Hiding in plain sight

A descriptive content analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood politicizing Islam 2005-2011

by

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Abstract
This thesis highlights the ways in which the Muslim brotherhood politicizes Islam, depicted in the group’s official documents. The study theorizes a social-constructivist approach to politicized religion and argues the concept as an effort to manipulate an understanding of religion with political intentions. Through a descriptive content analysis, this thesis analyzes three official political documents from the Muslim brotherhood’s English website, ‘Ikhwanweb’. The analysis identifies the religious ideology of the group as all-encompassing Islamic, as well as concludes the Muslim brotherhood as utilizing politicized religion extensively in the chosen material.

Key words: Egypt, Muslim brotherhood, Islam, Politicized religion, Ikhwanweb
1. Introduction

The role religion currently plays in various world affairs seems increasingly lost upon us in European societies, even more so in Scandinavian ones. Often blinded by the secular lens of religion as a private matter, rather than a public one, it is easy to underestimate the public role religion still plays in the world. There is a general Western, European assumption that religion is considered an epiphenomenon, meaning that religion can be caused, however, cannot cause something else. The significant role religion can play in different matters, especially political, is often disregarded, or treated as marginal. In much of the non-Western context, there are several empirical examples where the tendency of overemphasizing the role of religion is frequent, especially in states where religion plays a clear public role (Marshall, 2018). Furthermore, there has been a lot of discussion regarding what role religion plays in modern Muslim countries, not least in Egypt. In Hoffman & Jamal’s article Religion in the Arab Spring: Between Two Competing Narratives, religion and secularization are argued as two entities of process of social change in Egypt. Opposing of one another, they clash, blurring the understanding of which one dominates the public sphere (2014). This was clearly illustrated in the case of the Arab spring in Egypt, and in which ways it partially affected the religious and political culture of the country. Although far from a theocratic country, Islam and Sharia are partially embedded in the Egyptian constitution. The political presence of Islam is also evident as the major political party Freedom and Justice Party, of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) has for long been pushing an all-encompassing Islamist agenda.

With the force of the Arab spring being in full effect, as the people of Egypt demonstrated and called for democratic reform, and enabled Egypt’s first democratic election, MB saw an opportunity to rapidly transform their group from an Egypt’s foremost Islamic opposition group, to a political party. The development MB has undertaken, from originating as an anti-west group of Islamic teachings, to becoming a political opposition group, declaring a national political party, and obtaining the country’s highest political power, is a complex and multifaceted process. Scholars still discuss the various aspects of the group and how these aspects are publicly represented and strategically used to better understand MB’s rise to political power.

MB was primarily founded as a counter-reaction to the western, and secular tendencies and influences in Egypt, and was not intentionally built to govern (Brown, 2013). For long, MB worked with the assumption that although not in any position of any direct political power, their values represented the silent majority (2013, p. 4). During the reign of President Hosni
Mubarak, lasting 30 years (1981-2011), the brotherhood was constantly painted as terrorists, conspirators to overthrow the president, traitors in alliance with USA etc. which seriously hindered the ambitions of MB. MB is an Islamist group advocating for embedment of the Quran and Hadith’s as guidelines of rule in the modern society, and strives for a modern constitution of sharia law as principal guiding texts of governing (ibid.).

The question this thesis will state derives from the desire to better understand the development of modern politicization of religion, and in this case, how it is displayed by MB. This entwining of two forces [religion and politics] is a global phenomenon, exemplifying that national affairs can be both religious and political, not necessarily excluding of one another. It is also not limited to Muslim circumstances. Several Christian parties in Latin America as well as in Europe claim both religious and political ambitions (Marshall, 2018). The United States’ founding documents reference God, as does various other non-Muslim countries’ constitutions. In addition, in south east Asia, religious-political interconnections can be evident (ibid.). Nathan Brown anticipated the difficulties MB would face as a governing party, following their 2012 presidential elections victory. He argued that “a movement that prides itself on its ability to hold fixed positions, but also show great practicality and flexibility will come under real pressure when it attempts to govern” (2013, p. 5). This thesis aims to understand the religious ideology of MB and aims to highlight what role religion has played in the modern political agenda of MB.

1.2 Purpose and Research question

The purpose of this thesis is not to argue that Islam is generally an easier subject to politicization than other religions. This thesis does not try to give the impression of Islam as incomparable with progressive attitudes, democracy and social development. This thesis does not intend to paint a picture of Islamic values as opposite of western Christian/secular values, and this thesis does not reduce Islam as a religion in any way, shape or form. With that said, discussing politicized religion from a western/European perspective, it is often treated with negative connotations (as will be self-evident in the definition of politicized religion). Aware of this, this thesis aims to be as transparent as possible regarding this issue, and aims to focus on objectivity of the study of the case. In that note, this thesis purely aims to highlight the modern situations in which religion can be politicized, in this case of MB, and more comprehensively investigate to what extent it can be proven. By analyzing MB’s own official statements, this thesis will demonstrate how MB politicized religion in the years leading up to the Arab spring and ultimately their seat in government. This thesis investigates how MB depicts their religious
ideology, to understand to what extent MB politicizes religion. This leads us to the two research questions of this paper:

- How do political documents of the Muslim brotherhood depict the religious ideology of the group?
- How does the Muslim brotherhood politicize religion in their political documents?

1.3 Previous research

To understand the purpose of this study, and to limit this study in order ensure the specificity of the research topic of this thesis, it is important to address the previous work on which this thesis builds upon. Several books, articles, and papers have written on the subject of politicizing religion, political Islam and MB in Egypt, and although covering specific topics, these books simultaneously manages to capture such extensive material. In many regards the historical process of MB is often in the focus of the research that has been made around MB. The fact that MB is an Islamist group becomes quite evident and therefore sometimes goes without saying. That the end goal of MB is to implement Sharia (Islamic law) into the constitution of Egypt then also becomes an obvious fact and therefore in some cases does not receive the attention it deserves.

In Muhammed Zahid’s book *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt’s succession crisis* much focus is put on the political reforms of Egypt over the decades following its independence. It also follows the growth of the brotherhood and development from its grass roots to the political party it became in light of the Arab spring. However, it lacks the interconnection between the religious aspect of MB and its implications on the groups rise to political power (Zahid, 2010).

