Chapter 3:

*Politization of Islam*

1) Role of the social movements vis-à-vis the state.

2) The interactions between the state organs and the socio-political organizations at the centre and at the periphery.

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Chapter 3:

**Politicization of Islam**

As shown in the previous chapter, religion was an important political tool for the mobilization of the masses and formation of support bases against imperialism. As colonialism was affecting and impacting every aspect of society -- from education to law to economic development -- the reaction to it was also equally broad-based. From the urban to the rural, from the Western educated to the traditional school products, from ethnic minorities to larger majorities, every member of society who was affected by colonialism supported movements against imperialism.

If the politicization of Islam under the colonial rule dealt with the economic, political, cultural and social imperialism, post-colonial politicization of Islam would deal the changes in the manner in which religion was politicized to deal with the changing socio-economic-political developments in the region. It would deal with the developments in modern history that affected the nature of politicization of religion. Politicization of Islam refers to the use of religion as a political tool by political forces seeking state powers. In modern history, it has been an important force, particularly for the independence movements, to gather together people of diverse economic and social backgrounds and fight the impact of imperialism. Post-colonial political Islam is seen as the need for the opposition to continue using the tool of religion to fight what it perceived as the failure of the new regimes to deliver the promises made during the struggle for independence. Politicization of religion is important to understand the manner in which religion is used as a political tool, and to understand its implications in the larger political, economic and social arenas.

Reasons for the politicization of Islam range from the inherently political character of the religion (which has been attributed to the political scenario at the time of the genesis of the religion), to the lack of political vent in the region. The implications of a successful political religion in the region vary from the fear of establishment of a theocratic state, which would be regressive, un-democratic and violative of all civilizational norms. The terminologies used to describe the political character of Islam range from Islamic fundamentalism to revivalism and resurgence and radical Islam.

However, as pointed out earlier (chapter 1) political Islam is distinct from the concepts of Islamic fundamentalism, revivalism, radicalism and resurgence. All these concepts deal with the different facets of Islam as a political force. They function on the
assumption that the unrest in the different countries in West Asia and North Africa are because the majority of the population is Muslim.

The focus of the authors dealing with the concepts of fundamentalism or resurgence or revivalism, would be on the efforts of the religio-political ideologues into taking the population to a historical past which is seen as a more just, prosperous and a flourishing age of history. The past could be either of the state established by the Prophet or that by the Ottomans. The causes for the rise and growth of these political Islam is invariably attributed to the rise in unemployment, failed economy, poor housing, corruption and related features including the lack of a political vent given to the masses. The external factors responsible for the rise of these various phenomena range from the creation and establishment of Israel, to the failure of the pan-Arab movements, and the defeats in the Arab-Israeli wars. The later factors would include the success of the Iranian revolution, the increasing Western military presence in the region, the gulf crisis of 1991, the crisis of Afghanistan, and the present Iraq crisis.

The other focus of authors dealing with political Islam has more to do with the reactionary manner in which the society is responding to the West. Its basic theme is that political Islam is a reaction to the neo-colonial policies of the West. It is seen as a reaction to the constant Western intervention in the social-economic and political developments in the region. It represents the anti-Western sentiments of the masses. The West stands for everything that goes against the basic socio-cultural ethos of the region – colonialism, secularism, exploitation, materialism and socio-economic and political hegemonization. Political Islam is a reaction to the modernity the West stands for.

**Politicization of Islam**

Most of the analytical frameworks, though extremely well researched, suffer from certain drawbacks. These frameworks deal with either the history of the religion from the time of its inception, or to the developments in its history after the Second World War. The history of the colonial period and the manner in which colonization impacted the developments in the region are not taken into consideration. The problems in the region are attributed either to the flaw in the religion (which is seen as a conservative force), or they are seen as the result of bad governance of the existing governments.

In the post Second World War context, particularly in the West Asian and North African region Islam is seen as the main reason why the people are backward and unable to accept the new Western and modern socio-economic and political systems. Moreover, since the clash between Islamic and Christian civilizations dates back centuries, the
reaction between the two is assumed to be a natural occurrence. The framework is used to explain the resentment and hostility of the region towards Israel and the US. A suppression of political opposition is advised in the region, as political pluralism would make any of the nation-states in the region into theocratic states, which would be naturally hostile to the West.\textsuperscript{55}

The framework however overlooks the fact that the texts and early precedents do not deal with the problems faced by the countries today. Most Islamists do not uncritically reject modernity, but try to reformulate and regulate it, using discursive terms of the Islamic heritage.

Many of the solutions political Islam offers have no specific historical precedents in Islamic tradition. The organizational and mobilizational forms of political Islam – high speed international communications using faxes, cassette tapes and posters – rely on modern technology. Specific movements are often funded by businesspeople or regimes whose wealth depends on petroleum markets and other international circuits of capital. Women activists in Islamist movements respond and offer an alternative to an egalitarian model of gender relations, perceived as specifically Western.\textsuperscript{56}

In this context, it is also important to understand the role of biases and pre-conceived notions in the Western and the world’s perception of the religion and its adherents. Pioneering work on this issue has been done by Edward Said, in his works on orientalism. He has argued that the treatment of the world of Islam and Arabs was based on an inversion of idealized images of European culture.\textsuperscript{57} Biased and pre-conceived notions of racism, however do not translate into concrete reality.

Secondly, the theory works on the assumption, that the economy of the region is a rentier economy, and the oil wealth of the region is used to fight the West and its representative Israel. It overlooks the fact that the oil in the region is not uniformly spread to cover all the countries in the region, and that the governments of the countries where oil is a major contributor to the economy get only a part of the revenue earned from it while most of the income earned goes to the oil conglomerates of the West. Also, the income from the oil wealth goes to the state and not to the social movements that are supposed to be hostile to the West and the modernity it represents, and the governments though sympathetic to the cause of Palestine are not involved in actively engaging a war on the Western interests in the region or on Israel. Over a period of time the governments have supported and have been working towards allowing the US and its allies to establish their military bases in the region. The government support to the US and the Western allies has been most prominently visible from the gulf war of 1991 onwards.
The Marxist framework, on the other hand, argues about the lack of economic development in the region that is leading to a socio-political crisis. The crisis in economy, which was marked by the food riots in the region, has been due to the failure of the governments to honestly implement a socialist experiment. The emphasis, in any development process, should be on social welfare and a more equitable re-distribution of the economic wealth. The rise and role of the non-governmental organizations, and the support of the urban, middle to the Islamist movements reflect the mismanagement of the economy and polity by the regime in power. If the national priorities of the governments had been right, and the emphasis was not on increasing the military strength of the country, politically active religion would not have been such a strong force to reckon with. Moreover, since it is the state's responsibility to provide for the economic and social welfare of the masses, a failure on any of these fronts would mean the rise and growth of religious-fundamentalist forces.

The problem with the Marxist and other explanations lies in the fact that they tend to view the religio-political movements as purely social movements expressing either political or economic discontent. Political Islam is seen either as a expression of discontent of the masses with the failure of the governments to provide them with basic civic amenities and social welfare, or as a reaction to the failure of the government to provide political vent to the economic and social discontent, whatever be the causes of the discontent. Political Islam in this context is understood as a reactionary socio-political movement, and the politicization of Islam is a tool in the hands of the politico-religious opposition.

However political Islam and the process of politicization of Islam cannot be limited to being just a socio-political movement. The politics of using religion as a tool is not limited to the social movements and it is not a one sided movement. There are more dimensions to political Islam than it being a political pressure group aimed at opposing the regime in power, or the policies of the US in the region or the practices of Israel. It is a movement that covers international and national dimensions of politics, social conduct, economics and relations between these forces.

A second drawback with the existing explanations of political Islam lies in its periodization of the problem. The phenomenon of the politicization of Islam is seen as a contemporary one, with the turning points and the basis for its origins and growth being in either the independence movement or the creation of Israel, or the Iranian revolution. The focus of most of the studies lies in the pointing to the period from the mid-1980s, when religious unrest in the region was seen as peaking. The factors
responsible for the unrest ranged from internal factors of unemployment, economic recession, urbanism, lack of social welfare to external factors like the failure of the Arab-Israeli wars, the Iraq-Kuwait war and other large-scale events that have affected the developments in the region. Political Islam is seen as an expression of discontent of the masses against the injustices they have to suffer. It is seen as a movement against imperialism, whether the movement was against the direct colonizers or against the indirect colonization of the new world order.

What is overlooked is the fact that the process of politicization of Islam started not as a social movement fighting imperialism, but a tool of European imperialism. The Europeans used religion as tool to extend their control and authority over their colonies. The fight against the religion of the colony and its followers took the form of curbing the rights and the practices of the Muslims in the colonies. As documented in the previous chapter, the colonizers were open in their discrimination and suppression of the religio-cultural beliefs and practices of the colony. Even in the indirect colony of Egypt where the suppression was not open, and the al-Azhar was established to allow the religious leadership to formulate political and theological opinions, the state was as hostile to the religion and its practices as the French. They too curbed the economic powers of the clergy, refused to recognize the laws and practices of the Muslims and tied to integrate the socio-cultural practices of the Egyptians to those of the British. The al-Azhar was allowed to be a debating ground, it was totally at the state’s discretion to either accept or reject the suggestions of the school. Religion, as a political tool, was used by the colonizers, to entrench their rule more firmly in the colony. It gave them a chance and an instrument to intervene in the colony as never before.

This legacy of the colonial rule has been carried on in the post-colonial states. The governments have been using the tool of religion to legitimize their rule, to centralize their powers and to intervene in society on a large scale. The basic excuse of the state in intervening in the religious field in their countries has been to regulate the role of religion in politics and to assist in making the religion and its practices contemporary.

Another point, which needs to be kept into consideration, is the fact that the states we deal with are the post-colonial states, whose boundaries and identities have been defined and established by the European colonizers. Political Islam therefore cannot be taken as one homogenous social movement covering the entire region, or even the areas where Islam is the religion of the majority of the population. The borders and boundaries of the nation-states do not allow socio-cultural-political-economic movements to travel across borders. The movements may influence each other, but
their leadership and character will vary from border to border. Moreover, the priorities and actions of a state or a social movement within its border vary. Their outreach is limited and this defeats the possibility of homogeneity of political or socio-economic movements over large areas.

This thesis is working on the hypothesis that the politicization of Islam is the largest face of societal interaction with the state. There is a constant conflict between the state and the society it governs, resulting in either of the two forces exercising considerable influence over the other. Since the state being dealt with is the post-colonial state, we will have to keep in mind that the state is not just the nation state, but part of the larger global state as well. If the colonial states were inextricably linked to the colonial economy and polity, the post-colonial states have been equally deeply linked with the global economy. There is no one external economy such as that that linked the colonized economy, but the new economic order attempts to link the entire global economy into one. The control and the biggest beneficiaries of this economic order still remain the Western world, led by the US. Political Islam manifests the attempts of the social movement to resist the increasing role of the state as a dictating force about the basic character of the society. On the other hand it also implies the attempt of the state to gain control over the society through the tool of religion. The state-society interfaces have been working more in favour of the state rather than society.

Before the European colonization religion was an integral part of the state. The state-society relationship was one of collusion rather than of collision. The thrust of the religio-social movements was to compliment the state, rather than displace it or destabilize it. The state on its part worked towards the co-option of the main components of the social movements. It exercised some control over the social movement, but it was by and large a not a confrontationist movement. The areas covered by the political religionists did not clash with the state interests.

The colonial state however, did not believe in sharing of powers and viewed the social movements with hostility. Their attempts were to replace the religio-cultural character of the society with a more pliable and compliant one. The modern day political Islam is a product of the clash of cultures of the colonizers and the colonized. The entire colony was treated as a homogenous unit on the basis of their religious affiliations. As shown earlier, the French were open in declaring their hostility to the religion and the culture of the natives.

The British, though were subtler, but they were equally hostile to the religion and the cultural practices of the colony. It was the British and French who established a system
whereby the powers and authority of the clergy were curbed. The state takeover of all aspects of society— from mosques to schools to law courts— was a practice the colonizers had established. The religion, its adherents, its preachers and its institutions were all marginalized.

Political Islam in this sense would represent a struggle for power between the state and the most important social movement. The role religion can play in controlling the society cannot be underestimated. A control of the institutions and forces of religion was a result of the need for the state to strengthen its powers over society. It was more as result of a contact with the West than an indigenous development that took place on its own. In Egypt even if we trace back the history of the control of al-Azhar to the time of Muhammad Ali, it was more due to the fact that the khedive felt the need to strengthen the powers of the state to need the challenges posed by the incoming Western forces. The difference between the states before colonization and after independence in trying to curb the politico-social force of religion is that they attempted to control the force, co-opt it to a large extent and only when it resisted that the state went out of its way to suppress it.

The modern day politicization of Islam is to be understood not only as a socio-political movement used by the political opposition, but also as a usage of religion by the state as a tool to intervene, control and regulate the affairs of the society. The state has been using religion to legitimize its policies, decisions and give its apparatus a sanction to govern the population. Most importantly, it is used by the governing party to gain a social sanction for its political ideology, functioning and administration.

Official or state Islam is the alternative Islam propagated, supported and created by the state to counter the force of political opposition coming from the direction of political religionists. It works not just by curbing the power of the clergy, restricting them to the theological and spiritual level, and not allowing them to enter the field of politics. It also works by creating and supporting an alternative interpretation of the social-political-religious norms. It works by creating an alternate clergy and a school of thought that will mould and reshape the religious norms to accommodate the political ideologies the governments want to subscribe to. The state has devised its own machinery, appointed its own clergy and theologians who would interpret the Quran according to needs of the government and assist the government in its functioning. They are people with known credentials of being devout and pious Muslims, and have a public acknowledgement of their knowledge of religion. The state intervention in religion, however, is not limited to having a Ministry of Religious Affairs. It goes beyond that to declaring Islam as a state
religion or the religion of the majority. Apart from the appointed clergy, the role of the government servants, the political leaders and members of the regime in power to show their piousness in public is also a means by which the state uses religion to gain legitimacy and counter the opposition claim that the public servants are lesser Muslims. Moreover, in a state that has declared Islam to be the state religion and has absorbed the Islamic law codes (sharia) in its' governing, the alternative moral police and politico-religious opposition would find it difficult to critique the government on those grounds. The other dimension of political Islam, after it being a localized phenomenon, is that of its larger role in the regional and international political front. If colonization and the suppression of Islam as a religion along with its related culture and socio-political systems brought about the reaction of the religion being under threat, the post-independence external developments made the threat to and from Islam a very large and global phenomena. In the global context too the phenomenon of political Islam will have to be understood as a modern construct, which is mostly a reaction to the global developments vis-à-vis West Asia and North Africa. Beginning with the creation of Israel, and the displacement of millions of Palestinians from their homeland, gave the political religionists their first cause for being suspicious of the plans of the West in the region. With the tapping of oil resources, and the increasing interference of the Western military forces in the Arab-Israeli wars and later in the domestic politics in the region made the people even more hostile to the West. The support to Israel, the militarization of the region, the overt support to the regimes that were repressive and undemocratic all added to the distrust of the region towards the Western powers. Moreover, the Western perception of Islam as a political ideology capable of overtaking the world (especially after the Iranian revolution), replacing the vacuum left by the failure of socialism, and as a terrorist force, which if not contained would become a menace, all added up to the reaction to the religion and a reaction from the religious forces in the region. The politicization of Islam and political Islam in the global context, however, will have to be understood in the context state in society framework. It will have to be seen in the light of the smaller nation-states and their societies trying to either fit in the larger global world or reacting to it. It will have to be understood against the background of neo-colonialism where the Third World is facing the problem of a second colonialism due to its failure in the economic fields and a developed world trying to economically subjugate them through the multi-lateral funding agencies.
The authors who see the rise of political Islam in the background of the failed economic experiments, the debt burden, the lack of housing and urbanism also point to the role played by the multi-lateral funding agencies in increasing the poverty and economic disparity in the region.

