

# **Legitimacy and the Islamist challenge**

**A comparative study of the regime's strategy towards  
the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan,  
1980-1989**

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## **Preface**

This thesis is a result of a general interest for the Middle East and the political situation in this region. It has been rewarding to write about something of such interest to me. I have discovered and learned more about this turbulent part of the world.

I am grateful for the economic support I got from the scholarship “Stipend for ikke-europeiske studier”, which gave me the opportunity to spend three weeks of field studies in Amman, Jordan, and hence gave me better material for my thesis. I am grateful to everyone who helped me and contributed to this study during my stay.

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# 1. Introduction

## *1.1 Introduction of theme*

In the 1970s, the Arab world faced an Islamic resurgence. Across the region, many in their disillusionment began to question the political situation: Why were newly independent Muslim societies and governments impotent, authoritarian, poor, illiterate, and corrupt? The experience of failure triggered self-criticism and a quest for identity and authenticity, as many criticised loss of not only political power but also cultural identity. The failures of secular forms of nationalism strengthened new voices that appealed to an Islamic alternative and called for the Islamisation or re-Islamisation of society. Islam achieved a role as a symbol of political legitimacy and became a source of political and social activism and popular mobilisation.

The Arab states were inspired by Western and secular principles and there was a varying degree of state implementation of Islam. The majority of Muslim countries had only a minimum of Islamic values, such as requirements that the head of state must be a Muslim, or a declaration that *sharia* [Islamic law] was a source of law; regardless of whether this was the case. Modern Islamist social movements and organisations have been the driving force behind the spread of Islamic resurgence. In some countries, Islamist groups have competed for power in the name of Islam. The Islamist Revolution in Iran in 1979 was a protest against a modern authoritarian political system and was an inspiration for Islamist movements in the rest of the Muslim world. Islam became a major force in the public life of Muslim societies as a reaction to the progressive Westernisation and secularisation of society.

The religious resurgence came as a reaction to the legitimacy deficit in the Arab regimes. Michael Hudson describes in his book *Arab Politics. The Search for Legitimacy* (1977) the legitimacy problems in the Arab world. He identifies the malaise in Arabic politics, as indicated by instability, inefficiency, corruption, and repression as the result of insufficient legitimacy and accorded by the people to ruling structures, ideologies, and leaders. The central problem of the governments in the Arab world is the lack of political legitimacy. Max Weber argued:

“Without legitimacy, a ruler, regime, or governmental system is hard-pressed to attain the conflict-management capability essential for long-run stability and good government. While the stability of an order may be maintained for a time through fear and expediency or custom, the optimal or most harmonious relationship

between ruler and the ruled is that in which the ruled accept the rightness of the ruler's superior power." (Weber 1947:124-126)

The deficit of this essential political resource explains to a large extent the explosive nature of Arab politics and the autocratic and unstable character of all the Arab governments, writes Hudson.

The Islamist opposition has become more apparent in the Arab world since the 1970s, and their protests might be seen as a reaction to the lack of legitimacy of the Arab regimes' power. The Islamist movements' increasing popularity shows that they represent an alternative to the autocratic regimes. They challenge the secularised regime or the lack of a religious dimension. The challenge from the Islamists has influenced the politics in the Arab world. The Islamist movements are challenging the Arab regimes' power and their legitimacy of power and they represent an alternative to corrupt and ineffectual regimes. Since the Islamists enjoy strong support, the regimes must take them seriously and be careful in their strategies towards them.

The Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamist movement that was started by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. It has been the most prominent group in Sunni Islam since its inception. Al-Banna was struck by the corruption and degradation of Muslims, especially the young, of his time, and their subordination politically, economically, and culturally to the dominant foreigners at that time. He launched the Muslim Brotherhood as a movement for education and reform of hearts and minds (Al-Banna 1978, Zubaida 1989:47). The movement soon grew and spread to many parts of the country and gained premises and funds. It very soon acquired a political dimension, calling for the Islamic reform of society and government.

The Muslim Brotherhood became, along with other voluntary Islamist organisations, an effective agent of social and political change by developing alternative socio-economic institutions and participating in the political process and demonstrating its strength in institution-building and popular mobilisation. The Muslim Brotherhood engaged in a broad range of social and political activities, for instance the creation of Islamist charitable associations. The Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist organisations played a role in social life that governments had once claimed but since abdicated (Esposito 1996:12). In providing alternative social, health, and educational facilities these movements challenged the state structure, the credibility and even the legitimacy of the government. Although many were apolitical, Islamic private volunteer organisations filled a void and thus were an implicit critique of the government's inability or failure to provide adequate services. In the 1980s the



Muslim Brotherhood participated in parliamentary elections with an Islamist programme. However, although a supranational network, the Muslim Brotherhood has never been able to formulate a coherent international policy. When Islamists participated in politics, it was on a national level and based on local stakes. The positions taken by the various Muslim Brotherhoods have always been tied closely to the situations in their respective countries – collaborationist in Jordan and pacific opposition in Egypt (Roy 1994:129).

In this thesis, I will examine the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes' strategy towards the Islamists in their respective countries in the 1980s. I identify the legitimacy problems in these two states and analyse with the strategy each regime has chosen in order to meet the challenge from the Islamist opposition. I have limited my thesis to the Muslim Brotherhood. I examine whether the regime has a strategy of inclusion or exclusion towards the Muslim Brotherhood. My hypothesis is that the authorities in both countries chose have chosen a strategy of inclusion towards the Muslim Brotherhood in order to help legitimate their own power. The regime's strategy must be seen in light of the problems of legitimacy facing the regime. The Islamists criticise the regime's politics, and they represent the segments of the population who are dissatisfied with the government. Worsened socio-economic conditions are also one of the reasons for the legitimacy complaints resulting in protests such as riots and mass demonstrations. The regime's politic towards Israel and the USA has also been a source of discontent.

My hypothesis is that a regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood depends on the problems of legitimating power. Is the strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood inclusive or exclusive? Inclusion would entail that they have legal permission to exist as an organisation or a political party, to publish their papers and hold meetings and participate in elections. The opposite situation would be an exclusion from the political scene whereby the groups are forced to work in secrecy. I want to find explore whether the Muslim Brotherhood is repressed by the regime or not and whether their activities are limited or forbidden. I will define more precisely what is meant with the terms inclusion and exclusion in the next chapter. There might also be other reasons for the government's strategy than problems of legitimating their power and I will consider these other factors as well.

This is an exploratory study where I identify problems of legitimating power and try to see a connection between the lack of legitimacy and the regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. I assume that the regime's legitimacy deficit forces a strategy of inclusion of the popular opposition. My hypothesis is that the regimes in Jordan and Egypt choose to include

the Muslim Brotherhood in the political process in order to increase the legitimacy of their power.

I will analyse the political situation in the 1980s. This period is interesting because of the Islamist revolution in Iran that had just taken place, an event that led to Islamist resurgence in the whole region. The Islamists gained support in Jordan and Egypt as well. I will study how the authorities in these two states met the challenge from Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. The regime had to choose a strategy towards this new wave of protest, which was perceived as potentially threatening to their power. I will look at how the governments perceived the Islamists, whether as a threat or as an opposition group that the regime needed on their side. I will also find out what the Islamists represented within the particular state and what part of the regime's legitimacy they challenged.

The interaction between the regime and the Islamists within an Arab state is interesting. There has been a lot of talk about the Islamic threat to the Western world, but I think it is equally important to study how Islamic movements have been treated in the Arab world.

Legitimacy theory is a useful tool to explain the struggle for power and authority in the Middle East. Hudson wrote about the legitimacy crisis in Arab politics. Legitimacy is originally a Western concept and is mainly applied to cases in the Western world. On the other hand, social science research regards all behaviour as some sort of pattern. Engelstad says it is possible to measure social phenomena with help from theoretical concepts (1988:11). Legitimacy is a general concept that may be used independent of time and the society or the culture. Chabal (1992) argues that concepts may be used as instruments in all social science research. Studying politics in Africa is not different from studying politics other places. Every political phenomenon needs a local, historical interpretation, but the same tools for analysis should be used everywhere. I discover the regimes' legitimacy problems in Egypt and Jordan and analyse their strategies towards the Muslim Brotherhood in light of these problems. I will write more about legitimacy theory and different strategies in the next chapter. I will use legitimacy theory and David Beetham's criteria for legitimacy to point at the lack of legitimacy.

## *1.2 Method and sources*

The method I use represents an intensive design, which goes deep into the information about each entity. I study two cases; Jordan and Egypt, and go deep into each of them. An extensive design focuses on the breadth of the number of entities. When the scientist is applying an intensive design he or she is limited to look at a sample of the relevant units and variables. An extremely intensive design implies concentration on one single issue and collecting data about several aspects of this particular issue (Hellevik 1999:95). This is a case study, according to Hellevik. If two or a few units are compared, it is called a comparative study.

Yin (1993:5) defines a case study as a research strategy where one or a few cases of a more general phenomenon are studied. A case study consists of one or a few observation units and many variables. There are two types of case studies: Single-case study focuses on just one case while multiple-case studies include two or more cases within the same study. These multiple cases should be selected so that they replicate each other – either exact replications or predictably different replications. Yin also distinguishes between exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory case studies (ibid:5). An exploratory case study is aimed at defining the questions and hypothesis of a subsequent study or at determining the feasibility of the desired research procedures. My study attempts to see if there is a connection between the legitimacy problems in both Jordan and Egypt and the strategies the authorities have chosen towards the opposition group the Muslim Brotherhood. My hypothesis is that the regime's legitimacy deficit forces an inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood in the political process.

I study two cases, Jordan and Egypt, and this means I do a multiple-case study. It is also a comparative study since I systematically compare the two regimes' legitimacy problems and their strategies towards the Muslim Brotherhood. I originally wanted to include Syria in the analysis, but it was difficult to find enough data about this state so I decided to concentrate on the two cases Jordan and Egypt. There are several advantages related to studying more than one case, especially when the chosen cases are similar on certain control variables but otherwise differ on the dependent and independent variables. Studying just one case gives deep understanding and knowledge of the case's context, but makes it difficult to generalise to a theory. It is better to compare different cases and by that test a theory. This is particularly important in a study where the cases are picked out because they have a similar score on several control variables, but otherwise could differ on the dependent and the independent variables.

I have picked Jordan and Egypt because they share many of the same characteristics. Hudson (1977) divided the Arab world into categories but saw the same legitimacy crisis in all the states in the area. He put Jordan and Egypt into different categories; Jordan in the group of modernising monarchies and Egypt as one of the revolutionary republics. However, there are similarities in their legitimacy problems. Egypt and Jordan also share the same characteristics in other ways. They are both run by a strong, non-democratic and autocratic leader. They have similar decision-making processes and their authorities act as unitary actors, also towards Islamist movements. Both Jordan and Egypt face a strong Islamist opposition – among them the Muslim Brotherhood.

It is necessary for the analysis that Egypt and Jordan are comparable and I consider them to share a sufficient number of characteristics, making it is possible to undertake a comparison. I will study these two states more thoroughly to see if they can be compared.

We must consider which units and variables to study among the crowd of possible ones. In a case-study of one single unit or a comparative study of a few, the units cannot be randomly picked and it is better to use other criteria to decide which units we want to study. In comparative surveys with only a few units there are certain strategies for choosing units, which is called “most similar system” or “most different system” (Hellevik 1999:127). The most similar/most different system entails excluding as many potentially explanatory variables as possible by making sure that they do not covariate with the dependent variable. The variables must be excluded in the process of selection since they cannot be eliminated in the analysis. As mentioned, the cases should be selected so they replicate each other, either exact replications or predictably different replications. Jordan and Egypt are close to being exact replications since they covariate on many essential variables. I will systematically compare the cases in the way that I see which criteria for legitimacy that is fulfilled. If the same criteria are violated, the cases have scored similar. Then it is interesting to see if the two regimes have the same strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood and discuss what that tells us.

There are no strict limits between a case study with several cases and the method that is classified as a comparative study. Comparative method refers to the methodological issues that arise in the systematic analysis of a small number of cases, or a “small N”<sup>1</sup> (Collier 1993:105). Although this thesis consists of only two cases it is still a comparative study. The

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<sup>1</sup> “N” refers to the number of cases analysed in any given study. “Small N” means a study with few cases.

decision to analyse only a few cases is strongly influenced by the types of political phenomena being studied and how the phenomena are conceptualised. Collier argues that it is productive to examine relatively few cases when the topics we study are particular types of national political regimes. I examine the regimes in Jordan and Egypt and their strategies towards the Islamist opposition. A focus on a small number of cases is adopted because there exists few examples of the phenomenon under consideration that exhibit the attributes of interest.

The case study is also the preferred method when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context. Sometimes the definition of the phenomenon may be problematic since the interaction between the phenomenon and its context is complex. The inclusion of the context as a major part of the study means that the study will probably need to use multiple sources of evidence (Yin 1993:1). Studying a regime's strategy is a typical phenomenon suitable for case study since there might be more than one explanation for the strategy. Other factors must be taken into account. The defenders of single-case studies object to this argument for comparative studies and claim that by comparing cases the complexity in a rich case is reduced to the few variables several cases are compared by and that scientists in comparative studies, for instance multinational study, often have no respect for or knowledge about the culture and society that characterise each comparable case (Statsvitenskapelig leksikon 1997:34-35). Another problem might be to have a situation where there are more rival explanations to assess than cases to observe, or the quandary of "many variables, small N" as Lijphart describes it (Collier 1993). As the number of explanatory factors approaches the number of cases, the capacity to judge among the explanations through statistical comparison is quickly reduced. Using just one theory in the study of my two cases should avoid both these problems. I use only Beetham's legitimacy theory in this thesis and it is used to define the concept for measuring legitimation of power or the lack of it. There might be other theories to assess but that is not my agenda and would be a different thesis.

In this thesis there are two units, Jordan and Egypt. There is one independent variable; the degree of legitimacy of power while the dependent variable is the strategy of the regime in Jordan and in Egypt. Is the strategy to include or exclude the Muslim Brotherhood in the political process or is the strategy something in between these two? Giovanni Sartori (1970) suggests that the application of a concept, in my case legitimacy, to a broader range of cases can lead to conceptual "stretching", as some of the meanings associated with the concept fail to fit the new case. The concepts that can most easily be applied to a broad range of cases are often so general that they do not bring into focus the similarities and contrasts among the

cases that are essential building blocks in worthwhile comparative analysis. Consequently, a study focused on concepts that are carefully adapted to this “finer slicing” of a given set of cases should be extended to other cases with great caution. From this perspective, it may be argued that the most interesting studies will often be those that focus on a smaller number of cases. I am convinced that by studying these two cases I will not stretch the concept.

### ***1.3 The role of theory in doing case studies***

Robert K. Yin (1993) says theory can be used in analysing the empirical evidence of a case study. Theory is important in several kinds of case studies; explanatory, exploratory or descriptive case studies and even in multiple-case studies based on replication design. Theory can be important to case studies, helping to do the following:

- Select the cases to be studied in the first place, whether following a single-case or multiple-case design
- Specify what is being explored when you are doing exploratory case studies
- Define a complete and appropriate description when you are doing descriptive case studies
- Stipulate rival theories when you are doing explanatory case studies
- Generalise the results to other cases (Yin 1993:4)

From this perspective, the term theory covers more than causal theories, which try to explain the causal relations between variables. Here, theory means the design of research steps according to a relationship to the literature, policy issues, or other substantive sources. Good use of theory will help delimit a case study inquiry to its most effective design; theory is also essential for generalising the subsequent results. This thesis is an exploratory case study and I use legitimacy theory to specify what is being explored when I discover the legitimacy problems in Jordan and Egypt. Beetham’s definition of legitimacy helps me to identify the problems of legitimating power in both states and his criteria help me to measure systematically whether the regime’s power is legitimate or not. This will be done in the next chapters.

#### ***1.4 Qualitative method versus quantitative design***

I use qualitative method in my study. In a qualitative survey the number of units is less than in a quantitative survey and the values are registered as texts, not as numbers. The qualitative methods let the categories develop themselves and do not need already set categories like quantitative methods do. Qualitative design is useful in situations where the field is too complex and unorganised for a quantitative survey or where the scientist knows too little about the field and must work exploratory. The fact that the actors in the field could construct their own reality and by that force the scientist to be flexible when it comes to research design and communication also makes this design a better method (Statsvitenskapelig leksikon 2001:135-6). It is now common to use both methods, for instance qualitative design in the exploring part of the study and quantitative design when you have developed accurate terms and you have made a hypothesis to test (Hellevik 1999:110-111). It is also possible to use elements from both designs at the same time in a survey. This thesis is a qualitative study of the two states Jordan and Egypt and I have chosen to go deep into the two of them so I can get as broad a picture as possible of the complex political situation in each state within the limits of a thesis of this kind.

The collection of data has been unstructured which is typical for qualitative studies. My interviews have also been unstructured. The interviewees talked about the topic I had set and I have asked a few questions along the way to clarify or to follow-up. I have used secondary literature mainly based on qualitative studies except from statistics about the elections in Egypt and Jordan in the 1980s.

#### ***1.5 Sources and source critics***

Michael Hudson identifies in his book *Arab Politics. The Search for Legitimacy* (1977) the legitimacy problems in the Arab world, Jordan and Egypt included. One basic element in the Arab legitimacy problem is achieving structured political participation. A second element is the impact of all-Arab “national” concerns for legitimacy of particular state systems, since the legitimacy problem in the Arab world extends beyond sovereign boundaries. These are the common characteristics for the states in the region.

I use a few significant studies of the political situation in Egypt to describe the legitimacy problems in the 1980s and to analyse the regime’s strategy towards the Muslim

Brotherhood during this period. May Kassem's book *In the Guise of Democracy* (1999) and Robert Springborg's book *Mubarak's Egypt* (1989) provide valuable information for this purpose. I use books by John L. Esposito: *Political Islam. Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (1997) and *Islam and Democracy* (1996). These books contain information about general Islamist resurgence and specific case studies, Egypt and Jordan included. In Egypt's case I use other scholars' studies and analyses while for Jordan I had to collect a large part of my own data in addition to the studies I found. I have used a range of different types of sources. I used studies from Egypt and applied findings to Jordan to see whether the situations were similar or different. I have collected more information about Jordan than Egypt since there already exist several significant studies of Egypt. I have systematically compared the situation for Egypt and Jordan and tried to find similarities and differences. My intention is to reach a conclusion that applies to both states.

I have mainly used secondary literature in this thesis. For Jordan, Marion Boulby's book *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Kings of Jordan* (1998) has provided useful information. It is an analysis of the relationship between the king and the Muslim Brotherhood from 1948 to 1989, the period I study included. Valerie Yorke's *Domestic Politics and Regional Security: Jordan, Syria, and Israel* (1988) and *Troubles On the East Bank. Challenges to the Domestic Stability of Jordan* (1986) by Robert Satloff have also been useful. I use several other sources in addition. I did that for two reasons: To get enough information and to triangulate the data. Access to primary sources has been difficult mainly because I do not understand Arabic but also because of limited time and resources. I have gone through articles in the years from 1979 until 1990 and collected information from relevant articles in journals. The journals I have found relevant are Middle East International (MEI), Middle East Report and International Journal of Middle East Studies. The human rights journals Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have provided information about the human rights situation in Jordan. The papers Jordan Times and Arabic News have also been valuable sources, which I have used to get facts and news, and not so much for analysis. I have also used information about the human rights situation in Egypt in addition to the other information I have about this country.

Information about the Muslim Brotherhood is found in Richard Mitchell's *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* and *Independence and Dependence in the Name of God* by Bjørn Olav Utvik. Marion Boulby has done a study of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan in her book *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Kings of Jordan*. The Muslim Brotherhood was established in Egypt in 1928 and later spread to other countries in the Arab world, Jordan included.



I have one primary source and that is the interviews I did in Jordan. I chose to do interviews in Jordan and not Egypt since I had more data from Egypt while my material from Jordan was insufficient. During a three-week stay in Amman, Jordan in October 2003 I spoke to scholars on political and religious affairs, to an independent researcher and a journalist and interviewed them about the legitimacy problems in Jordan and the regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. Unfortunately, I did not succeed to get in contact with a representative from the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood could be an organisation with limited access for Western, non-Arabic-speaking persons. Connections are needed to get in contact with them and I did not have the time or resources to establish such a connection. They might be careful with speaking to strangers about the relatively tense relationship with the authorities. It would have been interesting to get their version of the situation. However, I have found written material about the Muslim Brotherhood's political programme on the Internet<sup>2</sup>. I have also used al-Banna's book where he writes about his ideas for the movement and his deep concern for what is happening in the society.

When using data others have collected it is important to be critical since all researchers are biased in some way. All information must be seen in light of this fact. I have used sources of both Arab and non-Arab scholars. It is also important to keep in mind that not all the persons we interview can speak openly. In authoritarian and to some extent repressive states like Jordan people might be afraid to criticise the authorities. I have also been aware of my own position as a researcher and my interpretation of the material I use.

We can have more confidence of our results if our study shows that information from interviews, documents, and our own observations all point in the same direction. This can be done by triangulating the data, which means using different sources to study the same phenomenon (Yin 1993:69). Triangulation is the most desired pattern for dealing with case study data. If you ask the different sources of evidence the same question, and all sources point to the same answer, we can be more confident in our results.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ummah.org.uk/ikhwan/>

## 2. Legitimacy problems and strategies

### 2.1 *The regime's strategy*

In this thesis, I seek to identify the legitimacy problems in Egypt and Jordan and analyse the strategy the regimes have towards the Muslim Brotherhood. What makes power legitimate? The legitimacy problems influence how they choose to meet the challenge from the Islamists to increase the legitimation of power. This makes it necessary to explain the concepts legitimacy and strategy. First of all I will define a regime. Østerud (1996:125) defines a regime as the way the state is ruled and how the political power is organised. The regime indicates how the decision-making process in the state is structured, which political roles that are central and how these roles relate to each other. It also indicates which groups may participate in the political arena, what sort of conflicts take place and how these conflicts are resolved.

According to Graham T. Allison a state can be seen as a unitary rational actor, or more specifically, to *behave* like a unitary rational actor. Most analysts explain the behaviour of national governments in terms of one basic model, called rational actor (Allison 1971:4). Each state's policy is a result of more or less purposeful acts of the unified national governments and is seen as the choices of unitary rational actors. A state can be defined as an established authority, which enjoys jurisdiction over a core territory and people for an extended period of time, stretching over at least several generations. The jurisdiction includes powers to implement the law, impose taxation, and demand military service, loyalty and allegiance to the established authority (Luciano 1990:5).

Although Allison's Rational Actor Model has proved useful for many purposes, it can be supplemented, if not entirely replaced, by frames of reference that focus on the governmental machine – that is the organisations and political actors involved in the policy process. Decisions are made in “black boxes” covering various gears and levers in a highly differentiated decision-making structure, and large acts result from innumerable and often conflicting smaller actions by individuals at various levels of bureaucratic organization. “They are intra-national mechanisms” (ibid 1971:5).

Allison describes two other explanations of how the national government makes its policy; it could either be as an organisation or through negotiations (ibid: 5-7). The

Organisation Process Model emphasises the process and procedures of the large organisations that constitute the government. What Rational Actor Model characterises as “acts” and “choices” are thought of as large organisations functioning according to regular patterns of behaviour. The third model, Governmental (Bureaucratic) Politics Model, focuses on the politics of a government. Acts are understood neither as choices nor as outputs, rather, what happens is characterised as a result of various bargaining games among players in the national government. In the end, the players agree on a decision and act as a unitary actor.

The regimes in both Jordan and Egypt are seen as unitary actors in my analysis since the processes for decision-making are to a large extent centralised to the head of state and the people around him. It makes my analysis less complicated since I do not have to consider what the different groups inside the regime means. The regime’s strategy is considered as the single, and official, attitude of the government, which everyone inside it supports.

In game theory the term strategy is used for the player’s preference of alternative actions in any research designs that may take place in the game. In other situations strategy means a greater plan for action while a subordinate plan or the choice of means are referred to as “tactic” (Statsvitenskapelig leksikon 2001:263). I use strategy in the meaning greater plan for action.

## ***2.2 Legitimacy theory***

The optimal or most harmonious relationship between the ruler and the ruled is that in which the ruled accept the rightness of the ruler’s superior power, argued Weber, if not the ruler is forced to use coercion to preserve stability. He defined legitimacy as the belief in legitimacy on the part of the relevant social agents; and power relations as legitimate where those involved in them, subordinate as well as dominant, believe them to be so (Weber 1965:124-126).

David Beetham disagrees with this definition of legitimacy. Legitimacy is not about beliefs, it is about rules, he writes in *The Legitimation of Power* (1991). “Where power is acquired and exercised according to justifiable rules, and with evidence of consent, we call it rightful or legitimate” (Beetham 1991:3). He criticises Weber’s definition and argues that a given power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy but because the power can be *justified* in terms of their beliefs. When we seek to consider the legitimacy of a regime, we are making an assessment of the degree of congruence, or lack of it, between

a given system of power and the beliefs, values and expectations that provide its justification. Weber's definition reduces legitimacy from several factors that give people good grounds for compliance, to one single dimension: their "belief in legitimacy" (ibid:23). It is the actions that create normative relationship and reciprocal obligations, not the "belief in legitimacy". People's interests can be connected to legitimacy through actions expressive of consent. Weber's definition misconceives the relationship between legitimacy and the beliefs that provide the justificatory basis for the rules of power. It is not identifying the relationship between the rules of power and the norms that provide their justification.

The definition of legitimacy will not be discussed any further. Beetham's definition of legitimacy will be used to find out whether power is legitimate in Egypt and Jordan. His definition shows important sides of legitimacy that Weber's definition lacks, such as legality and regime support through actions. A distinct analytic division between the four dimensions of the legitimacy of power relations is made and shows how these four dimensions relate to each other.

Beetham writes (1991:15-25) that legitimacy is not a single quality that systems of power possess or not, but a set of distinct criteria, or multiple dimensions, operating at different levels, each of which provides moral grounds for compliance or cooperation on the part of those subordinate to a given power relation. Power could be said to be legitimate to the extent that:

- i) it conforms to established rules
- ii) the rules can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate
- iii) there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation.

i) Power is legitimate if it is acquired and exercised according to established rules. These rules may be unwritten, as informal conventions, or they may be formalised in legal codes and judgements. The law might be disputed, but there exists an ultimate authority whose ruling is acknowledged as final.

ii) To be justified, power must come from a valid source of authority. The rules must ensure that those who come to hold power have the qualities appropriate to its exercise, and the structure of power must be seen to serve the general interest, rather than simply the interests of the powerful. These justifications depend upon beliefs existing in a given society about what is the rightful source of authority and about the appropriate qualities for the exercise of power and how individuals come to hold them. There also has to be some

conception of a common interest, reciprocal benefit, or societal need that the system of power satisfies. What counts as an adequate or satisfactory justification will be more open to dispute than what is legally valid, and there is no ultimate authority to settle such questions. However, there are clear limits to which justifications are reasonable and credible within the given society. To be legitimate, there must be consensus about the rules of power.

iii) Legitimacy acquires demonstrable expression of consent from the subordinate to the particular power relation. Actions such as concluding agreements with a superior, swearing allegiance, or taking part in an election are contributions the subordinates make to legitimacy. This is done in two ways; firstly, these actions have a subjectively binding force for those who have taken part in them, regardless of the motives. Actions expressive of consent will introduce a moral component into a relationship, and create a normative commitment for those engaging in them. Secondly, such actions are publicly symbolic or declaratory, as they constitute an expressed acknowledgement on the part of the subordinate of the position of the powerful. The powerful are able to use this as a confirmation of their legitimacy to third parties not involved in the relationship, or to those who have not taken part in any expression of consent.

