Oppressing Islamists and Domestic Insecurity in Egypt and Tajikistan

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Both the Middle Eastern and Central Asian regions exhibit difficult state relations with Islamism as a political and oppositional force. In 2013, Judgement 2315 of the Cairo Court of Urgent Matters found the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to be a terrorist organization (Nasralla, 2013). Meanwhile in Tajikistan, the largest opposition force – the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) was banned in 2015 by the Tajik Supreme Court (International Crisis Group, 2017). In both cases, along with the absence of institutional channels for opposition and conflict mediation, the Islamist parties and their supporters have been heavily oppressed. With the oppression reaching levels comparable or surpassing those of Egypt in the 1990s and Tajikistan since the Civil War, it seeks to question the potential mobilizing factor that this political oppression could play in both countries. Could the political oppression of the Islamist parties[1] in both cases lead to a mass mobilization against the state?

In this essay, Islamists are defined as groups who seek to implement Islam in public as well as private realm (Ghadbian, 2010: 79). However, as per Berman (2003: 257), I add that Islamists seek a revolutionary transformation of their societies. The moderate movements aim to bring this change through the use of gradual and peaceful means, which can, and in this paper does, include participation in the electoral process. Those Islamists, who seek to acquire state power through institutionalized participation in the politics have been called statist Islamists[2] (Volpi & Stein, 2015). As later case studies will reveal, in the case of IRPT, the term statist Islamism is very fitting, while the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt can be seen as both statist and non-statist due to the strong socio-economic engagement with the Egyptian community. In this sense, Islamists are by the very definition aiming to mobilize masses, a process I define as an organized attempt to use society to bring revolutionary change against the prevailing state system. Furthermore, state oppression here is defined using Tilly (1978:100) having argued that repression are actions taken by the regime that "raises the contender's cost of collective action" . In the case of both Egypt and Tajikistan it includes judicial bans, mass arrests, torture and even cases of disappearance.

To explore my question, I begin by looking at the theory of mass mobilization against a state and the likelihood of radicalization towards these goals due to exclusion as it is especially pertinent to the question of Islamists. I then look at both case studies – Egypt and Tajikistan – tracing the historical interaction between Islamists and the state before turning to the more recent events. The post-ban situations in Egypt and Tajikistan are evaluated in the light of both the theory and the domestic security factors. Noteworthy is that I do not aim to argue that the two cases are representative of the wider Middle East and Central Asia regions, rather examine them due to the recent events

1. The Theoretical Framework

"Force empowers its own adversaries. It raises up its own opposition. It engenders its own destruction. " (Roy Pearson in Gurr, 1970: 232)

Plethora of literature exists on the causes leading to violent mobilization against a state, be it rebellion or insurgency. I begin by exploring the question of mobilization and the constraints that authoritarian states impose to prevent any collective action. However, I additionally look at the theory of political inclusion and exclusion, better known as the inclusion-moderation theory and exclusion-radicalization theory. This is pertinent to the discussion in reference to the

institutional exclusion in both Egypt and Tajikistan and its impacts upon the question of violent mass mobilization.

Here Gurr's (1970: 9) frustration-aggression nexus is significant by predicting that group oppression rises the feelings of deprivation due to unfulfilled expectations, where one is proportional to the other. Yet, this explanation cannot be sufficient as the number of countries in the Middle East and Central Asia experiencing group oppression are extensive. As further pointed out by Berman (2003: 258) under such explanation, we could expect to see mass rebellions to be very common, when that is not the case. Therefore, Tilly (1978: 106) has argued that oppression consists of a combination of toleration, facilitation and repression, all of which oppressive governments use. While repressing one group and raising the cost of their collective action, the regime also facilitates other groups therefore minimizing their costs. Consequently, he argues it is not always true that repression will be enough to build resentment leading to violence as this balance between repression and facilitation will prevent mass action by removing some of their unfulfilled expectations.

Furthermore, as theorized by Skocpol (1994), mass movements never create crisis, rather exploit the already existing grievances (1994: 107). According to this theory, revolutionary actors would merely take advantage of already present set of problems. An example are the peasants who exist in a perpetual revolutionary condition as they are permanently subjected to economic, political and cultural marginality along with socioeconomic immobility (1979: 115). The political environment of authoritarianism can therefore provide this type of an environment for mobilization, if coupled with economic crisis and social animosity (Ghadbian, 2010: 81). Considering this argument leads to explore what turning points cause the masses to act upon the pre-existing revolutionary situation. Tilly (1978) argues that people living under repressive regimes will revolutionize if there are visible sudden changes in the government's repressive policy. "Cracking down on violators or certain law" can either rapidly encourage or discourage collective action (1978: 114). Indeed, in both the cases of Egyptian and Tajik Islamists history of revolutionary behavior and mass mobilization towards violence, against the prevailing state structures, are visible. Both have also experienced sharp increases in repression and the complete institutional exclusion making these to be great case studies to consider.

