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The Muslim Brotherhood: Exploring divergent views in Saudi Arabia and Qatar

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Major: Political Science

Program of Study Committee:
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The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2019

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NOMENCLATURE

MB	Muslim Brotherhood
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
UAE	United Arab Emirates
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
ABIV	Arab Barometer IV

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ABSTRACT

The 2017 Qatar diplomatic crisis upset the traditional alliances of the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt severed ties with Qatar, accusing Qatar of sponsoring terrorist organizations and compromising the Gulf Cooperation Council by strengthening relations with Iran. This article highlights the role of the Muslim Brotherhood within both Saudi Arabia and Qatar to demonstrate why the Islamist organization was an important piece in the initiation of the ongoing diplomatic crisis. Using two historical case studies, this paper reveals two divergent views of the MB in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Saudi royal family views the MB as a threat to their authority because of their religious ideology and pro-democratic stance. The Qataris, conversely, favor the MB because of their foreign policy goals to become a global actor that involves the MB. Survey data from the Arab Barometer IV connects views on the MB and democracy at the individual level. The two contrasting images of the MB held by Saudi Arabia and Qatar was a significant contributing factoring in causing the 2017 crisis. The inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood in the study of recent Middle East politics helps to highlight the complexity of the region that goes beyond sectarianism.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Crisis

On June 5, 2017, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Egypt announced that they were severing diplomatic ties with Qatar.[1] The former three additionally closed their air space to Qatari aircraft, banned their citizens from visiting Qatar, and gave Qatari citizens living in their territory fourteen days to leave.[2] Saudi Arabia even closed its land border with Qatar, Qatar's only connection to the mainland. As of writing this paper, this crisis is ongoing with little signs of ending.

The four aggrieved countries made a list of thirteen demands for Qatar that included closing its diplomatic mission to Iran, ending ties to terrorist organizations as designated by the four countries, shutting down the state-run news outlet *Al Jazeera*, and realigning economically, politically, and militarily with the other Arab countries.[3] Given these demands, the 2017 Gulf Crisis (as this event will be called hereafter) is clearly the result of a number of unresolved disputes between Qatar and its neighbors. Each area of dispute, such as relations with Iran or economic coordination, could potentially be the subject of a major study. This paper, however, will focus on the role of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in leading up to the crisis.

At first, the Muslim Brotherhood may seem unrelated to the list of demands given to Qatar, but Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt designated the Islamist organization

[1] Timothy Lenderking, Perry Cammack, Ali Shihabi, and Des Roches, "The GCC Rift: Regional and Global Implications," *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 4 (2017): 6.
[2] Faisal Mukhyat Abu Sulaib, "Understanding Qatar's Foreign Policy, 1995-2017," *Middle East Policy* 26, no. 4 (2017): 32.
[3] Abu Sulaib, "Understanding Qatar's Foreign Policy," 33.

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as a terrorist group in 2014.[4] Additionally, *Al Jazeera* hosts pro-Muslim Brotherhood figures.[5] This paper demonstrates the importance of including the MB in the study of the 2017 Gulf Crisis with a direct comparison of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In many ways, the two countries are similar. Both countries are non-democratic and predominantly Sunni-Arab states. However, in regards to the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia and Qatar are directly opposed to each other. The Saudi regime views the Muslim Brotherhood's push for democratic reform as a direct threat to their autocracy. The Saudis also rely heavily on religious legitimacy to maintain their power that the MB's own Islamic ideology challenges in multiple ways. The Qataris maintain strong ties with the MB as part of a long-term foreign policy strategy to remain independent of Saudi Arabia (or any other state) and become an important international actor. *Al Jazeera* also plays a role in Qatar's foreign policy goals in becoming an international actor by promoting a positive image of the state throughout the Middle East. In contrast to Saudi Arabia, the MB does not push for democratic reform in Qatar nor does it challenge the legitimacy of the Qatari ruling family.

Following the Arab Spring, a lot of literature has been written on sectarianism in the Persian Gulf.[6] While interest in this subject is appropriate, not a lot of literature has discussed other areas of relevance, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. When the MB is included in the conversation, the issues of democracy, domestic legitimacy, and internal security are brought forward. Additionally, this study on the MB may help increase understanding of other conflicts in the Middle East.

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[4] Matthew Hedges and Giorgio Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood: What does the Future Hold?," *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 1 (2017): 134.
[5] Sudarsan Raghavan and Joby Warrick, "How a 91-year-old imam came to symbolize the feud between Qatar and its neighbors," *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2017.
[6] See Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring that Wasn't*, (Stanford University Press, 2013) and Frederic Wehrey, *Sectarian Politics in the Gulf: From the Iraq War to the Arab Uprisings*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

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The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Included in the introduction is a brief section that defines important key terms that are important to this discussion, such as the region that is the Middle East as well as sectarianism. Chapter 2 provides a history of the Muslim Brotherhood from its inception in the 1920s up to the latter years of the reign of President Hosni Mubarak. This chapter is primarily set in Egypt, where Hasan al-Bana founded the organization and gives important insight into how the MB has changed and expanded over time.

Chapters 3 and 4 are the case studies on the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia and Qatar respectively. These two chapters set the stage for the 2017 Gulf Crisis and explain the divergent views the Saudis and Qataris hold towards the Muslim Brotherhood. Chapter 5 outlines this paper's main theories towards understanding the view of the Muslim Brotherhood and democracy at the individual level. This chapter uses data from the Arab Barometer IV survey to test those theories. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the paper by summarizing the main arguments and offers areas in which this research could be expanded.

Key Terms

Before continuing, it is vital to define key terms that will be used throughout this paper. First, the Middle East can be a difficult region to define because of its unique position at the crossroads of three continents and its complex history. Roderic Davison addressed the confusing history of this region in his article "Where is the Middle East?"[7] Davison showed how the terms "Near East" and "Middle East" have changed over time. The most restrictive definitions limit the Middle East to the Arab-speaking world, but this excludes Turkey and Iran. Definitions that are more expansive include territories controlled by the former Ottoman

[7] Roderic H. Davison, "Where is the Middle East?" *Foreign Affairs* 38, no. 4 (1960): 665-675.

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Empire at the height of its power, including the Balkans. An argument can even be made to include a majority of the Islamic world from Morocco in the west to Pakistan and Central Asia to the east.

Davison did not provide a strict definition of the Middle East but did offer three possibilities to address the problem.[8] First is to view the Middle East as shapeless, more a state of mind than a specific territory. Second is to admit that there is no specific Middle East, but many different definitions depending on the situation. As such, scholars need to redefine the region anew with every study. Finally, is to agree to an arbitrary definition based potentially on the commonalities of the previous definitions.

Figure 1: Map of the Middle East

Using the third solution, the one favored by Davison, the core countries of the Middle East include Turkey, Iran, Israel, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, Yemen, and Oman. For the purpose of this paper, this collection of countries will be used to define the Middle East.

In addition to this strict definition of the Middle East, this paper will add two other sub-regions. First, North Africa is an important region for this study, which includes

[8] Davison, "Where is the Middle East?" 674.

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Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt. Both the Middle East and North Africa together will be referred to as the MENA. Second, a significant subsection of these countries is those with an Arab heritage or the Arab World. These include the countries of North Africa, the Levant (excluding Israel and Cyprus), the Arabian Peninsula, and Iraq.

Sectarianism can also be difficult to define. There can be some confusion for what this term means as it is used in a variety of different context. In this paper, sectarianism is defined as the creation of divisions in society based on religious differences for a specific interest.[9] For example, extremist Islamist terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), targeted various religious groups, primarily Shiites, in order to consolidate a following of Sunni extremists. Much more subtle, some political leaders of Middle Eastern countries have used sectarian messages to prevent a unified protest movement from forming. Both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain used this technique during the Arab Spring to label protestors as Shi'a radicals, dissuading many Sunnis from joining the movement.[10]

J*ihad* is another complex term that is often misunderstood. *Jihad* literally translates to "to strive" but can have a variety of meanings in Islam. The term can mean a personal internal struggle with evil and sin ("greater *jihad*") or can be associated with war against oppressors ("lesser *jihad*).[11] Some interpretations of *jihad* have associated the term with wars against unbelievers while others use the term strictly to refer to defensive struggles. This paper will primarily be using the latter definition, war in the defense of Islam, but this use of the term is by no means definitive in the study of Islam.

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[9] Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf*, ix.
[10] Mohammad Yaghi, "Media and Sectarianism in the Middle East: Saudi Hegemony over Pan-Arab Media," *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics* 12, no. 1&2 (2017): 48.
[11] Assaf Moghadam, "Mayhem, Myths, and Martyrdom: the Shi'a Conception of Jihad," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (2007): 126.

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Finally, Salafism (derived from the Arabic world *salaf* meaning ancestors) is a term that has shifted in meaning over the past century. Henri Lauzière discussed this shift at length. Currently, purist Salafism is the more widespread understanding of the term. To purists, Salafism is "Islam as it was first revealed, unsullied by any innovation, deviation, or accretion and uncontaminated by exogenous influence."[12] Although Lauzière cautions that no definition of Salafism is absolute, this paper will use this purist understanding of the term in the following discussion.

[12] Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 6.

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CHAPTER 2

HISTORY & EVOLUTION OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

Early History

This overview of the Muslim Brotherhood will begin at their founding. While much of the early history of the Muslim Brotherhood can be seen as irrelevant to the modern discussion of the organization, this section is vital for showing the values and ideology on which the Muslim Brotherhood was founded.

