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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In this first part of this research, I shall analyze the very often misunderstood totalitarian phenomenon using a variety of approaches.[94] In my view, the study of totalitarianism requires an interdisciplinary study that incorporates both an understanding of the intellectual, social and legal-political developments which led to the formation of totalitarian thought as well as an overview of the existing normative and empirical theories.[95] A fair question to ask would be

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[94] Slavoj Zizek, *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?* (London; New York: Verso, 2001).

[95] The precise dynamic relation between the history of ideas and the history of changes in society which spawned totalitarian thought, however, remains one of reciprocity. Untangling this intricate web of relations is clearly beyond the scope of this research. A number of books have been written on this subject, which attempt to reveal the genealogy of totalitarian thinking. Although none of these books claim, or can be seen as giving a complete overview of the complex relations between the history of ideas and the history of changes in the respective pre-totalitarian societies, their combined reading will give the reader who is anxious to increase his understanding of this interrelationship ample opportunity to do so: Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989), Isaiah Berlin and Henry Hardy, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2006), ———, *The Roots of Romanticism: The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1965: The National Gallery of Art, Washington, Dc* (London: Pimlico, 2000), Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, ———, *Fascism*, Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, Hoffer, *The True Believer; Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, Josep R. Llobera, *The Making of Totalitarian Thought* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: Norton, 1993), José Ortega y Gasset, *Man and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1958), Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*, Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, Arthur Versluis, *The New Inquisitions: Heretic-Hunting and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Totalitarianism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, Bärsch, *Die Politische Religion Des Nationalsozialismus: Die Religiöse Dimension Der Ns-Ideologie in Den Schriften Von Dieter Eckart,*

why such an elaborate approach would be necessary in order to understand what totalitarianism is, and in order to test the validity of the totalitarian paradigm in relation to Islamist movements. Why wouldn't an inventory and summary of the existing normative and empirical theories suffice? Whilst it is true that such an approach could be viable for merely identifying the totalitarian nature of a given ideology through a textual analysis, it would not be adequate for understanding the totalitarian *movement.* A totalitarian movement is in the true sense of the word a movement that originates from, and often is a counter reaction to the social, economic and political developments within a given society. The mere observation that Islamist movements are totalitarian would be interesting in itself, but it would tell us very little about the place of such a movement in the dynamics of a given society. It would be as if we take the Islamists phenomenon, divorce it from its context and then make a statement about it without considering the implications for the society from whence it originates and in which it operates. My approach is not only interested in ascertaining whether or not Islamism is totalitarian, but in addition trying to get a feel for social-political and legal aspects that might influence the Islamist movement's discourse. It may be that such a movement's quest for political power is doomed from the outset due to limited appeal or resistance from the existing non-totalitarian society or religious institutions. Conversely, it might be that the dynamics of a given society are such that a totalitarian movement merely needs to 'move in and gather the harvest'.[96] Any analysis of totalitarianism would be of little value if it did not factor in those historical events and circumstances which contributed to its formation, its place in the wider scope of social-political dynamics and its potential appeal on the population. By choosing such a wider scope

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Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg Und Adolf Hitler, C. E. Bärsch, *Der Junge Goebbels: Erlosung Und Vernichtung* (W. Fink, 2004).

[96] Hoffer, *The True Believer; Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, p. 35.

of research I avoid removing totalitarianism from the social context in which it operates.

The question of the applicability of the totalitarian paradigm thus needs to be accompanied by the question of totalitarianisms *origins* and *potential* appeal in a particular society. Only in that way can we understand the relevance of the totalitarian phenomenon to Islamic societies. This of course covers a great deal of topics and a concise summary of these factors is well beyond the boundaries of this research. Whilst it is impossible, within the scope of this research, to chart the exact elements of German, Russian or Chinese society that gave rise to their respective totalitarian movements, it is possible to recognize that these societies shared certain overarching social, intellectual and political developments. These same developments seem to be at play in Islamic societies, and since the question of this research is the applicability of the totalitarian paradigm to Islamist movements, this research must take such a broad approach.

Totalitarianism is in many respects a phenomenon intimately linked to modernity. It is, paradoxically, a movement which is both an outgrowth of, and a movement against modernity.[97] Tracing the origins of non-totalitarian forms of authoritarianism, such as the military dictatorship or tyranny, is in comparison an infinitely simpler task.[98] As I will describe in part two of this research, Islamic societies have generally reacted to the phenomenon of modernity in many of

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[97] See for instance the analysis of Claude Lefort's and Hannah Arendt's understanding of the role of modernity in the advent of totalitarianism in: Bernard Flynn, *The Philosophy of Claude Lefort: Interpreting the Political*, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2005)., Dana Richard Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror: Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[98] A military dictatorship is often an outgrowth of the state which in itself is a modern phenomenon; yet, such a dictatorship is often not an outspoken product of modernity or aimed against modernity. A tyranny is historically wholly unrelated to modernity and has as its foundation power for power's sake without any ideological component.

the same ways as pre-totalitarian western societies have done. As I will show, the advent of modernity had a profound effect on both Islamic and non Islamic societies, and whilst these effects have provided the impetus for democratic movements, they also formed the drive for totalitarian movements. It are these similarities in the reactions to modernity which have to be factored into any analysis of Islamist and totalitarian movements, and for this reason a simple application of an empirical or normative theory would not suffice, since this would merely yield a static snapshot of a political phenomenon devoid of social and historical context.

