains a highly contested concept, it can still be utilized as a useful analytical tool which supports empirical research, especially with regard to the hypothetical projection of the likelihood or otherwise of the stability and continuity of newly established democracies. Therefore, regardless of the heavily disputed elements, several common constituents can be identified in most democratic consolidation theories: most importantly, the (1) elimination of all authoritarian legacies and undemocratic alternatives; (2) unequivocal and consistent commitment of all significant political actors to the democratic rules of the game; (3) occurrence of at least one democratic rotation of power; (4) routinization and institutionalization of democratic practices and procedures; and (5) development of a strong majority of public support for upholding the democratic system. In general, all of these elements are basically concerned with democratic survival and the elimination or prevention of the possibility of democratic breakdown or “rapid death”. Arguably, if these five elements persist in a newly established democracy, they will eventually lead to a deeper and higher-quality democracy.

Judged against the above criteria, as the investigation throughout this chapter has shown, Indonesia today indeed possesses most of the characteristics of a consolidated democracy, though some very important challenges still lie ahead in the way of democratic deepening and institutionalization. During the transitional phase of Indonesia’s democratization, the pro-reform political actors were heavily involved in the process of eliminating the Suharto-era authoritarian legacies. As the New Order restrictions on political participation and freedoms were removed and the field for free

77 Ibid, p. 16.
and fair electoral contestation was opened up, the new pro-democracy members of the 1999 parliament embarked upon a democratization campaign in the face of an ailing pro-status quo elite. Democratizing constitutional amendments and reform laws were successfully passed. In one battle after another, the reform-minded leaders who were determined to complete and stabilize the democratic transition defeated the anti-democracy actors and forces of the status quo. With the total elimination of non-elected parliamentary members, especially with regard to the military’s reserved seats, Indonesia’s representative and legislative institutions became fully democratized. The military accepted the new rules of the game without significant resistance and its role in politics has been substantially minimized. All relevant social and political forces, Islamic and secular or winners and losers, have always accepted the outcome of the democratic elections and legislative deliberations. Islamic parties and forces that lost their bid to re-introduce the Jakarta Charter into the constitution accepted the outcome without any mass rejection. Relevant Islamic political forces that favour the introduction of Islamic laws have been pursuing this end by peaceful and democratic means. In short, democracy has become “the only game in town” and all undemocratic alternatives have been by and large eliminated.

With all significant political actors consistently showing unequivocal commitment to the democratic rules of the game, the threats of democratic breakdown or “rapid death” have become increasingly unlikely. In fact, post-Suharto Indonesia did not see the emergence of any significant deviant or anti-democratic actors with access to substantial resources and support that could be invested in advocating anti-democratic activities and objectives. Even military-backed officials no longer seek to achieve their ends by the use of non-democratic or unconstitutional means.

However, one of the challenges that Indonesia has yet to fully address in order to join the rank of consolidated democracies is the ability to apply full “civilian control” or “supremacy” over the military. In fact, the extent to which the Indonesian military has been able to maintain its influence, formally or informally, over government policies is highly disputable and difficult to verify. Although its ‘dual-function’ doctrine has been

formally relinquished, the military has been able to maintain its territorially-based structure as well as a “dense web of military/business ties” and activities that are largely beyond the control of the government, which “creates a parallel administrative structure to the government, allowing the army to act as a type of localized paramilitary police”. 80

On the other hand, Indonesia’s democratization processes have made some very important progress towards the promotion of the return of the military elites to their barracks. Taking into account the total elimination of the military’s reserved representation in parliament, the prohibition of military personnel from taking positions in the bureaucracy as well as the removal of the military’s control over the police, the progress achieved so far seems to outweigh the remaining challenges. Some observers argue that the military’s consistency in maintaining a neutral stance “has contributed positively to the ongoing security reforms required to consolidate democracy in Indonesia”. 81

Furthermore, since the instigation of the democratic transition, Indonesia’s advancement towards the consolidation of its democracy has been buttressed by three peaceful rotations of power. The three presidential alternations occurred as the result of democratic in-parliament votes: Abdurrahman Wahid (1999) and Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001), or of direct presidential elections: Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004). The transition of presidential authority in each of these rotations was peaceful; even though the transition from Wahid to Sukarnoputri became tense when the former threatened to declare a state of emergency and dissolve the parliament, no significant political force rejected the outcomes. Consequently, with the constitutional balance of power between the legislative and executive branches of government and the highly successful implementation of democratic/constitutional government rotations, the possibility of the emergence of a presidential dictatorship has become highly unlikely, this being an essential element of democratic consolidation.


With regard to the criterion of the institutionalization of democratic practices and procedures, Indonesia’s democracy demonstrates elements of both strengths and weaknesses, though many researchers have put more emphasis on weaknesses and shortcomings in relation to this. It should be noted here that the institutionalization of democracy is meant to describe a political environment in which the rules of the democratic game become ‘routinized’ as a natural part of everyday life, rather than just a mere careful or conscious process of cost–benefit political calculations on the part of the political actors. Political actors in this situation become habitually committed to the democratic process and customarily subjected to the rule of law.\(^\text{82}\) Several weaknesses were identified in this regard during the 2004 legislative elections, though the elections themselves were remarkably peaceful, well organized and, as mentioned above, are largely regarded as an important step towards the consolidation of democracy. Although “the elections were generally positive”, Patrick Barron et al. confirm, “they do highlight institutional weaknesses that could undermine Indonesia’s institutionalization of democratic elections and potentially leave room for violence to escalate in the future”.\(^\text{83}\) The 2004 elections, they insist, demonstrate “a need for capacity-building, increased professionalism and broader social engagement on the part of state actors”.\(^\text{84}\) Party representatives at local elections in particular were accused of taking part in many undemocratic practices, such as vote-buying and other illegal conduct involving money politics.\(^\text{85}\)