The Society of Muslim Brothers (later renamed the Muslim Brotherhood) was founded in 1928 in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna.[13] Al-Banna and his followers were upset with the growing secularism in Egyptian society following the revolution of 1919. The Brotherhood feared the removal of Islam from everyday Egyptian life. The organization gathered a following by opposing the ongoing British presence in Egypt and the trend of Egyptian universities towards adopting a Western style of education. In his teachings, Al-Banna argued that Egypt should not follow the Western model of politics, economics, and education. Instead, he thought that Egypt should return to Islam and sharia law so that Western foreigners could not control Egyptian society.[14] In essence, al-Banna founded the MB to resist foreign domination by creating a moral revitalization of Egypt.[15]

Al-Banna advocated for gradual change by winning the hearts and minds of the Egyptian people. The MB displayed its commitment to the Egyptian lower class by offering charitable services and building mosques and schools. The MB, unsurprisingly, filled these

[13] Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, (Princeton University Press, 2013), 20.
[14] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, 22.
[15] Martin Kramer, *Arab Awakening & Islamic Revival: The Politics of Ideas in the Middle East*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 144.

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mosques and schools with sympathetic preachers and teachers sympathetic to the MB's own tenets. These institutions also competed with the Christian schools and charitable services, which the Brotherhood viewed as instruments of foreign influence.

Hasan al-Banna did not form the Society of Muslim Brothers as a political party, but slowly the organization became involved with Egyptian elections. At its founding, al-Banna insisted that the MB should not seek to gather power but focus solely on social reform. If the MB could successfully transform society, then the Egyptian people would demand Islamic reform regardless of who was in power. However, the MB's stance changed in 1941 when the organization decided to participate in the next year's parliamentary elections.

Although al-Banna did call for the gradual change, as mentioned above, al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood embraced the concept of *jihad* as a legitimate use of force to defend the Muslim community. Specifically, they advocated for the right to defend against imperial powers and Zionists. In fact, the MB developed a paramilitary force in the 1930s that even fought with rival political factions within Egypt. The military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood became so prominent that it created a separate unit, known as the "secret apparatus." This activity led to the dissolution of the MB in 1948 by the Egyptian government, but violence continued which lead to the assassination of Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasaha and the death of al-Banna in 1949 at the hands of government agents.[16]

In 1952, the Free Officers' coup overthrew the constitutional monarchy of Egypt. The new government originally welcomed the Muslim Brotherhood but by 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser consolidated his power and began to view the organization as a threat because of its large following and growing military capabilities, via the secret apparatus. The government once dissolved the MB in 1954. In retaliation, a member of the secret apparatus attempted to

[16] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, 26.

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assassinate Nasser in the same year, which led to a brutal government crackdown of the Muslim Brotherhood that lasted from 1954 to 1970.[17] As a result, government agents drove many members of the MB underground or into exile. Many members traveled to sympathetic Arab countries and Europe. These exiled members of the Muslim Brotherhood would play a significant role in the educational and judicial development of the Arab world, especially in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as will be discussed in later chapters.

Nasser arrested many members of the Muslim Brotherhood while in power. Among those imprisoned was the ideologue Sayyid Qutb. While in prison, Qutb promoted a more radical ideology than the gradualist approach followed by the majority of the Muslim Brotherhood.[18] He denounced the Nasser regime as un-Islamic and called for its immediate and violent overthrow. The government executed Qutb in 1966, but only after he had gathered a significant following who viewed him as a martyr.[19]

The distinction between the teachings of Sayyid Qutb and that of the other senior leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood at the time is important to note in the evolution of the MB. Qutb wrote extensively on the practice of *takfir* or the act of declaring another Muslim an apostate.[20] He used *takfir* as justification for declaring *jihad* against the Nasser regime because, according to Qutb, the Nasserists were not Muslim and were persecuting legitimate Muslims. Hassan al-Hudaybi, the successor of al-Banna, spoke out against Qutb's ideology. He wrote that people could not judge for themselves whether a professed Muslim was an apostate and that only God alone could pass this judgement.[21] Al-Hudaybi's teachings further

[17] Barbara Zoller, "Prison Talk: The Muslim Brotherhood's Internal Struggle during Gamal Abdel Nasser's Persecution, 1954 to 1971," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39, no. 3 (2007): 411-433.
[18] Zoller, "Prison Talk," 416.
[19] Zoller, "Prison Talk," 419.
[20] Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," *Foreign Affairs* 86 (2007): 110.
[21] Leiken and Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," 110.

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reinforce the gradualist teachings of his predecessor, emphasizing nonviolent and non-revolutionary opposition.[22] Qutb believed that man-made laws and states were not compatible with Islamic (God-made) laws. The supporters of Al-Hudaybi argued that Muslims could still abide by Islamic law even without an Islamic state, meaning that change did not have to be immediate. Ultimately, this disagreement led to many followers of Qutb splitting from the MB and forming radical revolutionary movements (such as al-Jihad a predecessor of the Egyptian al Qaeda).

When Gamal Abdel Nasser died in 1970, Anwar Sadat succeeded him. Sadat pushed back against Nasser's radical social and economic policies, including the criminalization of the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1971, Sadat granted members of the MB amnesty and released many members from prison. He even invited exiled MB members back to Egypt. Sadat and the MB maintained a tolerate relationship of each other throughout most of the 1970s, but tensions began to sour over the Camp David Accords signed by Egypt and Israel in 1978.

The Muslim Brotherhood from 1979 to 2012

Three key events shook the Middle East in 1979. The first was the end of the Iranian Revolution that gave rise to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The second was the peace treaty signed between Egypt in Israel, resulting from the Camp David Accords from the year prior. Finally, the siege of the Grand Mosque of Mecca greatly altered Saudi Arabia's stance on Islamism in the kingdom. The latter will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, but the first two deal directly with the evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Naturally, the Iranian revolution led to a general uneasiness among the other regimes of the Middle East, who feared a similar revolution forming in their own country. In

[22] Zoller, "Prison Talk," 423.

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particular, the threat appeared to be from Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. As stated before, the ultimate goal of the MB was to create a complete Islamic society, similar to that of Iran. To the autocratic rulers of the Middle East, such as Sadat, it was very possible that the Muslim Brotherhood could be inspired the Iranian revolution, especially after the MB initially declared its support for the revolution.[23]

The 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel would end up being the breaking point between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Sadat regime. As mentioned previously, the MB was furiously opposed to encroaching Western influence in the Middle East and the organization viewed Sadat's peace with Israel as comprising Egypt. In the same year, the Muslim Brotherhood began openly criticizing the regime. By 1981, Sadat began a crackdown and imprisonment of many political leaders and other Brotherhood leaders. Later that year the militant Islamist group al-Jihad assassinated Sadat.[24]

Hosni Mubarak became the new president of Egypt following Sadat's death in 1981. During the first years of his reign, Mubarak avoided controversy with the Muslim Brotherhood and its radical offshoots to avoid the fate of his predecessor. The MB, in turn, took advantage of the favorable political climate to form alliances first with the nationalist secular Wafd party in 1984 and then with the Socialist Labor Party and Liberal Party in 1987.[25] Mubarak still opposed the idea of the MB forming its own political party, hence the need for the MB to form coalitions. The established political parties offered the MB an opportunity to gain seats in parliament while the MB provided a popular base of voters.

[23] Walid M. Abdelnasser, "Islamic Organizations in Egypt and the Iranian Revolution of 1979: The Experience of the First Few Years," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1997): 28.
[24] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, 33.
[25] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, 47.

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Senior leaders justified the Muslim Brotherhood's entrance into politics in a number of ways. First, they claimed that the MB was not seeking power but to spread their message. Second, they pointed out that Hasan al-Banna himself had run for office in the 1940s. Finally, they believed that the MB could better hold the government accountable for providing to the poor and working towards Shari'a law with a presence in the parliament.[26] Overall, the 1980s were a crucial time for the Muslim Brotherhood's development as a political party.

Mubarak, much like his predecessors, began to fear the growing influence of the Muslim Brotherhood. The MB had cultivated a large regional network with its connections to the Afghan *mujahedeen,* who were fighting Soviet occupation in the 1980s.[27] Within Egypt, the MB became the main opposition in the 1987 Parliament. Mubarak had the courts dissolved the 1987 Parliament in an attempt to limit the MB. This action led to the boycott of the 1990 elections by the MB and the Wafd Party.[28] In 1992, the MB won major election victories in the medical and bar associations. In response, Mubarak dissolved the bar association and had the parliament pass a law limiting the MB's influence in all profession unions.[29]

The Muslim Brotherhood began openly calling for constitutional reform, but these protests only lead to a further government crackdown. In 1995, government agents detained eighty-two members of the MB's Shura Council on charges of plotting to overthrow the government. An attempted assassination on Mubarak in Ethiopia the same year raised

[26] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* 49.
[27] Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 39.
[28] Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005): 381.
[29] El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 382.

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tensions between the MB and government, even though the MB denounced the action. A military tribunal sentenced fifty-four election-seeking members of the MB to prison. The subsequent elections of 1995 were the most violent in Egyptian history with only one seat secured for the MB.[30]

The Muslim Brotherhood continued to advocate for democratic reform but refrained from delegitimizing the government and Mubarak. Governmental crackdowns continued into the early 2000s, especially during times of election. There was a brief respite in hostilities when in 2003, the government and MB coordinated antiwar rallies protesting the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq but later the same year security forces detained some of the MB leaders responsible for the rallies.[31] These setbacks did not prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from putting on a strong showing in the 2005 Parliamentary elections, where they won eighty-eight seats.[32] This success, however, led to a new wave of repression that lasted up to the Arab Spring.