Although writing excellently regarding the sudden transition of power MB experienced during the Arab spring by author Alison Pargeter (2013), it presents more of a hard fact chronology of the events that transpired during that time which has proven useful for the background of this thesis. However, to some extent it neglects the discussion of the potential external and internal mechanism in play. In Hesham al-Awadi’s *The Muslim Brothers in Pursuit of Legitimacy*, the book focuses on the chronology of the political story of MB. Although inclusive of MB’s Islamic ambitions, they are mostly described from a purely political perspective, with little regard to the religious proclamations of the Islamic agenda (Al-Awadi, 2014).

Furthermore, in scholarly articles, the role of religion is introduced in a more prominent way. In articles published, the role of religion in modern Egyptian politics are more clearly
outlined. Brown (2013) dismissed the idea that MB is politically fit for governing and although mainly focuses on the political hinders of MB, acknowledges the force of religion in the matter. In Hoffman & Jamal’s article Religion in the Arab Spring: Between Two Competing Narratives (2014), the specific role that religion both played, and did not play in the 2011 Egyptian uprisings are discussed to greater length, however fail to mention what role religion specifically was played by MB. Lastly, in Muedini’s The Role of Religion in the “Arab Spring”: Comparing the Actions and Strategies of the Islamist Parties (2014), the role of religion in MB is discussed, however merely from the perspective of the strategic efforts made by MB during the actual Uprisings. What the aforementioned books, and previous research arguably neglects in their works, and in their discussions, is to further discuss what role religion did play in the process of the MB gaining political power, and furthermore how MB perceives themselves, and how they depict Islamic principles and values with political intentions.

In Mohammed el-Nawawy & Mohamad Hamas Elmasry’s book (2018) a similar study is conducted using framing textual analysis of MB’s official website documents to examine two years of online content published by the Egyptian MB (2010-2012). Shedding light on the MB’s positions in foundational political events, especially in Egypt, and furthermore highlighting how the group wishes to be perceived by the English/Western audience, the authors conduct a similar study to this thesis. However, as the authors state, the methodological and theoretical purpose of their book is to conduct a media perspective study, and not an analysis of MB’s policy positions, nor how the role of religion plays in MB’s political process (2018, p. viii).

1.4 Material

This thesis will study the historical development of the religious ideology of the Islamist opposition group, MB, to the point of the Arab spring. In order to further investigate the development of MB standpoints on Islamic ideology, and how it reflects their overall political ideology, the primary sources of this study are necessary of introduction. To give a clear comprehension of MB’s standpoints on political affairs, the data provided by their own official English website, Ikhwanweb.com, will be used.

The analysis will draw from the material of the primary source of the official website of MB, which includes:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type of document</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Muslim Brotherhood’s Program”</td>
<td>Official election program of MB</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Muslim Brotherhood Initiatives for Reform in Egypt”</td>
<td>Official policy recommendations for reform</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Election program: Freedom and Justice Party”</td>
<td>Official election program of FJP</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
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These official MB documents outline the political intentions of MB, and what standpoints the group officially takes on different topics as well as states their aspirations as a political party. On Ikhanweb, thousands of documents circulate, both official statements from the group, but also voices of other bloggers, activists, news articles writing about MB, interviews with key figures etc. (Hamza, 2012). These documents are selected as these documents signify the clearest program- and reform documents posted on Ikhanweb, representing official standpoints of MB. The reason for the timeframe for which the material is chosen, is due to the 2005 parliamentary elections, which in a sense was MB’s first official step into the political arena. It is therefore the official statements from MB, as an aspiring political group, only dates to 2005 (The Muslim Brotherhood, 2019). MB is treated as having political ambitions in this thesis, per the nature and intentions of the documents. Furthermore, it is important to note that the official website of MB consists of translations of texts and public statements from Arabic to English. This is important for the acknowledgement of the verification of the authenticity of the documents, and further justify the legitimacy of recognizing these documents as primary sources. However, in a statement by Khaled Hamza, chief executive of the official MB website, explains that although linguistically different, and the Arabic and English websites also differ in editorial leadership convey the same the messages, statements and facts produced by MB and is therefore defined as a primary source (Hamza, 2012).

By choosing three of the websites proposition-papers with an even spread, from its

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1 The number of pages of the document when copied from the website, and pasted in a word document with times new roman font, font size 12, and 1.5 spacing.
launch in 2005 up until before the Arab spring, the documents will serve as primary sources of analysis in this study. The first document is labeled The Muslim Brotherhood’s Program which consists of the group’s official program for the 2005 parliamentarian elections. The document includes various reform propositions: economic, social, infrastructural, development plans, administrational strategies and arguments for implementation of Sharia in rule of law. The second document, labeled Muslim Brotherhood Initiative for Reform in Egypt, was published in 2007, which states MB’s reform proposition for Egypt, in accordance with Sharia law and the state, recommending reform in political, social, religious, legal, foreign policy, educational sphere etc. The third document, labeled Election Program; The Freedom and Justice Party, contains the official program presented by the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) for the 2011 parliamentary elections. Founded in 2011, FJP was established by MB as its official political branch. The political party FJP was granted legal status the same year with intentions of running in the post-Arab spring 2012 Egyptian elections (the first democratic elections in the existence of Egypt) (Shehata, 2011). The FJP program’s different topics are divided into different documents on Ikhanweb, however, a compiled version of the complete program was located from a different site (FJP, 2011), and will be used as reference and as the primary source.