 I will clarify this approach in the following paragraph. In order to come to an understanding of what totalitarianism is, I find it imperative that we also include a brief description of those forms of *non*-totalitarian, authoritarian political organization that have occurred in the centuries preceding the rise of totalitarianism. I do this for two reasons: First of all because the different elements that came to define totalitarianism were formed in that period and were in part derived from the experience of those systems of governance. Secondly, because totalitarianism needs to be defined both by what it is as by what it is not. Obvious as this may sound I will make the point that a neglect of such a negative description has often lead to a misunderstanding of the totalitarian phenomenon. Before discussing the various theories on totalitarianism, I will therefore offer a brief description of the distinctly un-totalitarian forms of authoritarianism such as tyranny, monarchy and dictatorship and a somewhat more elaborate description of fascism. As we will come to see in part II of this book, Islamists ideologues go through great lengths to argue that the political system they aim to create has nothing to do with and is the anti-thesis of these 'un-Islamic' forms of government. In order to understand the arguments they provide for that contention, it is imperative that we understand the nature of and the differences between the various forms of authoritarian political organization. In this overview of non-totalitarian forms of political organization I will emphasize the role of fascism since it, in my opinion, in many respects

forms the central axis around which the movement from authoritarianism to totalitarianism is made. As we will see in the second part of this book, this also applies to Islamists forms of political organization.

1.1 Methodology

This paragraph deals with the question of how to approach the taxonomy and clarification of the totalitarian phenomenon, the problems associated with it, the layout of this chapter and the choice of authors.

1.1.1 Problems of taxonomy

Of all forms of political organization, totalitarianism is notorious for its transformative and often times seemingly paradoxical nature.[99] When studying the different historical appearances of totalitarianism, one is reluctantly reminded of Winston Churchill's description of Russia as 'a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma'. Hannah Arendt, who wrote one of the most influential books on this subject, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* tackled this problem by discovering 'the chief elements of totalitarianism and analyzing them in historical terms, tracing these elements back in history as far as deemed proper and necessary'. Arendt then gave 'an analysis of the elemental structure of totalitarian movements and domination itself'.[100] The eventual structure of this book and the first part in particular, resembles the approach Arendt herself described concerning her own work; it focuses on the historical political, intellectual and social processes which ultimately crystallized into the various elements of totalitarian thought and its specific organization structure. I will briefly describe four elements that underlie the overall structure of this book, and which clarify why totalitarianism requires a somewhat different

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[99] "Many [..] have stressed the peculiar "shapelessness" of the totalitarian movement" Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 394.

[100] Hannah Arendt, "A Reply to Eric Voegelin," in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), pp. 402-403.

approach than the one usually associated with the study of political modes of organization. Although it may seem premature to discuss these elements in this paragraph, I am certain that it will be beneficial for the understanding of the overall structure of this book. These four elements are respectively: totalitarianism as an essentially anti-political movement, totalitarian lawfulness, totalitarianism as a non-state centred movement and, finally, totalitarianism's highly transformative mode of representation.

To start, how can a movement which seeks total domination of every sphere of life be conceived of as an inherently anti-political movement? Totalitarianism represents a radical break with all known traditional forms of political organization, whether it is from the most libertarian of democracies to the most oppressive forms of authoritarianism. It does not treat the individual under its reign as a potential political actor, but merely as the raw material to which a transcendent law is ruthlessly applied. Unlike all other forms of political organization which have a basis in some utilitarian consideration, totalitarianism is only concerned with the accelerated execution of these transcendent laws.[101] These laws, whether mankind is aware of their existence or not, represent a process or movement which underlies all human activity and whose end product is mankind in its ultimate naturally perfected form, a Utopian society. This process however, might take millennia to unfold before it comes to its, perceived, natural and inevitable conclusion. The totalitarian movement, which claims to have discovered these laws of movement, and which sees itself as the priestly intermediary between these laws and mankind, exists solely to accelerate this process and as such, does

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[101] "If we assume that most of our actions are of a utilitarian nature and that our evil deeds spring from some exaggeration" of self-interest, then we are forced to conclude that this particular institution of totalitarianism is beyond human understanding." ———, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), p. 233.

not exist to benefit the ruling class, or those whom it rules, but, on the contrary, exists merely to transform all of mankind into the living unfailing embodiment of these transcendent laws.[102] In that sense, totalitarianism has been dubbed the 'most radical denial of freedom' in that it reduces mankind to a mere raw material on which the Movement, inherent in the sovereign transcendental laws, is let loose.

The second point follows from this first one; the stated goal of all totalitarian movements is the application of these transcendent laws to all mankind. These laws however are not laws in the traditional sense, they do not demarcate a dividing line between the public and private life of the individual. Even the most tyrannical forms of government have recognized certain areas of the private life which were allowed to exist as long as they did not interfere with the goals of the tyrant. A certain sphere of autonomy was thereby guaranteed to exist and stabilize society in such a way that the individual was capable of living, within limits, a predictable and safe life.