From 2005-2011, Mubarak feared that the growing power of the Muslim Brotherhood in conjunction with Hamas's takeover of the West Bank in 2006, and increased sectarian violence Iraq as a sign of the growing influence of Islamist groups in the region. This was also a general concern of the Bush administration and as a result, lessened pressure on the Mubarak regime towards democratic reform.[33] Mubarak's government branded the Muslim Brotherhood as a radical and revolutionary movement, citing the December 2006 Al-Azhar University protests, where around fifty members of the MB dressed in black military

[30] El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 384.
[31] El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 389.
[32] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* 118.
[33] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* 121.

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fatigues.[34] The old guard of the MB argued that these accusations were overblown and continued to advocate for non-violence. For the most part, the response from the leadership of the MB was non-confrontational, fearing even further repression from the regime. In fact, this non-confrontation policy remained in place until the 2011 Egyptian revolution was in full swing, as the MB did not play a role in initiating the popular movement.[35]

After the fall of Mubarak, Egypt held new elections in 2012. The Muslim Brotherhood received a considerable number of seats in parliament but also secured the presidency with Mohamed Morsi. What happens next for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt will be covered throughout the next two chapters as it involves discussion on both Saudi Arabia and Qatar. For a moment in 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood had finally secured an opportunity to shape Egyptian society.

The history of the Muslim Brotherhood shows why a mixed view of the Islamist party exists today. On one hand, the Muslim Brotherhood has similar goals to those of the 1979 Iranian revolutionaries but with its own brand of Islamism. Additionally states that oppose the MB can point to the few violent episodes in its history and potential connections to terrorist groups (such as Hamas in Palestine and al-Qaeda with the Afghan *mujahedeen*) to hurt the image of the MB. However, the Muslim Brotherhood has also worked towards democratic reform in a gradual non-confrontational manner within Egypt. The MB did not violently take over Egypt in 2012, the Egyptian people elected the MB. The proper view of the MB is likely to acknowledge that both of these narratives have truth in them, but it is easy to see how a particular state could pick a narrative that suits their own interests.

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[34] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, 121.
[35] Eric Trager, *Arab Fall: How the Muslim Brotherhood Won and Lost Egypt in 891 Days*, (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2016), 19.

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CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY: SAUDI ARABIA

Now that the organizational history of the Muslim Brotherhood has been established, this paper now turns to two case studies on Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Recall the purpose of this work is to determine how these two countries have recently come to disagree on the nature of the Muslim Brotherhood. Each case study first offers the historical context of the MB within Saudi Arabia and Qatar before exploring the current relations that explain how the origins of the 2017 Gulf Crisis. Chapter 3 seeks to explain the current tense relations between Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Historical Relations

Relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and Saudi Arabia started out warm when Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the organization, visited the desert kingdom during the Hajj in 1932. The first Saudi king, Abdulaziz, offered the devout Muslim Brotherhood financial assistance and in return, the MB aided the formation of the Saudi judiciary system and supported Abdulaziz's tenuous claim over the Hijaz (and thus the holy city of Mecca).[36]

The rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954 strengthened the friendship between the Saudis and the Muslim Brotherhood. As mentioned previously, Nasser expelled many members of the MB from Egypt during the 1950s. These expatriates found refuge in Saudi Arabia, as the Saudis viewed Nasser as a geopolitical threat. The Saudis ruled as an absolute religious monarchy in their country that contrasted sharply with the secular and nationalistic rule of Nasser in Egypt. Both countries vied to be the leading voice of the Arab World and

[36] Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 76.

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had contrasting views on the future of the World. Nasser had a vision of a single united Arab country while the Saudis preferred a loose league of Arab states with each country retaining its own autonomy. The literature refers to this time of tension between the secular republics and the Islamist monarchies of the Middle East as the Arab Cold War, which lasted from 1954-1967.[37] During this era, the Saudis and Muslim Brotherhood shared a common cause in opposing Nasser. In the meantime, the Saudis welcomed the highly educated exiled members of the MB into their developing education system. With the death of Nasser, relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt slowly improved during the 1970s

Important to the discussion of the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia is the distinction between the MB's own brand of Islamism and Wahhabism. Since its conquest of the Arabian Peninsula early in the twentieth century, the Saudi monarchy has allied with the Wahhabi branch of Islam. Wahhabism, stemming from Sunni Islam, comes from the teachings of Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the late 1700s.[38] The core tenets of Wahhabism emphasize the oneness of God and the avoidance of all things that may lead to polytheism, such as idols, amulets, and talismans. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab even called for the destruction of places where idols worship occurs.[39] Wahhabism is also considered a Salafi ideology, as defined in the introduction. During the 1970s, purist Salafism became firmly associated with Wahhabism in the minds of many Muslims.[40]

It was also during the 1970s that Salafists distinguished themselves from the Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood, who they felt focused too much on politics. Salafists also

[37] Morten Valbjørn and André Bank, "The New Arab Cold War: Rediscovering the Arab Dimension of the Middle East Regional Politics," *Review of International Studies* 38 (2012): 10.
[38] Jeffrey R. Macris, "Investigating the ties between Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab, early Wahhabism, and ISIS," *The Journal of the Middle East* 7, no. 3 (2016): 245.
[39] Macris, "Investigating the ties between Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab, early Wahhabism, and ISIS," 245.
[40] Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 200.

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became less concerned with the spread of secularism and Western cultural invasion, at least compared to the Muslim Brotherhood.[41] Overall, while Wahhabism and Salafism generally focus on a conservative return to Islam as the Prophet Muhammad originally founded it, the Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood focuses on incorporating Islam with modern society through gradual reform. Although not exactly aligned, the two ideologies were not in direct conflict with each other. In fact, a movement known as the Sahwa (Awakened) rose within Saudi Arabia that blended the two ideologies.[42]

As mentioned in the previous section, the 1970s ended with a series of far-reaching events. The 1979 siege of the Grand Mosque of Mecca would be one of the most impactful on Saudi Arabia's stance towards Islam's place within the country. Radical Sunni militants lead by Juhayman al-Otaybi seized the Grand Mosque late in 1979. The ideology of these militants will not be discussed here, but the impact of this event on Saudi Arabia was significant. Because of this attack, the Saudi regime decided to slow down the liberalization of the country.[43] Part of this strategy involved a greater alliance between the regime and Wahhabi clerics. The Saudis hoped that by promoting Wahhabi teachings, the radical conservatives in Saudi Arabia, such as Juhayman, would be satisfied. The aim for the Saudis was to prevent any future attacks like the seizing of the Grand Mosque. This closer alliance between the regime and the Wahhabi establishment continues to this day, with the Saudis relying on the religious ideology to retain legitimacy. The Sahwa and Muslim Brotherhood remained in good standing with the regime over the next decade following the Grand Mosque

[41] Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 218.
[42] Stéphane Lacroix, "Saudi Arabia's Muslim Brotherhood Predicament," *The Washington Post*, March 20, 2014.
[43] Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia*, 24.

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incident, but the divergence between the reform-minded MB and the conservative Wahhabi only grew over time, as will be discussed in the next section.

The good relations between Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood did not last long into the 1990s. The Saudi family and the Sahwa came to blows over the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein of Iraq in 1990. The Saudis decided to invite the United States to lead a counter-invasion, but the MB and the Sahwa opposed allowing any foreign armies into the region.[44] Recall that Hasan al-Banna founded the MB partly on the principle of anti-colonialism, having feared a Western takeover in Egypt. The Sahwa also feared the intention of the United States and allies following the liberation of Kuwait. The Saudis, however, went ahead and invited the U.S. and allies to remove Hussein from Kuwait, which sparked protests from the Sahwa demanding political reform. Throughout the 1990s, the Saudis expelled MB leaders while limiting their and the Sahwa's activities as both movements continued to openly criticize the Saudi regime.[45] It is also important to note that Osama bin Laden had similar criticisms of the Saudis.[46] Although the reaction of bin Laden would obviously be more extreme, this connection between the MB and al Qaeda would raise fears later on the potential extremism of MB Islamism.

Relations somewhat thawed between the Saudis and the Muslim Brotherhood during the early 2000s as an agreement was struck between the regime and the Sahwa. The Saudis sought to secure a degree of religious legitimacy from the Sahwa as they campaigned against the ideology of al-Qaeda and other radical jihadist groups.[47] The Sahwa agreed to refrain

[44] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 132.
[45] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 133.
[46] Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, "Revisiting the Early Al Qaeda: An Updated Account of its Formative Years," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 1 (2012): 12.
[47] Lacroix, "Saudi Arabia's Muslim Brotherhood Predicament."

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from criticizing the Saudis and in return, the regime allowed them to resume their activities.[48] The Arab Spring of 2011, however, quickly ended the renewed relationship between the MB and the Saudis.

Current Relations

Why did the Saudi family turn hostile on the Muslim Brotherhood during the Arab Spring? The regime and MB appear to share a conservative view on the place of Islam in modern Middle Eastern society. Both are proponents for Sharia law and education focused on Islam. Members of the MB and Sahwa have long served in both the judiciary and educational bureaucracy of Saudi Arabia, so the convergence of interests in these areas is not surprising. Yet, the alliance between the Saudi royal family and the Muslim Brotherhood has been shattered in the Arab Spring era.