As mentioned, Beetham claims that legitimacy is not a single quality, but a set of multiple dimensions, or distinct criteria, operating at different levels. Different factors, successively and cumulatively, make power legitimate. Since the second dimension may be divided into two, this leaves us with four criteria for legitimacy (Beetham 1991:15-23, 117-150, Tiltnes 1994:16). The first criterion for legitimacy is that power is achieved and executed according to established rules. The second criterion says that a regime is legitimate if there is consensus about the rules of power, while the third one requires that the dominant power does not only serve the interest of the powerful but also those of the subordinates, or otherwise to make possible the realisation of larger social purposes in which the subordinates have a concern. The fourth and last of the criteria for legitimacy requires that there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation. This should be evidence of consent expressed through actions that are understood as demonstrating consent within the conventions of the particular society (Beetham 1991:59-60, Tiltnes 1994:16-18). These criteria will be systematically applied to the situation in Egypt and Jordan in order to find out to what extent the regime's power is legitimate.

These are the basic criteria for legitimacy in all historical societies, past and present, writes Beetham. Legitimacy for social scientists is always legitimacy-in-context, rather than absolutely, ideally, or abstractly (ibid 1991:22). The criteria give a framework for systematic

comparison between different forms of legitimacy, in different types of social and political systems, since there can be different perceptions of what is justifiable. The rules or arrangements of power represent justificatory beliefs or norms, and conventions about consent, even if they may come to diverge from them over time, or the beliefs themselves become *faded*. It also provides the basis for assessing the degree of legitimacy-in-context of a given power relationship, as a necessary element in explaining the behaviour of those involved in it.

All the three dimensions mentioned contribute to legitimacy, although the extent to which they are realised in a given context will be a matter of degree. In any society there will be some people who do not accept the norms behind the rules of power, and someone who refuses to express their consent, or who does so only under pressure. What matters is how widespread these deviations are and how substantial they are in relation to the underlying norms and conventions that determine the legitimacy of power in a given context. Judgements about legitimacy is usually of degree rather than all-or-nothing (ibid:19-20).

Weber has made a threefold typology of legitimate authority in which the three are dependent upon different types of belief. The rational-legal authority believes in rule-conformity and procedural correctness, the traditional in the sanctity of tradition, and the charismatic authority believes in the charismatic qualities of the individual leader (ibid:23). Weber's typology is much used by social scientists, but Beetham criticises it and finds that it elevates each of Beetham's three components or dimensions of legitimacy into a separate and fully self-sufficient type of legitimacy. Each component of legitimacy has been transposed into a different type of belief.

### ***2.3 Non-legitimacy***

All the four criteria I have described contribute to legitimacy, though the extent to which they are realised in a given context will be a matter of degree. Legitimacy may be eroded, contested or incomplete, writes Beetham (1991:20), and judgements about it are usually judgements of degree of legitimacy, rather than all-or-nothing. As mentioned, legitimacy is not a single quality but a set of criteria and power can be non-legitimate in different ways. What matters is how widespread these deviations are and how substantial they are in relation to the underlying norms and conventions that determine the legitimacy power in a given context.

Power is illegitimate when it is either acquired or exercised in contravention of the rules, or exercised in a manner that exceeds them. The illegal achievement of power usually has deeper consequences for legitimacy than some breach or contravention in its exercise has because it is more pervasive. However, that depends upon the seriousness of the breach, and whether or not it is repeated. Where the rules of power are continually broken, we could speak of a condition of chronic illegitimacy (ibid:16).

Rules of power will lack legitimacy to the extent that they cannot be justified in terms of shared beliefs. This could either be because no basis of shared belief exists in the first place or because changes in belief have deprived the rules of their supporting basis. It could also be explained by changing circumstances that have made existing justifications for the rules unlikely, despite beliefs remaining constant. These different situations clearly have widely differing significance, but they can all be described as examples, not so much of illegitimacy, as of legitimacy deficit or weakness (ibid :205).

It is in the degree of the public actions of the subordinate, expressive of consent, that we can talk about the real legitimation of power. The subordinates' consent is necessary to the confirmation of legitimacy, and likewise they may act in ways that demonstrate the withdrawal of their consent. Propaganda or public relations campaigns are legitimation generated by the powerful itself. If the public expression of consent contributes to the legitimacy of the powerful, then the withdrawal or refusal of consent will by the same token detract from it. Actions ranging from non-cooperation and passive resistance to open disobedience and militant opposition on the part of those qualified to give consent, will in different measure erode legitimacy (ibid:19). The larger the numbers involved, the greater this erosion will be. At this level, the opposite of legitimacy can be called de-legitimation.

Power does not necessarily collapse when legitimacy is eroded or absent, but coercion has to be strongly upheld and that is costly to maintain (ibid:28). Illegitimacy and legitimacy deficit means that power is less effective. A lack of legitimacy has an enormous effect on the degree of cooperation and the quality of performance that can be secured from the subordinates. Therefore it influences the ability of the powerful to achieve goals other than simply maintain their position. If the powerful have to concentrate most of their efforts on maintaining order, then they are less able to achieve other goals and their power is less effective.

## ***2.4 The legitimacy problems in the Arab world***

Michael Hudson writes in *Arab Politics. The Search for Legitimacy* (1977:1-7) that the central problem of governments in the Arab world is political legitimacy. The shortage of this political resource is much of the reason for the unpredictable nature of Arab politics and the autocratic, unstable character of all the Arab governments. Arab politicians must operate in a political environment in which the legitimacy of the rulers, regimes and the institutions of the states themselves is sporadic and, at best, scarce. What may seem like irrational behaviour, such as assassinations, coups d'état, and official repression, may under these conditions come from rational calculations. Such behaviour can be due to the low legitimacy political processes and institutions have, and contribute to the general cynicism about politics. This situation gets even worse when it coincides with the revolutionary and nationalist values held by the Arab people, such as the liberation of Palestine and throwing off external influence. Establishing democratic political structures through which social justice and equality can be achieved is another one. The regimes' politics may collide with them. Since these appeals are so widespread, every Arab politician has felt forced to support and maybe exploit them. Even the ideologically conservative monarchies have become eager supporters of Arabism, democracy, and social justice. These ideals contrast with the realities of political life, and this incongruence complicates the task of building legitimate order. Hudson has observed a sense of frustration among politicians and government officials across the Arab world (ibid:3). They are caught between ideology and political-administrative realities and discover apathy, indifference, and corruption within their own bureaucracies and among the constituencies. There was also a general negative attitude, suspicion and even fear towards the government, among ordinary people because of their prior bad experience with the authorities.

Hudson argues that when analysing the legitimacy problem in Arab politics one should look beyond the so-called uniqueness of the area itself and rather try to explain the situation in terms of universally applicable categories of analysis. The legitimacy problem in the Arab world is basically the same as that in most newly independent, rapidly modernising states. Hudson claims that it results from the lack of what Dankwart Rustow (1967) has designated as the three prerequisites for political modernity: authority, identity, and equality<sup>3</sup>. The legitimate order requires that the people within a territory must feel a sense of political community, which does not conflict with other sub-national or supranational identifications.

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<sup>3</sup> Dankwart A. Rustow (1967) *A World of Nations: Problems of Political Modernization*



In addition to this sense of identity, there must be a strong, authoritative linkage between the governors and the governed as well. The third prerequisite, equality, is a product of modern age and the ideas of freedom, democracy, and socialism are today natural criteria for legitimate political order in the Arab world, as in most of the Third World. However, they are far from being achieved. The modernisation process has made it difficult to keep power legitimate.

Beetham's criteria for legitimate power are already mentioned. In my analysis, I will systematically go through his criteria to measure to what extent the regime's power is legitimate. Hudson describes the legitimacy problems in the 1970s. In the 1980s, we see that the legitimacy problems in the region are much of the same.

### ***2.5 Modernising and change***

As mentioned, the question of legitimacy can also be connected to the process of modernising. Modernising, or social mobilisation as Karl Deutsch has called it<sup>4</sup>, has had a weighty impact on the politics of the Arab states, both positive and negative for building political legitimacy. The social mobilisation "package" includes increasing urbanisation, wealth, education, literacy and media exposure. Social mobilisation broadens people's identifications and relations, influence their socioeconomic behaviour, and standardises to some extent their cultural norms (Hudson 1977:4-5). The positive effects of social mobilisation seem to increase the chances to develop a civil, liberal political order.

On the other hand social mobilisation disturbs traditional political relationships. The newly mobilised, politicised masses do not find old patterns of identity and authority relevant, and the process of developing new ones is rarely peaceful. Rapid social mobilisation emphasises the importance of equality as a required norm for political legitimacy. The modernisation process will generate conditions favourable to the development of legitimacy. In theory, modernisation enlarges the capabilities of government and administration and has effects that are functional for building legitimacy

External factors in the Arab world have to be taken into account when we are analysing the political situation in the region. There are two types of external sources of

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<sup>4</sup> Karl W. Deutsch , "Social Mobilization and Political Development" *in American Political Science Review*, September 1961

legitimacy; the first is the influence from neighbouring regimes and movements. Their pressure to achieve what they want may take the shape of promise, reward, threat or coercion. The second type of external factor is what is called all-Arab concerns<sup>5</sup>. The legitimacy of an Arab leader is very much determined by his loyalty to these concerns (ibid:5).

## ***2.6 The Impact of Islam***

The Islamic component of Arab identity is very important and must be taken into account when the legitimacy situation in the Arab world is analysed. The significance of Islam lies in its pervasiveness in society, Hudson argues (1977:47-48). It has both a theological and symbolic impact. In theory, there is no distinction in Islam between the worldly and the divine since the head of state should be under God's divine guidance. Alternatively, a part of God's divinity is directly implanted in the leader. The symbols of Islam are found everywhere in the Arab world; the mosques, the calling from the minarets, and the same Arabic decoration. Socially, Islam is apparent in charitable organisations, religious schools, and in brotherhoods and orders, and politically, interpreters of *sharia*, have always been close to the centres of power.

To understand Arabism, it is necessary to consider Islam. It is of great significance to the Arabs that God chose to reveal His most perfect words to them. Even in a relatively secularised state as Egypt, Hudson argues, the force of Islam as the legitimising principal is evident even at the highest level (ibid:50). Islam remains a potent force for political mobilisation, and Islamic leaders are often politically influential. Almost every ruler in the Arab world tries to maintain at least the appearance of piety, and most of the Arab states have Islam as the state religion. Even while he was repressing the Muslim Brotherhood, President Nasser in Egypt emphasised his piety, and his successor Sadat pursued the same strategy even stronger. Islam has been an enormously significant force for the Arabs but has at the same time adapted itself to changing social conditions. Islam holds the sway over the Arab masses despite a century of modernisation. The Hashemite regime in Jordan claims to be direct

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<sup>5</sup> This expression was introduced by Clovis Maksoud. It points to a set of widely held values and preferences concerned with achieving a united or at least coordinated Arab world free of external domination and liberated from the last traces of territorial occupation (Hudson 1977:5).

descendants from the Prophet Mohammed and lends political legitimacy to the Hashemite family and the king.

Arabism and Islam are strong forces in Arab politics (ibid:53-55). There is a sense of community at both the mass and elite level. The Arab and Islamic identifications are flexible, and there is a great variety of expressions of Arabism and Islam and wide tolerance of diversity and multiple identifications. Arabs have certain specific, widely shared interests such as the liberation of Palestine, but also the development of inter-Arab solidarity and general commitments to economic and social development, and more equal distribution of wealth and power. The Arab leader or politician desiring to win and hold power by maximising his legitimacy will try to identify himself as an effective worker on behalf of Islam and Arabism. There is incongruence between Arab national loyalty and all-Arab concerns, on the one hand, and specific state loyalty and specific state interests, on the other. This adds additional disharmony to the Arab political scene (ibid:52-54).

Islam gives the Arabs an identity in contrast to values from the Western world and to being colonised. The Islamists reject Western values and influences and are reintroducing Islamic norms and morals. They find this action necessary because of the perceived lack of piety among many Muslims. The principal target of the Islamists is the modernising state, which has neither striven to eradicate Western influences, nor to deliver on promises of material development for the mass of people. Furthermore, it has failed to democratise (Haynes 1998:126). There is a division between the increasingly secular, Western-oriented elite and the Islamist opposition. Stimulated by the government's diminished legitimacy and authority Islam, is a major force in public life as a reaction to the Westernisation and secularisation of society.

## ***2.7 The regimes in Egypt and Jordan***

In this analysis I compare two Arab states. Michael Hudson and Giacomo Luciano both put Egypt and Jordan in different categories when they studied the Arab states, but I think they share so many of the same characteristics that it is possible to compare them.

Luciano (1990:4-5) refers to a typology of the origins of the Arab state system by Iliya Harik where the states are classified according to the bases of their authority. Their origins can be traced back to a period earlier than the nineteenth century and principles like ideology, traditions and dominion are the principles that can explain the emergence of the Arab state

system. The Arab states differ in structure, power base, traditions and sources and degree of legitimacy. In the bureaucratic-military oligarchy type of states, authority originates in what Luciano calls urban-based fort commanders, who developed an extensive bureaucratic apparatus. The monopoly of the means of coercion now is in the hands of an administrative-military group of people. Egypt is in this group. The colonially created state system consists of states that come from the defunct Ottoman Empire on the basis of foreign imperial interests. There was no credible local base of authority to build new structures on. Colonialism left a serious impact on most Arab states, but only in these states can it be said that the state system itself was created by the colonial powers. This group includes Jordan. The origins of the Arab states are different and can in most cases be traced back to before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the states had leaders who were locally rooted and enjoyed legitimacy in the eyes of their people. They also had recognisable boundaries or at least core territories. The inhabitants of these states had a sense of identity as people of a country and a state, regardless of whether the term nation-state applied to them or not. By the first half of the nineteenth century there were two major forces acting on Arab states: European penetration and the reclaim of Ottoman power. Both the Arabs and the Ottomans suffered great losses from the expansion of European colonial powers. Both Egypt and Jordan came under British rule and later got their independence.

Hudson divides the Arab states into two categories: The modernising monarchies and the revolutionary republics. Jordan is found in the first group while Egypt is in the group of republics. In the republics there is a dilemma between the force of modernisation and being congruent with a traditional culture. In spite of modern ideologies, traditional perspectives are still persistent at the elite level. Religion, kinship, and history itself still shape identities and are values that support legitimacy. The pan-Arab core includes the older republics in the area in which Arab nationalism was born and the development of independent political structures and processes has been most complete.

Most of the Arab republics have not little legitimacy left after the revolutions or independence events they have been through. There have been numerous coups in the Arab world since 1949. Building order on legitimacy bases after a coup is difficult since the relationship between traditional and modern values is tense. In revolutions, one set of authoritative institutions is replaced with another, such as monarchies with republics. Revolutions may transform the social order only partially, but they result in major transformations in the structures and the legitimising values of the political system. The development of a new legitimacy formula is required since a legitimacy vacuum is made after

the state has become independent (Hudson 1977:233). The situation is complicated by ideological fragmentation within the growing elite and differential social mobilisation occurring among the masses. Coups are frequent. The effect of the latter factor has stimulated an increase of traditional values, as in the phenomenon of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, but in general the social mobilisation is not pervasive enough to make a basis for legitimation of a revolutionary regime. The building blocks of legitimacy, such as kinship, religion, history, nationalism, and modernity, are exploited to accommodate new problems brought on by the revolution in addition to the traditional cleavages and tensions (ibid:233).

Arab nationalism is another dimension of legitimacy problems. The afore-mentioned all-Arab concerns are found everywhere in the region, and in the pan-Arab core they seem to be growing in intensity. They represent both a potential legitimacy benefit and a practical responsibility for the revolutionary republics.

In Egypt, the president has traditionally had strong personal legitimacy. There was value attached to Gamal Abdel Nasser's ideology and person and these values were reinforced by structures of government. Anwar al-Sadat's personal legitimacy was increased after the 1973 war. The structural legitimacy was not strong but there were some structural linkages to society such as the bureaucracies, which had specific interests, and linkages to the centre of power. Sadat's politics of liberalisation gave greater structural legitimacy to the political system under his rule. Only a few of the Arab states have boundaries that correspond with their traditional identifications and most of the states are sub-national or supranational. There are conflicts between classes and less respect shown to the traditional landed, commercial, and religious groups than before. New elites have developed and this has added another dimension to the conflict. Every state in the Arab world has a problem of systemic legitimacy that is not just routine political conflict "within the system", but a conflict over the moral bases of the system.

In the category of modernising monarchies, some of the monarchies are to a large extent patriarchal while others are more bureaucratically developed. Jordan is of the latter type. The monarchies that have survived are more resourceful and adaptable to new times. They have made significant efforts to modernise and develop society, and a few have even tried to broaden political participation. The wave of revolutions in the Arab world has made them struggle harder to survive and to develop legitimacy.

The centralisation of power has made it difficult for the king to broaden the power base and to assimilate the new groups produced by modernisation (Huntington). In the early stages of modernisation, the monarchs could have co-opted new elements, but this is not a

viable strategy in the long run. One solution is to slow down or prevent the modernisation process, another is to become the chief moderniser and by that control the social force. The king could also institute a constitutional system with shared power. In his book, Hudson analyses legitimacy problems and strategies for coping with challenges.

The ruler's personal devotion to religious standards and kinship loyalties is the main criterion for his legitimate authority. The ideal Arab monarchy would be an Islamic theocracy governed by a leader who can be traced back to Muhammad. The monarch in Jordan is respected less as a father than as a strong, ruthless leader. The governmental structures and capabilities, especially those covering internal security, are highly developed. So are parties and opposition movements, but they find themselves under almost continual suppression or pressure by the government. In a complex society such as Jordan, the monarch must meet the challenges straight on.

The King of Jordan has strong personal legitimacy because he is of the Hashemite family who claims to be descendants from Muhammad. This religious aspect gives the regime ideological legitimacy. The legitimacy problems in Jordan have been political, not social. In the 1970s, there was significant economic development in Jordan and a high degree of administration and planning. This is the positive results of modernisation and lent certain legitimacy to the system. The system's performance was less impressive when it came to non-material values (ibid:215). There was little progress made towards greater social justice or redistribution of wealth. The privileges of Jordan's elite have been preserved. Still, there has been little apparent public dissatisfaction with social conditions and unrest has focused on political frustrations. The tribes and the army have been awarded good benefits so they will be compliant and not pose a threat to the regime.

## ***2.8 Strategies to achieve legitimacy***

David Easton describes three sources of legitimacy: Structural, ideological and personal legitimacy (1965:302-3). A strong personal leader may generate legitimacy for a regime while a regime that identifies itself with an ideological programme may win support among the people through ideological legitimacy. Structural legitimacy is general respect for the rightness of the decision-making, the roles of the judicial system and the procedures of the political system itself.

Hudson (1977:25-30) shows how the two main types of Arab political systems, the modernising monarchies and the republics, cope with pressures and seek legitimacy in different ways. The modernising monarchies combine traditional autocratic authority with nationalism and the idea of development to legitimate their power. In the Arab republics autocracy wrapped in modern democratic norms and supported with militant nationalism is practised. Combined with a commitment to social equality and development, this is their formula for legitimacy.

Egypt fits into Hudson's category of the revolutionary republics (ibid:27-30). The Arab republics share in varying degree a revolutionary legitimacy in the sense that the regimes and leaders have achieved legitimacy through participation in the revolution. They tried to solve the problem of authority by breaking down authority patterns and integrating people into new ones. The leaders seek legitimacy through secular, rational, and universal norms, and they emphasise Arabism. These efforts have been sporadic, uncoordinated, and usually unsuccessful and have complicated the search for legitimacy. In the absence of structural legitimacy, the leaders have relied on ideological symbols for legitimacy and the impact of personalised leadership. Hudson divides the group of republics into two: The Pan-Arab core, where we find Egypt, and the republics of the periphery. The republics in the pan-Arab core are older and have had a more complete development of independent political structures and processes. It was in this area Arab nationalism was born, and hence all-Arab concerns are important to these states and shape their politics. The republics in the periphery are newer and geographically far away from the pan-Arab core. All-Arab concerns are not so important here. People have a common history but have distinct local characteristics.

Jordan is found in the category of the modernising monarchies (ibid:25-27). The monarchies' authority is patrimonial, and although some of the monarchs have made efforts concerning democratic values and structures, democracy is not really working. The monarch's personal reputation is the primary source of legitimacy while the secondary is the tradition of kinship and an ideology emphasising religious correctness and kinship commitment. Ruling monarchs in the Arab world have a record of persistence. This can be explained by their legitimacy formula, which shows great congruence with socio-cultural values. The monarchical legitimacy strategy is patriarchal. King Hussein frequently spoke of Jordan as a "family" and saw himself as their father (ibid:25).

The modern monarchies of the Arab world have exploited kinship and religion as legitimising values. The direct line of Muhammad and the ruler's piety is often emphasised. The monarchs are not trying to assimilate traditional groupings into a national identity as the

revolutionary leaders do; they rather associate themselves with selected modern norms, as nationalism and development. They accept existing traditional group identities in their country and accommodate them, but have also taken advantage of traditional rivalries and played one group against another. The kinship has had some structural legitimacy by itself. Personal legitimacy has also been one of the sources of structural legitimacy. Strong individual leadership as well as family or religious status have been important for the king's authority and the legitimacy of his regime. Some monarchs have tried to combine the monarchy with a form of parliamentary independence and have also succeeded in institutionalising their regimes. However, they are unwilling to let the masses become politicised and allow mass participation or autonomous opposition groups, and they also refuse to open up their political processes.

As we have seen, there are different strategies to achieve legitimacy. The regime can meet the challenge from opposition groups in different ways to try to increase their power legitimacy. They might co-operate with the opposition groups and allow them to participate in the political process. The regime and the opposition might have the same interests.

A policy of containment intends to limit or prevent someone from getting stronger (Boulby 1998:116). For instance, containment in the parliamentary process could take the form of denying the opposition representation in the cabinet, resorting to using the power of veto, introducing new laws which limit the activities of political parties, suspending parliament and changing the law, for instance the election law. In reality, a policy of containment puts severe limitations on the opposition.

Another strategy to achieve legitimacy is co-optation of the opposition. *Co-optive politics* is the bringing of non-state actors into the state processes (Saward 1992:5). State actors can use formal co-optation as a strategy in pursuit of their goals, and as such involve groups and individuals from a variety of professional, producer or promotional standpoints. Incorporating or co-opting groups and individuals into state decision-making is widely thought to be beneficial for governance; it creates consensus, participation, legitimacy, stability, expertise, information – the list of benefits is long. Most importantly, it undermines their independence and legitimacy in criticising the authorities. There are three ideal types of co-optation, argues Saward. These are ideological, psychological, and institutional co-optation. Ideological co-optation is the process maintenance of similar patterns of assumption between governors and administrators and the non-state groups or individuals. The process referring to the creation, maintenance or encouragement of common patterns of thought through the manipulation of words and symbols is called psychological co-optation. The third type is



institutional co-option and refers to cases where a private individual, group, or group representative is formally incorporated into state decision-making as an adviser, informant, or colleague.

In the absence of effective constitutional-legal rules of restraint, authoritarian rulers need to resort to alternative and more informal strategies to maintain control over political activity (Kassem 1999:9). The strategies are the results of attempts to cultivate the support and loyalty of subordinates on the basis of co-option and patronage. Coercion and use of repression can have profound consequences for political stability if the opposition becomes radical in its efforts to work against government actions. In the long term, broadening the power base of the regime to co-opt potentially subversive new elements appears as a more viable option. Authoritarian rulers can also deal with them either by actively contriving to eliminate them or attempting to win their cooperation and adherence.

### ***2.9 Three stages of legitimacy***

Beetham sees the development of legitimacy as different stages (1991:238-239). There are three types of regimes; the mobilisation regime is more advanced than a traditional regime because it gives opportunities to those from below and allows mass-politicisation. The traditional regime is usually a monarchy and the popular representation is limited to a legislative assembly. Jordan is an example of this type while Egypt fits into the group of mobilisation regimes. The third type is a liberal-democratic system and avoids the weaknesses of both the traditional and mobilisation regimes in the unqualified expression it gives to the principle of popular sovereignty. This system is tolerant to a variety of beliefs that is the necessary counterpart to the electoral mode of consent and differs from the other two types of regime in its acknowledgement that the better test of the public good is what the people, freely organised, state, not what the interpreters of tradition and old-fashioned opinions may say.

As mentioned, the popular representation in the traditional monarchy is limited to a legislative assembly. This political model has two key advantages: The first one is that the supreme executive office constitutes a focus of social unity beyond competition, and the other is that political power formally reflects the structure of social and economic power. There is a minimum requirement for popular consent through elections to a legislative assembly. Traditional institutions such as a monarchy cannot be created today; all they can do is try to

survive. They are vulnerable to the declaration of principles like equal opportunity and popular sovereignty within their own societies, and to agitation from outside.

Mobilisation regimes have their origins in a revolutionary process and let positions be open to those from below and allow mass-politicisation. A dominant party and a monopolistic belief system define the collective goal for society and encourage mass-mobilisation and are in addition the sources of authority for the ruling group. The belief system is what gives the regimes direction and dynamism and provides for all four criteria for legitimacy at the same time. However, this is both its strength and weakness since the belief system is required to do too much and hence makes it vulnerable to forces leading to the erosion of belief.

The liberal-democratic system expresses the principle of popular sovereignty. There is a test of the public good by assessing what the people assert, and not what the interpreters of tradition or ideology may decide. The system tolerates a variety of beliefs. Its vulnerability is that electoral competition for the legislative body is responsible for increased social divisions. The tension between formal equality of the electoral power and the socio-economic inequality can in reality become hard to manage for the regime. The problem may be moderated by the degree of electoral choice, but then the legitimating force of elections is also reduced.

### 3. Legitimacy problems in Egypt

To give a thorough description of the legitimacy problems in Egypt in the 1980s, it is necessary to look back at previous decades and the regimes under President Gamal Nasser and President Anwar al-Sadat. The problems of legitimating power in this period influenced the political situation in the 1980s as well. Some of the legitimacy problems have persisted over years and have roots back to the revolution in 1952. The legitimacy deficit in the 1980s was also caused by contemporary conditions. Both these conditions and the legitimacy problems since Nasser's regime will be described in this chapter. The regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood in the period will then be analysed. The movement challenged the regime's legitimacy and thus posed a threat to the authorities.

