CHAPTER 1

State and Political Islam: Theoretical Enquiry

The evolution of the modern state has been a long process, from small associations, kinship groups and other forms of associations to a complex state structure with defined boundaries, economies, a political system, judicial system and other systems of administration. Simply described society is a group of people who share a common culture, occupy a particular territorial area, and feel themselves to constitute a unified and distinct entity. society comprises of individuals who would identify their needs and aspirations as part of the larger social structure. It consists of groups of individuals with diverse socio-political and economic characters within a common territory.

The relation between the state and the society has been one of mutual exchange of powers and functions. For the states to exist, individuals and groups have had to concede authority in key areas such as defence. The role of the state in public and private spheres of society has been debated over the ages. The powers of the state, its functions and its limitations, reflect the socio-economic equations within the society it encompasses. The state-society equations define its social systems, the institutions of governance, modes of production, class and social formations.

The chief actor in the state-society interface is the institution of the government. It is through the government that the state exercises its various powers.

The government and state are invariably used as interchangeable terms. The government is seen either as a body of individuals who fill up positions of authority in the state or as an instrument to exercise power or as the process of governing, or as an agency which maintains an ordered rule in society. Classifications of the government are made either according to the arrangements of the offices through which it functions or through the relationship between the governing and the governed.

State-society relations are complimentary. The nature of a polity would define the role of the government in its society, the powers and functions of the state and the nature of the society governed. For example, if the state system were monarchical than the social structure would be feudal, and the economic system would be agrarian. Similarly capitalism would connote a democratic state system with pluralism characterizing its polity, economy and society.

In the 19th century the role of the government was limited to collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order and the basic state infrastructure. The interaction
between the state and the individual has increased manifold with time. The individuals are more participative in the functioning of the government and government has taken on more functions that affect the everyday life of an individual. The behaviour of a state and the consequences of that behaviour have been coming under increasing scrutiny. The role of the state, whatever its configuration, in the private and public spheres have never clearly been demarcated. The fallout of the scrutiny varies according to the responses received. If the state responds positively, its credibility and support base improves. However, if the response is not constructive, it leads to an erosion of the states' credibility.

The development of a specific state and social system cannot, however, be studied in isolation. With the passage of time, as the world has shrunk due to more economic, social, cultural, political interactions, so has the development of the two systems. Classification of a state system or a social system cannot be narrow or fixed. States and societies change with changes in regional, local and larger international arenas. The changes in one are responsible for the changes in the other. The post-colonial Third World is a case in point. The nature of the states in the Third World, have changed from socialist welfare to liberal democratic capitalist states.

The moot question in a state-society interface is that of power. Different state responses to different social demands, and the different social demands on the state, yield different results. How much of the dominant social groups or the social customs and bindings are able to guide and mould the government, and from the other end the extent to which the state is able to influence the making of the social setup, indicates their power over the other. The nature of the state-society interface is decided by the interaction between the two forces, at whatever level and at whatever point of time, whether complimentary or hostile.

Neither of the two actors, state or society, can be taken as a homogenous unit or a single identity on its own. There are multiple layers of both state and society, and both interact at different levels in different fashions. The highest political and policy-making levels of the government are important, and the social reaction mobilized by particular representative groups with charismatic leadership is significant. However, other sections of government and society, which could be the lower rung of the government staff, or the government representatives in remote areas, or the services provided by the workers of the non-governmental organizations supporting an opposition party, are equally important in shaping the society or helping the government respond to the society. The reactions the policy makers will get would be totally different from the
reaction a small village tax collector or health worker would get. Similarly, the role the local leaders would play in mobilizing the public opinion may not be of the same magnitude as that of a prominent leader. Also, as in the case of Egypt, the role of the welfare branches of the Muslim Brotherhood would have a more far-reaching impact than the ideological formulations of the Al-Azhar.

Changes in modern times are more visible, far-reaching, tangible and affect state and society more directly. The modern day states and societies are not isolated, homogenous, self-sufficient units; they are capable of getting profoundly affected by larger changes in other parts of the world. The economic forces of capitalism, socialism, and neo-liberalism are capable of affecting the policies of the individual states as much as the direct intervention of the multi-lateral funding agencies. The new ideologies and their proponents are as likely to be affected by the changes in the society they represent as much as by the theories in other parts of the globe. Marxism, capitalism, neo-liberalism and the clash of civilizations will have takers not only in the continents of their origin, but in remote African and Asian countries as well.

This chapter will attempt to deal with the various state-society interfaces and the impact of one on the other. It will try to form a framework for understanding the various interfaces between state and society in West Asia and North Africa in general and in Egypt and Algeria in particular. The dominant social actor here is religion. Political religion is one of the most powerful political players in the region. It is seen not only as a political vent for the disgruntled sections of society, but also an ideology that is capable of providing an alternative state system in the region. Political Islam is also understood as a response to the challenges posed by modernity, globalisation and Westernisation in the region.

The focus of this thesis would be on the dynamics of political religion and it interaction with the state, at different points of time, beginning with the colonial era to the independence movements to the food riots of 1988 and the elections of 1995. It would concentrate the various points at which state and society interact. More specifically the focus would be on the point at which society shapes the policies of the state and when the state influences and moulds the growth of the society. The points of interface between the state and society are 1) economy; 2) polity; 3) judicial and 4) impact of larger international developments.
In West Asia and North Africa the impetus for change has come both from within the region and without. US foreign policy, the creation of Israel, the economic pressure of the multilateral funding agencies and developments in the other countries in the region are the external factors of change. The internal factors on the other hand include the corruption within the administrative setup, the failure of the socialist model of development, and partial or lopsided development of the economy, political stagnation and the inability of the state to provide a welfare cover for its citizens.

The case studies being taken in this thesis, Egypt and Algeria, are representational of the dilemmas faced by the Third World, the Arab world and the African sub-continent. They were colonies to the two most powerful colonizers of modern history, i.e. Britain and France. What is important about these two countries is the role they played in crystallizing the role of religion as a political force. Political Islam owes its ideological leadership and philosophical origin to the two countries.

I. STATE

Broadly, the concept of state encompasses a set of institutions that possess the means of legitimate coercion, exercised over a definite territory and its population, referred to as society. The social character of the state defines its political and economic structures and by the same rule, the character of the state system defines its social structure and the economic system it encompasses. Every state, within its territorial boundaries, has a unique character. However no two states, despite common borders, or cultural, political, social, economic similarities would have the same character.

The state in West Asia and North Africa too cannot be given a specific character or a rigid classification. It contains a wide spectrum of political systems of governments, social and economic setups. The states in the region vary from being modern monarchies to socialist states to military dictatorships to theocracies and many more. Every state is a unique combination of different state systems.

The new states in the modern world cannot be limited by rigid definitions. The flexibility of character comes with changes the state and society have to accommodate with time and history. A state can borrow ideologies, roles and functions from other states. While framing their constitutions, a lot of the Third World countries borrowed from the various existing political and successful models of the West. With the passage of time, and the changing global economic and political scenario, the original ideologies and functions of the Third World states shifted to accommodate the new world order. This gave the states a multiplicity of character and made every state a unique system on its own. The
changes in the state systems could be conscious decision of the constitution makers and political leaders in power in the states, or the exigencies of time forced them to shape their states into a multi-functional state. For example, a state like Jordan is monarchy, yet have an elected system of government, and an economy, which is a combination of feudalism, capitalism and socialism. The decision to be this combination was the result of their history, economy, polity and most importantly of the social composition. 