Totalitarianism, however, claiming to execute a transcendent law of movement which transforms the raw material into a perfected end state, necessarily needs to dominate mankind in its totality, irrespective of the boundaries between public and private life; for any action that is not coordinated by the movement i.e. any action that stems from out of the autonomous sphere of individual behaviour, poses a risk to the success of the totalitarian enterprise. In order to

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[102] "Totalitarian ideology conceives of this species, of the human race, as the embodiment of an all-pervasive, all-powerful law. Whether it is seen as a law of nature or history, this law is actually the law of a movement that rages through mankind, finds it embodiment in humankind, and is constantly put into action by totalitarian leaders." ———, "Mankind and Terror," in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), pp. 305-306. "Totalitarian lawfulness, defying legality and pretending to establish the direct reign of justice on earth, executes the law of history or nature without translating it into standards of right and wrong for individual behaviour. It applies the law directly to mankind without bothering with the behaviour of men" Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 462.

succeed in their attempts of fabricating mankind, totalitarianism requires the individuals to be immobilized to such a degree that they become the unresisting and infallible building blocks on which the totalitarian mason can perform his work. Laws in that sense are not aimed at providing a stable society, but at creating a universal impotence for political action.[103] Totalitarian lawfulness inverts the commonly understood function of 'law' in that it obliterates the distinction between public and private life, denies any autonomous sphere outside of its own, and engulfs society into a state of impotence so that it may guarantee the accelerated fabrication of Utopia, unhindered by any spontaneous action from individual citizens.

Compounding the radical break with traditional legal and political theory is the totalitarian disregard for the state. Unlike traditional modes of political organization which focus on the state as an institution invested with political power, totalitarianism is marked by a thorough disregard of this institution. Instead it opts to monopolize society, including the state, as a whole. Most totalitarian movements of the past have started out as small vanguard movements of opposition that developed into movements focused on mass mobilization aimed at subduing the non-totalitarian society, not the state. They reached their pinnacle of power when society, and sometimes but not necessarily, the state, were incorporated into the movement itself, thereby fusing society as a whole with the movement, whose head is the party and its leadership. The acting agent of totalitarianism is therefore at all stages of its life cycle the

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[103] "If law, therefore, is the essence of constitutional or republican government, then terror is the essence of totalitarian government. Laws were established to be boundaries [..] and to remain static, enabling men to move within them: under totalitarian conditions, on the contrary, every means is taken to "stabilize" men, to make *them* static, in order to prevent any unforeseen, free, or spontaneous acts that might hinder freely racing terror. Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," p. 343.

party, not the state. The state is often a remnant of the pre-existing non-totalitarian order which is left to wither away, abolished or plainly ignored. The totality of the totalitarianism aspiration is therefore not limited to the ability to dictate the legal framework on which a society could still function semi-autonomously, as is possible in a democracy or republican society, nor is it limited to the instalment of a single leader or elite-class of leaders, as in dictatorships or fascism. The totalitarian aspiration aims at the complete incorporation of every facet of life into the movement and in which no autonomous sphere of activity is allowed to exist outside of the movement.[104] Whilst democratic and authoritarian movements can be identified by their particular external relationships towards the state, its institutions and society in general, totalitarian movements aim to incorporate all of these into the movement itself.[105] The

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[104] "Totalitarianism is not the same thing as a dictatorial regime, as is implied whenever this term is loosely used to designate a type of absolute domination in which the separation of powers has been abolished. More specifically, it is not a political regime: it is a *form of society,* that form in which all activities are immediately linked to one another, deliberately presented as modalities of a single world; that form in which a system of values predominates absolutely, such that every individual or collective undertaking must necessarily find in it a coefficient of reality; that form in which, lastly, the dominant model exercises a total physical and spiritual constraint on the behavior of private individuals. In this sense , totalitarianism claims to negate the separation of the various domains of social life, -the political, the economic, the legal, the ideological, etc. – which is characteristic of bourgeois capitalism. It effects a permanent identification between them. It is not, therefore , so much a monstrous outgrowth of political power in society as a metamorphosis of society itself in which the political ceases to exist as a separate sphere." Claude Lefort and John B. Thompson, "Totalitarianism without Stalin," in *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1986), p. 79.

[105] By external relationships I mean that neither democratic nor authoritarian movements ever fully identify themselves with the state, its institutions or society. They may function within these realms but never truly become identified with them; there always remains a degree of separation between them and these realms.

totalitarian movement sees itself not only as the exclusively legitimate legislative, judicial, and executive branch of government, but more importantly, as the only true representative of mankind itself in every realm of existence. In other words, the only things that lie outside of the boundaries of the party are those things which have yet to be incorporated into the party. It is therefore incorrect to speak of a totalitarian state, because the monopolization of the state and its institutions is neither the true objective of the movement, nor a major element of the whole totalitarian movement at the peak of its power. Calling something a totalitarian state is an incorrect description of, and an unjustifiable limitation of the ambition of the totalitarian movement. Every state which we know of that has been labelled a *totalitarian state*, represents in reality a discarded remnant of the old society which is now governed by the totalitarian party, a party which never claims to have taken over the state but has incorporated it into its own ranks and its own bureaucracy and now governs in its place. We therefore cannot identify a totalitarian movement by its relationship towards the state and its institutions but we need to look at the attitude towards and the impact of the movement on society as a whole.