The weakness of the institutionalization of democratic practices can also be identified through, and attributed to, the lack of party platforms in election campaigns. As has been demonstrated, all political parties, with the exception of the PKS, largely rely on personal attachment and sentiment in order to rally public support and mobilize the electoral vote. This also contributes to the persistent “weakness of accountability”,


\(^{83}\) Patrick Barron, Melina Nathan and Bridget Welsh, “Consolidating Indonesia’s Democracy,” pp. 32–33.

\(^{84}\) Ibid., p. 23.

which “is often associated with weak party system institutionalization”. 86 Therefore, despite the fact that political elections “are well respected” in Indonesia, public surveys “since 1998 have repeatedly found parties as among the least trusted social/political institutions”. 87

Surveys of public attitude, on the other hand, demonstrate other important points of strength with regard to democratic consolidation. The PPIM-UIN surveys conducted in 2001 and 2002, for instance, found that a strong majority of Indonesian Muslims support the idea of upholding the democratic system, despite widespread disappointment with the performance of the political elite. Specifically, about seventy per cent of all respondents in “the two surveys support[s] the idea that democracy, relative to other forms of government, is best for the country”. 88 Consequently, Indonesia’s democracy can be regarded as largely consolidated according to consolidation theories that consider a democracy to be consolidated when a “majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life”. 89 Interestingly, the PPIM-UIN surveys revealed an obvious concurrence between the rise of democratic support and the increase of Islamic consciousness in Indonesian society. This indicates that the democratization process is not only supported by the Islamic political elite, which can be accused of adopting tactical self-interest calculations, but also by the majority of Indonesian Muslims. This is a strong indication that the Indonesian Islamic community is not likely to pose any threats to democracy or democratic consolidation in the foreseeable future.

In general, while it can be asserted that democracy will most likely survive and that democratic breakdown has become highly unlikely in Indonesia, at least in the foreseeable future, whether this will lead to a deeper and higher-quality democracy remains to be seen. However, a systematic analysis of the extent to which Indonesia has deepened and consolidated its democracy, which is beyond the scope of this study, requires further reflection and more thorough and focussed research.

87 Ibid., p. 104.
89 Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, p. 6.
8.7. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the role played by Islamic political actors in the democratization process and discussed the prospects and challenges of democratic consolidation in Indonesia. It assessed the extent to which the threats of democratic breakdown have been eliminated and democratic stability has been established. The examination found ample evidence that, contrary to earlier sceptical and pessimistic expectations, the relevant Islamic forces in Indonesia have been primarily facilitating rather than obstructing the democratization process. They have played leading and constructive roles in the instigation and progress of the democratic transition and enhanced the prospects of democratic stability and consolidation. Islamic leaders and activists actively participated in the events that led to the fall of Suharto’s New Order regime and the subsequent elimination of its authoritarian legacies. Islamic parties that proliferated in post-Suharto Indonesia promoted a democratic agenda and took part in the introduction of legislative and constitutional reforms. Although some minority formalist parties, such as the Masyumi-oriented PBB, still espouse the constitutional enforcement of Islamic law, the majority of Islamic parties, including the Brotherhood-oriented PKS, believe that the current constitution does not contradict Islam and best serves the national unity. Most importantly, Islamic parties have always demonstrated a consistent and unequivocal commitment to the democratic rules of the game, even when the outcome was not favourable to their cause.

The findings in this chapter also support the argument that the transition to democracy in Indonesia was completed prior to the conduct of the 2004 legislative and direct presidential elections. During the transitional phase, the Indonesian political elites, with the effective involvement of prominent Islamic leaders and parties, introduced comprehensive constitutional and legislative reforms that democratized the structure of the representative and executive institutions as well as the political process. These reforms included effective separation of powers, enhancement of the electoral system and facilitation of political participation. They also removed Suharto-era restrictions and authoritarian legacies, such as ideological conformity by political parties and associations and non-elected parliamentary representation, particularly the reserved military seats in the MPR. The emergence of the MPR as a major player helped
minimize the possibility of the re-emergence of a new presidential dictatorship. The major practical achievements of the democratization process were realized through the 1999 and 2004 free and fair legislative elections and the three peaceful rotations of presidential power (Habibie, Wahid, Megawati and SBY), especially the 2004 direct presidential elections. In other words, the Indonesian political landscape today, as the investigation has confirmed, is characterized by frequent, free and fair elections, effective elected officials, actual separation of powers, inclusive suffrage, freedom of expression, independence of the media and associational autonomy. Consequently, according to most theories of procedural democracy, Indonesia today enjoys the main attributes of a democratic country, and has entered the camp of consolidating democracies.

