THE STRUGGLE OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS FOR POLITICAL POWER: THE CASES OF TURKEY AND EGYPT

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ABSTRACT

THE STRUGGLE OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS FOR POLITICAL POWER: THE CASES OF TURKEY AND EGYPT

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Religious organizations have been forming different relationships with state institutions to capture more power and reach more resources in many contexts. While providing social services regarding religion, education, health, and material aid, they realize their spiritual, economic, and social goals by broadening their scope of influence over the public and the economic and political spheres. This study examines how religious organizations seize political power, expand their supporter base, and become crucial actors in socio-political and socio-economic spheres. Two main strategies that the organizations follow are discussed in this study. First, the organizations may ally with an existing political party and stay out of the political arena as much as possible, as the Gülen Movement did. Second, they may choose to participate in politics either by forming a political party or nominating its candidates for any elections, as the Muslim Brotherhood had done throughout its experience within the Egyptian political context. The detailed examination of these strategies and their consequences has shown that the former was relatively more successful.

ÖZET

DINI ORGANIZASYONLARIN SIYASI GÜÇ MÜCADELESI: TÜRKIYE VE MISIR ÖRNEKLERI

EKİN BAYUR

UYUŞMAZLIK ANALİZİ VE ÇÖZÜMÜ YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, TEMMUZ 2021

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ateş Ali Altınordu

Anahtar Kelimeler: dini organizasyonlar, devlet, güç mücadelesi, Türkiye, Mısır

Dini organizasyonlar, birçok bağlamda daha fazla güç elde etmek ve daha fazla kaynağa ulaşmak için devlet kurumlarıyla farklı ilişkiler kurmaktadır. Din, eğitim, sağlık ve maddi yardım konularında sosyal hizmetler sunarken, kamusal, ekonomik ve siyasi alanda etki alanlarını genişleterek manevi, ekonomik ve sosyal hedeflerini gerçekleştirmeyi amaçlarlar. Bu çalışma, dini organizasyonların siyasi gücü nasıl ele geçirdiğini, destekçi tabanını nasıl genişlettiğini ve nasıl sosyo-politik ve sosyo-ekonomik alanlarda önemli aktörler haline geldiğini incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada organizasyonların izlediği iki ana strateji tartışılmaktadır. Birincisi, organizasyonlar, Türkiye'de Gülencilerin yaptığı gibi, mevcut bir siyasi partiyle ittifak kurabilir ve siyasi arenadan mümkün olduğunca uzak durabilir. İkincisi, Müslüman Kardeşler'in Mısır siyasi bağlamındaki deneyiminde görüldüğü gibi, ya bir siyasi parti kurarak ya da herhangi bir seçim için kendileri aday göstererek siyasete dahil olmayı seçebilirler. Bu stratejilerin ve sonuçlarının ayrıntılı incelenmesi, ilkinin nispeten daha başarılı olduğunu gösteriyor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my mother,
who has been my role model ever since I was a little girl

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1. INTRODUCTION

Religious organizations and their relationship with state institutions and political actors have been one of the most vital discussion topics regarding the influence these organizations have over social, political, and economic areas. The prominence of the religious organizations in those fields becomes apparent, especially when the organizations capture too much power, undertake the duties of the state unofficially, and become crucial actors who affect decision-making processes in these areas.

On the other hand, religious organizations aim to capture power to realize their spiritual, economic, or social goals by broadening their follower base. Therefore, especially in countries where the state could not or does not undertake the duties such as providing social services, the religious organizations appear to be service providers, both for broader political and social goals and the sake of their spiritual teachings.

By providing social services, religious organizations satisfy both the spiritual obligations and the needy in society (Arslan Köse 2019). In that sense, they create a follower base for the organization, in which social, religious, and economic needs are fulfilled. For these reasons, the sense of commitment of the individuals in these organizations creates a "brotherhood" that can easily affect civil society's social and political dynamics. Therefore, these organizations become important playmakers, especially in politics, considering their ability to lead these highly committed followers without assuming full responsibility. However, entry into the political arena to capture political power requires a strategic calculation of costs and benefits (Kirdiş 2015).

In this context, this study examines how religious organizations capture political power, extend their follower base and become crucial actors in socio-political and socio-economic spheres. It analyzes in particular two main strategies, namely forming alliances with existing political actors and participating in politics as an independent body with its own agenda. By examining these strategies and their

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consequences, I aim to find out whether one strategy is relatively more successful in the struggle for political power.

This research seeks to contribute to the existing literature in two ways. First, international comparisons regarding religious organizations with Sufi backgrounds have not been made yet by political science or sociology scholars. While the religious communities such as cemaats in Turkey and their historical background are discussed to some extent (Aviv 2018; Turam 2004; Yavuz 2003), these organizations are rarely discussed as important political actors in the Turkish political arena except for the Gülen Movement.

Secondly, a comparison of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Gülen Movement has never been made. The Brotherhood was compared to the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in several ways (Koni 2018). However, a comparison between the two religiously motivated organizations with similar goals will yield important analytical insights. While Kirdiş (2015) examines the different contexts in which the organizations determine their strategies, a discussion on the consequences of these choices has not been made, especially for the organizations with Sufi backgrounds. In this research, by employing a comparative historical analysis, I also discuss whether the different strategies they employed in their struggle for political power affect their success.

This thesis is composed of four chapters. The first chapter is divided into two subchapters. First, the methodology, research design, data collection process, resources, and the limitations of the research are presented. Second, the previous research on religious organizations, their prominence and effects, and state-religious organizations are discussed. I further review the literature on the strategies religious organizations embrace in their struggle for political power, which is to build a coalition with an existing political actor or participate in politics alone. The advantages and disadvantages of strategies discussed by various scholars are considered in this chapter for a comprehensive comparison. The second chapter examines the Gülen Movement, its history, and its relationship with various governments throughout its history. First, the background of the Islamic political identity in Turkey, tariqas, and other movements' relationship with the Turkish state is presented. After, I discuss the relationship of the Gülen Movement with the AKP government by explaining the incentive-based structure. Moreover, an analysis of the strategy followed by the Gülen Movement, implications, and an assessment on whether it was successful or not is presented.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is examined as a political actor in Egyptian political, social, and religious history in the third chapter. The relationship between

the Egyptian state and the Brotherhood is presented in the context of the political history of Egypt. The political, social, and economic activities of the Brotherhood are discussed during the rule of Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. In the end, an analysis of the strategy chosen by the Brotherhood is presented, which was to participate in politics as a separate political actor. The implications of the strategy combined with the post-Arab Spring experience of the Brotherhood constitutes the final section of the chapter concerning Egypt.

The fourth and last chapter provides a brief discussion and comparison of two cases, the Gülen Movement and the Muslim Brotherhood, by examining their relationship with the states, the public, their strategies, and the consequences of their strategic decisions. The implications, suggestions for further research, and possible limitations constitute the final section of the study.

1.1 Literature Review

In this section, the previous literature on religious organizations, their power struggle in politics, and the strategies they pursue to gain power are discussed. The section is divided into five subsections. First, religious organizations, their goals, and social and political influence capabilities are discussed. Second, the power struggle of religious organizations and the strategies they pursue in these processes are explained by referring to the previous literature. The following two subsections focus on two primary strategies: to be directly involved in politics or building coalitions with existing political actors. In the third subsection, the strategy to participate in politics overtly, how this decision-making process occurs, and how this decision affects the power struggle is discussed by mainly focusing on inclusion-moderation and social performance theories. Lastly, the process of coalition-building with existing political actors and the crucial factors in building and sustaining these coalitions are examined using theories of interest group-state relations.

1.1.1 Religious Organizations

Religious organizations have been one of the most influential groups in the social and political spheres within modern states. The prevalence of these groups can be understood by looking at the concept of religious authority while considering political and social roots and their understanding of the world.

Religion can be defined as "a system of beliefs and practices oriented toward the sacred or supernatural, through which the life experiences of groups of people are given meaning and direction" (Smith 1996, 5). What differentiates religion from other concepts as a mobilization tool emphasizes "sacred transcendence," where the individuals commit themselves to a higher authority, which may be a single God, several gods or deities. This authority is beyond the limits of what is considered rational and physical. In that sense, it differs from the human-constructed authority, where the orders can be questioned or discussed in public. Moreover, as cultural systems, religions define a set of meanings and a way of living, which are ordered by a higher sacred and spiritual authority. The religious understandings of proper order are different from those of other groups, such as ethnic or some of the ideologically motivated groups, since it diffuses into every aspect of life; personal, familial, communal, or societal (Brubaker 2015).

Therefore, religious groups and organizations are distinctively influential in social and political spheres. The decisions and relationships affect the rules that regulate both private and public spheres of individuals' lives. This aspect of the religion gives religious bodies a "more important and sacred" reason to engage in politics (Philpott 2007; Warner 2000) as principal actors to capture power and influence the policy-making process (Grzymala-Busse 2016).

Religious authority here can be understood in two ways. First, the sacred higher authority, for instance, gods, deities, or other spiritual concepts attributed to having supernatural powers. Secondly, it could be the persons who are considered to have the authority, knowledge, and skills to comment on, explain, make suggestions about, and sometimes enforce the rules and advice of the sacred. The second type of authority has its roots in the former since the religious traditions decide who can be authorized to be a part of the authority and comment on doctrines (Gill 2001). The Catholic Church, for instance, is an excellent example of this second type of authority. In Shiite Islam, "ulema" is considered this higher authority, which executes God's will. There is no single higher authority in the Sunni sect of Islam, but many tariqas and cemaats, founded by various Sufis commenting, explaining, and interpreting Quran in different ways.

Sufism can be described as "interiorization and intensification of Islamic faith and practice" (Chittick 2007, 22), and Sufis are the religious scholars who explain, interpret and comment on religious scripts. The Sufi texts written by these scholars became guidebooks in the Islamic faith of their followers. The Naqshbandi order is one the biggest Sufi brotherhoods (tariqas) of Sunni Islam, which sheik Baha' al-Din Naqshband founded. His interpretation of Islamic rules, hadiths, and teachings re-

garding religion are followed by many Muslims who consider themselves a disciple of this Brotherhood. A critical aspect of these Sufi Brotherhoods is that the founding sheiks claimed to be descendants of Prophet Muhammed. This lineage offers a channel to godly authority through master-disciple chains (Ernst and Lawrence 2016). Consequently, the followers who committed themselves to the brotherhoods accept the sheiks' and hence the brotherhoods' authority in their lives. These Brotherhoods are also religious organizations, which operate in political, social, and economic spheres.

Religious groups provide a variety of social services (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013) to the public by using donations. In Islam, "zakah," "sadaqah," and "qurban" are the practices, which enable the reallocation of resources and narrow down the gap between poor and rich in the society. The Brotherhoods, including tariqas and other religious bodies, via faith-based organizations or waqfs founded by them, collect and reallocate these donations, serving as intermediaries in applying an essential religious obligation. This intermediary position allows them to reach every stratum in the society while allowing them to provide additional social services (Arslan Köse 2019).

These services allow them to connect with individuals and influence them to join their cause. Especially when the state is not able to provide these services, religious organizations undertake the mission. Consequently, most of the time, the collaboration between organizations and states allows the implementation of charitable activities (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013). Additionally, this collaboration benefits the organization in several aspects, such as grant of public benefit status, land allocation, and access to government grants (Arslan Köse 2019). When the group and the government can be partners in delivering social services, the process works smoothly. Communication between them, resource sharing, having common goals and values are the key factors affecting the efficacy of the collaboration (Rogers 2009). Good relations with state actors and access to state sources, therefore, are crucial for religious organizations. The market for state resources is highly competitive. Therefore, religious groups aim to have an influential capacity, which permits them to be strong competitors in the religious market. As they become more influential, they have a higher bargaining capacity, hence reach the state resources more efficiently.

Religious organizations' ability to influence varies depending on regime type, religiosity level of the population, group proportion to population, and competition levels in the religious market. What needs to be emphasized is that religious organizations are organizations, which have political, social, economic, and ideological goals, as many of the interest groups. Even though religious organizations differ

from other interest groups regarding the source of legitimacy, they overwhelmingly have the same goals, which is to gain power in both the political arena and economic market (Kirdiş 2016*b*; Warner 2000).

1.1.2 The Power Struggle of Religious Organizations

Religious organizations occasionally choose to capture political power, making them a political actor or a solid ally to have access to state resources. Given that the religious market is highly competitive (Warner 2000), the organizations struggle with each other in this process and, therefore, develop different strategies.

The power struggle of religious organizations takes many forms. Mainly, they either form anti-system political parties or participate in politics actively, or make coalitions with existing political parties, if they are allowed (Grzymala-Busse 2016; Kirdiş 2015, 2016*b*). The decision to stay away from the political arena or be an actively involved actor depends on the "menu of options," where they need to assess agential priorities, risks, and needs (Kirdiş 2016*b*). The strategy to participate as an actor has been the most direct way of capturing political power by being components of governing and legislative bodies and state institutions. Direct institutional access is advantageous since the group does not have to rely on any other actor to implement its policies (Grzymala-Busse 2016). On the other hand, especially for the grassroots organizations, it may result in failure considering the risks, such as loss of popular legitimacy or deviation from spiritual aims and being too focused on political and economic goals (Kirdiş 2016*b*). The ideational, organizational, and grassroots level challenges may lead groups to follow a "safer" way and stay out of the spotlight (Pahwa 2017).

The groups may choose to stay out of the political arena for organizational, ideological, or political reasons. Therefore, these organizations aim at building coalitions with political parties through exchanges of incentives, resources, votes, and services (Warner 2000). The benefit of the coalition-building process is to stay away from the political debates. Especially in countries where the state elite does not tolerate any anti-system actor in the political arena, the groups have no other choice to rely on existing actors. Additionally, the moderation process of anti-system parties, which is discussed in this chapter, leads to problems resulting in organizational disruptions and increasing discontent among the organization members (Pahwa 2017). While mainly vanguard movements use this strategy, which does not have a popular base beforehand, the vision of a top-down change also affects the strategy to choose (Kirdiş 2016*b*).

1.1.3 Coalition Building Process

The organizations may collaborate with existing political actors, mostly with political parties, as a strategy in their political power struggle. The coalition between religious groups and parties should be examined within the interest group-party relations perspective, considering that both sides use these alliances for their own goals, policy decisions, and orientations (Warner 2000).