Some of Saudi Arabia's longtime allies fell during the Arab Spring, leading to an external security crisis for the Saudis. The Saudis had formed strong ties with Egypt during the reign of Hosni Mubarak. The days of the Arab Cold War had ended with the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970, leaving the door open for cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Mubarak became a valuable ally to the Saudi royal family as the two Arab Sunni powers pushed against the threat of Shi'a Iran following the 1979 revolution.[49] However, the Egyptian people overthrew Mubarak in 2011 and replaced him with democratically elected President Mohammed Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood. The Saudis had also noted the

[48] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 133.
[49] Frederic Wehrey, "Saudi Arabia's Anxious Autocrats," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (2015): 72.

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MB's political gains in Libya and Tunisia following the overthrow of each country's long-time dictator Muammar Gaddafi and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, respectively.[50]

When President Morsi came to power in June of 2012, the Saudis ended all aid to Egypt.[51] Immediately, Riyadh and their Gulf allies (not including Qatar) threw their support behind the Egyptian military and General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. In July 2013, al-Sisi successfully led a military coup that ousted Morsi. Saudi Arabia and its allies immediately resumed aid to Egypt. The Saudis justified that their backing of now President al-Sisi was necessary to stabilize Egypt and to counter growing Iranian influence in Syria and Iraq.[52]

The tacit alliance the Saudi regime had formed with the Sahwa at home was all but broken with the ousting of Morsi. Sahwa clerics criticized the Saudis in their preachings and on social media. This domestic backlash led to the arrest of a few Sahwa clerics but did not stop Saudi Arabia's anti-Muslim Brotherhood campaign. The Saudis backed anti-Islamist forces in Libya's multi-sided civil war with the goal of removing the MB from politics in the country. With Tunisia, the Saudis and the UAE targeted the Ennahda party (the local MB-affiliate) by supporting their secular political rival the Nidda Tunis party. Saudi Arabia also gave asylum to Ben Ali, Tunisia's deposed dictator.[53]

Riyadh went so far as to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization in March 2014.[54] The most recent flare of tensions came with the 2017 Gulf Crisis where the Saudis and its allies demanded that Qatar, a longtime supporter of the MB, cut its ties to the

[50] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 133.
[51] Wehrey, "Saudi Arabia's Anxious Autocrats," 76.
[52] Wehrey, "Saudi Arabia's Anxious Autocrats," 76.
[53] Wehrey, "Saudi Arabia's Anxious Autocrats," 77.
[54] David D. Kirkpatrick, "Saudis Put Terrorist Label on Muslim Brotherhood," *The New York Times*, March 7, 2014.

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organization. Overall, it appears that the recent hostile actions of Saudi Arabia towards the MB are the result of the MB's political success during the Arab Spring.

While the Muslim Brotherhood may pose somewhat of an external threat to the Saudi regime, the real threat is the potential for internal mobilization among Saudi citizens. This internal threat is two-pronged. First, the Muslim Brotherhood's own brand of Islam poses a challenge to the royal family's religious legitimacy. The Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood has significantly diverged from Wahhabi ideology. Wahhabism has remained a conservative movement, reinforced with forty years of support from the Saudi regime (since the 1979 Siege of the Gran Mosque) that is dedicated to a literal interpretation of the Koran.[55] The purpose of this strict interpretation of Islam is to return Islam to the state that it was founded and bring about the unity of the Muslim community.[56] The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, has a more accommodating approach in interpreting scripture grounded in the modern world. The divergence became clear in the 1990s when a new generation of Brothers revised the Brotherhood's ideology, in order to be more appealing as candidates in Egyptian elections.[57] For example, the MB reinterpreted parts of the Koran to argue that men do not have complete tutelage over women, especially in public affairs. This interpretation allowed for increased participation of women in elections, both running for office and voting. By the early 2000s, the new generation had reached the upper offices of the MB, allowing them to promote their accepting stances towards democracy, women's rights, and non-Muslim (primarily Coptic) rights.[58] The Muslim Brotherhood has continued to adapt in order to

[55] David Commins, "Contestation and Authority in Wahhabi Polemics," in *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia: Wahhabism and the State,* ed. by Hasan Kosebalaban and Mohammed Ayoob (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009): 48.
[56] Natana J. Delong-Bas, "Wahhabism and the Question of Religious Tolerrance," in *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia,* 11-12.
[57] El Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Muslim Brotherhood," 382.
[58] El Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Muslim Brotherhood," 389.

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remain relevant in elections. Wahhabism has not needed to compete within Saudi Arabia for followers and so has not greatly revised its ideology. For example, men in Saudi Arabia still control how the women in their family dress and where they can travel.[59] Additionally, it was not until 2011 that King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia granted women the right to vote, which Wahhabi scholars still opposed.[60] With information becoming more accessible through the internet and *Al Jazeera* the Saudi regime fears the potential of the MB spreading its brand of Islam in Saudi Arabia and competing with Wahhabism.

The second internal threat that the Muslim Brotherhood poses to the Saudi regime is a direct political to the monarchy. One aspect of this threat would be a direct overthrow of the regime. In this case, the Saudis could view the MB's wide success following the revolutions of the Arab Spring with suspicion. The UAE specifically was alarmed by the MB's electoral success and concerned by how quickly the MB seized power in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia following the overthrow of each country's dictator. [61] These electoral victories are perhaps a sign that the Muslim Brotherhood was not simply a passive group but instead waited for an opportunity such as the Arab Spring to take power.

The growing ambition of the Muslim Brotherhood over time could also be seen as a concerning side for the Saudi regime. At its founding, Hasan al-Banna vowed that the Muslim Brotherhood would not seek power but to instead remain a social movement. The MB changed over time to become a savvy and pragmatic political institution by the twenty-

[59] Gwenn Okruhlik, "State Power, Religious Privilege, and Myths About Political Reform," in *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia*, 96.
[60] Neil MacFarquhar, "Saudi Monarch Grants Women Right to Vote," *The New York Times* (September 25, 2011).
[61] David Roberts, "Qatar and the UAE: Exploring Divergent Responses to the Arab Spring," *The Middle East Journal* 71, no. 4 (2017): 554.

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first century.[62] This ambition culminated with the MB fielding Mohammed Morsi as a candidate for the Egyptian presidency.

In Saudi Arabia, the Sahwa could perhaps follow the path as their Brothers in neighboring Egypt. The same could happen if mass protests were to break out in Saudi Arabia. Unlike the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, who had hesitated to join the revolutionary movement, the Sahwa of Saudi Arabia could very well initiate these protests. The Sahwa has a history of activism beginning in the 1990s that resurged after the ousting of Morsi in 2013.

Overall, the Saudis view the Muslim Brotherhood as a direct threat to the stability of their country because of their involvement in the revolutions of the Arab Spring, challenge to Wahhabism, and commitment to democratic reform. This view has led the Saudi regime to become hostile towards the Muslim Brotherhood an in part initiate the 2017 Gulf Crisis. Importantly, this hostility is not the result of sectarian goals for the Saudi regime, but rather a concern (primarily) for domestic legitimacy.

[62] El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 390.

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CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY: QATAR

Historical Relations

The history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Qatar begins in the 1950s, similar to Saudi Arabia. MB members fled to Qatar following their exile from Egypt under the Nasser regime.[63] At the time, Qatar was an emerging state with only a population of around twenty-five thousand with little governmental structure.[64] Oil and natural gas gradually replaced the traditional industries of the country, pearling and fishing, which increased the profits of the Qatari ruling family, the Al Thani. The combination of this newfound wealth and the influx of educated members of the Muslim Brotherhood allowed the Qatar regime to develop a school system. Like in Saudi Arabia, MB members rose quickly in the ranks of the educational bureaucracy.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood was popular amongst foreign expatriates within the country, the native Qataris remained outside the Brotherhood's influence for four reasons. First, Wahhabism remained the most popular religious ideology among both the Qatari rulers and the native population, much like Saudi Arabia. The ruling family originated from the same region in Saudi Arabia as Muhammad Al Wahhab and maintained close ties to the sect.[65] Second, although the MB remains influential within the education system, the Qatari regime screens all religious textbooks to ensure they are in line with the state. The regime also restricts Brotherhood religious scholars from exerting domestic influence by limiting

[63] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 145.
[64] David Roberts, "Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood: Pragmatism or Preference?" *Middle East Policy* 21, no.3 (2014): 85.
[65] Roberts, "Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood," 88.

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their religious institutions.[66] Third, the MB was unable to build up support by offering welfare, such as running hospitals. Although Qatar was a relatively poor state in the 1950s, by the 1970s, the Qatari regime began to exercise its rentier state status by providing jobs, housing, generous wages, and healthcare to its citizens.[67] The Muslim Brotherhood simply could not compete with the Qatari government. Finally, Qatar has only one elected advisory institution, the Central Municipal Council, while also having a ban on political parties.[68] As a result, the MB was unable to become politically influential. The same could be said about the MB in Saudi Arabia, except with the emergence of the Sahwa.

The Qatari branch of the Muslim Brotherhood had to adapt within the country. Major debates occurred within the Qatari branch of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1980s about how to remain relevant despite the lack of elections and the need for social services in Qatar. This inwards reflection ultimately led to the self-disbandment of the Qatari Muslim Brotherhood in 1999 as the members no longer felt the need for a formal organization. Although disbanded, Qatari Brotherhood members never left. Without official publications or formal meetings, the few remaining followers focus on intellectual and spiritual pursuits but do continue to follow the Brotherhood's core tenants.[69]

Despite all of these obstacles, the Muslim Brotherhood (as an international organization) has remained a mainstay in Qatar from the 1950s to the present day. The Qatari regime and the MB created a mutually beneficial relationship. The MB provides Qatar with education expertise and an internationally connected network while Qatar gives the MB a safe haven as a base of operation. Little conflict emerged between the Qatar regime and the

[66] Roberts, "Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood," 88.
[67] Roberts, "Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood," 88.
[68] Courtney Freer, "Rentier Islamism in the Absence of Elections: The Political Role of Muslim Brotherhood Affiliates in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49 (2007): 485.
[69] Freer, "Rentier Islamism in the Absence of Elections," 488.