This brings us to the last point I wish to make. The second specifically taxonomical difficulty lies in the fact that the aspiration of fusing society to the movement is not visible until the totalitarian movement has achieved a true monopoly on power. Prior to that it may take on the guise of other authoritarian or even democratic movements competing for power[106], incorporating those elements that benefit

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[106] The commentary of the Nazi's on their disguise of a democratic party competing in the democratic system is illuminating: "We enter parliament in order to supply ourselves, in the arsenal of democracy, with its own weapons. We become members of the Reichstag in order to paralyze the Weimar sentiment with its own assistance. If democracy is so stupid as to give us free tickets and per diem for this "blockade" that is its own affair." [..] "The parliamentary battle of the NSDAP had the single purpose of destroying the parliamentary system from within through its own methods. It was necessary above all to make formal use of the possibilities of the party-state

them in their rise to power, but which should never be identified with the essence of the movement themselves.[107] This point is of particular importance when analyzing Islamist movements which, on the whole, have remained movements of opposition bereft of power. Furthermore, circling around the nucleus of the totalitarian vanguard party are myriads of social or political organizations that are designed to form as the front for the totalitarian vanguard party. Their aim is to create an impression of acceptability and they are used to draw men into the totalitarian movement. These organizations are part and parcel of the totalitarian modus operandi but are difficult to recognize as such due to their deliberately designed benign appearance in the public realm. They may in practice denounce the totalitarian agenda whilst they beneath the surface are part and parcel of it. Once in power however, these wilfully misleading organizations are no longer necessary and it is only at that point, when the mask is dropped, that the true face and nature of the totalitarian aspiration becomes evident to the general public. They may remain in function if it is beneficial to the movement, but once the power of the movement over the population has been established they usually, as we will see, lose their prominence. The movement itself uses this art of disguise as well, sometimes appearing as a democratic movement or a revolutionary movement designed to replace some dictatorship with

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system but to refuse real cooperation and thereby to render the parliamentary system, which is by nature dependent upon the responsible cooperation of the opposition, incapable of action." United States. Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality. et al., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*.Volume I, chapter 7, 8/55.

[107] This point is highly related to the dual use of propaganda, which is aimed at those who are not yet members of the movement and usually consists of well thought out lies, and indoctrination, which contains the movements true agenda. The movement in its initial stages and outward appearance relies heavily on propaganda, and therefore all too readily adopts those features of other movements which have been proven to be able to rally popular support. This however says little about the movement's true agenda. See Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," pp. 346-347.

a government 'of and for the people'.[108] Depending on the actual state, or receptiveness of society, additional measures might be needed before the totalitarian experiment in total domination can begin.[109] This represents one of the many paradoxes of totalitarian movements; they start out as revolutionary movements proclaiming to free citizens from some oppressive regime or loathed reality and in doing so they may even adopt many of the features that belong to other movements that *genuinely* aim to do the same thing. It is only when a monopoly on power has been attained that the totalitarian agenda is finally revealed. In other cases, totalitarian movements are not totalitarian from the outset but become so as a result of the mechanisms employed in their rise to power.[110] Furthermore, depending on a number of factors, it may occur that a totalitarian movement needs to soften its grip on society or even allow some limited form of political plurality. This however, does not have to mean that the movement itself has lost its totalitarian character, for this mere inability to fulfil the totalitarian agenda might well be temporal, waiting to flare up again under the right conditions. The

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[108] Whereas the start of the totalitarian aspiration of the NSDAP coincided with the attainment of power in 1933-34, the Stalinist version of totalitarianism came about long after power had been firmly secured into the hands of the dictatorship of the Communist party. The same goes for Mao's and the Khmer Rouge's form of totalitarianism which relied equally heavily on the destruction of the old society before the totalitarian elements of their rule could come to the foreground.

[109] "The turning point that decides whether a one-party system will remain a dictatorship or develop into a form of totalitarian rule always comes when every last trace of active or passive opposition in the country has been drowned in blood and terror. Genuinely totalitarian terror, however, sets in only when the regime has no more enemies who can be arrested and tortured to death and when even the different classes of suspects are eliminated and can no longer been taken into "protective custody". Arendt, "Mankind and Terror," p. 299.

[110] Lee Harris, amongst others, argues that the 'fantasy ideology' employed by fascist and other mass movements for propagandistic purposes can in certain instances 'become an end in itself'. Lee Harris, *Civilization and Its Enemies: The Next Stage of History* (New York: Free Press, 2004), p. 11.

taxonomical challenge thus lies in the fact that totalitarian movements acquire different elements of different forms of democratic and authoritarian rule in their march to power, and may discard certain elements along the way. Yet, when one compares the different appearances of totalitarianism including their different stages of development, the amount of structural similarities clearly indicates that they constitute a distinct political phenomenon.[111] Therefore, if one is to judge a certain movement on its possible totalitarian character it becomes necessary to do so by looking at its historical development and not merely its current representation.

