

CHAPTER ONE

Conceptualizing Islamist Movement Change

ON JUNE 30, 2012, Muhammad Mursi, a leader in the Muslim Brotherhood, was sworn in as Egypt's new president. To longtime observers of politics in the region, the event felt surreal. An Islamist organization that had spent most of its existence denied legal status and subject to the depredations of a hostile authoritarian state was now in charge of the very apparatus once used to repress it. And it had reached those heights not by way of coup or revolution but through the ballot box.

Just eighteen months earlier, the idea of a Brotherhood president of Egypt was so far-fetched as to be laughable. The Mubarak regime appeared too deeply entrenched and the Egyptian people too afraid of the security police and too exhausted by daily struggles to survive to imagine a breakthrough occurring any time soon. Yet on January 25, 2011, a massive uprising broke out in cities and towns across the country, and eighteen days later, after thirty years in power, President Mubarak was forced to step down.

The Egyptian uprising was part of a seismic wave of protest that began in Tunisia and rapidly spread to other Arab states. Millions of men, women, and children poured into the streets to demand their freedom, and Middle East experts, as surprised by the protests as everyone else, struggled to explain why what were considered some of the region's most durable regimes had proven more fragile than anyone had thought.

The "Arab Spring" has set a new dynamic in motion in a region long afflicted by political stagnation. Though the contours of the region's new landscape are still taking shape, one trend is clear: the power of mainstream Islamist groups is on the rise. As the largest, most popular, and best-organized sector of the opposition in most Arab states before the protests erupted, Islamist groups were uniquely positioned to ride the openings that occurred in their wake. In Tunisia and Egypt, Islamist parties emerged as the resounding victors in parliamentary elections, and in Egypt, a Brotherhood career politician was elected president. Even in countries where longstanding rulers retained power, Islamists gained

ground. For example, in Morocco constitutional reforms enacted after the Arab Spring prompted King Muhammad VI to appoint the head of the Islamist-oriented Justice and Development Party, the largest group in parliament, as prime minister.

The emergence of Islamist actors as a leading force in Arab politics has triggered competing reactions in the region and around the globe. While some have witnessed this development with equanimity, others have reacted with consternation and dismay. Such different reactions reflect the fact that the motives of such actors are hard to fathom. The information we have about Islamist groups is sketchy and incomplete, and the observations we have to go on are subject to conflicting interpretations. As a result, the broader implications of the Islamist surge, including its impact on the future of democratic governance, economic development, peace, and stability in the region, are open to dispute.

Perhaps the central issue is whether and to what extent contemporary Islamist groups have moved away from the illiberal features that characterized them in the past, including their support of violence, their rejection of democracy as an "alien" system imported from the West, and their calls for the application of Shari'a, or Islamic law, based on a conservative reading of Islam's sacred texts and juristic precedents. While Islamist leaders have welcomed and, indeed, actively supported recent democratic reforms, skeptics contend that they do not support democracy as an end in itself but as the first step toward establishing a system governed by the laws of God as they define them. From this perspective, the greater the influence of Islamist groups in the Arab world, the dimmer the region's prospects for democracy and freedom. Others, by contrast, claim that mainstream Islamist groups that once rejected democracy have become some of its greatest proponents and that the region's nascent transitions to democracy will hinge on their support.

The main objective of this book is to challenge these and other sweeping generalizations. Taking aim at much of what has been written about the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and other Arab Islamist groups in recent years, I argue that they cannot be described as "for" or "against" democracy, any more than they can be characterized as "moderate" or "extremist." First, by "breaking into the black box" of Islamist movement organizations and exposing the factional divisions and debates within them, I show that they are not monolithic entities whose members think and act in lockstep. Second, while demonstrating that Islamist groups have undergone an important evolution, I show that it has not been a linear, unidimensional progression toward greater "moderation." Rather, such groups have traced a path marked by profound inconsistencies and contradictions, yielding agendas in which newly embraced themes of freedom and democracy coexist uneasily with illiberal religious concepts carried over from the past. Third, I highlight the complex motivations of Islamist actors and demonstrate that recent shifts in their rhetoric and behavior cannot be attributed to a single chain of cause and effect. I argue

that such shifts bear the imprint of strategic and ideational processes of change occurring simultaneously.