1.5 Theory

This thesis uses social-constructivist theory. The point of departure of any social constructivist theory acknowledges the different constructions which builds the idea of our world, and are all dependent of its context, however, simultaneously recognizes that knowledge is received through different processes of social change, and that knowledge and social action is interconnected. Social constructivism therefor criticizes what is taken for granted, and thrives through hermeneutics, allowing it to apply itself in the research history of religion. In this sense, it allows one to study religion as a political tool, and in the ways it can be used as such, rather than treating religion through traditional definitions. Politicized religion is not subject to one definition, and depending on who one discusses the concept with is variously defined. For example, some Islamic thinkers have defined politicizes religion as a concept in which Allah creates Islam as a religion, whereas people construct it as a political power (Syarif, 2017, p. 444). Bassam Tibi, with regards to the purpose of this study, provides a more pessimistic, while simultaneously more applicable definition: “… politicization of religion is as an effort to manipulate an understanding toward religion through propaganda, indoctrination, and campaign which are socialized to the public.” (Tibi, 1998). In order to operationalize this definition, further clarification is needed to properly be able to identify politicized religion. To
do so, we need to establish what defines *propaganda, indoctrination*, and *campaign*. As they are not clearly defined by Tibi, the author assumes these concepts are defined through their objective definitions, in order to not complicate the matter further. Therefore, the Oxford English dictionary shall serve as source of definition of these concepts in this essay. *Propaganda* is viewed as “information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2019a). *Indoctrination* is regarded as “The process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically” (2019b). *Campaign* is treated as “An organized course of action to achieve a goal” (2019c). In addition, the definition is interpreted as a means of using religion in one’s self-interest rather than used to villainize another religion. Furthermore, due to the wording of the definition, it is vital to first identify MB’s religious ideology, to first establish the “understanding of religion” in which the group wants to socialize to the public, in order to then discuss how the group politicizes this understanding. Finally, it is important to note that the purpose of this study is not to identify empirical examples where MB is politicizing religion, but to identify the empirical examples of the group intentions to do so, as it is only so much the primary documents can provide. Would the purpose of this study have been to empirically identify cases of instances where MB politicizes religion, a whole different set of primary sources would be required.

The politicization of religion varies depending on which religion one is discussing, but also where politicization of religion takes place. Political Islam, or more commonly referred to, Islamism is regarded as a broad concept-framework in which one implements the teachings of Islam in all aspects of life, beyond solely the religious. One of the theoretical conundrums of politicized religion is often the religious character of the phenomena. Social activist movements in less-developed countries have shown to be direct consequences of western cultural and economic domination, which threatens their own cultural and national identities. Hence, religious movements become increasingly stronger as they offer shared ground and suitable means for collective actions, based on well-established traditions and values (Farah, 2009, p. 94) (Mol, 1976) (Seul, 1999, p. 558). When reducing economic and cultural frontiers and barriers, active groups are compelled to seek and reassert their identities through their religious beliefs and values. Analysts of the middle east have explained the failure of development programs, to improve the living standards of the majority of the population, has led to widespread frustration, sparking a resurgence of political Islam (Islamism) (Farah, 2009, p. 96). As previously mentioned, a widespread European view is often that religion itself is considered an *epiphenomenon*, a phenomenon that can be caused but cannot cause something else. This
assumption leads to the claim that religious affairs are in fact political, or economic, or ethic, anything but religious (Marshall, 2018). The role of religion, religious institutions and religious motivations are often disregarded in explaining politics as well as conflict. It is therefore vital to acknowledge that religious claims can serve as a mask for other motives and interests, and the role of religion, beyond what is stated, must therefore be taken into careful consideration. In Ivanescu’s article, she discusses the increasingly blurred line between religion and politics, which is argued could be observed as the invocation of religion in the political discourse (Ivanescu, 2010). Although a valid point, it could be viewed as an understatement, seeing as the discourse in the article depicts the current process of politicalizing religion in European, secular countries. In Muslim countries, like Egypt, the interconnection between religion and politics is a fact. In Egypt, politicized Islam has long played a major role in the constitution of national ideologies. The later political conflict of Egypt stems between conservative ideology based usually on religious principles, and the ideology of secularization and modernization. Various successive Egyptian regimes have manipulated Islam to support their policies as well as to fight competing elites (Farah, 2009, p. 87). Historically speaking, Islam has stood in the center for numerous political strategies in Egypt, for the regime as well as by the military, and independent groups, including MB.

In the context of Egypt, two major political ideologies, which have coexisted in Egyptian political culture for the last two centuries, can be distinguished; the conservative ideology that resorts to Islam as a legitimizing source, and the nationalist ideology stemming from a strong sense of nationhood stepped in thousands of years of history (2009, p. 98). MB is argued as an entity between the two, advocating a nationalist ideology that simultaneously advocates religion as legitimizing on state level, and a religious trend that seeks to integrate the concepts of the universality of religion and nationalism.

1.6 Method

This study, in its simplicity, is a descriptive content analysis. Content analysis is a useful method when collecting and analyzing similar content from different sources. The method is effective in measuring certain phenomena and compiling larger amounts of material and data (Nelson & Woods Jr., 2011, p. 110). Content analysis is based on the assumption that uniform relationships exists between the symbol and its meaning(s), as in the case of this thesis would entail the inclusion of religion in political affairs purported by MB, and the people’s desire to see that practically implemented. When applying descriptive content analysis, it allows an analysis of the content beyond simply quantitatively measuring variables of the results to
identify various patterns (ibid, p. 111). As a qualitative study, the descriptive feature of content analysis allows one to further analyze what the content of the official documents can tell us about religion’s role in the political ambitions of MB, beyond the fact that it exists. By presenting the content descriptively, it allows for a more in-depth analysis of the presented results in the study. One restrictive quality of this method is that the results of the study is often limited to the chosen material, and therefore more difficult to draw any generalizable conclusions, beyond the ones made in the case of the study (ibid, p. 117).

I therefore limit the analysis of this study to the results of the presented documents. In each document, a chronological description of references in the document when religion is mentioned and can be argued as used in a politicized way will be presented. To identify the religious ideology of MB, it is necessary to understand the various ways Islam is mentioned and also depicted. Thereafter, by analyzing what context Islam is being treated in the text, one can start to form a better understanding of how Islam is being politicized. When the three documents have been promptly presented, they will be summarized and analyzed accordingly. Finally, a concluding discussion will give an overview of the results and analysis.