The 1988 food riots in the region, were more a consequence of the structural adjustment programmes than domestic political crisis. The cut back on the subsidies on food led to the shortage of food in the urban areas, which led to the rioting on the streets. Though Egypt had seen such a crisis earlier in the 70s, it was the first of its kind in Algeria. The unrest was not lead by the Islamists, but they took over the leadership of the movements later.

What is significant about the 1988 unrest in the region is the manner in which the state, the Western powers and the society reacted to each other. It was one of the most significant turning points in the history of the region when the Western powers in the region used the unrest to increase their influence and powers in the region, and the local governments in the nation states used the occasion to increase their strength, partly with external assistance and partly through internal coercion.

The food riots of Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, and other countries gave the state a chance to intervene in the social fronts of their countries. This was particularly visible after the 1988 unrest, when the governments not only decided and enforced the economic but also the social and political character of their countries. They used the coercive machinery of the state to enforce the programmes for economic and political liberalism. They declared all opposition to be religious and fundamentalist and used force to curb it, while at the same time reiterating that they were the only secular forces in their countries. Whether it was by banning all religious opposition, or by reversing the results of elections, the governments had taken the decision to be representative of the society that was secular, and they would not allow the state to become a theocratic state.

The occasion was also used by the government to declare the shift in the economic policy of the state. From being socialist state with social welfare being a major priority, the governments had shifted the economic policy to that of economic liberalism and capitalism. Though the change was implemented over a period of time, at every step the government ensured that it did not face any major opposition to its new policies.

The social movements too on their part changed according to the demands of the time. In 1988, the demands had varied from shortage of foods to demanding social welfare to more participation in the political system. The movements also included protesting and
pressurizing their governments on a larger regional issues like Palestine, the increasing Western military presence in the region, the solidarity of the Muslims in the region, etc. The movements also included large scale-protest rallies supporting solidarity with the Palestinians or protesting against the US bombing on Iraq in 1991.

However, as the government policies of confrontation and co-option progressed, the nature of the social movements also changed from confrontation to co-option. The forms of public protests changed to limited student movements, small rallies, boycotting of elections and petitioning in courts. The scale of focus of the public movements had changed from larger interests to the interests of the people within the nation-state. The focus had shifted more towards developing a civil society and filling in the vacuum left by the government in governance of the country. The pan movements had been completely sidelined.

Also important in the state in society context is the role of the larger global players vis-à-vis the state and the social movements in the region. They play an important role in shaping the economy, polity and the manner in which the nation-state would deal with the social movements of their country. In this context it is important to define the rest of the world and their role in the region. From the time of the colonization of the region, the biggest players in the region have been the European colonizers and the Americans. Colonization integrated the region into the larger global economic, political and social world. The impact was felt most on the economy which had to totally transform itself to cater to the larger global economy. It had become a producer of raw materials and a market for finished goods.

The post-colonial economies found it extremely difficult to disassociate from the global economic setup. The alternative of a socialist economic setup, or a Third World economic and political block, or even a regional economic block comprising of the different countries in the region was an experiment that failed. The post-colonial states got their identities as nation-states from the European colonizers. The boundaries, the polities, the policies and the regional characteristics that separate each country from another, were all established under the colonial rules. No attempt to override the colonial legacies succeeded. The new nation-states demanded a loyalty that was above the loyalty demanded by the any other regional or global integration movements. This is clearly demonstrated by the failure of the many pan-Arab and pan-Islamic movements, and the many inter-state boundary disputes. Any attempt to unify the region into one political or economic unit has met with failure.
It was not just the policies within a country’s borders that affected its’ development, but the newly independent states had to assess themselves in the larger global scenario before taking any decision. The international scenarios were not necessarily the large European or American policies, but the domestic developments within the region too. So if the cold war and the US-Soviet relations were a guiding factor till the 1970s, the later Iranian Revolution was also equally important to the developments in the region. An evaluation of the contemporary history of the region will have to take the political, economic, social dynamics and developments in the region from the post-colonial legacies to the changing international scenarios vis-à-vis the region.59

The guiding force in the relations between different countries with the countries in the region changed with the passage of time. Just after the Second World War the need of the other newly independent countries to break away from the cold war blocks and establish a non-aligned block fostered strong ties between such nations. There was a large wave of sympathy and support for the region involved in the Arab-Israeli wars. Egypt emerged as a country which could provide effective leadership to the non-aligned movement. It was also leading the regional politics in attempting to form the pan-Arab and the pan-Islamic movements, which would help the region unite and fight the imperialism of the West through Israel.

The failure of the socialist experiments in most of the Third World economies their drifting to large debts under the multilateral funding agencies, the deteriorating domestic economic and social welfare conditions, the weakening of the USSR and the compulsion to enforce the structural adjustment programmes made the Third World countries look inwards and their foreign policies were governed more by domestic compulsions rather than by the larger goals of being non-aligned or defying capitalism etc..

In the 1970s, as the largest amount of oil exploration and oil trade took place in West Asia and North Africa, the economic interests of the world and their relations with the oil economies became the guiding factor in the polity of the region. However, by the 1980s and with the emergence of South America and the US as equally large producers of oil, and with the shrinking power of the West Asia and North Africa countries in OPEC, the factors affecting relations vis-à-vis the region had changed. Also with the increasing political unrest in the region, the success of the Iranian revolution, the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Afghanistan imbroglio, the prism through which the countries in the region had been viewed had changed. The focus had
Muslim population into a general plan of social transformation. The continuation of these conditions will assist the Islamic opposition movements to preserve their status in society and expand their base of support by proposing an alternative political discourse.  

In the period under study, the basic question about a political religion is of the legitimacy of the regimes in power. Right from the time of their independence from colonial rule, the political party to which power was handed over has been able to retain it through its own style of populism and force. The main feature of the politicization of Islam has been the centralization of the state powers and the larger hegemonizing powers in the region. The politicization of the religion was a two-way phenomena with the state and the larger global players on one hand, and the regional, domestic socio-political movements on the other. If, for the state it was an excuse to increase and centralize its powers over the society it governed, for the socio-political movements it was the platform on which to mobilize masses and organize a political opposition. The political religionists have been the most important actors on the alternate political, economic and social scene. The task of the political religionists in the region has been to counter the ideologies and policies of both the local governments and the global colonial forces. To counter the larger capitalist and socialist economic policies the Islamists worked towards formulating the concepts of Islamic economics and the concepts of Islamic states, with its set of laws and policies that would provide justice and welfare to the population. On the smaller scale they have been working towards filling the lacunae in governance. They have been working as organizations providing social welfare, have been forming the moral police and taking small steps to prove contest the legitimacy and the policies of the government. What is important about the political movements of the Islamists is that they have had to strike a balance and change with time depending on the social and political movements in their countries and in the region. For example in Algeria the religion based opposition started as a movement wanting to work within the system and ready to contest elections and allow for a transfer of power through the democratic process. However with the reversal of the elections the emphasis shifted to countering the government and its policies by establishing social service networks and -a political movement and parties, like those of the Muslim Brotherhood or by organizing armies to counter fight the government. With every event the ideologies of the political Islamists in the region changes. It evolves with the ideologies that it has to counter and provide an alternative to. From
country to country and from the changes in history of the region and country the political religion has grown from being a local movement to a movement with definite alternatives on issues like democracy, capitalism, socialism, women, culture, the US foreign policy, Israel, etc. The movements have evolved their own worldviews and methods of working.

While dealing with the issue of politicization of Islam, there are two important factors that have to be borne in mind. The first is that the politicization being dealt with is a modern construct. The nature of politicization and the type of state-society interfaces that have resulted from the politicization are deeply rooted in the modern European colonial legacies of centralization of state authority. Also, the usage of modern technologies in every aspect of politicization from media to military technology to the concepts of alternative Islamic economics or of civil society, all are modern developments that make the politicization a modern phenomenon.

The second factor that we have to keep in mind is that political Islam is the largest interface between the state and society. It provides the biggest political platform to the social movements, while at the same time providing the state with a platform to interface with the society. The important feature about political Islam is that it co-exists with other socio-political-economic ideologies like socialism, capitalism, etc., as well. It has an appeal that makes it different from the other ideologies, and like the functioning of any other political ideology, it absorbs features from them into its own functioning. For example, the establishment of NGOs that provide social services and welfare, which according to the socialist logic is a prime state-duty. The Islamists have used the socialist ideology to point to the failures of the government. Similarly, though the governments use the socialist ideology of the constitution, and follow the liberal economic policies, they also use the religious laws and traditions to assist in the governance of the society.

Within the state in society framework it is necessary to break the concept of politicization of Islam into the main points of the framework. Broadly, within the framework, the focus would have to be on the four major points:

1) Role of the social movements vis-à-vis the state.

There are two aspects to the politicization of Islam. The first is the politicization of the religion by the state; and the other is of its politicization by the socio-political forces. The first of the state-society framework arguments deals with the role of social
movements in keeping a check on the powers of the state. This would refer to the role of alternative Islam, or an alternative interpretation of Islam compared to the official interpretation of Islam. It would deal with the issue of the questioning of the legitimacy of the state by the social movements.

It would also deal with the manner in which the social movements of political Islam have used other institutions like NGOs and unions to mobilize their support base.

2) The interactions between the state organs and the socio-political organizations at the centre and at the periphery.

Working on the hypothesis that there are two different types of political organizations, dealing with two different sets of socio-economic-political problems, one urban and the other rural, it is important to understand the interaction between the state and the society and the state and the socio-political movements at these two levels.

From the point of view of socio-political movements, the city based organizations are urban, catering to the needs of the working class, and therefore their demands, like those of the other working classes would be of wanting welfare and civic amenities from the state. Their reaction would be the result of a non-fulfillment of necessary urban requirements by the state.

The countryside on the other hand would be more affected by other considerations, like changes in land holding equations, subsidies on agricultural production tools, techniques and labour. Their priorities would be different from those of the urban centres.

It would also deal with the issue of leadership and support base of the political Islamic movements. The role religious platforms have in gathering and consolidating the mass bases of support cannot be overlooked.

3) The empirical conditions affecting state-society interfaces.

The manner in which the state and the society react to changes both within their boundaries and without, are most important in understand the changing character of the socio-political movements and the state.

It is important to remember that the world we are talking about is a small and constantly shrinking world. Every large and small change in any field can affect the developments of any other part of the globe. Information dispersion and reactions to new developments takes place at extremely rapid speeds. Moreover we are dealing with much larger concepts like global capitalism, neo-colonialism, neo-liberalism etc.. If we
are dealing with policies on such a large scale, we will also be dealing with reactions on an equally large scale. Global policies will evoke global reactions.

IV. State vs. political Islam
This would focus on the areas where the state has encroached with the rights of society & areas where societies have encroached on the powers of the state.
By state encroachment, refer to the concept of official Islam to counter popular Islam: the chief feature of this is the prejudice exercised by the state in patronizing and encouraging an interpretation of the Islamic codes of conducts and laws that suit its purposes. The non-allowing of political pluralism and the rigging of democracy, the violence in suppression the Islamic opposition (basically the assertion of the coercive apparatus of the state) are the state encroachments on society.
The society’s encroachment of the state’s powers comes from the defiance of authority. This can be seen in the establishment of the moral police and the counter-violence of the Islamists. What we are dealing with is the politicization of Islam by both the state and the opposition. Both use religion to legitimize their authority.

The focus of politicization has to be from the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s, particularly in Algeria and Egypt. This time frame is important for the evaluation of the economic and political developments in the two countries, as it was during this time period that the strength of the religio-political movements at its peak, and by the end of the time period, the governments had emerged winner in the contest for power.
The two countries are distinct examples of two types of socio-political movements and the two different types of state reactions to the movements. The differences in the two countries are as striking as the similarities between the two. To assess the impact of the two main actors: state and society on each other and their histories, it is important to study the aspects of political and economic interfaces. The manner in which either actor handles the two issues is important for understanding the equation between them, and to understand the manner in which the two actors dealt with each other on the issues of economy and polity between 1988 and 1995, it is important to evaluate the economic and political histories of the two countries from the time of their independence.
Both Egypt and Algeria underwent colonization, resulting in the centralization of the state authority and the new regimes believed in the ideology of socialism. Both the newly independent ruling governments found a strong backing in the army and later at
the time of political crisis, the governments relied on the military to restore them to power.

However it is the difference in the two countries, that is more important. Both the economies under colonization were converted to primary cash cropping colonies. However, due to the Suez and the efforts of the Khedives in Egypt, the country had a more organized urban society. Algeria, on the other hand, was a peasant based country, and the policies of the colonizers left the country devoid of any indigenous urban population. Thus the political movements, and the socio-religious movements of the two countries took two different masses for the base and the orientations of their political ideologies also differed strongly.

Egypt is a case study of the socio-religious-political movements with roots in the urban cities. It is an example of organized urban leadership leading organized protest movements, formulating well-defined ideology, working towards forming a parallel economy and capable of running a parallel government. The Muslim Brotherhood and the al-Azhar are organized movements, with a well defined party hierarchy, a political, ideological, economic infrastructure through which they are able to mobilize their mass base and support groups.

Algeria, on the other hand, is an example of the leadership and mass movements originating and getting its strength from the peripheral villages and rural centres. The leadership of the socio-religious movements here comes from the small clergy and priests of the small mosques. They do not have an organized leadership. It was only after the 1988 food riots, that the movement found an urban base and leadership, which was capable of leading the movement and offering an alternative to the existing regime. But the aim of this new leadership was not to bring about any new changes in the state or social structure. The new leadership consisted mostly of leaders of the independence movement, who felt betrayed by the new government and felt that it had failed in living up to the promises made during the movement. It was the disgruntled political leaders along with the local religious leadership, that had risen up in the food riots, which came together to form the FIS.

The differences in the origins of the leadership reflected in the manner in which the socio-political-economic changes of the time were handled. The Muslim Brotherhood was capable of running a parallel government and economy. It was capable of dealing with complex issues like foreign policy, political alliances and Islamic economics, while the FIS with no organizational bases or cadres and no coherent ideological framework, was easily exiled or crushed. Over a period of time, particularly after 1995, the FIS lost
its mandate and found it exceedingly difficult to re-enter the political arena, in the
democratic manner it wanted to. The religio-political movement in Algeria resorted to
violence and open defiance of authority on a much larger scale than in Egypt. Later,
even though the Algerian Islamists adopted the Egyptian model of forming a party and
establishing social welfare services and institutions similar to those of the Muslim
Brotherhood, their success rate and ability to form a viable political alternative remained
limited.