To gain leverage on the scope and limits of Islamist movement change, as well as its underlying causes and dynamics, I examine the trajectories of mainstream Sunni revivalist movement organizations in four Arab states. The main contribution of the book is a finely grained analysis of the evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt from its founding in 1928 to the inauguration of Muhammad Mursi as president in 2012. My analysis draws on insights and observations from twenty-two years of research on the Brotherhood, beginning with the fieldwork I conducted in 1990 and 1991 for my first book, *Mobilizing Islam* (2002), and including research conducted specifically for this project during multiple trips to the region between 2004 and 2012. Rather than treat the Brotherhood as a unitary actor, this book highlights ongoing disagreements within the organization over ideology and strategy as well as the shifting power balance among its competing factions. In so doing, it endeavors to explain why the Brotherhood opted for one path over another at various points in the past and to illuminate how such developments have shaped its priorities today.

Toward the end of the book, I compare the trajectory of the Egyptian Brotherhood to those of its counterparts in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco, highlighting the features they share as well as those that set them apart. In Jordan and Kuwait, I focus on regional offshoots of the Brotherhood, as well as their political affiliates, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in Jordan and the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) in Kuwait. In Morocco, I focus on the Movement of Unity and Reform (MUR) and its political arm, the Justice and Development Party (Parti de Justice et Développement, or PJD). While formally independent of the Brotherhood's network, the MUR and the PJD were historically influenced by the Brotherhood's ideas and institutional arrangements and retain a close "family resemblance" to their Brotherhood counterparts.

To be clear, the four cases chosen for inclusion in this book cannot be said to represent the wider universe of Islamist movement groups and organizations around the globe, or even within the Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa. All of the groups covered in this study are situated within the movement of Sunni revivalist Islam. They also have focused primarily on issues of domestic social and political reform, committed themselves to a path of nonviolence in pursuit of their objectives, and accrued long records of participating in electoral politics. Such characteristics distinguish them from Shi'ite Islamist groups and parties, "national resistance" movements like Hamas (Sunni) and Hizbollah (Shi'ite), and militant Islamist groups engaged in a holy war or jihad against incumbent rulers and their foreign patrons, such as al-Qa'ida and its regional affiliates. They also distinguish them from Islamist movement organizations such as al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan (Justice and Charity) in Morocco that have chosen to boycott the formal political system. Likewise, such characteristics set them apart from Salafi Islamist groups that engage in grassroots religious outreach

but, except in Kuwait, have not until recently participated in electoral contests for political power.

The four Islamist groups included in this study hence constitute a distinctive subset within the broader matrix of groups and movements that define their identities and objectives in Islamic terms. My objective is not to articulate a general set of propositions that apply to all Islamist groups. Rather, it is to capture the impact of political participation on four groups that started out with similar agendas and sought to pursue them under roughly similar conditions: as nonviolent opposition groups situated within systems of authoritarian rule.

In all four of the countries under study, Islamist groups took advantage of regime experiments with political liberalization in the 1980s and 1990s by expanding their participation in electoral politics. Participating in the political systems of "un-Islamic" regimes was intended to advance such groups' partisan objectives, but it triggered fundamental changes in the Islamic movement itself. The aim of this book is to specify the changes that have occurred, the causal processes that produced them, and the impact they will have on Arab politics and society. My hope is that by offering new leverage on such issues the book will make a significant contribution to the fields of Middle East studies and comparative politics, as well as to the study of social movements and contentious politics more generally.

Yet as those who have worked the longest and thought the hardest about such matters are often the first to admit, the effects of participation on the goals and strategies of Islamist opposition groups are extraordinarily difficult to pin down. In recent years, a number of Middle East scholars have begun to explore the impact of political participation on Islamist movement organizations, goals, and strategies. A pathbreaking work in this regard is Jillian Schwedler's *Faith in Moderation* (2006), which traced the divergent effects of participation on Islamist groups in Jordan and Yemen. Other scholars who have made noteworthy contributions to the analysis of Islamist participation within and across countries in the Middle East and North Africa (including the non-Arab states of Turkey and Iran) include Asef Bayat, Michelle Browsers, Nathan Brown, Janine Clark, Mona El-Ghobashy, 'Amr Hamzawy, Quinn Mecham, Curtis Ryan, Samer Shehata, Joshua Stacher, Gunes Murat Tezcur, Eva Wegner, and Michael Willis. In order to gain traction on such issues, some Middle East scholars, myself included, have turned to the work of Przeworski and Sprague (1988) and Kalyvas (1996) on the democratic integration of socialist and Catholic parties in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century western Europe and of Share (1985), Huntington (1991), Mainwaring (1992), and others on the deradicalization of leftist parties and movements during "third wave" democratic transitions in southern Europe and Latin America. Although they differ in their particulars, such studies generally frame the ideological and behavioral moderation of former radicals as a response to incentives generated by the democratic (or democratizing) environments in which they are embedded. For example, so-

cialist parties renounced violence and diluted their calls for revolutionary change in order to gain the acceptance of erstwhile rivals, achieve legal status, and appeal to wider sectors of the electorate. Hence the prime movers in such accounts are considerations of strategic advantage, which prompted "rational" movement actors to adapt their goals and methods to changing political opportunities and constraints.