1.1.2. Methodology employed

The methodology of the first and second part of this book is generally the same. I will go into the details of the methodology employed in the second part of the book when the time comes, but a short word on it would clarify the set up of this book in general. I start with the foundations needed to come to grips with the issue at hand. For the first part of the book this will be a description of the larger category of 'authoritarian forms of political organizations' since it is upon these foundations that totalitarianism is eventually built. In terms of the second part of the book, these foundations are to be found in Islam's basic teachings and political outlook. I then move on to describe the historical, intellectual and political events that followed from these foundations and led to respectively, the rise of totalitarianism and Islamism. Finally I will analyze the subject that is the core of that part of the book, totalitarianism in part I and Islamism in part II. In terms of the first part of the book, the methodology employed is the following:

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[111] "[..] the curious fact that Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia started from historical, economic, ideological and cultural circumstances in many respects almost diametrically opposed, yet still arrived at certain results which are structurally identical. This is easily overlooked because these identical structures reveal themselves only in fully developed totalitarian rule." Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," p. 347.

Chapter two deals with the non-totalitarian and non fascist authoritarian forms of political organization. Although the ultimate goal of this first part of the book is to find an answer to the question: "what is totalitarianism?" I will start in chapter two by giving a short overview of non-totalitarian forms of authoritarianism for two reasons. First of all, this chapter is needed in order to clarify the roots of totalitarianism since these authoritarian modes of political organization have contributed towards the development of totalitarian thought and its particular modes of organization. Secondly, as we will see in part II, Islamism claims to be fundamentally opposed to any form of authoritarianism. In order to validate that claim, a basic understanding of the forms of authoritarianism is needed. Since this chapter is mainly a summary sketch of the authoritarianism, I will mostly use an empirical analysis which offers clear criteria for the different forms of authoritarianism and which clarify some of the basic concepts which govern the authoritarian phenomenon.

Chapter three will give a historical account of the different strands of thought and social developments that developed out of modernity and which eventually crystallized into fascist and totalitarian thought and modes of organization.

In chapter four I will focus on fascism as it forms the critical phase in the transition from classical authoritarianism to totalitarianism in which novel means of political organization, such as charismatic leadership, mass mobilization and terror are developed. fascism is that form of political organization which is often times misunderstood to be the equivalent of totalitarianism, but which in reality should be seen as distinctly different. Although numerous of the main political and philosophical concepts and political instruments of totalitarianism are derived from fascism, these two types of organization are radically different in their aims and political-legal philosophy. Chapter two and four thus form the negative typology of totalitarianism, i.e. they describe what totalitarianism is *not.* In addition, the elaborate

description of fascism is needed since Islamist movements, as we will come to see in part II, show considerable overlap with their fascist counterparts.

Chapter five will deal with totalitarianism itself and forms the main part of this chapter. I will begin this chapter with an overview of the existing theories, and use two categories of those theories to describe the totalitarian phenomenon: the empirical approach and the normative-philosophical approach. At the end of this chapter it should become clear what the objectives of totalitarian rule are, how it's organized, and in what way it stands apart from all other forms of authoritarian rule.

Chapter five will end with a description of the model of totalitarianism I will be using to analyze the Islamist phenomenon. The introduction to Part Two will explain how the research done in Part One applies to the study field of Part Two.

1.1.3 Choice of authors

Before proceeding to the actual discussion of the totalitarian phenomenon, I will briefly elaborate on the reasons underlying the choice for the main authors whose work I will use in describing the totalitarianism. Studies into authoritarianism and totalitarianism can roughly be divided into two main approaches, namely the normative philosophical approach which is concerned with the legal and political philosophical concepts which define these types of political organization, and the empirical approach which focuses on the institutions, laws and structures of said forms of organization. One should however be aware that neither of these approaches excludes the other. For reason which I will explain below, I have chosen to apply the empirical approach on non-totalitarian regimes whilst using the normative-philosophical approach on totalitarian movements.

The empirical and institutional theories of Juan J. Linz

The second chapter, which deals with *authoritarianism,* in general, will be discussed mainly by use of the work *Totalitarian and Authoritarian regimes* by Juan J. Linz.[112] This work is exemplary of the empirical approach of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. It gives clear empirical criteria regarding the institutions of authoritarian regimes which can be verified by comparing them with the existent empirical data. Seeing however the problems inherent in the transformative nature of totalitarian movements, Linz's approach does not seem to be applicable to anything other than a full blown totalitarian movement which acts as if it were a state. Since this phase signifies the totalitarian movement at the height of its power, it does little in terms of functioning as a guide to understanding the rise of totalitarian movements, and is of limited use in analyzing Islamist movements. With regard to the definition of authoritarianism however, it offers a clear and widely supported list of criteria.

The fifth chapter, which describes the *totalitarian* phenomenon, will be discussed by the works of three authors; primarily by Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), Eric Voegelin (1901-1985) and to a somewhat lesser degree by Claude Lefort (1924-2010), all of which mainly employ the normative philosophical approach.[113]

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[112] Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. J. Linz (b. 1926) is Sterling Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Yale University and has written extensively on authoritarian and totalitarian regimes and the transition between authoritarian and democratic regimes.