1) **Role of the social movements vis-à-vis the state:**
State-society relations particularly in the context of post-colonial states will have to
focus on two major aspects affecting their relations: economic and socio-political
relations. The economic relations involve dealing with the economic crisis and ensuring
that the economy is able to accommodate and provide welfare to the largest number of
people possible. The socio-political relations will have to focus on the relations between
the regime in power and the popular opposition ideologies and groups.
Since the new governments retained the old economic order, the economic re-
dependence of the new economy on the previous colonizers grew rather than fade
away. It was easier for the new economies to retain the old ties, though on different
terms. Along with the old parent ties, the new countries faced the problem of
integrating with the larger global economic market and with the rest of the world as
well. With no strong infrastructure to support them and with no reserves or to stop the
country from falling into debt if their economic experiments failed, the new states
entered the new world order.
By the 70s and 80s, the independent governments had started succumbing to the
pressures of integration into the global economy. Globalization or the global integration
into the economy was gradual, usually sector-by-sector. The first moves from the
’socialist experiments’ to ‘liberalization’ or ‘opening up of the economy’ have been
seen as shifts from an authoritarian, centralized policy decided on by an individual to a
more democratic, liberal and policy which had a larger consensus. They have been
given names like ‘de-Nasserization or ‘infitah’ in Egypt’, or ‘infitah’ and ‘open-door-
policy’ in Algeria.
The problems of unemployment, illiteracy, inadequate housing and medical provisions
remained as under the colonial regimes. The unequal distribution of the national income
had started affecting the economic capacity of the population. The largest chunk of
state expenditure was diverted to defence, which over time became a necessity to
maintain law and order in addition to maintaining the borders of the nation-state. The
dependence of the regime in power on military support grew as their economic policies
failed to deliver the results.
To overcome the deficits in the budget, the governments took loans from multi-lateral
agencies like the IMF and the World Bank. Since all the loans from multilateral funders
come with strings attached, the governments were forced to implement the structural
adjustment programmes and economic liberalization policies. Once the loan is given,
after a span of time, the governments are forced to implement a structural adjustment
programme, under which the subsidies and protection given to different sectors of the
economy are withdrawn. The concept of structural adjustment works on the premise
that open competition and the larger global capitalist economy with its global capital
and international investment are the remedy to modernize an economy, and make it
move forward. The method used to bring the open world economy into a domestic
economy, the government would have to remove all protectional tariffs and any form of
subsidy to the sector of economy where the reforms were targeted. Removing
protective tariffs from an industry or a sector of economy that have achieved a certain
amount of self-sufficiency, would allow for external capitalist financers to invest in the
particular industry, and the net profit resulting from the deal and taxes on incomes and
other services by the government would be able to cover up the budget deficit and
repay the loans.
The flaw with the IMF policy is that they have the same solution for all economies,
whatever their problems, peculiarities, and uniqueness of the problems may be. A case
in point is their insistence on democracy and integration into a global economy. The
inherent logic to enforcing democracy is that it is a pre-requisite for economic freedom
and both economic and political pluralisms are complimentary to each other, is.
However, the practical experience shows that in countries where the governments have
adopted the structural adjustment programmes have been more out of pressure than
out of choice. Moreover, the integration of a local economy into the global one has been
a move accompanied by a harsh repression of any dissent movements rather than by
support for these moves in the Third World.
All development is supposed to follow a sequence of events, and with each level of
development, an economy is supposed to be more prosperous, competitive and
technologically advanced. The importance of globalization to economic growth and
poverty varies for different categories for developing countries. While most developing
countries will gain from the globalization process, some will benefit more than others,
and a number of countries with initial conditions that make them less suited to take advantage of globalization will lose out and become more marginalized in relation to other countries.\textsuperscript{61}

The structural adjustment programme has neither been successful nor a popular one in the Third World. Some of the reasons given for the failure of the programmes has been the rampant corruption, bad implementation and lack of political will to improve the economy and raise the living standards. Since the state was the largest investor in the economy, and the sole provider for any form of social welfare, its withdrawal from the key sectors was a major loss to the economy. An ambiguous policy and an unstable economic situation combined with the political risks in the region kept the foreign investors away.\textsuperscript{62}

Between 1988-1995, the region saw an implementation of the structural adjustment programmes. Since the countries did not have a secure social security sector, the impact of the reforms was felt most by the workers and the middle classes. The food riots of 1998 were symptomatic of the impact of the withdrawal of subsidies from the agricultural sector. The inflation resulting from the lack of government protection in the sectors of basic necessities, lead to the chaos.

It was against this background, of a failed economy, corruption, lack of social welfare, unemployment and lack of political vents, that the opposition arose to meet the challenges. The opposition was led by the leaders of the ruling party who were disenchanted with the manner in which the government was functioning. If we take the example of Algeria, the riot was led by urban masses who were facing a food shortage and an economic hardship. Their targets were the rich and people with more than enough to spend. However, when it came to giving it’s leadership a face and an identity, it was the educated, moderate and disenchanted ruling party workers, who led the negotiations with the government. The backbone of their mass-support came from the religious clergy, who had the potential to curb the violence and the crowds. (Details of the events, leadership, etc., will be dealt with in chapter five).

Similarly the Muslim Brotherhood, that has bases in the social welfare sector of the country, and relies very strongly on the religious appeal of the masses, has for its leadership, leaders who were former colleagues of Nasser and Sadat. (The detailed political and economic history will be dealt with in chapter four). Even though Egypt had a distinct leadership school and organization, the leadership of the movement remains
one that balances the political aspirations of the religious leaders and the need or the masses to have a religious leadership.

The second aspect of the social movements vis-a-vis the state lies in the alternatives they offer to what they think is wrong with the functioning of the state. The questioning of the very existence of the state in its present form is the focus of the religio-political movements. For them, the state is a failed state as it is lead by morally corrupt, is a Western secular state, and is incapable of handling the problems of the masses as it deviates from the norms of a true Islamic state. The focus is on the flaws in the functioning of every field of the state, from economy to polity.

The idea of replacing the existing state with its administrative, political and economic paraphernalia is to focus on the question of injustice, mismanagement and the Western concept of secularism in the country. Since the state still adheres to the laws and policy precedents of the colonial era, and collaborates with the Western powers that support the arming of Israel, it is seen as a representative of the Western powers.

Political Islam is mostly understood as a reaction to the Westernization of the government, economy, polity and society. It is seen as reaction to secularism and modernization as represented by the West. The cultural, political and economic hegemonization by the West is countered by offering a solution that is rooted in the indigenous history and cultural, social and economic precedents of the region.

Modernity refers to the Western economic models of socialism, which the newly independent states had adopted, and later in the 1980s, the economics of capitalism and liberalism. Political Islam, in this context, is a reactionary development, opposing every concept that is attached to the Western economic and political systems adopted by the states in the region. Thus it opposes secularism, in the Western sense of the term, is opposed to the idea of globalisation, liberalism, communism and separation of the church and state.

The important feature of the alternative governments or models of alternative governments presented by the political Islamists is the nature of the alternatives offered, and the manner in which its successes can be measured. While in the field of society, the moral police and the judgments of the Islamic law council are effective and find support in the implementation of their programme, the alternatives of Islamic economics fails to offer a viable alternative to the existing system.

The concept of Islamic economics relies on the Islamic concept of not living off interest on capital. To circumvent the issue of interest, the Islamic economy bases itself on Islamic banks that use the savings in it to fund welfare and other developmental
projects, and make the investors shareholders in the project. Technically it is an income accruing from investment and is not just income from interest on capital. But in actual functioning it is as much a modern banking system as the next Western bank. The appeal of the Islamic economics is the concept of “Islamic”. The term is used to re-hash the traditional Arabic terminologies like zakat, etc., to lend credibility to the functioning of the economic transactions of these institutions. Islamic economics is an attempt to fit the old Islamic concepts of trade, zakat, etc., into the modern day world. Even if the manner of functioning of the Islamic banks or other institutions is the same as the Western capitalist system, the fact that it is Muslims who are doing the transactions and that the dealing will be done in accordance with the Islamic traditions is enough appeal to allow the middle class investors deal with the institution.63

In the case of Algeria, according to Hugh Roberts64, it was not just the concept of Islamic economics which was impractical, the Islamists too did not come up with any unique solution to the problems of the masses, in the 1989-1991 political crisis. The support that the FIS gave to the government’s economic policies showed that it did not have any concrete economic policy, but was aiming at political power at the expense of popular rhetoric.

"...at a time when Algeria’s Islamists regrouped in most part in the FIS, were apparently bidding for power in conditions of national economic crisis and controversy, they not only evacuated the entire debate over the future direction of the country’s economic development but did so at the expense of the interests of the urban poor whom they were committed to mobilizing, by supporting the positions of the FLN government and party leadership in this debate, that is, the positions of those whom they were notionally committed to overturning."65

In the case of non-capital economics, the religio-social movements do not have the infrastructure to counter the existing state apparatus. They thus use the failures of governance to build their support bases and their alternative administrative apparatus. They use the vacuum in the existing system to not only highlight the flaws in the existing system, but to establish their own support base. The role of the NGOs and the social welfare services are a case in point. They use the inability of the government to provide adequate health care, education, employment and a social safety net for the masses that is either too young or too old to be an earning and working member of society.66 The globalization policies, and the withdrawal of subsidies in the 1980s, affected the social sector most adversely. It cut back on formal Western education, health care and other services. The impact was felt not only in the services rendered to the masses, but among the workers within these sectors as well. In Egypt, the doctors in the government hospitals also work in the hospitals run by
the Islamic organizations to ensure a decent income and working conditions. The hospitals are better equipped, with a wider outreach and pay scales that supplement the government doctor's income.  

The social welfare networks, attached to the mosques use the appeal of religion and the concept of service to attract followers and build a network of dedicated followers. The importance of these networks is that it provides the social movement with cadre and an infrastructure that is capable of grooming and providing the movement with future leadership. Even if the movement is not aiming at a violent overthrow of the government or a radical revolutionary movement, it ensures a steady support for itself in the next elections. It works in a manner that secures it a mass base, and a credibility of being the most popular alternative available to the people. Confrontation with the state or the state repression, or its co-operation, all ensure that the status and position of political Islam as a viable alternative is not questioned.

What is important about the political Islam of the two countries, particularly in relation to the state, is their ability to mould themselves and work according to the demands of time. If the state is repressive and does not allow for dissent, the movement has the potential to defy its authority (even though on a small and limited scale). On the other hand if the state, under whatever compulsions, implements any form of political pluralism, the political Islamists have the potential to contest and win the elections, making them a unique kind of political religionists who allow for a peaceful transfer of state power through elections.

Hugh Roberts, while analyzing the FIS in Algeria, has shown that the religio-political opposition, despite being popular and with all the supposed mass support does not openly defy the government. He calls it political opportunism of Algerian Islamism. The Western perception that the opposition was ready to challenge the Algerian state, and the clash between the Islamists and the nation-state has been all but total, is false. The Islamists point to the flaws in the functioning of the government, raise the question of the moral character of the government, but are not willing to offer any radical solutions or even radically different alternatives to the existing policies. They work within the system, and though are opposed to some of the political policies of the government; they do not aim at a revolutionary overthrow of it. (Even in the case of the Iranian state and that of Sudan, the new Islamic governments did not deviate very drastically from the global economic-political systems. Sudan is the best known example of the Islamic state following the norms and reforms of the IMF with the most amount
of honesty). Though there are constant charges of corruption and mismanagement of the economy, the demand is always for the government to step down or be more accountable rather, than an overthrow it.

The social movements have over the period of time learnt to adapt to the changes around them. If in 1988 and till the early 1990s the demand was political pluralism, a revamping of the economic infrastructure, and there was vehement opposition to the state negotiations with the Western powers, US and Israel, by the mid-1990s the demands had changed to just pressuring the government into being more accountable and accommodative of popular demands. By 1995 the demand for elections had also subsided and the population had learnt to accommodate the state policies with the help of alternative institutions like the NGOs and other social welfare groups.

An example of the shifting stands of the social movements is visible in the shift in their attitude of the Palestinian and Israel problem. On the creation of Israel and on the subsequent displacement of the Palestinians the reaction of the entire region of West Asia and North Africa was very vehement. The three Arab-Israeli wars saw the people come out in massive support of their governments fighting Israel and US imperialism. However, as the society felt the economic strain of the wars and realized the futility of the hostility towards Israel, they accepted the changes in the foreign policies of their governments in negotiating bi-lateral agreements with Israel. Egypt which had led the ideological, political and military movement against Israel was the also the first country to negotiate truce with Israel.

2) The interactions between the state organs and the socio-political organizations at the centre and at the periphery:

Since the character of the socio-political organizations vary from the centre to the periphery, the nature of interaction between them and the state also vary. The demands, problems and nature of the urban populations are different from those of the rural and peripheral centres. The problems of the urban populations would deal with unemployment, social security cover, transport, civic amenities, etc.. Their demands would focus on social and economic welfare. Thus organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood that are more urban-centric organizations focus on the needs of the urban workers. They provide services for the city masses, like cheap and affordable education, health care services, vocational training and employment through small-scale industries. On the rural front, the most important focus of mass mobilization is through the clergy of the local mosques. The issues of the peripheral masses range from the protection of
their society from the onslaught of modernization, land-reforms, rural unemployment and most importantly the need for a social safety net that would insure the masses from agricultural calamities. Agriculture had been a neglected sector, from the time of independence. The new governments wanted a development of the industrial sector to be able to compete with the global economy. The agricultural focus was limited to agricultural subsidies and the protective tariffs on food grains. By the time of the mid 1980s, the economies in the region were no longer self-sufficient in food-grains, and had become dependent on aid and subsidies to subsist.

The focus of the government, in their effort to deal with the economic problems plaguing the country varied with time. As they could not afford to turn the focus of industrialization to agricultural (after the experiment of socialism had failed), they turned to the alternate economic policy of open economy, borrowing to cover up deficit budgets and become a part of the global economic system on a larger scale. This resulted in partial recovery of the economic system as the external investment came in selective industries and not in the economy as a whole. The military, industrial technology and urban sectors benefited more from the changes in economic focus than the rural sectors. The agricultural economy still had to rely on the subsidies and the state protection of the sector.

The political Islamic movements aim at not just the urban, educated, under employed or unemployed. They try to cover as much of the population as possible and attend the grievances of as large a scale as possible. They use the same platform of religion, but the manner in which it is used in the cities and in the villages vary. The common focus in both the places is on the smaller issues of poverty, unemployment, inadequate civic amenities and corruption. The larger issues deal with the question of political pluralism, the threat of imperialism from the United States and Israel. The leaders, who have over a period of time addressed these issues and formulated political ideologies on the basis of these issues, seek mass support against the policies of the existing government.

In the urban centres the target population of the Islamists are the workers at different levels of any organization. It is mostly from the educated and professionally qualified sections of the population that the Islamic movements have been drawing their leadership and support. The support base of the FIS is the urbane, middle class, educated and in some ways moderate in their political views. The biggest challenge to the government has come from the middle classes of the urban centres. Though the network of propagation through the mosques remains the same, whether in the rural or
in the urban centres, the leadership of the religio-political movements demonstrates a distinct pattern of leaders who are professionally qualified individuals, with religious training. Doctors, engineers, etc., all provide a vital support base and a leadership training ground for the movement. The FIS and the Muslim Brotherhood, both work actively in recruiting the professionals and the trade union workers in their party. Gaining control over the various unions has been one of the ways in which the political Islamists have been working towards consolidating their support bases.  