However, determining the extent to which democratic practices have been consolidated and institutionalized requires further and thorough consideration, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. In any case, the examination in this chapter has found that Indonesia has made significant progress in this regard, though there still remain some very important challenges and weaknesses to be addressed. Indonesia has developed many characteristics of a consolidated democracy with regard to the elimination of authoritarian legacies and undemocratic alternatives, the commitment of all significant political actors to the democratic rules of the game, several democratic and peaceful rotations of power and the maintenance of a strong majority of public support for upholding the democratic system. On the other hand, the most significant challenges to the deepening of democratic consolidation are mainly related to the process of the institutionalization of democratic practices, especially the improvement of the rule of law and the development of less patrimonial and more policy-driven electoral competition on the part of the major political parties. In this regard, the PKS appears to be the most notable exception. Out of the eight major political parties that competed in both the 1999 and 2004 elections, the PKS was the only party which did not rely on a charismatic leader or particular social organization; it also developed a largely clear political platform and managed to considerably increase its share of the vote. Therefore, by initiating a policy-oriented competition, which may lead other parties to follow suite in the future, and by providing a potentially successful alternative to patrimonial
politics, the PKS may very likely lead to the institutionalization of political parties and “contribute to a gradual democratization” and consolidation.\textsuperscript{90}

To conclude, one of the most important findings of this research demonstrates that the democratization process and the rise of public democratic support have developed concurrently with the increase of Islamic consciousness in Indonesian society. Mass surveys and opinion polls revealed that although there is an obvious increase in Islamic piety, a majority of Indonesian Muslims support the upholding of the democratic rule. Therefore, with the consistent commitment of an Islamic political elite to the democratic process as well as majority public support of democracy, the Indonesian Islamic community will be less likely to pose any threats to democracy or to hinder democratic consolidation, at least in the foreseeable future. In sum, the finding in this chapter confirm the hypothesis that the active participation of Islamic actors in the Indonesian democratization process seems to be consolidating, which demonstrates that neither Islam nor Islamic activism obstructs the process of democratic transition and consolidation in Muslim-majority countries.

\textsuperscript{90} Martin van Bruinessen, “Post-Suharto Muslim Engagements with Civil Society and Democratisation.”
Chapter Nine

General Conclusions and Observations

9.1. Summary of the Findings

The findings of the thesis have provided ample theoretical and empirical evidence that Islam is not inherently antithetical to democracy and Islamic political activism does not constitute an obstacle to the process of democratization in Muslim-majority countries. The available evidence confirms the hypothesis that the materialization of an Islamic democracy, in which the mainstream Islamic forces prevail and uphold modern democratic values and essential Islamic principles, is not an alien or remote possibility. The thesis has tested and verified this hypothesis by investigating the theoretical compatibility between Islam and democracy and the empirical impact of Islamic political activism on the process of democratization in Muslim-majority countries, focussing on Egypt and Indonesia. To this end, the thesis examined the theoretical and historical evolution of Islamic political principles and the contemporary political developments and structures in Egypt and Indonesia throughout the post-independence era. The role of Islamic political actors and forces in facilitating or hindering the democratization processes in these two countries, especially during the last decade or so, was the primary focus of the thesis.

Taking an ideational evolutionary perspective, the thesis investigated Islamic history and thought, tracing the origin and development of some important political principles and precedents that correlate with modern democratic governance. In particular, the thesis discussed the development of the principles of righteous Khilafah or good/legitimate governance, the separation and limits of state powers, pluralist Islamic legal theory and the intrusion of Western political notions into modern Arabic and Islamic thought. Furthermore, combining historical/longitudinal and actor-oriented approaches, the thesis examined the development of three political structures or regimes
in each of the cases of Egypt and Indonesia. For Egypt the investigation included ‘Abd al-Nasser’s Arab nationalist revolutionary regime, Anwar al-Sadat’s infitah or multi-party system and Husni Mubarak’s state-controlled liberalization process. For the Indonesian case, Sukarno’s Guided Democracy, Suharto’s New Order and the post-Suharto democratization process were investigated. Seeking to unpack the factors that contributed to the delay or facilitation of the democratization process in these two countries, the thesis focussed on the strategies and choices of the relevant Islamic political actors with regard to their relationship with the respective regimes.

In both Egypt and Indonesia, intolerant identity politics and the dichotomy between the nationalist and Islamic forces played an obstructive role with regard to democratic development. However, the main forces that directly and deliberately hindered democracy in Egypt and Indonesia were ambitious, self-interested, military-oriented dictators who represented or used nationalist ideologies and sentiments. As Islamic movements proved to be the most robust and viable opposition forces, Egyptian and Indonesian authoritarian rulers sought to suppress and/or utterly exclude these forces from the political process. Whereas coercive and containment strategies could prolong authoritarian structures, the suppression of the political expression of Islamic identity proved to be ineffective as Islamic forces continued to re-emerge and play central roles, directly or indirectly, in Egyptian and Indonesian politics. Whereas the fall of Indonesia’s strong dictator in 1998 triggered an unimpeded democratization process, it remains to be seen whether or not the demise of Egypt’s dictator will facilitate genuine political reform in the country. What has materialized so far is that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement has emerged as the only effective catalyst for democratic reform. More importantly, not only have Indonesian Islamic actors played a leading role in the democratization process, but also the Brotherhood’s counterpart in Indonesia, the PKS, appears to be the only political party which is currently providing an important viable alternative to patrimonial politics, in so doing leading the way to further democratic consolidation and institutionalization.
9.2. Islam and Democracy

As the findings of the thesis have substantiated, there is an abundance of historical evidence which demonstrates that political precedents and principles that, to a large extent, correlate with modern democratic governance are not absent from Islamic history and thought. Many aspects of compatibility between Islamic and democratic principles are found in the formative history of Islam as well as in classical and modern Islamic thought and literature. The general findings of the investigation support the hypothesis that the values of democracy can be articulated as fully compatible with Islamic doctrine where Islam is not inherently antithetical to democracy.