Approaches to the study of socio-political changes in developing countries have been very strongly influenced by debates concerning the process of modernization of Europe. It was only after the Second World War that the focus of the debate shifted from the social-structural transformations of Western Europe to the parameters of modernity, modernization, development, colonialism, dependency and concerns with bringing the "state back in" in the Third World context. The shifts in focus were an attempt to analyse the reasons for the failure of the Third World states to emulate the models of development of Europe. The new approaches tried to explain why the experiments in modernization, which had been so immensely successful in the West, failed to deliver the same level of prosperity and technological advancement in the rest of the world.

**The Modernization Approach:** The 1950s and 1960s was dominated by the debate on modernization. Under this paradigm all societies were classified as either traditional or modern, and the focus was on the destabilizing impact of socio-economic development. For the developing world, it was assumed, that they would also undergo the same development problems that Western Europe faced in the 19th century. The problem with this framework has been that the main agent of socio-economic change in the Third World has not been the entrepreneur but the state. The approach ignores the exogenous political process while conceptualising tradition and modernity as fixed oppositional categories. The relative absence of entrepreneurial initiative is actually very often a crucial part of the explanation of the continued underdevelopment that plagues these societies. State actors, not surprisingly in these circumstances, have often seen their role as necessarily one of stepping into the breach, have deliberately pushed the processes of social change, looking for haste more than harmony. Yet, at the same time, many post-war, post colonial states have turned out to be hemmed in by domestic and international forces on the one hand, and chronically unstable and ineffectual on the other. \(^3\)
The Dependency Perspective: Critique of the modernization theory came from the neo-Marxists and the nationalist economists in the Third World, in the 1960s and the 1970s. The perspective changed from the lack of investment and improper capitalism to the impact of colonial exploitation on the developing world. The history of development, under this framework, is traced not from the history of capitalism in the country but from the first interaction between the colony and the colonizer. The emphasis is on how colonialism itself fostered underdevelopment.

The countries that gained independence after the Second World War are also those that suffer from neo-colonialism. Even after granting a formal sovereignty, the continuing economic dependency maintained the colonial connections in subtler but in a more exploitative and harsher form. The colonization now is seen as not of one country over another, but of one developed, technologically advanced block over the lesser developed block. The dependency theory recognizes that contemporary developing countries differ in important respects from the industrializing Western countries of the past, and is aware of the constraints of the world economic scenario on the developing countries. It focuses on the interaction of political, social, and economic variables in a systematic study of development.

The problem with the dependency theory lies in the fact that the Western development and their policies cannot be held totally responsible for the ills of the developing world. The newly independent states, which chose alternative developmental models or framed their own policies, are as much to blame as the external pressures exerted by the Western world.

The State in Society framework:
In the 20th century, the dominant question remains that of the relation between social transformations and their relation with the state. The state has managed to overwhelmingly take over the society and become the biggest and most powerful force in moulding the character of the latter. It has definite moral order, determines the parameters of daily social relations and even establishes the economic agenda for it. Analysts choose between society centred and state centred approaches. How the state power is organized influences the social and economic actors and indirectly contributes to the patterns of change. Joel S. Midgal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue in their book State Power and Social forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World, 1994, have attempted to formulate a new framework for analysing state society relations.
The state-society framework of analysis focuses broadly on 1) how much the states vary in their effectiveness based on their ties to society, both quantitatively and qualitatively. As states are not the sole central actors in society, and are rarely free from the social forces, the latter can curb their powers. Even the most authoritarian regimes can face a check by social forces.

2) The states must be disaggregated. If states have to be viewed in their social contexts, it is important to study not only the peak organizations of states and key social groups, often located at the centre of the polity in the capital city, but also state-society interactions at the periphery.

3) Social forces, like states, are contingent on specific empirical conditions. The political action and influence of a social group are not wholly predictable from the relative position of that group within the social structure. No class has a historically pre-designed social role. Class compositions and their political powers can fluctuate with time.

4) States and other social forces may be mutually empowering. Interactions between the state and social forces can be either mutually beneficial, or may favour one party over the other, or they may cut into each other's powers and spheres of influence. In some cases, the state actors may ally with select social groups and try to play off one against the other. The real world situations do not conform to a set or specific pattern. The complexities of each state will vary and so will the state-society equations.

"....... patterns of domination are undermined by key struggles spread through what I call society's multiple arenas of domination and opposition. Officials at different levels of the state are key figures in these struggles, interacting -- at times, conflicting -- with an entire constellation of social forces in disparate arena. Any individual part of the state may respond as much (or more) to the distinctive pressures it faces in particular arenas as it does to the rest of the state organization."

Any state, particularly a Third World state, is composed of a combination of ideologies rather than a single ideology. The multiplicity of ideologies, in the newly independent states after the Second World War, was essentially an attempt by the leaders to merge the best features of the economy, polity and change of the West with the uniqueness of their own countries. Also with time, the ideologies and the priorities of the state in the Third World have shifted to accommodate changes that were taking place in the larger politico-economic and social scene. With the end of the Second World War, the world became a smaller place. The integration of the economic setups and the political and technological setups did not leave any country untouched. In the process, the original
ideological goals it had set for itself, have changed to accommodate the new global changes.

Political ideologies are usually formed on the basis of criticism of state policies and flaw in governance. Alternate political ideologies seek large social platforms to garner and mobilize support. Societies make different types of demands on the state and the responses to these public demands are decided by the objectives of the state. The nature of the state, and its responses however vary according to the political history of the state.

This is truer for the Third World states than for the other states. Most Third World states have had to deviate from their original ideological goals to help them accommodate in the rapidly changing world around them. In West Asia and North Africa, for example, most states adopted the ideology of socialism as state ideology, making the state into a welfare state. With time, and the failure of the state industries to provide an adequate solution to the problems facing their society, and with the pressure from the multilateral funding agencies to return loan amounts, the states their policies to partial capitalism, in the form of liberalization.

A strong and powerful social force like religion may never be able to solve most of the eco-political problems, and may never be able to gain enough strength to even become the ruling force, but it has the potential to be able to influence the small and larger policies of the state. Thus in West Asia, even though after independence the states opted for a socialist pattern of development, the pull of political Islam forced them to adopt measures to either blunt their socialism or adopt measures that can largely be called ‘populist’.

Since neither the state nor the society is a static phenomenon, it changes every time it comes in contact with other forces. All large and small changes in the larger world or within domestic policies will either make the forces of state and society come closer together or will set them on a collision course. These interactions give both the state and society a fluid character, a changing set of goals and different ideological orientations with time.

There are both external and internal factors that shape changes within a polity. Factors like globalisation, capitalism, socialism or even a clash of civilizations would provide powerful tools for political parties with alternative political and economic ideologies. Technological revolutions and modernization have as much a chance of reshaping the
basic character of a state as concepts like national pride and loyalty to the nation-states.