"Without question, fundamentalist groups often recruit among and appeal to people on the short end of economic development. Often the followers are poor, jobless people, lacking worldly prospects. But they are not the poorest of the poor, who do not have the luxury of becoming disciples — much less leaders of fundamentalist movements — and are more preoccupied with "the fundamentals" of basic survival. More commonly, recruits one from educated unemployed or underemployed, or from gainfully employed teachers, engineers, medical technicians, and other professionals in the applied sciences, areas of specialization in which modernizing societies are playing catch-up."  

The merging of people's welfare with religion produced a sort of secularised religion. The civil governance and the welfare activities were used only to show the flawed nature of governance by the secular regime. The Islamists did not use the charitable and other institutions as platforms for launching their political movement. On the contrary, by the early 1990s they had mobilized the support of the professional unions, which were organized, vocal, articulate, with a membership of people who belonged to a fairly well to do class and with the ability to take the government head on issues like corruption, globalisation and other modern day challenges.  

The reactions of the state organs towards the socio-political organizations have been one of either co-option or outright suppression. One of the main reasons given for the rise of a political Islam has been the corruption and the confrontation between the bureaucracy and the masses at different levels. If the state was experimenting with the policies and ideologies of socialism, it had been executed through a bureaucracy that saw its own welfare in the system. The inability of the bureaucracy to effectively and honestly implement any policy has been one of the major drawbacks of the other ideologies. In the case of socialism, the system worked more towards ensuring government jobs for the educated masses rather than focus on productivity and making the system into a profitable enterprise. Similarly the later attempts to open up the economy and allow for private capital and a capitalist market ethics could not succeed due to the
incomplete and partial implementation of the policies. Any economic system and all political unrests have strengthened the bureaucracy rather than make the government weaker or more accountable. All changes have facilitated the bureaucracy and the government in increasing their powers.

One can take the examples of democracy economic change to prove the point that the state powers have increased rather than diminish with time. If we take up the case of the failure of the economy to successfully open up to the global economic system, the most common complain of the regulatory bodies like the IMF and the WB have been about the extent of government intervention in the system. In the case of Egypt, Nazih Ayubi points out that it was the state (bureaucracy), which got strengthened in the process of liberalization, by the focusing on its economic rather than welfare role.

"In the economic sphere, the public sector has not really given way to the private sector (except in the special case of commerce and finance), but the state has merely chosen to co-operate with international capital. This has signified a transformation of the states' role from a developmental one production-oriented one (seeking profit and cutting down on welfare activities within the joint public sector/ international public sector enterprises). However, the welfare functions of the state bureaucracy towards society at large (education, health, food subsidies, etc.) have not been significantly curtailed, although the state has become increasingly dependent on external sources for financing them."

He sees privatization as a means by which the state bureaucracy has diversified and dominated the various economic resources. The bureaucracy, according to him did not suffer a retrenchment, but got more firmly entrenched in the profit-enterprise field of global capitalism.

"The open door policy of has developed more because the state bureaucracy has opted for an alliance with international capital, rather than from any pressure from local industrial capitalists. This means that the Egyptian state bureaucracy has simply chosen new ways to continue to dominate the state and to benefit from it's economic resources."  

Similarly in the field of elections and the processes of state management, it is the government that managed to gain power and intervene in the socio-political movements. Whether it was the promising of elections after the 1988 riots in Algeria, or the process of elections in the trade unions, the government manages to regulate and monitor these elections. To strengthen its own powers, the government is at liberty to decide who will contest the elections and in what capacity.

Thus when the government did not want the Muslim Brotherhood to contest elections at the trade union level, it passed the law that the candidates will have to be individuals
and not belong to a party. At the national level, it can stop the religious parities from contesting elections.

The functions of the state have increased enormously extending into areas of socio-economic services that far exceed the scope of the activities in pre-colonial or colonial times. The state is the largest employer and the largest investor; most of the religious officials, teachers, professionals are employed by the state; the state subsidizes education, basic food supplies, consumer items, essential commodities etc. But the state is also the source of intrusive regulations, such as labour laws, religious organization, currency and import controls, exit visas, school curriculum and social norms. 77

On the flip side the state has become the monopoly of a few, or the ruling elite. The elite manipulates issues, movements and events to stay in power. The elite uses the military apparatus, the policy of co-option and suppression, and after the unrests of 1988, even external forces to stay in power. The gulf between the ruling and the ruled is a widening phenomena. The conflict of interests between the majority and the ruling elite, is deciding factor in the politico-social-economic equations of the nation states.

If the state has been using the threats of terrorism and unrest as reasons to strengthen its own military and coercive apparatus, and is using the apparatus to maintain its hold on the society, the social movements on their part have been using the mass movements and policies of co-option to maintain their strength in the state system. Both the actors have been using modern tools to propagate their views and canvass support for their causes. These include the internet, the print and audio-visual media. They appeal to the both the external and internal forces who can affect and influence the masses.

The religio-political movements, however have co-opted within the system and work in tandem with the state to allow the socio-political discontent to have a vent. The larger part of the political leadership of the Islamic movements does not aspire for a revolutionary overthrow of the government and the existing administrative system. Hugh Roberts, while analyzing the failure of the FIS points out that the leadership did not aim at a revolutionary overthrow of the system. When the mass movement was turning revolutionary, the leadership negotiated elections and features like political pluralism, condemnation of Israel etc., rather than take over the reins of the government. Taking over and establishing an Islamic state would mean working towards destroying the existing structure and replacing it with a new one, and re-
negotiating the equations with the rest of the world. This is a risk the leadership is not ready to take. 78

3) The empirical conditions affecting state-society interfaces:

The empirical conditions affecting the state-society interfaces will have to be divided into internal and external factors. The internal factors will include factors like corruption, unemployment etc., while the external factors will include the Arab-Israeli wars, the gulf wars, the crisis in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the external and the internal factors are not watertight in their classifications, and they can influence each other in a variety of ways.

The most important aspect of the changes in the relations between the state and society has been the role of the external factors in the development of the histories of the region. Oil, Israel, the increasing presence of the Western troops and economic activity in the region, all contributed to the changes in the state-society relations, and in the relations between the nation-states and the larger world, and between the different nation-states themselves.

For example, the IMF conditions of structural adjustment and democracy are external factors affecting the internal dynamics. The economic deficit from the end of the 1970s forced the governments to borrow money from the multilateral funding agencies. However, the loans came with strings attached. The governments were expected to make political conditions in their countries, conducive for democracy and implement the structural adjustment programmes. The flaws in the programmes and whether the policy of enforced from outside, democracy would be successful are heavily debated topics. 79

The Western policy makers find Islamic upsurges, a challenge to their global capitalist market oriented policies as in many countries Islamic upsurges have been witnessed mainly due to the crisis caused by this policy. As a result the West has developed a suitable equation. Emerging political Islamic upsurges (Islam) =Fundamentalism =Terrorism and extremism=threat to global order and stability. 80

The crisis of 1988 was not just a symbol of the dependence on food aid and foreign economic systems, but it also marked the integration of the domestic economy into the global economy. The integration was in nearly all the sectors of the economy, and not just in agricultural but also in industrial labour, agricultural labour and other sectors. It is supposed to be the beginning of the impact of 'neo-liberalism' in the Third World.
The important point about the demand for democracy is the attitude of the Western powers towards democracy in the region. The fear of Islamic parties winning the elections and turning the states into theocratic states is a perceived threat to the Western powers. A move of this sort would jeopardize the economic and military interests of the West in the region, and it would also translate into a security threat to Israel. Therefore to curb the possibility of this eventuality, the Western countries work at two levels to allow for a successful democratic experiment in the region. In countries like Algeria, and other former colonies, the previous colonizers invest in intelligence and economic and military support to retain the governments in power. On the other hand, the United States and Israel use the military bases and the economic treatises like GATT and IMF to ensure that the governments do not allow the Islamists to ever gain power.

A truly democratic and free Arab world would reduce Israel to a backwater islet in a sea of "Market Democracy". Given this apocalyptic vision, it is no wonder that Israel encourages America's alarmist view of Islamism and supports an instrumentalist approach to Arab political-economic development. Peace with Israel in which the Jewish state remains the centerpiece of democracy, development, and domination while the Arab world languishes in political backwardness which ensures a limited socio-economic future is one subscribed to although never so crudely or explicitly stated.81

On the local level, the governments use the opportunity to stay in power without any contest. They legislate and do not allow parties with religious affiliations to contest elections, or outrightly ban organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood and FIS. In the peak of the socio-political-economic crisis from 1988-1995, the states also used the weapon of terrorism to crackdown on their opposition.

International agreements and cooperation are usually undertaken for purposes of external security. But when domestic change is so great as to alter the system of government and threaten the positions of the incumbents, then domestic security becomes a major motive behind the politics of the states. Neighboring North African countries have tightened their relations and overcome their hostilities on occasion over the last decade in order to help each other meet the challenge of democratization, notably in regard to the Islamist movements.82

Politicization of Islam will have to be understood in the context of the rampant corruption and misplaced national priorities of the national economy, on the national font. On the international front, it will have to be understood as a response to the right wing politics of the Western world. The politicization of religion which is seen as a new form of hegemony that the Western world is trying to exercise through the new form imperialism the symbols of which are the multi-lateral loan giving agencies, Israel, the oil-conglomerates, the funding and support the West gives to the corrupt and unpopular regimes, and the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia and their constant intervention
in the regional Arab politics, is all understood by the Islamists as part of the reversal of crusades.

Mark Tessler points out that the support to the Islamist movements in West Asia and North Africa are a result of the political and economic discontent of the people, rather than religious and cultural traditions. The political economy is more important in understanding the reasons for the turn to political Islam in the region, rather than the religious history or the cultural traditions of the region. The reasons for the discontent range from, the inability of the governments to create jobs on a scale needed to accommodate the country's population, to the wide disparity in the educational opportunities provided to the masses and the matching employment opportunities to go with it; from inadequate housing to the inability of the governments to meet the challenges of the growing urban populations. The external factors of Israel and the US foreign policy, along with the militarization of the region are equally important in the politicization of the religion.

Its symbolism notwithstanding, political Islam is not a religious tradition but a twentieth century popular movement that has gained wide currency in response to the military humiliations, political depredations and socio-economic discontents of recent history. The Gulf War of 1990-91 was about realpolitik, not ideology. By maintaining its military stance in the Peninsula and offshore indefinitely, however, the US risks provoking an Islamist underground movement against Arabian royal families. Using a tactic of the old days of the Palestinian resistance, the Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden attacked US civilians abroad in order to drive American forces from his homeland. Employing Israeli-style prerogative, the United States counter-attacked within third countries. While Washington claims that ships, planes and troops are needed in the Gulf to protect the world from Saddam Hussein, others see an aggressive imperial force protecting a client royal gerontocracy.

The empirical conditions affecting the state society relations are equally responsible for the politicization of the religion. The social movements have used the religion as a political platform to highlight the inefficiency of the state, to question the legitimacy of the ruling regime and to offer an alternative to the existing Western ideologies that are seen to have brought only suffering and humiliation to the people. The state, from its side, has used the religion to counter the political opposition it has been facing. Official Islam was created with the sole purpose of keeping the power of the religio-political movements in check. By declaring Islam as the official religion and by keeping the clergy on its payroll, the state has used the tool of political Islam to legitimize its authority and be the most important actor in determining the religious character and norms of the society.
On the international front too, the political Islamists have used the tool of religion to try and enlarge their movement, give it a worldview and gain strength form the failures of the states in the larger arena. The presence of Israel, the US and the Western policies have had as much of an impact strengthening the movement of political Islam as much as it has had on strengthening the powers of the state vis-à-vis political Islam.

However, the leaders of political Islam are aware about the limits to which they can appeal on the basis if religion. The state control and the international control on the political movements, coupled with the fact that the state also plays a role in influencing the social thought, stops the movement into taking a very revolutionary character that would overthrow the regimes in power or forming the alternative Islamic state. They are aware of the debts they would have to repay, and therefore do not formulate an alternative economic policy, nor can they break out of the loyalties within the nation state to ask for a larger Islamic region. The state too works on the limitations set on it by the religio-political movements. The economic plans are partially implemented to stave off the unrest; a religious sanction is sought before every major political move is made, and on the political front a political vent is permitted, however limited, to prevent a political unrest.

4) State vs. political Islam:

As pointed out earlier, ever since the contact with the European colonial powers and under the colonial regimes, the state-society relations have been one of hostility, confrontation and collision. The governments have been trying to suppress or counter the political force of religion. The uniqueness of the religio-political system in West Asia and North Africa is its ability to adapt to the existing political system. It seeks to continue within the existing political system. The Islamist populist opposition to authoritarian regimes are often well-organized movement and yet they continue to be willing to operate within the existing political and economic system.\textsuperscript{85} It was to counter the political strength of the Islamists the state came with its own official or state Islam. It was the attempt by the government to co-opt or integrate the religio-political activists into the state system. Ministries of Religious Affairs took charge of the clergy and their powers. Now it was in the hands of the state to ratify the appointment of the clergy, their salaries, benefits, preaching and powers. Respected religious thinkers identified with the salafiyya reformism were allowed to voice their ideas within a narrow Islamic religio-jurisprudential framework. To ensure ideological compliance, the thinkers were often named to posts as government functionaries responsible to the ministry.\textsuperscript{86}
Official Islam however was not always accepted. From the time of its inception it has faced a challenge. Independent clergy, even educated middle class students, and other disgruntled elements of society, rallied behind the alternative Islamic preachers. These preachers and leaders, at different levels challenged the policies and legitimacy of the government.

Political Islam has been a phenomenon encompassing the needs of both the state and the Islamists. It is a symbiotic relationship, in which all involved in field of politics have a role to play, and a have a stake in the process of power sharing.

The institutionalisation of Islam has set a pattern of relationship between the ‘ulama’ (religious scholars) in charge of these institutions, on the one hand, and the state, on the other. ...... The need of the regime to promote actively the traditional forms and values of Islam and values is two fold: first, to cultivate a base of support for launching a largely secular-oriented nation-wide modernization drive – that is, to provide a banner of national unity over political issues that may not necessarily draw mass support; and second, to perpetuate the (ff) legitimacy and stability of the regime dominated by a Westernised political elite with little in common with the masses.87

Political Islamists have also been classified as fundamentalists, who have been using the imagery of the golden era gone by and the promise of justice and prosperity in the future if they are able to establish an Islamic state. Abdel Azim Ramadan explains, that fundamentalists are people who wish to renew Islam, by purifying it of spurious beliefs, return to the essentials and reconcile Islam with the requirements of the modern age, to consider Islam as an appropriate instrument for government, and to believe in the capacity of Islam to bring progress rather than rely on Western secular political structures and laws.88

What has brought the political Islamists into focus is the state repression of the political Islamic movements and the extreme violence perpetrated in the name of religion by both the state and the Islamists. The period from the mid 1980s to the mid-1990s is extremely important in the history of political Islam. This was the period when the crystallization of the radical Islamist movements took place in the form of organized parties. In Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and the rest of the region, due to strong state repression the radicals, even though they had been declared illegal and had lost considerable support bases, had managed to gain certain credibility. The organized radical movements had come of age by the end of the 80s.