Yet the application of causal models derived from Western scenarios to the analysis of contemporary Islamist groups is hardly a straightforward endeavor. First, it is unclear whether groups that seek to establish a political system based on God's instructions for humankind are analogous to leftist parties, or even to Catholic parties that have a religious foundation but whose platforms contain nothing akin to the call for the application of a comprehensive system of divine law. Second, the participation of Islamist groups during the time frame in question occurred within the context of stable "semi-authoritarian" regimes, not within established democracies or during turbulent and open-ended periods of regime change. Finally, the resonance of Islam, the weakness of rival secular ideologies, and the limited—and largely disappointing—record of previous experiments in democracy in the Arab world have arguably lessened the pressures facing Islamist groups to dilute their agendas in order to appeal to wider sectors of the electorate. Indeed, the leaders of mainstream Islamist groups routinely contend that their agendas are already supported by a majority of the public at large.

Equally if not more vexing for those seeking to capture the effects of participation on Islamist groups in the Arab world is the fact that key terms in the "participation-moderation" thesis remain woefully underspecified. Indeed, a review of the literature on the subject reveals a striking lack of consensus on the definition of the outcome(s) to be explained, the conditions under which they occur, and the causal processes presumed to be at play. Let me describe each of these areas of contention and briefly explain how I will approach them in this book.

CHARACTERIZING ISLAMIST MOVEMENT CHANGE

Much of the literature on contemporary Islamist groups seeks to identify whether and how their participation in the domain of formal politics has contributed to the "moderation" of their goals and strategies. Yet the concept of "moderation" suffers from a high degree of imprecision. First and most obvious, it can refer to both an end state and a process. Second, as a relative rather than an absolute concept, it begs the question, "Moderate in comparison to what?" Third, it may refer to changes in behavior, such as a renunciation of violence, and/or to changes in broader worldviews, goals, and values, such as a growing commitment to freedom of expression or women's rights. Fourth, the term can

be applied to changes both at the level of individual actors and at the level of the complex organizations of which they are a part. Yet when used as a descriptor of an Islamist organization as a whole (the Muslim Brotherhood is or is not “moderate”) or to capture change over time in an organization’s rhetoric and behavior (the Muslim Brotherhood is or is not “moderating”), it may gloss over some important vectors of internal differentiation. First, the term implies an overarching, internally consistent, and linear process of behavioral or ideological change when in fact an Islamist group may “moderate” its official rhetoric and practice in some areas while retaining, or even radicalizing, them in others.¹ Second, treating Islamist organizations as unitary actors entails the risk of exaggerating the extent of the ideological and behavior uniformity within them—that is, of failing to discern instances in which the beliefs and practices of some individuals or factions of a group have changed while those of others have not.

Rather than aiming to determine whether the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and similar groups are “moderating,” I take a more open-ended approach to the study of Islamist movement change. That is, I seek to capture the effects of participation on Islamist groups without assuming a priori that such change is likely to assume a particular form or direction. Like many other Middle East scholars, I am particularly interested in the type of changes implied by the concept of “moderation.” But rather than employ “moderation” as a shorthand, I disaggregate the concept and attempt to specify the multiple dimensions of change it encompasses while leaving open the question of whether such changes have in fact occurred. Below I summarize the dimensions of primary interest.

To begin, I consider whether Islamist groups have renounced violence and come to support the democratic alternation of power, a system in which leaders are chosen through free and fair elections. Further, I seek to determine whether and to what extent Islamist groups as a whole—or some individuals and factions within them—have adjusted their broader worldviews, values, and beliefs along four dimensions. First is whether they have moved toward a more relativistic approach to religion—that is, they have begun to frame their interpretation of Islam as one among many—as opposed to equating that interpretation with Islam itself. Second is whether they have moved toward greater toleration of the expression of values and perspectives that conflict with their own, not only in the domain of politics but also in the spheres of art, literature, film, and scholarship. Third is whether they have deepened their commitment to the legal guarantee of individual rights and freedoms, including the right to make life choices (with respect to styles of dress, forms of recreation, social interactions, and sexual conduct) that violate Islamic mandates as they define them. Fourth is the extent to which they have embraced the principle of equal citizenship rights, both for Muslims and non-Muslims and for men and women, with the latter extending to support for gender equality in the “private” domains of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. What should be amply clear is that such ideo-

logical changes go far beyond support for the procedural aspects of democracy and the principle of majority rule. What may be less obvious is that they do not necessarily entail or require a shift from a religious frame of reference to a secular one, though they do require a fundamental break with the letter and spirit of Shari’a rulings inherited from the past.