2. A brief history of the Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood is considered the largest Islamist movement in the world. Founded in Egypt 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, a religious preacher and schoolteacher, the group primarily functioned as an organization where Islamic history was taught and advocated for the implementation of traditional Sharia preached in all aspects of life, from the private individual to the public state. One of the more controversial parts of the founder’s teachings, which seemingly appealed to the newer generation of its members, was the claim al-Banna made that Islam represented a complete and totalizing way of life (el-Nawawy & Elmasry, 2018, p. 24). During its early years, the core principles of MB developed by anti-colonial/west and pro-Islamic ideas and attitudes. al-Banna saw the economic struggles, non-religious education and overall moral decadence as forces of the Europeans, more specifically the colonization state Great Brittan (Obaid, 2017, p. 5). All along, MB’s ideological standpoint of the group has been clear, and although their practical manner has later taken many forms, the fundamental religious principles of the group leaves little room for practical as well as ideological flexibility. During its first decade, MB dedicated much of its energy to increase the memberships of the group, and already in 1949, the group had established transnational branches and had gained up towards 600 000 members (ibid.). During the premature years of the group as an international actor (which remains a core method of public engagement on their part), MB focused on a
bottom-up approach of incremental social reform which included mostly of informal social work, as well as improving infrastructural shortcomings in Egypt, helping building schools, hospitals etc. (2017, p. 6). MB is regarded as the Arab world’s oldest and most influential Islamist movements, and is highly seen as the “mother” of political Islam, and establishes its international credibility through its transnational branching with neighboring countries and elected officials in various countries representing MB in different capacities. Its highest presence, outside of Egypt, can be seen in Kuwait, Jordan, Yemen and Algeria, to name a few countries with autonomous political ties to MB. In many states where the MB is represented, the parties are recognized by their individual states, however is not the case in Egypt, where the political party for most of its existence, from period to period, has been denied legal status as a social and political movement (Al-Awadi, 2014, p. 17). The political contradiction MB has experienced during its existence have been excessive and sought out by many. The groups relationships with the Egyptian leaders over the decades have been unstable to say the least. Regardless which regimes MB has endured, whether it be the King Farouk, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat or the Hosni Mubarak regimes, the relationship between government and MB has had similar characteristics. Although MB has for most part been subject to regime repression regardless of the regime, it occasionally also featured a tit-for-tat type of relationship, although often balancing on the thin thread, leading to brief openings and shorter periods where the two parties cooperated (el-Nawawy & Elmasry, 2018, p. 25).

The rule of the Nasser regime started on a good note as MB and Nasser both supported the 1952 revolution, overthrowing King Farouk and also ending the British occupation and securing Egyptian independency in 1954. However, the same year the positive attitude Nasser showed MB quickly turned opposite after an assassination attempt on Nasser for which MB was to blame for, despite the lack of evidence to link MB to the attempted murder (2018, p. 26). Although the Nasser period was a foundational period in MB existence where intellectual and ideological position where established, it was also infected by the anti-MB campaign led by Nasser resulting in mass arrests of MB members and leaders, and several executions (ibid.).

Anwar Sadat ruled 1970-1981 during which the overall political development in Egypt allowed for MB to make significant progress as an organization, drafting important university student representatives, expanded their media coverage and cooperating with government on anti-extremism efforts, ultimately allowed the organization some political influence and ability to shape the state (2018, p. 28).

Assassinated in 1981, the Sadat rule ended abruptly, and the 30-year rule of Hosni Mubarak began, which proved most testing of MB, who was during Mubarak’s regime largely
treated as “the single largest and most organized opposition group in Egypt”. Under the pressure of the Mubarak regime, MB was still allowed to carry out social- and charity work, however only through the implied recognition of the Mubarak regime as legitimate. Simultaneously, MB manages during the 90’s to cooperate and create alliances with various syndicates (such as doctors, pharmacists, engineers, dentists and lawyers) as well as political parties, granting them some few official parliamentary seats. It was not until the 2005 parliamentarian elections when MB as its own party shockingly won 88 out of the 444 seats (almost 20% of the total seats), which in a sense both became their first official foot into politics, as well as their first real directs impact on Egyptian politics (el-Nawawy & Elmasry, 2018, pp. 28-30). In the 2010 parliamentarian elections, the success-story was not repeated. Following Mubarak’s massive 2007 MB crackdown, the Mubarak had managed to suppress all factions of the group as a significant opposition party in parliament. What followed was the 2011 Arab spring, which spread quickly to Egypt where popular protests sparked massive gatherings of Egyptians demanding democratic reform and the ouster of Mubarak. MB did not officially endorse the demonstration until four days following the first protest of the Egyptian Arab spring; the 25th January revolution. These were the protests which ultimately lead to Mubarak’s ousted in 2011 (2018, p. 31). Shortly after the first demonstration, during the Mubarak-transition period, MB decided to officially enter politics as real condensers for political power. MB quickly institutionalized its part in the removal of Mubarak by announcing its official political party, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) (ibid.). After acting as a underground movement, outlawed and banned for most of its entire existence, MB finally was in a position to play the key public role on the post-Mubarak political scene (2018, p. 44).

Between periods during the 70’s and 80’s, the MB was banned as an organization and much of the leadership of MB was imprisoned. The governments constant denial of the legitimacy of the MB has had a tremendous effect on the successfulness of the development of the group. As a group under the whip of the government, the relatability to the situation of the people, and the relationship that has enabled them to develop between state and society has been in extremely beneficial to the MB. Part of the group’s ability to survive and endure governmental denial, banning, and imprisonment, is mainly due to the group’s ability to be pragmatic, creating new alliances, gaining the support of the public, adapting ideas and attitudes, making them more susceptible to other members, such as other parties, democracy-activists and women (Al-Awadi, 2014). These social traits have been characterizing of MB since its establishment as a social and political movement, and has been vital for the growth and expansion of the MB. Through the efforts made by MB through the social actions taken by
the group, the interaction with the people allowed MB into contact with millions of people and them in contact with MB and their vision for Egypt (Zahid, 2010, p. 72). Furthermore, it let MB to demonstrate to the people its capability to provide social and economic guarantees to the Egyptian population. The ability to provide to a population on the scale MB managed to during its first decades as a movement laid ground for its reputation and allowed for the groups potential to challenge the Egyptian government as the provider of the nation. Although these changes in the MB dynamical structure as a movement being explained mainly through socio-economic and political shifts during the 80’s and 90’s, the implications this flexible pragmatism has on the religious ideology of MB and their legitimacy to govern as a future Islamist political party will be vital in the upcoming analysis.

3. Results from Ikhanweb

3.1 The Muslim brotherhood’s program

MB’s program was published prior to the public parliamentarian elections in 2005 where it was stated the various standpoints and reforms on which MB used as its agenda for the upcoming elections. The document covers goals, policies and strategies discussed on the various political topics MB takes stance on such as; economy, social questions, political reform, national security, education, environment, public health etc. The text begins by introducing the Islamic method, which states having the necessary characteristics to constitute reform in Egypt

“its mechanisms of reforming humans in order to let the high moral values prevail; thus, each man wishes for others what he wishes for himself and faith increases. Consequently, man’s conscience comes to life and everyone feels Allah’s Presence; thus, the rates of corruption in society decrease on economic, political and social levels.” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007b).