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MB as the MB remained primarily outward facing for the reasons explained in the previous paragraph.

This alliance, however, led to several confrontations between Qatar and other Middle Eastern countries throughout the 1990s. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE became concerned about the Muslim Brotherhood's push for political reform.[70] Recall that the Sahwa had lead protests against the Saudi monarchy following the regime's invitation of U.S. troops to liberate Kuwait, leading to Saudi repression of the Sahwa and the MB. Egypt, in particular, felt threatened by Qatar's direct support for the pro-Muslim Brotherhood regime in neighboring Sudan.[71] Qatar maintained its strong ties to the MB despite these protests from its neighbors.

The year 1995 saw a major shift in Qatari foreign policy that greatly increased the importance of the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Qatar's foreign policy strategy. In 1995, Sheikh Hamad al-Thani seized power in Qatar from his father. Sheik Hamad immediately set out to increase the independence of Qatar from its neighbors, primarily Saudi Arabia.[72] Qatar had long suffered from having little status at the international level. Fellow Muslim countries did not even give Qatar representatives at World Muslim Congresses until after 1962.[73] Sheik Hamad's goal was to overcome Qatar's small size and small population to make Qatar not only a regional player but also a global actor.

Hosting the Muslim Brotherhood allowed Qatar to differentiate itself from its neighbors. Qatar became critical in negotiations between its agitated neighbors and the MB. The launching of *Al Jazeera* in 1996 furthered the goals of Qatar. The news network allowed

[70] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 146.
[71] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 146.
[72] Abu Sulaib, "Understanding Qatar's Foreign Policy," 30.
[73] Roberts, "Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood," 89.

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Qatar to promote the Qatari state across the region by giving itself an international platform. Additionally, *Al Jazeera* became a platform for the Muslim Brotherhood. The most influential MB preacher on *Al Jazeera* is Yusuf al-Qaradawi. His preachings reach millions of people listen to his sermons throughout the Middle East.[74]

In fact, Yusuf al-Qaradawi is critical to understanding the wider conflict between Qatar and Saudi Arabia and warrants an extended discussion. Born in Egypt in 1926 he received a religious education before joining the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1940s and becoming an active member.[75] Like many of his Brothers, Egyptian authorities imprisoned Qaradawi in the 1950s. During this time, Qaradawi emphasized patience in his writings, in line the gradualist nature of the MB.[76] He traveled to Qatar in the 1960s where he developed a centralist ideology that seeks to balance the conservative and liberal aspects of Islamism. The biggest draw for many Muslims to Qaradawi is his acceptance of modernity, interpreting the Koran to deal with the modern world rather than interpreting the Koran literally. For example, a verse of the Koran praises the raising of horses for the purpose of *jihad* but Qaradawi expands on this concept to include all military vehicles used today.[77] This ideology has led Qaradawi to support some moderate views including his approval of the democratic participation of Muslims living in the West and the condemnation of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).[78] However, as a centrist he has also received criticism from reformists for his harsher views on women and homosexual rights as well as his support

[74] Raghavan and Warrick, "How a 91-year-old imam came to symbolize the feud between Qatar and its neighbors."
[75] Samuel Helfont, "Islam and Islamism Today: The Case of Yusuf al-Qaradawi," Foreign Policy Research Institute, January 8, 2010.
[76] Gavi Barnhard, "The Patient Preacher: Yusuf al-Qaradawi's Long Game," Hudson Institute, March 31, 2015.
[77] Helfon, "Islam and Islamism Today," and Barnhard, "The Patient Preacher."
[78] Helfon, "Islam and Islamism Today," and Barnhard, "The Patient Preacher."

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for Hamas' use of violence against Israel. With the creation of *Al Jazeera*, Qaradawi has been able to spread his message to a wide audience across the Middle East.

Continuing with the story of Qatar, part of Sheikh Hamad's strategy was also to restore relations with Iran, once again differentiating itself from the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. Not surprising, Saudi Arabia and the other GCC states grew even more irate at these policies, viewing *Al Jazeera* as a propaganda machine for Qatar and the MB and Qatar as treasonous for becoming friendly with Iran. Overall, Qatar was able to stay in good graces in the GCC through the 1990s and 2000s by carefully balancing its foreign policy, all the while remaining a staunch ally of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Current Relations

The Arab Spring serves as a pivotal moment in the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and Qatar. In contrast to Saudi Arabia, Qatar remained supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar backed the Muslim Brotherhood's affiliates in Libya and the Ennahda Party (MB associated) in Tunisia during the uprisings. Upon the election of President Morsi in Egypt, Qatar immediately pledged tens of billions of dollars in investments to the struggling Egyptian economy.[79] Qatar also supported the Muslim Brotherhood branches in Syria and Yemen following the outbreak of civil war in both countries. In Syria, Qatar backed political candidates with links to the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013 as a government in exile while also sending around three billion dollars in arms aid to Syrian opposition groups.[80]

[79] Roberts, "Qatar and the UAE," 546.
[80] Roberts, "Qatar and the UAE," 546.

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With these investments, the Qatar regime was continuing its policy of overcoming its size and lesser status in the Middle East. Qatar historically relied on its much larger and influential neighbor Saudi Arabia for geopolitics in the region. The Arab Spring offered the Qatar regime an opportunity to distinguish itself from its neighbors by favoring the Muslim Brotherhood. In a way, this move was a gamble. If Qatar successfully backed pro-Brotherhood regimes across the Middle East, the small country would have created many allies, increased its regional influence, and removed itself from the shadow of Saudi Arabia.

However, this gamble did not immediately pay off. Libya collapsed into civil war while the war in Syria continued and costs mounted. Secular parties also diminished the electoral victory of the Ennahda party in Tunisia.[81] Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain were able to weather the initial wave of protestors in 2011 and set about countering Qatar's growing influence. The three countries backed General el-Sisi's coup in Egypt in 2013, worked to limit the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen, and even briefly recalled their ambassadors from Qatar in the spring of 2014.[82]

In the midst of these challenges, Sheik Hamad al-Thani agreed to hand over power to his son Tamim al-Thani who became the Emir of Qatar in June of 2013.[83] The Qataris did take some measures to appease its neighbors by expelling a few high members of the Muslim Brotherhood, but overall the regime continued its support for the Islamist organization. Qatar once again faced troubles with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain on June 5, 2017.[84] The three countries, along with Egypt, severed diplomatic ties to Qatar while also closing their airspace to Qatari aircraft. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain even demanded that Qatari

[81] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 148.
[82] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 138, 149.
[83] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 148.
[84] Abu Sulaib, "Understanding Qatar's Foreign Policy," 32.

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citizens leave their territory while banning their own citizens from traveling to Qatar. Saudi Arabia additionally closed its border with Qatar to all trade, shutting off about forty percent of Qatar's food supply.[85]

The four aggrieved countries did cite Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood and other "terrorist" organizations but *Al Jazeera*'s "propaganda" and Qatar's inappropriate relations with Iran also upset them.[86] These four countries felt particularly threatened by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who U.S. officials consider one of the most influential figures in the Middle East.[87] The Muslim Brotherhood's, and especially Qaradawi's, teachings that Islam can be reinterpreted to work in the modern world is a direct threat to the Wahhabi notion that Islam needs to return to how it was founded in order to remain true. The Saudis fear that Qaradawi's message will become widespread, through *Al Jazeera*, within Saudi Arabia leading many to question the tenets of Wahhabism, which the Saudi regime relies on to maintain power. For example, if democracy is compatible with Islam, as Qaradawi has stated, then Saudi citizens may question the need for the monarchy that exists in Saudi Arabia.[88] Essentially, the Saudi regime fears that a less stringent interpretation of the Koran will have a wider appeal than the conservative interpretation of Wahhabism that requires a lot more effort for individual Muslims to fulfill their faith.

It is possible that Qatar allows the preachings of Qaradawi to air on *Al Jazeera* because of the challenges his ideology poses to Qatar's neighbors, but it may also be an unintentional consequence from Qatar's general support of the Muslim Brotherhood and

[85] Aub Sulaib, "Understanding Qatar's Foreign Policy," 32.
[86] Timothy Lenderking, Perry Cammack, Ali Shihabi, and Des Roches, "The GCC Rift: Regional and Global Implications," *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 4 (2017): 7.
[87] Raghavan and Warrick, "How a 91-year-old imam came to symbolize the feud between Qatar and its neighbors."
[88] Helfont, "Islam and Islamism Today."

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allowing the organization to use *Al Jazeera*. Despite the pressure, Qatar has yet to give in to the demands of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt to sever ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran and close down *Al Jazeera*. In order to overcome the shortage of food, Qatar has increased trade with Turkey and Iran.[89]

Despite these recent developments, the Qatar regime has continued to back the Muslim Brotherhood. The MB is still critical for Qatar in its foreign policy strategy. Sheik Hamad's policies have made Qatar an influential regional actor. In order for Qatar to maintain its niche, it needs to continue its support of the Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar not only balances itself between Saudi Arabia and Iran but also between conservative monarchies and Islamist parties, which makes Qatar critical with any discussions between these actors. If Qatar were to abandon the MB, the country may essentially return to being vassal of Saudi Arabia, much like Bahrain.