Wide literature exists on authors arguing that institutional exclusion encourages rebellion and disempowers moderate voices within the movements (Hafez 2003; Aksoy et al. 2012; Piazza 2017). More widely this has been debated in relation to the inclusion-moderation theory and its opposite, the exclusion-radicalization theory. The general argument regards that political inclusion provides incentives for groups to negotiate and compromise in regards to multifaceted issues like abandoning violence to work within the parliamentary procedure (Huntington in Schwedler, 2011: 353). Tezcur adds that given the authoritarian nature of the regimes in which the Islamists operate, by entering the electoral process they open themselves up to further surveillance, making it difficult to pursue radical agendas (Tezcur in Schwedler, 2011: 357). In respect to this, authors argue that the exclusion of Islamists stimulates violence (Piazza, 2017) and especially increases when there are opposition parties that lack access to legislative procedures (Aksoy et al., 2012). This essay has been especially influenced by the work of Hafez (2003) having argued that the rebellion of Muslims is caused by a combination of institutional exclusion and discriminate repression that is threatening to both the Islamist organizations and their livelihoods (2003: 22).

Despite the increase in discontent and even violence, given the theoretical arguments discussed, it still remains relevant to evaluate whether any political oppression is significant enough catalyst to lead to a mass mobilization. As pointed out by Hafez (2003) it requires the mobilization of resources, recruitment and even trust among the participants (2003: 73). Skocpol (1979) agrees, as her work on peasantry proposes that in order to act upon the revolutionary situation, the peasants need enough tactical freedom along with relaxed coercive state sanctions (Skocpol, 1979: 115). However, with different levels of repression, the potential of mobilization can be affected. Hafez (2003) points out two types of targeting, those being selective[3] and indiscriminate.[4] Indiscriminative repression, according to Hafez (2003: 75), is incentive that pushes the supporters towards rebellion as it antagonizes even the inactive supporters, while selective targeting signals that those disassociated with the movement will be spared, therefore decreasing the support towards them. This understanding leads to evaluate the case studies in regard to the theory.

2. Egypt

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by school teacher Hassan al-Banna. Until 1938 the movement was primarily focused on societal reform which changed after al-Banna began advocating for political mobilization (Fayed, 2017: 246). Significant to consider is that this change was fueled by internal disagreements led by a splinter group within the Brotherhood, calling themselves Muhammad's Youth and opposing al-Banna's pragmatic political stance (El-Ghobashy, 2005: 376). Since then, the Brotherhood's political participation has been marked by a mix of toleration and oppression by the Egyptian government. The most recent wave of oppression began following the overthrow of Morsi in 2013 and has since been matched by widespread arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings and disappearances (HRW, 2017). Particular attention to the oppression post-2013 needs to be given due to two historically unprecedented shifts. First, beforehand despite the government's persecution, the Brotherhood had been able to count on some degree of legal protection. And second, the recent crackdown has additionally targeted the Brotherhood's network, including the charity and associational work. As this paper will show, these two shifts have led the Brotherhood underground leaving limited future options, with the choices being either demonstrations or violence (Brooke, 2017). It therefore additionally leads to the question whether the classification of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization may become a self-fulfilling prophecy?

2.1 History

History of Islamist oppression in Egypt has not been linear. In order to narrow the scope of my argument, I look at the Brotherhood beginning with the political liberalization period, particularly under Mubarak's rule. Since then, the regime's attitudes towards them have been marked by oppression and toleration in various degrees. Becoming more established in the electoral politics under Mubarak, the Brotherhood entered in the parliamentary elections in 1984 and 1987 (Wickham, 2015: 47). Along with political participation, this time under Mubarak (between 1981-1987) was marked by their cooperation with the regime and acceptance of their secondary political role (Teti, 2017: 16). This changed following the 1987 elections, marking one of the largest Islamist victories in the history of Egypt along with the Brotherhood's own recognition of their electoral successes leading them to ask for a less restricted political voice (Ranko, 2014).