The interaction between social forces and states forms the basis of change. Situating a study in broader social settings helps comprehending the reasons why the states succeeded or failed in their politico-economic tasks, and why the society reacted to the changes the way it did. The relation between the state and society is mutually empowering for both. They both decide each other's limitations and give each other strength to face changes.

II. SOCIETY

Society is as susceptible to change in character and constitution, history and boundary as the state. It cannot be limited by definitions and parameters. The problem with trying to fix a definite identity to society is that it overlooks the struggles between sections of society, and in a democracy -- it overlooks the ability of the system to co-opt the various strata of society. The society is not just a part of the state over which the latter exercises its power and authority. Society also actively contributes in the formation of the state system by giving it the population to govern over, by accepting or rejecting the changes that the state system proposes and by providing leadership for both the governing and the opposing ideologies. It is the popular reaction to events that assist the government in framing its policies, and it is the societal acceptance of policies that help the state maintain its system of governance.

The role of the leadership in modern states is a very important component in deciding the nature of the state. The political leaders, in the post-independence states, laid premium on the concept of nationalism and the primacy of the state, loyalties to it and the importance of having a strong nation-state. This focus has given the leaders unlimited powers in their countries and a control over the lives of people they lead. The leaders aim at creating an aura of invincibility about the concept of state, and attempt to formulate state norms, rules, and regulations about every aspect of the lives of its citizens.

In Egypt and Algeria, just after independence the leaders, who took over from the colonizers, did not evolve any form of socio-economic-political system, rather they chose a particular ideology from among the existing ones, retained the system of governance and decided to implement what they felt was best suited to the interests of their country. So if the countries implemented the socialist model, it was because the leadership chose it over any other model. The leaders very carefully implemented the
Western economic model without allowing for political pluralism. Their ability to do so was mostly due to the charisma of the leadership, and the quite acceptance of the changes by the society.

The appeal of the alternative state, offered by the political Islamists, also depends on the leadership that propagates the ideology. The appeal of the leader and the ability of the leaders to gather a mass support base provide enough pressure to make the government accept the changes demanded by them. Incorporation of religion in defining the basic state structure, the acceptance of civil laws according to the religious texts and as propagated by the Islamists were some of the social pressures that the state had to yield to, initially. In response, the extremely powerful mobilizing force of political Islam, under its leadership decided not to stake a claim in governance.

There are no fixed rules by which the society can be made to abide, as the changes in the nature of society, its reaction to events and forces of change are random. The society accepts, resists or rejects change, as it deems necessary. The flexibility and arbitrariness of society gives it a unique character. In any given situation, two societies are capable of diametrically opposite reactions. The reaction to political religion, for example, in a particular region may vary considerably from country to country. In Iran and Sudan it overthrew the regime in power and established a theocratic state, while in Egypt where the ideologies of political Islam were founded and formulated, the societies were more tolerant and allowed the state to work out formulas for partial absorption of the ideology.

An example of the nature of change in the attitude of a society would be that of Algeria. Modern history of Algeria has been one of violent resistance against changes in the state. It took the French a long and bloody battle to establish their rule in the country, and later to give in to the violent independence movement of Algeria. They had experienced an extremely violent politico-religious movement in the country. However, the same politico-religious movement of the late 1980s was marked by non-violence and blending into a modern system that would allow for a peaceful transfer of power. The violence and militancy in the Islamist movement came much later, with the reversal of the democratic process and the state repression of the Islamist movement.

**Political religion**

Religion as a social force is not a new phenomenon. In the simplest of forms, religion is the belief in the supernatural. On an individual plane, it is the quest of an individual to
attain spiritual salvation. On a larger social plane, it gathers people with similar beliefs and organizes them into a social group.⁹

There are two levels on which political activism of a religion are debated: the first is that of the religion having politics ingrained in its essential character; and the second of the politics of religion. In the first case, all justifications for political activism are seen in the inherent history of the religion. In the West Asia and North Africa context, this would typically translate into the logic of the 'clash of civilizations'. Analysts like Bernard Lewis or the author of the theory, Samuel Huntington¹⁰, would see the rise of a politically active Islam as a result of the inherent flaws in the religion of Islam which from its very inception has been a politically active force, has a history of political violence ingrained in it, and cannot co-exist with the other two Semitic religions, Judaism and Christianity.¹¹ Since there is a rigidity in the religion, which is regressive, anti-modernity and non-developmental, it automatically leads to a confrontation between Islam and the other world religions. The failure of democracy to succeed in the region, and the inability of the region to develop into a modern economy, despite the oil and natural gas wealth, are seen more as examples of the religion holding back development, than the failure of the modern state to develop in the region. It overlooks the fact that all religions, including Islam, have played a political role. Under-development is the result of a combination of factors rather than just one.

The second framework, which sees religion as a tool used by political forces in the case of West Asia and North Africa, uses the economic inequality, corruption, failure of modernization and poverty as providing the mass base for political forces to exploit religion. It is seen as a reaction to the hegemony of the west, which through Israel is trying to re-colonize the region and establish its economic, political and cultural hegemony. On the domestic front it is seen as a reaction to the corruption and the failed nationalist and socialist policies of the regimes in power. The economic stagnation and the consequent impoverishment of the population, the falling per capita income, the reliance of the government on external assistance to retain power, the failure of democracy are all reasons for the masses to support alternative ideologies and political parties with a diametrically opposite agenda than what the regime in power offers. Due to the absence of any other ideological parties, the religion-based parties emerge the strongest in the region.

Political religion is to be understood as a socio-political activity disassociated from religion. It has characteristics that distinguish it from being a totally religious movement, and its incomplete and partially developed political ideology do not allow it
to be a totally political movement either. Political religion will have to be understood more as a social movement with a political leadership than as a political movement with a social backing. In West Asia and North Africa, political religion has served more as a political pressure group, which leads and guides the masses from religious platforms. Political religion does not offer an alternative to the system of governance or a radical change in the existing systems of governance. It represents more an expression of political grievances of the masses, in religious terms, giving the entire problem a religious framework and a channel for venting the suppressed aspirations of the masses. It acts as a link between the state and the society.

Political religionists, whom Martyn E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby refer to as fundamentalists, bind individuals with similar faiths, united in their common experience of oppression, suffering, dislocation and fighting the evil influence and politics played by the other religions. They see it as a reaction to the dislocation of values and identity due to the changing and modernizing world, which displaces people from their very roots. The idea sold to these people is of he need to unite to maintain tradition, culture, values and the every essence of their faith.