Saudi Arabia turned against the MB because it viewed the Islamist organization as a political and ideological threat. Qatar, in contrast, does not view the MB as an internal threat. The Qatar branch of the Muslim Brotherhood dissolved itself in 1999 because they felt the Qatar regime was already acting in within the MB's guidelines. As a result, the MB in Qatar has focused outwardly. Qatar did not have the Sahwa unlike Saudi Arabia and thus did not have any internal pressure from the MB to reform.

Internationally, Qatar was also not concerned with the Muslim Brotherhood's political gains following the Arab uprisings of 2011. Qatar had in fact backed the MB in many of these countries but recognized that the MB had secured power democratically through elections and not by revolutionary overthrow. Saudi Arabia and its allies were concerned that the rapid gains of MB were a troubling sign that the MB had been plotting all

[89] Aub Sulaib, "Understanding Qatar's Foreign Policy," 32.

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along to seize power. Qatar, however, stood at the Muslim Brotherhood's side arguing the MB had legitimately come to power.

The Qatar regime takes the Muslim Brotherhood at face value: an Islamist organization that pushes for democratic and social reform. This is in stark contrast to the Saudi point of view: a dangerous Islamist group seeking to topple the regimes of the Middle East purely for their own gain. The result of these conflicting views, which are not rooted in sectarianism, was the 2017 Gulf Crisis, as has been argued throughout this paper. Now that the relationships between the Muslim Brotherhood and these two countries have been established, this paper now turns to an analysis to see how these contrasting views of the Muslim Brotherhood are born out in the current Middle East.

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CHAPTER 5

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The previous two chapters explained the current state of affairs between the Muslim Brotherhood and Saudi Arabia and Qatar at the country level of analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to test what relationship exists at the individual level between the people of the Middle East and the Muslim Brotherhood. Ideally, data would have been collected on Saudi Arabia and Qatar to match the previous case studies, but such data was not obtainable for this paper. Instead, this paper uses data from other Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa using data from the Arab Barometer IV (ABIV) survey. The results of this analysis will still provide insight into the view of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East and the organization's connection to views on democracy. If the results can be taken broadly, they could even be applied to Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Some speculation may be necessary, but the results of this analysis can display what kind of threat, if any, the MB poses to the Saudi regime. The following tests primarily look at the democratic/political aspect of this threat, but future studies could look at the ideological side as explained in chapter three. Overall, this analysis aids in understanding what factors, beyond sectarianism, contributed to the 2017 Gulf Crisis.

Theory

Many governments of the Middle East have shown skepticism towards the Muslim Brotherhood in recent years. The UAE's distrust for the MB has been a driver for its foreign

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policy since the start of the Arab Spring in 2011.[90] Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt designated the organization as a terrorist group in 2014, a sign from the government that the Islamist organization should not be trusted.[91] Jordan has yet to criminalize the MB, but the Jordanian government has moved in line with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, even arresting MB members critical of the UAE in late 2014.[92] Citizens of these countries who trust and support the government are likely to believe these reports and in turn not trust the Muslim Brotherhood. Additionally, citizens who trust in the MB will not believe these official reports and have a more difficult time trusting the government. For Hypothesis 1, this paper will test this position:

H1: The more trustful individuals are towards the Muslim Brotherhood, the less trustful they are of the government.

Whether there is a relationship between a citizen's trust in the Muslim Brotherhood and the government is one thing, but another issue to understand is why certain governments of the Middle East do not trust the Muslim Brotherhood. The mistrust of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt towards the Muslim Brotherhood could be a result of the Muslim Brotherhood's association with democracy, which poses a threat to the authoritarian regimes.[93] Two questions need to be addressed. First, is there reason to believe that there is a relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and democracy? The Muslim Brotherhood does have a history of participating in democratic elections and promoting democratic reform.[94] As noted before, the MB originally was not a democratic political party, but during

[90] Hedges and Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood," 138.
[91] Kirkpatrick, "Saudis Put Terrorist Label on Muslim Brotherhood," March 7, 2014.
[92] Wehrey, "Saudi Arabia's Anxious Autocrats," 81.
[93] Toby Craig Jones, "Saudi Arabia versus the Arab Spring," *Raritan: A Quarterly Review* 31, no. 2 (2011): 50.
[94] Leiken and Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," 107.

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the 1940s, the organization fully embraced elections.[95] The structure of the Muslim Brotherhood itself also has democratic elements. The Shura Council, the hundred-member legislative body of the organization, elects the General Guide, or the chief executive, by majority vote. While the Egyptian Brotherhood was in exile, this process rarely occurred as MB leaders could not organize elections, but since 2004, the MB has followed these guidelines.[96]

Second, do individuals who view democracy as an appropriate form of government trust in the Muslim Brotherhood? Democracy is not widespread throughout the Middle East, but the Muslim Brotherhood is one of the few regional organizations that actively promote democracy in the region. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has often allied with other pro-democratic factions.[97] Affiliates of the Muslim Brotherhood in other Middle Eastern countries, such as Tunisia, Jordan, Libya, and Morocco, have also been active participants of democratic elections.[98] Broadly, across the Middle East, the MB has displayed trustworthiness in regards to democracy. To formalize, there is likely a positive relationship between an individual's view on democracy and the MB:

H2: Individuals who would accept democracy have greater trust in the Muslim Brotherhood.

If there is indeed a positive relationship between an individual's thoughts on democracy and their trust in the Muslim Brotherhood throughout the Middle East that could explain Saudi Arabia's (and other authoritarian countries) own mistrust towards the Islamist organization.

[95] El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 377.
[96] El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 377.
[97] El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 390.
[98] Alexander and Dodge, "Muslim Brotherhood is at the Heart of Gulf Standoff with Qatar," June 7, 2017.

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Research Design

Survey data is the most appropriate way to test these individual-level hypotheses. Although polling data, in general, can have issues with participants answering questions in a variety of biased ways, such as selecting answers based on societal norms and not what they personally think, surveys still offer the most direct measure for individual-level data. This analysis uses data from the Arab Barometer IV (ABIV) survey.[99] Arab Barometer conducted this survey between 2016 and 2017 in 7 countries/territories: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. ABIV surveyed twelve hundred people from each country with six hundred Syrian nationals living in Jordan and Lebanon included. In total, the ABIV surveyed nine thousand individuals on a variety of topics.

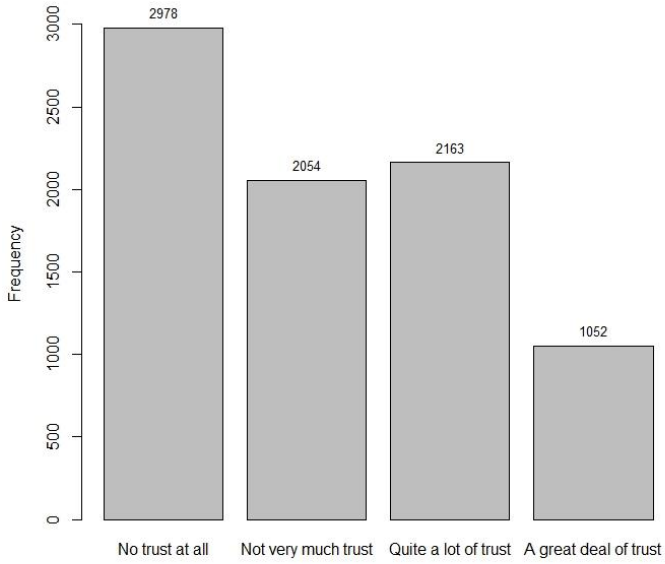

Figure 2: Distribution of Trust in Government

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were used for this analysis. The primary dependent variable for this analysis is the level of trust an individual has towards the government. This variable was measured by using a survey question from the ABIV that asked participants how much trust they have in the government (Council of Ministers). The survey gave participants four options ("no trust at all," "not very much trust," "quite a lot of trust," and "a great deal of trust") which were transformed into a

[99] Arab Barometer, "Arab Barometer Wave IV (2016-2017)," http://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-downloads/.

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four-point scale with 4 being the highest amount of trust and 1 being the lowest. Figure 2 shows the distribution of this variable, while 8.4% of those surveyed (or 753 participants) declined to answer or did not respond.

The primary independent variable is the level of trust an individual has towards the Muslim Brotherhood. The ABIV used the same format to ask participants how much they trusted the Muslim Brotherhood, which was similarly transformed. A slight complication with the data is that the ABIV only asked the MB question in Algeria, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. Although not devastating to this study, this limits the number of observations available and the scope of any conclusions. Figure 3 shows the distribution of this variable, with 9.1% of participants from the four surveyed countries declining to answer (437 individuals).