Additionally important to this era was the state-controlled economic modernization efforts, which led to a large-scale state withdrawal from the social sector. This created welfare vacuum was then used by the Islamists, leading to their increased role in the charity and associational sectors (Volpi & Stein, 2015: 279). For example, the Islamic Medical Association (IMA), established in 1977, aimed to provide low cost medical care in hospitals across the country and represents only one of such institutions ran by the Brotherhood. Through these charity mechanisms, they were able to emerge and stabilize their central role in the Egyptian public life (Wickham, 2002: 99), which proved to be a stable source of social support and a level of guarantee against the state, before it proved to be too threatening to Mubarak's regime.

2.2 Insurgency in the 1990s

Sensing this mounting opposition, Mubarak's divide and rule strategy, which previously considered the Brotherhood as a "moderate" group, quickly turned against them. Imposed by the state it further led to an internal division within the Islamist movements more generally. Here, this rupture between the Islamists provides a challenge that was influential in the creation of the low-level insurgency between 1992-7. Although *Jama'a Islamiyya* not the Muslim Brotherhood were the main perpetrators, the insurgency remains pertinent to this argument for two reasons. First, it is the emergence of *Jama'a* from a student association, and second, the motivation for violence that they themselves quoted. Indeed, as argued by El-Ghabashy (2005), the Brotherhood didn't radicalize when faced with regime oppression during the 1990s, rather it turned to further moderation (El-Ghabashy, 2005: 382-384). However, while in this case it can prove to deny the validity of the oppression-radicalization theory, it is the impact of the Brotherhood upon *Jama'a* that proves to be significant for the argument.

Jama'a Islamiyya emerged as an Islamist student association that was dominating Egyptian university campuses during Sadat's presidency. This is especially important considering the high increase of students in the higher institutions, rising from two hundred thousand in 1970 to over half a million in 1977 (Kepel, 2003: 135). In the span of a few years, *Jama'a* went from being favored by Sadat to employing violence against the state and innocent civilians

during the1990s insurgency. Although the Brotherhood's leadership shunned their violence, *Jama'a* proved to be masterful in radicalizing the youth while providing what the Brotherhood had failed to do while remaining peaceful and determined to enter politics. Indeed, Mubarak's oppression beginning in the 1987 shows how, despite the Brotherhood's efforts to integrate within the institutional process, the post-1987 elections led to their political marginalization, either way. *Jama'a* effectively instrumentalized this nuance, calling the young to abandon the "fake democratic path" and join the Islamic revolution instead (Hafez, 2003: 64). As this case has demonstrated, the youth members, when affected by the Islamists ruptures, often show to be preferential towards more revolutionary goals, as previously visible from the splinter group that challenged al-Banna in the 1930s.

2.3 Post-Morsi Implications

Following the fall of the Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elected president, the al-Sisi government has taken a zero-sum approach towards the Muslim Brotherhood; an approach that to some degree mirrors that of the moderate/radical division employed by Mubarak during the 1990s but taken further by the terrorism classification. This classification has led to the failure of legal protection previously afforded to the Brotherhood even during oppressive periods. Currently, the legal sphere has not only failed the group's political participation, but has also failed to protect the charitable organizations now seized by the state (Brooke, 2017). For example, the previously-mentioned Islamic Medical Association was seized by the government in 2015 (Brooke, 2017: 21). This has caused large disruption and rifts within the Brotherhood, including the decentralization of their organizational structure in order to cope with the crackdown (Awad & Hashem, 2015) along with loss of revenues and support (Fayed, 2017).

The oppression of Islamists has since included not only the ouster of Morsi and the ban on the Brotherhood but additionally what often appears as arbitrary Islamist arrests and even torture. Especially angered have been the young Islamists targeted on university campuses and representing a large social faction. Reports indicate that young Muslim women have been arrested and even sexually assaulted while in detention (Awad & Hashem, 2015: 9). These cases, along with the memories of Rabaa[5] and the reports of torture in prisons, have been quoted by the revolutionary movements that call for the destruction of al-Sisi's regime through violence. The insurgency groups have been increasingly popular among Egyptian youth, as in the cases of, for example, the Execution Movement or the Revolutionary Punishment group. Many have been created or include the Brotherhood youth members along with claims to wanting to pressure the Brotherhood to "reform itself to become a resistance movement" (Ibid.: 12).