They are modern constructs, and so like the other modern political ideologies, speak the same language of secularism, nationalism, development, political pluralism and welfare. The difference between them and the other ideologies is in the justifications used. The political religionists use history and in the fundamental tenets of the religion. Political religion criticizes the existing state system on moral grounds. It also offers an alternative, which is not just indigenous, but also has a religious sanction to it. It seeks refuge in a past, to formulate a system of governance, which gave the region a golden era in history. The need of the past to be repeated to restore the glory, prosperity and justice, is very strong. In the Third World the struggles are not simply over foreign or economic policies, but are more about the very essence of how the societies should be constituted and governed. The dominance of state organizations in such domestic struggles cannot simply be taken for granted, the role of the state here is itself and object of struggle.13

Political religionists tap the ideological inconsistencies and policy failures of the non-fundamentalist governments to garner a mass base. They do not have a solution to the problem, which would be permanent, effective and can be dealt with systematically. They react to the situation on the ground and seek power through the short-term movements they are able to lead.
"Fundamentalists provoke a crisis, identify their cause with the nation's cause, and challenge the government to do the enforcing. .......... Fundamentalists shrewdly perceive, exploit, and draw strength from the absolutism implied in the very concept of the sovereign nation; they drink from the same wells and are eager to give a name to the principle of sovereignty, whether that name be Rama, Allah, Yahweh, or God."

Significantly, the leadership of the political religionists consists of political leaders and professional politicians. It is the political leadership that is responsible for converting a social movement into a political one. They give the movement a definite agenda, an ideology, an alternative to the existing system and an organizational structure which can carry the agenda and mobilize support from the remotest parts of the country. If the movement is successfully able to form the government, it is these leaders, who govern the country, with the assistance of either the existing system of administration or with a new one. Everyday governance and dealings with the rest of the world takes precedence over establishing the religious state that was promised to the population that brought them to power.

Political religion dictates more than just the norms of social behaviour, it works towards the establishment of a theocratic state, where political religion would be not only a social actor but would form the alternative system of government. The states in West Asia and North Africa, after gaining independence opted for socialism as the state ideology, but could not overlook the role of the Islamists as a political force, and were forced to adopt legal and certain civil policies from the sharia.

**Political Islam**

In West Asia and North Africa, Islam played a dominant role in the anti-imperialist movements as a platform for mobilization. Though it had the ability to draw support for the cause, it was not accepted as an ideology competent enough to govern the country after independence. It was a guiding force, but not something that could lead the country to a path of progress or even deliver prosperity to all. That is why the newly independent states adopted Islam as the state religion, but did not opt to become "Islamic states".

Political Islam as a political ideology originated in Egypt, where the leaders of the twentieth century formulated a political ideology out of Islam. It sought to unify the entire Islamic world into a socio-economic—political and geographic force. The pan-Islamic, and the pan-Arab movements, which aimed at unifying the region into one block based on religion and race were inspired from this school of thought. Algeria, on the other hand, did not have the privilege of having an establishment formulating an
ideology. Inspired by the Egyptian example the political Islam that originated in Algeria, was a means of mobilizing the masses as a socio-political movement. It provided leadership to those countries who did not have an established religious system, and political opposition had to be organized from the grassroots, periphery and taken to the centre. After independence however, the role of religion as a political force shifted from aiming at the ouster of foreign rulers to a different set of national priorities. The changing character of the political religion corresponded with the changing character of the state. When the focus of the newly independent state was development, economic progress and adoption of Western technology for the betterment of the country, the religious leaders and ideologues focused on the co-relation between Islam and science and technology to justify the government’s move. However, as the economic stagnation and corruption started taking a toll on the economy by the early 1980s, the focus had shifted to demanding better governance by people who were morally upright and honest god-fearing Muslims. After the Second World War, and more importantly after the end of the cold war, political Islam with its worldviews, ability to formulate a political and economic alternative to capitalism and potential to provide leadership to the disgruntled masses was seen as an alternative to the dominant political ideologies of the West, namely capitalism, communism and socialism. The importance of political Islam came into prominence after the Iranian revolution and the end of the cold war. The focus then shifted to the anti-West and the anti-Israeli and anti-secular regimes in the region. The failure of the three Arab-Israeli wars, the increasing poverty and indebtedness in the region, the increasing presence of the Western military forces in the region all combined to highlight the role of Islam as the majority religion and an alternative to all forms of Western ideologies. In the period 1988-1995, however, the force of political Islam had become the most formidable political force of the region. In Egypt and in Algeria when the concept of a religion as a political threat was strong enough to topple the government, and the government reacted with a vehemence and political tactics to contain the threat. The state-society relation was most tenuous and the possibility of a totally new kind of polity emerging in the region was at its peak. It was at this time that all the possible players, who could influence the nature of polity, were involved in deciding the fate of the state and society.
There have been two approaches for understanding the dynamics of religion and politics in the region. The first is the role of Islam as a political religion. It has been assumed that since the inception of the religion, and due to the fact that the founder of the religion was also a political statesman, politics became an inherent part of the religion. Adherents of this view tend to view the history of the region after the establishment of Islam as the history of Islam itself, and not as a regional history. The other approach sees Islam being used a political tool by leaders to allow for a transfer of power from the existing government to them. Islam does not offer a comprehensive socio-political-economic alternative but acts as a platform around which the disgruntled sections of society can gather and work towards a common political agenda. The mass base of the Islamist parties, it is argued, comprises of the educated unemployed, marginalized sections of society who support the religious parties looking for a quick redressing of their grievances.15

Political Islam has to be differentiated from Islamic fundamentalism, resurgence and revivalism. All the terms are used to explain the various political activism associated with religion.

Fundamentalism refers to the political ideologies which are looking to the roots of the religion's history to find a solution to the modern day problems of poverty, unemployment, corruption, increasing Western influence in the socio-political fields. Religious Fundamentalism, as a term was coined to describe the earlier Protestant Christian movement, whose focus was the return to the fundamentals of the religion. A fundamentalist movement always attempts to restore the religion in its pristine and original form, and in that form, it seeks to find solutions to the contemporary problems. The difference between Islamism or political Islam and resurgent fundamentalism is that the former is a wider term, encompassing the ideas of political alternatives to the state, while fundamentalism just connotes a return to the basics of the religion.16

Islamic revivalism, resurgence, fundamentalism, and political Islam are terms usually associated with the Iranian revolution. The unexpected ouster of the Shah and his replacement by a cleric as the head of state left the world in a state of shock. Islam was now being seen as a powerful force that could overtake the polities in the region and disturb the equation between them and the rest of the world. It was also seen as an ideology that could fill the void left after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The US media saw in the rise of the Islamic revolutions, the rise of a new enemy which would be much more virulent threat to the principles of capitalism, democracy, liberalism and freedom which the first world represented. It was seen as a regressive movement that
## Egypt, Arab Rep. at a glance

### Key Economic Ratios and Long-Term Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981-91</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>98.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-01</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-05</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **GDP (US$ billions)**
- **Exports of goods and services/GDP**
- **Gross domestic savings/GDP**
- **Current account balance/GDP**
- **Interest payments/GDP**
- **Gross national savings/GDP**
- **Domestic interest payments/GDP**
- **Total debt/GDP**
- **Total debt service/exports**
- **Present value of debt/GDP**
- **Present value of debt/exports**

### Structure of the Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private consumption</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General government</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports of goods and</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Growth of Investment and GDP (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of GDP</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Growth of Exports and Imports (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Exports</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Imports</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** 2001 data are preliminary estimates.