#### *3.1. Personal legitimacy and absence of political participation before the 1980s*

In *Arab Politics, The Search for Legitimacy* (1977), Michael Hudson describes the legitimacy problems in Egypt. In the republics of the pan-Arab core, the modernising politician had to on the one hand be a moderniser who had to eliminate the shackles of tradition and on the other he had to be congruent with the traditional culture. Egypt was the leading country of the Arab world in the 1970s<sup>6</sup>. Social mobilisation was further advanced here than elsewhere in the region and the political sphere was more differentiated ideologically and structurally. The diversity of opinions and political organisations was unique in the Arab world. However, in this period the Egyptian political system faced serious legitimacy problems, Hudson observes (1977:234). A coup made by the Free Officers in 1952 overthrew the king and the British colonial powers. It was a tactical success, but a strategic failure in terms of generating permanent system legitimacy. Through manipulation of anti-Western and pan-Arab values<sup>7</sup>, the officers behind the revolution set the country on a course towards relative stability, economic and social development, and prospects of political influence in both the region and

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<sup>6</sup> Based on Hudson (1977:234-251) unless otherwise is noted.

<sup>7</sup> Pan-Arabism is the idea that common history, culture, language, and religion unite the Arab people and implies that the Arabs should be one political unit (Young 1976:ch.10). Pan-Arab values are shared concerns among the Arabs.

the world. President Nasser enjoyed strong personal legitimacy because of his charisma and his reputation as a national hero. His regime, however, clearly failed to legitimise itself or its successor in structural terms such as institutionalised, open participation in the political process (Hudson 1977:235). The regime was also hard-pressed to provide the social welfare to which the revolution was committed. To survive domestic challenges, Nasser's regime pursued heavy-handed and secretive procedures, which repressed the opposition, but did not manage to dissolve it.

Egypt is one of the most homogenous societies in the Arab world, with relatively little of the primordial kinship, ethnic, and religious tensions that exist in several other countries in the area. It has long been the intellectual centre for the Islamic world. Both Nasser and Sadat exploited Islam effectively without actually embracing Islamism (ibid: 237). The Muslim Brotherhood was the most formidable of the revolutionary-reform movements and challenged the triangle of the monarchy, the British, and the Wafd party<sup>8</sup>. The Free Officers were cautious of sharing power with any organised elements and the old political parties were banned. The Muslim Brotherhood received at first positive signals from the authorities but was suppressed when they appeared to pose a threat to the Officers' power.

The defeat in the 1967 war with Israel was a political humiliation that Nasser survived only due to his own charisma and the effective internal security. However, it did cause cracks in the regime's legitimacy. There was widespread disturbance in February 1968 by the "democratic" forces of workers, students, and the unemployed, as well as traditional elements from the old Wafd and the Muslim Brotherhood, against the regime (Hudson 1977:245). This caused the revolutionary government to exert a degree of repression that eroded the climate of free expression.

The government's procedures and institutions were not respected and thus not valued as legitimate in themselves. The problem of political participation, which requires a certain structural legitimacy for its solution, was not solved by Nasser's regime. The deep and widespread values attached to Nasser's ideology and as a person were to some extent reinforced through the structures of the government. The regime was supported by a set of bureaucracies – the military, the civil service, and the Arab Socialist Union – with specific interests and organic linkages to the centre of power. In spite of these structural linkages, Nasser's regime failed to achieve structural legitimacy in the typical sense since there were no

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<sup>8</sup> Wafd was the main democratic party from the period before the Free Officers' revolution in 1952

institutionalised processes of collective choice making. The Egyptian people showed both resignation and cynicism towards their government (ibid: 246).

When Nasser died in 1970, Anwar Sadat came to power and proved to be a clever and tough political fighter in the way that he consolidated his personal rule and put down the challenge from the radical groups. At the same time, he was unable to achieve the kind of personal magnetism as his predecessor. Still marked with the legacy of the 1967 war and burdened with growing economic problems, Egypt seemed to be heading for a legitimacy crisis. Sadat had little personal legitimacy, but success in the 1973 war against Israel was legitimacy “boost” for him. Sadat sacrificed pan-Arab ideals, and “Egypt first” became the emphasis in the regime propaganda (ibid: 248). President Sadat’s steps to minimise Egypt’s commitment to Arabism were both dramatic and significant since he was in effect challenging some of the most sacred values in Arab public opinion. This shift was paralleled on the internal level by moves away from state socialism. The huge public sector was blamed for the visible decline in the Egyptian economy and infrastructure, and cautious efforts were initiated to reintroduce a measure of free enterprise into the system. There was also an opening of the Egyptian economy to foreign capital. The most important part of Sadat’s strategy was concerned the question of political participation. The press, the National Assembly and the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) were now allowed greater freedom in the discussion of governmental policies.

The main political actors consisted of three groups; the Muslim Brotherhood and its allies and the Marxist at each pole and the regime itself in the middle. Despite the scepticism expressed by both rightists and leftists, President Sadat’s cautious liberalisation of organised political participation seemed to increase the structural legitimacy of the political system, according to Hudson (ibid:249). The re-emergence of organised opposition at the right and the left extremes of the political spectrum were seen as a problem. The Muslim Brotherhood, banned after its unsuccessful challenge to Nasser in 1954, had never disappeared, and in the middle 1970s the movement came once more into public life. Sadat’s turn away from pan-Arabism and his moderation towards Israel was a gamble. In April 1974 an uprising by an Islamist fundamentalist group at the Egyptian technical military academy was put down with violence and casualties, and in 1975 labour unrest led to hundreds of arrests.

Sadat’s course of turning politics inward, relaxation of the strict rules and liberalisation of organised political participation was understandable as a legitimising strategy. Still, it seemed likely that liberalisation would renew the latent ideological polarities represented by the Islamic Right and the Socialist Left. Little was done with the economic

crisis and moderation on the diplomatic front with Israel was costing Sadat a lot in terms of ideological legitimacy. It was not easy for Nasser's successor to construct an alternative legitimacy formula that would take in the country's restless political forces. However, in the early 1970s, times were good and the people did not complain about the political situation and the lack of political freedom. Egypt benefited from the economic boom in the Arab world as a result of the large production of oil.

This development came to a halt, and by the end of the 1970s the regime could no longer afford to "buy" consent for its rule, much due to the worsening economy. Other incentives had to be devised (Esposito 1997:20). The political stage was then opened and the much-resented restrictions on expression and participation were relaxed. Still, the regime was reluctant to admit that there were legitimacy complaints. It did not intend to confront competitors for power but to solidify and broaden the elite in power, making increased domination possible.

### ***3.2 The regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood***

Since the early 1970s, political Islam has become a major social and political force in the Egyptian society. The political system faced serious legitimacy problems, and the Islamists represented a fresh alternative to the corrupt and repressive regime. The principal target of the Islamist is the modernising state, which has not managed to eliminate Western influences. It has failed to deliver on promises of material improvements for the general population; and it has also failed to democratise (Haynes 1998:136). Islamist movements have emerged in a situation of social and political crisis. The Muslim Brotherhood was one of the Islamist movements that criticised the authorities and their strong support among people in Egypt became a challenge to the regime.

The Muslim Brotherhood was established by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928 and has been the most prominent group in Sunni Islam since its inception (Zubaida 1989:47). As mentioned, he launched the Muslim Brotherhood as a movement for education and reform of hearts and minds. It very soon acquired a political dimension, calling for the Islamic reform of society and government.

The Muslim Brotherhood was opposed to the corrupt aspirations and conduct created by European dominance and wanted a society with high moral standards and an Islamic political order. In their version of an Islamic community piety, order and authority would play

a central role. However, their social and economic programme was vague. The Muslim Brotherhood appeared modern in its statements and operations. It relied on organisation and mobilisation of support on ideological and political appeal and on an individual basis. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood was nationally oriented except for certain all-Arab values like the liberation of Palestine. In the early 1940s, the movement developed its own armed “secret apparatus” and engaged in political assassinations of politicians (ibid: 48).

President Nasser needed to counter the Muslim Brotherhood’s Islamic appeal and challenge to his legitimacy, and had to mobilise the people behind his Arab socialist revolution. This made him turn to Islam to achieve his political goals and he used Islam to legitimate Arab socialism (Hudson 1977: 242). In spite of his Islamic rhetoric, Nasser’s regime was essentially secular and the dominant official ideas were nationalism and socialism. The Muslim Brotherhood’s programme cannot be said to be socialism although it emphasised the maintenance of social justice as specified in the Quran (Zubaida 1989: 49). The Muslim Brotherhood had vague notions of social justice, but did not use the vocabulary of socialism. It viewed Nasser’s regime as ungodly tyranny and one that neglected all the tenets of Islam.

The Muslim Brotherhood had originally supported Nasser and the Free Officers’ revolution in 1952. However, the leadership felt alienated from Nasser when it became evident that he did not have the same goals as them and that he had only used the organisation as an Islamic alibi. The Muslim Brotherhood was banned because of its unsuccessful challenge to Nasser in 1954. After this, the Brotherhood became an opposition movement using violence to achieve its goals. After a number of assassination attempts had been made against Nasser, the regime started to suppress the Brotherhood (Esposito 1984:126). In 1965, the police claimed to have discovered an armed plot against the government and this led to the arrests of key members (Zubaida 1989:48). The Muslim Brotherhood has not always been a coherent organisation, especially not under pressure. After the death of al-Banna and during Nasser’s repression, there were signs of disunity. Conflicting factions were formed and engaged in different struggles. Often, there was no strong central control or discipline over the activities of members and factions. Some of them had their own projects (ibid: 51). Many members were not satisfied with the weak leadership succeeding al-Banna. Dissident groups were formed as a result of the development. However, the Muslim Brotherhood maintained its role as the leading actor and opposition group on the Egyptian political stage.

President Sadat introduced the so-called “Corrective Revolution” in 1971 that continued Nasser’s use of Islam to enhance political legitimacy (Esposito 1984:198).

Democratic socialism was used as a counter-ideology to Nasser's scientific socialism, and Egypt's one-party state was replaced with a multi-party electoral system. After a long period of harsh repression under President Nasser, the Muslim Brotherhood was now given the opportunity to create a political role for itself in understanding with the government (Egset 1998:93). The new president was more liberal towards Islamic groups, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic university student organisations. This shift in politics was done to counter the influence of pro-Nasser secular leftists. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood who had been imprisoned were released, those in exile permitted to return, and some religious publications were legalised in 1976.

President Sadat's support of religious revivalism began to show strains by the mid-1970s when he discovered he lacked control over Islamist issues and organisations. In 1979 a number of new laws were made, for instance the prohibition of starting political parties built on an Islamic programme, and partial restrictions imposed on the freedom of the press (Ayubi 1991:74). Sadat had used Islam solely for his own political purposes, and the growing authoritarianism of his last years produced both Islamic and secular opposition critical of his democratic initiative as more rhetoric than reality (Esposito 1984:198). In addition, the social outcome of the economic policies of Sadat's regime was negative and helped only to fuel the frustration and anger of the religious youth. In 1981, Sadat was assassinated by Islamist militants in the name of Islam. That marked the climax of a turbulent period of Islamic politics during his period in power. Sadat had spoken against religious-political fanaticism and this, together with the other mentioned factors, led to the assassination of the president (Hjärpe 1980:63).

### ***3.3 The political system under Mubarak and problems of legitimation power***

The system of personalised authoritarian rule in post-1952 Egypt was constructed by Nasser and sustained by his successors. It resulted from factors that guaranteed the absence of autonomous groups and thus ensured the President's control over all state apparatus. The system of personalised rule in Egypt has lasted for nearly half a century, largely as a result of the enormous legal-constitutional powers vested in the presidency according to the constitution (Kassem 1999:31). Since the president has so much power, the political actors and institutions are dependent on the individual occupying the office of the President.



Political legitimacy in an authoritarian context tends to be determined by certain factors mainly related to the achievements of the individual in office.

Under Hosni Mubarak, the state has been run by a government of men rather than of laws since the political system is characterised by a personalised method of rule (Kassem 1999:3). While formal political institutions exist, they are usually devices manipulated to maximise the personal power of the ruler rather than to set and impose the rules of political conduct and constraint. The concept of multi-party legislative elections does not mean much in Egypt. The elections can best be viewed as an instrument of clientelist co-option and control. Kassem (1999) writes about what she terms the *clientelism*<sup>9</sup> in Egyptian politics and means the unequal relationship between the authorities and the opposition. The nature of the presidency in the post-1952 political system must be considered and Kassem (1999:33-48) describes the Egyptian political system under Mubarak. The Egyptian president maintains almost a monopoly over the decision-making process. There are immense legal-constitutional powers vested in the presidency, and this means that the political institutions and groupings depend on the individual occupying the post of the President. This is of great impact for the opposition as well.

The 1971 constitution was constructed upon the same tenets as the previous constitutions and remains in effect. Personalised presidential rule still exists even after the demise of the charismatic Nasser. The People's Assembly nominates the President of the Republic and the candidate must obtain two-thirds of the Assembly's votes. The decision is then ratified through a popular plebiscite. The Egyptian President does not have to compete for his position since the Assembly can only refer one person to a national plebiscite. The President's official claim to office is therefore grounded on the basis of almost unanimous support. In Mubarak's presidential election referendum in 1987, it was said that 97 per cent voted "yes" and that the turnout was 88.5 per cent (ibid: 33). These numbers were clearly exaggerated and one of the reasons for this could be that electoral results are not processed and announced by an independent body, but by the Ministry of Interior. However, such extraordinary results allowed the Egyptian president to claim total popular support and thus absolute legal legitimacy.

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<sup>9</sup> Clientelism is the personal, affective, and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of a dyadic relationship, as defined in Lemarchand and Legg (1978:122-3).

The constitution defines a presidential term as six years and there are no limits to the numbers of terms for which a President can be re-nominated (ibid:34). This means that Egyptian Presidents can remain in office for life. Both Nasser and Sadat died in office and it appears that Mubarak will remain in power as long as he wishes. Mubarak had earlier stated that he would not be president for more than two terms. However, the President changed his mind and accepted a re-nomination for a third term in office in 1993 and made continuing as president seem like a call of duty. The fact that the President changed his mind illustrates the difference between formal political procedures, whereby the Assembly officially chooses the President, and the reality, in which the President actually decides his own tenure in office.

The People's Assembly's power is limited since most of the power is vested in the President. The Assembly consists of 440 members and has the power to address questions to any of the Cabinet members concerning matters within their jurisdiction and can withdraw its vote of confidence (ibid:35). The Assembly has the right to not re-nominate the President at the end of a presidential term but has never used this right. The legislative body has been limited to what Kassem calls "the role of rubber-stamping presidential decisions" because its powers are restricted by certain presidential powers beyond its control (ibid: 37). The President has the authority to bypass the Assembly by having his proposals endorsed through a referendum. Thus, the legislative powers of the Assembly can be nullified. It is then impossible for the Assembly to intervene or deliberate upon the subject matter. The potential use of referenda both weakens the Assembly's legislative role and restrains its supervisory role. If the Assembly decides to use its right to withdraw its vote of confidence from the Cabinet, the President can refuse to endorse the decision and has to take the case to a public referendum. If the Assembly refuses to comply with the President, it could lead to a presidential decision to dissolve the Assembly (ibid: 38-39). This means that if the Assembly decides to take on a role that extends beyond supporting and formalising presidential legislation, the President could resort to act of a referendum as well as dissolving the legislature.

It is also possible for the Egyptian legislature, on the basis of a two-thirds' majority vote, to file charges against the President for committing high treason or any other criminal act. The President might, in the Assembly's absence and in situations that cannot suffer delay, issue decisions that have the force of law. However, such decisions must be submitted to the Assembly within fifteen days. In reality, there are cases where the President has excluded both the legislature and the Cabinet from any form of participation. The President in Egypt refers to the People's Assembly as though it was an independent and equal force in the

political system while in reality he clearly shows that he knows the legislature is not (Egset 1998:109).

The Egyptian President has, according to the constitution, the right to implement a state of emergency (Kassem 1999:36). He needs the Assembly's approval within 15 days and the state of emergency should not extend beyond a limited period without the Assembly's approval. However, all three Egyptian presidents have managed to call for, and obtain, a formal state of emergency lasting for extraordinary long periods. Emergency law has been maintained by Mubarak since the assassination of Sadat in 1981 with the Assembly's approval. The explanation for this long-lasting state of emergency has been the threats of violence and terrorism.

Prior to 1952, a multi-party parliamentary system functioned within the framework of a constitutional monarchy. As the monarchy was abolished after the revolution in 1952, the multi-party activity was temporarily suspended and was later banned. It was said that the multi-party system was both an obstacle to national unity and a betrayal of the regime's ideological goals of social justice, writes Kassem (ibid:39). In Egyptian politics, there has been a move towards a single party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), which is intended to secure an attitude of obedience to authority and acceptance of the methods enacted by the ruler. For instance, Nasser used the party more as a means of mobilising support than as a vehicle for political participation. Sadat changed the rules of political participation and transformed the political arena from one-party to a multi-party system in 1977. In 1978, he created his own party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), and more than half of the members of the People's Assembly joined the President's party. The first two opposition parties, the National Progressive Union Party (*Tagammu*) and the Liberal Party (*al-Ahrar*) came in 1977 and were also created from the top. In reality, the power of authoritarian rulers in the National Democratic Party (NDP) exceeds the power of a multi-party parliament.

The Egyptian President increases his control over the major institutions of the state because he has the power to appoint and dismiss people to positions in these institutions. The president can appoint advisers, prime ministers, ministers and provincial governors to all the most senior posts in the state (ibid: 43). Springborg (1975:83-108) argues that informal organisations such as the family, the *dufa* [graduating class] and the *shilla* [group of friends] are important when it comes to recruitment to these major institutions.

The individuals at the elite level are tied to their patron – the President - and their goal is to preserve their existing relationship by remaining subservient. This segment of the elite has a very good chance of maintaining its posts for a long time. The government of Prime

Minister 'Atef Sidqi lasted from 1986 to 1996, which made it the longest serving since the first modern Cabinet was formed in 1914. Mubarak did not see any reason why he should change the government, according to Kassem (1999:45). The personalised power of the President in Egypt is reinforced by the President's personal control of state funds and resources. Although an annual budget is presented to the Assembly for approval at the beginning of each fiscal year, this is basically a formality. Special resource allocations are neither revealed to the Assembly nor pursued through formal channels. Instead, the distribution of resources to the different political and state organisations is primarily determined according to the personal and political objectives of the President.

The President is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and gives out the top military positions, including the Minister of Defence. Since the Nasser period, the military establishment has had a role as the protector of the regime (ibid: 46). After all, it was a military coup that brought the regime to power in 1952, and since then all three Presidents were originally military men. Military personnel cannot join political parties or vote, but officers and their families get material benefits because of their positions. Thus the military has an interest in protecting and upholding the system. Since 1952 the armed forces have never refused a President's call to combat mass riots or to front challengers from within the system.

### ***3.4 Political Islam in the 1980s: Development of Social Institutions and Political Participation***

The Islamists changed their attitude after the death of Sadat. While Islamic revivalism in Egypt during the 1970s had been a movement of confrontation and violence the 1980s witnessed the institutionalisation of Islamic activism and entrance of Islamists into the mainstream of Egyptian politics (Springborg 1989:239).

The Muslim Brotherhood became among other voluntary Islamic organisations effective agents of social and political change by developing alternative socio-economic institutions and participating in the political process, demonstrating their strength in institution-building and popular mobilisation. The Muslim Brotherhood engaged in a broad range of social and political activities, for instance the creation of Islamic charitable organisations. Together with other Islamic organisations they played roles in social life that governments had once claimed but abdicated. In providing alternative social, health, and

educational facilities these movements challenged the state structure, hence the credibility and even the legitimacy of the government. Although many were apolitical, Islamic private volunteer organisations filled a void and thus were an implicit critique of the government's inability or failure to provide adequate services (Esposito and Voll 1996:178). In the 1980s the Muslim Brotherhood participated in parliamentary elections and competed for power with an Islamic programme.

The Brothers were sufficiently well organised to campaign actively for votes and possessed the infrastructure required to make sure that their voters actually were present at elections. Operating within the political system, the Muslim Brotherhood concentrated their criticism and demands on a call for greater democratisation, political representation, social justice, and respect for human rights (Esposito and Voll 1996:179). There was a willingness of several Egyptian movements to use democratic institutions as a vehicle for political participation (Esposito 1996:23). The Muslim Brotherhood was one of them.

Mubarak became president after the assassination of Sadat, and the first years of his rule was a breathing space for the Islamists and enabled Islamic political and social activism to grow more rapidly. The Islamic movements could expand its institutions and become part of mainstream society. They made their own socio-economic institutions and participated in the political process and demonstrated by that their strength in institution building and mobilisation of support. The Muslim Brotherhood engaged in a broad range of social and political activities, from the creation of Islamic charitable associations to participation in parliamentary elections and in professional association elections. The Brothers have not spelled out the economic and political details for their alternative project. This has been tactically effective. The Islamist activists held low profile the first years of Mubarak's presidency and assessed the new president and his attitude towards Islam. The peaceful period, however, came to an end with the 1984 parliamentary elections, argues Springborg (1989:215).

After the re-emergence in the 1970s, the Brotherhood chose participation rather than violent revolution and used democracy both to criticise the government and as a means to achieve its goals and carry on the struggle for Islam. In the 1980s, the Brotherhood participated – or, when not permitted, demanded the right to participate – in the political process. To them democracy was at best a means to an end since everything is to be subordinated to the struggle of preserving and spreading Islam. The Muslim Brotherhood wanted to recreate the early Median community of the Prophet with the slogan “the Quran is our constitution” (Zubaida 1989:48-50). They advocated a presidential system with an elected

*shura* [consultative] council, postulated as an equivalent to a parliament. Al-Banna strongly opposed political parties, arguing that they represent sectional and selfish interests, which divide the politics of the *umma* [Islamic community]. The Brotherhood wanted to establish an Islamic state within the context of the modern state.

Under the Mubarak government, the Brotherhood sought recognition as a political party and wanted to participate within the multiparty system. The Brotherhood's Supreme Guide (top leader) Tilmisani sent in December 1982 a letter directly to the Ministry of Interior where he demanded full legal existence for the movement with the same right as other political parties. He emphasised the Brothers' opposition to violence and terrorism and their long-lasting co-operation with the government. The request was turned down and forced the Brotherhood to consider allying itself with one of the legal parties. The Muslim Brotherhood therefore sought legal recognition as a religious society, not a political party. This was an indication that the movement was no longer satisfied with the terms by which the regime tolerated it, where its semi-legal status served as a self-binding control mechanism. The party law prohibited parties founded on a religious basis and prevented the Muslim Brotherhood from participating as an independent party. There was also a new amendment to the party-law that prohibited independent candidates. The Muslim Brotherhood had gained their representation this way in previous elections (Egset 1998:101).

Mubarak allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to participate in the national elections, although only as allies of other parties, and this opened up for the Brotherhood representation in parliament. The Muslim Brothers was banned as a political party in Egypt, but formed coalitions with other legal political parties and emerged as the strongest political opposition group (Esposito and Voll 1996:179).

It also hurried the defection and marginalisation of radical groups and contributed to the "normalisation" of the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood. This division would argue for a policy of inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood (Anderson in Esposito 1997:27). While some militant groups advocated the forceful overthrow of the state, the Muslim Brotherhood worked within the democratic structures (Esposito 1996:10). Ayubi (1991) has found that the government in Egypt drew a distinction between parliamentary Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic groups. Except for the increasingly grudging toleration of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s, Islamist movements were excluded from competing for power.

When the political system permitted, the Brotherhood participated in electoral politics. In the 1980s the Muslim Brotherhood successfully participated in electoral politics. In both elections, the Muslim Brother won several seats and came out third among nine competing

parties (Esposito and Voll 1996:24). The Islamists also got to hold portfolios in the cabinet after the elections, and emerged as the leading opposition in Egypt (Esposito 1997:4).

### ***3.5 Legitimacy problems***

Mubarak came to power as vice-president in 1973 and became president after the assassination of Sadat in 1981. Both of his predecessors had a record of political activity, being core members of the Free Officers' group for instance. Mubarak could not claim such legacy nor could he claim direct association with any pre-revolutionary national activists (Kassem 1999:48). Thus he had to legitimise his power in other ways and he got personal legitimacy because of his background as an officer in the army and the period as vice-president. Sadat's unpopularity in the last few years of his rule made it necessary for Mubarak to distance himself from his predecessor and gain the support needed to consolidate his own position.

In this section, I will take a closer look at the political situation in Egypt in the 1980s and detect the regime's problems of legitimating its power in this period. My hypothesis is that legitimacy problems led the regime to co-opt the Muslim Brotherhood to make sure that the movement would be on their side and help them to stay in power. I use Beetham's legitimacy theory and his four criteria for legitimation of power to point at how the regime's power is not legitimate<sup>10</sup>.

Under Mubarak, Egypt has continued to be a state with a powerful president. There have been presidential elections in which Mubarak won by nearly 90 per cent of the votes with no opposition candidate in both 1987 and 1993. Although he served as Sadat's vice-president, Mubarak found excuses for not electing his own vice-president. He claimed that a vice-president would be divisive and that it would encourage the press to exploit issues and differences and by that divide the nation. We see that power did not conform to established rules (criterion 1). The People's Assembly and the bureaucracy have continued to be dominated by the government's National Democratic Party (NDP). The government has also absolute control over the creation and continued existence of political parties. Thus, it has been able to refuse legal recognition of the Muslim Brotherhood as a political party (Esposito and Voll 1996:179). The Muslim Brotherhood has instead been recognised as a religious

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<sup>10</sup> The legitimacy criteria are described in section 2.2.

party. Thus, we may say that the dominant power is not serving the interest of the subordinates also (criterion 3) because the opposition is not allowed to form political parties.

Mubarak had earlier stated that he would not be president for more than two terms. However, the President changed his mind and accepted re-nomination for a third term in office in 1993. The fact that the President changed his mind illustrates the difference between formal political procedures, whereby the Assembly officially chooses the President, and the reality, in which the President actually decides his own tenure in office. This shows that power does not conform to established rules.

Mubarak tried to create an image of himself as a strong supporter of democracy. His efforts were initially aimed at containing two main sources of discontent. One was the potential turbulence in society as a result of Sadat's economic experiments and the other source was the great expectations his message of liberalism concerning political participation had created among opposition parties. In 1982 the State Council declared Sadat's decrees of September 1981 as unconstitutional, decrees that had brought to halt all opposition activities, and during May and June that year the opposition press was allowed to reconstitute. However, this did not include the Islamic papers *al-Dawa* and *al-I'tisam* (Egset 1998:90).