Political elites need religious organizations, and religious organizations need political elites for several reasons. First, the organizations may help elites increase their legitimacy in the public's eyes (Koesel 2017; Warner 2000). Especially if the religious group is a majority group regarding its religious denomination, its support indicates religious appropriateness. The groups, in turn, push for religious policies, which are following their religious agenda. Even though it is argued that the issues of faith do not necessarily affect the relationship between a religious group and the elites, mainly if the state is an authoritarian one (Koesel 2017), the conflicts regarding religious policies may result in the breakdown of the alliances (Warner 2000).

Secondly, the political actors need religious groups' organizational resources and bases for mobilization purposes (Warner 2000). If the group has vast resources in terms of the social services provided and hence a popular base, which will vote for the political party in case of an alliance, the political elites look for a coalition with the organization (Arslan Köse 2019; Koesel 2017; Warner 2000). On the other hand, the groups make a strategic decision while supporting one specific political party. The supported political party should be the one, which will gain enough seats in the parliament or at least have the capacity and authority to influence the policy-making process to benefit from this alliance (Warner 2000).

These alliances can be defined as clientelist relationships, which exchange services and suitable for electoral support (Stokes 2007). The elites provide groups resources, grants, land, special rights, and status, which allow them to expand their domain in terms of social services and revenues (Arslan Köse 2019). In turn, the political actors demand groups to actively work for their political cause, mobilize their followers, and conduct a political campaign for the specific party or actors by using their organizational resources (Warner 2000). Both sides, therefore, should convince the other that it would be a strategic and rational alliance. The organizations mostly use selective incentives provided by the actors, such as material goods or spiritual salvation, or try to convince or coerce to vote for the political actor (Warner 2000). In countries with limited government expenditure on social services, the welfare services provided by religious organizations are crucial (Ayata 1996). These organi-

zations undertake the mission of providing services such as health, education, and material aid. Therefore, their provision of any aid allows them to be important social actors who influence the public in voting preferences (Ayata 1996; Koesel 2017). In exchange, the political actor, if elected or has access, increases the number of incentives and goods it provides to the organization. In the end, it turns into a symbiotic relationship, where both sides depend on each other for several various policies and services.

The organizations, on the other hand, should consider several other aspects. The religious market, economics, cultural-historical background play an essential role in the decision of religious organizations in terms of cooperation (Koesel 2017). The aspects such as whether the group can be an actor in the political arena or whether the religious market allows them to cooperate with other political actors matter too.

The vanguard movements, which do not have a popular base and consist of fewer members, are more likely to stay out of cooperative relationships, considering their scarcity of followers and resources (Kirdiş 2015). While political actors do not prefer these kinds of groups given their organizational and structural inefficiency for political campaign purposes (Warner 2000), these groups also consider it too risky. Since their existing organizational identity gets lost if they cooperate with a political party, they are more likely to form a political party and widen their scope of influence (Kirdiş 2015).

On the other hand, grassroots movements with an organizational identity and a vast popular base tend to choose cooperation, considering that the group will need to moderate and may lose its popular base if they get directly involved in political competition (Kirdiş 2015, 2016*b*; Pahwa 2017). As a result of the alliance with a political party, the order and structure of the organization may be disrupted, and the party may exploit the organization without giving less in turn (Warner 2000). The organizations, therefore, need to calculate the options of cooperation or exit carefully and strategically, given that it is a rational strategic choice (Kirdiş 2016*b*; Warner 2000).

The moderation process, on the other hand, is risky for this type of group with a preexisting follower base. Nevertheless, they may choose to participate as well if they see no other option or trust their ability to be included in the system by moderating and at the same time not upsetting their followers.

1.1.4 Anti-System Parties and Political Incorporation

If the organizations find the participation option less costly, they become active political actors to identify their causes, goals and plan to attract voters besides their main popular base. The challenges are two-fold: they first need to convince their preexisting followers about their main agenda. The organizations that participate in politics years after their foundation have a popular base that they need to keep intact and do not offend with their policies (El-Ghobashy 2005; Kirdiş 2015; Pahwa 2017). However, they also need to widen their scope to reach more voters and gain more seats in the parliament, which brings about more public visibility and risks fragmentation (Kirdiş 2015). In that sense, they face various challenges, especially if the regime and political elites consider these organizations to promote anti-system ideas and subsequently threaten their power.

The anti-system parties are expected to have either non-democratic ideologies (Budge and Herman 1978; Ferraresi 1988) or support or participate in illegal or violent actions and behaviors (Zimmermann 1989). Sartori (2005) defines anti-systemness as a characteristic that stems from the ideological distance from existing political actors and the essential principles of the regime. This definition includes a broad list of political parties, which are polarizing the existing political arena. (Capoccia 2002, p.26) furthers the definition by arguing that Sartori's definition is "relational," while ideological anti-systemness means "the opposition to any characteristics of the minimal definition of democracy". The parties occasionally find the existing system "less democratic" than it should be, called political perfectionism, and become anti-system in an existing democratic regime even though they have a pro-democratic agenda (Keren 2000).

Religious organizations, which have religiously oriented political goals, threaten existing regimes, either being democratic or not, if the state does not follow a religious plan as the group suggests. Especially if they are in countries with authoritarian regimes, they want the regime to be more democratic or open and make their propaganda, such as in the case of the Gülen Movement (Yavuz 2003) and Muslim Brotherhood after the 1980s (Wickham 2013). Therefore, I further argue that the regime type is not crucial in defining anti-systemness, but its characteristics and strategies matter. If a state is authoritarian, a political party supporting democratic norms may be considered as an anti-system party. Likewise, in a secular democratic state, any actor supporting non-democratic or non-secular ideas is an anti-system actor. Several scholars have provided various theories to explain how the anti-system parties incorporate into state institutions without being a threat by the state elite and the regime. Two main theoretical arguments regarding the

incorporation of anti-system parties are moderation-inclusion theories and social performance theories.

If they want to capture power, the anti-system parties should be a part of the existing political system by being elected to legislative bodies and taking part in other institutions such as governing bodies or holding offices in various state institutions. They often do not have a chance to change the system initially, given the existing elites and structures that do not allow any actor to affect the status quo.

Inclusion-moderation theorists focus on the anti-system parties' efforts to moderate and incorporate into the existing system based on incentives and sanctions (Altınordu 2016). The anti-system parties must show that they are not a threat to the system and the elites to access the political arena. However, they are likely to lose their voter base given that their adaptation takes place on many levels, i.e., organizationally and ideationally (Pahwa 2017). They may have to eliminate the most radical members and change their plan in a way that the significance of their ideological stance may get lost. It sometimes results in frustration for the voters and supporters who committed themselves to the anti-system ideas. Therefore, keeping the balance is crucial in the moderation processes.

To be accepted into the system, the parties are expected to signal credibility (Kalyvas 2000). They may, for instance, denounce violence and radical behavior and signal that they are becoming a part of the current political system. If they fail to show their credibility, they are quickly thrown out of the system, considering their suspicious image in the public and political arena. Kalyvas (2000) further argues that religious institutions play a crucial role in the moderation processes since centralized, hierarchical institutions are more successful in prohibiting contending arguments, suppressing radicals, consequently following a disciplined strategy that the existing actors will not easily target. This argument is opposed by several scholars in different ways, especially by Schwedler (2011) where she argues that institutions and political opportunities are vital. However, they do not produce the order that is anticipated as much of the moderation literature suggests. For instance, the religious organizations, whose religious denomination is Sunni Islam, should be disadvantaged according to the argument of Kalyvas (2000).

Given that there is no higher centralized authority in Sunni Islam but many Sufi Brotherhoods, one expects that their moderation fails most of the time. However, Sufi Brotherhoods are also hierarchically organized groups that pay attention to discipline and do not oppose opposing arguments. The various understandings of "higher authority" in religion are thus crucial in explaining in-organization discipline.

The credible commitment sometimes is not enough, as can be seen in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. According to Brownlee (2010), structural factors affect the result of moderation efforts. If the elites do not face any threat that may affect their well-being enormously, they often do not choose to compromise (Brownlee 2010). It does not matter whether the group is hierarchically organized as a centralized group or not.

The structural factor that invalidates the moderation efforts may be the regime itself. The anti-system party literature primarily focuses on the anti-system ideology in democratic regimes (Capoccia 2002; Keren 2000; Sartori 2005). However, the regime may be autocratic and does not allow anti-system parties to embrace democratic ideals, i.e., Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1990s (Harnisch and Mecham 2009). The anti-system parties sometimes choose to promote democratic institutions and practices to deal with the structural challenges since they think it can provide them a playing field. They can attract people to their ideas and claims.

Since the regime is not democratic, the anti-system parties need to change their organizational structure and ideological stance (El-Ghobashy 2005; Pahwa 2017). They experience political and strategic learning, where they adopt their policies and ideologies according to the level of reaction they get from the political agents (Pahwa 2017; Wickham 2004). This argument was also contended by Schwedler (2011); she argues that one can also learn extremist behavior in an authoritarian regime, which does not show any inclination toward liberalization or democratization.

The social performance theory, presented by Jeffrey Alexander, focuses on cultural performance, which means the actors' presentation of their social display through their social interactions (Alexander 2004). According to the performative perspective, religious-political leaders should repeatedly pronounce their commitment to the current regime and its symbols (Altınordu 2016). Since the inclusion-moderation theories assume that elites are willing to democratize or allow incorporation, the social performance leads us to examine the "elite side" of the conflict. The assumption that political elites always want to democratize is doubtful; the main interest of the elites is often to protect their power and the status quo that ensures their power. The political elites, when the anti-system party lacks the performative discipline and therefore fails in the implementation, use the necessary measures to exclude them without losing much legitimacy (Altınordu 2016). However, if they would face a critical loss of legitimacy, they tend to incorporate the given anti-system party. The state elites or tutelary powers are inclined to exclude the anti-system parties when the parties fail to influence the public. Still, when these parties can impress the public and demonstrate their honesty, the elites and authorities cannot counteract

since they fear losing face and a positive image.

The literature on religious organizations and their strategies in achieving political power suggest that the strategic decision to pursue a tactic shapes the course of the struggle. While each decision, either being an ally of an existing political actor or being a separate political actor in the system, brings about various benefits and disadvantages, the strategic calculations based on a contextual evaluation of characteristic of the actors and the organization forms the choices of the organization. As a result, this study questions which strategy is more successful in the power struggle of religious organizations.

1.2 Methodology, Research Design and Sources

1.2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research question, the method employed for the analysis, research design and the data collection procedure for the thesis. The chapter consists of three sections. In the first section, the research question is presented and explained. Even though the question is provided in the introductory chapter, the concepts and the terminology used are defined and explained detailly, such as "religious organization" and "political power". The second section is a detailed presentation of the thesis's research design, in which three crucial subsections are of importance: The method of the research, the case selection procedure and the data collection. The method of the research is comparative historical analysis, and its strengths are discussed by referring the existing literature on the method. The case selection and data collection procedures are explained in detail as well, considering the consistency between the method, cases, and the data is the essential part of a research. The last section demonstrates the possible limitations and weaknesses regarding the research design altogether.

1.2.2 Research Question

My main research question is, *"To what extent do different strategies, which are to participate in politics or to form an alliance with an existing political actor, of religious organizations affect their success in acquiring political power?"* The research focuses only on religious organizations, which have anti-system ideologies and aim

to change the existing political regime or modify the regime according to their ideologies. Anti-systemness here means the ideological difference of the political actors from others in the system, which most of the time indicates a threat to the regime (Capoccia 2002). Since it is expected that these groups to be an opponent to existing non-religious regimes, these groups are considered as anti-system, even though the regime in which they operated are not necessarily fully liberal democratic regimes. To explain power, the definition presented by Weber (2019 [1959]) is useful: "the ability of an individual or group to achieve their own goals or aims when others are trying to prevent them from realizing them". Having power at the state level enables the group or individual to exercise it by using state institutions. Political power implies having authority over the decision-making process, hence realizing the goals by using political institutions (Dahl 1957). The groups, by having political power, have the legitimate use of coercion to apply their decisions at the state level.

Therefore, several organizations as well as interest groups want to have political power, since the ability to affect the decision-making process allow them to realize their goals extensively. To acquire political power, organizations and interest groups pursue different strategies, which may affect the likelihood of their success in the long run. Two most prominent strategies are either to enter political arena by actively participating in elections to reach political institutions and/or appearing in the politics as a separate political party, or to remain outside and to form alliances with existing political actors such as political parties or state elites.

The entry into political arena here indicates direct involvement in politics in electoral authoritarian or democratic regimes by establishing new political parties or running for offices independently. The organization can establish a political party by drafting its own agenda correlating with the organizational objectives.

Forming alliances, on the other hand, indicates a strategic coalition with an existing political party. The organization aims at reaching its goals and necessary means to accomplish its objectives by building a coalition, which is based on incentive exchange between the actors. The dynamics of the relationship, the incentive structures and the balance of power between the actors determine the characteristic, stability and the structure of the coalition.

Both strategies have different implications. The organizations make a strategic choice to participate in or to stay out of political arena based on the menu of options provided by socio-political structures (Kirdiş 2015). Whether the organization will be successful or not in their struggle for political power in part depends on the strategy they choose to implement.

I consider an organization successful in capturing political power by looking at two categories: realizing goals and implementing them legally. The success in having and exercising political power depends on whether the organization could reach its religiously motivated objectives and implement them legally. Those religiously motivated objectives can be establishing Sharia, opening religious schools, the Muslimization of education, Islamization of the public, building a transnational Muslim community, and increasing the scope of influence over the public.

In a more organizational framework, an organization is successful as it affects more individuals, increases its assets, provides more social services, and has a greater budget than the other organizations do. These also depend on its relations with the existing state elite and political parties. Regarding the mentioned strategies, the organizations, either by being elected as the state elite or building coalitions with existing state elite, can have the access to state resources and incentives. The political parties may provide them incentives in exchange for an electoral support, or the organization, by being elected to the parliament, may affect the decision-making process and legislative or executive bodies, pass decrees that benefit them in the long run. Therefore, I consider an organization successful in its struggle for political power if it could realize its spiritual, social and organizational goals by using the political mechanisms and relationships it builds.

1.2.3 Research Design

1.2.3.1 The Method of the Research

A comparative historical analysis is conducted to analyze the cases of interest in this research. *Comparative historical analysis* is a social science method, which examines causal relationships and the historical processes that shape these relationships across time and space (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003). Especially when the causal forces grow throughout a prolonged period, a historical analysis is necessary for the accuracy of the causal mechanisms' identification. Those slow-moving processes may be "cumulative, involve threshold effects or require the unfolding of extended causal chains" (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 181).