Primary Islamic and historical sources provide indisputable proof that the Islamic principles of mutual consultation (shura), political contract (bay’ah), selection of political leaders (ikhtiyar) and consensus (ijmaa’) were established practices during the formative years of the Islamic community. In addition, tolerance of difference, religious freedom and social pluralism were highly valued, particularly during the time of the Prophet and his four immediate successors, the Rightly Guided Caliphs. While this foundational episode of Islamic history is accepted by Muslims as an authentic point of reference, most contemporary Islamic political movements utilize its ruling principles, which by and large correlate with modern democratic governance as substantive theoretical foundations for a pluralist, inclusive Islamic democracy.

Moreover, under the Islamic Caliphate system, the limits of the rulers’ power became increasingly lucid, especially during the Abbasid classical era. With the emergence and institution of the ulama (Islamic scholars) during the classical era of Islamic history, the process of the separation of power began to take hold in Islamic societies. Under this system, the legislative and judicial authorities came largely under the control of the respected ulama, who developed a pluralist theory of Islamic law, which culminated in the emergence of the four Islamic schools of law (madhabs). With these schools of law dominating most Islamic societies, the power of the rulers became by and large limited to defence, security, economics and other pertinent administrative issues. This helped modernist Islamic scholars and thinkers incorporate modern Western political concepts
into Islamic discourse and legitimize, in Islamic terms, the promotion of political reform and democratic values.

With the decline of Ottoman power and the encounter by many Muslim societies of modern European colonialism during the nineteenth century, an influential group of reform-minded ulama and thinkers began to advocate modernization and political reform in Islamic societies. The ideas of these modernist Islamic thinkers developed into influential, politically-motivated religious currents and eventually began to inspire the formation of Islamic social and political organizations throughout the Muslim world. Initially, Sheikh Rifa’a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi sought to legitimize the modernization projects promoted by the Ottoman-loyalist rulers of Egypt. By the late nineteenth century, as Egypt fell under the domain of British colonialism, other prominent Islamic scholars, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Mohammad Abdu and Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakiby, began to call for the Muslim peoples to rise against political despotism in their societies. These modernist scholars promoted *ijtihad* (reinterpretation of Islam), political reform and Islamic unity as a means of overcoming Muslims’ weaknesses and defeating colonial aggression. The ideas and views of these pioneer Islamic reformers proved to be very influential in that they soon began to spread throughout the Muslim world, inspiring the formation of Islamic reform movements. The formation of the Muhammadiyah and Muslim Brotherhood movements of Indonesia and Egypt, respectively, are the most notable examples. These and other similar movements have played very important intellectual, social and (direct or indirect) political roles in various parts of the Muslim world.

In general, appreciating the rootedness of modern democratic values in Islam, contemporary mainstream Islamic movements and thinkers have developed “a view of Islam that emphasizes justice, human dignity and equality, the rule of law, the role of the people in selecting their leaders, the obligation of having a consultative form of government, and the value of pluralism”. Consequently, as these Islamic and democratic values provide an important source of inspiration for contemporary Islamic activism, the development of an Islamic democracy which upholds both democratic and Islamic values is not an alien possibility, at least theoretically.

9.3. Exclusionary Identity Politics as an Impediment to Democratization

The investigation found that intolerant identity politics and the conflict between secular nationalist and Islamic identities played a detrimental role with regard to the development of national unity and democracy in Egypt and Indonesia. Although Islam constitutes a primary component of national identity in the Arab world as well as in Indonesia, nationalism in both of these regions developed into a more or less intolerant secular ideology. While Islam provided an important source of inspiration and unity in the struggle for independence in the Arab world and Indonesia, colonialism left different legacies in these two Muslim-majority regions, particularly in relation to defining the national borders. In the post-independence era, military dictators who advocated a uniform secular nationalist identity dominated the political scene in Egypt and Indonesia. Egyptian and Indonesian nationalist rulers built authoritarian regimes that abhorred pluralism and disdained political dissent. They used the ideology of nationalism as a pretext to promote a uniform nationalist identity, suppress political expression of Islamic identity, thus eliminating or delaying the democratic process. In many cases, however, it became evident that “[e]xclusion breeds fanaticism, whereas inclusion encourages” moderation. Consequently, the investigation verified the hypothesis that the repression and exclusion of Islamic activism, rather than representing a solution to Muslim societies’ predicaments, only exasperates tension and fosters extremism.

By providing the core belief system and collective normative values for almost ninety per cent of the populace, Islam has come to constitute a major component of national identity in Egypt and Indonesia. During the colonial era, Islam also became a unifying force in the face of Western colonial powers. Whereas the all-encompassing Dutch colonialism of the archipelago brought the East Indies together into one political unit, the competition between various colonial powers for natural resources in the Middle East and North Africa fragmented the former Ottoman-controlled Arabic-speaking region into many political units regardless of domestic considerations and interests. Contrary to the case in the Arab world, Dutch colonialism in the East Indies played an indirect, positive role favourable to the development of national unity in post-

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2 Naguib Mahfouz, “Brothers in the Parliament.”
independence Indonesia. Therefore, in its struggle against colonialism, the main objective of the Indonesian nationalist revolutionary movement was independence. In the post-independence era, the objective became primarily focussed on the preservation of the revolution’s achievement and the maintenance of national unity.