Since 1983 Mubarak has attempted to depict himself less as an advocate for democracy and more as the guardian of stability and order. The preference of socio-economic stability instead of political liberalisation in Egypt meant that the President could argue in favour of responsible political participation (Kassem 1999:54). A food riot, which took place in September and October 1984, was quickly contained before it spread, much because Mubarak was in control of the state's coercive powers. Hence, the subordinates expressed the opposite of evidence of consent to the regime (criterion 4). We may also argue the criterion 3 was violated, which says that the dominant power serve the interest of the subordinates also. A food riot indicated the opposite. In general, the president obtained the consent of the semi-secular middle and upper class to his rule and gained their support in his campaign to isolate radical extremists. On the other hand, Mubarak carried out Islamic politics to legitimise his power among the Islamic constituency.

One clause in the 1986 Electoral Law outlaws independent candidates and was meant to limit individual access to the legislature of individuals since they might be unknown to the regime (Kassem 1999:60). The opposition went to the Supreme Constitutional Court to have this clause in the election laws annulled. Hence they challenged the government and showed at the same time that they considered the electoral law as biased. There was not consensus about the rules of power (criterion 2). President Mubarak made efforts to modify the law in



1986. He decided to adjust the electoral law and call for early elections rather than wait for a court decision on whether the election laws were unfair or not. This must be understood in terms of Mubarak's own political circumstances. His re-nomination for a second presidential term was due at the end of 1987 and a court ruling against him could have weakened the legitimacy of his nomination since it would have seemed like the President was elected under an unconstitutional Assembly.

In May 1990 the Supreme Constitutional Court struck down a section of the 1986 Electoral Law. Criterion 2 was violated. President Mubarak decided to comply with the ruling and set up a committee whose task was to remove and revise the parts of the law found unconstitutional. The committee members were picked out by Mubarak and did not include any elected members of parliament. The draft recommendations were quickly passed as legislation without passing through the Assembly, which means that power did not conform to established rules. This swiftness illustrates the extent to which the majority of Assembly members were willing to overlook matters, argues Kassem, even those concerning their own interest, as an election law is. They would rather do that than challenge the decisions of the President. The reason for this is the before-mentioned right of the President to dissolve the Assembly if necessary and after a referendum of the people.

The growth and relative success of the Islamist movement in Egypt occurred as a result of a development crisis whereby many new social forces were unleashed. There was growing social inequality and cultural alienation. To many Egyptians, the Muslim Brotherhood represented an alternative to the regime's failed politics. There were public protests against the regime's politics, which means that there was not evidence of consent by the subordinates (criterion 4). After the Muslim Brotherhood's success in the 1984 elections, the government promised much but did little. The Brothers' main issue in their campaign was the application of *sharia* and was hard to ignore for the government. This started a debate about whether Islam was a suitable framework for government. The debate was joined by other notables and after the People's Assembly rejected the demands for immediate implementation of *sharia*, the public became agitated by the issue as well (Springborg 1989:216). The Muslim Brotherhood planned a march to Mubarak's Cairo office on the subject, but it was cancelled when the government refused to issue a permit. In addition, security forces arrested more than 500 activists and temporarily closed the mosque where the march was supposed to start.

The government restrained the influence of radical imams who had attracted large followings in their mosques. The Ministry of Religious Endowment sent out a decree that said

these imams should be replaced (ibid). At several mosques there were protests and this led to arrests of the radical imams and activists. Students at al-Azhar University demonstrated against the government's actions and the institution was closed for two weeks. This was the opposite of expressed evidence of consent by the subordinates to the particular power relation. These events together with the preparations for the 1987 elections stimulated religious tension and led to widespread violence.

The legitimacy problems of Mubarak's regime are mainly violations of the criterion "power conforms to established rules". Mubarak has in reality been excluding the legislature from participation by reducing their role to rubber-stamping presidential decisions. The continuation of emergency laws has also given the People's Assembly little power. In addition, the President has decided his own tenure in office independent of the Assembly. The criterion "the dominant power serve the interest of the subordinates also" is also violated. Mubarak has had monopoly over the decision-making process although the power ought to be shared between the president, the Cabinet, and the People's Assembly. Recruitment to major institutions has been from Mubarak's closest circle. The number of protests illustrated that there was not evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation.

The fact that the Supreme Constitutional Court struck down a section of the Electoral Law of 1986 shows that there is not consensus about the rules of power.

Instead of looking to the substance of Islam, we should examine the political circumstances, or institutional environment, that breeds political radicalism, argues Lisa Anderson (Esposito 1997:18). There may be circumstances that foster radical political strategies just as there may be conditions that encourage political movements to work within the system, no matter how radical their ideologies are. Legality and incorporation may encourage but do not guarantee respect for democratic norms or a willingness to play within the system on the part of political opposition movements. The platforms and programs of the government and the opposition reflect a great variety of sources. Opposition is defined partly by what it opposes. All political opposition is subject to dramatic and often unpredictable changes in the definition of what is permissible except for institutional opposition in established democracies.

### *3.6 The Elections in 1984 and 1987*

So-called “open” parliamentary elections were held in 1984 and 1987. These elections were supposed to be free and fair but were characterised by irregularities<sup>11</sup>. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood looked forward to general elections in 1984 as an opportunity to re-establish themselves on the central political arena. They also wanted to test the government’s democratic intentions. The government saw the elections as an opportunity to measure the strength of the opposition.

After several months of debate, the parliament, controlled by the NDP, announced in early 1984 a new electoral law which introduced a mandatory list system and a threshold of representation at as much as ten percent which also automatically transferred the votes of those lists which failed to reach the threshold in each district to the largest party in the same district (Egset 1998:92). The new amendments to the electoral law started an intensive debate and threatened to push the opposition to an all-out boycott of the election. The opposition protests were taken seriously and Mubarak urged the parliament to lower the threshold to eight percent, which they did.

The high threshold made coalition building necessary, especially because of the short period of time between the announcement of elections and Election Day. In the 1984 elections, the Muslim Brotherhood co-operated with the Neo-Wafd Party, which had been re-legalised in 1983. This was the only opposition bloc that passed the threshold and won mandates. The formation of the Neo-Wafd Party/Muslim Brotherhood alliance was such a surprise for the regime that it made more use of irregular methods than planned (Egset 1998:104). There were reports of violence and NDP mob attacks against the Muslim Brotherhood during the election. The NDP also attacked them during the election campaign, although it cannot be proved that the reported violence and fraud was directed against the alliance in particular. The Interior Minister admitted 88 “incidents” that were going to be investigated but blamed them all on local and tribal feuds.

The Muslim Brotherhood’s coalition with the Neo-Wafd Party in the 1984 elections won sixty-five of 450 seats and became the largest opposition group in the parliament. Eight of these mandates were Muslim Brotherhood candidates. Since the threshold was as high as

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<sup>11</sup> The opposition issued a joint declaration blaming their poor results on fraud, violence and other irregularities (Koszinowski 1984:351).

eight percent, the other opposition parties did not pass it and their votes went to the winning party, NDP.

**Table 3.1 Results 1984 Election:**

Parties	Votes in percentage of total vote	Per cent in parliament with 8% threshold	Mandates
NDP	72.9	87.3	390
Neo-Wafd (incl. MB)	15.1	12.7	58
SLP (Labour)	7.1	0.0	0 (4)*
NPUP (Tagammu)	4.2	0.0	0 (1)*
LSP (Liberal)	0.6	0.0	0

\* The numbers in brackets are seats appointed after the elections

Mubarak seemed to acknowledge that the elections and the election results were not satisfactory for his democratic credibility, and adjusted the result by appointing four candidates to parliament from two opposition parties among the ten candidates he has the right to appoint. Both ministers responsible for the elections later lost their posts.

After the 1984 elections, the Higher Constitutional Court looked at the electoral law to see if it was legal. Instead of waiting for the final ruling, the NDP rushed a new, amended electoral law through parliament, followed by a “referendum” to dissolve the parliament and call for new elections, to be held in April 1987. It was better for them to present an improved election law than to lose in court (Egset 1998:112). Few believed that the elections would be characterised by high legal standards since 1986 had been a year of outbreaks of social conflicts. In addition, the new parliament would be responsible for re-nominating Mubarak as presidential candidate for a second period. This led to a strict governmental “control” over the parliament’s composition.

In the 1987 elections, the Muslim Brotherhood was still banned as a political party and formed a new coalition with the Labour Party and the Liberal party, the Islamic alliance. There was strong pressure on the opposition and several Muslim Brothers were arrested nationwide shortly before Election Day. Rules for voting were also violated. The coalition won 17 per cent of the votes, and emerged as the main political opposition to Mubarak’s government. Muslim Brotherhood candidates held thirty-eight of the Alliance’s sixty seats (Esposito and Voll 1996:180).

**Table 3.2 Results 1987 Election:**

Parties	Votes in percentage of total vote*	Per cent in parliament	Mandates
NDP	69.6	68.8	308 (+40 indep.)
Neo-Wafd	10.9	8.0	36
The Islamist Alliance	17.0	12.0	56** (+3 indep.)
Ummah Party	0.2	0	0
NDP independents	-	8.9	40
Opposition independents	-	1.8	8

\* Votes for independent candidates not included

\*\*Of these, 30 were members of the Muslim Brotherhood and 26 were Labour members

Sources: Najjar 1989:108, Zaki 1994:80, Fahmy 1996:21, Egset 1998:113

One of the major disagreements between the opposition and government was the persistent manipulation of electoral results and President Mubarak's refusal to take any action. This was especially evident after the 1984 elections but also after the 1987 elections where the opposition filed a suit against "questionable" NDP winners (ibid: 62). The Supreme Court of Appeal found enough evidence to annul the votes for about 20 per cent of the NDP's 348 winning seats. The Assembly Speaker, however, refused to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling.

The government's strategy of weakening the Islamist movement became clearer following the 1987 elections. NDP deputies began publicly to probe their counterparts in the Brotherhood about their attitudes on economic issues such as landlord-tenant relations, subsidies, the public versus the private sector, Islamic investment companies, and so on. The government wanted to demonstrate that the claim "Islam is the solution" was in reality a veil to cover the conservatism of the Muslim Brotherhood's elite and its lack of a systematic programme. At the same time, the government relaxed its pressure on the Wafd Party. The party's paper *al-Wafd* responded by attacking elements in the Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood included.

One part of the government's strategy to contain Islamism, Springborg writes (1989:x), has been to keep the religious violence and disorder before the public. The government thought that a majority of the voters would turn away from Islamists and towards the state because of this. The election results from 1987 showed that it came true. In provinces where religious disturbance had been most serious, the NDP performed comparatively well.

### ***3.7 Mubarak's Strategy towards the Islamists***

#### ***3.7.1 Rules and censorship***

Mubarak had a policy of political liberalisation and tolerance but responded quickly and firmly to the opposition that was using violence to challenge the authority of the government. He distinguished more carefully between religious and political disagreement and direct threats to the state (Esposito 1996:178). Mubarak made security and stabilisation his primary priorities, but at the same time he moved towards the domestic political forces Sadat had pushed away. Before his first year in office was over, he started to release opposition politicians, journalists, intellectuals, and most of the Islamist activists. Mubarak was quick to declare his desire to strengthen the political liberalisation started by Sadat, and one of the first things he did as a president was to meet with the newly released opposition leaders and assured them of his commitment to renewed co-operation. The Muslim Brothers were not invited to this meeting since their movement was considered a religious organisation and not a political party.

A state of emergency had been maintained more or less since the war against Israel in 1967. This meant that censorship could be exercised over all activities and ranged from observing political action to limiting the freedom of expression. Gathering five or more people or distributing political literature without official government authorisation was not allowed and all those involved could be arrested. Political parties had to apply for formal authorisation at the local police station and the Ministry of Interior made a decision on the matter. Permissions for political parties were automatically denied except on specific occasions, which was during the month leading up to the elections. The President did not seem to take his promises to lift all press censorship and permit a free national party press seriously. When the press began to pose a challenge to the President's authority by pursuing and publicising cases relating to government corruption, the freedom of the opposition's press became even further restrained (Kassem 1999:63).

Emergency laws also limited the role of the Egyptian judiciary in matters relating to political participation. The 1966 Law of Military Judiciary gave the authorities freedom to detain and prosecute civilians in military courts (ibid: 58). The military courts were used for political activists whose offence was their rejection of the political status quo. The judiciary had earlier played an important role in defending the right of political parties to be formed,

and once one of the parties went to the courts, the government complied with the court rulings and granted the necessary permits. When the court rulings favoured the opposition in cases disputing electoral laws, the government obeyed the court verdicts. All the political parties licensed by the government as a result of court rulings, were relatively insignificant, unlike the religious based political organisations, which the President said he perceived as dangerous (ibid:59). The long-lasting emergency laws were an attempt to maintain a tight grip on multi-party participation and by that control of entry into the Assembly. They were also aimed at containing terrorist activities. While Mubarak played up the threat of Islamist extremism, he had earlier admitted that the Islamist threat in Egypt was not particularly serious (ibid: 57). Mubarak had few hesitations in exploiting Western fears with regard to the threat of political Islam (ibid: 56).

The government sponsored television debates between Islamist militants and religious scholars from al-Azhar University to represent the religious establishment. Government-run television and newspapers regularly featured religious programs and columns that were often independent in their tone and criticisms. Religious critics had permission to state their opposition publicly, and were allowed to voice their objections in the media, publish public newspapers, and compete in parliamentary elections. It was said that Mubarak's government was so willing to seek an accommodation with its religious opponents because it saw the Islamic resurgence not as an alien and subversive force but as the continuation of long-lasting movements with many elements compatible with the development of capitalism and democracy (Robert Bianchi in Esposito and Voll 1996:176).

Springborg (1989) gives examples of Islamic politics carried out by Mubarak. Several public-sector spinning and weaving companies made a decision to no longer employ women and this was seen as a concession by Mubarak to Islamists. There was an indictment in 1986 of police and state security agents for torturing Islamist prisoners that reduced the political tension associated with this sensitive issue. The regime toned down its accusations that the Islamists' disturbances had been the work of "outside agitators" (Springborg 1989:35). The government also avoided policy initiatives that would be a provocation to the Islamists. To avoid both a confrontation with the Islamist movement and to stimulate a pluralisation of them, the government allowed quasi-political libraries in mosques and let Islamists organise seminars, present their views on television, and publish books and magazines.

Mubarak had learned the danger of martyrs and knew what the Islamists were capable of doing to achieve their goals. He was afraid of what such actions might do to the public opinion and this may explain why he made the before-mentioned concessions. The

government tried to employ the state-controlled Islamist establishment to counter oppositionist Islamists. It was, according to Springborg (1989:x), seeking to move the conservative wing of the Islamist movement into the position formerly occupied by the official religious hierarchy and from which a message supportive of the establishment views can be widely spread. Mubarak and his government hoped that the Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood and his followers would have a political function whereby they prevented radical appeals and, because of their link with the state, legitimated it. The government tried to co-opt individual members of the opposition with attractive government posts or other favours, and this compromised the integrity and consistency of such opposition. The opposition were often forced to choose between their privileged access and righteous positions (Esposito 1997:22).

Mubarak did not seem to have an intention to transform the existing political system. As mentioned, multi-party participation has been controlled and contained under his rule (Kassem 1999:57). The President decided to continue allowing some opposition in the People's Assembly and showed by this act some degree of flexibility. The opposition parties in Egypt believed political liberalisation in the 1980s would lead to a genuine democracy but came to accept far less. They were co-opted via the electoral system. However, the multi-party system was more than a façade since notables and activists played the game, but reinforced rather than undermined authoritarian rule, at least in the short term, because it advanced the regime's co-optation. In reality, the Assembly had limited power and the multi-party system did not mean much.

In 1983, the Liberal Party was permitted to publish *al-Nur*, a weekly Islamist newspaper while the publication of a newspaper by the Muslim Brotherhood continued to be prohibited. The government wanted to keep the Islamist movement fragmented by preventing their message from being channelled through a single, dominant organ. Politicians were released and professors and journalists reinstated, and this might be seen as a useful strategy to keep good relations with moderate opponents and avoid a two-front war with both moderate and violent Islamists (Kassem 1999:50).

Mubarak's system of control over the opposition distinguished more between political friends and enemies than the system under Nasser and Sadat did. His strategy required the security apparatus to separate good from bad Islamists, but this strategy appeared to be unsuccessful since the establishment *ulama* have undermined their own credibility with many Islamists by exchanging their independence for governmental patronage (Kassem 1999:36)

One clause in the electoral law outlaws independent candidates and seemed to be an attempt to limit access of individuals to the legislature (Kassem 1999:60). The opposition



went to the Supreme Constitutional Court to have these election laws annulled. President Mubarak made efforts to modify the law in 1986.

Mubarak attempted to convince the opposition of his democratic intent. He tried to get their support in the face of harsh economic conditions and a potentially turbulent society. His strategy seemed to be successful when the opposition turned to almost unanimous support for the new President. The problem with Mubarak's advocacy of democracy was that it produced higher expectations among the opposition than intended. Mubarak's commitment to democracy was a mechanism to stabilise the political scene and consolidate his own position and at the same time prevent the expansion of political participation (Kassem 1999:51). This became evident after 1983. In 1984 NDP won the first parliamentary election under Mubarak's leadership and helped secure his position further. Mubarak wanted to make sure that democratic politics were conducted in parliament rather than the streets (Gehud Auda in Esposito 1997:22). Roger Owen has said: "The appeal of democracy (however limited in practise) backs up the legitimacy of the regime both internationally and domestically" (Owen in Kassem 1999:50).

Kassem (1999:3) argues that if authoritarian rulers should adopt democratic institutions, they will do what they can to ensure that such measures exclude the four principles which give such institutions their true democratic content: consensus concerning the rules of the game, political accountability of the rulers, the right to ample political representation, and alternation of power.

### ***3.7.2 Mubarak's War against Islamism***

By the end of the 1980s, Mubarak realised that his flexible policy had failed to effectively co-opt or silence the Islamic opposition and it was replaced with a more aggressive response to the challenge of both groups of Islamists; the moderates who were willing to participate within the established political and legal framework, for instance the Muslim Brotherhood, and the religious extremists who advocated the violent overthrow of the government. Mubarak's regime argued that there was no real difference between moderate and extremist Islamists (Esposito 1997:9). The situation calmed to some extent, but from the mid-1980s on, religious and sectarian unrest started up again (Ayubi 1991:76). The government became less discriminating and broadened its battle beyond the militant, secret radical groups, using

harassment and imprisonment to control the growing strength and challenge of more moderate Islamist movement such as the Muslim Brotherhood (Esposito and Voll 1996:177).

The government tried to control Egypt's private mosques, which was a breeding ground for Islamic militancy. Both Sadat and Mubarak announced plans to take control of private mosques but given the enormous number of mosques and poor resources, results were limited. (Esposito and Voll 1996:182)

In the 1985 student union elections, the government doubled its efforts to defeat Islamist candidates in the elections, working through the NDP, university officials, and the security agencies (Springborg 1989:226). Islamist candidates who were financially supported by the Islamic banks and Islamic 'Money Utilisation Companies' (MUCs) were condemned by Mubarak.

### ***3.7.3 Co-optating or containment?***

The careful democratisation process undertaken in Egypt came to a near standstill in the late 1980s. The government had two strategies: (1) suppress the Islamists through the use of the police and security approach or (2) gradually to introduce increasing doses of religion into legislation, education, media etc. Neither method proved to be effective, argues Ayubi (1991:86).

Springborg argues that Mubarak's strategy towards the Islamists is considerably more complex than Sadat's. Sadat first encouraged Islamists and then tried to clamp down on them. Mubarak gave up on symbolic issues while holding firm on matters of substance. For instance, he let the Muslim Brotherhood enter the political arena but on terms that are unfavourable to it and that are likely to increase disagreement within the movement about whether to participate within the political process or not. Still, argues Springborg, Islamism remains ideologically and organisationally potent, religious tension and violence persists and Mubarak's personal legitimacy is yet to be established. Allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to participate in the political process could be seen as a search for legitimacy. Esposito (1996:189) argues that rulers in the Arab world are forced to choose between a policy of repression or greater popular participation. If they make the wrong choice they themselves could lose power. Egypt's rulers can expect to see an Islamism that faithfully reflects the skill or failure of their own statecraft. The Islamist responses and tactics are often a reaction to government policies (Esposito 1997:9).

In the Islamic Middle East, all political opposition exists in ambiguity – sometimes tolerated, even encouraged, as often ruthlessly repressed, but the opposition is rarely fully confident of its status. Lisa Anderson finds in her study confirmation of two general political science hypotheses: 1. Absence of reliable, transparent institutional framework for political opposition to work within. They are considered ‘rejectionist’ or ‘disloyal’ parties. 2. Government harassment of once tolerated opposition groups fosters more extreme, radical, or violent programs (Anderson in Esposito 1997:19).

Mubarak followed a path of political liberalisation and tolerance while he responded quickly and firmly to those who resorted to violence to challenge the authority of the government (Esposito 1996:178). Mubarak distinguished more carefully between religious and political dissent and direct threats to the state. The Islamist activists held a low profile the first years of Mubarak’s presidency and assessed the new president and his attitude towards Islam (Springborg 1989:215).

Kassem claims that the only function of the elections in Egypt is to systematise and expand clientalism in a way that both engages and marginalises activists, co-opts much of the opposition and inhibits the formation of broader political groupings in the mass public (1999:31).

## 4. Jordan

### 4.1 Legitimacy problems before the 1980s

In the Arab kingdoms, success in building legitimacy is due to strong leadership together with technocracy, argues Hudson (1977: 209). David Easton has provided a useful classification of legitimacy resources; personal legitimacy, ideological, and structural legitimacy (ibid:16-24). The personal basis of legitimacy may be an important component of the legitimacy formula. The behavior and personalities of the authority could be of dominating importance. The second type of legitimacy resource is ideology. It is to large extent a legitimacy resource in Arab politics, Hudson argues. The frequency of symbols of nationalism in public speeches of Arab leaders appears to exceed the attention given to issues of identity, authority and the ultimate good society. To the extent that political structures are seen to constitute the framework within which the “accepted procedures” are carried out, they bring legal legitimacy upon the system and hence structural legitimacy.

In Jordan, legitimation of power has also been dependent on two environmental factors, wealth and the relatively un-politicised character of the kingdoms’ small and tribal-oriented population. In the 1970s, wealth diminished, the population grew larger and more politicised and hence the prospects for legitimacy were not so good anymore<sup>12</sup>. The reason why the regime has beaten the odds against it can be explained by factors of personal legitimacy, for instance strong, authoritative leadership. The regime relied on repression and coercion to deal with the political opposition, especially student and labour groups.

The Hashemite rulers claim to be direct descendents from the Prophet Mohammed and this has given political legitimacy to the king and his family among the Bedouins in particular but also the farmers of the villages. The Hashemites can stake out impressive claims to the three pillars of traditional legitimacy: kinship, religion, and the historical performance of their kingdoms in the past, Hudson argues (1977: 211). They appealed both to the traditional elements and the new educated elites by, on the one hand, calling upon sacred and primordial

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<sup>12</sup> Based on Hudson ‘s *Arab Politics. The Search for Legitimacy* (1977:209-219) unless otherwise is noted.

symbols and, on the other, taking the lead in the material development of the society. The question of legitimacy and identity in Jordan has been connected to the rise and decline of the whole Hashemite family in modern Arab politics. Since the overwhelmingly majority of Jordanians are Muslims, Islam can and has been used by the regime as a political instrument.

As many other states in the region, Jordan has also been affected with the classical Middle East distinction between the desert and the settled societies and this caused a political problem for the regime. The varied population led to a less homogenous society and complicated the Hashemites' ruling and legitimacy problem since there were several groups with different interests to consider. Jordan's legitimacy problem has been present both on the local and the national level and the monarchy has not been able to build legitimacy among the all people. On the one hand, the king expected loyalty to himself through the traditional mechanism of providing patronage to the sheiks and tribal notables. On the other hand, he projected himself as a modern leader whose authority rests theoretically on representative institutions and whose central government provides tangible services (Gubser 1973:149-152). The king tried to satisfy both groups. It was difficult for the political system that was created as recently as 1922 by British diplomats as a by-product of more important strategic decisions in the region, and it was difficult to find legitimacy as a native, traditional authority. Aruri (1972:198) writes that the task of state building was achieved in a few days while the task of nation building was harder. The regime in Jordan has not been able to develop a consensus of what should be the legitimate means and ends of political action.

Jordan gained full independence from the British in 1946 and in 1948 Abdullah was proclaimed the king of Palestine<sup>13</sup> in addition to Transjordan. By 1950 Abdullah had formally annexed the new territory and changed the kingdom's name from Transjordan to The Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. The new state had a mixed population of well-educated Palestinians on the one hand, and a traditional desert tribal society on the other. Transjordanian tribal leaders and village notables, filled with the values of the desert kinship, society and Islam, looked with dislike on the Palestinians who in turn considered Transjordan as a desert backwater (Hudson 1977: 213).

There were antiroyalist feelings by the nationalists and Palestinians. To counter these antiroyalist movements, the regime tried to increase its ideological legitimacy and emphasised its role in the Arab nationalist movements. For the Jordanians the issue of fidelity to Arab nationalism, and especially the Palestinian case, was very important but the regime's record

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<sup>13</sup> After the 1948 War Palestine consisted of the West Bank and eastern parts of Jerusalem

was not entirely positive when it came to this subject. The kingdom suffered chronic tension and upheaval up to 1980 but survived all attacks of internal antiroyalist groups, other Arab states, Israel, and organised, armed militant Palestinian nationalists. The exception was the Muslim Brotherhood, which supported Hashemite rule in the whole period. The monarchy resisted the efforts by politicised elements like Arab nationalists, Ba'athists, and Palestinian nationalists to gain real participation and power sharing. The kingdom's durability has also surprised economic experts who have said that the state is not viable because of the lack of economic resources.

Jordan had under British rule been isolated from the movements working for Arab nationalism. After 1948 the desert kingdom became directly involved in the Palestinian case and the conflict dragged it into the Arab national tumult again (ibid: 213). The regime's Arab nationalist alibi was challenged by competitors like Egypt, Syria, and even Saudi Arabia. From these states comments were made about how the same family that won two kingdoms out of the defeat of Arab nationalism in World War I had now joined the British and Israel in the partition of Palestine. The loyal followers of the Hashemites said they were seeking realistic goals through pragmatism rather than empty and provocative ideological ranting (ibid: 214).

The regime faced a challenge from Palestinian nationalist groups, which culminated with an attempted coup by Palestinians in 1957. After the incident the Arab nationalist movement was suppressed and political freedoms restrained and this led to problems with the Palestinians. There were riots in 1963 and 1964 when Jordan did not support the Arab unity campaign in Egypt, Syria and Iraq to establish a pan-Arab state. After the Six-Day War in 1967, an organised Palestinian national movement arose and even created "a state within the state", posing a serious challenge to Hashemite authority. This conflict culminated with "Black September" in 1970 where 4000 Palestinians were killed by royal officers and tribal armies and Palestinian guerrillas were driven out of Jordan (ibid: 218).