The cases and their analysis in this research indicate existence of cumulative causes, considering that the choice of strategies, political learning, public influence as well as the exercise of political power are sociological processes often linked to long-term changes in the structure of the organizations. Historical analysis, therefore, allows one to analyze the causal effects of these processes cumulatively, without losing any

crucial mechanisms in the shaping of the various outcomes. In this case, a structured and focused comparison and a detailed macro-causal analysis embedded in a historical process (Pierson 2015) is employed. Therefore, by employing a comparative historical analysis, I aim to examine both cases' historical development while focusing on and explaining in detail the cumulative macro-social causal mechanisms that lead to the specific success or failure outcomes.

1.2.3.2 Case Selection

In comparative case studies, selection bias is a serious problem that affects the reliability of the research. Therefore, a theory-guided selection of non-random cases is necessary to make sure that the research is nonbiased (Gerring 2007; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Levy 2008).

The cases to be compared in this research are the Gülen Movement in Turkey and Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The Gülen Movement in Turkey has been the most effective and widespread religious organization in the history of the country. Additionally, it was the most integrated one regarding the number of members employed in state institutions. After the July 15 coup attempt, the government had started legal action for almost 600.000 people for being a member of the Gülen Movement, and 128.000 civil servants were expelled from state institutions by 2020 (Sade 2020). These numbers indicate the influence of the Gülen Movement within state institutions, and its ability to infiltrate the state through its history.

On the other hand, Muslim Brotherhood is one of Egypt's oldest and most prominent organizations, which has become a transnational religious organization over time. It was always involved in politics, even though it was not allowed to be in the political arena besides exceptional short periods. However, being strictly excluded from politics and state institutions did not affect its scope of influence. After Mubarak's resignation, Brotherhood's party received 37.5% of the total votes in 2011 parliamentary elections, followed by their candidate Morsi becoming Egypt's president. Even though it had relatively more radical ideas than the Gülen Movement, both had the same goal: to capture power through politics and affect the policy-making process.

There are several reasons why these cases are selected:

1.1 Both organizations are religious organizations that embrace anti-system Islamic ideologies, even though they occasionally do not reflect their belief in their performative actions. Since the groups' salient identity is being Muslim

before any other type of shared identity, their goals, interests and organizational structures are shaped consequently, by following an Islamic discourse.

1.2 Both groups have tried to involve in politics overtly, considering Islamic political identity in both countries was shaped by religious organizations and their relationship with the secular state. The groups embrace the anti-system ideas and use political and social spheres as a mean to achieve their goals and extend their scope of influence.

1.3 Both states, throughout their histories, were not liberal democratic regimes. While modern Egypt was founded on Baath principles in 1953, Turkey was founded by nationalist and secular leaders in 1923. In both cases, military tutelage characterized the contexts in which the civil organizations with political and ideological orientations have operated (Cook 2007).

The Turkish army had usually controlled Turkey's political arena since its foundation prohibited religious groups to enter and operate within the political arena officially. Until the late 2000s, the military influence was obvious in the political arena. Likely, modern Egypt had been an electoral authoritarian regime, which means the regime holds multiparty elections, however, does not meet with the minimum standards of liberal democratic regimes (Schwedler 2011). While in 2005 Mubarak opened the political arena to various groups in a limited way, the regime did not change. Even though Mubarak resigned in 2011 and a democratic regime was established, the coup that took place in 2013 ensured that Egypt is still an electoral authoritarian regime ruled by former military elites. In that sense, both states had experienced similar military tutelages. However, one of the differences between the political contexts of these two states is that Turkey's system was semi-open while Egypt's system was fully closed. This, in turn, limited the integration of various organizations into the political and social arena in Turkey. On the other hand, the closeness of the system did not limit, but fully prevented the possibility of integration and participation in Egypt.

The main difference between these organizations is that the Gülen Movement had integrated into the system and institutions that allow them to exercise power through a complex yet successful process. It did not participate in politics overtly throughout its experience in Turkey. However, it followed a path that succeeded in the long term and allowed it to have more than 125.000 members employed in state institutions and several political elites, who are either allies or supporters of the movement. The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, had failed in the power acquisition process and missed the chance to be a part of the system in 2013 due to its failure in incorporation. The Brotherhood had always participated in politics by promoting

its own agenda, nominating its candidates for parliamentary elections or forming a political party after 2011, making them vulnerable to state elite's attacks. In 2013, after the coup, Muslim Brotherhood became the most significant enemy of the state once again, its members and supporters being sentenced to death, jailed or murdered (Lavrilleux 2020).

Therefore, these two groups are good examples of how a religious organization's trajectory in terms of its acquisition of political power is shaped through diverse ways of involvement in politics. The difference in their methods for the same goal allows for a well-suited comparison regarding religious organizations' strategies for gaining political power.

1.2.3.3 Data Collection and Resources

The research's empirical data are secondary data, composed of different resources from various scholars' articles, online newspapers, books, and websites. Given that both groups' conflict with the states did not come to an end, the events occurred until 2016 are included in the research. The events occurred after 2016 are briefly explained, so that the trajectories and the further research regarding the two cases can be seen as well.

Religious organizations that want to engage in politics and capture power have two options: They either form a political party or collaborate with existing political parties, which allow them to exercise power in various ways, in exchange for votes or services. In that sense, the indicator is clear, whether they are involved in politics directly or not.

In that sense, their success depends on how much political power they gained as a result of their strategies. The success in terms of political power acquisition is understood as their ability to influence decision-making process and realize their political and religious goals. To be able to do that, they may choose to first hold important offices in state institutions, second become important actors in not only in political domain, but also in economic and social spheres.

The organization may decide to enter political arena without relying on another actor, as in the Muslim Brotherhood's case. Muslim Brotherhood was banned from the political arena for long periods. Until 2005, Egyptian governments held no presidential elections. The existing parliamentary elections were neither free nor fair (Wickham 2013). However, when the system allowed, Muslim Brotherhood participated in elections with independent candidates, and gained considerable seats in the

parliament despite the state intervention to election polls (Wickham 2013). There-fore, the ways, methods, and experiences of the Muslim Brotherhood are explained in detail by using empirical data from state resources, international news agen-cies and academic articles, which are very comprehensive in explaining the Muslim Brotherhood's history in Egypt.

For the Gülen Movement, the strategy was to form alliance with the incumbent party, AKP, which needed an ally in its conflict with state elite. While it was staying away from political arena as an active agent, it has managed to collaborate with the AKP government, and built a relationship based on exchanges of favors, services, resources and incentives. After their relationship started to deteriorate, the political power of the Gülen Movement became obvious as well. This alliance formation process, which occurred in a context where the status quo was changing, has unique characteristics to be explored.

Islamic and center-right political parties collaborated with religious organizations in exchange for votes since the 1950s (Yavuz 2003), however, none of them succeeded as much as the Gülen Movement did. Therefore, the historical development and or-ganizational structure of the movement are examined in detail, considering their im-portance in the effective power acquisition process. The case is empirically analyzed by using several information sources: state reports, online newspapers, journalists' research focused on the state – religious organization relations in Turkey, articles, and books. Since the details of the alliance and of the exchange of favors become open to public after July 15 coup attempt, most of the empirical evidence are found by using State of Emergency (OHAL) Commission reports published after 2016.

1.2.4 Limitations

In this section, the limitations of the analysis and research are explained. Because of the time and data constraints, there are several limitations of the research. These are problems related to small-N analysis, reliability of data and the scope of comparative analysis.

Firstly, the external validity of the research is relatively low compared to a large-N analysis, given that the generalizability of the theory is hard to be proven since the theory is applied to only two cases. However, small-N case studies are useful for forming descriptive inferences since it allows for an in-depth analysis (Gerring 2004). Various scholars, therefore, criticize the use of small-N analyses for prob-abilistic research (Goldthorpe 1997; Lieberson 1991). Nevertheless, various tech-

niques of causal analysis allow a probabilistic causation (Collier and Collier 1991; Mahoney 2000; Rueschemeyer and Stephens 1997). By using a cross-case comparison of within-case chronologies (Mahoney 2000), a causal narrative has been presented, hence it became possible to make causal inferences.

Even though the data are used by referring to various resources, the reliability of data is a problem to be dealt with. Some parts of the information may be lost or delicately hidden. Since the topic and historical background of it is still debated and reflect daily politics, the empirical data of some relationships' indicators may be still held secret for the well-being of politicians, offices or business-people. By using resources as many and diverse as possible while crosschecking the validity of information, the research provides one of the most reliable empirical data regarding state and anti-system religious organization relationships of Turkey and Egypt.

2.   THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the Gülen Movement in Turkey and the relationship between the Movement, the AKP government, and the state throughout the movement's history. After a historical summary of Islamic politics and tariqas in Turkey, a detailed narrative of the Gülen Movement, its strategies, relations, and its influence over the public and state are explained. Considering the importance of the coalition between AKP and the Gülen Movement, the incentives, favors, and mutual benefits, which constitute the foundational structure of the relationship between AKP and the Gülen Movement, are presented and discussed. By providing a detailed narrative of the Gülen Movement, this chapter examines a crucial strategy used by religious and non-religious interest groups in their struggle for political power.

2.2 Tariqas and the State

Tariqas have been a fundamental part of Islam and articulating religious knowledge and faith for hundreds of years. The word *tariqa* means "the way, which leads the way to Allah." They intend to lead their "murids," students, to ultimate truth and thus to Allah by offering them religious knowledge about the truth, practice, and living. The practice is called Sufism, which means "interiorization and intensification of Islamic faith and practice" (Chittick 2007, 22). The Sufi scholars, such as Bahauddin Naqshbandi, Said Nursi, Abdulkadir Gaylani, interpret religious texts and orders to get a better understanding of Islam and apply it to their daily lives accurately. Most of them have been spread through the region known today as Central Asia and Arabian Peninsula, spread worldwide, transforming into transnational organizations that offer spiritual, economic, social, and political incentives.

The most prominent tariqas in Anatolia have been Mevlevis, Bektashis, Kadiris, and Naqshbandis, due to their number of murids (Yavuz 2003). Resulting from that demographic potential, they have leverages Turkey's political, economic, and social arena, especially Naqshbandis and Nur groups, after the transition to a multiparty system in 1945 (Mardin 1991; Çakır 1990).

Naqshbandi, one of the most critical tariqas of contemporary Turkey, has been found in the 14th century in Bukhara by Bahauddin Naqshband (1318-1389). It has also been one of the most politically active tariqas, given its relationship with the state throughout Turkish history (Yavuz 2003). Even though Naqshbandi members gained authority positions during Sultan Abdulmecit's rule (Yavuz 2003), the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, The Law of Unification of Education of 1924, and a strict secular understanding of a state and public realm negatively affected their influential and powerful position in the society. It has transformed them into underground organizations, which are ready to mobilize politically. Only after the 1980 coup, these groups were informally allowed to operate within public space and became more active in the political arena (Yavuz 2003).

Five branches of the Naqshbandi order have gained power and attracted many followers in Turkey. These are İskenderpaşa, Erenköy Cemaati, Süleymancı, though quite divergent compared to mainstream branches, İsmailağa and Menzil, which are called "*cemaat*"s. Those cemaats were formed as local social study groups in mosques, led by Sufi scholars trained in various tariqas (Ebaugh 2010). After they have gained public visibility after the 1980 coup, each branch has fought to protect their power or gain more power in their relations with the Turkish state. Tariqas and their branches have become the main actors of right-wing politics (Aviv 2018). Unlike many cases, tariqas have been the ones who established an Islamic political identity and have engaged actively in politics since the 1940s (Aviv 2018; Narli 1999; Yavuz 2003).

2.3 Naqshbandi Branches and the Turkish State until AKP

With the transition to a multiparty system in Turkey in 1946, civil society organizations, which had been repressed since the Republic's foundation, found a politically legal way to express their dissatisfaction with the current regime policies through Democrat Party (DP).

The transition has created an organizational space for Islamist groups, and the

newly founded parties have focused on voters' religious sensibilities to attract their votes (Toprak, Islam and democracy in Turkey 2005). It has resulted in various tariqas building coalitions with the DP (Narli 1999). It has become the most potent political party competing with the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi [CHP]) and opposing the restrictions placed on religion by the CHP. The organizational space provided by the to these religious organizations in exchange for support in the political arena has resulted in incorporating their members into state institutions as a short-term incentive (Yavuz 2003).

Even though Naqshbandi and Nurcu groups gathered around the DP during the 1950s, they only expected policies regarding religious freedom from the DP. The first appearing of one of the prominent branches in state institutions, Süleymancıs, was in the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) as preachers. Most of the branches of different tariqas have used state mosques to organize and recruit members (Yavuz 2003). It is evident that many branches have been established in those mosques and have used the mosques' names.

In 1949, with the decision of the DRA to open new Quranic schools and to hire more preachers for mosques, Süleymancıs were employed as preachers and dominated DRA offices until 1965 (Gözaydın 2008). In 1965, the DRA published an enactment, allowing only Imam Hatip School graduates to be employed at the agency. It resulted in a huge reaction and a competition between the DRA and Süleymancıs, which is still going on today. Allegedly, Süleymancıs do not visit state mosques even for Friday prayers. Instead, they use their buildings for prayers, arguing that state preachers are "political Islamists and Arab radicalism supporters" since the 1970s (Yavuz 2003). Since then, Süleymancıs have not engaged in politics and political parties overtly, even though they supported center-right parties, like the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi [AP]) or the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi [DYP]) from time to time.

The possibility of creating an organizational space for religious groups has emerged after the 1960 military coup. With the 1961 constitution, religious groups were granted the right to organize (Narli 1999). It resulted in the massive mobilization of religious groups and citizens concerned about the state's religious policies. On the one hand, this mobilization and growing numbers of followers in these branches had attracted newly emerging political parties. On the other hand, the followers themselves began to engage in politics and civil society, even held crucial offices, mostly in right-wing parties and organizations. In the 1960s and 70s, there was a considerable mobilization of religious groups and *cemaat*s, especially by voting and participating in Islamic and center-right parties. The most prominent one until

the 1980s was the İskenderpaşa community with its founder Mehmet Zahid Kotku, who played an essential role in the foundation of the first openly Islamic party, the National Order Party, in 1970 (Yavuz 2003; Çakır 1990). Given that all center-right parties had shown their commitment to secularism somehow, the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi [MNP]), founded by Necmettin Erbakan, was the first religious party in terms of its plan and constituents.