In the Arab world, however, secular nationalism was initially encouraged by the European colonial powers in order to undermine Ottoman influence in the Arab region. Independence for the Arab nationalist movement was, in fact, only a major step towards the achievement of Arab unity. Consequently, rather than subsiding, the revolutionary sentiments of the Arab nationalist forces gathered momentum in the post-independence era. This is why the nationalist movement in the Arab world became much more puritan and intolerant than its Indonesian counterpart in the post-independence period.

During the early years of independence, the conflict between secular nationalist and Islamic identities and forces in Egypt and Indonesia gave the politically ambitious military elites that had strong nationalist and authoritarian tendencies the justification to thwart the democratic political process and promote a uniform national identity by coercive means. In Egypt, Abd al-Nasser’s revolutionary regime promoted a pan-Arab nationalist agenda, according to which people had to sacrifice their freedom and forfeit their political rights for the sake of Arab unity. Nasser’s vision of Arab nationalist identity was extremely exclusionary and intolerant of dissent. Accordingly, the clash with the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which was the only socially rooted and strident opposition force in Egypt, became inevitable. With the destruction of the Brotherhood’s infrastructure by Nasser’s regime, political dissent was utterly eliminated and Nasser emerged as an unchallengeable dictator. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, Indonesia’s first president and most prominent nationalist leader, President Sukarno, promoted a uniform, intolerant vision of national identity and introduced his Guided Democracy after discarding the then fledgling democratic process. Like Nasser, who dissolved all political parties and brutally suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood, Sukarno stifled political dissent by banning political parties that showed overt opposition and by persecuting critical political leaders, especially with regard to the then strongest Islamic party, Masyumi.
The military-backed authoritarian regimes, in fact, continued in Egypt and Indonesia, even with the demise of Egypt’s pan-Arab Nasserism and Indonesia’s Guided Democracy in the late 1960s. The banning of the Muslim Brotherhood and Masyumi also continued under Egypt’s post-Nasserist regimes of Sadat and Mubarak as well as throughout Indonesia’s New Order regime of Suharto. Although the leaders and activists of the Muslim Brotherhood and Masyumi, who were eventually released from prison, remained prohibited from reconstituting their organizations or forming new political parties, their social and Islamic da’wah activities were tolerated, and in some cases encouraged, by both Sadat and Suharto.

In Egypt, President Anwar al-Sadat disbanded some of the authoritarian structures and legacies of Nasser’s regime and introduced his infitah or openness policy, which was accompanied by political liberalization measures that initially appeared to be moving towards genuine democratization. In addition to the release of political prisoners, Sadat launched a new multi-party political system after disbanding Nasser’s former political machine, the Arab Socialist Union, which Sadat did not have full control of. By the late 1970s, as Sadat’s personal control over the state’s institutions and security apparatus was consolidated, the liberalization policies were quickly reversed and political freedoms and activities became largely curtailed. Although the multi-party system was officially maintained, a new personal authoritarian structure, in which political repression and coercive containment were established practices, eventually emerged. Hence, new restrictive political laws and electoral security-screening measures were introduced. In addition, massive imprisonment of political activists and opponents became the norm. These as well as other security and emergency measures that were introduced by Sadat’s successor, President Hosni Mubarak, enabled the regime’s new political machine, the National Democratic Party, to dominate the political scene in Egypt to the present day.

President Mubarak, in fact, built upon Sadat’s political legacy and skillfully utilized it as an effective means for preventing democratic progress or any meaningful political reforms. His ostensible commitment to political liberalization and multi-party politics and relative tolerance of judicial autonomy initially raised positive expectations about
the prospects of “democratization based on the rule of law”. However, with the regime’s unswerving use of the state of emergency and restrictive participatory laws to control and contain political opposition, these hopeful expectations have diminished almost entirely. The regime’s blatant exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood and persecution of its leaders and activists enabled the ruling NDP to maintain absolute domination in parliament and managed to prevent effective political reform and democratization. With its enduring gradual approach, strong organizational structure and rooted social base, the Muslim Brotherhood eventually managed to re-emerge as the most robust and only viable opposition force in Egypt. Its impressive win of 88 seats in parliament in the 2005 legislative elections, despite blatant vote-rigging and state-managed violence against opposition candidates and voters, particularly made the Brotherhood an effective catalyst for political reform.

Since the 2005 elections, the reaction of Mubarak’s regime has been unwaveringly intolerant. New security and legally restrictive measures were introduced, and political arrests and persecution of Brotherhood activists became the norm. The 2007 constitutional amendments further cemented the authoritarian elements of the regime by entrenching the exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood, removing provisions for the comprehensive judicial supervision of elections and providing new provisions for new anti-terrorism laws. In the final analysis, as long as the Brotherhood continues to be excluded from the formal political process, the prospects of democratization in Egypt are likely to remain bleak and an isolated possibility.