The current situation therefore asks to consider the potential of mass mobilization given the previously relatively high support of the Brotherhood, and the closing of various charitable organizations that provided help to many economically disadvantaged people. To mirror Hafez (2003), the indiscriminate nature of the oppression could indicate the likelihood of mobilization. However, this seems to be an unlikely case, since as a Brotherhood member in exile has argued, the members, who have not been arrested, are living in hiding or under heavy surveillance (Fayed, 2017: 254). Additionally, the crackdown on the charitable organizations has significantly minimized their social reach further curtailing the potential of mobilization against the state. Those somehow sympathetic to the Brotherhood are unlikely to participate in fear of the associations. Therefore, I conclude that mass mobilization, due to the political exclusion and oppression of the Islamists, against the Egyptian state seems to be unlikely.

Nevertheless, it is important to consider the possibility of insurgency or terrorism given the state of (in)security in Egypt. As mentioned, the oppression of Islamists since the ousting of Morsi has led to an increase in revolutionary groups. These groups, however, are not officially sanctioned by the Brotherhood, whose leadership remains committed to non-violence (Fayed, 2017: 255). However, while the Brotherhood's leadership may remain determined to continue with non-violence, the decentralization of the group has led to a lack of control coupled with increased appeal towards revolutionary and violent goals by the movement's younger members who are motivated by vengeance (El-Sherif, 2014: 19). This is especially troubling given the strength of the *Wilayet* Sinai and Al-Murabitun terrorist organizations with both aiming to increase their recruitment in mainland Egypt (Awad & Hashem, 2015: 18). This is especially significant given the disillusionment felt by the younger generations of Islamists, who perceived Morsi's fall as an "end of history", and may see the alternative in joining transnational extremist groups instead (The Tahrir Institute, 2015). Considering the Brotherhood's internal strife, their ability to deter the youth members from

joining violence appears very limited. Therefore, while the potential of state-wide mass mobilization may not be likely, the regime's oppression of Islamists could lead to increasingly strengthened insurgency or terrorism.

3. Tajikistan

The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) was established in 1991, months after the all-USSR Islamic Renaissance Party united the clandestine groups across Central Asia (Naumkin, 2005). As per Volpi & Stein (2015), the IRPT can be seen as a primarily statist Islamist group, unlike the Muslim Brotherhood which has maneuvered between social or political reforms. The IRPT, since its establishment, has chiefly focused on being the opposition force in Tajikistan, particularly challenging the post-Soviet influence even following its collapse. Following a decade since the Tajik Civil War, which strengthened the IRPT as an opposition, the current Tajik regime led by Emomali Rahmon has begun, what Human Rights Watch calls "the worst political and religious crackdown since the end of the civil war" (HRW, 2016b). This has included not only the ban on the IRPT, but also arrests of its members and their families, confiscation of personal property and even torture (HRW, 2016a). Any outward religious symbolism has been perceived with hostility by the regime, even leading the government to order the shaving of Muslim beards or arresting women for wearing hijabs (International Crisis Group, 2017: 6). This political oppression, coupled with the experiences of civil war and the climate of economic and social insecurity, therefore aims to question the potential of mass mobilization as triggered by the political oppression of the IRPT.

3.1 History

During the Soviet era, Tajikistan proved to be resistant to the modernization project which aimed to educate the 'backward' Central Asian population, including the expulsion of Islam from the social sphere. The explanation for this resistance, and the prominence of the Islamist groups, in part stems from the traditional aspect of Tajik society. Tajik social relations tend to be organized vertically and exhibit strong tribal hierarchy, as such rejecting the Soviet impositions. An additional segmentation has been provided by the geographical location where the mountainous regions have created natural barriers between the regions (Jonson, 2006: 42). As such, replacement of the traditional ideology with that of the new Moscow-imposed anti-religious communist language was not successful. In the 1970s and 1980s, various Islamist cells emerged underground as a way to reject modernization and link the Tajik society with its traditional values, including Islam (Ibid.: 159). Particularly important was the Islamist emergence through youth movements, especially among those *hujra* students who rejected the caution of their Islamic teachers and aimed for an increased status of Islam (Khalid, 2006: 147). The Soviet regime, however, disapproving of public expression of religiosity, led these clandestine cells and their members to be associated with fundamentalism; this is visible from the symbolic use of Wahhabism to refer to them (Epkenhans, 2015: 329). The post-Soviet government has followed similar trajectory, denying the religious-political dimension of Islamists by equating them with fundamentalism. For example, the use of the Wahhabi term persisted during the Civil War, when it was used to rob the opposition of legitimacy by equating them with radicalism. This remains the case despite the IRPT's strong ideological influence from the Muslim Brotherhood (Karagianis, 2009: 16), towards whom the Saudi Arabian Wahhabism has been especially hostile. Although the IRPT undeniably emerged with the objectives of Islamic awakening and the spiritual revival of Tajikistan, as is visible from their founding Statute, it also quickly began to mobilize towards the desire for Tajik self-determination and the rejection of Soviet-imposed elites (Naumkin, 2005).