[113] Hannah Arendt was a former student of the phenomenologist Martin Heidegger at the University of Marburg, Germany and has served academic posts in the United States at, amongst others, the University of California, Berkeley, Yale and Chicago. Claude Lefort was also a student of a phenomenologist, namely Merleau-Ponty. Both a philosopher as well as an activist, Lefort was closely associated with Troskists movements of his time. Lefort wrote for the socialist journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie* and later for the journal *Les Temps Modernes* whose founders included Jean Paul Sartre, with whom he later fell in disagreement, Simone de Beauvoir and his former tutor, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. During his academic career Lefort taught at the University of São Paulo, the Sorbonne and at the École des Hautes Études

Nazism and the normative philosophical theory of Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt's main book on this subject, '*The origins of Totalitarianism*', is considered by many to be one of the true classics in the studies on totalitarianism. Divided into three chapters; Anti-Semitism, Imperialism and Totalitarianism, this book offers the reader a concise overview of those historical developments in the social, political, economic and legal field, that eventually led to the development of National Socialist and communist totalitarianism. Arendt makes extensive use of normative concepts in her analysis of the different appearances of the totalitarian phenomenon, focusing mainly on concepts such as legality, power, authority, freedom, and the interrelation of terror and ideology. Arendt was certainly not the first author to describe the totalitarian phenomenon; she was in that respect preceded by amongst others Franz Borkenau and Eric Voegelin.[114] She was however one of the first, if not the first, to do so from a retrograde perspective. Whilst other authors have written about totalitarianism before the Nazi's assumption of power, their analyses mostly offered predictions about the future, or tried to interpret totalitarianism within the framework of already existing forms of authoritarianism. Arendt on the other hand was one of the first authors to recognize the sheer novelty of the totalitarian phenomenon, the relationship between modernity and totalitarianism, and one of the first authors to write on this subject in such detail *after* the fall of Nazism. Although her works supports a large amount of empirical data, this is mainly used to underpin her normative arguments. One should be reminded that Arendt wrote the

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en Sciences Sociales. Eric Voegelin was born in Germany, and educated in political science at the University of Vienna. In 1938 he fled from the Nazi and emigrated to the United States. He spent most of his academic career at the University of Notre Dame, Louisiana State University, the University of Munich and the Hoover Institution of Stanford University.

[114] Borkenau, *The Totalitarian Enemy*. Eric Voegelin, *Die Politischen Religionen*, Schriftenreihe "Ausblicke" (Stockholm,: Bermann-Fischer verlag, 1939).

book shortly after the demise of Nazi Germany and while the soviet totalitarian experiment was still in full swing. This somewhat limits her ability to give as concise an overview of the communist totalitarian experience as compared to her work on the Nazi's experience, a shortcoming that is substituted for by Claude Lefort's work as we shall discuss hereafter. Nevertheless her insights have proved to be of vital importance to our understanding of this phenomenon and to the further exploration of this field of research. For this reason I will use her seminal work as the primary tool for the analysis of totalitarianism and as such will, necessarily, explain a number of her arguments beforehand.

Arendt insisted that totalitarianism represented a radically novel form of political organization which cannot be compared to any of the preceding forms of political organization.[115] It is because of the significance of this position that we shall look at the non-totalitarian forms of authoritarianism in chapter two before moving on to our discussion of totalitarianism. According to Arendt, totalitarianism should at all times be distinguished from those forms of political organization, and their associated legal philosophical concepts, which predated it.[116] For the better part of her book, Arendt attempts to show how certain ideas and sociological phenomena from the 18th, 19th and early 20th century, which in themselves were of a non-totalitarian nature, came to be an integral part of the totalitarian legal and philosophical world view and supplied some of the fertile ground

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[115] Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," p. 328.

[116] The novelty of totalitarianism according to Arendt "is not primarily its ideological content, but the event of totalitarian domination itself. This can be seen clearly if we have to admit that the deeds of its considered policies have exploded our traditional categories of political thought (totalitarianism is unlike all forms of tyranny and despotism we know of) and the standards of our moral judgment (totalitarian crimes are very inadequately described as "murder" and totalitarian criminals can hardly be punished as "murderers)" ———, "A Reply to Eric Voegelin," p. 405. See also, Ibid. "totalitarianism, [..] did not exist before it had come into being".

on which totalitarianism was able to bloom. Some of the fundamental concepts and phenomena which in her view are intimately connected to the rise of totalitarianism are: the application of science to history, industrialism and the rise of the masses, the ensuing atomization of the individual, feelings of loneliness and superfluousness, a loss of interest in public matters and a wide held apathy if not resentment towards politics and the subsequent loss of authority.[117]

 All of these are linked to the overarching concept of modernity and:

> [..]what Arendt called "the modern triumph of *homo faber*" [..] It is thus this hubris – the hubris of *homo faber*, of "everything is possible" – which finds expression in the totalitarian project of "fabricating mankind." This project consists in the violent reshaping of available human material so that, in the end, neither classes, races nor individuals exist, but only specimens of the (perfected) species.[118]

Instrumental to the fabrication of mankind is the negation of politics to the edicts of the ideology, the ensuing eradication of freedom and plurality, and the application of terror, not as a means of suppressing opposition but as an organizational principle which allows the movement to reshape mankind into its own image, without concern for individual or collective interests of its subjects. [119] Since this, according to Arendt, is something which no other form of political

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[117] It should be mentioned that many of these concepts and the appreciation of their role in the formation of totalitarian thought are shared by other authors such as Eric Voegelin, Erik van Ree and Claude Lefort, to name but a few. I will discuss some of these authors later on. See also: ———, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Part II, chapter 1, 3, 4, and 5, part III chapter 1, 2 and 4

[118] Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror: Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt*, p. 185.