The government discovered in the 1970s a new Jordanian nationalism based on east Jordanian tribal and Islamic values, loyalty to the royal family and to the army, and more specifically, cleansed of Palestinian, pan-Arab and progressive ideologies. This even happened after Jordan had suffered the amputation of the West Bank in 1967<sup>14</sup> and put the Palestinians out of action in "Black September" in 1970.

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<sup>14</sup> 1967 War between Arab states and Israel, which resulted in Israeli occupation of the West Bank among other territories (Hudson 1977: 215).

The achievement of modernity can itself be a legitimising factor<sup>15</sup>, but on this criterion the political system of Jordan has showed mixed results. When it came to material development, Jordan did well up until the end of the 1970s. The high degree of administration and planning and the regime's development accomplishments in this period no doubt lent some legitimacy to the system. When it came to non-material values associated with modernisation, the system's performance was less impressive. There was little progress made towards greater social justice or redistribution of wealth and the privileges of Jordan's wealthy class were preserved. Despite considerable material inequalities in income and land distribution, there was little evident public dissatisfaction with social conditions, particularly compared to several of the neighbouring countries. The unrest has focused on political frustrations, not social and economical (ibid: 216). Still, the regime's lack of progress in the political field did not seriously erode the system's legitimacy. Two sectors from which a serious threat could have emerged – the many tribes and the army – received generous patronage, salaries and other benefits, and the regime emphasised their political status by giving representatives from these two sectors privileged access to the palace.

Jordan is more thoroughly socially mobilised than the other monarchies in the Arab world; the number of educated people, its exposure to modern political values, and the country's political experiences of conflict and revolution have intensified the importance of democracy as a legitimising principle. Value dissonance between form and reality in modern systems is very much a drain on their legitimacy too, Hudson writes (ibid: 216).

The legitimacy crisis in Jordan was political, not social. The King and the ruling circles have gone far in giving the kingdom a constitutional and parliamentary form of government and showed that there is great importance attached to participation. Formally, Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, but in fact the king has held absolute power. There is a parliament but its autonomy has been minimal, and except for a brief period in the mid 1950s, political parties have been banned. Few people in Jordan believed the parliament to be representative because of the obvious corruption in the electoral process. The parliament is a symbol of democracy but has been perceived as non-representative so its contribution to legitimacy of the system has been minimal. In addition, the combination of traditional and modern systems of political authority, for instance tribal and state, has created confusion about where authority is supposed to lie. Because political crises have been so frequent,

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<sup>15</sup> See chapter 2, p. 9 about how the modernisation process has effects that are functional for building political legitimacy.

martial law has been more the rule than the exception. After the incidents with the Palestinians in 1970s, Jordan returned to a normal situation, but freedom of the press and domestic political activities remained limited. Jordanian authorities said the necessity for periods of strict control was due to crisis situations originating outside the country. The Jordanian people knew about the effectiveness of the *mukhabarat*, the royal intelligence apparatus.

The regime relied on repression and coercion to deal with the political opposition and it seemed like the kingdom could only survive by such means (ibid: 209). However, the reality was more complex than that. Despite all that had happened, the king retained significant personal legitimacy. In the traditional Arab systems, there is a strong relationship between the strength of leadership and legitimacy. When the king aligned himself with national forces against the British and the Americans, his popularity grew. Events in the middle 1970s, for instance after the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 and the death of Nasser, showed there is a linkage between the Hashemite regime's internal legitimacy and the unresolved all-Arab concerns disturbing the region. The regime proved its tactical skills in coping with these concerns. However, people were not satisfied.

To sum up the legitimacy problems of the Jordanian regime in this period, it must be said that the king has enjoyed strong personal legitimacy, both through the history of the Hashemites and through strong leadership. The regime has achieved some ideological legitimacy among the tribes in light of traditional values and because of a new Jordanian nationalism. Structural legitimacy has almost been absent since there has been discrepancy between the rules of power and execution of power in reality. Despite what the constitution says, the king has held almost all power.

#### ***4.2.1 The regime's strategy towards political Islam***

As most countries in the Arab world, the Islamic resurgence in the region in the 1980s influenced Jordan. King Hussein was concerned about the impact of the revolution in Iran and the resurgence of political Islam in the politics of the region. He was aware that the Jordanian society, which was both Westernised and secular to a large degree, was not immune to the effects of these events. The effects of the rapid socio-economic development of the 1970s was important for the growth of the Islamic resurgence in Jordan. These included the dislocations accompanying the urbanisation of rural tribal elements, their access as a result of spreading



literacy and education in the universities to a more puritanical and activist form of Islam, and the combined impact of Westernisation, conspicuous consumption and the growing income gap. For the authorities in Amman the implications of these developments became more serious in the 1980s. This was because the tightening grip of economic recession seemed likely to turn frustrated expectations into grievances, Yorke argues (1988:52). Urbanisation, spread of literacy and education, Western influences in the society, increased consumption and a growing income gap all helped the spread and growth of Islam. Islamic elements, which the conservative Hashemites had not needed to fear in the past, were increasingly opposed to the adverse effects of Western materialism. From the late 1970s, there was evidence that the appeal of Islamic activism as a form of protest was growing in Jordan.

Outside interference came from pan-Islamic parties. The most significant was the Muslim Brotherhood. It was founded outside Jordan, and a national group, although illegal with the exception of certain periods, was founded in the country in the period before King Hussein came to the throne (Gubser 1983:90). King Abdullah gave the Brotherhood legal status as welfare organisation to secure its support against secularist opposition (Boulby 1998:37). The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan was started in 1946 by a wealthy merchant named Abu Qurah with the help of members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (ibid: 40-41). It developed as a loose-knit coalition of merchants whose primary goal was to support the jihad in Palestine. The Jordanian Brotherhood officially adopted principles similar to those of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, which strongly criticised Western influences on Jordanian society and called for the education in Islamic principles to pave the way for Islamic rule. The Brotherhood did not seek to implement this agenda in reality (ibid: 37). The Jordanian society was rather un-politicised at this time and the Brotherhood's leader Qurah was very loyal to the king. The Muslim Brothers opposed the King's policies in Palestine but was willing to overlook any differences to ensure the king's blessing. The programme was later extended, calling for implementation of *sharia* and establishment of an Islamic order. The Brotherhood's ideology continued to be reformist in nature, stressing non-violence as Hassan al-Banna had done in Egypt from the start. It emphasised gradual Islamisation of society, for instance by education so a more Islamistic oriented generation that could come to power (ibid: 32).

During the 1950s the Brotherhood crystallised its ideological traits. Ideology remained moderate and reformist, defending the legitimacy of Hashemite rule and working for gradual implementation of *sharia* through education. The movement toned down the creation of an Islamic state as a serious goal. The liberation of the Palestinians remained important on the

Brotherhood's agenda but was included in the general context of what they called "the liberation of Muslim people from imperialist and by extension, Zionist control" (ibid: 38). Beside from being moderate, the programme was also imprecise. The movement became more political active and showed it was willing to work within a parliamentary system and participated in the elections of 1954 and 1956. It decided to support the Hashemite throne against nationalist challenges and was therefore allowed to function legally by the regime.

The Brotherhood's strategy obtained good rewards. In 1957, the movement was the only political organ to keep its legal status under the cover of being a charitable organisation. The Muslim Brotherhood developed a grass-root social base in the following decades and kept a low profile on the political stage while the grass-roots organisation expanded and a broad base of support was created (ibid: 37-39).

The Arab defeat in 1967 caused disillusionment with pan-Arab and socialist perspectives and opened at the same time up for an ideological climate favourable to the Brotherhood. When the PLO was weakened in the civil war of 1970-71 room was created for the Brotherhood. In the decade of stability and economic prosperity of 1973 to 1983 the Muslim Brotherhood kept to itself and was devoted to the development of its organisation and grass-roots network. Its legal status gave them relative freedom compared to other movements and allowed the organisation to build a mass support base. The Brotherhood had never applied for a status as a political party and was instead registered as a religious or charitable organisation. All political parties were banned in 1957 (Tiltnes 1994:58). The Muslim Brotherhood was the most important opposition group on the conservative side and had a different position than other political groups because of its support of the regime.

#### ***4.2.2 Peaceful times in the 1970s with regime support of the Muslim Brotherhood***

The monarchy has always recognised Islam as an important uniting and motivating force among its citizens and has drawn on Islam to strengthen its legitimacy. With their ancestral connection to the Prophet Mohammed, the Hashemites have not had to establish their Islamic record but rather to be careful to keep it intact (Yorke 1988:50). The King used his good relations with the religious establishment and his unstated alliance with the Brotherhood to advance Hashemite interests. In the 1950s, there was a need to counter attempts by secular leftist forces to de-legitimise the regime. The Brotherhood's identification with the regime was particularly strong since the leftists were their rivals (ibid: 49). King Hussein had been

careful to maintain close relations with the *ulama*, in an effort to co-opt rather than alienate them as the situation was in other states (Gubser 1983:39).

In the 1970s Jordan benefited from the economic boom in oil producing Arab states. There were job opportunities for Jordanians and an increase in aid payment from Arab sources. Oil wealth served to inhibit demands for democratisation in Jordan during this period, as all sectors of society reaped the economic benefits of the status quo. Political life was circumscribed in this decade. The regime discouraged all formal political activity but people did not complain because times were good (Boulby 1998: 26-27). The benefits of expanded economic activity gave Jordanians an interest in the status quo. The modernisation process and the socio-economic disorder it produced were met with acceptance among the people. The state had gained financial resources to enforce its powers through co-optation and the extensive use of state patronage and benefits of expanded economic activity gave Jordanians an interest in status quo (Yorke 1988:24). Some Islamic elements were incorporated into the Hashemite establishment and this, combined with relative prosperity and dynamism of the economy since mid-70s, made the Islamic movements militancy against the state very moderate.

By the end of 1970s, the economy worsened and the Jordanian regime could no longer afford to simply “buy” consent to its rule. Other incentives had to be used and the political stage was opened and unpopular restrictions on expression and participation were relaxed.

The Muslim Brotherhood was on King Hussein’s side in the crisis of the 1950s, after the 1967 war defeat and Black September 1970-71, and they were on his side during his isolation in the early 1970s. The regime in Jordan tolerated the Muslim Brotherhood because of the ongoing “Arab Cold War”<sup>16</sup>, and since the movement was opposed to Nasserism, Ba’thism, and Marxism. The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood supported the Hashemite regime. The King allowed them to remain active because of their past support for him and their role as a safety valve for more militant Muslims. King Hussein found a *modus vivendi*<sup>17</sup> with the Muslim Brotherhood to the extent that it did not oppose him in the turbulent 1950s and after Black September in 1971. Tensions between the PLO and the Muslim Brotherhood had their roots in the 1950s when the Brotherhood supported King Hussein against the challenge of

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<sup>16</sup> Expression introduced by Malcolm Kerr

<sup>17</sup> Modus vivendi: Temporarily practical arrangement by which people who are opposed or quarreling can continue to live or work together while waiting for their dispute to be settled (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, Oxford University Press, London 1989)

National Socialists. In the late 1970s, King Hussein's regime did not feel the pressures or threats from the Islamic resurgence like the Muslim Brotherhood in the same way as the neighbouring states did (Gubser 1983:40). Khomeini came to power in Iran after the revolution in 1979 and this was the starting point for the Islamic resurgence. However, this did not influence Jordan and the regime retained its stability. However, King Hussein was aware of the impact of revolution and the resurgence of politicised Islam in the region. He knew that the Jordanian society was not immune to the effects of these events (Yorke 1988:47).

King Hussein would not crack down on the ordinary activities of the Jordanian Brotherhood because of its past support of his regime although it did cause trouble with Syria (Gubser 1983:120). This became evident during the conflict with Syria over the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1979 the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood conducted a series of attacks against Syrian state institutions. President Assad attacked Jordan verbally, asserting that the country helped and supported the Muslim Brotherhood and allowed it to set up guerrilla camps on Jordanian soil. He demanded that Jordan curtailed the organisation's activities. There was no solid intelligence to substantiate these claims and the accusations were probably just an attempt to remove focus from internal problems (ibid: 120).

The occasional friction that at times has characterised the Brotherhood's relations with the Jordanian authorities was tempered by its consistent support for King Hussein and their shared distaste for the nationalist groups (Ayubi: 95).

### ***4.3 The political system***

Jordan had gained full independence from the British in 1946. Abdullah was proclaimed the king of Palestine and by 1950 he had formally annexed the new territory (Hudson 1977:213). Formally, Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, but in fact the king holds absolute power. There is a parliament but its autonomy has been minimal, and except for a brief period in the middle 1950s, political parties have been banned. As mentioned, the King and the ruling circles have to a large extent given the kingdom a constitutional and parliamentary form of government and this might be a sign of the value of participation (ibid: 216). Because political crises have been so frequent, martial law has been more the rule than the exception. The *mukhabarat*, the security police was feared (ibid: 218).

The National Assembly or Parliament consists of the Senate (40 members) and the House of Deputies (80 members). The Constitution requires a legislative National Assembly or parliament with two chambers: A senate (*Majlis al-Ayan*) and a House of Deputies (*Majlis al-Nuwwab*). While the representatives to the House of Deputies are elected, the senators are appointed by the king (Art. 36). The number of members in the Senate is supposed to be half the number of the House of Deputies. The period for both chambers is four years.

The Constitution was promulgated in 1952 and has not been changed much since then<sup>18</sup>. The major difference from the 1947 constitution was transformation to a responsible government with the Prime Minister and the cabinet accountable to the Parliament (Art. 51)<sup>19</sup>. The House of Representatives has the right to dismiss the cabinet by a two-thirds vote of no confidence (Art. 53). It can also override the royal veto by a two-thirds vote in both houses and hence the constitution reduces the king's absolute power. The period allowed before he has to confirm or reject legislation is limited to six months instead of a whole year as it was in the previous constitution (Art. 93, Section III). The Constitution gives Parliament the authority to impeach ministers by a two-thirds vote in the House of Representatives (Art. 56). Article 96 grants members of both houses of the legislature the right to ask questions of any minister concerning any policy matter and request a debate on such questions. The King has still the right to dissolve Parliament without causing resignation of the Cabinet.

The legislative branch is granted considerable authority in financial affairs. The general budget for income and spending is submitted to the House of Representatives, which can reduce expenses section by section or in its entirety and propose the creation of new expenses (Art. 112). The Constitution grants the legislative branch authority in foreign affairs as well and the King was no longer the sole organ for ratifying treaties. Article 33 says that the House of Representatives must approve treaties and alliances involving territorial regulations, or financial commitments.

The Supreme Council is entrusted with the trial of impeached ministers. The Council consists of members of the upper house and the highest civil court and is also the final authority in constitutional interpretations. The Council of Ministers (cabinet) or the House of

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<sup>18</sup> There have been minor changes and amendments since 1952. The latest registered changes are from 1984.

<sup>19</sup> The Constitution is described in Naseer H. Aruri (1972) *Jordan: A Study in Political Development*, p. 92-93 and in Boulby (1999: 17-18). Since the Constitution is not changed much, I can use material from as far back as 1972 to describe it.

Representatives upon a majority vote can send in requests for interpretations of the Constitution (Art. 122).

The Constitution outlines the fundamental rights of the people, including equality before the law, individual liberty, right to property, freedom of conscience and religious ceremonies, freedom of opinion, the right to hold public meetings and to form political parties. The Constitution recognises the basic freedoms of speech, press, assembly, as well as the right of citizens against illegal entry or search. In general, the Constitution changed the basic principles of the old patriarchal order (Aruri 1972: 93). People in Jordan and their representatives were now allowed to participate in the political system and to exercise restraint on the, until then, unchallenged executive authority. The provisions limited the ways in which the throne could block the role of parliament. However, the Constitution also provided for imposition of martial law and the indefinite suppression of parliament.

Hisham Sharabi described (1966:48-50) what he called the “palace system” in Jordan. It consisted of the King as a person, the monarchy as an institution, and the groups that represented and served the monarchy. Although the system has changed since then, there is still much power vested in the palace system. According to the Constitution, the monarch’s formal authority is enormous. The King is directly involved in the decision-making process and has determined the main lines in politics. If he wants changes in politics, he can replace one or more ministers in the cabinet. The monarchy as an institution consists of two main groups. The first is the dynastic elite where we find the King’s relatives. They often have political and military positions, but might also function as informal advisers. The palace elite also includes members of the royal court. They are political advisors and a council of Bedouins is also among this group.

The King also executes power through the government. The ministers are mostly from the traditional, conservative power elite and are loyal to the Hashemite family. There has been a frequent change of government in Jordan’s history.

Before the 1980s, there were few political improvements at the national level, in contrast to the economic and social development that had taken place. Jordan lacked an elected parliament since the 1967 parliament had been dismissed in 1974 and re-dismissed in 1976 because of the political situation. After the 1967 War, martial laws had been in force. For two years no elected legislative body existed in the country until the National Consultative Council (NCC) was appointed by the King in 1978. It was created in response to pressure for a more formal process of political participation. The Council consisted of 60 members and had in reality no official legislative functions, but the King and the Cabinet

would never promulgate any new law not approved by the Council. The National Consultative Council had no real power and the political system remained unchanged. The king was unchallenged at the pinnacle of power, ruling with the East Bank-controlled army and security forces and with the business-government oligarchy that consisted of Palestinian and East Bank people (Boulby 1998:33). When there were economic problems in the beginning of the 1980s, King Hussein increased the National Consultative Council with 15 to 75 members to meet the discontent. However, this only led to more intense demands for democracy partly because the elite stood behind the demands. In 1984, the Council was dissolved and the Parliament was recalled (Gubser 1983:111).

There had been martial laws since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Political parties were banned again and continued to be outlawed in the early 1980s (ibid.). Political parties had been formed as early as in 1925, but most of them were banned because they were to a large extent organised and inspired by anti-monarchical elements outside the kingdom such as the Syrian Ba'ath, the Egyptian Nasserites or Communists. New informal political groups were formed in late 1984, and showed politically-active Jordanians' interest to find ways to express their political will through a real democratic process (Yorke 1988:27). However, the long-term aim was to get political parties legalised.

The King felt the pressure to implement political changes after many called for the sharing of power (ibid: 28). However, if he were to make changes, the monarchy itself and the security of Jordan might come under threat. Political parties remained outlawed during the elections in 1984 and in 1989 and candidates had to run as individuals<sup>20</sup>.

Election laws have been changed several times during the years. In November 1985 the King introduced a new electoral law to Parliament. The law was supposed to accommodate demographic shifts on the East Bank since 1967 (ibid: 85-86). The new law provided for an expansion of the numbers of elected representatives to the Lower House in the next general election and the number of members of the Chamber of Deputies was increased from 60 to 142. According to this law the number of deputies would be increased to 130, equally divided between the Jordanians and the Palestinians, including 56 representatives from the West Bank and nine from the refugee camps in the East Bank. The government, however, considered increasing the number to 138 in accordance with a parliamentary

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<sup>20</sup> Even though the Muslim Brotherhood was accepted as a religious organisation, the movement could not participate in elections and its candidates had to run as individuals just like the political parties had to.

recommendation. There were reservations for regions with equal division of seats between both banks to maintain parliamentary representation for both the East Bank and the West Bank. There were also a certain number of representatives reserved for the Palestinian refugee camps on the East Bank and a number for the rest of the East Bank. The small number of seats was intended to separate disproportionately large Palestinian refugee camp constituencies on the East Bank. Directly elected members of parliament would then choose half of the remaining West Bank deputies and these again would choose the rest. The law reserved seats for Christians, Circassians and Chechens<sup>21</sup> and maintained a privileged status for the minorities. The system was now decentralised with constituencies based on the administrative units of the governorate and its subdivisions with the result that people living in rural areas would get better representation than before. The constituencies were now smaller and favoured tribes and families and rural areas. The new law would ban members of illegal political organisations from standing for elections. The electoral law was implemented in 1986.

The army has had a role in internal conflicts as well as providing external security. The police and the security forces have been used to control the regime's opponents and keep the status quo. In both the police and the security forces men with a career in the army have been in charge, chosen by the king himself. The Constitution gives the King the right to appoint the leaders of all public services, the heads of the defence and security forces included (Art. 120). The security police, *mukhabarat*, controlled and even infiltrated both legal and illegal organisations with the purpose of inhibiting activity that could threaten the regime. The *mukhabarat* was also responsible for giving permits to work in public services. Any contact with the intelligence service could be negative for a person's reputation.

Media has been censored since the turbulent 1950s when martial laws were implemented. Newspapers critical to the regime and its politics were closed or taken over by the regime. The press and publication laws were strict and supervised by a special department in the Ministry of the Interior. Radio and television were owned by the authorities.

King Hussein has emphasised his strong personal ties with members of the Islamic elite. The King had an image as a religious man and Islamic rules have been followed in the public life. The Constitution says the King and his successors must be Muslim. Islam is the state religion and Islamic institutions are supported by the government. An academy for the

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<sup>21</sup> The Chechens had emigrated from the Caucasus in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and represent about 1% of the population in Jordan today (Gubser 1983: 21).



Study of Islamic Affairs, *Al al-Beit*, was established in 1981 by the government and symposia on Islamic affairs have been held. The religious establishment has been used by the regime to advance its interests. Roy argues that there has taken place a process of clericalisation of Islam by the states in the Middle East. The regime in Jordan set a standard by offering important positions to moderate members of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Zayd al-Kilani in Jordan. The former Minister of Islamic Affairs and Holy Places, Kamil Ismail al-Sharif, was originally one of the leaders in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and his brother has been Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper *al-Dustour*. The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood was strong on the university campus and seemed to control the appointment of faculty staff at the University of Jordan. It was also influential in the professional associations and had something of a watchdog role over the content of school curricula and television programmes (Yorke 1988: 50). The Brothers have also enjoyed influence in the Ministry of Education. There were also reforms of mores, the status of women; *sharia* and so on. Laws relating to personal status are based on *sharia*. The regime also incorporated the local preacher into its financial body and administration (Yorke 1988: 47-50, Ayubi 1991: 94, Roy 1994:126). There has been an expansion of state power to include the education, training and confirmation of local preachers. Religious affairs were bureaucratised through the Ministry of Religious Endowments.

The king kept personal contact with religious leaders. During the brief reign of Talal, Abdallah's son, the "king's men" increased their power in the palace. Talal's liberalisation of the political system gave senior notables and ministers more power in relation to the monarch. The palace system consisted of the king as a person, the monarchy as an institution and the groups that represented and served the monarchy. The palace's authority had more power than it was given in the Constitution. The Palace controlled the parliament and the elections and put restrictions on the execution of individual rights.

The king was unchallenged at the pinnacle of power, ruling with the East Bank-controlled army and security forces and the business-government oligarchy.

#### ***4.4 Political Islam in the 1980s: Pressure for democratisation***

As a result of the new Islamic consciousness in the whole region since the late 1970s, Islamic groupings in Jordan had aspirations of more influence in politics. The Islamic movement in Jordan was less vocal than it was in other countries, but it was still of intellectual and political significance. Since the majority of Jordanians are Muslims, Islam can and has been used both

by the regime and by the opposition as a political instrument. The regime has had a policy of cooperation with, and co-optation of, the *ulama*, and has tried to appear as the sponsors of an intellectual and cultural Islamic tradition that would be continued by institutions like the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs (Ayubi 1991: 94).

There does not exist an official number of members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The estimate varies from a couple of hundreds to thousands (ibid:96). Most members are from the middle class people and the majority are students, teachers, and public sector employees. The movement's basic organizational unit has been the *usrah* cell (Boulby 1999:74-83). These cells consist of five to ten individuals and were originally introduced by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Members of the cells recruit individuals at a highly individualised and personalised level, and the idea is to create a bond of friendship in order to draw an individual into the cell. Considerable time is spent in study groups in discussion led by the cell leader. Branch executives, elected by all members in any region, are in charge of important administrative duties, such as collection of membership fees and financial donations and the co-ordination of activities. The regional committees have considerable administrative autonomy, but they do not have political authority. The Brotherhood's policy decisions are made at the level of consultative body of the Muslim Brotherhood, and then implemented by the executive committee. The Jordanian branch has been subordinate to the Egyptian general director of the Muslim Brotherhood, but has to a large degree maintained independence in administration and even policy.

In connection with the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational structure, there is a complex network of educational, religious, and charitable institutions. These have played a key role in the mobilization of the Muslim Brotherhood's support amongst all social classes (Boulby 1999:80).

The Muslim Brotherhood was the most important of the religious organisations (Yorke 1988: 48). In the 1980s the movement became a significant player on the political stage in Jordan with successful participation in the elections. It was able to mobilise support in the elections for three reasons (Boulby 1998: 90-95): First, the economic decline of the early 1980s fuelled political and economic discontent, which the Brotherhood was able to take advantage of. The Brotherhood talked about democracy and gained support among people because of this. The decline in popularity of the Pan-Arabists and PLO was the second reason for the Brotherhood's increased support. The 1967 War defeat led to a general disillusionment with pan-Arabist and socialist politics and the Islamists appeared as an alternative to these ideologies. And finally, the widespread Islamist revival in the region after the successful

Iranian revolution led to increased appeal of the Muslim Brotherhood. Another reason for the Muslim Brotherhood ability to mobilise support was that political parties were forbidden. Thus, only independent candidates could run for elections and they were not required to come from political parties, but could also come from other organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the Pan-Arabists and the PLO's decline in popularity (Boulby 1999: 92-93). The relationship between the PLO and the Muslim Brotherhood had been tense since the 1950s when the Brotherhood had supported King Hussein against the National Socialist party<sup>22</sup> and the tension continued. The Muslim Brotherhood was critical of nationalist and socialist ideologies. The Brotherhood had a non-confrontational posture and rejected armed struggle as a solution to the Palestine problem. They believed that the liberation of Palestine would be possible only with the help of a revival of the Islamic faith. The Brotherhood had a function as a counterpart to the PLO in the regime's eyes and was encouraged by the regime to expand its activities. The government has had a tolerant attitude towards the Muslim Brotherhood because they saw the movement as a useful buffer in both domestic and foreign policy. The Brotherhood on their side gained benefits and influence because of their good relations with the regime. They got important positions in society and were allowed to function as a legal organisation and openly disseminated their message. The Muslim Brotherhood has also maintained good relations with a segment of the close circle of people around King Hussein (Roy 1994: 110).

The Muslim Brotherhood tried to avoid confrontation with the regime (ibid: 94). Their ideology was vague and showed, as it had in the 1950s, that the movement did not want to distance itself from the regime by adopting goals contrary to the authorities' political interests (Boulby 1999:115). The Muslim Brotherhood preferred to be seen as a legalist and reformist movement. It emphasised its acceptance of the monarchy and tried to justify this acceptance in Islamic terms. The Brotherhood wanted to implement *sharia* through gradual reform and rejected violence as a means to this end. The Brotherhood chose to work within the democratic structures for pragmatic reasons in order to increase its political influence and participated in elections in the 1980s (ibid: 115).