*The diamonds show four key indicators in the country (in bold) compared with its income-group average. If data are missing, the diamond will be incomplete.*
### PRICES and GOVERNMENT FINANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic prices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percentage change)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit GDP deflator</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percentage of GDP, includes current transfers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current budget balance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall surplus/deficit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TRADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total exports (fob)</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>6,388</td>
<td>7,078</td>
<td>8,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>2,334</td>
<td>2,895</td>
<td>3,105</td>
<td>3,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other agriculture</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactures</td>
<td>1,163</td>
<td>2,844</td>
<td>3,108</td>
<td>3,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total imports (cif)</td>
<td>11,425</td>
<td>17,860</td>
<td>18,432</td>
<td>19,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1,802</td>
<td>1,395</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>1,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel and energy</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>2,451</td>
<td>3,233</td>
<td>3,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital goods</td>
<td>3,340</td>
<td>5,639</td>
<td>6,396</td>
<td>7,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export price index</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import price index</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of trade</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BALANCE of PAYMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exports of goods and services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports of goods and services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource balance</td>
<td>-3,869</td>
<td>-3,236</td>
<td>-6,774</td>
<td>-4,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net income</td>
<td>-497</td>
<td>-363</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>1,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net current transfers</td>
<td>2,230</td>
<td>7,419</td>
<td>4,679</td>
<td>3,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current account balance</td>
<td>-2,136</td>
<td>3,820</td>
<td>-1,163</td>
<td>-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing items (net)</td>
<td>2,606</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-1,862</td>
<td>-832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in net reserves</td>
<td>-470</td>
<td>-3,843</td>
<td>3,025</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXTERNAL DEBT and RESOURCE FLOWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>22,078</td>
<td>24,869</td>
<td>28,988</td>
<td>28,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>1,887</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>1,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total debt outstanding</td>
<td>23,618</td>
<td>26,756</td>
<td>30,674</td>
<td>30,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total debt service</td>
<td>1,551</td>
<td>6,748</td>
<td>1,793</td>
<td>1,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of net resource flows</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official grants</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official creditors</td>
<td>1,518</td>
<td>1,385</td>
<td>-587</td>
<td>-774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private creditors</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>-202</td>
<td>-201</td>
<td>-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign direct investment</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio equity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitments</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbursements</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal repayments</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net flows</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>-98</td>
<td>-46</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest payments</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net transfers</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>-249</td>
<td>-111</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Inflation

#### Inflation (%)

- **1981**: 15%
- **1991**: 10%
- **1998**: 96%
- **2000**: 98%
- **2001**: 75%

### Export and import levels

#### Export and import levels (US$ mill.)

#### Export and import levels (US$ mill.)

#### Export and import levels (US$ mill.)

#### Export and import levels (US$ mill.)

### Current account balance to GDP (%)

#### Current account balance to GDP (%)

#### Current account balance to GDP (%)

#### Current account balance to GDP (%)

### Composition of 2001 debt (US$ mill.)

- **A**: IBRD
- **B**: IDA
- **C**: IMF
- **D**: Other multilateral
- **E**: Private
- **F**: Short-term
- **G**: Bilateral

- **A**: 1,269
- **B**: 1,389
- **C**: 894
- **D**: 20,948
- **E**: 1,506
- **F**: 272
- **G**: 1,506

The World Bank Group: This table was prepared by country unit staff; figures may differ from other World Bank published data.
would take the region and the adherents of the faith away from science and development.

The reasons for political Islam vary from country to country, but common catalysts and concerns are identifiable. Secular nationalism (whether in the form of liberal nationalism, Arab nationalism, or socialism) has not provided a sense of national identity or produced a strong prosperous society.¹⁷

Political Islam is seen as an political force which can at any point turn into a revolutionary force and topple the secular regimes in the region. The support to the Islamic movements is measured in the rise in piety in the region, particularly after the success of the Iranian revolution and the economic decline that started in the mid-1980s. A lot of factors have been attributed to the rise of political Islam in the region. Scholars have traced the political activism of the religion from various points in history starting from the failure of the Arab-Israeli wars, and from the establishment of the state of Israel, the economic stagnation and decline in the per capita incomes, the success of the Iranian revolution, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the gulf crisis of 1991. The external factors coupled with domestic crises of the lack of political openness, failures of democracy, the fallout of the structural adjustment programmes all gave strong reasons for the region to revolt against the incumbent states.

How a society will react to a particular kind of situation, at any given point of time, cannot be predicted with certainty. It may react to a similar situation later, in a markedly different manner than it had earlier. A large section of society disgruntled over economic failures would not necessarily rise in revolt against the state or the system of governance. In the West Asian and African region, or in any other country, a rise in piety does not necessarily translate into a religious revivalism, or support for militant fundamentalism. It would also not translate into an expression of dissatisfaction against the government.

For religion to become a political force, the high level of individual religiosity alone is not sufficient. The ideologies of leaders, their sermons alone do not necessarily have any control over the adherents. The leaders need a control over a service that is vital to society.¹⁸ The hold of the Muslim Brotherhood and the FIS over the welfare services, mostly in the form of non-governmental organizations is a pointer to the need felt by these organizations to use a service to be able to retain a hold over the population.
III. State and Society in North Africa:

The North African states are variously classified as Third World states, Arab states, rentier states, socialist states, neo-colonial states and can be classified under many more heads. They have been broadly clubbed with other states, which would share either the same history or economy or social structure. Their earliest orientation was towards socialism and their constitution describes them as socialist states. However, though the countries in the region share a few common features with the rest of the Third World in being a colony of a European power, or with the rest of the Arab world as the predominant population is Arab, or with Africa, due to their geographical positioning, their histories and societal setups are very different from each other, and from the rest of the countries in the region. The factors which will have to be kept in mind, before reaching any conclusion about the states will be 1) colonial legacy; 2) the historical, geographical, social, cultural, political economic similarities and the same diversities within the nation-states.

The region has its own diverse socio-political-cultural-economic variations. The polities in West Asia and North Africa range from monarchies to democracies and from theocracies to military dictatorships. The common factors that affect the developments in the region however can be broadly divided into external and internal factors. The external factors are broadly the increasing military and political presence of the West in the region (particularly the US), the question of Israel, and on the economic front the hegemony of the Western capital from sources of funding (the multi-lateral funding agencies) to the unequal trade and economic practices in the name of liberalization and globalisation. The internal factors are the inability of the state to provide a welfare cover to the masses, illiteracy/unemployment, poverty, urbanism, corruption the wide disparity in incomes, and the lack of a political vent to air the public grievances.

Rentier state

The entire West Asian and African region is commonly described as a rentier state\textsuperscript{19}, a theory by which the state receives most of its income by the sale of its natural resources. The theory was formulated after taking the oil wealth of the Arab gulf into consideration. In the 1960s and 1970s oil was tapped and the rent accruing from the sale of the oil gave the region a very large economic leverage. The rentier state theory is one of the main theories used to explain the lack of democracy in the region. Since the regimes in power do not need to tax the people to raise revenue and run the government, they do not need to be accountable to them either.
The theory was formulated to explain the lack of development and poverty in the region, despite the oil wealth. It was understood that since the governments in the region did not have to collect taxes or revenues directly from the people they were not obliged to be accountable to their population. The few, who run the government, control the resources and have mostly mismanaged the surplus money on personal luxuries rather than disperse it on the welfare of the masses.