Although all cemaats had cast votes for the MNP or the AP in exchange for offices, positions, financial support, or patronage, İskenderpaşa was different in its role in forming and organizing Islamic movements in Turkey. Besides holding high-level positions in the State Planning Organization (DPT) in the late 1960s (Çakır 1990), İskenderpaşa could raise important figures in Turkish politics, such as Turgut Özal, who had been prime minister between 1983-1989 and president of Turkey between 1989-1993 (Yavuz 2003). It is not easy to detect whether they are raised as politicians by İskenderpaşa, or they chose İskenderpaşa to be able to take part in politics. However, they all attended the "*dergah*"s, dervish lodges built for gatherings, spiritual education, and praying together.

One key reason was the close relationship between Kotku and Erbakan. Allegedly, Kotku had given the idea of "push for the heavy industry" to Erbakan (Yavuz 2003). Kotku was an important figure; however, it would not be accurate to consider it an "exchange" between a *cemaat* and party, given that Kotku encouraged and supported the establishment of the party. However, the reluctance to be identified with a political party overtly stemmed from two aspects. First, as a grassroots movement, entry into party politics is risky (Kirdiş 2015). Second, any confrontation with the secular regime would be dangerous for the organization. Until 1980, the MNP was closed by the state once, to be founded again as National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi [MSP]) in 1972. The *cemaat* support it attracted, combined with its policies regarding religion and nationalism, which attracted small businesses and artisans in Anatolia (Gülalp 1998; Gümüşçü 2010; Toprak 2005), had increased its vote. The owners of these small-businesses constituted the new Muslim bourgeoisie of 1980s and 1990s.

After the coup in 1980, all political parties were closed. In 1983, political parties started to emerge again. Turgut Özal, with his Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi [ANAP]), gained the majority vote and became prime minister. Since former political leaders were banned, he attracted votes of center-right voters and *cemaat* voters. As a follower of Kotku in the 1970s, a follower of the Naqshbandi order, many *cemaat* members were willing to vote for him. After the state had lifted the ban on former political party leaders, Erbakan returned to the political arena with the Welfare

Party (Refah Partisi [RP]) and became an important figure in the Islamist political movement again. The globalization process led by Özal in the 1980s created a new middle class consisting of business leaders from Anatolia who supported Islamic politics and political actors (Fitzgerald 2017; Tuğal 2009). This new middle class supported neoliberal globalization while committing to Islamic values and rules to some extent. In the following years, they became crucial contributors and suppliers of religious organizations, especially the Gülen Movement (Tuğal 2009).

The collapse of the relationship between İskenderpaşa and Erbakan began with the death of Kotku. His son-in-law, Esad Coşan, replaced him. Even at some point in the 1980s, Coşan refused to vote for Erbakan, arguing that "he does not allow İskenderpaşa members to collect money from people while allowing other *cemaat*s to collect" (Çakır 1990). A *cemaat*, which does not benefit from its alliance with a political party, could not be expected to vote for that party since the relationship was built based on incentive and benefits exchange as of many interest groups and political actor relations (Warner 2000). After these conflicts took place, combined with the authority clash between Coşan and Erbakan, İskenderpaşa openly encouraged its followers to vote for ANAP (Çakır 1990).

Until the rise of the AKP in the 2000s, religious groups have used their followers as a voter base in exchange for patronage, position, and power. While they were not allowed to operate overtly, they used their ability to provide social services and gained votes for a party in return for public benefits such as exemption from taxes (Ayata 1996; Koesel 2017). With the liberalization of religion and reduced military authority in daily politics during the AKP era, the *cemaat*s have found a broader and more accessible organizational space.

Nurcus and the Gülen Movement had a distinctive position in the history of Turkey. Even though the Gülen Movement was one of the Nur Movements, which consider Said Nursi's writings and teachings as their baseline for commenting on Islam, it distinguished itself from other Nur Movements the political, economic, and social arena more (Yavuz 2003). While they are not formed within the Naqshbandi tariqa, they played an important role in Turkish politics, especially after 2007. However, their alliance with the AKP was different from the alliances between *cemaat*s and political parties before which had been based on vote-patronage exchange. Besides, how they position them to the state differs much from cases of İskenderpaşa, Süleymancıs, and others.

2.4 Nur Movements and the State

Nur Movements, which base themselves on the religious scholar Said Nursi's religious doctrines, entail a different religious and political framework than Naqshbandi religious movements. Even though other movements have also used media, print-based education, and the newly emerging Anatolian bourgeoisie in the 1980s, Nur Movements benefited from these sectors more than their counterparts (Yavuz 2003).

The Nur Movements base themselves on the scripts and doctrines of Said Nursi. Unlike other *cemaat*s, they do not have a sheikh, whose words are the ultimate sacred explanation of religious documents. Instead, they read Said Nursi's books, which provide a framework for understanding the world and the Quran and not explicitly interpreting it. Even though it seems contradictory that these groups consider Nursi as a sheik, the writings of Nursi mainly encourage his readers to read, think, evaluate, and discuss. His scripts were more like a guideline in Muslims' journeys, in which they need to be alone first. However, the *cemaat*s have leaders and a hierarchical relationship based on religious knowledge was formed. In that sense, the Nur Movements became a group that primarily operated in print-based media, organized, and came together through reading circles (*dershanes*) and discussing the implications of Nursi's words in the real world (Fitzgerald 2017; Yavuz 2003).

It is crucial to understand what Nursi had thought and written to understand Nur Movements' organization. Nursi was interested in public life and politics; he was opening schools, teaching, he even took part in the Ottoman army during First World War as a preacher. He also had helped and defended the War of Independence and Atatürk. After the Turkish Republic's foundation, Nursi, being disturbed by Turkey's secular politics, withdrew from politics and public life and dedicated himself to writing religious scripts (Yavuz 2003).

Nursi's teachings have shaped the Nur Movements as a whole. He rejected the ultimate unquestionable authority of religious figures, argued that each person should raise their Islamic consciousness by themselves (Yavuz 2003). Nur Movements have followed it to some extent, especially considering the Gülen case, some branches have attached much importance to the leaders. However, it resulted in a more communal understanding of a *cemaat*, each member discussing religion regardless of their titles or ages without an overt hierarchy.

Nursi spent his last years distributing his scripts (Risale-i Nur) and spreading his doctrines. Allegedly, before he died, he voted for the DP in 1957 and encouraged his followers to vote (Çakır 1990). According to Nursi, a Muslim first needs to raise

consciousness independently, then implement faith in daily lives, and then restore Sharia's law (Yavuz 2003). Nur Movements have followed these steps in their daily lives as well.

There are three major groups, which are Nur Movements: Gülen Movement, Yeni Asyacılar and Yeni Nesilciler. All three groups have fought for state patronage and power. Some Nur groups became pro-MSP and had parliament members, though they left the MSP after the 1977 elections (Yavuz 2003).

Yeni Asyacılar followed a more nationalistic-religious agenda, while the Gülen Movement followed a Turko-Ottoman nationalist, anti-Arab, and anti-Persian agenda, being highly state-centric (Yavuz 1999, 2003). All groups, however, were interested in politics. Yeni Asyacılar supported the AP and the DYP and did not challenge the military memorandum of March 12. Mehmet Kırkıncı, one of the most important figures of the Nur Movement, supported the 1980 coup, alongside Fethullah Gülen (Çakır 1990). Unlike the significant Naqshbandi branches, the Nur Movements supported or did not challenge state policies and military interventions and followed a more conciliatory approach.

Gülen was a student of Kırkıncı. His movement was different from other Nur groups in three ways. They were Turkish nationalists, who held a more state-centric approach than other Nur movements; they were promoting the free market, and they focused on education extensively (Yavuz 1999). These three characteristics have led the Gülen movement to spread rapidly and attain power easier than others have done.

2.5 The Gülen Movement

The Gülen Movement is a "neo-Nur" movement, considering the differences it has been compared to other Nur groups and the understanding of *cemaat* in the scripts of Nursi. Like other movements, the Gülen Movement was founded in the 1960s and spread during the post-1980 era. The state-religious group relations in 1970s and 1980s, which are discussed above, shaped the Gülen Movement's organizational structure and the strategies of Gülen as well.

We may divide the Gülen Movement's trajectory into three periods. The first period demonstrates the foundation and community-building process of the Movement during the 1970s (Yavuz 2003). Fethullah Gülen was a preacher in Kestanepazarı, İzmir, teaching the Quran and organizing camps, reading circles (*dershanes* or Light-

houses) as spaces for debating and discussing the teachings of Nursi, Quran, and Islam. Additionally, the aim was to fight with communism and to create a "Golden Generation", who would be pious, hardworking and well-educated (Gümüşçü 2016). During the 1971 coup, he was arrested and became the center of military attention as other religious leaders of his time (Akyol 2007). Though he was arrested, in the leading newspaper of the Gülen Movement, *Zaman*, articles welcoming the coup of 1971 were published, arguing the coup was against communists (Şık 2016). Especially considering Turkey's left-right conflict during the 1970s, he followed an anti-communist, conservative, nationalistic agenda (Yavuz 2003). However, he did not support any political party openly, even though he directed his followers to vote for Erbakan, claiming that his party is "really Islamist" after being targeted by the military (Şık 2017). Gülen's statist and safer approach probably saved him from facing severe criminal penalties during the 1980 coup. The Gülen movement had started to participate in media in the late 1970s. Its flagship magazine Sızıntı started to be published in 1979, on religion, science, and history (Yavuz 2003). Additionally, the daily newspaper *Zaman* became a widely read newspaper in Turkey.

The second period of the Gülen Movement, 1983-1997, was characterized by the integration process of the Gülen Movement into state institutions. Gülen developed ties with the post-coup Özal government (Yavuz 2003), following a neoliberal agenda. Even though Özal was Naqshbandi and was raised by the İskenderpaşa branch (Çakır 1990), in this period the Gülen Movement started to incorporate into state institutions with the help of Turgut Özal as well as the military elite. The conflict between Erbakan and Gülen, based on different understandings of Islam and Islamic politics, paved the way to new alliances (Şık 2017). The moderate, tolerant, and liberal outlook of the Movement helped it operate within economic, social, and cultural domains without receiving too much reaction from the state elite and the military.

Especially considering the military authority in the post-coup era, one cannot argue that the rise and spread of religious movements and *cemaat*s were only a consequence of neoliberalism and the exceptional efforts of Özal himself. The political agenda followed by the military helped religious movements to be able to act in the public realm and public institutions.

After the 1980 coup, the military followed a domestic policy, which aimed at complete cleansing of leftists and accommodating Islamists at the same time. One of the Nur Movement leaders, Mehmet Kutlular, stated in an interview published in the newspaper *Milliyet* in 1999 that the military elite met with all religious leaders in Turkey and proposed them immunity and organizational space on the condition of

commitment to the principles of Atatürk (Şık 2017). The Gülen Movement was one of the groups that accepted this proposal. Considering their nationalist, tolerant and peaceful approach, they had become one of the "secret" allies of the contemporary state elite in the post-coup era of Turkey. Gülen followed the strategy of strategic nonconfrontation (Gürbüz and Bernstein 2012) until the mid-2000s.

The Movement summarizes its principles as a Turko-Ottoman nationalist religious movement, fighting with three enemies: ignorance, poverty, and disunity (Esposito and Yılmaz 2010; Yavuz 2003). The emphasis on education to fight with "ignorance" led them to open religious and non-religious schools in Turkey and Central Asia, starting with the 1990s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkic states became the center of Turkish foreign policy's attention. Therefore, the educational activities of Gülen in Central Asia were welcomed by the state, arguing that these schools were promoting Islam, dialogue, and tolerance, and a common identity and the language of Turkish people (Esposito and Yılmaz 2010; Fitzgerald 2017). These principles in understanding education were not conflicting Turkey's new agenda, even contributing to it generally, which can be defined as making use of secular state while not disturbing, even contributing to it (Turam 2004).

The fight with poverty was done by religiously motivated humanitarian aid and charity events called "*hizmet*" (service) (Ebaugh 2010; Sevindi and Abu-Rabi 2008). To understand how it found a resource to accommodate its members' needs, one should first look at the change in economic policies in Turkey in the 1980s. With the neoliberal policies supported by Turgut Özal and rapid industrialization in the 1980s, a new bourgeoisie had emerged in Anatolia (Fitzgerald 2017; Tuğal 2009). Called "Anatolian Tigers," this group constituted newly emerged traders and manufacturers who held religious affiliations. They had begun to support religious movements financially, considering their importance in civil society, given that this new bourgeoisie was not dependent on the state in terms of their financial resources (Gümüşçü 2010; Yavuz 2003). The increase in urbanization and education, followed by rapid industrialization and liberalization, helped religious movements to find support economically and socially. The rural immigrants' poverty and the inability of the government to provide social services due to rapid neoliberal industrialization policies (Ayata 1996; Gümüşçü 2010) resulted in a system where the financial aids provided by the new conservative bourgeoisie being channeled to rural immigrants as a welfare service provided by the Gülen Movement.

The Gülen Movement benefited from these developments especially more, while Gülen was openly encouraging entrepreneurs to engage in the neoliberal global free-market economy, arguing that it is compatible with Islam (Dreher 2015; Esposito

and Yılmaz 2010; Hendrick 2013). It had resulted in a vast expansion of the institutions representing the Gülen Movement in the public space, such as the foundation of Journalists and Writers Foundation in 1994, which became one of the most prominent organizations for the writers and journalists in Turkey (Gözaydın 2008; Yılmaz 2010).

The bourgeoisie and urban people with religious concerns had started to participate in religious civil society by joining meetings and discussions, second by helping the people in need to strengthen the commitment to the Movement and create an understanding of community. On the other side, the Movement organized charity events and organizations to collect financial support for the people in need via mobilizing working or lower-middle-class people as discussed above (Koç 2008). One important example may be the *Kimse Yok Mu Association*, which collected vast amounts of money for humanitarian aid purposes (Koç 2008).

The third enemy, disunity, was defeated by promoting dialogue and tolerance, according to Gülen (Esposito and Yılmaz 2010). This principle was fundamental in a context where Islamic fundamentalism was rising in Turkey and the world, especially after the Cold War. The promotion of tolerance and non-violence in Islam made the Gülen Movement a worldwide supported movement representing the "good Islam"(Akyol 2007). He also intended to place himself in the Good Muslim camp too. By arguing that Turkish Islam is nonviolent and tolerant, unlike the interpretations of Islam in the Arab world, he was placing himself to an upper scale compared to Arab Muslims while promoting the Turkish version of Islam as the right way of Islam, which he claimed, was nonviolent. It had resulted in worldwide respect and support for Gülen Movement compared to other movements had (Lacey 2014).