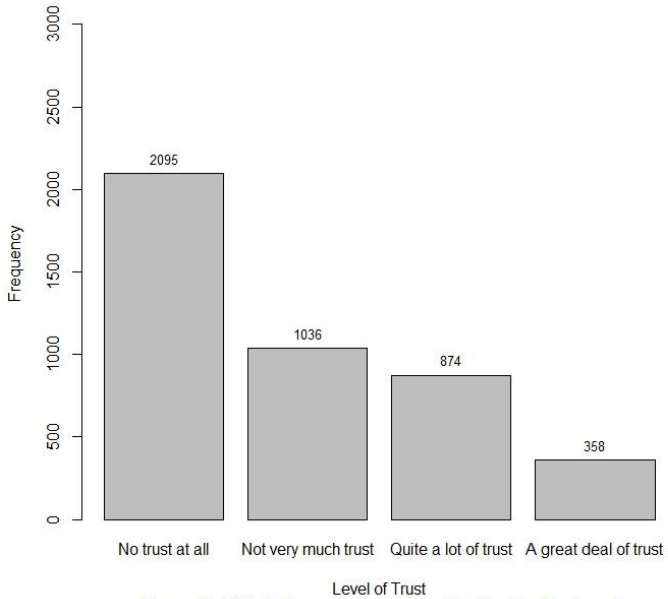

Figure 3: Distribution of Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood

As a result, an alternative test was used for a broader outlook on the Middle East. No other question in the ABIV specifically asked about the participant's feelings towards the Muslim Brotherhood. However, a question asked if the participant felt anger towards Islamic parties and movements. The survey once again gave four options ("I strongly disagree," "I disagree," "I agree," and "I strongly agree"). This data was also recoded so that participants who felt the most anger towards Islamist parties (strongly agreed) were coded as 4 and those who felt the

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least anger (strongly disagreed) were coded as 1. ABIV did not ask this question in Palestine, but its inclusion still limits the amount of dropped observations. Figure 4 shows the distribution of this variable with 9.1% of those surveyed declining to respond (710 individuals).

It is difficult to make a direct comparison between the first test (using trust in the Muslim Brotherhood as the primary independent variable) and the second test (using anger towards Islamist parties as the primary independent variable) for two reasons. First, the two questions are surveying two different concepts: trust and anger. Naturally, an individual's internal "scale" for trust and anger may be different, so a one-degree increase in trust may not be the same as a one-degree decrease in anger. Second, the two questions ask about two different entities: the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist parties in general. While the Muslim Brotherhood may be the best-known Islamist party among the surveyed countries, there are a number of other Islamist parties that exist. An individual who trusts the Muslim Brotherhood may still be angry at Hamas's use of violence against Israel. Additionally, there is only a small correlation between these two variables.[100]

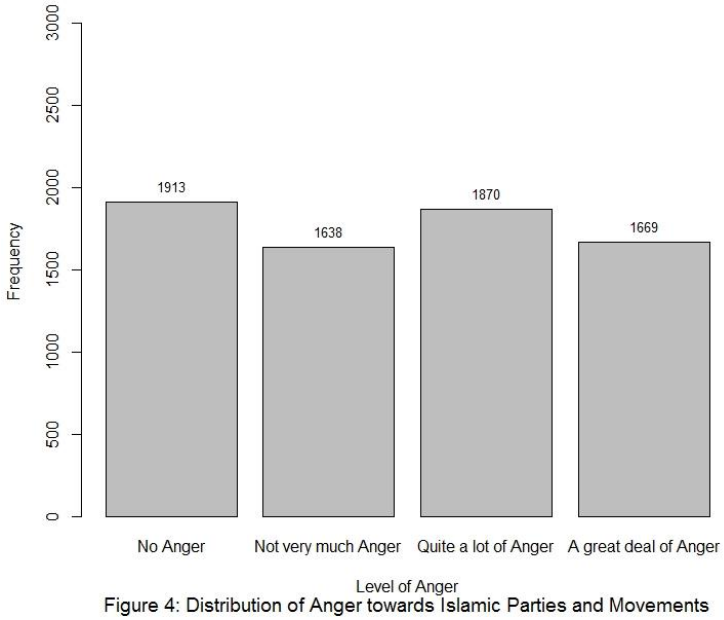

Figure 4: Distribution of Anger towards Islamic Parties and Movements

[100] Using the Spearman method, the correlation between trust in the Muslim Brotherhood and anger towards Islamist parties in Algeria, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia is -0.217.

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Despite the differences between these two variables, theoretically, they could have the same relationship with *Trust in Government*. Individuals who are angrier towards the MB and other Islamic parties may trust the negative reports of those organizations put out by the government, as explained for H1. For the reasons explained in the previous paragraph, the strength of the relationship between *Anger towards Islamic Parties* and *Trust in Government* is likely different from the relationship between *Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood* and *Trust in the Government* even if the direction is the same. Recall that the reason for using the *Anger towards Islamist Parties* variable is to utilize data from all of the surveyed countries, limiting dropped observations.

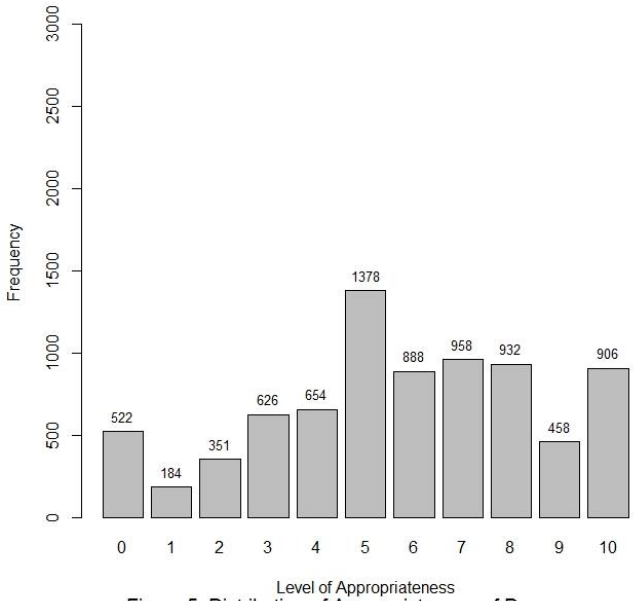

Figure 5: Distribution of Appropriateness of Democracy

To test H2, a measure for the respondents view on democracy was necessary. The ABIV asked participants, on a scale from 0 to 10, how appropriate they thought democracy is for their country. This variable, *appropriateness of democracy*, will be the primary independent variable for H2 with trust in the Muslim Brotherhood and trust in the government as the dependent variables, respectively. Figure 5 shows the distribution, while 12.7% of surveyed participants declined to answer (1143 individuals).

Control variables were also taken from the ABIV survey. *Country* data was taken from where the survey was conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco,

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Palestine, or Tunisia and was converted to a series of dummy variables. The 600 Syrians living in Jordan and Lebanon were included in their current country of residence. The *age* of the participants was also asked in the survey is included in this analysis. The variable *male* is a dummy variable to indicate gender with 1 being male. *Muslim* is an additional dummy variable for religion with 1 denoting the participant as being Muslim and 0 otherwise. In the survey, 8295 participants identified as Muslim while 705 indicated that they were Christian or other. No participants identified as Jewish. There was one question that asked individuals for their denomination, but the ABIV only asked this question in Lebanon. While it would be interesting to control for differences among Sunnis and Shi'as, too many observations would be dropped by only using data from Lebanon. For these reasons, these tests will only have one variable to indicate religion.

Religiousness is a potentially insightful variable that, for example, could be related to the level of trust a participant has towards the Muslim Brotherhood. The ABIV asked how the participant would describe themselves as "not religious," "somewhat religious," or "religious." This data was recoded on a scale with three being those who described themselves as religious and one being those who were not religious.

The surveyors coded *Urban* as a dummy variable with one indicating participants who live in cities and zero otherwise. The *income* variable used a survey question that asked participants to choose one of four statements that best described their household income. These statements ranged from "our household income does not cover our expenses and we face significant difficulties in meeting our needs" to "our household income covers our expenses well and we are able to save." This question was recoded onto a four-point scale,

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with 1 being those who faced the most difficulties in covering expenses and 4 being the households which could comfortably cover expenses and save.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable Name	*Minimum*	*Maximum*	*Mean*	*Median*	*NA's*
Trust in Government	1	4	2.16	2	753
Trust in Muslim Brotherhood	1	4	1.88	2	4637
Anger Towards Islamic Parties	1	4	2.47	2	1910
Appropriateness of Democracy	0	10	5.72	6	1143
Age	18	95	39.7	38	4
Male	0	1	0.50	0	0
Muslim	0	1	0.92	1	0
Religiousness	1	3	2.25	2	48
Urban	0	1	0.68	1	460
Income	1	4	2.31	2	91
Algeria	0	1	0.13	0	0
Egypt	0	1	0.13	0	0
Jordan	0	1	0.17	0	0
Lebanon	0	1	0.17	0	0
Morocco	0	1	0.13	0	0
Palestine	0	1	0.13	0	0
Tunisia	0	1	0.13	0	0
No Formal Education	0	1	0.12	0	0
Elementary	0	1	0.16	0	0
Prepatory	0	1	0.18	0	0
Secondary	0	1	0.30	0	0
BA	0	1	0.21	0	0
MA	0	1	0.04	0	0

Finally, the *education* variable contains six different levels of education: no formal education, elementary, preparatory, secondary, Bachelor of Arts, and Master of Arts and above. This question was changed to a series of dummy variables for each level of education. The ABIV asked a slightly different version of this question in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Palestine that included an option for "mid-level diploma/professional or technical." For coding purposes, participants that selected this option are included at the secondary level of education. Table 1 shows a summary of the descriptive statistics.

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Results

The results of the first two OLS regressions are presented in Table 2. Model 1 uses *Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood* as the primary dependent variable while Model 2 uses *Anger towards Islamist Parties*. Both models have *Trust in the Government* as the dependent variable.