The rentier state theory is based on the assumption that all the countries in the region are rich in natural resources, and since the natural resources are located within their territory, the local governments have a complete control over it. The oil and gas is located in only some countries, the other countries like Egypt have to rely on their traditional economic structures and taxes to raise revenues. The region is also not the largest supplier of the world oil and gas, nor does it own a global monopoly over the resources.

Also, the entire process, beginning from oil exploration, drilling, refining and marketing – is done by the oil conglomerates, most of whom are American and share only a percentage of their profits with the local governments. So the individual governments have only a stake in a part of the profits and have no control over the amount of revenue they can command. They can neither raise their outputs nor decrease it according to their domestic needs, as quantum of production and its pricing is decided by larger global bodies like OPEC. It is because of the lack of control over the natural resources that the local governments are forced to take large loans from the multi-lateral funding agencies and are as caught up in the debt trap as any other Third World country.

Moreover, the link between taxation and accountability is extremely weak and unproven. An economy based on taxation is not necessarily democratic or more accountable than any other economy. (In Egypt, the scope for pluralism and democracy is as limited as in Saudi Arabia). An external enforcement of democracy or economic liberalization (in the form of structural adjustment and other IMF/WB conditionality) would also not automatically make the polity accountable, nor guarantee it becoming a free and fair democracy.20

IV. The State in Egypt and Algeria:

Both Egypt and Algeria are typical examples of the similarities and diversities any possible two countries can have, in the region. Egypt was an indirect colony of the British, who re-organized the administrative structure of the country to reap the
maximum amount of benefit from the agriculture-based economy. They made it into a cotton production centre and a market for the finished products. However, daily governance was left at the hands of the local elites. The British just set up an administrative system and a model polity and economy to suit their needs and left the task of running the system in local hands.

Algeria too faced the problem of having a Westernised economic and political model set up in their country, the difference however lay in the nature of colonization. The French treated the country as being a part of their own country. The entire system – be it political, economic, legal or even social – was of centralization, where the central control of the parent country was supreme.

As a result of the European colonization both countries inherited a legacy of an impoverished population, illiteracy, redundant laws and a decadent economy, unemployment, crime, corruption and bad administration. The leaders who took over from the colonizers were mostly a Westernised elite who continued using the colonial setup of administration, and looked to the West for a quick solution to their economic ills. The economic and political alternative sought by the first leaders was that of socialism. The reasons for this were not very hard to find. The primary being the successful experiment of the ideology in USSR, which offered an alternative to the capitalist, exploitative economic philosophy of their colonizers, giving welfare and security to a large section of the population. Also the need to have an economic and political system which was more humane and adaptable to the local conditions, lead to the choice of socialism and the philosophy of welfare and equal opportunity for all.

V. Points of interface between state and society in Egypt and Algeria:
In the state-society interface, we will have to focus on different areas of interaction between the two. The most important points of interface are: 1) nature of polity; 2) economy; 3) civil governance and 4) political Islam.

Nature of polity refers to the kind of political system prevalent in the two countries. Briefly it would refer to the lack of opposition, the unquestioned authority of the regime in power, the role of the military and violence in retaining the status quo and the kind on democracy implemented in the region.

Economy would deal with the failure of the economic policies to deliver to the entire population or even most of it. The process of development has been limited, and not been able to provide an economic respite to a population that was already suffering due to the lopsided and discriminatory policies of the previous colonizers. By the late 1980s
the economic debt burden and the inequalities between the national incomes and expenditures had become glaring.

Civil governance would deal with the economic and social aspect of governance. Economically the focus would be on the failure of the state apparatus to provide welfare to the masses, and the subsequent stepping in of the non-governmental organizations to fill the vacuum. On social and legal front, the focus will have to be on the role of the Islamists (or the moral police) in enforcing a moral code on society. The focus will be on the conflict between the progressive, modern state, which is trying to follow a Western economic and political path of development, and its internal pressures forcing it to adopt civil and criminal laws of the *sharia*.

Political Islam would deal with the concept of political Islam, how it is different from the other political religious phenomena of resurgence, fundamentalism, militant Islam and revivalism and its conflict with secularism. It would attempt to list the manner in which political Islam has influenced the working of the state and shaping its character and the impact the state has in making religion into a political force. Political Islam is a typical example of the state and society being two opposing forces and at the same time being the most important force in each other's growth and development.

1) **Nature of polity:**

The polity inherited from the colonizers has been state-centric. The regime that took over the centralized bureaucratic setup, that concentrated the management of all resources in the hands of the centre. One can argue that the development efforts of the state created a centralized bureaucratic structure, which then sought to stifle further development by allocating to itself the economic surplus. A high degree of centralization was sought to explain away the ideological framework of socialism.

The two countries have a history of a single party rule from the time of independence. The party that took over from the colonizers automatically replaced the former in the politico-bureaucratic setup. Their ideology of socialism and secularism became the national ideology. As development, establishment of a social welfare system, self-sufficiency in economic terms became the popular slogans and opposition in any form took a backseat.

Since the entire state-machinery along with the military supported the idea, the need for getting a popular consensus for it was not mandatory. It has been a history of non-contestation of authority. The governments in North Africa have been military backed, dependent on the coercive forces, unable to establish a political legitimacy and unable
to provide a stable economic system which would be able grant a self-sufficiency in food grains, technology and make available satisfactory welfare services. They have been blamed for leading the country into the debt trap, allowing for an inequitable distribution of wealth, being unable to liberate Palestine or even halt the growing Western hegemony in the region.

Between 1988-1995, when the opposition started mobilizing masses to oppose the government, it was the coercive machinery that came to the rescue of the government. A policy of suppression and co-option was followed to dismiss the strength of the opposition. The polity remained authoritarian, military backed, unrepresentative government with a volatile opposition with an alternate ideology, waiting for a chance to replace the regime in power. The tendency has always been to be a strong state, bound together by a spirit of loyalty to the nation state and a strong military.

2) Economy:

The governments in the region have taken over the role of being the largest economic actors in their states. They have established industries and shaped the economic development process in their countries. What is important is the marked change in time of the national priorities. The larger chunk of the budget started going to strengthening of the military and administrative infrastructure. External debt repayments and military expenditure take the first priority, relegating other aspects of human development to a more secondary status.

The period of the late 1980s to the mid-1990s is the time when the two countries suffered major economic setbacks, and by the end of 1988 there was a massive food riot in the region. The socialist governments could no longer look to the Soviet Union for support, and were forced to integrate into the global economy on an unprecedented scale. The attempt to shift the model of development was an expensive process. This was also the time, when the two countries had to enforce an economic and administrative structural adjustment package. The governments had taken loans from the multilateral funding agencies to cover the losses incurred in their industrialization programmes. A lot of money had been spent in maintaining the military apparatus.