In Indonesia, on the other hand, General Suharto restructured the Indonesian political system and continued his predecessor’s authoritarian policies. He established a durable absolutist regime which lasted for more than three decades. Under his authoritarian New Order regime, Suharto successfully consolidated the state’s control over all spheres of society by strengthening the role of the military in the bureaucracy and politics and restricting the number of existing political parties in addition to manipulating their internal affairs. In order to diminish the formidable influence of Islamic political forces, Suharto sought to depoliticize Islamic organizations by forcing them to adopt Pancasila

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as their sole ideological basis, thus purging them of their Islamic identity and/or excluding them from formal political participation. In order to maintain and consolidate his control over the country, Suharto transformed the Functional Groups or Golkar into a military-bureaucratic political organization and used it as a means for political manipulation and containment. Military corps and civil servants were forced to observe mono-loyalty and join or support Golkar, which also enjoyed special access to government funding. Hence, throughout the New Order era, Golkar was able to secure a confident majority vote in all national elections. Under such restrictive and manipulative conditions, the role of the political parties in influencing government policies or facilitating accountability remained trivial.

Moreover, Suharto’s regime introduced repressive measures to emasculate political parties and subvert political opposition, particularly targeting Islamic oppositional forces. In addition to excluding the Masyumi party from the political process, Suharto prohibited its prominent leaders and activists from taking part in the newly formed modernist Muslim party, Parmusi. He also imposed an accommodative leadership on the party, preventing it from having effective access to Masyumi’s former mass support. Furthermore, in order to weaken the political parties and inflict on them constant internal conflicts and rifts, Suharto forced the existing political parties, with the exception of Golkar, to merge into two main coalition blocs. Islamic political parties had to merge into the PPP, while secular and Christian parties formed the PDI. With its overt Islamic identity, the PPP managed to maintain a mass base, provide a competitive ideological alternative to the state ideology of Pancasila and constitute a viable opposition to the New Order regime. Therefore, Suharto launched a comprehensive program of secularization or the indoctrination of Pancasila. In addition to his attempts to de-politicize Islam, he interfered in the internal affairs of the PPP, exacerbating rifts between its traditionalist and modernist camps. Eventually, the PPP was purged of its Islamic identity when it was forced to adopt Pancasila as its sole ideological basis and the traditionalist NU withdrew from it, as a result of regime’s interference which sidelined NU’s influence within the PPP.
9.4. The Failure of the Suppression of Islamic Activism

The findings of the thesis demonstrate that the suppression of the political expression of Islamic identity has ultimately failed in both Egypt and in Indonesia. In both cases, Islamic political forces managed to re-emerge as the most strident political opposition and effective catalysts for political reform. Despite decades of oppression as well as the hegemonic inculcation of a uniform, secular, nationalist identity, the political expression of Islamic identity continued to provide an inexorable source of inspiration for political action. Unlike Suharto’s complex manipulative tactics of allowing the formation of an Islamic party then purging it of its Islamic identity, Mubarak’s methods of excluding Islamic political forces from formal politics remained blatant. However, in order to test its strength and/or expose its underground infrastructure, Mubarak allowed the Brotherhood to participate in parliamentary elections by launching independent candidates. This explains the regime’s fluctuating tolerance and inconsistent strategy towards the Brotherhood’s activities since the early 1980s. While relatively tolerated, its prominent leaders and activists have been frequently harassed by security forces and tried before military courts. In any case, despite all these repressive measures, the Muslim Brotherhood managed to re-emerge as the strongest and only viable opposition force under Mubarak’s regime.

In general, Egyptian and Indonesian authoritarian rulers, who had secular nationalist leanings and military background, built intolerant authoritarian regimes and sought to suppress the political expression of Islamic identity. Whereas Egyptian rulers were blatant in their use of naked force and in their determination to exclude Islamic forces from the formal political process, both of the post-independence Indonesian authoritarian rulers, especially Suharto, developed sophisticated containment and co-optation strategies. With the substantial increase of the Brotherhood’s presence in Egypt’s parliament, Egyptian politics appear to be moving in a more complex and unpredictable direction. Egyptian politics until the present day seems to have developed many of the features that characterized Suharto’s New Order politics. It may only require another ‘Asian crisis’ for the Egyptian regime to collapse and follow the Indonesian path. In any case, given the popularity and social rootedness of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt’s society, the findings of the thesis confirm the hypothesis that
the democratization process will not likely progress in Egypt without the full inclusion of the socially rooted Muslim Brotherhood Movement in the formal political process.

9.5. Islamic Actors and the Prospects of Democratic Consolidation in Indonesia

The post-Suharto, fully inclusive democratization process allowed all political forces to freely organize, recruit leaders, mobilize citizens, contest elections, build political coalitions and, though not commonly, articulate political programs. This unimpeded and free political environment provided an important opportunity for conducting empirical research aimed at testing the practical choices and stances of Islamic actors and their actual commitment to the democratic rules of the game. Accordingly, the Indonesian case allowed the investigation in this thesis to empirically test and verify the hypothesis that the active participation of Islamic actors in the Indonesian democratization process seems to be consolidating, which demonstrates that neither Islam nor Islamic activism constitutes an obstacle to democracy in Muslim-majority countries. The findings of the thesis provided overwhelming evidence of positive results in this regard. The mainstream Indonesian Islamic forces have not obstructed democratic reform in their country. They have, rather, played a leading role in facilitating and stabilizing the democratization process. The thesis has systematically verified and documented the effective and positive contributions of Islamic forces to the fall of Suharto’s New Order regime and the elimination of its authoritarian legacies, to the progress of democratic transition, as well as to the enhancement of the prospects of democratic stability and consolidation.