The Islamic method is thereafter described in further detail, both as an ideology but also in a practical manner, with references to the teachings of the prophet Muhammad. In addition, MB’s juridical ambitions of implementing Sharia is clearly suggested as equally elevating of the individual as described in the Islamic method. Furthermore, MB sees the future governance of Egypt as a state that combines both state and religion (2007b). The members of MB consider themselves as Islamic preachers of the wisdom and good teachings of Allah in order to apply Sharia through peaceful means.

Following the introduction of the document, the group’s vision for the future Egypt is summarized and divided into three sets; Revival (includes a vision on freedom, human rights,
rights of citizenship, moral values, culture, development of man, media, youth, women, and children), Development (includes a vision on agriculture, industry, constructional development, education scientific research, health, and environment), and Reform (includes three visions; #1 a vision on the political reform which includes domestic and foreign policy, civil society, national security and the local ruling #2 a vision on economic reform which is considered about unemployment, budget deficit, internal and external debt and inflation #3 a vision on social reform which tackles promoting moral values, social security services, insurance and retirement rights and health insurance).

In the first point, Revival, there is not any specific references identified, other than the quotes from the Quran which is used to justify their standpoints on human rights, values, culture, women, and media. In the second point, Development, the first stated goal of their program is

“Achieving justice, liberty, equality in the light of Allah’s law (the Islamic Sharia)”. On the topic of Education before the university one of the development points is “The necessity of revising the curricula and the education plans of Al-Azhar and promoting its quality, and connecting it with the needs of the country and the Arab and Islamic world including the men of religion, scientists and men of education.” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007b).

Al-Azhar is the oldest of University/Mosque complexes in Egypt, and has in addition to university education, a national network of Sunni schools, overseeing approximately two million students. On the MB’s program’s third point, Reform, three separate fields are included in their vision for the reform they see necessary for Egypt: political reform, economic reform, and social reform. The principles MB asserts, regarding the reform they wish to implement, envisions the state system as republican, parliamentarian, and constitutional system of governance, “under the umbrella of the principles of Islam” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007b). MB further states the system is based on the on the confirmation of general freedoms for all citizens without discriminations or segmentation of these freedoms, seeing freedom as a condition for progress and it is a crucial starting point in all aspects of successful reform. Following the topic of health and environment aspects in the election program, one of the most important means of treatment according to MB

“Connecting the health and the environmental interests with Islam, through the mass media; as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said; The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak one and, Cleanliness is a part of faith.” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007b)

The program concludes with a reflective summary of the reasons MB is running for parliament
and how they value the process of elections, and is conveyed by the then sitting chairman of MB, Mr. Muhammad Mahdi Akef. He introduces the text by reassuring the people of the legitimacy of their cause and their vision for Egypt

“The eighth legislative course of Egyptian Parliament came to an end, affirming for the Egyptian society, officials and people, Arab and Islamic worlds, and for the whole world that the motto the Muslim brotherhood raised i.e. “Islam is the Solution”, was not playing with Islamic emotions of the people, as some claim; or is an unachievable motto as some others claimed. What the deputies of the Muslim Brotherhood in the last five years confirmed that our Islamic project of setting up a regime is achievable. The final goal of the Muslim brotherhood to get in the Parliament or other elected councils, syndicates and all civil society establishments, is set up the Muslim society which leads to setting up the Islamic state in which good for all human beings, weather Muslims or non-Muslims, is achieved.” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007b)

MB specifically reaffirms the goal to which they have been struggling to accomplish for many years prior, further also reaffirming that spreading Islam in its entirety, and through its thoroughness, as a method of ruling, guarantees stability, development, honor, prosperity, sovereignty, security, truth and justice

“All these will be achieved only by Islam as it is indeed the solution for all our problems, and it is the way to achieve all what we need and wish in all fields, economically, politically, culturally, socially and educationally for the sake of our homeland (Egypt); including men, women, the rich, the poor, the rulers and the ruled. How great Allah is when He stated, “Verily, this brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me (and no other).” (Al-Anbiya: 92). For that all, we say and declare with all pride that “Islam is the solution.”” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007b)

Conclusively, Chairman Akef prays to Allah and asks for strength and wisdom and the fortune of being successful in the upcoming elections and to get more people to see the MB for what they claim they are, and together build the nation and home of god and people.

3.2 Muslim brotherhood Initiatives for Reform in Egypt

The opening statement of the public document on Ikhwanweb labeled Muslim Brotherhood Initiatives for Reform in Egypt is as follows

“The Arab and Muslim worlds currently witness continuous and persistent attempts aiming at imposing a change from the outside. These attempts take form of force sometimes and strong pressures at other times. We are certain these outside do not, in essence or goals, target real reform for the sake of the people, but rather the continuous hegemony of the United States, its control over the areas destiny and fortunes, the superiority of the Zionists entity that usurped Palestine, in addition to implanting regimes more cooperative in carrying out Washington’s general strategy.” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007a)
The opening statements are followed by four passages from the Quran which for most part reference the good in people, the good in Islam, and how the most comprehensive reform, to strengthen both, is the appliance of Sharia law and Islamic legal code in order to please Allah. This document, as the title reveals, is a reform policy recommendation paper published in 2007 on Ikhwanweb and constitutes 13 “fields” of reform in which they recommend change. These fields are much like the topics of the 2005 electoral program, namely; political, economic, electoral, legal, social etc. However, before these fields are presented, the Chairman of MB, Mohammad Mahdi Akef addresses four points in need for further clarification. Firstly, it is stated MB rejects foreign hegemonies and foreign interference of any kind in Egypt’s affairs in Islamic and Arabic regions. Secondly, MB claims that the comprehensive reform they present is not only a national demand but also an Islamic one. Thirdly, political reform is a priority as the group believes that through political reform, the rest of the country will thrive. Lastly, MB calls on all Egyptians to help bear the burden of these reform, as it is too big of a task for government or any individual political entity, thus requires national cooperation. The statement that follows is not entirely clear whether Chairman Akef is referring to “we” as the brotherhood or the Egypt as a nation, however, based on the context of which the statement is being made, it is treated as addressing the Egyptian people (including the brotherhood), admitting they have steered away from the goals their group originally aimed towards