Table 2: Regressions with Trust in Government as Dependent Variable

	(1)		(2)	
Variable Name	***Estimate***	***Standard Error***	***Estimate***	***Standard Error***
Intercept	1.778***	0.224	1.652***	0.101
Trust in Muslim Brotherhood	0.364***	0.014	-	-
Anger towards Islamic Parties	-	-	-0.053***	0.011
Age	0.005***	0.001	0.006***	0.001
Male	-0.100***	0.028	-0.083***	0.024
Religiousness	-0.004	0.023	0.087***	0.020
Muslim	-0.455*	0.202	0.198***	0.050
Urban	-0.055	0.031	-0.072**	0.026
Income	0.108***	0.016	0.146***	0.014
Algeria	-0.096*	0.041	-0.123**	0.043
Egypt	-	-	0.820***	0.044
Jordan	-	-	0.326***	0.044
Lebanon	-	-	-0.562***	0.048
Morocco	0.041	.040	0.140**	0.044
Palestine	-0.106*	0.043	-	-
Tunisia	-	-	-	-
No Formal Education	-	-	-	-
Elementary	-0.141**	0.054	-0.225***	0.049
Prepatory	-0.240***	0.059	-0.309***	0.052
Secondary	-0.344***	0.058	-0.340***	0.049
BA	-0.267***	0.060	-0.466***	0.052
MA and Above	-0.142	0.081	-0.239***	0.072
	4,083	Observations	6,365	Observations

* significance level ≤ 0.05
** significance level ≤ 0.01
*** significance level ≤ 0.001

The results of Model 1 show that there is a positive and significant relationship between trust in the MB and the government among participants. This correlation goes against the predicted relationship of Hypothesis 1, which stated that there would be a negative relationship between the two variables. Model 2 additionally shows a negative

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relationship between anger towards Islamist parties and trust in the government. Recall that the anger variable is essentially the inverse of the trust variable so the negative relationship is in line with the results of Model 1. With either measure, there is a clear and significant relationship so the null hypotheses of H1 can also not be accepted.

Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon in Model 1 and Palestine in Model 2 are excluded because those countries were not included in the measure of their respective dependent variable. Tunisia is excluded as a reference category for the country controls in both models while *No Formal Education* is left out as a reference category for education.

Table 2 shows that a positive and significant relationship exists between *Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood* and *Trust in the Government* which goes against the predicted relationship in H1. These results potentially provide evidence that even if individuals (in Saudi Arabia or elsewhere) trust the messages of the Muslim Brotherhood as sent through *Al Jazeera* they still have a lot of trust in the government. It is reasonable to expect that a group of individuals who trust the government do not pose a revolutionary threat to the regime, as the Saudi's fear from supporters of the MB.

Individuals who have a broad trust in all institutions could potentially drive the positive relationship between *Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood* and *Trust in the Government*. Additionally, individuals who have a general distrust in institutions, which would normally serve to counterbalance, may have declined to take the survey altogether. These individuals could see the survey's as agents of some institution (whether the government or otherwise) and refused to take part in the survey. Unfortunately, this issue is tricky to resolve because of the nature of poll-based data, which relies on the self-selection and self-evaluation of participants. However, Figures 2 and 3 do show a large numbers of participants reporting that

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they do not have any trust in the Government or the MB (the most out of any response) so there does appear to be a substantial sample of mistrusting individuals. Overall, there is little evidence that trust cannot be shared between the Muslim Brotherhood and the government among individuals.

Model 2 additionally shows a negative and significant relationship between *Anger towards Islamic Parties*. Recall that a negative coefficient with *Anger towards Islamic Parties* is actually in line with a positive coefficient with *Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood* because of how each variable was measured. If Model 1 instead used *mistrust* in the Muslim Brotherhood as an independent variable, then the direction of the two coefficients would have been the same. In summary, there is evidence that individuals who are angrier towards Islamic parties are also less trusting of the government. Additionally, *Anger towards Islamic Parties* appears to have a much smaller effect on *Trust in Government* than *Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood.* Once again, model 2 potentially provides evidence that individuals can be supportive of both the MB and the government. Perhaps in Saudi Arabia the same is true; people who are not angry towards Islamic parties (such as the MB) still trust the government and would not overthrow the regime.

Hypotheses 2 deals with a new variable: the *Appropriateness of Democracy.* Table 3 displays the results of two additional OLS regressions. Model 3 uses *Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood* as the dependent variable while Model 4 uses *Trust in the Government*. Model 3 tests H2 while Model 4 is an additional test to see the relationship between an individual's view of democracy and their trust in the government.

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Table 3: Regressions on the Appropriateness of Democracy

	(3) Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood		(4) Trust in the Government	
Variable Name	***Estimate***	***Standard Error***	***Estimate***	***Standard Error***
Intercept	0.735**	0.250	1.321***	0.094
Appropriateness of Democracy	0.046***	0.006	0.067***	0.004
Age	0.000	0.001	0.003***	0.001
Male	-0.044	0.032	-0.065**	0.022
Religiousness	0.159***	0.026	0.081***	0.018
Muslim	0.397	0.223	0.174***	0.048
Urban	-0.017	0.035	-0.062*	0.024
Income	0.102***	0.018	0.117***	0.013
Algeria	-0.160***	0.046	-0.151***	0.042
Egypt	-	-	0.775***	0.042
Jordan	-	-	0.252***	0.042
Lebanon	-	-	-0.668***	0.047
Morocco	0.233***	0.048	0.026	0.043
Palestine	0.162***	0.048	-0.041	0.043
Tunisia	-	-	-	-
No Formal Education	-	-	-	-
Elementary	-0.088	0.064	-0.147**	0.047
Prepatory	-0.206**	0.069	-0.268***	0.048
Secondary	-0.118	0.067	-0.285***	0.046
BA	-0.221**	0.070	-0.378***	0.049
MA and Above	-0.121	0.093	-0.174*	0.068
* significance level ≤ 0.05	3,879	Observations	7,485	Observations
**significance level ≤ 0.01				
***significance level ≤ 0.001				

The results in Table 3 show a positive and significate relationship between *Appropriateness of Democracy* and *Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood* in line with H2. In addition, Model 4 shows a positive relationship between *Appropriateness of Democracy* and *Trust in the Government.* The results of Model 3 were what was expected, and the test provides evidence that those accept democracy also trust in the Muslim Brotherhood. If this relationship is true throughout the Middle East, then the Saudi's hostility towards the Muslim Brotherhood could be a result of this association with democracy rather than viewing the MB as direct ideological or political revolutionary threat. Model 4 further shows that individuals who do find democracy appropriate also have increased trust in the government. Should any

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country feel threatened by a particular group of citizens who do trust the government? This paper will not address this question, but there does seem to be little reason for the Saudi government to be hostile towards the Muslim Brotherhood besides its association with democracy.

Overall, these tests provide evidence of a connection between an individual's view of democracy and the Muslim Brotherhood and those individuals can trust both the government and the Muslim Brotherhood. These tests are far from comprehensive but do offer insight at the potential role of democracy and the MB, and not necessarily sectarianism, in causing crises in the Middle East.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The June 2017 Gulf Crisis demonstrates the complexity of international politics in the Middle East. The crisis, primarily between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, cannot be explained solely as a sectarian confrontation. In order to understand the 2017 Gulf Crisis, this paper studied the role of the Muslim Brotherhood. As demonstrated with two case studies, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have a long history with the Islamist organization. Relations between Saudi Arabia and the MB are currently tense because the MB's own brand of Islamism and the MB's pro-democratic stance poses a threat to the Saudi autocratic regime. Qatar and the MB are currently on good terms because of Qatar's current foreign policy goal to become a global actor. The Muslim Brotherhood's connections and influence throughout the Middle East and the world are critical to Qatar's strategy. Additionally, as there is no local branch of the MB in Qatar, there is little threat of a religious or political domestic conflict with the Islamist organization.

Both Saudi Arabia and Qatar have domestic concerns to keep in mind when conducting foreign policy that go beyond sectarianism. The quantitative analysis, additionally, provided the connection between the Muslim Brotherhood and democracy at the individual level. The analysis might suggest that there is little reason for Middle Eastern regimes to distrust the Muslim Brotherhood besides their connection to democracy.

Clearly, the conflict of interest over the MB between Saudi Arabia and Qatar in part sparked the 2017 Gulf Crisis. Following the Arab Spring, interest in the Persian Gulf region increased studies but primarily focused on sectarianism. Studying the causes and effects of

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sectarianism is important to the understanding of conflict in the Middle East, but scholars should not ignore other areas of study. Studying the Muslim Brotherhood increases the understanding of how democracy, domestic legitimacy, and internal security are related to the crises of this region.

The primary focus of this paper was exploring the divergent views of Saudi Arabia and Qatar towards the Muslim Brotherhood, but future works could expand on this list of case studies. Obviously, the MB's history with Egypt comes to mind, which was explored partly in Chapter 2. Additionally, the UAE, Tunisia, Syria, and Yemen, among others, are all countries that have a complex history with the Muslim Brotherhood. Future studies on any of these countries would complement the findings of this paper.

While this paper utilized data from the most recent wave of the Arab Barometer, future studies could more directly test the proposed hypotheses within Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Survey data within both countries is sparse but a proper poll on Saudi and Qatari opinions towards the government, democracy, and the Muslim Brotherhood would be a valuable addition to the literature. The Arab Barometer allowed for a general look at trends in the Middle East, but surveys from the two primary actors of the 2017 Gulf Crisis would likely prove insightful.

This paper focused on the Muslim Brotherhood's involvement in the 2017 Gulf Crisis, which admittedly does not capture the totality of this crisis. Future studies on the 2017 Gulf Crisis and Gulf politics, in general, should not ignore the multifaceted nature of this crisis which involves sectarianism and Brotherhood but also economics, geopolitics, relations with the U.S. and Iran, and other issues. This paper served as an introduction to one of the factors leading to the 2017 Gulf Crisis, but plenty has yet to be explored in the literature.

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