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<sup>22</sup> The 1956 elections returned an Arab nationalist, anti-monarchical majority in the parliament and brought in the leader of the National Socialists party as prime minister. King Hussein was increasingly opposed to National Socialist policies, which threatened his relations with the West. The National Socialist government courted Soviet backing (Boulby 1999:64).

The Palestinian discontent in Jordan rose in the 1980s. Palestinians were disillusioned after the PLO was expelled from Lebanon in 1982. Many Palestinians living in Jordan, especially in the refugee camps, thought the Arabs were ineffective towards Israel's lack of flexibility. The outbreak of the *intifadah* in 1987 reinforced Palestinian nationalism, which the Brotherhood this time was able to channel into political support. The Palestinians now looked other places than PLO to find hope and a possible solution for their people.

Signs of an Islamic revival in Jordan have been evident from the early 1980s on. As mentioned, the success of the Iranian revolution also increased the appeal of the Muslim Brotherhood. The general Islamic revival of the 1980s and activities on university campuses resulted in growing sympathy for the Brotherhood. The students of the Islamic bloc demanded establishment of a national student's union and democratisation of university politics. These demands brought them into conflict with the regime, which feared the outlook of Islamist domination of a national students' body. The individuals who participated in, or were conscious of, an Islamic revival were the potential support bases for the movement (Boulby 1999: 96). The Brotherhood's base of support was broad and transposed class and regional divisions because both their ideology and also the support of the Palestinians were vague. The Brotherhood got its support from young people in urban centres and refugee camps, especially students, teachers, and officials. Many were middle class from towns and urban areas. The Muslim Brotherhood's membership was however not that large. There are no statistics and the estimates vary from a few hundreds to several thousands. Jordanians have been suspicious because it is the only "party" allowed (Gubser 1983: 111).

The movement operated legally from Amman with official local offices in various towns. The Brothers have not been permitted to run military training camps or an official newspaper, but they had until late 1985 a considerable freedom inside the kingdom and derived benefits from the regime like no other organisation in the Arab world. The Muslim Brotherhood publicly supported the regime for its flexibility towards their existence. However, they would like to see a closer commitment to the rules of Islam than the existing one (Yorke 1988: 50). The movement was represented in larger Jordanian cities and, by contrast with Syria for instance, where the organisation worked in secrecy, the Brotherhood's cell-like structure operated openly. The Muslim Brotherhood has been permitted to operate on the pretext that it is a charitable grouping and not a political party. The movement founded the Islamic Charity Association, which supervised a growing network of educational and social institutions. The Brotherhood's status was a religious organisation, not a political party. Formally, it is not a party but it is regarded as one by people in Jordan.

The Muslim Brotherhood faced competition from more militant movements, especially the Islamic Liberation Party (ILP). The ILP was established by a Palestinian lawyer in Jerusalem in 1953. It declared itself as a political party whose principle is Islam with politics as its activity (Ayubi 1991:96). The party's ideas are believed to have influenced smaller and more militant groups that have splintered away from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, as well as groups between the Palestinian and Jordanians. The ILP believed that they could take over power and establish an Islamic state within thirteen years or at least no more than three decades. A takeover was attempted in Jordan in 1968 and another one was said to have taken place a few years later (Ayubi 1991:97). Except for the toleration of the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamist movements were excluded from competing for power, for instance running for election and participating as a political party (Esposito 1997:27).

All political parties have been banned since 1957. The Muslim Brotherhood, as the most important opposition group on the right wing, had a different position than the other political groups. The movement had never applied for a status as a political party and was instead registered as a religious or charitable organisation. The government knew about the Brothers' political and even social ambitions and goals but treated them better than other opposition groups. As mentioned, the government's tolerant attitude might be explained by the need to have the organisation as a buffer. Other Islamic movements were harshly suppressed.

The decision to participate in the 1984 by-elections was a part of the Muslim Brotherhood's long-term pragmatic strategy<sup>23</sup>. The Brotherhood considered parliamentary representation as a way of increasing its influence in the society, even though it did not necessarily see parliamentary democracy as a satisfactory goal in itself (Boulby 1999:98). The Brotherhood's active participation in the 1984 Parliament by-elections reflected their restlessness, Yorke claims (1988:76). The Brothers got good election results in both 1984 and 1989 and the success was the first indication of the rising popularity of Islamists. They gained influence within the government administration, Ministry of Justice and Education and some universities (Ayubi 1991:95).

There was peaceful coexistence between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime up until 1984, but in the mid-1980s the Brothers became more direct in their demands for democratisation and Islamising reforms. The Brotherhood's outspoken demands for reform

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<sup>23</sup> Since all political parties were banned, members of the Muslim Brotherhood had to run as individuals and not together as a party. This was the situation for the other parties as well.

soured relations with the regime after 1984. The movement, encouraged in 1989 by a strong show of public support, was less easily co-opted by the regime. I will get back to this.

#### ***4.5 Legitimacy problems of the regime in the 1980s: Economic downturn and demands for democratisation***

After 1982 the prosperity Jordan had enjoyed came to an end. World oil prices declined and the economic downturn that followed gave rise to political dissatisfaction<sup>24</sup>. Differences between Transjordanians and Palestinians resurfaced because of the state's unequal distribution of resources in the previous decade in favour of the Transjordanian population on the East Bank. Palestinian nationalism was reinvigorated after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The Transjordanians on the East Bank were also politically agitated. Tribal identification with the Hashemites had begun to change (Yorke 1988:25). All these factors led to grievances among the people towards the regime.

In this section, I will describe the political situation in Jordan in the 1980s and detect the regime's problems of legitimating its power. My hypothesis is that legitimacy problems led the regime to co-opt the Muslim Brotherhood to make sure that the movement would be on their side and help them to stay in power. I use Beetham's four criteria for legitimation of power to point at how the regime's power is not legitimate.

Transjordanians were dissatisfied with the extent of state patronage and their diminishing share of the economic cake. Tribal leaders wanted more to say in policy-making and more resources to rural areas. There had earlier been strong relations between the tribes and the King. The tribes had always supported the King, even in hard times. There had been a gradual erosion of the old informal system the tribal leaders had benefited from that made them frustrated<sup>25</sup>. The population of the East Bank was a new generation, educated and technically skilled, with strong nationalist and anti-Palestinian feelings. There were clear indications that people in Jordan were not satisfied with their situation, and thus the dominant power did not serve the interests of the subordinates. Members of the political elite, many

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<sup>24</sup> Educational efforts in Jordan had produced an ambitious class of technocrats as well as an expanded intelligentsia demanding political, social and economic change (Yorke 1988: 25).

<sup>25</sup> The largest tribes in Jordan had for decades been supporting the King and had always been loyal to him.

educated in the West, demanded change in the state's economic and political policies. They called for greater political participation, a fairer system of taxation and parliamentary control over the vast consumption (Yorke 1988: 25).

The more modernised groups began publicly to articulate their demands. The King had encouraged the use of channels of dialogue and interaction, in addition to the National Consultative Council (NCC). The Council never played any significant role in Jordanian politics, and people in Jordan were dissatisfied with the fact that the parliament was not in function. NCC was seen as a poor response to the pressure for a more formal process of political participation. Its activities, for instance holding of various symposia and the founding of institutes and public forums, were no longer an acceptable substitute for real democracy (Yorke 1988:26). The lack of a parliament was a violation of Beethams's criterion 1, which states that power is executed according to established rules, in this case the Constitution. These demands forced the King to make political changes towards more sharing of power. If he failed to do that, the monarchy itself and the security of Jordan could come under threat (ibid: 28). In 1984, King Hussein dissolved the Council and called the parliament from 1967 back.

In the meantime Jordan's economic crisis intensified as a result of the ongoing regional oil drop. The outbreak of the *intifadah* in the occupied areas in 1987 heightened Palestinian nationalism and their opposition to King Hussein's policies<sup>26</sup>, but no real spread of the *intifadah* took place in Jordan. The implications of the ongoing situation with growing dissatisfaction became more serious for the authorities in Amman after 1982<sup>27</sup>. The Arab world was humiliated by Israel's invasion of Lebanon and dissatisfied with the regime's peace treaty with Israel. The Palestinians were not satisfied with their situation in Jordan. The economic recession could turn their frustrations into complaints and bring the crisis to a head, Yorke argues (1988: 52). As we have seen, the subordinates did not feel the dominant power was serving their interests and hence criterion 3 for legitimate power was violated.

The regime was worried that these factors could undermine King Hussein's use of Arab nationalism as a counter measure to the wave of Islamist activists. The Islamists could now be motivated to use Islam to widen their popular base and stir up both frustrated Palestinian refugees in the camps and Transjordanians with specific social and economic

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<sup>26</sup> Hussein's foreign policy was so-called neutral, meaning Jordan had good relations with USA and had signed a peace treaty with Israel.

<sup>27</sup> In 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon and kicked the PLO out of the country.

grievances against the regime. The Islamists could start a broad nationwide protest movement for greater social justice, one that many of the frustrated people would join.

External incidents like Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 and the question of Palestine, together with mounting social, political and economic strains led to the calling of elections: People demanded parliamentary democracy and elections were planned to take place in 1984. One of the reasons for elections was Hussein's manoeuvre to challenge the PLO's exclusive position and monopoly over Palestinian representation (Boulby 1999:33)<sup>28</sup>. The pressure came mostly from the educated middle-classes and from students, workers, peasants and refugees. There was not consensus about the rules of power; in this case the use of martial laws for several decades and the absence of a functioning Parliament. Hence Beetham's criterion 2, which demands consensus on power between the dominant and the subordinates, was not fulfilled. There was a fear that the poorest strata of society, mostly Palestinian, might choose more violent means to express their grievances and that they might do so in temporary alliance with the Islamists and other disaffected groups (ibid: 81). In that case, elections to the Parliament would be better for the regime and less out of a desire to democratise than to stabilise a shaky regime, the government made an exception in the otherwise authoritarian regime and promised elections.

There was pressure from powerful political constituencies for more to say in policy-making, and calling for reforms, for democratic rights and legal permission for political parties. Many Jordanian strongly believed that a reinvigoration of democratic political institutions was necessary for building a popular consensus and consolidation of the nation. The re-opening of the parliament in 1984 and the following elections was a result of these demands. At the same time some Jordanians feared that political activity generated by a resumption of parliamentary life could get out of hand and produce the unsettling effect that a new Parliament would be intended to avoid (Yorke 1988:81). Some were even anxious that the King's steps towards democratisation would endanger the security of the regime (ibid: 29).

In an interview with the Kuwaiti daily *As-Siyasah* in November 1983, King Hussein said that internal pressure was growing and people were restlessly calling for participation and representation. He indicated that general elections in Jordan might take place very soon (*MEI* 11 November 1983). The King had understood that people were dissatisfied and hence the

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<sup>28</sup> In the Rabat 1974 Summit Jordan had given the PLO the permission to rule this area, but was now trying to reassert its domination in the West Bank.



opposite of evidence of consent had taken place. That meant that the criterion 4, subordinates show expression of consent, was not fulfilled.

People wanted an active democratic life so they would have a formal political system through which they would be able to make officials more accountable for their decisions. If the deputies did a bad job, they could be punished by not being re-elected. This situation shows that both criteria 1 and 3 were violated. On the one hand the Parliament was not functioning as it should be according to the Constitution (criterion 1), and on the other hand people wanted to make sure their interests were served as well as the interests of the dominant power (criterion 3). Through a functioning Parliament they could give feedback on that. In addition, the political activity Parliament would give rise to could provide a means of airing the complaints this would cause (Yorke 1988:82). The Parliament could also compensate for, and draw the attention away from, the decline in economic advantages that many used to have. Many felt they had contributed much to the building of modern Jordan.

In May 1986, there was student unrest in Yarmouk University in Irbid north in Jordan. The students protested against higher fees, which the majority of the students could not afford, and against the suppression of their students' activities, both political and recreational (*MEI* 30 May 1986). The university had no real outlet for the students' frustrations, with all activities restricted by rules and security concerns. The students were not allowed to form student councils. Criterion 3 was violated since the students' interests were not served; only the dominant power, in this case the University management. The students at Yarmouk came from middle and lower income families. Yarmouk also includes a higher percentage of Palestinians from the Israeli-occupied territories. This group tends to be more political than the East Bankers. However, many East Bankers also led the protests. The unrest was an expression of the students' disagreement with the regime; hence the opposite of criterion 4 of expressed consent to the power relation.

The unrest culminated after two weeks when police stormed the university to split more than 2 000 students staging a sit-in inside the campus. Three students were killed and hundreds injured and arrested. The government blamed a small number of "troublemaking students" for starting the demonstrations and implied that political parties, in particular the Jordanian Communist party and the Muslim Brotherhood, stood behind the disturbances and were manipulating the students for their own purposes (*MEI* 30 May 1986). Communists had marched with members of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was a rare occasion in Jordanian history. Students believed to be either supporters or members of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested while the movement itself was left largely untouched. Instead, the government

unleashed its anger mainly on the Communists, whose leaders were arrested. The government wanted to keep a good relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood. Although the Brothers protested too, the reaction was not that tough towards them.

The protests seemed to indicate the growing gap between government and people and increasing class antagonism in Jordan. It was connected with the deterioration of the economic situation in Jordan. Suppression of students was part of a general crackdown on freedom of expression in the country, including stricter control of the local press and the banning of several journalists from writing in local newspapers. The students expressed their disagreement with the regime but other Jordanians felt the same way. Power was not executed according to established rules, like freedom of speech and organisation, as criterion 1 of Beetham's definition of legitimacy requires.

Spring 1989 riots broke out in the southern part of Jordan, an area traditionally loyal to the monarchy. The government had announced a price increase on fuel and other basic commodities as a part of an IMF-required economic reform plan and the disturbance came as a reaction to this (*MEI* 28 April 1989). It was the first clear outcry for social justice and democracy. The riots spread further north to the cities of Karak and Salt as well. This protest was also the opposite of expression of the consent from the subordinates to the power relations. The riots also made it clear that the interests of the subordinates were not served with the economic changes that took place. The Muslim Brotherhood avoided a confrontation with the regime and did not take part in the riots. This happened even though the movement was strong in Maan, where the troubles first started (*MEI* 12 May 1989).

During the riots, people's anger was directed at Prime Minister Zaid Rifai, who was blamed for the worsening the economy. He became a symbol of corruption, economic mismanagement and authoritarianism. Community leaders in Karak formulated people's overwhelming consensus into specific political and socio-economic demands, including the resignation of Rafai's cabinet. The community leaders demanded that officials convicted of corruption were punished and that a national economic programme, which took into account the plight of lower income classes, was formulated. They also wanted more political freedoms and a freer press and amendment of the electoral law, which were perceived as emphasising ethnicism, sectarianism and tribalism, rather to provide a democratic, pluralist parliamentary representation. Criteria 1 and 3 had been violated since established rules, in this case the Constitution, had not been followed and hence the interests of the subordinates had not been met. The riots spread to other areas of the kingdom and raised the political awareness of Jordanians. The demands from Karak were expanded to various areas of the country and

included demands for lifting the martial laws and financial support for small-scale farmers. The leaders of Jordan's professional associations joined the call for Rifai's resignation and claimed that the government's way of ruling had become unacceptable to the Jordanian people. The fact that so many groups of people agreed with the Karak principles was an expression of discontent with the dominant power.

The use of violence by security forces seemed to be restrained by the authorities, while the intelligence service (*mukhabarat*) arrested leftist activists and a number of nationalists. The arrests were justified on grounds that all political groups might use the situation to try to destabilise the country. Despite the strong reaction by the mukhabarat, people were no longer afraid to call for political freedom and participation. The riots were moderated to be more realistic and responsible when people were left with a feeling that the message had been spelled out. Hussein understood that he had underestimated the extent of Transjordanian political and economic frustrations, and the riots made him realise that he had to carry out economic and political reforms if he wished to maintain the stability of his regime (Boulby 1999).

Human rights violations have been reported by Amnesty International. In the 1980s the main concerns in Amnesty International's annual reports included long-term detention without trial of political prisoners, imprisonment of prisoners of conscience and allegations of ill treatment of prisoners. There were cases with lack of basic legal safeguards in trials held by the military court. Some prisoners were held without charge or trial for prolonged periods and there were trials of political prisoners by martial court that fell below international standards for fair trials and arrests of suspected opponents of the government. Martial law had been in force since 1967 and its provisions suspended a broad range of constitutional guarantees and invested the Prime Minister with wide powers of arrest and detention. Political prisoners could be held for long periods without trial or be tried by military courts. A prominent member of the Islamic Liberation Party, Mahmud Uwaydah, had been detained without trial in 1982 and was released in February 1987. Further politically motivated arrests were carried out in 1987, mostly by the General Intelligence Department, including two prominent members of the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The Jordanian Constitution from 1952 provides the people with several human rights, like the right to publish, assembly, freedom of speech etc. The human rights violations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch point at in their reports show that criterion 1 of Beetham's criteria for legitimacy is broken. Power is not executed according to rules of law, as criterion 1 requires. The regime may defend itself by saying that martial laws set all other laws aside and claim that martial

laws have been necessary for the security of the state during all these years. Still, the Constitution has limits for how long martial laws can be upheld and this limit was exceeded long ago. Together with criterion 1, criterion 2, which requires consensus about the rules of power, is violated.

During 1989, over 100 suspected opponents of the government were arrested. Most of them were detained without charge or trial following the riots in April, held for several months, and then released before the end of the year. About 20 political prisoners were tried before the Martial Court whose procedures did not satisfy international standards for fair trial. Torture and ill treatment of political prisoners were reported. Twelve people were reported to have died during the April riots, and hundreds were injured. Hundreds of protesters were arrested, but most were released in May, with the exception of alleged political activists. In connection with the riots in April, people perceived to be a threat to the government were arrested. They were detained without charge or trial under emergency legislation. All the detainees were believed by Amnesty International to be prisoners of conscience or possible prisoners of conscience. They included writers and journalists, engineers, students, lawyers, doctors and trade unionists. Many were alleged members of banned political organisations such as the Jordanian Communist Party.

Many of the prisoners were released during the year. For instance two brothers arrested in October 1987 and in June 1988 respectively detained as alleged members of the Islamic Liberation Party (ILP)<sup>29</sup> were released. About 20 people were reportedly tried on political charges before the Martial Law Court. A student arrested in August 1989 was tried under the 1953 Law of Resistance to Communism and sentenced in December to four years' imprisonment for possession of banned literature.

I have not found any information about unfair treatment or human rights violations of members of the Muslim Brotherhood in any of the reports from Amnesty International or from the Country Report on Human Rights Practices<sup>30</sup>. This fact confirms my hypothesis about the good relationship between the Brotherhood and the regime. The Muslim

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<sup>29</sup> ILP was a more militant movement than the Muslim Brotherhood and declared itself as a political party whose principle is Islam with politics as its activity (Ayubi 1991:96). See more p. 11 in section 4.3.

<sup>30</sup> The Country Report on Human Rights Practices is a report submitted to the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate and Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives by the Department of State.

Brotherhood is a legal organisation and is left more or less untouched by the regime. In return, the movement has supported the regime.

## ***4.6 Elections***

### ***4.6.1 Pressure for elections and the 1984 By-Elections***

There were three main reasons for the recall of the Parliament in 1984: demands for democratisation; King Hussein's strategy to challenge the PLO's exclusive position as the officially recognised representative of the Palestinian people, and to put pressure on the organisation to join Jordanian diplomatic efforts towards a peace settlement with Israel. There was also a practical reason that since the last elections, held in 1967, eight representatives had died. The king recalled parliament on January 5 1984 and soon elections were held to replace these eight members. They would be replaced by direct election. There were rules for the distribution of seats to preserve multiplicity. Elections were to be held only on the East Bank, and not on the West Bank, because of the Israeli occupation of this area. Still, Parliament's jurisdiction was limited to the East Bank. First of all the recalled Parliament had to pass constitutional amendments allowing elections on the East Bank only.

Many Jordanians believed that the re-strengthening of democratic political institutions would build a popular consensus and consolidate the nation. The political activity to which Parliament gave rise would partly compensate for, and divert attention away from, any decline in economic advantages previously enjoyed, and provide a means of airing the grievances this would entail (Yorke 1988:82). The recall of parliament was partly a consequence of the King's pre-emptive attempt to ward off potential tensions and was a response to increasing popular pressure for a return of active democratic life, Yorke argues (1988:82). It was to provide a formal political system through which Jordanians would be able to make officials more accountable for their decisions. The aim was to strengthen national institutions in order to protect the kingdom from the negative effects of destabilising regional development. The continuation of Parliamentary life came as a response to the growing malaise in Jordanian society. The King needed to maintain the loyalty of his people and realised that this might depend on the recall of Parliament. But there was the risk that the transition, if too speedy, could unleash destabilising forces and erode the King's power, Yorke argues (1988:84).

The government permitted free elections in order to measure public opinion. The 1984 elections was the first time women were allowed to vote and young voters down to 20 years old could also vote (Boulby 1999: 98). However, mass meetings, public rallies, loudspeakers and posters in the streets were prohibited and political parties were still banned. The Muslim Brotherhood participated in the elections as well. All the candidates ran as independents since political parties were illegal.

The political establishment was shocked when the election results showed that Islamists won three out of eight seats in Parliament. Two of the Islamists were members of the Muslim Brotherhood. These results were the first indication of increased popularity of political Islamists amongst the population, Boulby writes (1999:99). Both the government and defeated traditional candidates were surprised and reacted with alarm to the election results. They realised how much popular support the Islamists had.

**Table 4.1 Results 1984 By-elections:**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Mandates</b>
Islamists	3
Members of the Muslim Brotherhood	2
Others	5
<i>Total</i>	8

As we have seen, the recall of the parliament in 1984 did not indicate a significant liberalisation of the political life in Jordan. Political parties continued to be banned and the press was censored and regime opponents, especially members of the Muslim Brotherhood, were harassed by the security police (Boulby 1999:34).

The presence of Islamists in the parliament after the 1984 elections made life uncomfortable for the government. The three Islamists joined with three or four other deputies to form a bloc in the lower house. They attacked the government on human rights issues, the activities of the security services, the public sector corruption, and the continuance of martial law. Two of them concentrated their attacks on the security services, hoping to cause maximum embarrassment to the Prime Minister, who was a former interior minister and head of the security services.

#### ***4.6.2 The 1986 Electoral Law***

The government's response to the electoral results came in the form the implementation of a new electoral law. In November 1985 the King introduced a new electoral law to Parliament. The law seemed to have been shaped in a way that would reinforce the political foundation of the Hashemite regime<sup>31</sup>, Yorke argues (1988: 85). The new law was made to restrain the Islamists' chances in future parliamentary elections. The constituencies were now smaller and favoured tribes, families, and rural areas. The law confirmed King Hussein's responsibility for the Israeli-occupied West Bank and provided representation for the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan.

The re-opening of Parliament and the passing of the electoral law in 1986 seemed to be aimed in part at providing new channels for political activity, and was an attempt to limit the appeal of Islam as a vehicle through which other groups could articulate their complaint, Yorke argues (1988:53).

In February/March 1986 the Jordanian parliament's legal committee approved the new elections law. There was no public controversy over the law, at least not on the surface, simply because there was a complete black out in the media about it (MEI 21 February 1986). Jordanians in general welcomed the prospect of change that the new law seemed to promise. Most of the Jordanian political groupings seemed to be more concerned with the opportunity for their own political participation and the prospect of general elections that the new law provided. The Muslim Brotherhood, as the single legal and most influential political group in the country, protested against the ban of the other political organisations and asked for several amendments to the law. The present parliament, most of them elected in 1967, could not be said to represent the people anymore (MEI 21 February 1986). The government did not want the present political groupings to become political parties so political parties were unlikely to be legalised (Yorke 1988: 86), and together with the ban on members of "illegal organisations", it seemed to result in a continuation of tribalism and a low level of political awareness in any newly elected parliament.

The law provided for an expansion of the numbers of elected representatives to the Lower House in the next general election. The next elections, scheduled to 1988, would show whether Parliament would be a platform for vital debate and liberal political participation on the one hand or a political form, which provides for continued co-optation of the

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<sup>31</sup> The content of the 1986 Electoral Law is described in 4.4

Transjordanian political elite on the other hand. The latter would mean continued manipulation of the electoral process in favour of the monarchy while at the same time giving the impression of greater legitimacy to Hashemite rule (Yorke 1988:86-87).

#### **4.6.3 The 1989 Elections**

There were new elections in 1989 and for the first time in twenty-two years full parliamentary elections for all the seats in parliament were held. According to the Constitution elections should have been held in 1988 but they were postponed by the King. In 1988, the government of Jordan had experienced street demonstrations and food riots in response to food shortages, high unemployment, and corruption. It seemed that it was less out of a desire to democratise than to steady shaky regimes, the government opened up for elections (Yorke 1988: 87).

The election campaign was full of activities with the spread of pamphlets and banners and where lively rallies took place. This was the freest campaign in Jordan's history (Boulby 1998:102). The only, but significant restraint placed on the candidates was that political parties remained illegal. This meant that the majority of the 652 candidates ran as independents. In absence of legal parties, groups of candidates tried to form lists. Only the Muslim Brotherhood was able to form a nationwide list and had also the advantage of being able to campaign publicly as a legal organisation. The dominant issues in the campaign were the deepening economic crisis in the country, the need for political liberalisation and the ending of martial law, in addition to support for the *intifadah*. Palestinian activists debated whether to establish political parties in Jordan. The concern was that the Jordanian regime might use these parties to weaken the PLO. The Jordanian authorities, on their hand, emphasised that it was the PLO and not the parliament that should represent the Palestinians, and discouraged them from running as candidates (ibid: 104).

Islamist candidates, Muslim Brothers and independents, did well in these elections just as they did in 1984. The elections were otherwise relatively free and fair (Yorke 1988:32). The elections sent a solid block of 34 Islamists; 20 members of the Muslim Brotherhood and 14 allies or sympathisers, into the 80-member parliament. The government and ruling elite were shocked by the result of the elections and the fact that Islamists emerged as the leading opposition in the country.

The Islamists promoted an independent as their candidate for the post of parliamentary speaker. However, it was the government's candidate, supported by the nationalist and leftist



opposition, who won. A Muslim Brother (Arabiyya) was elected president of the National Assembly and the Cabinet formed in January 1991 included several Muslim Brothers (Roy 1994:128). In addition to the 32 seats in Parliament, the Muslim Brotherhood got five cabinet portfolios (Esposito and Voll 1996:150). Muslim Brothers had positions in the Ministry of religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education. The minister of Education was even for a period a Brother.