“It is only right to acknowledge that we have gone very far from the true path of Islam which urges us to adopt the useful, take the realms of wisdom if found as these are our targets. We stand no chance of achieving development in any field of our life unless we return to our religion, apply our Sharia (Islamic law), follow the path of science and modern technology and acquire as much knowledge as we can, in light of great religion’s basic and moving from its principles and values.” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007a)

Before entering the “fields” of reform presented by MB, they establish the foundations to which they claim these reforms. Much of it is based on the further implementation of Sharia law as the most effective and righteous way to improve the lives of the Egyptians

“…This mission could be achieved through building the Muslim individual, Muslim family, Muslim government and the Muslim state that leads Islamic countries, gather all Muslims, regain Islamic glory, gives lost Muslim land back to its owners and carry the flag of the call to Allah, thus making the world happy via teachings and right of Islam.” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007a)
This is what MB claims to be their target, as well as their method. The first field of reform elaborated on the building of the individual, where MB emphasizes surrendering to god as the ultimate reform of the individual. “The Egyptian people is religious by nature” they claim and by doing so stresses the need for proper Islamic education of both man and especially of the younger generations (2007a). MB also states their ambitions to achieve

- Respect of the nation’s foundations represented in Allah, his angels, Holy books, messengers, the Hereafter (afterlife), and abiding by Allah’s rule.
- Upbringing our children on the principles of faith and righteousness.
- Freedom of call to explain the principles of Islam, its nature and features, most importantly the fact that it is comprehensive in organizing all walks of life.
- Filtering mass media, removing all that contradicts the rulings of Islam and the givens of straight manners.
(Muslim Brotherhood, 2007a)

In the second field, concerning political reform, MB stresses the commitment they have for a democratic government, presidential, constitutional, and parliamentary, in the framework of Islamic principles. MB also stresses the individual freedom in political participation. MB also stresses the freedom of individual believes, as well the freedom of practicing rites for all acknowledged divine religions (ibid.). In its third field, legal reform, it becomes a matter of security for MB, arguing legal reform as a milestone for comprehensive reform

“Changing the laws and purifying them to be in conformity with the principles of Islamic Sharia as it is the major source of legislation, under the second article of constitution.” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007a)

MB acknowledges the need for economic reform, and in the fifth field recognizes liberal trade policy to further global cooperation with the interest of the Egyptian people firsthand. However, MB also believes

“the economic system of Egypt should stem from Islam as a religion and a complete, comprehensive way of life that stresses freedom of economic activity…” (Muslim Brotherhood, 2007a)

In the ninth field, of social reform, MB believes in social peace and integrity as key components necessary for any form of significant reform. This includes fighting poverty, drugs and addiction, decreasing class marginalization, and increasing living standards, through institutions within a comprehensive Islamic system. MB is committed to work towards encouraging the spirit of being religious in the society. Much of this also applies to the twelfth
field, regarding culture, stressing the culture of Egypt stems and represents Islamic principles to develop the individual as well as the society.

3.3 The Freedom and Justice Party Election Program

Prior to the 2011 parliamentarian elections, MB declared their official political party, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). The party later the same year was granted legal status, meaning they were given legal permission to run for office. Short thereafter, the party released its official election program. The program is divided into five parts: (1) Urgent issues, (2) Freedoms and Political reform, (3) Social Justice, (4) Integrated Development, (5) Regional Leadership. Due to the focus of this study, the first and last part of the program will be excluded from the presentation of the document – except for the section “Religious Leadership” in the fifth part of the program – as they do not significantly contribute to the following analysis.

In the second part of the election program, in the subsection Characteristics of the state, FJP addresses the desire they claim the people has for establishing an “enlightened”, viable political system that interacts with the democratic political atmosphere FJP wishes to build. FJP further advocates the democratic characteristics of political accountability of people in power, and how the peaceful transitions of power would help build the environment for integrated development, social justice, and leadership that would lead the party to establish the features of the desired civil Islamic State (FJP, 2011, p. 10). However, in order to achieve this goal,

“This requires a new constitution, with enlightened principles of Sharia (Islamic law) as its frame of reference and the source to its articles and the subsequent changes in the legal system. This would safeguard for Egyptian citizens all their social, economic, political and other rights, without prejudice.” (ibid.)

The Islamic principles in which the new constitution would be established is part in the Islamic modern democracy FJP envisions for Egypt. This is strengthened by arguing for the nurturing nature of Sharia in which it increases morality, worship and aspects of faith, as well as it regulates them, through definitive texts and general rules and principles in order to keep a balance. Furthermore, FJP stresses the civilian and democratic nature of an Islamic State.

“The state is civil and civilian, for the Islamic State is civilian in nature. It is not a military state ruled by armed forces who get in power by military coups, and it is not ruled like a dictatorship, nor is it a police state controlled by the security forces, nor is it a theocracy – govern by the clergy or by divine right… In fact, the rulers in the Islamic State are citizens elected according to the will of the people; and the nation is the source of authority.” (FJP, 2011)
In addition, the fundamental political principles presented by FJP defines freedom as a human right and one of the most important objectives of the Sharia. FJP is determined to protect all Egyptians, Muslims as well as Christians, and see the different religions as integral in the fabric of Egypt as one country. The freedom of religious expression is also clearly stated in the program, which ensures the guaranteed rights by the constitution of the law, and by Sharia, that Christians must not be deprived of the right to build churches (FJP, 2011, p. 15). There is no mention of the religious rights of those other than Christian faith.

The part of the program which discusses integrated development includes a sub-section discussing human development, which FJP states they give priority to (2011, p. 23). The FJP argues the individual is the effective tool for all desired reform and change, and that a nation’s process can only be measured by its achievements in the field of human development. The ultimate goal of all reform is freedom, and this indicates the freedom in the sense that was earlier mentioned. For men “it is of paramount importance to become an Egyptian citizen, with a good rich personality spiritually, intellectually, scientifically and physically in order to create a morally committed and intellectually mature generation...”. The same applies to women as “The basic principle of Islamic law is equality between women and men in rights and duties.”. For children improving children’s well being “can be achieved by educating young people – in theory and in practice – the principles of Islam and morality...”. FJP makes a clear statement that in order to develop as a human being, Islamic principles are vital, no matter sex or age (2011, pp. 24-25).