[119] Ibid., pp. 180-190, Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," pp. 338-341, ———, "Mankind and Terror," p. 279, ———, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Part III, chapter 4.

organization has ever attempted we can understand why she would regard it is a radically novel.

As we take a look at authoritarianism in chapter two it will become clear that the concepts which relate to modernity will in large part not apply due to the simple fact that the concept of modernity did not appear in that period of time. The transition from the *ancient regime* to modernity will be discussed in chapter three together with an elaboration on the effects of this transformation on the formation of totalitarian thought.

With respect to authoritarianism however, a few basic concepts need to be elaborated upon for if we analyze any system of political organization a few key concepts serve to illustrate its anatomy. And since Arendt's work takes up a central position in this chapter I will employ the methodology she set out in some of her work.[120] Arendt rightfully claimed that it is imperative to distinguish between these concepts because they all

> refer to distinct, different phenomena and would hardly exist unless they did [..] To use them as synonyms not only indicates a certain deafness to linguistic meanings, which would be serious enough, but it has also resulted in a kind of blindness to the realities they correspond to.[121]

In order to clarify the distinctions between these terms I will adhere to the distinction Arendt makes and which is as follows:

Power refers to the ability to act in concert with others. Before one has power and is able to direct the actions of others, one has to have been *empowered* 'by a certain number of people to act in their name'.

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[120] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York,: Viking Press, 1963)., ———, *On Violence* (New York,: Harcourt, 1970), ———, *The Human Condition*, Charles R. Walgreen Foundation Lectures ([Chicago]: University of Chicago Press, 1958).
[121] Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 43.

Strength, unlike power refers to an individual instead of a collective quality. "It is the property inherent in a person or object and belongs to its character, which may prove itself in relation to other things or persons, but is essentially independent of them".

Force is often used a synonym of violence or an illegitimate exercise of strength of one individual over another *i.e.* 'to force someone'. Arendt reserves the use of the term force strictly to the forces of nature or the force of circumstances such as the force of social movements. Unlike power or violence, force has no cognitive component.

Violence is the opposite of power. Where violence exists power is absent and vice versa. Violence is the instrument by which strength is multiplied until " in the last stage of their development, they can substitute for it". [122] Violence can be used to multiply one's strength, or the strength of one's convictions, to such a degree that others would willingly agree to empower you to act in their name. As such power is not something that rests exclusively on the free consent of others; it can also be derived from the application of violence. The successful application of violence ends in the attainment of power. Hence the remark that power and violence are mutually exclusive.

Authority needs neither persuasion nor coercion. What is required however is unquestioning recognition by those who are asked to obey. The child that obeys the father or the catholic that obeys the church both recognize the authority of this institute without question.[123]

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[122] Ibid.

[123] Arendt, *On Violence*, pp. 43-46.

These concepts shall be used for the remainder of this book. Insofar as the definitions of other authors or their use of these concepts divert, I shall reinterpret them in the light of Arendt's definitions.[124]

Communism and the normative philosophical theory of Claude Lefort

The second author relating to chapter five is Claude Lefort. Like Hannah Arendt, Lefort's focus lies not on the empirical level but on the normative philosophical level. A number of his main works have been combined in the book 'The political forms of modern society: bureaucracy, democracy, totalitarianism'.[125] Unlike Arendt, Lefort focuses mainly on the totalitarian experience in the communist USSR and specifically the epoch of Stalin's rule. In his analyses, Lefort

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[124] To put all of this in perspective I will use an example. If we take the Chinese '*Tienanmen*' student revolts of 1989 we can describe it along the following lines: The wish for democracy amongst the revolting students can on the one hand be expressed as the accumulated *strengths* of their convictions and on the other hand as a decrease in the *authority* of the Chinese communist party in the eyes of the protestors. If these students can put their respective differences of opinion, which necessarily exist in all communities of individuals aside, then their potential to act in concert can be actualized. This usually happens along the lines of hierarchical organization ending in the appointment of a leader or leadership core who speak for those who constitute the movement. The later has thus been *empowered* by the followers to act in their name. By acting in concert these students have consolidated their individual strengths in a movement which has thus become a centre of political *power.* Since the Chinese government was not willing to acknowledge the wishes of the student movement and it could not rely on *authority* to end the protest, they necessarily had to exert their accumulated strength through *violence*. In the end the clash was between the collective strength of the student movement and the collective strength of the Chinese government. The unwillingness of the students to continue their protest after the violent crackdown of the government rests not on their respect for the authority of the government but on the violent coercion to agree to its power.
[125] Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*.

emphasizes the relationship between the realms of power, knowledge and law, the role of the party and its bureaucracy in maintaining and effectuating the totalitarian policies, the symbolic representation of the people and power as one, and the contrasting indeterminacy of democracies. The benefit of including Lefort's analysis in this chapter lies in the fact that he is able to describe, much in the same way, and using much of the same vocabulary that Arendt uses, the totalitarian phenomenon in an area that Arendt to an extent left untouched, namely the USSR and the developments after the death of Stalin. Whereas the focus of Arendt's work is on totalitarian movements at the height of their power, Lefort continues to describe them after they have reached their peak and from a slightly different point view.