**Table 4.2 Results 1989 Elections**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Mandates</b>
Islamists	34
Members of the Muslim Brotherhood	20
Islamist independents	14
Leftists, pan-Arab nationalists, reformers and liberals	13
Traditionalists, rural community leaders, former officials and Bedouin candidates	31
Others	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>80</i>

Sources: Andoni 1989:3-4, Boulby 1999:103

The Brotherhood's mobilisation of support surprised the regime, which had underestimated the extent to which Islamism and Palestinian activism would come together and reinforce each other's strength (Boulby 1998:104). Even taking into account the Brotherhood's good organisation and grass-roots base, its success in the 1989 election beat all predictions. Twenty out of the twenty-six candidates from the Muslim Brotherhood had won parliamentary seats and together with fourteen other Islamists they formed a bloc of thirty-four out of eighty seats. Several factors could explain the Muslim Brotherhood's success in these elections. The movement could for instance campaign publicly as a religious organisation<sup>32</sup>. The mobilisation of support also helped the Brotherhood to get good results in the elections.

The Muslim Brotherhood was used as a buffer against religious extremism in the 1980s. As mentioned, Muslim Brothers had positions in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of religious Affairs. The Brotherhood's role as a buffer will be further described in next section (4.7).

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<sup>32</sup> Since political parties still were banned most of the candidates had to campaign as individuals but since the Muslim Brotherhood had status as a religious organisation they were allowed to campaign.

The Brotherhood's achievements in the area of Islamising reform were limited due to the short duration of this period in cabinet and the King's use of executive veto to block legislation. There were severe limitations placed on the Brotherhood by the regime. The movement was denied representation in the cabinet, and the regime used constitutional provisions allowing for an executive veto of lower house legislation and even resorted to suspending parliament. Pragmatic as always, the Brotherhood continued to avoid confrontation with the regime throughout this four-year period. Their pursuit of reform through parliamentary means did not serve it well in the 1989 to 1993 period, Boulby argues (1998:117). The representatives were criticised for their failure to introduce Islamic reforms and to find solutions for socio-economic problems.

The general election did more than restore a measure of parliamentary democracy to that country's political life; more importantly was the fact that it established a connection between democratic practise and the growth of the political power of Islamism.

#### ***4.7.1 The regime's strategy in the 1980s: Co-optating the Muslim Brotherhood***

As the only country in the Arab world, Jordan officially recognises the Muslim Brotherhood. The movement is not seen as a political party and is allowed to work as a charitable organisation although some of its activities are political. The Brotherhood's members have frequently been co-opted into prestigious positions by the regime and the Brothers have for instance had strong influence in the Ministry of Education. The regime has allowed Jordan to be used as a sanctuary for Brotherhood members in the whole region on a temporary basis, including those escaping from Syria in the first years of the 1980s. However, the King has warned that "the exploitation of belief by any party to sow disunity" would not be tolerated (Yorke 1988: 50).

As mentioned in 4.4 about the political system, there has been a process of clericalisation of Islam by the states. The states, Jordan included, have set a new standard and offered important positions to the reputedly moderate Muslim Brotherhoods, Olivier Roy writes (1994:126). In the 1980s press censorship was lifted, political prisoners were released, political parties authorised, and contested elections were held.

Except for the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamist movements were excluded from competing for power (Esposito 1997:27). The government had a tolerant attitude towards the Muslim Brotherhood because it thought the movement might be useful in both domestic and

foreign policy. The regime needed the Brotherhood on its side since it was a religious alibi and enjoyed support among people in Jordan. The Muslim Brotherhood on its hand gained influence and was granted prestigious and important positions among the powerful (Tiltne 1994:59).

The re-opening of Parliament could be aimed at providing new channels for political activity. The regime tried to limit the appeal of Islam as a vehicle through which other groups could formulate their complaints (Yorke 1988:53). The Parliament with representatives from different groups provided an alternative and Islam was now not the only option for people who wanted changes. The election law in 1986, described in 4.6.2, was meant to inhibit the Islamists' access to power. By re-opening Parliament the regime clearly did not intend to confront competitors for power, but to solidify and broaden the elite in power (Esposito 1996: 20).

Three Islamic activists won seats in the House of Deputies in the 1984 by-elections. The regime was surprised by their electoral success and had not expected the Islamists to achieve so many seats. The presence of Islamists in the parliament after the 1984 elections made life uncomfortable for the government (Boulby 1998: 100).

King Hussein was concerned by the Muslim Brotherhood's outspoken critique of the regime and tried to limit the movement's political significance. The King spoke publicly against the Muslim Brotherhood. The intelligence service and the police arrested several Brothers, mainly the leaders of the movement and well-known members. The government did not ignore the direct attacks from the Islamists. The King realised for the first time the possible threat of the Brotherhood to the regime's stability, especially in the wake of the elections. He took steps to try to limit the Brotherhood's influence in the period up to the 1989 elections.

In April 1985 the government was changed. Prime Minister Obeidat and his ministers were dismissed and informed that the new Prime Minister Rifa'i and his cabinet were already sworn in. The palace would have liked Obeidat to pursue more confrontational policies towards the Islamist extremist groups and thought he had failed to do so. Some of the ministers in his cabinet had even given public sermons in mosques indicating their preference for the establishment of Islamic rule in the country, while others engaged in the activities of other political parties and groupings (*MEI* 19 April 1985).

To neutralise any danger the Islamist organisations may pose, the King should deal with the frustrations of the various domestic constituencies and at the same time accommodate Islamic sentiments, Yorke argues (1988:53). The regime's goal was

complicated by the election of three Islamic activist deputies to the Lower House of the Parliament in the 1984 by-elections and the influence they subsequently wielded there. They were rallying support around their call for an end to martial law and a policy of confrontation against Israel. The King has not been afraid of taking risks towards the Islamists.

As we have already seen, the king had used the Muslim Brothers as a pawn in foreign policy in the 1980s. In November 1985 the King's interest in normalising relations with Syria led to a public acceptance of the Syrian accusations, even though the King was not aware of the truth of this. In a speech of 1985, the King directly attacked the Muslim Brotherhood on these grounds, much because the relations with the Syrian president had improved. The King also delivered a warning to the Brotherhood.

After the speech, members of the Brotherhood were harassed by the security forces. Around 300 members of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested without any warning. The King also promised to ensure that Muslim preachers refrained from political excesses in their sermons (Yorke 1988:52). Many senior members of the Brotherhood lost their jobs, and some had their passports taken away. One Brother was forced to resign his post as parliamentary deputy in 1988 after criticising the intelligence department's campaign against the Brotherhood. He was prevented from returning to his teaching post in the Faculty of Education at the University of Jordan. The influence the Brothers had enjoyed was then reduced as a result of the purge of Islamic activists. The clampdown indicated that the past *modus vivendi* between the monarchy and the Brotherhood had seriously eroded (Yorke 1988:54).

In May 1986 there were demonstrations at Yarmouk University in Irbid in the north with the following round up of Communists leaders and Muslim Brotherhood members. The security forces showed a tough response to the protests. It indicated that maintenance of security and the Hashemites' interest in self-preservation would take priority over further liberal reforms.

During the unrest in 1989, no arrests of members of the influential Muslim Brotherhood were reported despite the king's directions to the new government "to stop the politicisation of religion" (MEI 12 May 1989). The Brotherhood has many supporters in Maan, where the troubles first started, but the organisation deliberately avoided a confrontation with the regime although it was strong in that area. King Hussein struck back at the protests and held speeches and ordered arrests, and the election law was changed (Tiltne 1994:71).

The period of hostility reached an end in spring 1989 when the King made it clear that he wished to resume co-operative relations with the Brotherhood. The King realised the necessity of continuing to co-opt the Brotherhood because of the intensifying political and economic tensions of his country. He faced mounting criticism for not implementing democracy. Economic hardship and anger at political corruption in the government had sparked serious disturbances in the south of Jordan. All these factors pressed the government to initiate a program of political liberalisation, leading to the elections of November 1989.

In the election campaign in 1989 the Muslim Brotherhood steered away from direct confrontation with the government and the King in the election campaign. The movement for instance toned down its call for implementation of *sharia* in press statements. The Brotherhood's mobilisation of support in the 1989 election surprised the regime, which had underestimated the extent to which "fundamentalism and Palestinian activism" would merge and reinforce each other's strength to such an unprecedented degree (Boulby 1998:104).

The Islamists' good results in the election once again revealed the hidden strength of the Islamists which could bring King Hussein into confrontation with the regime's most reliable ally in the face of radical Arab states and the Left. If Hussein was disappointed with the election outcome, he did not show it and was not discouraged from proceeding with the process (*MEI* 17 November 1989).

Still, the regime seemed to be intolerant of dissent. Political parties would probably not be legalised (Yorke 1988:86). The king did not want to risk a repeat of the events of the 1950s with the coup attempts. Existing informal political groupings were encouraged to continue their activities as long as their members demonstrated loyalty to the King. Hopefully, they could help neutralising the influence that the Islamic radicals had acquired through their religious organisations.

The Hashemites have based their power and security in large part on the expansion of state institutions and making Jordanians dependent on the state's financial assistance. In this way, the King has retained with his supporters and co-opted or won the acquiescence of opponents. Stability of Hashemite rule was improved through the crafting of a social balance in which the country's social groups neutralised the influence of each other. During the 1970s a general assumption developed that the King had achieved substantial legitimacy. When anti-government riots took place in April 1989, King Hussein called the elections to pre-empt a crisis in his relations with his people. His strategy was to find a political balance – one that gave his people the reformed political system they wanted based on the 1952 Constitution, and at the same time guaranteed the future of Hashemite rule.

Jordanians could move towards alternative means to satisfy their needs. Both the Islamists and the radical left were ready to provide direction to the disaffected and found it easier to gain support. The king's success in holding relatively free and fair elections<sup>33</sup> helped stop the tide of Transjordanian protests (Yorke in MEI 17 November 1989).

The efforts of the protests have so far been effectively contained. Still, the regime remains wary of the political implications of the activists and the aspirations of Islamic groupings in Jordan against the background of the new Islamic consciousness.

#### ***4.7.2 Conclusion: From Co-optation to Containment***

As we have seen in the previous section, the regime's hostility towards the Muslim Brotherhood that had been going on since 1985 ended in the spring of 1989. The relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime had soured during the 1980s, much because of the movement's electoral success and its outspoken demands for democratisation and reforms.

As mentioned, in spring 1989 the King made it clear that he wished to resume co-operation with the Brotherhood. The King seemed to realise that it was necessary to continue to co-opt the Brotherhood as before the mid-1980s because of the intensifying political and economic tensions in his country. Elections were held in November 1989. The Muslim Brotherhood was the only tolerated Islamist movement (Esposito 1997:27). The reason why the government in Jordan has had a tolerant attitude towards the Muslim Brothers could be because they thought the movement would be useful both in domestic and foreign policy. The Brotherhood on their hand got influence. The Brotherhood was used as a buffer against extremists and a counterweight to secular opposition from leftists and nationalist groups.

Since the 1950s and until the second half of the 1980s the Brotherhood had supported King Hussein. The King's policy towards the Brothers might be viewed as *institutional co-optating*. The Brothers got important positions and became part of the establishment. The Muslim Brotherhood has been integrated into the political scene without any particular concessions being made to them (Roy 1994: 125).

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<sup>33</sup> The elections were free and fair, although everyone could not run for election. However, everybody could vote, nobody was physiologically stopped from voting and there was no election fraud.

King Hussein was a spokesperson for moderate interpretation and application of Islam and was influenced by Western opinion. Establishing Islamic rule in Jordan, which is the Brotherhood's final goal, would not be compatible with the Hashemite dominance. Still, the regime needed to control the Islamists and used them as buffers against other enemies, like leftists and nationalist groups. The regime also used Islam to legitimise its politics. The Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to exist as a legal organisation and could organise their activities as they wanted and participate in the political process. The movement had status as a charitable organisation. However, there were limitations and the regime did not tolerate outspoken criticism.

However, in the 1989 to 1993 parliamentary period the Jordanian regime moved increasingly away from a policy of co-opting the Brotherhood to one of containment. It denied the Brotherhood representation in the cabinet, resorting to constitutional provisions allowing for the executive veto of lower house legislation, introducing a National Charter (1991) limiting the activities of political parties, and before the election in 1993, imposing an election law designed to limit the Islamists' chances in the election and favour tribal interests in rural areas loyal to the regime (Boulby 1998:116). The regime effectively contained the Muslim Brotherhood in the parliamentary process.

Although the Jordanian monarchy had been effective in containing the Muslim Brotherhood, how long will the regime be able to maintain a stranglehold on the liberalisation process and repress the constituencies represented by the movement?

As in other Muslim countries, the Brotherhood has been used as a counterweight to secular opposition from leftist and nationalist groups. It is under such circumstances that Islamism, given a democratic chance, could emerge in a respectable parliamentary guise. The Muslim Brotherhood was used as a buffer against religious extremism in the 1980s. As mentioned, Brothers were granted important positions in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of religious Affairs.

## **5. Comparing Egypt and Jordan**

### ***5.1 Introduction***

First of all, I have to decide if it is possible to compare the two cases in this study. In chapter 1 in section 1.2 I described how I would use the method “most similar system”. The cases should replicate each other. I will now use my findings from the previous chapters and see if the cases are comparable. I will use the same categories and the same structure as I have used in the chapters about Egypt and Jordan<sup>34</sup>. If I find out that the cases of Egypt and Jordan can be compared, I will see if the strategy the regime in each state pursued against the Muslim Brotherhood was the same. My hypothesis is that the regime has problems legitimating its power and tries to co-opt the Muslim Brotherhood in order to increase its legitimacy. This can be achieved by having the popular Islamist movement on its side as a regime supporter.

### ***5.2 The Political Systems***

#### ***5.2.1 The head of state and the Constitution***

The two countries in my analysis have different state systems; Egypt is a republic while Jordan is a monarchy. Even though the state systems are different, there are several similarities between them. As we have seen earlier in this thesis, both the president in Egypt and the king in Jordan enjoy extensive power and have very strong positions in their respective states.

Although Egypt is a republic with a parliament and a cabinet, the president has almost a monopoly over the decision-making process. Since Nasser came to power in 1952, there has been a system of personalised authoritarian rule. The system ensures the president’s control over the entire state apparatus as well as an absence of autonomous groups. There are

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<sup>34</sup> See chapter 3 and 4. In these two chapters, I have focused on the political system, the role of political Islam, the regime’s legitimacy problems and its strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan.



immense legal-constitutional powers vested in the presidency according to the Constitution. Political parties have been banned for a long time with the exception of a few parties, among them the president's own National Democratic Party (NDP). The constitution defines a presidential term as six years and there are no limits to the numbers of terms for which a President can be re-nominated. The People's Assembly nominates the President of the Republic and the candidate must obtain two-thirds of the Assembly's votes. The Assembly can only refer one person. Mubarak had earlier stated that he would not be president for more than two terms. However, the President changed his mind and accepted re-nomination for a third term in office in 1993. This illustrates the difference between formal political procedures, whereby the Assembly officially chooses the President, and the reality, in which the President actually decides his own tenure in office.

The King of Jordan inherited the Hashemite throne and was born into his position. He would be the King until his death unless something unexpected happens. Jordan is a monarchy and the King holds absolute power. The parliament's autonomy has been minimal and political parties have been banned. Because political crises have been so frequent, martial law has been more the rule than the exception. The National Assembly consists of the Senate and the House of Deputies. The King picks out senators while the representatives to the House of Deputies are elected by the people in general elections. The King has the right to dissolve Parliament without causing the resignation of the Cabinet. The fact that the King of Jordan will stay in power until he dies makes the situation in Jordan different than in Egypt where the president is elected for periods of six years. This is a major difference between these two states. Still, in the period of time I have analysed both the leaders had been in power for a long period; King Hussein as the monarch in a system where the people cannot choose their leader and Mubarak was president for two tenures of six years each and everybody expected him to go for a third term. As we now have seen, the relationship between the head of state and the parliament is more or less the same in Jordan and Egypt. Both the King of Jordan and the President of Egypt are supposed to share power with a national assembly, but have had considerable more power than the representatives.

A state of emergency has been used for long periods by both regimes. Since the assassination of Sadat in 1981, President Mubarak maintained a situation of emergency law with the Assembly's approval. The justification for this long-lasting state of emergency has been the threats of violence and terrorism. The president has the right to implement a state of emergency and although emergency law should not extend beyond a limited period without the Assembly's approval, the state of emergency lasted for extraordinary long periods of time.

A state of emergency was maintained for several years in Jordan as well. The Constitution provides for the imposition of martial law and the indefinite suppression of parliament. Otherwise, provisions limit the ways in which the throne could block the role of parliament.

The Egyptian president has the power to appoint and dismiss people to positions such as the prime minister and the other ministers, advisers and provincial governors. That means that he has control over the major institutions of the state. Informal organisations such as the family, the *dufa* and the *shilla* have been important when it came to recruitment to these major institutions (Springborg 1989: 88). The president has personal control over state funds and resources and is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and appoints the top military positions. The elite is tied to the President and have interests in preserving its existing relationship by remaining subservient.

In Jordan, the situation is the same. The King has the privilege of choosing persons for important positions and hence ensuring that these persons share his interests. The Constitution gives the King the right to appoint the leaders of all public services, the heads of the defence and security forces included. In both institutions men with a career in the army have been in charge, chosen by the King himself. King Hussein emphasised his strong personal ties with members of the Islamic elite. The King had an image as a religious man and kept personal contact with religious leaders and even offered them important positions in society. Islamic rules have been followed in the public life and Islamic institutions are supported by the government. The King was surrounded by supporters of the regime, a group that was called the palace system. The palace had more power than it was accorded by the Constitution. As we see, in both state systems the head of state picked out people to important positions to be sure that these were loyal to the regime and its interests.

The constitution in Jordan dates back from 1952 and has not been significantly changed since then. The latest version of Egyptian constitution was made in 1971.

The Jordanian parliament can ask questions of the cabinet and impeach ministers. The cabinet is accountable to the parliament, says the constitution. The King has the full right of imposition of martial law and indefinite suppression of parliament. In Egypt, there is enormous legal-constitutional powers vested in presidency and the parliament has the role of rubber-stamping presidential decisions.

Both constitutions provide for equality before law and individual liberty. Media has been censored to a large extent in both regimes.

### ***5.2.2 The Parliament:***

In Jordan, the Parliament's autonomy is minimal. It has authority in financial and foreign affairs although the King has clearly overridden the parliament in questions of international treaties and other foreign questions. The parliament can ask the Supreme Council for interpretations of the law. Members to the House of Deputies are elected by the people in general elections while the King appoints the senators.

The Egyptian parliament elects the president, however, only one candidate can be nominated. The parliament has also the right to not re-nominate the president for another term in office. It has the right to question cabinet members concerning matters within their jurisdiction and can withdraw its vote of confidence. The President has the authority to bypass the Assembly by having his proposals endorsed through a referendum and thus the legislative powers of the Assembly can be nullified. If the Assembly refuses to comply with the President, it can result in his decision to dissolve the Assembly. The President might, in the Assembly's absence and in situations that cannot suffer delay, issue decrees that have the force of law.

In Jordan, political parties had been banned since 1967 and candidates had to run as individuals. The parliament had been dismissed since 1976 and there was no elected parliament until 1984. In Egypt, there were multi-party legislative elections, however, neither of the elections in 1984 nor 1987 were free and fair. There are only a few permitted parties, which were mostly created from above. Independent candidates could not participate in the elections, so the banned parties had to run for election in coalitions with legal parties. Election results have not been processed and announced by an independent body, but by the Ministry of Interior.

I have come to the conclusion that the two cases can be compared. There are many similarities between them. Even though Jordan and Egypt have different state systems, they share many of the same traits. They are both Muslim nations and political Islam had become a strong movement in these two countries, in which large parts of the population are religious and the religious establishment is very strong.

### ***5.3 Political Islam in Egypt and Jordan***

In the 1980s, Islamic activism was institutionalised in Egypt and the Islamists entered the mainstream of Egyptian politics (Springborg 1989:239). The Muslim Brotherhood in both Egypt and Jordan participated in elections and had success. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt became among other voluntary Islamist organisations effective agents of social and political change. In Jordan, Islamist groupings had aspirations of more influence in politics, the Muslim Brotherhood included. The decision to participate in the 1984 by-elections in Jordan was a part of the Muslim Brotherhood's long-term pragmatic strategy. The movement considered parliamentary representation as a way of increasing its influence in the society, even though it did not necessarily see parliamentary democracy as a satisfactory goal in itself.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was well organised and campaigned actively for votes. They also possessed the infrastructure required to ensure that their voters actually were present at elections. They had success in the elections in 1984 and 1987. The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan obtained good results in the elections in both 1984 and 1989 and the success was the first indication of the rising popularity of Islamists in Jordan. The Brotherhood was good at mobilising support in the elections (Boulby 1998: 90-95). For instance when the economic decline of the early 1980s fuelled political and economic discontent, the movement was able to take advantage of this. They talked about democracy and gained support among people because of this. The decline in popularity of the Pan-Arabists and PLO was the also another reason for the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood's increased support. The 1967 War defeat led to a general disillusionment with pan-Arabist and socialist politics and the Islamists appeared as an alternative to these ideologies. And finally, the widespread Islamist revival in the region after the successful Iranian revolution led to increased appeal of the Muslim Brotherhood. This was the situation in both Egypt and Jordan.

Both the movements have been vague in declaring political programmes. The Egyptian Brotherhood did not spell out the economic and political details for their alternative project. This was tactically effective. Operating within the political system, the Muslim Brotherhood concentrated their criticism and demands on a call for greater democratisation, political representation, social justice, and respect for human rights (Esposito and Voll 1996:179). The Jordanian Brothers' ideology was vague but considered, and showed that the movement did not want to distance itself from the regime by adopting goals counter to the authorities' political interests.

To the Brotherhood in Egypt democracy was at best a means to an end since everything is subordinated to the struggle to preserve and spread Islam. The Muslim Brotherhood wanted to recreate the early Median community of the Prophet with the slogan “the Quran is our constitution” (Zubaida 1989:48-50). It advocated a presidential system with an elected *shura* [consultative] council, postulated as an equivalent to a parliament. The Brotherhood in Jordan had the same principle and chose to work within democratic structures for pragmatic reasons in order to increase its political influence and not because democracy was the right system.

The Brotherhood was banned as a political party in Egypt but formed coalitions with other legal political parties in order to participate in the elections. In Jordan, all political parties had been banned since 1967. Here, the Muslim Brotherhood had a different position than the other political groups. The movement had never applied for the status of a political party and was instead registered as a religious organisation. Muslim Brothers could run for elections but only as independent candidates.

In both Egypt and Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood’s relation with the regime was normalised in the 1980s. The Brothers chose to participate in the political process and run for election in both states. The movement was tolerated by the authorities as long as it operated within the limits the regime had set. The Brotherhood in both Egypt and Jordan won seats in the parliament and in Jordan the Brothers even gained positions in the Cabinet as a result of the movement’s success in the elections. The Muslim Brotherhood worked much in the same way in Egypt and Jordan.

I think the Muslim Brotherhoods in Egypt and Jordan are so similar that they can be compared in the thesis. The organisations have the same origin. The Muslim Brotherhood started in Egypt and spread to Jordan among other countries. The movements in Egypt and Jordan share the same ideas and have the same goals, all inspired by the founder, Hassan al-Banna. In the 1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan faced different state systems, but both movements supported the regime in their state. At that stage, the Brotherhood in both Egypt and Jordan decided to work within the political system.

#### ***5.4 Elections in Egypt and Jordan***

Elections were held in both states in the 1980s. In 1984, elections were held in Jordan for the first time in 17 years. The parliament had been suspended but now it was recalled. There were

three main reasons for this; there were demands for democratisation; King Hussein's wanted to challenge the PLO's exclusive position among the Palestinians and to press the organisation to join with Jordan in diplomacy towards a peace settlement with Israel. There was also a practical reason that since the last elections, held in 1967, eight representatives had died. Because of martial laws the Parliament had been suspended more or less since 1967. The recall of parliament seemed partly to be a consequence of the King's pre-emptive attempt to ward off potential tensions and as a response to increasing popular pressure for a return of active democratic life. It was to provide a formal political system through which Jordanians would be able to make officials more accountable for their decisions.

In Egypt, parliamentary elections were held in 1984. The government saw the elections as an opportunity to measure the strength of the opposition. The Muslim Brothers saw elections as an opportunity to re-establish itself on the central political arena. They also wanted to test the government's intentions of democracy.

According to the Constitution, the next elections in Jordan should have been held in 1988 but were postponed by the King. Instead, elections took place in 1989 and this time there were full parliamentary elections for all the seats in the parliament. In 1988, there had been street demonstrations and food riots in response to food shortages, high unemployment, and corruption. Less out of a desire to democratise than to steady the shaky regime, the government had promised elections.

Also in Egypt, the president made changes after pressure. After the 1984 elections, the Higher Constitutional Court in Egypt looked at the electoral law to see if it was legal. Instead of waiting for the final ruling, the National Democratic Party (NDP) rushed a new, amended electoral law through parliament, followed by a "referendum" to dissolve the parliament and call for new elections, to be held in April 1987. It was better for them to present an improved election law than to lose in court.

Although there were restrictions, the Brothers managed to participate in elections in the 1980s and won seats in both Egypt and Jordan. Thus they were able to influence the national politics despite the regime's attempt to restrain the movement's electoral participation. In both Egypt and Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood met obstacles regarding participation in the elections. In Egypt, the ten-percent threshold made coalition building necessary, especially due to the short period of time between the announcement of elections and Election Day. In the 1984 elections, the Muslim Brotherhood co-operated with the Neo-Wafd Party, which had been re-legalised in 1983. In the elections in 1987, the Brotherhood was still banned as a political party and formed a new coalition with the Labour Party and the

Liberal party, named the Islamic alliance. The Brotherhood did not have status as a political party; instead it was registered as a religious organisation. In Jordan, political parties were banned and all the candidates, including those for the Muslim Brotherhood, ran for elections as independent candidates. The Brotherhood had status as a religious organisation and hence it was not banned like the political parties, but neither could it form its own list.

We see that the Egyptian government tried to control the opposition by making changes in the electoral system and the electoral laws. The Muslim Brotherhood on their hand responded by forming coalitions with legal parties. In Jordan, the regime tried to inhibit the influence of large opposition groups by prohibiting political parties. However, the Muslim Brotherhood managed to get its members into the parliament even though they had to run as independent candidates. The movement was well organised.

Both the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and in Jordan had success in the elections in the 1980s. In Jordan, Islamists won three out of eight seats in Parliament in the 1984 by-elections and two of these were members of the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1989, the elections sent a solid block of 34 Islamists, 20 members of the Muslim Brotherhood and 14 allies or sympathisers, into the 80-member parliament. This made the Islamists the leading opposition in the country. The elections in Egypt also showed the same tendency. The Brotherhood's coalition with the Neo-Wafd Party in the 1984 elections won 65 of 450 seats and became the largest opposition group in the parliament. Eight of these mandates were Muslim Brotherhood candidates. In 1987, the Muslim Brothers and the coalition won 17 per cent of the votes, and became the main political opposition of Mubarak's government this time as well. Brotherhood candidates held 38 of the coalition's 60 seats.