The state has tried to deal with the political opposition by either crushing it or by co-opting it. Under the policy of co-option the state has been incorporating the changes
being made by the political religionists like closing offices for Friday prayers, or closing the eating joints during the month of Ramadhan, etc. Though they have incorporated the agendas on a partial basis, the governments have cracked down on the leaders of the movements that demanded the changes. This way it works towards fragmenting the opposition posed by political Islamist.

The state is capable of co-opting as well as repressing the religio-political movement. It has the power to manipulate the movement to its side or co-opt the ideas of the movement while suppressing the concept of political unrest.

Whatever Islamist political intentions may be, however, the ability of the government to co-opt, as well as repress is enormous............ As they (the young fundamentalist movements) move from the arena of religiously inspired protest and reform to political engagement, they may be vulnerable to manipulation by secular political veterans........ In this light the dramatic rise of political Islam in Algeria seems accounted for more by the failure, and subsequent face saving maneuvers, of wizened secular political hands than by a popular Islamic movement, which in its organizational structural and political mechanisms, has been underdeveloped.89

A fallout of the tool of repression by the govt is increasing the long-term position and credibility of the movement as an opposition group and justified its demands. In the case of post-coup Algeria, when the regime sought the persecution and liquidation of a group, the Islamic movement broke down into smaller but more cohesive—and generally more radical—splinter groups.90 The process of repression and co-option however, has not totally been able to eliminate the potential of socio-religious forces being a political force. As the government failed to deliver its promise of prosperity and political liberalism, the politicization of religion started asserting itself in more subtle ways. There was a marked increase in the attendance in religious services, rise in the observance of traditional social customs, like the veiling of women, or the growing of beards by men. All these came to symbolize a sort of protest against the ruling code of Westernisation, secularism, modernity and the general direction in which the government was leading the country.

By the 1990s, the process of cooption had found takers even among the Islamists in the region. The constant conflict with the state, with its large repressive machinery had split the Islamic movements into two. Either the members had turned radical and taken to arms to establish their utopian Islamic state, or they had contracted with the other opposition parties in the state and decided to infiltrate the governing administrative ranks and become a part of the system. The separation of the movements, on the basis of their bases and activities, their memberships and support funding are used to
differentiate a group of activists are the problem makers, and those who can be accepted into the mainstream. The differentiation provides proof that the larger sections of the Muslims are not anti-West or radical fundamentalists; rather it is the moderate political Islamic movements which are popular and need to be encouraged to get the majority of the population to come into mainstream politics.

The accommodation of the Islamists within the political system has been very tenuous. It was a very uneasy truce between the ruling regime and the moderate Islamists who wanted to be part of the system to change the system. Both tried to upstage each other in some manner or the other. If the government declared the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist parties to be illegal, they would contest election in collaboration with the other parties and prove that they are also a political force to be reckoned with. All Islamist parties in the region differed from their governments on different issues as and when they came up. Whether it was the question of truce with Israel or the question of interest on bank deposits, the Islamists always had an objection, supported by the religious texts. The governments on the other hand, never missed an opportunity to condemn them as dogmatic, non-progressive misleaders of youth and suppressers of women's rights. The government constantly tightened its surveillance and control over the activities of the political religious groups. Under the label of threat to internal and external security the ministries dealing with law and order and defence have kept a constant check on the organizations.

To counter the influence of the government on the social life, and in attempts to win over the machinery of the government the political Islamic movements have been working towards infiltrating the bureaucracy and the other organs of the government. A very prominent example to the level of their successes in this exercise is seen in the assassination of President Sadat. The assassin was an army official with support from his unit. Just after the assassination, one of the first steps of the government was to flush out the politico-religious elements from the state machinery. One of the reasons for the success of the Iranian revolution has been the successful infiltration of the political Islamists in the state machinery.

Though the infiltration of the Islamists has been pretty deep into the ranks of the bureaucracy and army, the possibility of an Iran type takeover is not possible. According to Asef Bayat, the two main reasons for this was the overestimation of the strength of the ability of the Islamic movements to mobilize and sustain a revolutionary and insurrectionary movement. Movements like the Muslim Brotherhood may be able to lead
a protest march or even lead riots like in the food riots, but they do not have the base to sustain the movements to revolutionary levels. Secondly, the organizational structure of the Islamic models in the region might be able to explain the support bases of such movements, like the reasons for discontent, but not explain the reasons why any or which of these movements might turn revolutionary.93

Knowing their limitations, most governments and religious opposition parties work together to retain the equilibrium. The relationship between the government and the Islamic opposition has been symbiotic. Even in states where the confrontation between the government and Islamists is sharp, there are ways in which a political co-option takes place. The more popular reason for this might be the might of the state apparatus, but the other important reason for the Islamists to cooperate in the process, is their realization of the thinness of their mass base.94 Lacking a broad-base of support but hoping to achieve one and inevitable joined in a high-stakes competitions with other Muslim groups, the fundamentalists frequently change tactics.95 This is most commonly seen in the manner in which they work out political alliances to contest elections.

The state needed the Muslim Brotherhood, in Egypt, to fulfil its role of being a welfare state and get a base against the more radical Islamists. The Muslim Brotherhood always took advantage of the political liberalization periods to renew their mass appeal and broaden their youth bases.

The price paid by the state was to allow an ideologically hostile force to penetrate publicly the institutions of the professional middle class. The price the Brotherhood paid was to respect the state’s need for political and social stability. This new social contract became the hallmark of Mubarak’s style of democratisation: unlike Nasser’s and Sadat’s approach to politics, which depended basically on a strong central leader, this aimed at consolidating the mainstream through creating consensus among political actors on the need to avoid involvement in destabilizing actions against the government.96

The character of mobilization of the religio-political social work movements also changed to being more critically of the government’s failure rather than being revolutionary. The natural calamities in the both the countries, and the welfare provided to the victims, is indicative of the extent to which the demands for political changes have altered over time. The 1987 earthquake in Egypt demonstrated the extent to which the social work organizations had managed to function and form a parallel government that was capable of overthrowing the state administration completely in the region. Once the government became aware of the strength of the alternative socio-
political networks they took steps towards controlling its powers and ensuring that it
remained limited to being a pressure group and not offer an alternative to the
government. The scope of the works of the religio-charitable organizations was limited
to supplementing the government social welfare schemes, rather than offer an
alternative to it.

In Algeria, the political Islamic groups that wanted to overthrow the government in
1988, had by 1995 started negotiating truce and the possibility of becoming part of the
system again. Rather than resist the government, the later day FIS had proceeded on
the road to retain a status quo in the existing political and economic system.

Conclusion:

From 1988 to 1995 West Asia and North Africa in general and Algeria and Egypt in
particular went through a series of socio-economic and political changes which has
affected the history of the two countries and took them in a totally different direction. It
saw the transition of the economy from a socialist to a capitalist one, the enforcement
of the structural adjustment programmes, socio-political-economic unrest and an
unprecedented conflict between the government and the religio-political organizations.
The economic and the political history of the two countries, within this time frame, is
indicative of the changing patterns of socio-political developments in the region. The
socio-political movements in this period show a marked change in character and focus.
From being street movements in 1988 and 1991, with the potential to overthrow the
government, they went on to becoming less reactionary movements, that was more
keen on working within the system rather than radically overthrow it. The nature of the
movements changed from radical revolutionary to more demonstrative yet moderate
and non-violent movements. The role of the press in Egypt and the role of the
democratic processes are indicative of the shift from outright confrontation to moderate
resistance to the government policies.
The case examples of Algeria and Egypt show the shift in the political, economic and
social movements of the two countries. An evaluation of the manner in which the
governments had managed a shift in ideology on the political and economic front,
shows how the socio-political movements also shifted and changed accordingly. The
constant interaction between the state and the social movements had resulted in the
state gaining control and increasing its powers at the expense of the movements.
This is not to undermine the strength or the powers of the religio-political movements.
In their own way they managed to impact the government’s political, economic and
social decisions. In the form of terrorist movements, they even attempted to resist the government, though on a limited scale. The larger movement has dissolved into being a moderate movement that works through various state and non-state organs to resist their dissatisfaction with the working of the government. The next two chapters are case studies, documenting the political and economic changes in Egypt and Algeria from 1988-1995, and the different levels of state-society interfaces and their impact on each other.
See Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis and Daniel Pipes for details on the theory of the Clash of Civilization, and the reason why democracy, development and modernization has failed in West Asia and North Africa. The focus of Daniel Pipes works is more on the Islamic threat to the security of the US.


Sheila Carapico, "Introduction to Part one", in ibid., n.2, p.29.


See Hugh Roberts in Rudey, n. 67

70 See J. P. Entelis, "Islam, Democracy, and the State: The Reemergence of Authoritarian Politics in Algeria", in Rudey, n. 64, pp. 219-251

71 See Dennis Sullivan, n. 67; and J.P. Entelis in Rudey, n.64.


76 ibid., pp. 59.


82 I. William Zartman, n. 58, p. 213.


87 Shahin, Emad Eldin, n. 60, pp. 18-19


89 James Piscatori, "Accounting for Islamic Fundamentalisms", in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby ed., n. 78, p. 369.

90 E.E. Shahin, n. 60, pp. 244-245.

91 On the issue of usury and the opposition to the banking system see Gehad Auda, "The "Normalization" of the Islamic Movement in Egypt from the 1970s to the Early 1990s", in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby ed., n. 78, p. 391-2.

92 "Despite the lines of understanding between the Brotherhood and the Ministry of Interior which were established in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Ministry of Interior was keen, particularly under the ministry of Zaki Badr (1986-1990), to make the Brothers feel themselves under surveillance by the police. The Interior ministry never missed an opportunity to attack the Brotherhood publicly as a sly organization that only sought power and was never true to Islam. It attempted to prove that there was a covert deal between the Brotherhood and the radical Islamists, a division-of-labour scheme for destroying the state. Furthermore, it made great effort to restrict the Brothers' access to the public through confiscating their publications or banning their public meetings."

Gehad Auda, ibid., p. 391

93 Asef Bayat, n. 73.

94 See James Piscatori, n. 89.

95 ibid., p. 370.

96 Gehad Auda, n. 78, p. 388.
Introduction to the case studies of Egypt and Algeria:
Changes in any variable at any given point of time will affect the state-society
equations. To demonstrate these changes two case studies have been taken within a
specific timeframe. From the time of the bread riots in Algeria to the elections in the
two countries around 1995, the economic, political, social and cultural dimensions had
changed to a new order. The origins of support for the religio-political movements will
have to be evaluated against the backdrop of political and economic changes in the two
countries rather than in the religious or cultural traditions of their inhabitants. 97
The changes in the two countries have to be evaluated against the backdrop of the
changes in global front. The mid eighties marks the beginning of the new world order,
with the changes in the economic front dictated by the multi-lateral funding agencies
getting the first socio-political reactions. It marks the beginning of the new economic
order of free trade and global capitalism.
The domestic policies reflected the changes that would integrate them in the new order.
The most important of these changes too place in the economic and in the political
fields. It is to study the manner in which the economic and political changes took place,
that the two countries make important case studies.
This study is based on North Africa, as the region is the home of the major Islamist
schools of thought. The Islamic base for political Islam in North Africa varies from the
tribal Maraboutic Islam of Morocco to the mass based grass-root movement in Algeria,
where the leadership and support to the Islamists comes from the illiterate, peasant
populations. At the same time Egypt represents a unique case of well-formulated
political Islam with an educated leadership capable of developing a comprehensive
political ideology from the religion. Moreover, the scope of influence of the socio-
political movements in each of the countries in the region transcends borders to impact
the developments in other countries in the entire West Asian and North African region.

The period from 1988-1995 is important from an analytical point of view to understand
the changing equations between the state and social movements. From the manner in
which the states used the domestic turbulence caused by the food riots to the co-opting
of the process of political pluralism for the IMF loan conditions, the period represents
the evolution of the new-modern state in the region. It was during this period that the
concept of the state that existed, faced its biggest challenge, as it had failed on both
the domestic and international fronts to remain the representative of the people. It was
also in this period that the state successfully met the challenge and increased its powers
to become the representative of the masses. By 1995, the state had managed to manipulate the social movements to its advantage, and had acquired a legitimacy for itself. It had managed to become the biggest social actor, by official deciding the kind of religion which needed to practiced, how much of religion with all its appendages needed to be incorporated in the modern state and a cultural definition which would identify the country was also established.

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.

Features that make these two countries the most ideal countries for case studies:

a) Egypt was a British colony, never direct, urbanization started by the *khedieves* before the British and even later. The advantage of the Suez Canal, institutionalization of the theological school, etc.. Egypt was the epicenter of the Arab Israeli wars the pan-Arab and the pan-Islamic movements. Algeria on the other hand, was a late independence country. No urban population, agricultural economy, lay clergy leading the religio-political movement. Important point about the country's religio-political leadership is that it did not have an economic or even a foreign affairs agenda till after the 1991 elections.

b) The post-colonial histories of both countries, charted a similar route of development and political-economic ideology after independence. In both the countries the new leadership that took over from the colonizers was the Western educated elite that did not want a new system of administration. Its main goal was to take over the administration from the colonizers.

In both the countries, the new leadership was interested in following an ideology that was very different from that of the colonizers. The attraction to the socialist ideology was due to it being an alternative to the Western capitalist one. The socialism of the two countries, like the socialism of any other Third World country was very different from that being followed in either Russia or China, and differed widely from any of the
socialist ideologies of Europe. In these countries, the demand for the socialist model came from the top and not from the working classes or as a mass movement. It incorporated the features of the Western socialist model to the domestic scene, which meant that it focused on the aspects of state providing for health, education, welfare and industrialization.

Since the leadership in both the countries was an urban educated leadership, the focus of their attention was on the development of the urban sectors of the population, economy and polity. The rural masses and agricultural development remained a neglected sector, till the industrial economy started stagnating and tilted towards a recession.

c) On the domestic political level, the concepts of socialist secularism and policy of non-contestation of ideology of the regime in power, dominated the political front of both the countries. In Egypt, though the organized political Islamic opposition existed, it never came into conflict with the policies and the functioning of the government till mid-80s. The confrontation between the two forces was on a much smaller scale.

The manner of dealing with the question of political Islam remained the same in both the countries. The policies of official Islam to counter alternative Islam, the suppression of movements led on religious lines, the need to co-opt and suppress the political Islam was the same in both the countries.

Studies on the reasons for the popular support to political Islamic movements and organizations can be broadly broken into four categories based on the frameworks being taken to evaluate them. The first category, based on the class studies of the leadership of the political Islamic movements and organizations, classifies the movements into being either radical or moderate movements. The moderates are the ones who try to work within the system, seek changes within the existing political system of democracy and constitutional provisions. Their leadership comprises of the Western educated, urban elite or middle classes. The radicals on the other hand comprise of the uneducated clergy, or the products of the Arabic schools of education, trained mostly in theology and religious studies.

The second categorization is based on the study of the history of the political movements in the country and in the region. They focus on the shifts in the political tactics of the leaders and studies the political ideology of the leaders of the Islamic movements. From the reformist leaders like Abduh to the radicalism of Sayyid Qutub or
Abassi Madani, it tries to place the political Islam in the milieu of the country's development. It is in these studies that the political Islamic movements have been studied as political opportunists\textsuperscript{98}, or organizations that are aiming only for political power. These studies have focused on the different policies being offered by the Islamic movements to counter the existing government and infrastructure, how different are the alternatives from the ideal Islamic state setups, the worldviews of these organizations and the various question of pan-Islamism, Islamic movements in other parts of the world and the questions of networking with the other Islamic movements.