The strength of the military and the need of its support in forming a government after independence cannot be underestimated. If the secular, nationalist regimes have been able to retain their hold over power, a large credit for it goes to the military apparatus. Significantly, in Egypt, all the Presidents, from Nasser to Mubarak have been serving military personnel, and it is due to the unflinching loyalty of the establishment that have
allowed them to govern without the threat of being ever dislodged from power. In Algeria too, it was the open support of the military to the FLN, which allowed them to reverse the outcome the 1991 elections. The allegiance of the military to the secular regimes plays a vital role in their ability to keep the political-religious forces at bay. Consequently, the military establishment also consumes the largest chunk of the national expenditure. The military expenditure of the governments is incurred not only in the large-scale wars it has to wage against larger enemies like Israel, but in the low intensity wars with neighbours, and in assisting the government in dealing with law and order problems within the country. Most governments in the West Asian and African region spend approximately 30-39% on defence. To fund such a large budget on defence, the governments normally cut back on the budgets for social welfare. As a result, West Asia and North Africa, like the rest of the Third World, faces the problem of inequitable distribution of wealth and financial resources. On the one hand a government purchases the most advanced and the most sophisticated of military equipment, on the other the living standard of the people, and the human development yardstick shows a steady decline.

Egypt does not include the defence budgets in the national budget, hence, if one looks only at the defence expenditure as part of the GDP/GNI, the proportion is too small. The defence budgets are independent of the national budget and invariably placed on a higher priority than any other head. Governments do not hesitate to take a separate loan or grant, from outside sources, to meet the expenditure of the military.

3) Civil Governance:
The newly independent states of Algeria and Egypt declared themselves to be socialist states, with social welfare to be a major priority. However by the beginning of the 1980s the governments had failed to provide a social welfare cover to most of the population. One of the major causes stated for the rise of political Islam is the rise of unemployment, illiteracy, urbanism, lack of primary health care, education and basic civic amenities.

The state, which was established, was an over-reaching apparatus that included ideological, administrative, bureaucratic, legal countries and a security system that acted in a certain degree of coherence to structure and administer within different levels of the territory. The manner in which the state deploys and restrains its different patterns of authority, power and means of domination determines its character. On the
other hand, relations between the states' spheres of influence, power and control and society's provinces of activity differentiate between governing systems.22 The underlying causes for the populations to turn to religion as a defence mechanism, according to the Developmental–Social perspective, is the non-percolation of development to the masses. The writers using this approach have pointed out that the support base and the mass base for the Islamic movements come from the unemployed, semi educated, or educated unemployed, the laid off workers, the disgruntled peasants and the marginalized sections of society.23

The state-society equation works against the state in two main areas. The first is the politico-economic aspect of governance, and the second is the everyday criminal and civil laws. One of the main areas where the Islamists have a major hold on the society and are able to win over mass support is in the field of social welfare. Since the state is busy with the task of governance, it is the non-governmental agencies (mostly run by the Islamists), which fill the void of providing welfare facilities to the people. From education to health care to employment to civic amenities to providing relief at the time of a natural calamity, the non-governmental organizations cover it all. It is one of the methods used by the opposition to win over the masses, the other being mass propagation of their ideology and using public platforms to point out the discrepancies in the functioning of the government.

The other aspect of this interface is the concept of co-option by the government. As a self-defence mechanism the government has gradually assimilated the programmes, ideologies and demands of the Islamists as its own. Property disputes, marriage and divorce matters, crimes and other civil disputes are mostly tried by the Islamic laws and traditions. Precedents of similar cases tried in the times of the prophet or the first four caliphs, or similar situations dealt with by local religious leaders are used to dispense justice. In Algeria and Egypt, where the civil laws have been incorporated on a limited scale, there has been a social enforcement of the Islamic code of conduct, for example, the non-acceptance of the Western dress code.

VI. Political Islam in the state-society framework
Political Islam will have to be understood as a modern concept of state-society reactionary interface. The state-society interface in the two countries, as in the rest of the region has been reactionary with the economic failures, the failures of legitimate political vents and the credibility of the political leadership and government to gain
socio-political acceptance. In every milieu, society has looked for an alternative to the shortcomings of the state. If under colonialism, it was the call of independence and nationalism which was seen as a solution and an alternative to the oppression and exploitation of the foreign imperialists, political religion will have to be understood as a reaction to the failure of the nationalist, secular government to provide security, prosperity and welfare.

Political Islam has a social, political, economic dimension to it. There is an organized political agenda, supported by an equally planned economic and social welfare work, which makes the movement into an alternative political force.

Religious fundamentalism, according to Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, in the twentieth century thrives on the personal and social dislocations that traditional societies experience as a result of the rapid industrialization and modernization on their societies. In such displaced societies Political Islam then becomes a tool for restoring a sense of identity and offer a sense of cohesion to the community. To achieve the cohesion it also relies on the modern concepts, like the secular states, of nationalism, loyalty, need for better governance, welfare, etc. They may not seem to be the ideal alternative to the existing regimes, but they expertly exploit the ideological inconsistencies and policy failures of the non-fundamentalist governments. Moreover, to get credibility and an authenticity the political religionists rely on the support of the educated, semi-educated and modern professionals. They adapt the ideology to suit the interests of the more articulate educated professional classes, which can be groomed into later providing the leadership for the ideology.

The reactionary force of political Islam does not necessarily imply that the religion is an inherently political religion, and has been a reactive force from the time of its inception. The religious courts and civil laws are as much a part of the practice of Islam, as they are in the other religious. A return to the religion, and usage of a religious platform for political purposes is only symptomatic of the need of the society to seek a solution to the modern day problems.

1) It is an attempt of the society to dominate the state, and the state measures of co-option and repression are attempts of the state to hegemonies the society. The system is one of checks and balances. If the politicisation of Islam by the state was to give the ruling party the informal mandate and legitimacy to implement its own ideology, the politicisation of Islam by the society is to ensure that the is accountable to it. Political Islam is the tool by which the state and society can counterbalance each other. If the
state opposes the existence of Israel, and accepts the demands of the implementation of *sharia* laws in domestic courts, it also holds the authority to crackdown on any form of violent opposition to its authority. Political Islam from society, on its part, enforces its own code of conduct, not conflicting with the state authority and demands a non-violent transfer of power. The code of morality and conduct acts as a check on the system.

2) Political Islam, as an organizational entity, in the form of the political parties (Muslim Brotherhood and FIS) also fills the lacuna between the government and the society being governed. The schools, hospitals, and other welfare services provided by the network of the Muslim Brotherhood and the FIS are the only safeguards most of the population have against the economic failures of their states. This holds particularly true in the peripheral parts of the state, where the processes of development have not been able to permeate. It educates the masses about the policies of the state and also leads the protests if the policies are flawed or improperly executed.

3) The Islamists also need a political, economic or social situation, which they can tap to convert discontent into a political movement. For example the creation of Israel, the Arab-Israeli wars and later the presence of US and other military forces in the region, provided the ideologues and political leaders a platform for voicing their discontent. On the domestic front, the bread riots or the inability of the government to provide adequate relief after a natural calamity provide similar platforms. The 1988 riots in Algeria, were the first ever mass movements of social discontent the country had witnessed since its independence. It was a spontaneous outburst of social discontent. Yet it provided the Islamists the first public platform and the recognition it never had. The taking over of the movement by them, gave them the opportunity to crystallize a social movement into a political one.