He started to be encouraged by state institutions to open schools in Central Asia and the Middle East. However, the pressure was not absent. The fight with reactionary activities was continuing for the Turkish military. Even though Nur movements declared their full support to the military in each case, they could not escape being a target in 1997.

The 1997 coup, considered a postmodern coup, had limited the organizational space of religious movements once again. In 1999, after the rumors spread that Gülen was about to be put in jail, he flew to the USA, called it a "self-exile." He has never visited Turkey since then. However, the Gülen Movement had experienced its most powerful and influential era in Turkish politics while he was in the USA. This era is defined by Yavuz (2003) as the liberal and global era of the Gülen Movement, where Gülen gave up on nationalistic agenda and focused on human rights, democracy, and civil society rather than following a statist approach. On the other hand, the

educational services abroad, where the Movement teaches Turkish to foreigners, and the events such as Turkish Olympiads imply that the Movement had continued to emphasize nationalism as an ideology and a strategy (Wulfsberg 2015).

After the 1997 postmodern coup, the Gülen Movement organized a meeting called the Abant Platform and published a statement, arguing that the state should respect religious freedoms; secularism and religion and revelation and reason do not conflict with each other (Yavuz 1999). While this declaration criticized state policies towards religious groups, it also accepted laicism as a core founding value of the Turkish state. This moderate stance against state policies got a reaction and led to the self-exile of Gülen; however, it was not considered a significant threat compared to other religious movements.

By the time, the number of the *dershane*s reached more than 5000 in 1999 (Yavuz 1999), and international schools had reached all around the world more than 2000 (Esposito and Yılmaz 2010). While members had found many positions and offices in state and military since the 1980s, this was not an overt integration. The direction is still unknown: did the Gülen movement members integrate into state institutions secretly by covering their Gülenist identities or did the state officials become movement members over time? While the first seems more likely to consider the allegations towards Gülen Movement for "engaging in deception," they had started to incorporate in both cases. After the AKP faced problems regarding its government authority in 2007, the Gülen Movement, with many state institutions, combined with its financial and social support, became a crucial ally in Turkish politics in the late 2000s.

2.6 The Gülen Movement and AKP

According to many researchers, the alliance between the Gülen Movement and AKP was a forced relationship (Demiralp 2016; Yavuz 2018; Şık 2016). Due to the state- and military-friendly approach of the Gülen Movement since the 1970s, Islamist movements blamed Gülen and his supporters for letting down Islamist struggle and not being loyal to the movement and history in which the Islamic political identity was formed. The founders of AKP, former Welfare Party members, were also in an implicit conflict with Nur Movements (ANKA 2016). However, politics allow differences to be ignored and to form new alliances. The alliance benefited both sides so that the differences were ignored to the extent they would not be otherwise.

2.6.1 The Alliance Formation Process

Before the 2002 elections, the AKP and Gülen allegedly agreed, and the movement implicitly supported the AKP in the elections (Şık 2016). This temporary alliance did not mean a complete collaboration between the two groups until 2007. The Gülen Movement supported Mehmet Ağar, who was the leader of DYP and former interior minister of Turkey, and other newly emerging center-right parties until 2007 against AKP (Şık 2016). This alliance may be explained by AKP's need to gain more votes, while the Gülen Movement could not find any center-right parties to support.

By 2002, Gülen was able to control national police forces and had many members undercover in the military (Yavuz 2018; Şık 2016). The reports of the attorney general of Ankara indicate that between 1983 and 2014, 400 personnel were expelled from the military for being a Gülen Movement member by the military judges, none of them taking place after 2003 (Şık 2017). Additionally, the National Security Council's suggestion in 2004 to combat with Gülen Movement since they started to control each state institution was also ignored by the government (Şık 2016). This suggestion was discussed by the officials only after the breakdown of the AKP-Gülen alliance. It shows that the Gülen Movement was already powerful enough, suggesting that direct institutional access is more beneficial (Grzymala-Busse 2016). However, the AKP needed help to cope with the military and the judiciary. The temporary alliance of 2002 resulted in a win-win situation; the AKP became the majority party in the parliament, and the Gülen Movement became freer in their operations to some extent.

In 2007, the alliance was formed again as a defense mechanism against the Kemalist military elite's actions such as e-memorandum, the presidential elections and the closure case against the party (Gümüşçü 2016). The president was to be appointed by the parliament, a member of AKP, Abdullah Gül, was to be elected. The discussions were mostly about his Islamic identity and the headscarf of his wife. It resulted in massive protests called "Republic marches," where a considerable majority called the military to intervene, together with the journalists and political figures calling for an intervention in the media outlets (Şık 2016). An e-memorandum was then published by the military, arguing that laicism must be protected. Based on Turkish state-military relations history, it indicated that the military would intervene if it thought it is necessary. However, the AKP did not step down, partly due to the public support, partly due to the international reaction that urges the military not to intervene in Turkey's politics. The good relations sustained by AKP, especially the EU and the ongoing EU accession process, allowed the AKP to operate within

the political arena more freely.

After Gül could not reach the necessary vote number to be elected, the CHP appealed to the Constitutional Court, and the Constitutional Court canceled the election. It resulted in an early election, in which AKP demonstrated public support by receiving 46,5% of the total votes. It is important to note that AKP has received only 34% of the votes in the 2002 election.

Two different aspects can explain the alliance between Gülen and Erdoğan. The first one is the Kemalist military elite versus AKP conflict, which originates from the Turkish military's self-appointed position as the defender of secular norms throughout the republic's history. The AKP, since its foundation, had been following a different agenda compared to former Islamic parties, which was more moderate and liberal, democratic, EU-friendly, and secular to some extent without confronting Kemalist military and bureaucratic elite (Demiralp 2016; Yavuz 2018). The plan followed by the AKP was welcomed by Islamists and liberal democrats, and international actors such as the EU. In turn, any further confrontation with the military elite was categorized as a part of the democratization process. The crisis resulted in the dissolution of the parliament and an early election, which demonstrated the public support of AKP. For the Gülen Movement, which aimed and struggled to weaken the Kemalist teaching in politics and state institutions, this was an opportunity to reach its goals.

Secondly, the Gülen Movement characterized itself by committing and supporting the ideas and values promoted by AKP. Gülen's idea of Islam, which is compatible with the secular state and favors co-existence with secular liberal groups, secular and liberal democratic agenda were coherent with the agenda of AKP (Yavuz 2018). The match in interests and approaches helped them to collaborate without any reaction from their members and supporters.

In addition to the two reasons discussed, the Gülen Movement and the AKP benefited from each other in both state institutions and public spaces. While the AKP would allow Gülenists to operate and expand within state institutions freely, the Gülen movement provided the AKP with bureaucratic aid, media outlets to reach the public, votes and devoting themselves to *hizmet* (Yavuz 2018).

Just after the alliance faced these political crises, AKP had decided to redesign the judicial system with a constitutional change by diminishing the military influence over state institutions (Gümüşçü 2016). Fethullah Gülen himself had supported the constitutional change in public, even arguing that "the dead should rise from their graves and vote in favor of the package" (Gümüşçü 2016, 8). After the package was

accepted by popular vote, the alliance started to take action.

The *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* trials (Jenkins 2009), which accused military personnel of planning a coup against the AKP government, had begun after the constitutional change had been made. Many military officers, media outlets, politicians, journalists, academicians, students and former police and National Intelligence Unit members were put on trial, many of them were jailed thereafter (Gümüşçü 2016). With these trials, combined with the constitutional changes in the 2010 referendum, the aim was to reduce the influence of the military and Kemalist elite over the Turkish political arena. The power transition process was painful yet successful for the AKP. However, this alliance started to evolve into a first implicit, then explicit, conflict between two groups who can no longer share power.

2.6.2 The Rise of the Gülen Movement

The rise of the Movement can be seen in three major categories: education, NGOs, and elected members of parliamentary and municipalities. Even though the reports show that state institutions of all branches and ministries employed a varying number of individuals who identify themselves as followers of Gülen, those three major categories indicate the power of the Movement clearly, which will be outlined below.

Education was the most critical aspect of the Movement, considering that the *Işıkevleri* (Lighthouses) were the primary units of the organization since its early days. Those houses were the meeting spots of the followers, where the murids received religious education. These meetings help individuals create a shared identity with other followers. The individuals from different social and economic statuses interact with each other, and the hierarchy in these relations depends on the superiority in righteousness.

The lighthouses evolved into *dershane*s in time, where general school education was provided besides religious education. As they expanded, they become private teaching institutions, in which the students were prepared for high-school and university entrance exams. A critical aspect of these institutions is that they were private institutions that provide academic help in exchange for small amounts of money to students from any background, not only to their followers. These institutions became popular with the high rate of success of their students. The first *FEM* (private institutions preparing students for university entrance exams) was opened in 1984 in Istanbul. The number rapidly increased, and as of 2013, the number of branches reached 215 throughout Turkey (Yeni Asır 2013). Another report provided by Na-

tional Education Ministry in 2013 showed that there were 920 branches of various private institutions connected to the Movement, 263 of them *FEM* branches (Oda TV 2013).

The private teaching institutions and private schools, private dormitories, and universities were also opened widely throughout Turkey by the Movement. The OHAL Commission Report of 2020 indicates that 1005 institutions were related to the organization, all opened before 2016 (OHAL Commision 2020).

Two main aspects contributed to the expansion of the private educational services provided by the organization. Together with the rumors that exam questions were provided to the successful students, the success of the institutions was the first rumor. While the rumor was questioned, especially after the university entrance exams in 2011, the investigations showed that the institutions stole the questions of various entrance and qualification exams since 2005 (Gümüş 2021). These exams include public personnel selection examinations, high school and university entrance exams, police academy, and military school qualification exams.

Second, the organization was highly active at the universities, in the Ministry of National Education as well as in YÖK (The Council of Higher Education). The Commission Report demonstrates that 41.039 individuals were expelled from these institutions since 2016 on charges of being a member of the organization (OHAL Commision 2020). 17.894 of the individuals expelled from the beforementioned institutions allegedly were involved in the stealing and distribution of exams to the organization's private institutions (Gümüş 2021).

On the other hand, NGOs play a significant role in the provision of services of the organizations. By establishing one or more associations, the religious organizations provide social services to the public-funded by donations. As mentioned before, those donations are mostly religiously motivated. By being an intermediary in this religiously motivated aid campaign, the organizations create a commitment between themselves the needy and allow the wealthy to satisfy their religious responsibilities.

The Gülen Movement had various NGOs founded for this purpose, approximately 1500 associations and waqfs (OHAL Commision 2020). One crucial association was "*Kimse Yok Mu Derneği,*" founded in 2004, which had 81 regional offices organized throughout Turkey as of 2008 (Koç 2008). The association had 56.000 volunteers in 2014, and allegedly the number tripled in 1.5 months after the AKP-Gülen alliance was broken (İHA 2014). The organization provided aid regarding health, food, money by being an intermediary between the needy and the wealthy, and additional educational and foreign aid were provided (Koç 2008). The financial re-

ports available show that the organization mainly relies on donations. The reports indicate that from 2005 to 2008, the number of donators increased; however, the total amount of collected donations decreased to some extent in the following years (Koç 2008). While the association expanded its scope of influence and opened new branches, the decrease in the collected donations was suspicious. After the failed coup attempt, the investigations made from 2016 to 2021 suggested that the donations collected by the association were sent abroad or transferred to the organization directly (Anadolu Agency 2018*b*).

Lastly, after the coup attempt in 2016, the parliamentary members and mayors of big cities were accused of being a supporter of Gülen even though the relationship between the AKP and Gülen was worsening, especially after 2013. In 2017, former mayors of Istanbul and Ankara were forced to resign, allegedly by the AKP, because of their connection with Gülen (Yetkin Report 2019). The son-in law of the former mayor of Istanbul was investigated for being a member of the organization (Usta 2020), and the former mayor of Ankara was accused of providing land, resources, and benefits to the organization (Milliyet 2015). Additionally, the ruling party AKP expelled 7 mayors and 27 city council members for being a supporter of the organization in 2016 (Ekiz 2016).

While the parliamentary members were not expelled or directly investigated, several of them were out of the party list in the next elections. One hundred and forty-nine former members of parliaments were not nominated in the 2018 elections (Anadolu Agency 2018*a*). Considering that AKP had 316 members in the parliament, the number was relatively high, and the reason was to freshen up the cadres and motivate the members.

The numbers and the rise of the Movement regarding its personnel in various state institutions and NGOs, and civil society indicate that the organization flourished, especially after entering the alliance with the AKP government. As the scope of influence of the organization increased, the incentives it provides to its followers increased as well. Two sides of this symbiotic alliance based on mutual benefits could be discussed: the side of the Movement and the AKP government.

The AKP government, which had faced elite reaction in the power transfer process in parliament and executive institutions, needed an ally, which had already personnel and influence in state institutions and civil society. The Gülen Movement was already placing officials to state institutions since the 1980s, especially regarding the numbers provided in reports of MGK (National Security Council). However, these reports were neglected (Şık 2017), especially after AKP became the governing party in Turkey in 2002. While direct institutional reach to state institutions is

more beneficial for an organization itself (Grzymala-Busse 2016), this power also strengthens the organization's hands in negotiations for building a political alliance (Koesel 2017; Warner 2000). The political parties mostly look for several benefits as they choose a political ally: resources, the positive effect of the support, and the legitimacy of the ally in the eyes of the state elite and the public (Koesel 2017; Warner 2000). The Gülen Movement was providing resources by mobilizing its organizational resources for election campaigns by providing human and material resources and propaganda through its media. Besides voting for the party alone, the members worked for the party's political propaganda as well.

The movement, which was seen as a representative of moderate Islam (Ebaugh 2010; Yavuz 2003), was already supported by international actors (Lacey 2014), public and state elite to some extent. The alliance, therefore, created an image for AKP, which illustrates AKP as a moderate, reasonable, and trustworthy actor in both the domestic and international arena.

On the other side of the coalition, the movement gained political power hence the state resources it needed to expand its activities. The reports and numbers indicate that the Movement could operate within the social, political, and economic arena freely, being the most important actor in the religious market. By capturing the qualification exams of various kinds, the movement could place its members to state institutions. For example, 33.716 personnel were expelled from the Ministry of the Interior, most of them being police officers of any rank (OHAL Commision 2020). The latest trials showed that qualification entrance exams for police departments were stolen and provided to selected students before the exam took place (HalkTV 2021).