Regarding religious leadership in Egypt, FJP states the following

“...The Egyptian people are amongst the oldest and most devoted to their religion. They also have the most respect for the religious morals and values. They consider the religion of Islam the supreme authority and fundamental framework for them in all fields. Therefore, our program relies on religious institutions and expects them to play a prominent role in promoting the various cultural, political, social and other aspects of Egyptian life. Indeed, these institutions played an essential role in establishing Egypt's leading position in education as well as religious and spiritual guidance. In this context, reform and development of the religious affairs sector, as well as the advancement of Al-Azhar are necessary for the revitalization and rejuvenation of Egyptian society, to restore to it the status it deserves with its glorious history and its prominent place in religious heritage. Thus, it is of paramount importance to restore to Egypt its religious leadership position in Arab, Islamic and global domains.” (FJP, 2011, p. 41)

FJP follows this claim by structuring different points on how they wish to implement legislative and administrative reform in order to improve the religious leadership, in which many of the arguments made are strikingly similar to the ones made for the general reforms made by the different part of the program.
4. Analysis

4.1 Analysis Muslim brotherhood Initiatives for Reform in Egypt

Campaigning an understanding of Islam

In the MB’s 2005 parliamentarian election program Chairman Akef states “Islam is the solution” which has been an important statement and has had a significant role in the continued statements made in all the documents presented. The implication MB’s slogan has, is vital to clearly understand their intentions for Islam in Egypt and in their overall political ambition.

Islam as the solution, when not specified, is regarded to represent the solution for Egypt as a nation. One could argue that this implies Islam being integrated and imbedded in all aspects of the Egyptian life for the country to heal and progress. This can further be confirmed as this is specifically what MB historically has stated in various occasions. Therefore, politicizing religion in the way presented in the documents is a necessity for MB in order to prove to the Egyptian people that Islam, in fact, is the solution. This is demonstrated in the first citation where MB argues the Islamic method as an increased presence with Allah, therefore decreasing corruption. As the Islamic Method is regarded as both an ideology of MB and a practical method of governance, it gives the MB the opportunity to invoke it into the group’s religious ideology, as well as use it in their political agenda.

Furthermore, referring to themselves (all members of MB) as preachers of good Islamic faith and the good teachings of the prophet Muhammad, implies that MB holds a set of rules, teachings and principles of Islam higher than others. One could argue this causes them to, per definition, manipulate an understanding of how MB’s religious ideology is perceived through the Islamic principles, values, and teachings which are in accordance with MB’s political intentions, which they through their website socializes to the public. To broaden the understanding of the vagueness of MB’s ambitions to implement Sharia on the Egyptian constitution, one of the stated goals of MB, on the topic of development, is to achieve justice, liberty and equality, in the light of Allah’s law. Not only is this goal left unspecified, but it also includes three abstract concepts, Justice, liberty and equality which can be defined and applicable in several ways. Therefore, seemingly one could further argue the politicization of religion in order to understand how MB highlights the width Islam has in positively affecting whatever it becomes subject to. This is further demonstrated in the results as to where this religious empowerment can affect political subjects, including health, environment, economics, legislation, etc.
The reaffirmation that their goal to establish an Islamic state “in which good for all human beings, whether Muslim or non-Muslims, is achieved”, although not always following the path they claim they follow, MB still are determined to achieve this ultimate goal. However, they rely on having elected representatives in parliament, elected councils, syndicates and social establishments that can speak for MB’s vision of an Islamic state, and the measures necessary to turn it into a reality.

4.2 Analysis of Reform initiative  
Campaining an understanding of Islam

The opening statements of this document gives a sense that the Muslim identity is threatened. From beyond the Arabic and Muslim world, Egyptian Muslims are subject to attacks by domestic forces, and that any interference beyond the domestic sphere is acting only in self-interest and ignoring the wellbeing of the Egyptian people. In the statement addressed by chairman Akef, it is clarified MB rejects any involvement of foreign hegemonies due to this claim. In addition, he states the reform suggested by MB is not only demanded by the public, but also by Islam. It speaks to the religiosity of the purpose of the reform initiative as strengthening the people, as well as Islam, thus the identity of Egypt. Here, as in the 2005 election program, MB acknowledges the divergence of the “true path of Islam” as a confession of their shortcomings as a people who can directly affect the development of Egypt as a country. However, this confessional statement is simultaneously made to highlight the necessity of Islam as the tool to improve the lives of all Egyptians. By returning to Islam and the principles and values of Islam (although unspecified what principles and values) is the only solution, applying Sharia (Islamic law) and rebuilding Egypt as a nation.

Indoctrinating an understanding of Islam

The Muslim identity is also repeated in the reform proposition paper, and the strengthened identity of the Egyptian Muslim is a priority of MB to achieve. It further builds on the threat that Islam currently faces, according to MB and advocates further for a reestablishment of the traditional values and principles of Islam, “regaining Islamic glory, and giving lost Muslim land back to its owners…” arguably stretching political Islam to interact with geopolitical matters. For MB, this is action that would benefit the world, not just Muslims. Nevertheless, the four points made in the first field of reform, as to how Islam is to strengthen the individual once again seemingly appeals to the religious identity of the Egyptian people. The second point made, “upbringing our children on the principles of faith and righteousness” relates back to a quote from the 2005 election program regarding “the necessity of revising the curricula and the education plans of Al-Azhar and promoting its quality…” which then corroborates a vision of
a national Islamic based education for the coming generations which is based on the upheld principles and values which MB holds close to heart, which in that case is in accordance with the theory politicizes Islam through indoctrination.

4.3 Analysis of FJP’s program

Campaigning an understanding of Islam

In the continuation of themes addressed in the documents presented, it can be established the pattern of inclusivism MB is abundantly clear to invoke. Democratic principles are always prior to the implementation of Sharia MB ultimately soughs after. Although inclusive of the people of Egypt, reassuring the religious freedoms of Christians, addressing women’s rights in society, caring for the younger and older generations, MB is exclusive of that outside Egyptian borders. Showing their awareness of the outside forces’ efforts to imposing change in Egypt is promptly used to further enforce the necessity for strengthened nationalistic Egyptian identity. How the Egyptian identity is to be strengthened is exemplified in various topics, ultimately referencing Islamic values as the basis for any type of starting point of the development of Egypt.