4) The Islamists provide the link between the state and the society, and also act as a political vent for the dissatisfied masses. It works both ways. The state, by recognizing political Islam as a socio-political force, gives it a sanction to represent the masses, and recognizes its alternative ideology. If it were not for the political Islamists in the form of Muslim Brotherhood and the FIS, the two countries would have been thrown into a never-ending political chaos.

Political Islam will essentially have to be understood as a use of the call of religion towards a political end of achieving power. The example of Sudan and Iran are typical of the political ideologues using the concept of Islamic state as an alternative to the existing modernist, secular state. Yet, once in power, Sudan stands out as an example
of enforcing the structural adjustment programmes with far more vigour than any other
country. Iran is as much a part of the modern day economic, social setup, as
democratic and as technology savvy as any other country in the world.

VII. State and Political Islam

The character of the state and the socio-political force of political Islam has been fluid. The state shifted from the socialist, developmental state with religion as the state religion, bitterly opposed to Israel and the cultural, economic, political, and social hegemony of the West; to a state ready to capitalist state, ready to integrate into the global capitalist market, ready to negotiate truce with Israel, ready to deal with arms from the West and allow for the establishment of not just Western economic, but also their cultural and military bases in the region.

As the economic and political situation of a country changed, so did the socio-political equation. It also changed the way in which the state dealt with the socio-political opposition movement of political Islam. The British colonizers saw Political Islam as a threat in Egypt, and decided to channel it into a moderate political movement, by giving it an arena in which it could develop as a school of thought. The French in Algeria, on the other hand, tried to totally crush the concept. Hence, while political Islam was a well-formulated ideological concept, and a phenomenon being developed, practiced and preached by the educators and scholars of Al-Azhar, in Algeria the lay clerics were only attempting to organize and lead the popular discontent against the French.

Egypt and Algeria are important case studies to understand the manner in which a social movement can take the shape of a major political movement. People always have a faith and a religion they can adhere to and in this case it was Islam. Religiosity is often seen as a refuge being taken by people who are facing a crisis. To tap the fear of the masses, and use the platform of place of worship as a political platform is the basis of a political religion. The Islamists, over time have been able to offer a worldview of history, politics and economics.

Egypt is an example of a leadership and ideology coming from an educated elite, who had the benefit of preaching, practicing, studying and evolving an ideology. It was the case of a political philosophy disseminating from the centre and reaching the periphery. The Muslim Brotherhood with its social welfare network is representative of the method adopted by a political party to garner support. Religion alone is not a very cohesive tool for leading a socio-political movement.
The Algerians on the other hand, did not have the benefit of having the kind of patronage and space that the Egyptians had. The movement there was led by lay, uneducated clerics who used the situation of discontent as a political opportunity. For them forming comprehensive ideology, or developing a worldview came as later. It was a movement that went from the periphery to the centre.

Between 1988-1995, the food riots, the suppression of the riots, the identification and separation of Islamism into different of strands of political activism, and co-option or suppression of it marked the rise of political Islam as an alternate state system. Significantly, the state patronage to it and the demand of the movement for mere rectification of flaws within the system keeps a balance between the state and the social movement.

To analyse the state-society interfaces in West Asia and North Africa, with the case studies of Egypt and Algeria, the thesis would be broken into five chapters, including a chapter of conclusion. The next chapter would deal with the interface between the colonial state and political Islam under the colonial rule and the policies followed by the post-colonial regimes. How much was the colonial rule and the post-colonial regimes responsible for making religion a political force to reckon with. The focus would be on the policies of the governments that lead to the populations mobilizing under the aegis of religion.

The third chapter would deal with the politicisation of Islam. This chapter would deal with the diversification and the development of political ideology by the Islamists. The emphasis would be on the reaction between state and society in the 1980s and 1990s. The result of the state – society interface in the contexts: (internal contexts and external contexts). Internal: 1) the state takeover of religion; 2) failed socialism; 3) structural adjustment; 4) failure of political pluralism in the wake of the economic and social failures of the governments.

External: 1) the Iranian revolution; 2) Iraq - Kuwait war; 3) US foreign policy; 4) Israel; 5) globalisation.

The fourth and fifth chapters would trace the political, economic and social histories of Egypt and Algeria from 1988-1995, as case studies for the state-society interfaces.


4 ibid, p. 301.

5 ibid check introduction for framework.


7 ibid, pp. 17-23


11 According to Daniel Pipes, the Jews did not have a bitter historical experience with the West, so they can adapt faster to the processes of Westernization and modernization. Islam has had over 150 years of hostility, so they will resent the domination of the West, but will have to come to terms with it. See Pipes, Daniel, In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power, (New York, Basic Books Inc., 1983).


13 Migdal, n.6, p. 10.

14 Marty and Appleby, n. 12., p. 628.

15 Refer to any of the works of John P. Entelis, John Esposito, Clement Henry or John Waterbury.

16 See the Fundamentalism Project, for differences between Islamism, Secularism, and Fundamentalisms of different types.


19 For a detailed discussion refer to Luciani, Giacomo, The Arab State (Routledge, London, 1990)

20 For critiques of the rentier theory and the lack of co-relation between structural adjustment and democracy, refer to the works of John Waterbury, Clement Henry and Tim Niblock. They deal with the monopoly of the conglomerates and the powerlessness of the Gulf countries in the larger global oil market.

21 Timur Kuran shows how the money from the system of Islamic economics can be siphoned off to funding the Islamic militants, while John Waterbury tries to argue that even if the countries are not militarily dealing with the Israel question, the conflicts with immediate neighbours will make the military expenditure the most important one. See Timur Kuran, "The Economic Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism", in Martyn E. Marty, and R. Scott Appleby, ed., n. 12, pp. 302-341, and John Waterbury, "From Social Contracts to Extraction Contracts: The Political Economy of Authoritarianism and Democracy", in J. P. Entelis, ed., Islam, Democracy and the State in North Africa (Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1997), pp. 141-174


24 See Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, ed., n.12

25 See G. A. G. Soltan "State Building, Modernization and Political Islam: The Search for Political Community(s)in the Middle East. www.cidob.es/Castelleno/Publicaciones/Afers/Soltan.html

26 See Denis Sullivan on the use of non-governmental organizations by the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamists to create a mass support base. Sullivan, Denis. J. and Sana Abed-Kotob, Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State (Boulder, London, Lynne Reinner, 1999).
Chapter 2

*Colonial Legacies And Nation Building Exercises*

I. Colonization
   
   Features of colonization
   
   1) Re-organization of the map
   
   2) Centralization
   
   3) Modernization
   
   4) Apartheid

II. Society under the colonial rule in Algeria and Egypt:

III. State-society interface under the colonial rule:
   
   1) The legal and educational interface:
   
   - Egypt
   - Algeria
   
   2) Economic interface:
   
   - Egypt
   - Algeria

IV. Colonial legacy

   Post colonial state-society interface:
   
   1) Economic:
   
   - Egypt
   - Algeria

   2) Administration and governance

   3) Political Islam