The Brotherhood's electoral success came as a surprise to the regimes in both Egypt and Jordan. In Egypt, Mubarak seemed to acknowledge that the elections and the election results in 1984 were undermining his democratic credibility, and he responded by appointing four candidates to parliament from two opposition parties among the ten candidates he has the right to appoint. Both ministers responsible for the conduct of elections later lost their posts. The regime in Egypt was aware of the Muslim Brotherhoods' strength and used all kinds of methods to try to limit the Brothers in the next election. The government's strategy of weakening the Islamist movement became even clearer following the 1987 elections.

The political establishment in Jordan was shocked when the election results from the 1984 elections showed that Islamists won three out of eight seats in Parliament. Both the government and traditional candidates that had not won seats were surprised and reacted with alarm to the election results. They realised how strong the Islamists were in society. The

Brotherhood's mobilisation of support in 1989 surprised the regime, which had underestimated the extent to which Islamism and Palestinian activism would come together and reinforce each other's strength (Boulby 1998:104). The government and ruling elite were shocked by the result of these elections and the fact that Islamists emerged as the leading opposition in the country.

Elections were held in both states. The Muslim Brotherhood participated although the circumstances were difficult in the two states. The organisation existed under restrictions. The Brotherhood won several seats in the parliament in Jordan, but was not the dominant power there. We have seen that the conditions for the Muslim Brotherhood regarding elections have to some degree been similar in Egypt and Jordan. The movement could participate in elections in both states during the 1980s. However, in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood did not have legal status as a political party and had to form coalitions with other legal parties. There were also reports of violence and NDP mob attacks against the Muslim Brotherhood during the election. In Jordan, the conditions were better. The Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to campaign in the period leading up to the elections, but political parties were banned and all candidates had to run as independents, not as groups.

We have seen that the regime in both Egypt and Jordan tried to control the opposition through the electoral system and by restrictions on freedom of association and assembly.

### ***5.5 Problems of Legitimizing Power in the 1980s***

Both states had serious legitimacy problems in the 1980s. My hypothesis states that the regime has problems of legitimating power and needs to include the Islamist opposition in order to legitimate its own power. Now, I will look at the legitimacy problems in each state to see if they are the same ones.

As shown in 4.3, King Hussein held absolute power. Egypt is a republic with a powerful president. After President Mubarak came to power, he decided not to have a vice president, as the Constitution required, because he meant a vice-president would be divisive. In both states, we see that criterion 3, the dominant power should serve the interests of the subordinates, is violated since the same person is in power for so long. Furthermore, criterion 1, power is not exercised according to the rules, is also not fulfilled.

In the 1980s, economic downturn created turbulence in both states. In 1989, the population in Jordan demonstrated when the government announced price increases of fuel



and other basic commodities as a part of an IMF-required economic reform plan. A similar food riot took place in Egypt in 1984 (MEI 28 April 1989, Kassem 1999:54). This was the opposite of the people expressing their consent. In Jordan, differences between groups resurfaced because of unequal distribution of wealth. This was however not the case in Egypt.

The 1984 food riot in Egypt was quickly contained before it spread, much because Mubarak was in control of the state's coercive powers. Mubarak had attempted to depict himself less as an advocate for democracy and more as the guardian of stability and order. In Jordan, a student riot in 1986 led to intervention by the police where three students were killed and hundreds injured and arrested. Arrests were limited to students believed to be either supporters or members of the Muslim Brotherhood while the movement itself was left largely untouched. The people protesting in Maan in 1989 came into confrontation with the regime but this time the Brotherhood stayed out of it. The Brotherhood was, along with other groups, expressing the opposite of consent to the regime. The regime tried to get in control with the opposition by using the state's coercive powers. The police arrested people who participated in the demonstrations.

More political participation was expected since the constitution in both states stipulates democracy. People demanded participation and influence in the political process. The Egyptian regime allowed more freedom of the press in 1981. The exception was Islamist publications. In Jordan, there was pressure for democratic rights, freedom of the press included, but the control over the local press was stricter. The secular middle and upper classes, but also the Islamists supported Mubarak. People in Jordan thought that King Hussein served the interests of his people, and the Islamists also supported him.

The governments in both states have electoral laws tailored to suit the regime's interest. In Egypt, the new amendments to the 1984 electoral law sparked an intensive debate and threatened to push the opposition to a boycott of the election. After the 1984 elections, the Higher Constitutional Court looked at the electoral law to see if it was legal. Instead of waiting for the final ruling, the NDP rushed a new, amended electoral law through parliament, followed by a "referendum" to dissolve the parliament and call for new elections, to be held in April 1987. In 1990, the Supreme Constitution Court struck down a section of the 1986 electoral law. President Mubarak decided to comply with the ruling and set up a committee whose task was to remove and revise the parts of the law found unconstitutional. The committee members, picked out by Mubarak, made draft recommendations that were quickly passed as legislation without passing through the Assembly at all.

An electoral law from 1986 in Jordan seemed to be made to suit the regime. The law was meant to inhibit the Islamists' access to power. The Muslim Brotherhood asked for amendments.

In Jordan, political parties were forbidden while in Egypt the government controlled the creation and continued existence of political parties. When it came to rules for who could run for election, the situation was opposite in the two states. In Egypt, independent parties were outlawed and only legal political parties could participate in the elections. In Jordan, only independent candidates were allowed and could run as individuals while all political parties were outlawed.

The regime in both Egypt and Jordan tried to control the opposition by putting restrictions on political participation and making changes to the electoral system. The Muslim Brotherhood on its side manage to participate in the elections by forming coalitions in Egypt and running as independent candidates in Jordan. The movement also protested against the governmental regulations and went to court to see if the restrictions could be stopped.

Parliament in both Egypt and in Jordan has limited power. The National Assembly in Egypt was "rubber-stamping presidential decisions" (Kassem 1999:37) since the president could dissolve the parliament if it did not vote for the proposals from the president. Thus the National Assembly did as the president and the government suggested in order to avoid being dissolved.

The Jordanian parliament could in 1986 not be said to represent the people anymore because there had not been elections since 1967. According to the Constitution, the King has the right to dissolve the parliament. The King of Jordan decided when elections would be held, and he made the decision to postpone elections. The President of Egypt did not have the right to decide elections. Both President Mubarak and King Hussein maintained martial law for long periods, longer than the constitutions allowed.

In Egypt, there were protests against the regime's politics in this period. The reply from the regime came when the security forces closed down a mosque and imams were replaced. Hence, the authorities interfered with religious matters. At several mosques there were protests and this led to arrests of the radical imams and activists. Students at al-Azhar University demonstrated against the government's actions and the institution was closed for two weeks. The Muslim Brotherhood had planned a protest march to Mubarak's Cairo office because the government refused to change its politics after the Brotherhood's electoral success. They did not get a permit and security forces arrested more than 500 activists and temporarily closed a mosque where the march should start.

Human rights violations were reported in Jordan in the 1980s. Amnesty International's the main concerns included long-term detention without trial of political prisoners, lack of basic legal safeguards in trials held by the military court, and imprisonment of prisoners of conscience. Amnesty Reports show that there were serious human rights violations in Egypt as well.

### ***5.6 The regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood***

Both the Brotherhood in Egypt and in Jordan had supported the regime for decades. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt supported Gamal Nasser and the Free Officers when they came to power in 1952, but felt alienated from Nasser when it became evident that he did not have the same goals as the Muslim Brotherhood and that he had only used them for an Islamic alibi. After their unsuccessful challenge to Nasser in 1954, the Muslim Brotherhood was banned by the regime.

The Jordanian Brotherhood on their side had supported the regime since 1950s and did so until the second half of the 1980s. Although the Brotherhood opposed the King's policies in Palestine, it was willing to overlook any differences to ensure the King's blessing. The King had good relations with the religious establishment and an un-stated alliance with the Brotherhood and used these relations to advance Hashemite interests. As the only country in the Arab world, Jordan officially recognised the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood had supported the regime, but in Egypt the movement only supported the regime for a short period.

One of the first things Mubarak did after he had come to power was to declare his desire to strengthen the political liberalisation started by Sadat. He met with the newly released opposition leaders and assured them of his commitment to renewed co-operation. Some degree of political participation was allowed but there were strict rules governing it. Permissions for political parties were automatically denied except on specific occasions, which was during the month leading up to the elections. The Muslim Brotherhood did not have status as a legal political party and had to form coalitions with other parties in order to run for election.

In Jordan, people wanted more political participation and demanded parliamentary democracy, which had not taken place since 1967. In an interview in November 1983, King Hussein admitted that internal pressure was growing and people were calling for participation

and representation. He indicated that general elections in Jordan might take place very soon. The Muslim Brotherhood wanted to participate in the elections, but like the rest of the participants they had to run as individuals because political parties were forbidden. As in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood had status as a religious and charitable organisation. It was allowed to work as a charitable organisation although some of its activities were political. The Muslim Brotherhood enjoyed some degree of freedom in both states, but also faced restrictions on its activities. In the early 1980s, the situation for the Muslim Brotherhood was tolerable in both Egypt and Jordan.

The Egyptian authorities facilitated religious activities to seek accommodation with the religious opponents, for instance religious programmes were broadcast on government-run television. The government hoped that the state-controlled Islamist establishment could counter oppositionist Islamists. It hoped that the Muslim Brotherhood would have a political function whereby they prevented radical appeals and would legitimate the regime because of its association with it. The Brotherhood had legal status as religious organisation.

The Hashemite regime claims to be direct descendants from the Prophet Mohammed and this has given the king and his family political legitimacy at least among traditional groups in the Jordanian society. King Hussein had a tolerant attitude towards the Muslim Brotherhood because he thought the movement might be useful in both domestic and foreign policies. It was used as a buffer against extremists and as a counterweight to secular opposition from leftists and nationalist groups. The regime needed the Muslim Brotherhood as a religious alibi since they enjoyed support among the people in Jordan. We have seen that the regime in both Egypt and Jordan needed to legitimate its power among people and used the Muslim Brotherhood as a religious alibi. The movement enjoyed strong support among the people in Egypt and Jordan because of its effort on moral issues.

In both Egypt and Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood enjoyed support among people for talking about morality and against problems in society such as corruption. The regimes in the two states wanted the Muslim Brotherhood on their side to increase its legitimacy among the Brotherhood's supporters. But the movement created problems for the regime as well because it criticised the regime's politics and negative sides of society, like corruption and Westernisation. The regimes in Egypt and Jordan wanted the religious establishment on their side, represented by the Muslim Brotherhood, but also needed to control them so they would not criticise the regime in too large degree and turn people against the ruling power. I have noticed this two-sided relationship in both states.

In Egypt, multi-party participation was controlled by the regime. As mentioned, permissions for political parties were automatically denied except on specific occasions, which was during the month leading up to the elections. The Muslim Brotherhood did not have status as a legal political party and had to form coalitions with other parties in order to run for election. In Jordan, political parties were forbidden and candidates who wanted to run for election had to participate as individuals. This rule also applied to the Muslim Brotherhood with its status as a religious organisation. Political participation was allowed, but with restrictions. The regime in both states tried to control the opposition through the electoral system.

In spite of these restrictions, the Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to have activity in both states. With a status as religious organisation it was not seen as a direct threat to the regime. In Egypt, the Brotherhood was regarded moderate Islamists and Mubarak wanted to distinguish between moderate and extremist Islamists where the more moderate ones could be used to give his regime religious legitimacy. The Brotherhood had connection to the religious establishment and was not regarded so much as an opposition group as the militant Islamists. The regime had interests in setting these two groups against each other.

President Mubarak had promised to lift all press censorship and permit a free national party press when he came to power but did not seem to take his promises seriously. In 1983, the Liberal Party was permitted to publish an Islamist newspaper while the publication of a newspaper by the Muslim Brotherhood continued to be prohibited. The government wanted to keep the Islamist movement fragmented by preventing their message from being channelled through a single, dominant organ. During the 1980s, the regime released politicians and professors and reinstated journalists. It was a common trait for the regimes in Egypt and Jordan that they kept good relations with moderate Islamists. By this, the Egyptian government attempted to keep the opposition fragmented.

In Jordan, media had been censored since the 1950s when martial laws were implemented and continued to be censored in the 1980s as well. Newspapers critical to the regime and its politics were put down or taken over by the regime. The press and publication laws were strict and were supervised by a special department in the Ministry of the Interior. Radio and television were owned and controlled by the authorities. We see that in both states the regime wanted to control the Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition groups by putting restrictions on freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Both the regimes' reactions to public protests showed their need to control the opposition. In Egypt, a food riot that took place in fall 1984 was quickly contained before it

spread, much because Mubarak was in control of the state's coercive powers. In the same year, a march the Brotherhood had planned to Mubarak's Cairo office was cancelled when the government refused to issue a permit and the security forces arrested more than 500 activists. Likewise, members of the Jordanian Brotherhood who participated in the demonstrations at Yarmouk University in 1986 were met with a tough response by the security forces. During the 1989 unrest in Jordan, there were no reports of arrests of members of the influential Muslim Brotherhood despite the King's directions to the new government "to stop the politicisation of religion" (*MEI* 12 May 1989). This time the movement seemed to have deliberately avoided a confrontation with the regime. The regime in Egypt and in Jordan did not tolerate expressed evidence of disagreement. There were restrictions on freedom of association and freedom of assembly.

In Egypt, members of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested nationwide shortly before Election Day in 1987. The government seemed to have a strategy of weakening the Islamist movement. Deputies from the National Democratic Party (NDP) began publicly to probe their counterparts in the Brotherhood about their attitudes on specific and problematic issues. As a result of the Muslim Brotherhood's success in the 1984 elections, the ruling power applied strong pressure on them before the 1987 elections.

In Jordan, the election campaign in 1989 was the freest campaign in country's history. It was full of activities with the spread of pamphlets and banners and where lively rallies took place. The only, but significant restraint placed on the candidates was that the political parties remained illegal and the candidates had to run as independents. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt did not operate under such conditions. There were reports of violence and NDP mob attacks against Muslim Brothers during the election. The NDP also attacked them in the electoral campaign, although it cannot be proved that the reported violence and fraud was directed against the Brotherhood's alliance in particular.

In the elections in the late 1980s, both the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and in Jordan participated in elections under different conditions. The situation was better in Jordan, but also here the Muslim Brotherhood experienced restrictions on its participation. The regime in both Egypt and Jordan tried to control the Muslim Brotherhood through the electoral system.

The governments in both states tried to co-opt individual members of the opposition with attractive government posts or other favours, and this compromised the integrity of the opposition. The opposition was often forced to choose between their privileged access and convictions. In Egypt and Jordan, this led to a situation where the religious establishment, the

*ulama*, undermined its own credibility with many Islamists by exchanging its independence for governmental patronage, Kassem argues (1999:36).

As an example of this, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan gained influence and was co-opted into prestigious positions by the regime in the 1980s. After the success in the 1989 elections, members of the Muslim Brotherhood won 32 seats in Parliament and were given five cabinet portfolios. They got positions in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education; in the latter the minister was for a period a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Hence, the King's policy towards the Brotherhood might be viewed as institutional co-opting. When members of the Brotherhood were given important positions they became part of the establishment and they were integrated in the political scene.

The governments in both states pursued a strategy of inclusion towards the Brotherhood. Still, there were differences in the strategies the regimes pursued towards the organisation. The regime in Egypt put to a larger extent restrictions on the Muslim Brotherhood's activities. Both Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and Egypt participated in elections during the 1980s, but the regime in Egypt tried to limit the Brotherhood's participation.

The Egyptian Brotherhood joined in coalitions with legal political parties to have the chance to run for election. Right before the 1984 elections, a new electoral law was announced. The law introduced a mandatory list system and an electoral threshold of ten per cent. The votes of those lists that failed to reach the threshold in each district were automatically transferred to the largest party in the same district. These new rules made it difficult for the opposition to win seats in the parliament, and at the same time they favoured the largest party, the NDP, which was Mubarak's party.

The formation of the alliance between the Neo-Wafd Party and the Muslim Brotherhood in 1984 had been such a surprise for the regime that it employed irregular methods more than planned. There were reports of violence and NDP mob attacks against the Muslim Brothers during the election. The NDP also attacked them in the campaign for the elections, although it cannot be proved that the reported violence and fraud was directed against the alliance in particular<sup>35</sup>. In the 1987 elections, there was strong pressure on the opposition by the regime, and several members of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested nationwide shortly before Election Day. Rules for voting were also violated in these elections.

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<sup>35</sup> The Interior Minister admitted 88 "incidents" that would be investigated but blamed them all on local and tribal feuds (Egset 1998:104).

There was persistent manipulation of electoral results and President Mubarak apparently refused to take any action, as described in 3.6.

The Muslim Brotherhood was tolerated to some degree by the regime in both states. The Brotherhood in Jordan could continue their activities as long as they demonstrated loyalty to the King. In Egypt, the Brotherhood was seen as moderate Islamists and could exist and work under much better conditions than so-called extremist Islamists, which were regarded as a threat to the regime. Mubarak and his government hoped that the Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood and his followers would have a political function whereby they prevented radical appeals and, because of their link with the state, legitimated the regime. Although the regime tried to put restrictions on the Brotherhood's activities, the movement was treated better than other Islamist opposition. I think we can say that in both Egypt and Jordan the regime co-opted the Muslim Brotherhood to some degree.

The background was the same: The regime needed to legitimate its power and tried to co-opt the moderate opposition, the Muslim Brotherhood, into positions to control them and to help legitimate the regime's power.

After the Egyptian Brotherhood's success in the 1984 elections, the government promised much but did little. The organisation's main issue in its campaign had been the implementation of *sharia* laws and this was hard to ignore for the government. However, the People's Assembly rejected the demands for immediate implementation of *sharia*, but the public had become agitated by the issue as well (Springborg 1989:216). The Muslim Brotherhood wanted to arrange a march to Mubarak's office on the subject but it was cancelled when the government refused to issue a permit.

All this shows that the regime in Egypt tried to restrict the Muslim Brotherhood's influence. Although the regime did not stop the Muslim Brotherhood from participating in elections, rules were made to inhibit the movement from getting stronger and gaining important positions.

The Egyptian government's strategy of weakening the Islamist movement became clearer following the 1987 elections. NDP deputies began publicly to probe their counterparts in the Brotherhood about their attitudes on economic issues as landlord-tenant relations, subsidies, the public versus the private sector, Islamic investment companies, and so on. The government wanted to demonstrate that the claim "Islam is the solution" was in reality a veil to cover the conservatism of the Brotherhood's elite and its lack of a systematic programme. The government also relaxed its pressure on the Wafd Party. The party's paper *al-Wafd* responded by attacking elements in the Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood included.



By the end of the 1980s, it became clear that the regime in both Egypt and Jordan changed its attitude and strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. At this time, Mubarak did not distinguish between moderate and militant Islamists anymore. He had realised that his flexible policy had failed to effectively co-opt or silence the Islamic opposition and his former policy was replaced with a more aggressive response to the challenge of both groups of Islamists; the moderates who were willing to participate within the established political and legal framework, for instance the Muslim Brotherhood, and the religious extremists who advocated the violent overthrow of the government. The government became less discriminating and broadened its battle beyond the militant, secret radical groups, using harassment and imprisonment to control the growing strength and challenge from more moderate Islamist movement such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

King Hussein on his side realised that the Brotherhood could pose a threat to Hashemite interests. In the parliamentary period after the 1989 elections, the government was concerned over the Brotherhood's outspoken criticism in the parliament and tried to limit its political significance. King Hussein had seen how strong the movement had become after its electoral success and regarded it as a threat. Thus, the regime pursued a policy of containment towards the Muslim Brotherhood. It denied the Brotherhood representation in the cabinet and resorted to constitutional provisions allowing for the use of the executive veto of Lower House legislation.

In both cases, the regime thought the policy of co-optation had failed and replaced it with a stricter response towards the Muslim Brotherhood. The regime had pursued a strategy of co-optating the Muslim Brotherhood to legitimate its power but the Brotherhood had ended up as a strong opposition group criticising the regime.

I have studied the case of Jordan to see if there are similarities with the situation in Egypt. Can the data from Egypt be applied to Jordan? The regime in Egypt treated the Muslim Brotherhood stricter than the Jordanian regime did. As mentioned in 3.3, Kassem argues that the regime in Egypt pursued a strategy of co-optation with elections that can be best be viewed as an instrument of clientelist co-optation and control. I have found the same strategy of co-optation in Jordan. This changed in the late 1980s where the response from the regime in both Egypt and Jordan became stricter.

## ***5.7 Conclusion***

I have checked whether the cases in Egypt and in Jordan can be compared, and I have come to the conclusion that they can. In the 1980s, the political situation in Egypt and Jordan were similar. The Islamist opposition was strong in both states, and the regimes had problems with legitimating their power. Beetham's criteria for power legitimacy have not been fulfilled. The governments in Egypt and Jordan both tried to co-opt the opposition to help legitimate their power by getting the Islamists on their side and at the same time inhibit their opportunity to criticise the ruling power.

## 6. Conclusion

The Islamists are challenging the regime's power in the Middle East. In the 1970s, the Arab world faced Islamist resurgence. Islam achieved a role as a symbol of political legitimacy and became a source of political and social activism and popular mobilisation. The religious resurgence came as a reaction to the legitimacy deficit in the Arab regimes.

This study represents an effort to look close into two cases where this phenomenon has taken place. I sought to find out whether there was a connection between the regime's problems of legitimating power and its strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. In other words, could the regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood be explained by the regime's problems of legitimating power? I have used Michael Hudson's *Arab Politics. The Search for Legitimacy* (1977), which describes the legitimacy problems in the Arab world. David Beetham's book *The Legitimation of Power* (1991) was used to explain the regime's legitimacy problems and how the Islamists challenge the regime's legitimacy.

As a conclusion, I will sum up the results along the two main perspectives in the analysis: The regime's problems of legitimating power and its strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. I will also say something about the general implications of my findings.

The cases had to be comparable in the sense that they scored similar on background variables. My results showed that both the Egyptian and the Jordanian regime had problems legitimating its power and that both regimes faced the challenge from the Muslim Brotherhood. These two findings, in addition to other similar traits, convinced me that the cases were similar enough to be comparable.

The regimes in Egypt and in Jordan both had problems legitimating their power in the 1980s. I identified these problems with Beetham's criteria for legitimacy. There were two common traits for the regimes' lack of legitimacy, meaning that particularly two of Beetham's criteria for legitimacy were not fulfilled. Firstly, the regime's power did not conform to established rules. The regime in both states did what it wanted regardless of what the Constitution stated. Martial law was maintained for long periods, which implied restrictions on freedoms and rights such as the freedom of assembly and the freedom of the press. Secondly, there was not evidence of consent by the subordinate to the regime. Instead, there were demonstrations and protests against the regime's politics. This was the situation in both states.

The Muslim Brotherhood enjoyed considerable support among people in both states. The movement had become an effective agent of social and political change by developing alternative socio-economic institutions, in addition to participating in the political process and demonstrating its strength in institution-building and popular mobilisation.

I have done an exploratory study where I identified the problems of legitimating power and tried to see a connection between the lack of legitimacy and the regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood.

In the beginning of the 1980s, the regimes in both Egypt and Jordan tried to include the Muslim Brotherhood in the political process. In both regimes, the government had tried to control the growing challenge from the Muslim Brotherhood, but had failed to. Now they had to try something else and changed the strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. In this period, the Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to have activity in both states. Jordan. Egypt. The regimes also tried to co-operate with the religious establishment, and in Egypt, the government separated between moderate and extremist Islamists and treated the former better. The regimes let the Muslim Brotherhood participate in the elections and, as we have seen in Jordan, even let them have positions in the cabinet.

However, later in the 1980s, it seemed like the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes realised that their policy of inclusion had failed and that they had not managed to get control with the Muslim Brotherhood. Both the regime in Egypt and in Jordan now started to pursue a stricter policy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian government's strategy of weakening the Islamist movement became clearer following the 1987 elections. Deputies from the NDP began publicly to probe their counterparts in the Brotherhood about their attitudes on different issues. The government wanted to demonstrate that the Muslim Brotherhood's claim "Islam is the solution" was in reality a veil to cover the conservatism of the movement's elite and its lack of a systematic programme. President Mubarak did not distinguish between moderate and militant Islamists anymore. He used harassment and imprisonment to control the Muslim Brotherhood.

In Jordan, the regime denied the Brotherhood representation in the cabinet after the 1989 elections. The regime tried to limit the Muslim Brotherhood's activities in the parliament and resorted to constitutional provisions allowing for the use of the executive veto of Lower House legislation.

The Muslim Brotherhood met different treatment from the regime. What was the strategy from the Muslim Brotherhood to this? The Muslim Brotherhood on its side manage to participate in the elections by forming coalitions in Egypt and running as independent

candidates in Jordan. The movement also protested against the governmental regulations and went to court to see if the restrictions could be stopped.

I assumed that if both the states had problems legitimating their power, they would have the same inclusive strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. Both states had problems legitimating their power. The strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood differed to some extent. I found that although both states had problems legitimating their power, the regime in Jordan pursued a more inclusive strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood than the regime in Egypt. King Hussein had a tolerant attitude towards the Muslim Brotherhood because he thought the movement might be useful. The regime in Egypt put to a larger extent restrictions on the Muslim Brotherhood's activities.

The effort to detect legitimacy problems gave most support to my hypothesis, which said that the regime's legitimacy deficit forces an inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood in the political process. It was very clear – with the use of Beetham's criteria for legitimacy - that both the states had great problems legitimating power. The regimes in Egypt and Jordan pursued partly a similar strategy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. The strategy seemed to change when both the regimes had failed to control the Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian and the Jordanian governments had tried to co-opt the Muslim Brotherhood, but ended up trying to contain the movement instead. In my two cases, the hypothesis partly got support. The hypothesis applied more to the situation in Jordan than in Egypt.

I think I have found the same explanation for both cases. Although there are differences between the two states I have studied, both the regime in Egypt and in Jordan had problems legitimating its power. They both pursued a strategy of inclusion towards the Muslim Brotherhood to increase its own legitimacy, although this was the case to a less extent in Egypt. The government in Jordan had a more inclusive attitude towards the Muslim Brotherhood than the regime in Egypt had. In my cases, the strategy to achieve or increase legitimation of power was by co-opting of the opposition. According to Hudson, most states in the Arab world had legitimacy problems in the 1980s. How the regimes met the challenge from the Islamists, which were present in many states in the region, would be interesting to explore.

As noted in the methodological section in chapter 1, this study has limited objectives in terms of generalisability. If the hypothesis should be tested for other cases, it calls for greater specificity and contextual attention. Detailed case studies can be the basis for further generalisation on the positions of the Islamist organisations and the authorities' strategy

towards them. The Muslim Brotherhood or other Islamist organizations are not the exact same in all the states where they exist.

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