The third categorization focuses on the lack of political pluralism and the role of external intervention in the region to have caused a shift in the nature of political Islam from being moderate to being radical. It evaluates in particular, the role of the forces of economic liberalism, the ideologies of neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism at work in the region and the problems with the US foreign policy directives in complicating the situation in the region.

The fourth category uses the framework of political economy and political factors to evaluate the reasons for the movements turning radical. The rise in radicalism is seen as the result of the failed political economy and a range of political factors ranging from the suppression of democracy to the Iranian revolution, the Palestinian crisis, and the increasing American military, economic and political hegemonization in the region. Within this category also come the studies dealing with the clash of civilizations, the concepts of mismanagement of the rentier economy.

d) On the international level, the factors that were affecting the development of the state and society, remained the same in both the countries. Whether it was globalization on the economic front, or the need to suppress the Islamist movements or the rigging of elections, the question of human rights or the question of Israel, the reactions of both the state and society in the two countries, from the time of the failure of the socialist experiment in the two countries. The external factors that made the question of political Islam into a larger political force, with its anti-Western stand, its opposition to the West backed domestic regimes, the violence and the opposition to authoritarianism that accompanied the movements, all peaked between the mid-80s to the mid-90s.

This aspect of military and political intervention by the Western powers in the regions' politics in general and in the politics and developments within each country, in particular has caused a lot of resentment and anti-Western sentiments in the region.
end of the Second World War to the mid-1980s, the region saw Israel being created with a population of a few thousand Jews at the expense of displacement and devastation of 4 million Palestinians. Also the West helped Israel in the three Arab-Israeli wars since then. To establish the country, and to oppose any attempts at the process of nationalization of domestic economic resources (beginning with the Suez revenues), the Western powers were ready to wage wars and militarily defeat the region to establish their hegemony. Israel has since been seen as a tool of re-colonization of the region, and it is through Israel that the Western powers have been establishing their hegemony in the region. The military strength of Israel far exceeds the military strength of the entire region. To obtain loans and economic concessions in the global economic system a country in the region has to recognize the existence of Israel and work towards establishing bi-lateral relations with it. And it is to protect Israel that the Western world and the US have been building military bases all over the region. It is a process that gained speed and strength from the end of the 1980s.

The second aspect of the international problem faced by the two countries, transcended the problem of uniqueness of the nation-state. It affected the economy and economic management of not just the two countries in the region but also other countries in the Third World: that of imposing the conditionalities of the IMF and WB for the recovery of the loans taken from them. By the 1970s, both Egypt and Algeria had become heavily indebted to the multi-lateral funding agencies to cover for the shortfalls in their economies. The limited industrialization and the inability to cope with the complexes of the global economic system into which they had been drawn from the time of their European colonization, and the failure to adapt the socialist model of development within their countries had made the government take loans from the multi-lateral funding agencies to cover for their budget deficits. To obtain a loan, the countries have to fulfill the conditions of workable democracy and economic liberalism. This has caused the regimes in power to convert the country into a strange kind of democratic structure that always allows the regime in power to win. It has been variously called guided democracy, market democracy and puppet democracy. It is a system that does not allow any kind of opposition, and allows the regime in power to win by heavy margins very time the elections take place. The loan recovery system that involves re-structuring the entire economic and political fabric of the country, and the loans giving conditions also impact the basic structure of polity and economy in the country.
The idea of allowing free and fair elections in the region has been bypassed by the fear that in such a situation it would be the religion based parties that would succeed and change the state system to being a theocratic state system. An Islamic state would naturally be anti-Israel, anti-West and every value and norm the Western world embodies. It has led to a circle of contradictions regarding the Western worlds’ and the loan givers attitudes towards the governments and the political systems in the region. In the 1970s and 1980s, the demand was for democracy within the country, and a system of free and fair elections be established. However, with the success of the Iranian revolution and the fear of the Islamic parties succeeding in elections, the Western governments pressurized and re-negotiated the contract conditions with the IMF and World Bank to allow the governments (secular, military backed) to use every technique to stop the Islamic parties from succeeding in the elections or preventing them from contesting the elections. Military aid, economic aid and intelligence support helped the military backed regimes stay in power.

The conditions imposed by the multi-lateral funding agencies have been based on the philosophy of liberalism. It co-relates political pluralism with economic liberalism. It envisages a society that would allow for liberalism in all spheres from social to economic to political. A country with a democratic structure or a system whereby the people can choose the ideology and policies of their choice would naturally allow for economic systems that would be flexible and allow for free trade at all levels. It would allow international capital to invest and develop the different sectors of the economy in the spirit of healthy competition and as part of the global trade and economic system benefit from the raw material and markets of the rest of the world.

The concept of foreign direct investment that was part of the economic liberalization programme being pushed through in the mid-1980s was based on the same principal of allowing international capitalist investment to bring in technological changes. Under the changes that took place the most prominent ones included the privatization of domestic industries, allowing foreign direct investment in different sectors of the economy and removing the social safety net and social security cover from a large section of the population. It created a sort of contradiction in he economy that was responsible for the economic and social discontent. Though it raised the income and savings of the government and lowered the budget deficits, it also aggravated to the problems unemployment, urbanism, inaccessibility to the national resources, corruption and over bureaucratization. Evaluation of economic development not in terms of national incomes, but also in terms of human development indexes and living conditions have
shown a steady decline in the economic development of the different countries in the entire West Asia and North Africa region. This is despite the fact that most countries, being clubbed in the category of being rentier economies and having an access to the international technological infrastructure the disparities between the ruling classes and the masses have not been bridged.99

Egypt

Egypt is an important case study of the manner in which the state Islam and the alternative Islam reacted to each other and with the state. It is the home for the different kind of Islamic movements. From the moderate and purely intellectual al-Azhar to the practical and political Muslim Brotherhood; from the assimilationist Muslim Brotherhood to the radical al-Jammah Islamiyah, Egypt provided the ideological background and the leadership for the different types of political Islamic movements. Every international and national event impacted their development. The Egyptian state and its social movements were much more involved in the global and international politics and economics than any other state or social movement in the region.

The centralizing tendency of the state powers had begun with the coming of the British in the 1800s itself. The khedives of Egypt had been involved in the large scale restructuring of the economy to assist it in integrating itself to the global economy. For this reason the ambitious projects of the Suez Canal and other large projects were envisaged and executed. The problem arose when the Egyptians realized that the other economic powers were not going to assist them, and by the time of the end of the Second World War, the state was in a debt of millions pounds. To add to the problems, the independent decisions of the new government, like the nationalization of the Suez Canal and economy brought about a military retaliation by the European powers and Israel.

In the period between 1948-1956 (when the last of the British troops moved out), the political changes on the domestic front ranged from the deposing of the monarchy and the establishment of the military regime under the leadership of General Neguib, and later the establishment of the government under Gamal Abd an-Nasser. A new constitution that established the presidency of Nasser was passed in a plebiscite in 1956, giving him a legal sanction and a strength to decide the future course of development for the country. It was under Nasser that Egypt involved in the four circles of religious affairs, Arab and African affairs and finally in the non-aligned movement.
An important feature of the polity under Nasser was its non-contestation. The authority and powers of the President were uncontested. Starting from the elections to the National Assembly in 1957, under the new constitution, the members were handpicked, and were meant not to question the authority of the president. Even in the United Arab Republic, of Syria and Egypt, the effective governance remained with Nasser. The combined National Assembly was inaugurated in Cairo, by Nasser, in 1960. Later in 1965, President Nasser obtained 99% of the votes in the Presidential referendum, but the discontent was visible.

Nasser's rule is marked in the international arena by the formation of combined Arab Republic consisting of a confederation of different countries, from Yemen to Sudan and Syria. It also saw the break up of the UAR, and the failure of the Arabs to unite under one umbrella, despite their cultural, religious, economic and socio-political affinities. The leaders of the pan-Islamic movement, later blamed the pan-Arab experiment as being responsible for the failure of the pan-Islamic movement. From the side of the government, the Muslim Brotherhood and the political Islamic movements were blamed for the failure of the pan-Arab experiments. Nasser had even gotten the Brotherhood banned from the political arena.

The failure of the pan-Arab and the pan-Islamic movements is indicative of the intensity with which the borders of the nation states had been drawn by the European colonizers. The need to be more loyal to the smaller nation state, did not allow the region to ever be able to unite despite the affinities of culture, religion, race, society, etc.. The political and administrative divisions were too deep to allow for an amalgamation of countries.

The breakup with Yemen and Syria, and the rift with Saudi Arabia had cost the Egyptian economy a lot of foreign currency and revenue. The 1967 war with Israel brought the economic losses to the fore. It had cost the Arab world millions of dollars in losses and had firmly entrenched Israel in the region. The losses in the war caused a severe economic and socio-political crisis in the region. The three Arab-Israeli wars are the main factor for the origin and the growth of modern day political Islam. The international dimension of the political Islamic movements focused on the rise of the Israel and the re-colonization of the region by the Americans and the Europeans using Israel as the tool, and the failure of the domestic governments to stop the Western intrusion in the region, all are seen as the result of the failure of the governments to establish an Islamic state, with true Islamic foundations and principles.
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:
The opposition to the colonial system and governments came in all forms of political thought. It ranged from liberal to radical, from socialist to nationalist, and from democratic to religious. The anti-colonial movement took many forms. Of these the most organized were the Nationalist and the Liberals. The problem arose in mass appeal, where the political Islamists came in the picture.
The difference between the Muslim Brotherhood and the al-Azhar is important, though both are active political actors using religion as a political plank, and both have their origins from the time of the European colonial rule in Egypt. The al-Azhar was established as a school of theology. It had the sanction of the government, and was effectively used by the colonizers to channelize the political Islam and religio-political discontent to favour the government. The al-Azhar was a school of thought where the scholars of theology and religion were allowed to debate on various issues of religion and social problems.
The Muslim Brotherhood on the other hand was an inspired movement that aimed at mobilizing the masses, addressing their economic and political needs and working towards establishing a mass base for a political movement. The combination of missionary work and the religious ideal of wanting to establish an Islamic state, made the Muslim Brotherhood the first of the Islamic associations in Egypt with a stake in political power. The need to cleanse the system of the corruption of the West and the necessity to make the governing system more sensitive to the religious, political and economic needs of the masses, were combined by the Muslim Brotherhood to demand an Islamic state, a theocratic state that would combine the best of traditions from the time of the prophet to that of the caliphate.
The political activity of the Muslim Brotherhood involved the taking of the religious discourses and the activities out of the traditional Islamic centres like the al-Azhar, and included a range of working and non-working population into its activities of discourse and social welfare.
The Brotherhood shifted the responsibility for establishing Islamic government from the religiously educated class to the Western incultured class, from the shaykhs to the lawyers, doctors, engineers, pharmacists, and army and police officers. This was a significant development in the history of contemporary Egypt because it linked pan-Islamic Egypt before World War I to nationalist Egypt after the war, just as it linked religion to modern science, and so prevented Egypt from joining Turkey in a headlong rush toward Westernization. The disunity between organizations like the Brotherhood and al-Azhar was one of the main reasons for the failure of the politico-religious movements in taking over from
where the colonizers left. A lack of unity among the two organizations allowed the alternative political ideologies, like the socialism of Nasser to succeed in retaining power and taking the support base away from the political Islamists. Al-Banna was very critical of the al-Azhar (as it was the recognized official voice of Islam) and the ulama in particular, as they represented a decay, decline and a primitiveness and stagnation which had set in the daily practice of Islam. The following of the Brotherhood was most prominent in the villages and the countryside. Here the marginalization of the peasants and population by the developmental process, led them to turn to religion in general and social mobilization through mosques in particular. Al-azhar, on the other hand, was not an organization with a political base. It never used its political leverage, and the fact that it had the sanction of being the state interpreter of Islam to ever form a mass-political base or even represent the problems of the masses. It remained confined to being urban educated body.\textsuperscript{101}

According to John Voll, the support to political Islam was a response to the crises faced by the society at that time. It is important to evaluate leaders, their preachings, followings, reasons for their popularity and their importance within the contemporary political milieu and the challenges the times threw up. Thus, if the incorporation of the al-Banna and the al-Azhar or the Muslim Brotherhood was part of the nationalist movement, it was for a reason. The anti-colonial logic of the Islamists, their ideas about religion being a strong weapon to combat the inequalities and injustices perpetrated by the imperialists, came in handy for the other social democratic leaders of the Wafd, and other political forces when they were attempting to mobilize forces against the British.\textsuperscript{102}

Newly independent Egypt underwent major transformations in the form of nationalizations, the agricultural and industrial revolutions, the fading away of the feudal social structure, the rise and growth of the socialistic models of development. Clashes between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regimes in power were inevitable. The Brotherhood reacted to the developments by rejecting the Soviet model and the dependence on it, as being an alien (or Western) model which was inappropriate for the country. The conflict between the Brotherhood and Nasser had led to the jailing and the execution of most of their leading thinkers. The most influential of them, Sayyid Qutb, was executed in 1967, and in reaction to his death arose a number of radical, underground, secret and violent organizations.
The death of Sayyid Qutb was just one of the factors which gave rise to the armed resistance groups, the other factors were the defeat of Egypt in the Six Day war, the Israeli occupation of the Sinai and the whipping up of a nationalist fervor by Nasser. In this period, the leadership of the politico-religious movement was influenced by the works of Sayyid Qutub. In his opinion, the "Western solution", to the Egyptian social and political problems was no solution. The widespread adoption of secularist values threatened to strip Muslims of their one indisputable indigenous prize, their religious faith.\textsuperscript{103}

**State-society interface under Nasser:** The post-independence control of Egypt by Nasser led to a conflict of control of power between him and al-Banna. Once in power, Nasser had the Muslim Brotherhood outlawed and banned. The movement survived but as an underground movement, with no legitimate recognition and bases to work from. Nasser, with his charisma and leadership qualities, was able to garner support for his large-scale nationalization programme.

Under Nasser, the basic debate and discourse took place within the framework of a more radical and socialist set of concepts than had been provided by liberal nationalism. The new regime in Egypt was able to create a widespread sympathy for and mass support for its goals. Nasser was able, with his support, to bring an end to the organizations of liberal nationalism such as the Wafd Party.\textsuperscript{104}

The important features about the state-society interfaces under Nasser were the emphasis on state control over the country's economic resources and religious institutions. It was also a period marked by the state control over polity and the socio-political movements in the country. The suppression of opposition was not limited to the ruling party, but the possibility of any political opposition was eliminated by suppressing organized religious movements and schools of theology.

It was important that the religious institutions support the state policies, particularly in the field of foreign affairs.