The Gnostic speculation as a substitute-religion in Eric Voegelin's analysis of totalitarianism

The works of Eric Voegelin are wide and varied but the main works which I will be using for this research are his works '*Science, Politics and Gnosticism*', '*Political religions*' and '*ersatz religionen*'.[126] At the heart of Voegelin's theories on totalitarianism lies the view that the totalitarian phenomenon is akin to a religion but, unlike religion, is wholly immanent. In a process of fabricating a new worldview, a new *order of being*, man has eliminated the divine and the metaphysical from the human experience. In its place stands an ideology, which is the result of the 'Gnostic's search for order' and which replaces theology as the source of what Claude Lefort would term as the source of power, law and knowledge.

> [..] when god is invisible behind the world, the contents of the world will become new gods, when the symbols of transcendent religiosity are banned, new symbols develop from the inner-worldly language of science to take their

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[126] All these works can be found in Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*.

place".[127] [..] Now the link to God in the perfect inner-worldly
symbolism is severed and replaced by the community itself as
the source of legitimation of the collective person.[128]

When one studies secular totalitarian movements one is struck by two
main phenomena. First of all, despite its professed rejection of
religion, the totalitarian movements rely upon concepts which have
their basis in religion. This applies both to their modes of organization
and representation as it does to the way in which their ideology is
formulated. The Gnostic, which is the founder of the totalitarian
ideology, sees the world as being in chaos and despair. This chaos is
explained as a lack of proper organization. The Gnostic argues that if
only the world were better organized then all of the ailments of the
current mode of existence would disappear. It is thus the task of the
Gnostic to find this formula for self and world salvation, and apply it
to mankind which takes on the role of the raw material out of which
Utopia must be built. In religious terms one can equate the
observation of chaos to the observation of man being thrown out of
Eden. The reason for this is due to man's own actions and in order for
man to return to the Garden of Eden, he will need to fabricate a new
order of being along the lines of the ideology. The totalitarian
movement, to use an analogy, is the Sheppard that brings the masses
back into the Garden of Eden via the pathway of the formula for self
and world salvation, which is defined by the ideology. Man as an
individual has very little choice in the matter since the ideology, in
Arendt's terms, is the law of nature or history itself. One cannot
debate it; one can only submit freely to it or be forced to submit to it.
In a reference to Robespierre one can say that the raison d'être of the
totalitarian movement is thus to force men to be free. This close

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[127] Ibid., p. 60. Voegelin uses the terms 'inner-worldly religion', 'ersatz-
religionen' and 'political-religions' to indicate this process. Interestingly
enough when one reads the works of early fascists and especially totalitarian
ideologues, the similarity between their language and religious language is
striking. I will return to this in chapter five. Ibid., p. 60.
[128] Ibid., p. 64.

relation between totalitarianism and religion make the approach of Voegelin exceptionally suited for the study of Islamist movements.

The second feature of totalitarianism which features prominently in the work of Eric Voegelin is that it operates in much the same way as cults do.[129] In terms of how they draw people into the cult, the psychological pressures and mechanisms they apply to their followers and their emphasis on sacrificing the individual to the greater good through collective action, totalitarian movements are most akin to this phenomenon. This too has close relations to the way in which certain religions operate and for this reason too, the model of Eric Voegelin has great value in analyzing Islamist movements.

A last and most important point about Voegelin is that whilst he offers a normative analyses, his theory is not devoid of practical means by which to evaluate whether or not a certain ideology and ideological movement is totalitarian or not. Both Lefort and Arendt would in principle suffice to explain the totalitarian phenomenon, but Voegelin offers some practical criteria with which to verify some elements of the normative theories. Through a six point analysis of the Gnostic's search for order, Voegelin offers us an empirical and normative model with which we can analyze whether or not a certain thought process equates to a totalitarian ideology. Such an ideology, as I will show, lies at the heart of the theories of Arendt and Lefort but lacks clear criteria. This will all become clear in the next chapters and conclusion of this part of the study of course, but for the sake of clarity I must make it clear that the blueprint I aim to develop for the study of potentially totalitarian movements culminates in the use of the definition put forth by Arendt, which is elucidated by Voegelin and Lefort, and which finds its practical expression in Voegelin's schematic of the Gnostic speculation. This combined approach will thus result in

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[129] Reinhard W. Sonnenschmidt, "Die Politischen Implikationen Des Religiösen in Den Neuen Religiösen Bewegungen," in *Der Begriff Der Religion. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, ed. Manfred Brocker Mathias Hildebrandt (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008).

a model with which the second part of the book will analyze Islamist movement's potential totalitarian character.