Individuals who benefited from the stolen questions or education and other resources such as free food, dormitory or counseling, felt indebted to the organization. Therefore, the emotional and financial connection had created a chain of debts, which result in a patronage relationship between individuals and organizations. As these individuals hold crucial offices in state institutions, the Movement extended its influence over state institutions by controlling them for its advantage.

The question "Why did the Gülen Movement not choose to form a political party of its own?" can be answered by looking at the organizational structure as well as the state-religion relations in Turkey. The Movement was a grassroots organization, and its non-participation in politics was a reason for its success in its struggle for power (Kirdiş 2016b). The strategic calculation the movement made and the evaluation of the menu of options were successful. The grassroots movements mostly see the shift to party politics as too costly since it brings about moderation to stay in the

existing system and may erode the popular legitimacy (Kirdiş 2015). The Gülen Movement, therefore, stayed out of the active political arena. However, it operated within state institutions without being a direct target of the state elite.

2.6.3 The Collapse of the Alliance

After 2010, the relationship changed, given that AKP gained more power and authority, and Gülen Movement expanded its institutional authority. The disagreement over the distribution of power and wealth had resulted in a slow-growing conflict between the Gülen Movement and AKP (Gümüşçü 2016). Considering the Gülen Movement, the group became powerful in municipalities and accumulated wealth and land for their foundations; the members were selected for ministerial offices for justice and interior ministries specifically. They were considered foreign policy actors given the Kemalist elite influence in foreign affairs ministry, which could not be eliminated much (Yavuz 2018). After the coup attempt of Gülen Movement in 2016, many documents revealed that the Gülen Movement had become a "parallel state," in which they only hire and protect each other, use police forces for their good and eliminate possible rival actors without considering judicial consequences (Şık 2016).

Even though the conflicts' details are not crucial in understanding the relationship between the Gülen Movement and AKP, the reasons worth mentioning, first, the National Intelligence Office was controlled by AKP, the Gülen Movement was only able to use the police for intelligence purposes (Demiralp 2016; Şık 2016). Secondly, the agenda of AKP to resolve the Kurdish question was not welcomed by Fethullah Gülen himself; he criticized the approach of AKP to the problem openly (Şık 2016). Combined with these events and the demand of the Gülen Movement for an increase in the number of parliament members, who are loyal to Gülen (Yavuz 2018), the AKP started to counteract with the decision to shut down private preparation schools for university exams. Then, it aimed at media outlets and shut them down, too, especially after AKP itself could control many media outlets other than the Movement.

As a result, in 2013, Gülen Movement declared war on AKP by releasing record tapes of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and many other politicians and their relatives as empirical evidence of corruption and money laundering activities. AKP successfully managed to eliminate these allegations by arguing that it was a judicial coup (Yavuz 2018). The event showed that the Gülen Movement could no longer compete with AKP in public support and institutional authority.

Fethullah Gülen himself could not see it due to several assumptions. First, he wrongly assumed that his supporter base is still loyal to him. Due to the AKP's enormous success and ability to provide services without using Gülen's channels, many former supporters of Gülen became AKP supporters. Secondly, he assumed that his institutional authority was more effective compared to the power Erdoğan holds. However, 11 years in government made AKP the most vital organization in Turkey. Lastly, Gülen thought that withdrawal of support of the Gülen Movement would cost Erdoğan about 10% of the total vote; thus, he would not dare to oppose and dismiss his movement (Şık 2016). Nevertheless, the presidential elections of 2014 showed that Erdoğan did not need Gülen Movement and their support anymore; he won the elections in the first round by receiving more than 50% of the votes.

The results and the ongoing support for Erdoğan in his battle with the Gülen Movement encouraged him to take bolder steps, and the purge of the Gülen Movement had begun. Until 2016, *Samanyolu TV* and other TV channels were closed, many officials with high rankings in state institutions were expelled, the significant public figures, business people, parliament members, and other politicians in AKP were expected to pledge loyalty to AKP. The failed coup attempt of the Gülen Movement in 2016 accelerated the purge, and hundreds of thousands of state officials, teachers, doctors, academicians, even janitors were expelled from state institutions.

Therefore, the relationship between AKP and the Gülen Movement differed from the worldwide religious movement-political party alliances. The relationship was not only based on a vote-incentive exchange (Koesel 2017) but also on shared goals and mutual benefits; a distinct relationship supported by bureaucracy. These foundations of the alliance became the fundamental reasons for separation, especially after both sides gained too much power and authority over various state institutions and public spaces.

The Gülen Movement had always followed a strategy based on nonconfrontation with the existing political elite until the mid-2010s. The strategy of nonparticipation and nonconfrontation allowed them to capture critical offices in state institutions until 2002. After 2002, the organization extended its scope of influence as an incentive provided by the alliance with the ruling party AKP. As a result, the organization captured political power for a period, allowing them to control decision-making processes in each state institution, which will benefit the organization in terms of resources. As the coalition collapsed, the Movement could not survive as an organized group in Turkey. The causes and implications are discussed in the concluding chapter.

3.   THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

3.1 Introduction

Modern Egypt, which had been under Ottoman, French, and then British government from 1525 to 1952, had been granted its independence in 1922. Even though Britain gave them autonomy and a parliamentary monarchy was established, the British influence had continued to affect the political arena and state institutions very profoundly. Only in 1952, a military coup led by General Abdel Nasser took place and declared the end of British rule and monarchy in Egypt. Even though the independence movements were inclusive, where diverse groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood were present, the new regime was not tolerant of their existence after it was established. The exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood became an enduring state policy regardless of the leaders' names or ideologies.

In this chapter, the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian state and the strategies Muslim Brotherhood followed to gain political power to implement their goals are discussed. First, a brief history of the Muslim Brotherhood is presented. Second, the 1952 revolution and the role Muslim Brotherhood had in the independence are discussed. Then, the strategies the Muslim Brotherhood pursued and the challenges they faced are examined in detail in three leaders' rule in Egypt one by one. Lastly, an analysis of the success or failure of the strategy is made.

3.2 The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

Hasan al-Banna established Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. Even though it operated as a social movement until the 1930s, it became a part of the civil society

and started to engage in political activities fully in the 1970s. The Brotherhood primarily provided services and jobs to poor people, built hospitals and schools, and represented the opposition to secular politics and foreign influence (Botman 1998). Even though Egypt was on paper an independent state during the parliamentary monarchy regime, it was under British influence. The Brotherhood became a crucial factor in the complete independence movements and Marxist left and nationalists, with hundreds of thousands to a million activists (Botman 1998).

The Brotherhood was not inherently a Sufi organization. However, it embraced lots of elements of Sufi tradition, such as *murid-murshid* (follower – teacher) relations, interpretation and discussion of religious texts by the scholars, and promoting a spiritual and hierarchical system in which the teachers help the followers in terms of how to live like a good Muslim (Elsässer 2019). On the other hand, the organizations' most principal aim was to establish Sharia and reorganize the Egyptian state as a religious body, which was overwhelmingly political and diverged from many Sufi Brotherhoods.

The main focuses of the Muslim Brotherhood were the following: defying British dominion as well as Western non-Muslim influence, decreasing the poverty of the population, improving declining morality of the public with implementing an Islamic rule (Munson 2001), establishing a judicial, political, social system based on Islamic principles, and eventually uniting Muslims under this system worldwide (Al-Anani 2016). One interesting point was that even though Muslim Brotherhood openly claims that it aims at an Islamic state, it was found not sufficiently devoted to Islamic principles by other Islamic groups in Egypt. One reason was the accommodationist strategy of the Brotherhood, where they occasionally accept state policies and state authority (Abed-Kotob 1995). This accommodationist strategy is explained in the following sections. However, especially Salafi movements did not collaborate with Muslim Brotherhood (Ashour 2007). Even though the aim was similar, the divergent tools they use resulted in a fragmented Islamic movement, in which the groups did not prefer to cooperate.

The movement started to appear in the political arena in the late 1930s, as they were able to run for parliamentary elections (Munson 2001). Britain granted Egypt independence; however, the Suez Canal, military, and external affairs were still controlled by the British administration. Even though the British withdrawal began in the 1940s, the anger towards British control had not decreased but grown in public rapidly. The political system, on the other hand, was a parliamentary monarchy. The Muslim Brotherhood, which had been conducting violent attacks towards British officers or royalists among Egyptian politicians (Britannica 2020),

participated in the parliamentary elections of 1941 (Munson 2001). While al-Banna preferred broad social reform over political power (Munson 2001; Voll 1991), the Brotherhood simultaneously tried to use their increasing popularity among the public to affect the decision-making process.

The Brotherhood appeared as an alternative social organization in the 1930s and 1940s, and its followers increased drastically. Starting with five branches in Egypt in 1930, by 1938, the Brotherhood had three hundred units with a total of almost 100.000 members (Munson 2001). The British influence decreased in the 1940s, and Egypt was going through slow industrialization or urbanization. However, the number of members continued to increase. By 1949, the group had over two thousand branches around Egypt and between 300.000 and 600.000 members, implying that the group is the most significant organized force in the country (Munson 2001). The organization supported the coup of 1952 and became one of the founders of republican Egypt.

Besides the political turmoil in Egypt, the appealing sides of the Muslim Brotherhood were crucial in explaining its huge follower base. First, the Islamic component was essential, considering that Egypt is overwhelmingly Muslim. The Western influence, French and British control over the country, had been protested by focusing on non-Islamic and Christian identities of both most of the time. Other social organizations were highly unorganized and had fewer members to create a popular base. Hence the Brotherhood had the political opportunity in such an environment (Abed-Kotob 1995).

While the urbanization process started in the 1920s and continued in the 1930s and 1940s at a lower speed, it led to urban migration and urban poverty (Munson 2001). While the state could not handle the rapid urbanization and modernization, the Brotherhood was opening branches in urban areas simultaneously and providing social services such as building mosques, schools, and health centers(Munson 2001). As a result, the Brotherhood appeared as a social organization by which humanitarian aid and social service were provided to the population, which the state failed to provide.

The organizational structure of the Muslim Brotherhood also helped it to survive and grow stronger. It was highly demanding; a member should make sacrifices and work hard, lead others to the cause, follow orders without questioning, stay loyal to the teachings of the Brotherhood and Islam in its daily life, and hence should be trained well (Al-Anani 2016)(Al-Anani 2016). Member recruitment was not open to all but selective. The chosen members are socialized to the organization through a long and complicated process. They are challenged and trained in terms

of knowledge, physical power, intellectual capacity, and religious loyalty (Al-Anani 2016). The members who have gone through these processes became first-level members, and their levels increase as they continue in the organization. As a result, these individuals become socially, religiously, and ideologically devoted members of the organization.

The violent attacks organized by the Brotherhood in the 1940s resulted in the organization's dissolution in 1948, leading hundreds of members to be arrested and the branches to be raided. The government argued that the Brotherhood had a secret paramilitary group trained in the camps (Zahid and Medley 2006). Egypt's prime minister was murdered by a member in 1945 after the government declared that Egypt was taking part in World War II to become a UN member. After a series of assassinations of judges, prime ministers, politicians, and bombings of public spaces, the Muslim Brotherhood was found guilty and dissolved. Even though the state repression was enormous, and the Brotherhood was under strict government control, the State Department of the USA reports have shown that the Brotherhood continued its secret meetings in mosques, distributing pamphlets and organizing demonstrations constantly (Munson 2001). Meanwhile, al-Banna refused violence as a means, and the Brotherhood administration had a hard time controlling its members' behaviors and actions in the public arena (Britannica 2020). The organizational capacity and potential of the Brotherhood cannot be underestimated considering that as the ban was lifted in 1951, thousands of members organized rallies around Egypt on the same day.

3.2.1 The Nasserist Regime and the Brotherhood

In 1952, a group of army officers, headed by Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser, made a coup and toppled the king. In 1953, with a new constitution, Egypt was declared a republic. Nasser, an Arab socialist, nationalized Suez Canal and followed an anti-Western, anti-Israeli, and Soviet-friendly foreign policy. Even though he was a charismatic leader, when Egypt was defeated by Israel in the Six-Day Wars in 1967 this decreased his popularity.

Muslim Brotherhood had supported the regime change in 1952. The regime released many of the members. However, tensions increased as a member tried to assassinate General Nasser in 1954 (Munson 2001). It had resulted in the closure of the Brotherhood and the detention of thousands of members. The state repression of the Brotherhood continued and reached its peak. The organization was not able to operate within the public space, and all high-level members were detained. The

sufferings of the members before and during the Nasser regime became one of the most crucial aspects of the identity-building process of the Brotherhood, in which sacrifice for the organization and Islam are considered as duties. The justification of hierarchy based on suffering would become a huge debate in the following decades.

Nasser had introduced several secular policies. The state started to appoint religious schools and mosques' officials; reforms at the Al-Azhar University took place. Since Al-Azhar was the most important religious institution in the country, the university's subjection to state allowed the governments to grasp religious authority, which was called as "capitulation of the ulema to the state" (Crecelius 1972, p.36). For instance, Al-Azhar ulema condemned the attacks attributed to the Brotherhood each time and argued that violence is not compatible with Islam (Zeghal 1999). Even today, we see that the Al-Azhar administration has shown support to the existing government of General Sisi, who made a coup and toppled the popularly elected government in 2013 (Hassan 2020).

These steps were crucial in changing the hands of religious authority in Egypt. While the Muslim Brotherhood was expanding its scope of influence in Egypt, by banning the organization and reforming the religious authority structures, the government aimed at reducing the impact of the Muslim Brotherhood in the country. Meanwhile, the social contract presented by Naser aimed at strengthening the relationship between the citizens and the state. The policy of state distribution of jobs and goods and services in exchange for political support was followed by the Nasserist regime, where each graduate was granted a state job (Wickham 2002). While the system worked well initially, it created a massive burden to the state in the long run. It paved the way for a drastic policy change in the following Sadat era to improve the economic situation of the state and the citizens. This policy change had allowed the Brotherhood to take up a new position in the public space.

3.2.2 Anwar Sadat and the Brotherhood

After the death of Nasser, Anwar Sadat assumed the presidency and became the head of government in 1970. With Sadat's presidency, Egypt had gone through a liberalization process both in political and economic terms, yet still limited and controlled. Eventually, the Muslim Brotherhood found itself a tiny public space. It broadened its scope of influence, became active in many institutions, and reached more individuals than it could before.