3.2 The Civil War

Due to the scope of my argument, I do not provide an in-depth historical analysis of the events during the Civil War. However, the Civil War becomes increasingly important to consider as it shows Tajikistan's experience with an Islamist-led conflict. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Tajikistan, former communist leader from the Northern Leninbad region – Rakhmon Nabiev – won the first presidential elections. The opposition, however, rejected the validity of the elections and therefore the outcome itself. The repression towards the opposition led to the creation of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), where the IRPT acted as the main force. By the time Nabiev finally gave into the demands and resigned, Tajikistan had already entered the brutal civil war.

As argued by Jonson (2006), three factors are relevant in regards to the outbreak of violence leading to the Civil War

of 1992-1997. First, there were the regional divisions, which in effect go back to the North-South divide[6], which had been ensured by both geographical reasons and the Russian-used divide and rule strategy towards their subjects. This dominance cannot be overplayed as between the 1930s and 1992 all of Tajikistan's rulers came from the north (Martin, 1997: 336). Meanwhile, the opposition, with the Islamists as the largest group amongst them, gained their support from primarily poorer areas like the Gharm and Qarotegin regions (Ibid.: 329-330). The second factor was the turbulent neighborhood, in particular the porous border with Afghanistan as Tajikistan's neighbor. During the Civil War, the opposition forces moved to Afghanistan to launch over the border hit-and-run attacks (Karagiannis, 2016: 268). As the third factor Jonson names radical Islam, which played out through the politicization of Islam, used by both the IRPT to gain additional support and the government forces, which used the Wahhabi discourse to legitimize their violence against the main opposition (Jonson, 2006: 42-44).

Important to note is that despite the IRPT being an Islamist party, their cooperation with the Democratic Party of Tajikistan and the nationalist Rastokhez indicate that the grievances were not only limited to Islam. Furthermore, the Civil War, which reached an 'end' in 1997, did not lead to the radicalization of the IRPT, despite the government's reluctance to include them in the parliamentary process. The IRPT was eager to work within the government and make use of the thirty percent of parliamentary seats offered to the opposition in the peace agreement of 1997 (Jonson, 2006: 46). This is visible from the political integration process undertaken by the late leader Said Abdullo Nuri, who announced the IRPT's participation in the parliamentary elections in 2000 despite their accusations of election rigging in 1999, which led to the election of Rahmon (Schmitz, 2015: 19). Indeed, the 1999 party charter indicates that the IRPT was not seeking to replace the secular state character of Tajikistan with that of an Islamic government (Khalid, 2006: 146). This remains the case under the 2003 Statute, which emphasized the nationalistic priorities of the IRPT (Epkenhans, 2015: 351). Following the death of Nuri, the party underwent further modernization under the new leader Muhiddin Kabiri, who has since broadened the support base from peasants and Gharmi Tajiks to also include students and even non-Muslim (Karagiannis. 2016: 272).

3.3 Current Implications

The atmosphere in Tajikistan, with the crackdown on the Islamist opposition, however, is by no means reflectory of all the problems facing the country. Tajikistan has also been ravaged by decreasing economic situation unable to reach pre-Soviet-collapse economic levels. Especially problematic has been a lack of job creation resulting in high unemployment rates and low wages (Goransson, 2016: 12). Instead of addressing these issues, Rahmon's government has focused on his own power consolidation by attacking the opposition ahead of the upcoming 2020 elections. To mirror Hafez's (2003) theory, the crackdown has been highly indiscriminate having included not only IRPT members, their families, lawyers and journalists, but additionally anyone engaging in non-sanctioned religious activities (Ibid.: 14). It is undeniable that prior to the Civil War, the aim to consolidate the elite's power, coupled with the economic devastation caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, were among the largest factors that triggered the outbreak of the war. To further use Hafez (2003), the indiscriminate regime attacks against the Islamists and those that the government assumes to be ones, would indicate that mass mobilization against the state is very likely. Especially considerable is the revolutionary situation, as per Skocpol (1994), underlying the insecurity in Tajikistan due to the regime's failure to address economic and social problems. Socially troubling appears to be the fact that Rahmon's own security sphere has been disturbed by the economic instability which has raised discontent among the Kulobis, who had supported Rahmon post-Civil War (Crisis Group, 2017).