Subordinating the al-Azhar to the state would also allow Nasser to balance the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, which threatened to mobilize Egyptians against the government. Moreover, Nasser understood that al-Azhar's influence extended well beyond the borders of Egypt and that government control over the most respected and influential institution of Islamic scholarship would be an important tool in furthering Egypt's leadership of Arab and Islamic nations.\textsuperscript{105}

The method of subordination adopted by Nasser included land reform laws, through which the state managed to gain control over most the land holdings of the \textit{ulama}. The control over the economic resources of the clergy was a powerful tool that Nasser had inherited from the \textit{Khedives}. It was the state which decided how the lands and
resources of the religious institutions were to be handled. The power to appoint or recognize the official position of the clergy also lay with the government. In 1955, Nasser also abolished all sharia courts, which had run parallel to the secular courts.\textsuperscript{106}

In 1961, Nasser had the al-Azhar placed under the Ministry of Endowments. This gave the government a lot of scope to interfere with the funds and the management of the institution.

Under the 1961 law, the Egyptian president and the minister of endowments were also given formal jurisdiction over important issues of appointment, most notably of the appointment of the Shaykh al-Azhar. Finally, the 1961 reorganization expanded al-Azhar considerably from just three colleges of theology, Arabic and shari'\textasciiacute;a to include many secular colleges, such as medicine law and engineering. The impact of this reorganization was profound. Al-Azhar was transformed from an institution with a high degree of independence to one with very little autonomy from government interference.\textsuperscript{107}

A second feature of the policies of Nasser was the nationalization of the mosques. Since private mosques could pose a threat to the policies of the state, and could challenge the legitimacy of the government, Nasser undertook a major policy of nationalization of mosques and disallowed the formation of new mosques without state permits. This combined with the state policy of appointing the clergy was important in establishing state control over the religious institutions.

However, it must be remembered that even under the most powerful and dominating regimes, the religio-political movements have played a complimentary and a supplementary role in the government. Even though the control of the government in the functioning of the al-Azhar and the Muslim Brotherhood grew at an unprecedented pace, the organizations were also able to get their own mileage out of the increased state control over the institutions. For getting the fatwas and sanctions from the al-Azhar, the government had to pay a heavy price. This was most visible in the amount of funds the institution received from the state over a period of time. From the 1960s the al-Azhar gained state resources and funding for many of its diverse projects. The increased resources helped it to expand its activities and its area of influence.\textsuperscript{108}

The legacy of Nasser that continues till date include the policy of nationalization of the mosques, gaining control over the economic resources of the religious institutions and using the religious institutions to issue religious fatwas in favour of the government policies. The policy of co-option and suppression of religio-political opposition has been a feature of the Egyptian political scene from the time of Nasser.
On the death of Nasser, Sadat was appointed provisional president, by the cabinet and the party, but the national referendum gave him complete control of the government. His short term as the president of Egypt was marked by the compromise on the ideological front, by changing the direction of the economy and polity from socialist to liberal capitalist. He tried to downplay both the philosophies of socialism and Islamism, and tried to set one off against the other in an effort to assert his superiority. Sadat started by reversing the entire setup and systems established after independence.

On the domestic front, Sadat tried to liberalize the economy and polity. He brought in the policy of *infitah* (or open door policy), which started as a liberalization process in the economic field, but spread to the social and political fields as well. *Infitah* was initiated as an economic policy, to counter the recession which had set in due to the failure of the centralized planning, socialist model. The opening of the economy was meant to attract foreign investment. It aimed at attracting direct foreign investment in the economic sectors, particularly those that were stagnating or becoming redundant units due to lack of investment.

The problem with the policy of opening the economy and polity arose when the government realized that it wanted the external inputs, but not at the loss of state control. The policy of *infitah* failed, due to the state's inability to allow capitalism to totally replace the existing economic ideology and practice. The rules and bureaucratic red tape, along with the political instability kept the foreign investors away. To cover up for the failure of the new policy, the state had to take more loans. Moreover, most of the loan money went in the maintenance of the existing infrastructure. The immediate outcome was the strain on the economy, which led to an economic uprising in 1977.

The year 1971 was marked by a powerful diplomatic campaign against Israel, and the launch of a full-scale military assault on the country on the Suez Canal front. The dependence on Soviet aid on both military and economic fronts were causing resentment on the domestic front.

In 1972 the relations between Egypt and the USSR reached their lowest ebb, leading to a break off of the military ties between the two countries. The break up of ties did not result in the breaking up of economic relations between the two countries, but it led to the strengthening of ties between the Egypt and the West. The main suppliers of military equipment to Egypt, along with the other members of the UAR, including Libya, became the UK and France.
The turning point in the relations between Egypt and Libya, and the rest of the Arab world was the negotiation of peace between Sadat and Israel. On the external relations front, Sadat by attempting to negotiate peace with the US, Europe and Israel was trying to explore the alternative solution to Nasser’s policy. For him, a local peace with Israel would help Egypt resolve the external problem and give it the breathing space of looking inwards and managing the domestic front more effectively.

The 1973 war with Israel and its later consequences had put Sadat in a situation where the domestic and the political situation in the country became much more prominent than the international gains that could be achieved. Despite the fact that Egypt was able to wrest back territories east of the Suez from Israel, the war had cost the country hugely in economic terms. In such a situation negotiating a peace plan with the US and Israel was the only viable option left for Sadat. Though the beginning of 1974 saw the approval of the new economic, political and social reforms getting an overwhelming mandate of 99.95% votes (from the 8.5 million voters), the latter part of the year saw the country disapproving of the economic policies and the foreign policy of the country. By 1974 the euphoria of crossing the Suez had started telling on the domestic economic and political front. The first large scale riots of discontent protesting against the rise in cost of living and the failure of the economic reforms package, took place in Cairo in 1975. It forced Sadat to turn his attention from the international front to the domestic crisis at hand. Despite the gains made by Sadat on the international front, by being an ally of US and Israel and by playing a pivotal role in negotiating the peace processes between the West and the Arab world, the domestic losses and unrest within the country made him the most unpopular leader of the country.

The 1977 riots in the country shook the government into taking major economic and political changes. The immediate cause of the riots was the withdrawal of subsidies on food and agricultural products. As a result of the riots, the subsidies were restored, and other economic changes in the pipeline were postponed. No political opposition apart from the existing political parties were permitted. The restrictions on the political liberalization were severe and large. The curbs were also imposed on the civil liberties of the population, and the whole proposal was put to vote. In the referendum of the 96.9% of the enfranchised population 99.4% of the votes cast approved of the changes proposed. By June 1977 Sadat considered the internal situation in Egypt to be sufficiently under control to regularize the current position on political parties. A law was adopted by the People’s Assembly stating that each party must include at least 20
members of the People’s Assembly (current parties excepted). This effectively excluded the Communist Party, the Muslim Brotherhood and the New Wafd Party. However, it was from 1977 that the relations between Sadat and the till now supportive Muslim Brotherhood soured. The rapprochement between Israel and Egypt was a major breaking point between the two. Any compromise with Israel was ruled out by the Islamic parties, and negotiations with Israel and signing of the peace accord were seen as betrayal of trust by the Muslim Brotherhood and a sellout of the cause of the Palestinians.

Social movements under Sadat:
The political liberalization under Sadat, gave the Muslim Brotherhood an opportunity to re-group and strengthen its policies and practices, and build a mass support base for their political activity. They slowly and gradually used the opportunity to increase their bases and mobilize popular support against the government’s policies.

Since the 1980s, the Islamist movement has constituted the main political challenge to the Egyptian state, in two ways. Radical Islamist groups pose a security threat to the state. More significantly, moderate Islamists, who have steadily built a popular base, developed institutions, and begun to negotiate space for themselves in the political process, pose the threat of an eventual transfer of power, of major change in the established order. The government has responded to the first threat by simple repressive measures. Regarding the second threat, the state has oscillated between coercive measures and co-optive tolerance intended to minimize the role of Islamists in politics. Unlike the Jordanian state, the Egyptian government has not considered inclusion of Islamists within the political process as a viable option.

Sadat may have allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to re-enter the political arena, but he had not decentralized the assembly or the hold over the party. The National Democratic Party (NDP) continued to be the ruling party within which the changes were taking place. All steps were taken so that even if the political structure had to be changed, it would still allow the NDP to dominate and retain power. The opposition was not allowed to get a share of the political power.

He did not let loose the hold on the military either. Once the reversals and the discontent against the infitah started, the military came to the rescue of the regime, and was actively used to repress the opposition. However, as a result of the brief spell of liberalization, the politico-religious movement acquired a more radical and violent character. For the first time the radicals organized themselves into political parties. (Al-Jammah and Al-Jihad).
Sadat used the religious forces to help him counter the strength of the left. In the communists and the Soviet intervention in domestic politics, both Sadat and the Muslim Brotherhood had a common enemy. It was to counter the political strength of the Nasserite groups and the Soviet military advisors and troubleshooters that Sadat used the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Muslim Brotherhood on its part used the new found freedom to replenish its support base and increase its activities at the grass roots. It started working towards increasing its rank and file. The Muslim Brotherhood reclaimed its public voice for the first time since 1954. They used the journal Al-Da'wa to voice their new views and the new changes in their interpretation of the political situation. They retained their old principles of pan-Islamism and the application of Shari'a courts. However the idea of wanting to re-establish the times of the Islamic caliphate had undergone a change. The Al-Daw'a openly supported Sadat and his policies of infitah, condemned Nasser and the communists and were wary of the American methods of brokering peace in the Palestinian crisis.

The importance of having to tackle the Muslim Brotherhood on the political front arose due to the fact that the al-Azhar had lost its credibility as a political player. The constant usage of the organization to ratify the government policies had led to the erosion of its credibility. As an institution that had impacted the thinking of the masses in terms of religious frameworks and justifications about what was right and what was wrong, the al-Azhar had lost its credibility by issuing a series of fatwas in favour of the government policies whenever the need arose. The rise in the popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood as a result needed to be checked. Sadat used the policy of co-option and later suppression to keep the Islamic organizations under check. At the same time, he also employed other methods to counter their influence.

To combat the Islamists Sadat took two very prominent stands: the first of projecting himself and his government as an Islamic government; and the second of letting the state take over religion and decide the guidelines and laws. This way the state determined what was the correct Islam and was able to set up official machinery which would be used to counter the opposing Islam movements.

Sadat consciously identified himself and his efforts more clearly with is than was the case with Nasser. However, although Sadat made possible a greater freedom of expression for fundamentalists, his own state policy reflected, if anything a greater orientation towards toward Islamic modernism. Through increasing state control over religious institutions, Sadat attempted to maintain the Islamic legitimacy of his state without creating an effective Islamic basis for opposition to it. However, as organized fundamentalist groups assumed a stronger role in
articulating opposition to Sadat’s policies throughout the 1970s, his initial support for them waned. Nonetheless, Islamic approaches had become a vital part of the political dialogue by the end of the decade. In response, Sadat did not attempt to remove Islam from the forefront of the political scene; rather, he developed and promoted a non-fundamentalist alternative which could become a kind of “civil religion” for the state, with the “Believing President” at the center.112

A second level of Islamic affirmation in Egypt during the Sadat era was tied to a more general outpouring of renewed religious sentiment among Egyptians. There was an increase in religiosity and the emphasis on moral policing increased. The revivalism reasserted itself in the form of the veiling of women, increased religiosity in the form of increased attendance in the Friday prayers, or the increased sale of Islamic literature. Also, it was during Sadats’ time that the clear distinction between the militant fundamentalists and the moderates of Muslim Brotherhood were brought into focus. For the first time the press had used the term “fundamentalist” to distinguish the more radical groups form Muslim Brotherhood.113

Sadat’s policy was one of limited co-option of the religious organizations to further his ends. He released the political prisoners and gave them enough space in the political system to be able to become a political force, but one that would not oppose him or his stand. On the other hand, he did not rule out suppression and repression whenever he felt threatened by any opposition. Nasser’s policy of limiting the powers of the clergy and the religio-political leaders was never stopped. The process was allowed to slow down, but never come to a halt.

**Algeria:** Algeria got its independence after an eight year long and bloody battle with France. The war had left behind a trail of devastation. There was no technical and trained bureaucracy to run the country, no technically qualified personnel to manage the economy and development process and no satisfactory structure of governance. After independence, the first elected president was Ahmed Ben Bella. He had emerged as the consensus candidate from the different faction of the National Liberation Front (FLN), and was strongly backed by the FLN’s Army Chief of Staff, Colonel Hourari Boumedienne.

The political system of governance involved the FLN exercising collective leadership and ruling the country from a central political bureau. The model was a socialist model that included a centrally planned economy, nationalization of resources. The new constitution of 1963, that was passed through a referendum, gave the president wide ranging powers and few restraints.
The first problem the newly formed government had to face was that of the economic crisis due to the violent decolonization process. Ben Bella's answer to these problems came in the form of a worker self management system called autogestion. Under this scheme all the lands left by the colons were nationalized and managed by the government. However, since there were very few people who could understand how to manage and develop the resources the plan collapsed.

In 1965 Hourari Boumedienne replaced Ben Bella in a bloodless coup. He formed a 26-member Council of Revolution which became the country's highest government body, with the army displacing the FLN as the overriding political influence. The aims of the new regime were to remedy the abuses of personal power associated with Ben Bella, create an authentic socialist society based on sound economy, pursue an international relations policy of non-alignment and support the struggles for freedom.

The new economic policy of the Algerian government was of rapid industrialization. The focus was shifted from export of agricultural products to heavy industry. All natural resources were nationalized. And greater emphasis was placed on development of the hydrocarbon sector rather than on the agricultural sector. Also, like a typical socialist economy the Algerian economy became a planned economy and the first plan was from 1967 to 1969. After 1970 the country shifted to four year plans.

Two major factors however started affecting the Algerian economy that led to it becoming one of the largest world debtors by the mid-1980s. The first was the international control over the oil and gas economies. The international vagaries of the oil economies started affecting the economy of Algeria too. It had to suffer from the consequences of the oil boom and bust phenomena of the 1970s. The second was the shift of the economy from being one self-sufficient in food to being one dependent on food aid. In 1971, Boumedienne introduced an agrarian reforms programme in an attempt to rejuvenate the lagging agricultural production by giving formerly state owned lands to peasants. The programme however was a major financial burden and a step too late and too mismanaged to be successful. The policies of Boumedienne were responsible for the economic indebtedness and crisis the country faced in the later years. The problem lay not in the policy in itself, but also in the manner in which it was implemented and the problems of corruption, nepotism, rapid population growth and the neglect of the social welfare sector.

Boumedienne was succeeded by Chadli Benjadid. He began by retaining the government's authoritarian practices and made some attempts to solve the country's economic problems. His policy of opening up the economy or infinitah did not prove to
be too much of a help. The policy had not initially aimed for foreign investment in the economy. Overall, the state gained power through its changed role, and no political opening coincided with the economic one.  