Political liberalization and economic liberalization went hand in hand during the

1970s in Egypt. The defeat in 1967, worsening relations with the West and neighbors, economic deterioration, and unemployment among university students led Sadat to follow a completely different strategy in his leadership. He first started with the elimination of Nasserists among state institutions as well as civil society (Roussillon 1998). One of the tools he used for this strategy was to reactivate Muslim Brotherhood in the public space.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Sadat allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to operate within the public space by lifting the ban on its members and branches. The Sadat government allowed several Islamic organizations to publish magazines, distribute them, hold conferences and meetings, and reorganize at the universities, syndicates, and associations. One main reason was to eliminate Nasserists among these spaces. Knowing that the Nasser regime was highly repressive, and the organization suffered a lot during the confrontations with the state, especially the Brotherhood remained loyal to the state and state policies until the late 1970s and enjoyed its limited freedom (Wickham 2013). While it granted mutual benefit to both sides, many other Islamic movements and their followers at universities and other institutions disliked the cooperation between the organization and the state. Many found the Brotherhood either strict for its membership commitments or deviated from religious principles due to its collaboration with the Egyptian state (Wickham 2013). The Brotherhood, on the other hand, was able to attract Islamic students due to its organizational capacity and incentives.

As the Brotherhood benefitted from this liberalization in terms of organizational capacity, the new members became a new generation representing a different approach to religion and society. This new generation became highly socialized with ideologically other groups, led to de-radicalization of the organization in its attitudes (Ashour 2009). While working at university chambers and organizations with several representatives of different faculties or clubs, the new generation had experienced communicating, debating, and finding common ground in an environment with diverse individuals and organizations (Wickham 2013). The socialization process resulted in huge debates regarding the hierarchical structure of the organization in the following decade (Martini, Kaye, and York 2012).

The economic struggle, on the other hand, was hard to overcome. Grant of jobs to graduates created a burden to the state; the government lowered salaries to employ each graduate in state institutions. It became clear that by the late 1970s, university graduates did not prefer state jobs due to lower wages, and only non-graduates or elementary school graduates were employed in state institutions (Wickham 2013). On the other hand, the closed economy was not organized in a way that encouraged

manufacturing or other production sectors; enterprises of the state itself were limited. It, in turn, resulted in the inadequate provision of state services.

To overcome this problem, Sadat, after opening the economy to some extent, allowed religious and civil organizations to operate within the public space. Given that the collaboration between an organization and state in terms of social service provision is beneficial for both (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013), Sadat let these groups operate within public space.

The Brotherhood, which had hundreds of branches and hundreds of thousands of members in Egypt, was already providing social services even though it was banned most of the time since it was founded. However, the collaboration between Sadat and the Brotherhood enabled the group to enhance its capacity and reach more individuals than before. Additionally, Sadat tolerated and actively supported the expansion of the Brotherhood's service provision networks (Brooke 2019). One example is the IMA (Islamic Medical Association), which the Brotherhood opened around Egypt. Research on the IMAs and their operations shows that these hospitals were opened in urban areas where the lower-middle-class resides and provided healthcare of good quality not for free but for a reasonable price (Brooke 2019). The hospitals were not fully depoliticized, but allegedly the provision of services was not discriminative in religious or group identity. This characteristic, in turn, made IMAs one of the most popular hospital complexes in Egypt, which eventually resulted in sympathy towards the Brotherhood in public.

Even though some of the economic principles promoted by the Brotherhood did not correlate with Sadat's economic liberalization, the organization hardly opposed it in the first half of the 1970s. The private property reforms and shrinking public sector were welcomed by the organization since the members and the organization itself benefited from these reforms (Abed-Kotob 1995). These types of collaborations help organizations in two ways. First, the grants provided by the state, land allocation, or public benefits allow the organizations to expand their services (Arslan Köse 2019). Second, the organization can interact with the community more, hence increasing their organizational and financial capacity while increasing their influence on society.

By the late 1970s, the relationship between the Sadat administration and the religious organizations started to deteriorate. The Brotherhood was both inside and outside in the system. At the same time, it functioned within the public space, having no official recognition as an association or a political party (Wickham 2013). Even though both sides were mutually happy with the cooperation, two events led to the dissolution and anger towards each other.

The first one was the government's rejection of granting formal status to the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1979, the government did not approve the application of the Brotherhood to become a political party (Wickham 2013). It resulted in discontent among members, who were already accommodating the differences between the state and the organization's ideological stance for a decade. Secondly, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty signed by Sadat has created a wave of enormous anger among Egyptians.

Considering it as treason to the Muslims in the Middle East, many Islamic groups and leftist groups protested the decision. Many started to express their concern and disapproval of the peace with Israel, which again resulted in state repression towards the organizations. Muslim Brotherhood was one of these organizations as well. After it declared its condemnation, the government raids, closing of the branches, and arrests of the members had started again. Combined with failure in improving the economic status of the citizens, the decisions and internal uprisings they created marked the last years of Sadat. He was assassinated in 1981 during a parade by the Islamic Group. After the assassination, his successor, Hosni Mubarak, declared an emergency, and massive repression of Islamic organizations continued for a period.

3.2.3 The Mubarak Era and the Brotherhood's Political Experience

Hosni Mubarak had followed Sadat's foreign and domestic policies during his administration. He maintained and even furthered diplomatic relations with the USA while boosting economic and political liberalization in a limited manner. Meanwhile, the Brotherhood continued to broaden its scope of influence in terms of social services and participate in civil society by being in and leading syndicates, student councils, and organizations.

By the mid-1980s, the Brotherhood had to decide where the leadership and the members should determine their role in the society. While the founder al-Banna had urged his followers to stay away from politics and violence, the following leader, al-Qutb promoted a more violent and active approach. Even though the Qutbists left the organization afterward, arguing that the organization is too passive and incompetent, Qutb and his followers affected the Brotherhood's members regarding their perspective of organizational strategy.

Al-Tilmisani, the then General Guide of the Brotherhood, promoted political participation and explained the benefits to the organization (Wickham 2013). While this was welcomed and endorsed by the new generations, older generations in the

leadership strongly disagreed. They presented that the organization would accept the legitimacy of the regime and system by being a part of it (Wickham 2013). The risks of losing the popular base, legality, and deviation from spiritual aims are the main challenges a religious organization may face if they join the political arena (Kirdiş 2016*b*).

The generational gap started to become a real issue at the beginning of these discussions. The younger Brotherhood members, who were socialized in student councils, organizations, and syndicates in the 1970s and 1980s, were more open to dialogue and participation than older generations, who suffered a lot, imprisoned and tortured, under the repressive regime. The bigger problem that resulted from this for the organization was the younger generations leaving the organization as a reaction to the hierarchical structure based on not merit but the intensity of the sufferings of the members (Al-Anani 2016).

The Brotherhood tested its organizational and electoral capacity during the 1940s in national elections and 1984 and 1987 in the professional syndicate elections (Abed-Kotob 1995; Wickham 2002, 2013). While a different committee was working on a political party platform, the organization continued its social services in urban and semi-urban areas. In addition, the group saw the electoral campaigning process as a mean to spread their word regarding Islam while being immune from legal restrictions the organization had been facing (Abed-Kotob 1995; Mashhur 1987). This experience became a crucial turning point for the Brotherhood. The organization had worked on combining Islam, Sharia, and the concepts of democracy, the rule of law, and freedom (Wickham 2013). Nevertheless, the organization was not granted political party status by the state in the 1980s. It could only run for seats in the parliament by nominating independent candidates, which were limited in number and suppressed or dismissed right after they were chosen.

The 1990s had shown the Egyptian state and the Mubarak administration that the Brotherhood's organizational capacity and scope of influence were too great to be repressed to secure the survival of the existing state elites and the system. The late 1980s were already marked by a worsening economy, increasing budget deficit, high levels of unemployment (Wickham 2002). The social services provided by non-state organizations played an essential role in the perception of their groups in the society, and they were improving and spreading out.

The 1992 earthquake was the breaking point of the stable co-existence of the Muslim Brotherhood and the state. After the earthquake happened, the Brotherhood offered help to the affected through professional syndicate organizations and their social service options (Brooke 2019; Wickham 2013). On the other hand, the state

appeared to be inadequate in providing the necessary help and aid. This realization made it clear for the state elite that the expansion and influence of the Brotherhood could not be accepted anymore. The state elite was highly concerned, as the then interior minister of Egypt Abdel Halim Moussa put it: "Do we have a state within the state?" (Wickham 2013).

After the 1992 earthquake event, the state started to restrict the organization and activities of the Brotherhood and other groups. The healthcare facilities were either closed or put in difficult situations such as getting late approvals or experiencing financial problems (Brooke 2019). The organization again witnessed state violence due to its growing social and political influence (Al-Awadi 2005). Even though the Brotherhood followed a more accommodationist approach and continued to condemn violent attacks (Abed-Kotob 1995) and express their support to the current regime, political participation became an almost impossible option for the organization. Only in the 2000 election, the organization could run for parliament with a limited number of candidates. However, the Brotherhood utilized the regime repression as it always had done since Nasser, by using the notions of patience, test, and sacrifice to construct a narrative of victimization and enforce coherence among the group (Al-Anani 2016).

On the other hand, political liberalization was not entirely a result of domestic pressure, but one other reason was the foreign policy of democratization promoted by the USA. The good relations between the Mubarak administration and the USA administration had resulted in more pressure on the democratization of Egypt. Mubarak, therefore, pursued a strategy, which mainly focused on holding elections without political liberties or liberal democracy principles. Thus, the elections were more like sham elections, in which the opposition was not allowed to nominate candidates more than the governing party of Mubarak were nominating. The Brotherhood and other organizations' members and candidates were arrested on election days; even the individuals were detained or barred from voting if they would be voting for any opposition group, especially the Brotherhood (Shenker 2010; Wittes 2005). However, the Mubarak administration followed a relatively more accommodationist approach to the opposition figures and organizations than Sadat and Nasser (Wickham 2013).

The Brotherhood participated in the 2000 elections and gained 17 seats in the parliament despite the reported fraud on the election day. Until 2005, the Brotherhood followed more self-restrained propaganda to avoid state repression to some extent and create a legitimate position for themselves in the existing political system (Wickham 2013). The organization changed its slogan from "Islam is the Solution" to "Constitution is the Solution." The moderation process of the Brotherhood, therefore, had

begun at the beginning of the 2000s.

The organization's decision to enter the political arena was a strategic choice. They already had significant influence over the urban areas, and hence their mobilizational capacity was proved by their significant mass protests with thousands of protesters. The social service part was crucial since even the non-sympathizers of the Brotherhood appreciated their services for the public (Brooke 2019). The extensive assistance provided by the Brotherhood made them more connected with society and more responsive to their problems. Given that the state could not provide social services, the non-state actors take responsibility and gain legitimacy (Ayata 1996). As a result, even though it was not clear which predated the other, the Brotherhood nominated candidates and won in the districts in which the IMA facilities of the organization existed (Brooke 2019). The organization, therefore, made use of its facilities and services and got rewarded in a way.

On the other hand, the organization saw it as an opportunity to spread its ideas and motivations through electoral campaigns. In 1984, Al-Tilmisani argued that the strategy to participate in politics was meant to achieve their objectives, not an end (Wickham 2013). To participate, the Brotherhood was aware that the system should be more open, and the democratic liberal principles should be recognized. Therefore, collaborating with diverse oppositional groups, the organization promoted democracy, the constitution, and reform in the political system (Wickham 2013).

In the elections of 2005, the Brotherhood won 88 seats in the parliament, becoming the most prominent opposition bloc. Despite the arrest of hundreds and election day fraud allegations, this was a big success for the Brotherhood. As a result, the state again launched a significant attack on the Brotherhood, arresting hundreds, suppressing and dissolving meetings. Another trigger of these attacks was the change in the Brotherhood's discourse. The Brotherhood, starting with the 2005 elections, began to campaign, in which they aim to challenge the perception of the Western actors that the Brotherhood is a terrorist organization (Osman 2011). Worrying that the state may lose its legitimate position as a fighter of radical Islam in the Middle East, the Mubarak administration began to repress the organization. Together with the *Kefaya* (Enough) Movement starting in 2005, a grassroots coalition protesting Mubarak, and the possibility that his son may be his successor, the stakes were too high for the regime to ignore the growing influence of any opposition group.

As a result, the elections in 2010 were a disaster for the opposition bloc, in which the Brotherhood could not get any seats. While many groups boycotted the elections beforehand, the Brotherhood withdrew from the polls after the first round. Expecting that the elections will be repeated in a more accessible environment,

Mubarak declared his party's victory in 2011. The discontent and anger towards Mubarak resulted in the outbreak of mass protests on 25th January, leading the way to Mubarak's resignation on 11th February. The transition process began, and Egypt had experienced a pluralistic and democratic period for two years.

The democratic experience of Egypt was not a well-designed one. Several political parties were established, together with the Freedom and Justice Party of the Muslim Brotherhood. Even though the organization had accepted that it would not be nominating anyone for the presidency (Brooke 2019), the Brotherhood then nominated a presidential candidate. After the candidacy of the first nominee was dismissed, Mohammed Morsi became the new candidate. He had won most of the votes in the second round of the elections, becoming the first president of the new democratic Egypt in 2012.

The democratic experience ended in 2013 when the military made a coup following the mass protests rejecting Morsi and his presidency. In a fragile political environment, the Brotherhood could not maintain its position as a legitimate political actor in the existing system. The two-year-long experience of the Egyptian state and the one-year-long Brotherhood rule became the last democratic experience of Egypt.

3.3 The Failure of the Muslim Brotherhood

3.3.1 First Moderation and Inclusion Attempt in 1990s

The failure of the Brotherhood in terms of its participation in the political arena can be understood by referring to the political incorporation literature. Given that the Brotherhood was an anti-system party, which openly challenged the existing political system, it had to moderate itself to be a part of it before changing it. The moderation process, which had begun in the 1990s, failed each time the organization captured relatively greater space in the political arena.

Although the Brotherhood argued that democracy is compatible with Islam, the dilemma of the superiority of religious authority versus legislative authority resulted in a distrust against Muslim Brotherhood (Harnisch and Mecham 2009). Furthermore, conflicting statements made by different members about *shura*s (councils) and the democratic institutions' compatibility with Islam caused more confusion (Ranko 2014). The ideological moderation did not start during the 1980s (Ranko 2014) but in the 1990s (El-Ghobashy 2005). The 1990s turned out to be the years

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that the Muslim Brotherhood strived the most for moderation and acceptance into the system.