However, I further argue that the theory fails to account for Rahmon's ability to instigate insecurity coupled with the masterful use of Civil War memories. Indeed, the government has used the security situation on the borders of Tajikistan not only as a reason to oppress the Islamist opposition, but also to consolidate its power. For example, the Islamic State (IS) Khorasan group has been used as a fear-mongering strategy. Although, the IS Khorasan may appear to be more threatening following the IS's territorial loses in Iraq and Syria, the Taliban, who have consolidated their power in Northern Afghanistan along the Tajik border, have provided a 'protection' from IS infiltration in this region (International Crisis Group, 2017). Another security threat instrumentally used by the regime has been the potential return of those Tajik fighters who went to fight for the IS in Iraq and Syria. However, as argued by Lemon (2015: 68), only a small number of Tajik citizens have actually traveled to join IS and do not appear to be returning to Tajikistan. Additionally for the instrumental use of (in)security, the memories of *Jangi Hudkushi*[7], continue to be

brought up by the government in relation to the Islamic opposition (Lemon, 2015: 70-71). Therefore, I conclude that the potential of mass rebellion against the state appears unlikely. If considered, the socio-economic grievances appear to be stronger indicators of mass mobilization, due to Rahmon's use of Civil War symbolism to deter any action in favor of the Islamists, who are branded as the main culprits in the instability.

Conclusion

Islam or its ideology Islamism throughout the Middle East and Central Asia has shown to have large social appeal, but also face wide oppression. Both Egypt and Tajikistan, the two case studied in this paper, show no exception, with the regimes both aiming to restrict the political outreach of the Islamists. Historically both cases exhibit use of oppressive tactics towards them, however, since 2013 in Egypt and 2015 in Tajikistan, the Islamist parties have been completely banned and recognized as terrorist organizations.

In this essay, I have discussed the oppression of Islamists as a mobilizing factor for mass mobilization against the state. I have further discussed the post-ban implications in both countries, considering the domestic variables together with the theoretical framework. Using Hafez (2003), I have also shown that both regimes illustrate indiscriminate oppression towards the Islamists, but reach differing conclusions strongly influenced by the internal situation within each of the countries. This therefore mirrors Skocpol's (1994) argument that revolution (or in this essay any mass mobilization against the prevailing regime) requires a pre-existing revolutionary situation. The analysis of Egypt coupled with the theoretical understanding examined in section one, illustrates that mass mobilization against the state, fueled by the grievances of the ban on the Muslim Brotherhood, seem to be unlikely. However, the oppression and especially the employed tactics, like torture and even sexual assault, have provided a mobilizing factor among the Brotherhood's youth. This coupled with the security threat presented by the strength of terrorist groups like the Islamic State in Sinai, presents a potential for growth and strengthening of terrorism, through the radicalization of the Islamist youth. The case of Tajikistan, using Hafez (2003), and the regime's indiscriminate attacks on both Islamists and Muslims alike, would suggest that mass mobilization against the state appears likely. However, I have argued that this fails to account for the state's control of official memories, particularly those of the Civil War, which blame the Islamists for the brutal violence that ravaged Tajikistan. Yet, the heavy socio-economic problems in Tajikistan, coupled with the rejection of political opposition in general, provide better factors for mobilization and one where the IRPT could play a role, like during the Tajik Civil War. Therefore, I conclude that the oppression of Islamists can lead to mass mobilization against a state; however, it is heavily dependent on domestic factors.

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Footnotes

[1] Here, I also mean movements more broadly, as the term 'party' does not fully reflect the nature of the Muslim Brotherhood.

[2] As opposed to non-statist Islamists, who focus on "the relationship with the community" (Volpi & Stein, 2015: 277).

[3] "Only targets the leaders and core activists of the movement" (Hafez, 2003: 75).

[4] Targets "supporters, sympathizers, and ordinary citizens suspected of involvement in the movement" (Mason and Krane in Hafez, 2003: 75).

[5] A sit-in organized by Morsi supporters at Rabaa al-Adawiya Square in Cairo where al-Sisi's forces killed up to 1000 demonstrators (El-Sherif, 2014: 4).

[6] Or rather the Soviet elitism which emerged through this divide as the Soviets had also favored the Kulob region in the south.

[7] Tajik for ‘fratricidal’ or Civil War (Lemon, 2015: 71).

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