Historically, Islamic political actors were amongst the most overt critics of Suharto’s authoritarian regime. When the anti-Suharto protests that instigated the reformasi movement began to gather momentum, Islamic organizations provided the movement with an important source of leadership and mass-base support. With his open criticism of Suharto and strong support of reformasi’s political demands, the former leader of Muhammadiyah, Amien Rais, was hailed as the father of reformasi. Traditionalist and modernist Islamic groups, most notably those that took part in the establishment of KAMMI, rallied in support of the reformasi movement, accelerating the political pressure which led to Suharto’s resignation.
Furthermore, post-Suharto Islamic parties have actively participated in legislative and constitutional democratic reforms, promoted democratic agendas, and demonstrated a consistent and unequivocal commitment to the democratic rules of the game, even when the outcome was not favourable to their cause. While minority formalist parties, such as the PPP and PBB, continue to advocate the constitutional enforcement of Islamic law, most Islamic parties, including the PKB, PAN and PKS, do not aspire to major constitutional changes. Pancasila’s nationalist principles for the majority Islamic parties and social forces do not conflict with the tenets of Islam; therefore, major amendments to the current democratic constitution, which they believe best serves the national unity, are unnecessary.

Furthermore, the only alternative to patrimonial politics which will likely lead to more institutionalized democratic practices and consolidation, appears to be emerging from the camp of the Islamic parties. The overtly Islamic party PKS, which is very close to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in its ideological and organizational outlook, is the only Indonesian party which does not rely on a personalized leadership or a specific social organization. This party managed to foster an image of a clean and visionary party and develop a coherent, policy-oriented political program. As a result, the PKS was the only Indonesian party to succeed in obtaining significant electoral growth in the 2004 parliamentary elections, where it increased the number of its parliamentary seats from seven to forty-five seats. Taking into consideration its consistent off-campaign-period social and anti-corruption activities and programs, the PKS may even increase its share of the vote further and could possibly emerge as one of the two largest Islamic parties in the coming election in 2009. With its impressive electoral success and, unlike other Indonesian parties, its reliance on policies and programs rather than patrimonialism and rhetoric, the PKS may contribute to a gradual consolidation and institutionalization of democratic practices by leading other political parties to follow its example.

In relation to the question regarding the extent to which democratic practices have been so far consolidated and institutionalized, the study found some very important points of progress as well as other challenges and weaknesses. However, this requires further and thorough consideration, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. On the one hand,
Indonesia has developed many of the features of a consolidated democracy as judged against the criteria stipulated in theories of democratic consolidation. The most important features include the elimination of authoritarian legacies or anti-democracy alternatives, the consistent commitment of all principle actors to democratic decision making and peaceful rotation of power. Other important aspects of consolidation include the development of a strong majority of public support for democratic governance.

On the other hand, the most significant challenges are concerned with the institutionalization of democratic practices and the persistence of strong patrimonial politics and weak policy-driven political programs. The only notable exception is the PKS, which seems to provide a positive prospect for the likelihood of overcoming these weaknesses in the future. The implementation of complete civilian control over the military is also an important challenge which has yet to be fully addressed, especially at regional level. At national level, however, the military has show remarkable compliance. For instance, the elimination of the military's representation in parliament and its role in the bureaucracy as well as the removal of its control over the police force, were smoothly implemented without any major resistance.

Moreover, as surveys of public attitude have demonstrated, Indonesian society has been witnessing an obvious correlation and concurrence between the rise of Islamic consciousness and the increase of public support for democracy. Consequently, in addition to the unswerving commitment of the Islamic political elite to the democratic rules of the game, a strong majority of Indonesian Muslims have come to hold the belief that democratic rule and institutions that respect Islamic values and principles are most appropriate for governing collective life in their country. In other words, democracy has become the only game in the Indonesian political arena, and the Indonesian Islamic community is unlikely to pose any threats to, or seriously hinder, democratic consolidation in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the earlier concerns of the sceptics who questioned the commitment of Islamic actors to democracy and their pessimistic expectations about the future of democratic stability and consolidation in Indonesia are becoming increasingly unwarranted.
9.6. Concluding Remarks: Limitations and Generalizability

As has been substantiated, the findings of the thesis reinforce the working hypotheses (1) that the materialization of an “Islamic democracy” is not a remote possibility; (2) that Islam is not inherently antithetical to democracy; (3) that the democratization process will not likely progress in Egypt without the full inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood in the formal political process; and (4) that the active participation of Islamic actors in the Indonesian democratization process seems to be consolidating, which demonstrates that neither Islam nor Islamic activism obstructs the process of democratic transition and consolidation in Muslim-majority countries. However, unless the limitations of the study are taken into consideration, the findings of the thesis and the conclusions drawn in light of its working hypotheses can be taken to imply unintended sweeping generalizations. Consequently, in order to avoid such unintended and unsubstantiated generalizations, a few words about the limitations of the thesis and the generalizability of its findings are necessary. Most importantly, we must keep in mind that the assertion of one possibility does not exclude other alternatives and possibilities and that, in making generalizations across time and place, we should not overlook social contexts and historical developments.