*Infinitah* was initially initiated largely because of the industrial power group's lack of influence under the new regime. Also there was an increase in the size of the new middle class that needed a consumer economy. The economic priorities shifted away from heavy industry to agriculture. Chadli took a lot of measures to liberalize agricultural production, but the capital investment in it was still ambiguous since the terms of ownership were not clearly defined. The overall farm output increased, but it still was inadequate for meeting the domestic needs. Food imports continued to multiply as the population continued to increase. Under Chadli the biggest blow to the economy came from the fall in oil prices after 1982. When the oil prices fell international debts became a priority, particularly with regards to repayment of debt. Imports and investments were cut even further, as were the budgets of welfare programmes. Unemployment rose, despite the promise of liberalization being one of bringing in a better life. During this time the uneven class distribution of wealth became painfully obvious, particularly as related to the bureaucratic managers who benefited greatly from the reforms. In the case of Algeria, the IMF and the WB were directly responsible for the economic chaos of 1988. They pressurized Algeria to devalue the dinar against all opposition. The pressure to change the economic policy and make it follow the multi-lateral guidelines, despite their reverses repercussions also contributed to the growing instability. However, it was the bloating of import prices, which followed dinar devaluation, that proved to be the flash point for the Algerian riots. The high prices of imports raised the prices of bread and led to the riots. The riots have also been called the "bread riots" for this reason. It was a demand for the basic necessity of life, a commodity that was needed for everyday existence, affordable bread. Moreover the pace of economic change that had taken nearly two decades in Egypt had been accomplished in a span of about four to five years in Algeria. The result of the fast track reforms and such sudden changes were responsible for the intensity of the riots of 1988. Throughout the period of reforms and liberalization, the other concern for Chadli was the growing opposition in the political field. He was scrambling to maintain control and influence in order to continue his reforms programme. As the FLN itself became more hostile to the reform programme, he strengthened the Parliament at their expense and added a new cabinet. He was under a lot of pressure throughout his tenure to move the
reforms too quickly to slow down their pace. The political liberalization package that he introduced after the '88 riots were part of the liberalization policy that he was made to adhere. However, by the time it came into practice the military junta had taken steps to ensure that it failed and removed Chadli from office.

On the international political front, from the time of its independence the involvement of Algeria was more in the Palestinian conflict and the movement for Maghrebi unity. Though Algeria did not have a very significant role to play in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, after the war the popular opinion was against the sellout by Nasser. Algeria maintained its troops in the Sinai till 1970 and was active in a diplomatic warfare supporting the cause of Palestine. The Boumedienne government’s stand on the Palestinian issue was radical. It refused to compromise of the question of the rights the Palestinian people, refused to accept the ceasefire of 1967 and the UN resolution on the issue. It sheltered the Palestinian refugees who had started guerilla activities in Egypt and Jordan, after 1971. This brought them in a direct conflict with the two countries. During Chadli’s presidency the foreign policy of Algeria became milder and less determined on ideological considerations. He gave up on the fight of Boumedienne for the cause of the Third World. Since the focus of Chadli’s policies was more domestic his priorities differed from those of his predecessors. He tried to mend bridges with neighbours and foment friendly ties with other countries in the region with different ideological setups. He still supported the cause of the Palestinians, and was opposed to the settlement of the Russian Jews in the West Bank, but fought the battle on the diplomatic front. In 1987, Algeria was elected to the UN Security Council. Under Chadli, the government also tried to forge good relations with the Islamist movements and try to strike a compromise between the moderate and the radical groups.

In March 1983 Algeria and Tunisia signed a Maghreb Fraternity and Co-operation Treaty, which provided a framework for the creation of the Greater Arab Maghreb. The moves towards making a block out of the Maghreb region had been a strong movement independence the time of Algeria’s independence, but it was only now that the movement seemed to be bringing results. The previous attempts had been overshadowed by border disputes and fears of territorial encroachments. With the 1983 treaty, the fears were sought to be assuaged. Simultaneously Tunisia and Algeria resolved their 20 year old border dispute, and by 1985 the Algerian-Mauritanian dispute was also resolved. By 1985, the efforts towards a Maghrebi co-operation had started
taking a definite form with Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco signing the fraternity and co-operation treaty.

The efforts however failed after the mid-1980s. The political mistrust between the leaders of the five countries and Libya defeated the concept of regional unity. The problem between Libya and Morocco over labour and workers migrations resurfaced. Similarly the support given by Algeria to the Polisario Front of Morocco deteriorated the relations between them. The ups and downs of bi-lateral relations affected the moves for any diplomatic or political co-operation in the region. Despite the fact that the countries were facing similar problems of economic decline, failed socialism, etc., they were never able to unify as a block. This was mostly to to the deep grounding of the concept of nation-state and boundaries in the leadership and population of the region. The colonial legacy had highlighted the differences in the culture, history, polity and society of the region.

Social movements till 1988: The important characteristic about political Islam in Algeria is the fact that it played an important and significant role till the time of the country's independence, and later resurfaced as a political movement only after the 1988 food riots. Till then it remained a dormant force that showed no signs of ever becoming an organized political movement. Even after the riots, the leadership that took over from the Islamists was not a totally religious leadership. To get the political advantage the movement had taken leaders from the disgruntled FLN members and leaders from other political parties. The undercurrent was religion, but by the time the FIS was formed in 1991 the agenda of the religion based party was political.

The role of official Islam in controlling the concept of an alternative political Islam has been most important in Algeria. Here the state was not countering the threat of an alternative Islam coming from an organized political movement or a school of theology, but from the lay practice of Islam. The popular Islamic movements, during the time of independence were more reformist than radical. Thus the state adopting the more moderate, reformist and non-contesting version of Islam as state religion was meant to safeguard its own interests. Also the reformist Islamic movement was more influenced by the leaders of Egypt and emphasized change and adaptability to the modern world. It allowed a flexibility that facilitated the adherents to cope with the changing political, economic and social changes.

According to Hugh Roberts¹¹⁴, by making a particular brand of Islam as official religion the regimes of Ben Bella and Boumedienne consolidated their political control over the
religious leadership and reduced that raison d'etat latter to paid servants of the state. In effect, the fledgling nation-state nationalized Islam as much as it nationalized the oil industry and the press, thereby subordinating it to the nationalist. While the majority of the ulama were willing to accept the subordination to the nation-state, a minority led by Shaykh Soltani and Shaykh Sahnoun refused. They later emerged as the leaders of the Islamic movements of the 1970s and 80s.

Till the 1980s the leadership of the Islamists comprised of lay clergy, disorganized religio-political leaders in small pockets. It had no significant agenda, no means of making its impact felt and no means of organizing itself. The riots of 1988 were spontaneous and sporadic. It was only later that the Islamic parties and leadership took over the movement and gave it a direction.

By the early 1980s a qualitative change had occurred in the character of Islamic agitation in Algeria. The marginal, occasional, ideologically diverse and politically ambivalent character of this agitation during the Boumedienne years had given way to a vigorous, ambitious and self-confident movement increasingly active in the public arena and capable of mobilizing militant energies on an impressive scale.

The openness with which the Islamic movement could criticize the state was possible only after the crisis of the 1980s. Till then the political Islamic movement of Algeria was more or less a pressure group, the riots of 1988 made it into a proper political movement. To counter the pressure group the government had resorted to incorporating some of the changes that were being enforced by the moral police. But the moves to allow for political pluralism and then withdraw it were measures to counter the political force of Islamism. The rise in the repression of the Islamist movement was also a measure adopted to curb its political potential.

One of the problems that arose with the state appropriation of religion was the dissatisfaction with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The problem arose as a result of the proliferation of the number of mosques in the country. The state was unable to regulate the construction, functioning and management of each of the mosques. The lay preachers who had started to officiate in the new mosques, did not have the leadership or the education enough to argue and preach the religious doctrine.

The political Islamists used the tool of partly completed mosques, the lay unrecognized mosques and open platforms to articulate their ideology and preach their sermons. As they gained support for the cause of the shari'a to be made into a legal system for the judiciary, they also gained the strength to form a moral police and enforce their parallel system codes and conduct.
Political Islam in Algeria is characterized by its amalgamation into the existing political process. Their attempt to come to power through the most globally accepted fashion of elections, the flexibility of their agenda, the unorthodox manner of mobilization of support and the diversity of its activities set it apart from any other political Islam.

Political Islam in Algeria was not the product of rationally, deliberately organized school of theology as in Egypt. Here it was the small time ulama, preaching from small mosques who garnered support for the nationalist independence movement. As a force, the Islamists could not be overlooked or ignored, as they constituted the second largest support base in the country. Their mobilization capacity gave an intensity to the struggle against the imperialists. Though the national leaders with their agendas of socialism were able to take over the politico-administrative setup of the newly independent state, they were forced to incorporate the Islamist agendas in their doctrines. They had to declare Islam as the dominating religion, and sponsor an official interpretation of religion.

After gaining independence from France in 1962, the Algerian state officially incorporated Islam. The new ruling military-party hierarchy integrated Islam's religious institutions, co-opted its clerical class by requiring state-approved certification, and screened (and sometimes even composed) Friday mosque sermons. All of this as administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, through which the state supervised and controlled the expression of Islamist thought. Respected religious thinkers who were identified with salafiyya reformism were allowed to voice their ideas within a narrow Islamic religio-jurisprudential framework. To ensure ideological compliance, these thinkers were often named to posts as government functionaries responsible to the Ministry.

The differentiating feature of the Algerian Islamism is the fact that it did not evolve into a large-scale movement like its Egyptian counterpart. Its world view, its ambition for sphere of influence never went beyond the borders of Algeria. It is not that it was not aware of the developments in the other parts of the Arab and Islamic worlds, but worked towards remaining detached from it.

**Conclusion:**

The post-independence states, either Egypt or Algeria, both followed the general Third World pattern of economic development, ie., of rapid industrialization and establishing an economic and political status in the international arena. The sectors of agriculture and social welfare were totally neglected. A largest consumer of the national income was the military sector. This was important not only due to the involvement in the larger international wars in the region but also due to the intra-regional warfare.
The common feature about the failed economies was the debts incurred in trying to maintain the budgets. The heavy industrialization led to the need for expansion of the industries and the need to invest in newer technological advances in the field. The debts had forced the governments to take conditional loans from multi-lateral funding agencies. By and large most of the countries in West Asia and North Africa had entered into the era of structural adjustments by the mid-1980s. While it did not solve the problems of economic disparities, deficit budgets, unemployment, urbanism, housing and lack of adequate social welfare infrastructure it affected the welfare sector most acutely.

The early 1980s also saw the inability of the region to support each other's economic needs. It was the time of the oil-boom bust, which meant shrinking rents, contraction of the labour markets, and the Iran–Iraq war taking the most of the regions' resources and political efforts. The incomes had gone down, but due to the drastic cuts in economic spending, the situation with regard to debt servicing had improved. However the defence budgets, and the military expenditures had not come down. The external outflow of capital in the form of military expenditure remained as high as ever. The role of the military in the civilian administration and functioning of the polity cannot be underestimated.

........ if there is one factor that sets the Middle East apart from the rest of the developing world, it is the level of armed conflict that has prevailed in the region since 1947/48. It may be futile to debate whether or not praetorian regimes have been the principal cause of military conflict or the result of it, but the fact remains that the Middle East has suffered six large-scale conventional wars and five major and prolonged civil wars. No other region has devoted so large a share of its gross product to the military as the Middle East. Because in several states the military has monopolized political and coercive power, its invasion of the civilian economy has been inevitable and extensive.

It is for these reasons that the nature of the military's economic and political entitlements is the single most important variable in determining the political economy of authoritarianism and democracy.\textsuperscript{117}

Whether it has been a military backed regime, or a military dictatorship or any other kind of government, the reason the religion based parties are finding it easier to question their legitimacy is that the governments are corrupt, do not follow the correct Islamic principles and morally bankrupt. A concrete economic solution to the problems plaguing the country has not been offered by the Islamic organizations. Moreover, as the examples of Sudan and Iran show, the Islamic regimes in power have been following as much of the new global economic system, conforming to the norms of the
IMF and other funders. They have been much more efficient in implementing the structural adjustments than the other governments.

The alternatives of Islamic economics, particularly through the system of Islamic banking that have been advertised are more or less similar to the existing capitalist system of banking and trade. They work within the same framework and with nearly the same principles. The reason why they are more popular is due to the fact that they are supposedly not working within the government apparatus, are independent of the government policies and ideology. However, the crackdown on the political Islamic movements brought about a crackdown on the system of Islamic banking as well. The system is seen as funding the terrorist and radical organizations. The state regulations on the system have limited its scope and activities.

There are two important aspects to the political Islam in the two countries. The first is their ability to use any crisis situation to their advantage. The student unrests, the food riots, the political turbulence at the failure of the governments, and even natural calamities were all exploited to the extent as to make it a tool to contest the legitimacy of the governments in power. Both national and international events were used to their advantage by the Islamist. The national crisis of poverty, unemployment, debt, etc., were as important for the cause of the Islamists as the Palestinian crisis, the gulf wars, the crisis in Afghanistan or the Iranian revolution.

The second is their ability to mould their ideology and philosophies to suit the domestic requirement. This is most marked, particularly in their ability to adapt to the political situations within their countries and compromise on the issue of coming to power via the world accepted means of elections. The organized political Islamic movement of Algeria has its roots in the system of elections. In Egypt, however, the movement changed its course from being an alternative to the existing government to being a movement that worked within the system and attempted to come to power through the system of elections. The importance of this aspect of the Islamists is the built in hostility to the process of democracy in the ideology of political Islam.

The manner in which the situations were used however varied in the two countries. In Egypt since the Muslim Brotherhood had an organized social work base that allowed it directly affect and get support of people who were left behind in the processes of development or who suffered from natural calamities. The NGO network and the social
work network of Egypt were instrumental in garnering support for the cause of the Islamic movements. The Islamists in both Egypt and Algeria, used the conditions of misery left behind by the incomplete economic development, the conditions of poverty, unemployment, lack of urban housing, population explosion, economic decline, urbanism to win over support bases for their ideology and activities. The political tactics of the Islamists have varied from providing relief to victims of natural calamities and running NGOs that provide welfare services, vocational training and other services to the population to making political alliances in other political parties to be able to contest and win elections.

The other aspect of the work of the Islamic organizations in Egypt was the manner in which they recruited their support bases. They reached out to all sections of society, from professional doctors, engineers etc., to the vast mass of educated unemployed and the uneducated unemployed who were responsible for increasing the phenomena of urbanism in the country. It is from the educated professional that the movements got their leadership and organizational apparatus.

The political adaptability of the Islamic movements has led to two very varied interpretations about their political mobility. On the one hand, it is seen as an attempt to gain power at whatever cost, including that of making alliances with parties that have different political ideologies and agendas. On the other hand, a refusal to compromise on their position on question of democracy, or coming to power through legitimate means condemns them into being dogmatic parties that are radical, fanatical and inappropriate in the modern world scenario. It is these stances of the governments and the Western worlds that have led to the wide spread repression of the Islamic movements.

The contestation of legitimacy has come not only from the quarters of failed domestic economy, the suppression of democracy and lack of Islamic values in governance, but also on the larger global front of failed foreign policies, the failure of Arab-Israeli wars, the success of the Iranian revolution etc.. The legitimacy of the regimes in power had been most seriously and strongly challenged in the period between 1988-1995. During this time the failure of the governments to deliver on the promises made at the time of independence were brought to the fore. Not only was the ideology, the framework of approach of the government challenged, but the manner in which it claimed legitimacy was also challenged.
Since the largest opposition group that had an ideology or the capability to encash on the popular discontent was the Islamic organizations, the ire of the government fell on them. Partly due the repression, partly due to the political mobilizational skills of these organizations, partly due to the failure of the regime in power to counter them totally, partly due to the chaotic situations that the government was unable to handle properly, and partly due to the inability of the other political organizations to meet the challenge of the changing times the Islamic organizations managed to emerge as the strongest contenders for power. Both the external and internal political chaos contributed to the rise of political Islam as a contender for being the most legitimate representative of the masses.