It is important to note that the Islamist organization "Islamic Group" in Egypt was the most targeted group by the state during the 1980s. With their renunciation of violence in the 1990s (Ashour 2007), the Brotherhood lost its status as the more moderate Islamist organization; however, the credibility of nonviolent Islamist opposition grew gradually until 2008 (Brownlee 2010). The revisions in the ideology of the organizations emerged with the younger generation in 1994 (El-Ghobashy 2005). As discussed, the new generation was more open to dialogue, debates, and discussions with groups that have diverse ideologies. This socialization process at universities and in professional syndicates enabled the new generation to have a different perspective than the older generations. The older generations, who suffered under the regime, were reluctant to interact with varied individuals or give any concession to the system. They stated that women's rights are protected within the organization, that women candidates were running for offices in the Brotherhood, and that they support equal citizenship rights, including non-Muslims (El-Ghobashy 2005). However, these statements did not signal any credible commitments since other older members made contradictory statements.

One example provided by El-Ghobashy (2005) is the interview made by Mashhour in 1997. The candidate for the local council of Muslim Brotherhood argues that Coptic Christian citizens should not hold top posts and should pay extra taxes. As Altınordu (2016) argues, this lack of consistency and the organizational discipline of the Welfare Party in Turkey failed its incorporation as well. Since he was the general guide of the Brotherhood, this displayed the insincerity more rather than the lack of discipline. Although the organizational structure of the Muslim Brotherhood changed to some extent with the inclusion of university graduates and less radical members, it was not enough to prevent the elites' reaction and immoderate behavior.

According to Brownlee (2010), Muslim Brotherhood was able to silence the radicals only by 1998. The electoral success of the organization had grown in each syndicate or university council election. This period was marked by the incorporation attempts of the Muslim Brotherhood that did not work much. Several reasons may be the lack of credible commitment, lack of organizational cohesion until the 2000s, weak performative success, and the structural organization of the state, which was an authoritarian regime. However, since performative actions were not consistent and trustable enough, the elites displayed the counter performances by thinking they would not lose their legitimacy.

3.3.2 Second Moderation Attempt with a Political Party

After the parliamentary elections in 2010, protests began and resulted in the resignation of Mubarak in 2011. After the transition process, the presidential elections were held, and the candidate of Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammed Morsi became the president of Egypt in 2012. In the parliamentary elections in 2011-2012, Democratic Alliance led by Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) of the Brotherhood won the 44,9% of seats.

In terms of electoral success, FJP formed the Democratic alliance with non-Islamist parties and changed its slogan to "Doing Good for Egypt" rather than "Islam is the Solution" (Pahwa 2017; Wickham 2013). Alliance-building was already a strategy used by the Muslim Brotherhood before the 2012 elections. However, the alliance gave a strong message to the constituencies that the FJP is moderate enough and is not following the radical Islamist discourse anymore. This was also a result of political learning. The hierarchy and discipline in the party were established, and radical Islamism as an ideology was abandoned. Instead, a combination of Islam, human dignity, and values were promoted. (Pahwa 2017).

It went well until the success of the Salafi movement (al Nour Party [1] became striking, and the FJP considered this success as public approval for Islamism in politics and feared that they might lose their original voter base (Pahwa 2017). Even the new constitution of 2012 protected the right of religious freedoms of all citizens, and Sharia was limited to family law. However, the change in public attitude generated a "back to basics" understanding within the organization in several sections. As the party moderated, it created resentment for the old constituencies, and the party starts to lose votes while it tries to be a catch-all party. The Brotherhood's complex and contradictory signals confused non-Islamists and the state elites, and the Islamist electorate. Since political actors are strategic and see the costs of moderation vis-à-vis immoderation too high, they begin to immoderate (Kirdiş 2016*a*). To compensate, the FJP left its stance as the most moderate Islamist party and started to lean toward the old discourse, which necessitated Sharia and Islamic rule.

One of the problems that caused the loss of legitimacy of Morsi was this change in ideology. As the FJP and Mursi got closer to Islamist policies and rules, secular parties and leaders withdrew their support left the assembly (Pahwa 2017). The Brotherhood's loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the public and the failure of support from other political parties had resulted in an opportunity for old elites to

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[1]Al-Nour party was formed in 2011 after the Arab Spring by ultra-conservative Islamists, who advocate for implementing Sharia strictly (Ashour 2009)

counteract against the party. When the secularists and other Brotherhood's opposition demanded a military intervention, the military intervened without losing much legitimacy.

One would expect that a grassroots movement would eschew party politics, arguing that it is too costly in two ways: co-optation threatens the legitimacy and popular base. The participation would limit the focus on spiritual education and training (Kirdiş 2015). Additionally, the moderation process is highly risky, given that the organizational and ideological moderation affect the coherence of the organization (El-Ghobashy 2005; Pahwa 2017). However, the Brotherhood had chosen to be an active member of the political arena, considering that it would benefit the organization relatively more. During 1970s, the organization participated in civil society by organizing in university clubs and councils, and in 1980s and 1990s by holding offices in syndicates of various professions. This created an organizational space for the Brotherhood, especially in the social life, where they could attract more followers and sympathizers due to their services or work in improvement of social or workplace conditions.

However, the organization lacked the direct access to institutional resources, which made them a less preferable ally for existing political figures (Grzymala-Busse 2016). The Brotherhood was also a notorious figure, which had no legitimacy in the eyes of state elite, even though it had a popular base in the society. Even the popular base it had frightened the state elite, creating a sense of threat that could not be tolerated. The strategic calculations based on these characteristics prevented the existing crucial political actors to form an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood.

On the other hand, the Brotherhood was also not in favor of compromising with the elite due to several reasons. First, the menu of options provided by the system was not favorable for the Brotherhood. Second, the Brotherhood had the bottom-up understanding of Islamic change due to Banna's teachings and therefore was a grassroot movement operating within the civil society. However, the Brotherhood leaders, such as al-Tilmisani decided to participate in politics arguing that the change would not happen if the political system would not change as well (Wickham 2013). The vanguard movements with a small base rely on this strategy as a way of direct and rapid change, creating a popular base after the organization acted (Kirdiş 2015). Therefore, the organization suffered from moderation and social performance problems during its two periods of participation into politics.

During 1980s and 1990s, the Brotherhood could not silence the radical wing of the organization (Brownlee 2010; Wickham 2013). The contradictory speeches by the high-level members of the organization and the lack of a clearly defined agenda

did not propose any credible commitment to the existing system, which would convince the elite to tolerate the organization (El-Ghobashy 2005; Kalyvas 2000; Pahwa 2017). On the other hand, the elite was not willing to accept any challenging actors into the system. The lack of a coherent and consistent social performance, which would prevent elite from reacting (Altınordu 2016) was not existent in the case of Brotherhood in Egypt. In fact, even the democratic bloc in the Egypt, which was consisting of liberals, communists and so on, was not willing to support the Brotherhood due to their lack of confidence in the Brotherhood in commitment to democratic principles (Wickham 2013).

After the Arab Spring, the organization, knowing that its organizational capacity and popular base were the highest among others, had chosen to participate in politics as a distinctive actor. This made them vulnerable to the state elite, who was not replaced by a new elite after Mubarak's resignation (Masoud 2014). The FJP was signaling moderation by being an active member of the democratic bloc and supporting a liberal democratic political arena in 2012. After gaining power in 2012, the strategical immoderation (Kirdiş 2016a) of the FJP due to the rise in Salafi movements resulted in a great discontent within the society as well as the existing state elite.

This, in turn, resulted in a coup made by military in 2013. The Brotherhood members, until then, were exiled, jailed and executed. The failed moderation as well as a failed strategy followed by the organization had led to the organization being excluded from state institutions since the beginning of their attempts to diffuse into state, and eventually resulted in a complete removal of the organization from Egypt.

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, I argued that these strategic decisions regarding how participation in the political arena is shaped determine the religious organizations' success or failure in their struggle for political power. A historical-comparative analysis is conducted for the research, and the two cases compared were the Gülen Movement in Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. While the Gülen Movement allied with the government party AKP to increase its organizational capacity and resources by capturing power in the state institutions, the Muslim Brotherhood stayed as a distinct political actor in the Egyptian political arena. The Gülen Movement captured political power, that is having the ability to influence the decision-making process in state institutions, by building an alliance, as discussed in the study, while the Brotherhood was not. Several explanations are provided for the difference in the level of success of the two organizations.

Firstly, the organizations choose to participate in politics or stay out of politics based on their strategic calculations. Especially if the organization is a grassroots movement, it is more likely to stay out of politics, given that the participation would endanger its coherence and discipline (Kirdiş 2015). While both the Gülen Movement and the Muslim Brotherhood are grassroots movements, the Brotherhood had chosen to participate in politics as a separate political actor in the 1990s and after the Arab Spring.

One reason the organizations choose to stay out of politics is the problem of moderation. Since these organizations promote anti-system ideas, they were expected to moderate if they want to be accepted into the political system by the existing state elite. The moderation process creates the risk of reaction by the followers, especially given that these organizations recruit their followers precisely through the extreme religious or ideological approach they pursue. This paradox primarily results in abstaining from participation in politics for grassroots movements with a significant follower base.

On the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood chose to participate in politics while moderating its political image without disturbing its members and supporters. It had two implications. First, many small groups left the organization and formed their organizations, arguing that the organization did not adhere to its founding principles (Ashour 2007). Second, the moderation process of the Brotherhood failed miserably. The organization could not moderate in a way that both convinced the existing elite that they are not a threat and provide a reliable and consistent image, which would prevent the state elite from resisting their inclusion.

The Gülen Movement had chosen to stay away from the political arena as a separate political figure by being an ally of the existing state elite or political parties. By pursuing this strategy, the Movement aimed at capturing political power and hence state resources without being a direct target of the state elite or public reaction. It was a successful strategy, given that the Movement could open more than a thousand private institutions since the 1980s, had more than 120.000 members employed in the state institutions, including military, police, education, etc. The organization, in addition, was able to shape the decision-making process owing to its significant number of personnel from any position in these institutions. The leak of entrance exam questions to the members was one of the most crucial indicators of the extent of influence, creating a loyalty chain in institutional decision-making processes.

Even though the Gülen Movement could not survive after the coalition collapsed, the golden age of the Movement (2002-2013) was due to the existence of these coalitions. The strategic calculations in sustaining the alliance may fail regarding the false assumptions about the others' attitudes and reactions. However, during the coalition, the parties make sure that they benefit from the alliance more than they would gain alone. In that sense, coalition-building is a relatively better strategy that a religious movement can do if the organization aims to capture political power.

This study has three contributions to the discussion on the religious organization – political party relations. First, by introducing religious organizations other than Churches as interest groups to the puzzle, the strategic decision-making process of these organizations is discussed in detail. Second, the religious organization literature lacks the debates on Islamic religious organizations. The faith-based organizations in the U.S. or the Churches in Europe were discussed by many authors (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013; Grzymala-Busse 2016; Koesel 2017; Warner 2000), Islamic religious organizations and their alliance-building processes were discussed rarely (Arslan Köse 2019; Kirdiş 2015, 2016b; Turam 2004). By introducing the Gülen Movement and the Brotherhood into the puzzle, I aimed at discussing the effect of religious denomination and religious authority in terms of understanding

of power in Islam and politics while placing them under the umbrella of interest groups.

Lastly, by creating a causal mechanism between anti-system actor moderation, participation in politics, and alliance formation, I argued that the costs of the moderation process affect the decisions on participation in politics as separate political actors. While the moderation theories are widely discussed in the literature (El-Ghobashy 2005; Pahwa 2017), the further implications of the failures in moderation-inclusion processes and strategies followed by the organizations afterward can be studied by referring to the real-life cases as well.

What determines the sustainability of the coalition is another question, which can be analyzed in further research by examining the case of the Gülen Movement. While some argue that sustainability depends on communication, resource sharing, common goals, and values are vital factors (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013), some argue that the shared values are not crucial. Still, mutual benefit status, reputation, and failures of critical issues matter the most in the sustainability of the relationship (Warner 2000). When one party fails at the implementation of agreed decisions or makes decisions that can affect the reputation of the other, the parties tend to exit from the coalition. On the other hand, as we can see in the Turkish case, the context may change so that one party would be better off alone. The discussions regarding the coalition-building processes and sustainability of the relationship can open a new research area in the political elite and religious organization relations in Turkey and worldwide.

The coalition as a concept was considered as an interest group – political party relationship in this study. The Brotherhood was forming relationships with other political groups, such as liberals, Salafis, or communists in their struggle against the Egyptian state in critical issues. However, this alliance was not built as a long-term strategic relationship but as a "coming together" against a common enemy, which would not have the dynamics of an interest group – political party relationship. These relationships are mostly built based on vote and organizational resource provision of the interest groups to political parties in exchange for incentives, state resources, or regulations regarding the ideological aims of the group (Warner 2000). The political power acquisition of the interest group should benefit the political party so that the coalition would benefit both sides. If the ally were a competitor in the future, this relation would not survive yet exist in the first place as a well-formed mutually beneficial "alliance."

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Table A.1 The Periods of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Gülen Movement

Period	Muslim Brotherhood		Period	Gülen Movement
1928-1953	The Independence Movement against the British Rule		-	-
1953-1970	Total Exclusion of the Brotherhood by Nasserist Regime		1970-1983	Creating a Golden Generation, Fighting with Communism, a Nationalist and Conservative Agenda
1970-1980	Allowed to Operate within the Civil Society, but Not Allowed to Participate in Politics		1983-1997	Integration into State Institutions of the Organization, Building Alliances with Center Right Parties
1980-1990	Relatively Freer in its Operations within the Society		1997-2002	Self-Exiled, a Strategy of Nonconfrontation with Military
1990-2000	State Repression and Limitations imposed on the Brotherhood		2002-2007	Building Alliances with Center-Right parties, a Temporal Deal with AKP
2000-2010	A Self-Restrained Approach by the Brotherhood, Allowed to Participate in Politics (limited)		2007-2011	The Alliance with AKP, Increasing Resources and Scope of Influnce over Decision-Making Process
2010-2013	Full Participation of the Brotherhood, Formed the Government, Morsi was Elected		2011-2016	Deterioration of the Relationship and Turning into Enemies by 2013
2013-	After the Coup Not Allowed to Organize, Many Members are Self-Exiled or Jailed		2016-	Not Allowed to Organize, Many Members are Self-Exiled, Jailed or Dismissed from the Institutions