Firstly, by asserting the possibility of the correlation between Islam and democracy, the thesis does not exclude other contradicting possibilities. Similarly, the conclusion that Islamic activism does not obstruct democratic development is not intended to negate the existence of anti-democratic Islamic trends in Muslim societies. However, while undemocratic, conservative, Islamic interpretations and forces are not absent, they do not represent the mainstream Islamic political forces. What should be considered for further research is the possibility that, in certain conditions, some of the seemingly apolitical conservative forces may be drawn towards extremism if legitimate channels for voicing discontent are not available. There are many alarming indicators in this regard. The very low percentage of turnout at Egyptian elections is but one obvious example. While this may indicate a distrust and discontent about the unfairness of these elections, it can also imply a mass rejection of the Muslim Brotherhood’s gradual and peaceful approach as a viable alternative. This indeed deserves further research.
Secondly, the thesis did not aim at providing a full explanation of the factors that have contributed to the success of the democratization process in Indonesia, nor did it seek to address fully the raison d'être behind the persistence of authoritarian rule in Egypt. While Islamic actors were not the only force which facilitated the democratic transition in Indonesia, they were a primary player. Similarly, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is not the only political force pushing for political reform in Egypt, but it certainly is the only effective political opposition, at least for the time being. More importantly, rather than an obstacle to democracy, the MB has become a catalyst for democratic reform. Although legally banned, the MB remains the only alternative for overt Islamic political activism and represents a wide spectrum of Islamic currents, from conservative da'wah-oriented to politically motivated reformist trends. Considering the regime’s unswerving determination to exclude it from formal politics, it remains to be seen whether or not the MB will be able to contain its frustrated conservative elements in the foreseeable future. The continuing persecution and oppression, which only reinforce underground activism and extremism, may carry the potential danger of pushing the movement or its conservative faction into full confrontation with the regime. This represents another concern which deserves further research.

Finally, with regard to cross-national generalization, contextual and historical factors should not be overlooked. Therefore, the generalizability of the study’s conclusions is relative to the number of shared contextual, social and historical variables. Consequently, the general conclusions of this thesis can be relatively extended only to the relevant countries that share all, or at least most, of the primary factors that are emphasized in this study and shared by Egypt and Indonesia. These factors are: a vast majority Muslim population; strong historical, socially rooted and politically motivated Islamic activism; a legacy of colonial history; and, in the most part of their post-colonial history, predominant secular nationalist regimes. Obviously, many of these elements are not shared by all Muslim-majority countries. The most notable example is Saudi Arabia, which has never experienced a history of direct colonialism, strong politically-motivated Islamic activism, or a secular nationalist regime.
### Tables

#### Table 1

**The 2000 Egyptian Parliamentary Election Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party/Movement</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Percentage of Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Democratic Party (NDP) (total)</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Official NDP candidates)</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NDP-affiliated independents)</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood (MB) (independents)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wafd Party</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagammu’ Party</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasserist Party</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-elected members</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Al-Ahram Weekly, online (accessed on May 1, 2007) [available]: http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/archives/2000elec/index.htm*
Table 2

The 2005 Egyptian Parliamentary Election Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party/Movement</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Percentage of Seats</th>
<th>Gains/Losses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Democratic Party (NDP) (total)</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Official NDP candidates)</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NDP-affiliated independents)</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood (MB) (independents)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>+71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wafd Party</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagammu’ Party</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ghad Party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasserist Party</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-elected members</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Al-Ahram Weekly, online (accessed on May 23, 2007) [available]: http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/index.htm
Table 3

The 1955 Indonesian Parliamentary Election Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Valid Votes</th>
<th>Valid Votes (%)</th>
<th>Parliamentary Seats</th>
<th>Parliamentary Seats (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PNI</td>
<td>8 434 653</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masyumi</td>
<td>7 903 886</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>6 955 141</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKI</td>
<td>6 176 914</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSII</td>
<td>1 091 160</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkindo</td>
<td>1 003 325</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partai Katholik</td>
<td>770 740</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>753 191</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murba</td>
<td>199 588</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4 496 701</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37 785 299</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Komisi Pemilihan Umum- KPU (General Elections Commission), online (accessed on January 26, 2007) [available]: http://www.kpu.go.id/Sejarah/sejarah_list.php
Table 4

Elections Results in the New Order (1971–1997 Elections)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLKAR</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>18.67</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parmusi</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSII</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perti</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PDI               | 6.9   | 30    | 8.6   | 29    | 7.9   | 29    |
| Parkindo          | 1.34  |       |       |       | 10.9  | 40    |
| Murba             | 0.09  |       |       |       | 14.9  | 56    |
| IPKI              | 0.62  |       |       |       |       | 11.9  |
| Katolik           | 1.10  |       |       |       |       |       |

Source: Komisi Pemilihan Umum- KPU (General Elections Commission), online (accessed on February 12, 2007) [available]: http://www.kpu.go.id/Sejarah/sejarah_list.php
Table 5

The 1999 Indonesian Parliamentary Election Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Votes %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seats %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDI-P</td>
<td>35,706,618</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLKAR</td>
<td>23,742,112</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKB</td>
<td>13,336,963</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>11,330,387</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>7,528,936</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBB</td>
<td>2,049,708</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PK</td>
<td>1,436,565</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Komisi Pemilihan Umum- KPU (General Elections Commission), online (accessed on March 16, 2007) [available]: http://www.kpu.go.id/Sejarah/sejarah_list.php

Table 6

The 2004 Parliamentary Election Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Percentage Vote</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Percentage of Seats</th>
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<td>Golkar</td>
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<td>PDI-P</td>
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<td>9,248,764</td>
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<td>PD</td>
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<td>PKS</td>
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<td>PBB</td>
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<td>11</td>
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Source: Komisi Pemilihan Umum- KPU (General Elections Commission), online (accessed on March 26, 2007) [available]: http://www.kpu.go.id/Sejarah/sejarah_list.php
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