Despite its undeniable political-religious ambitions stated by MB, they also acknowledge the nature of the Islamic state they wish to establish, stressing it would not be ruled as a dictatorship, nor as a military/police state, or as a theocracy, but as a democracy. This can be argued as valid due to the social ideological grounds laid out by the group during the 80’s and 90’s as anti-violent, and establishing of social work in around the country, as well as publically supporting and advocating the electing of official political figures and parties through elections. Furthermore, the group promotes the development of individuals in Egypt through Islamic principles. As the absolute majority of the Egyptian population are Muslims, arguing in order to further the development of individuals, regardless of sex, age, profession or social status through Islam could be argues as appealing to the religious identities of the population as a means of gaining political support.

Indoctrinating an understanding of Islam

In the program, as in the 2007 document, the importance of an Islamic educational system that upholds the principles and values of the Muslim national identity is repeatedly stressed:  “Therefore, our program relies on religious institutions and expects them to play a prominent role in promoting the various cultural, political, social and other aspects of Egyptian life. Indeed, these institutions played an essential role in establishing Egypt's leading position in education as well as religious and spiritual guidance.”. It is in this statement made clear for the intention of MB to implement Islamic thought into education spanning generations to come,
not simply relevant to current people of Egypt. The educational program is presented as a necessity to ensure the future of Islam, and also MB.

5. Discussion of analysis
This section of the study aims to understand the established results through the presented theory, and to answer the research question of this thesis. As exemplified in the analysis of the different documents from MB’s official website, there are clear intentions of MB to politicize religion in the efforts made by the group to gain public support and political power. Based on a founding idea that Islam is the solution, MB seeks to implement Sharia regulated Islamic principles and values in political topics, with the promise of prosperity, equality and development of Egypt.

All documents show implications of the ambition of MB to implement Islamic law (Sharia) into the Egyptian constitution as well as into national reform in various topics which has been presented throughout the three documents. With quotes of statements made in various topics, form social, to economic, legal, human development, infrastructure, moral values, culture etc., across a period of six years between the documents, one simple conclusion can be made regarding MB’s religious ideology, which is, according to MB, the understanding that “Islam is the solution” is literal. This should come to no surprise given the founding principles of the group, established by MB’s founder Hassan al-Banna. However, given the modern political scene of Egypt, one could argue the totality of their religious ideology is unclear as to how it deals with the various complex political matters of the modern state. Much of the implementation of Sharia which is offered as a solution to the problems of Egypt are left unexplained of the specific details of how it is to be implemented and how it then becomes a solution instead of a continued problem.

The documents are filled with reform and policy suggestions that can be described as progressive, democratic, and inclusive. They are also ultimately founded on a set of Islamic principles, specifically in accordance with the religious ideology of MB. One could therefore argue that these progressive policy proposals, and reform initiatives become contradictory due to the underspecified elaboration of what and how specific Islamic principles are to supply the ‘Islamic solution’. It is important to acknowledge the context in which Islam is being politicized, which is in a highly religious country, where religion plays a considerable public role, and where religious references are included in the Egyptian constitution. In this context, it is understandable, the extent which Islam is politicized by MB. When religion already is an important part of the national identity, while simultaneously playing a significant public role,
it should come as no surprise when MB envisions to implement Sharia as the regulating governing force of Egypt.

Historically, MB has for most part been at the mercy of the state, denied legal status and political participation, treated as a threat. Being left little throughout the decades, enduring various regimes, MB has developed close relationships with the population, and the social traits MB currently encompasses gives the group the characteristics of a social movement, and is demonstrated in their pragmatism as a group. Having these characteristics could be argued as a key ingredient regarding the way MB has been described to politicize religion. MB’s historical success is much due to the pragmatic nature of the group, creating new alliances with other groups and political parties, supporting the public, adopting new attitudes and ideas, allowing them to become susceptible to a wider set of groups of people. It has allowed the group in later years to pride itself on its ability to hold fixed positions, but also show great practicality and flexibility, which has become evident with the development of this thesis. The group has been able to hold fast the position of its religious ideology since MB was founded, whilst showing pragmatic and progressive policy and reform recommendations in social standards, democracy, women’s and children’s rights, religious freedoms and various other topics. This paper concludes that the method of demonstrating a progressive attitude toward political change, combined with the fixed position of their religious ideology, has allowed MB to politicize religion in a discrete but prominent way allowing the political-religious ambitions of the Muslim brotherhood to hide in plain sight.
6. Conclusion
The research question in the beginning of this thesis asked “How do political documents of the Muslim brotherhood depict the religious ideology of the group, and in what way can it help understand how the Muslim brotherhood politicizes religion?” which through a descriptive content analysis aimed to better understand the practical discourse of the concept *politicized religion*, and how it could be identified and used in a specific context. The material this thesis used consisted of three official political documents from MB’s official English website, Ikhwanweb; one reform policy recommendation paper, and two official election programs for parliament, one representing the group as a social movement, and the other representing the group as a political movement. Analyzing these three documents from Ikhwanweb, the religious ideology of MB was identified as all-encompassing Islamic and further showed evident of the intentions of MB of politicizing Islam as means of pursuit of political power. As per the definition of *politicized religion*, I could argue for the politicization of religion in the documents presented as definite. Much of the content of these documents included either reference to, or justification of Islam as necessary in order to tackle the political issues Egypt faced during the publication of each respective document. Spanning over a six-year timeframe between the documents, various similarities were found with regards to campaigning and indoctrination of the understanding of Islam the MB wished to socialize to the public through their website. How MB came to politicize religion to the extent they did is argued a combination of pragmatism as a political party, demonstrating modern and progressive policy and reform recommendations, in social standards, democracy, women’s and children’s rights, religious freedoms and various other topics, whilst simultaneously including their firm position of their religious ideology in the same policy and reform recommendations. Further research could theorize general themes of how religion is politicized, allowing for a more generalizable result of the analysis, however is left undiscussed as it does not serve the purpose of this study, as it requires a further analysis of the various contexts in which religion can be politicized.
Bibliography

**Primary sources**


**Secondary literature**