In addition to the ideational dimensions of Islamist movement change, the book investigates changes in the relationships of Islamist groups with other social and political forces, as well as the types of issues and activities to which they devote their time, energy, and resources. Further, to the extent that available information permits, it examines changes in their institutional norms and decision-making processes. At issue here is whether and to what extent Islamist groups are becoming more transparent, rule based, and internally democratic, as well as more accommodating of members with different views and opinions, including those advocating the reform of group norms and practices.

One might argue that a focus on the “progressive” dimensions of movement change reflects a preference for the kinds of values and institutions associated with liberal democratic systems in the West. That is, whether we define the outcome as “moderation” or as a series of discrete changes, as I propose instead, the questions animating my research exhibit a normative slant. I fully concede that the types of changes described above are consistent with my own culturally specific values and preferences. Yet I would argue that no social science research is in fact “value free” and that our normative preferences do not preempt a sober-minded analysis of real-world trends, as long as we consciously guard against the temptation to exaggerate features that conform with our preferences and to ignore, discount, or attempt to explain away those that do not.

As noted earlier, whether or not progressive changes are occurring in Islamist worldviews, values and practices can be analyzed at the level of individuals, at the level of organizations, or both. With this in mind, I attempt to distinguish between individual and collective processes of change and address the crucial problem of aggregation—of whether, when, and how ideological innovation spreads from the level of individuals or subsets of individuals to the broader organizations in which they are embedded. One of the central contentions of this book is that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and its analogues in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco are large umbrella organizations encompassing individuals and factions with different and at times conflicting worldviews, values, and opinions. Moreover, such variation cannot be neatly captured by a single ideological spectrum, with “hard-liners” on one end and “moderates” on the other, because the composition of internal alignments hinges on the issue at hand. Hence it is important to examine when and why certain issues have emerged as a focus of internal contention and debate. In particular, we need to assess whether those who advocate progressive changes in the historic agendas and practices of Islamist groups have managed to acquire the influence and authority to shape group policy over the objections of their detractors. This in turn

requires greater attention to the balance of power among competing factions within Islamist groups and the conditions under which it may shift over time.

DISAGGREGATING PARTICIPATION

Another central problem in the literature on the “participation-moderation linkage” is that the concept of “participation” is underspecified and hence is ill equipped to provide a conceptual anchor for the analysis of Islamist movement change. In general terms, “participation” refers to the involvement of movement organizations and parties in competitive elections for parliament and, in some cases, for positions in local government councils, student unions, faculty clubs, and professional syndicates. *Yet which dimension(s) of participation act as triggers of movement change—and how—remain unclear.* First, there is the question of whether participation under authoritarian constraints differs in its overall effects from participation in established or emerging democracies. Second, regardless of the institutional context, “participation” arguably encompasses several discrete processes at once. For example, it entails a party or movement organization running candidates in elections and, if they secure enough votes, the ascent of their members to positions of public office, necessitating decisions about how they will respond to the needs and concerns of their constituents, including those who did not vote for them and, in some cases, actively oppose their agendas. In addition, participation often propels movement actors into sustained interaction with regime officials, security personnel, and the leaders of other political parties, movement organizations, and civil society groups, as well as domestic and international media outlets. Since these different dimensions of participation may be presumed to have different effects, lumping them all together under a single rubric is problematic. Hence we need to disaggregate the concept of “participation” and investigate how the different processes it encompasses have shaped the trajectories of Islamist opposition groups in the Arab world.

THE CAUSAL MECHANISMS OF ISLAMIST MOVEMENT CHANGE

If the key terms in the “participation-moderation” thesis require greater theoretic specification, so too does the presumed causal relationship between them. One of the central propositions advanced by Prezeworski and Sprague, Mainwaring, Huntington, Kalyvas, and others is that even ideologically motivated individuals and organizations are apt to adjust their rhetoric and behavior to advance their partisan interests. That is, the leaders of socialist and Catholic parties can be portrayed as “rational actors” responsive to the incentives for “moderation” generated by their surrounding democratic (or democratizing)

environments. Hence, for example, socialist party leaders renounced violence and postponed or abandoned their call for a radical restructuring of the foundations of economic and political power in “bourgeois” democracies in order to avoid repression, gain legal recognition, and appeal to wider sectors of the electorate. The deradicalization of party goals and strategies thus occurred in the service of maximizing the party’s influence and power. A key feature of this causal model is that adjustments in ideology are characterized as guided by, and ultimately subordinate to, considerations of strategic advantage. Conspicuously missing is any serious effort to identify a set of factors that might prompt deeper changes in radical actors’ underlying worldviews, orientations, and beliefs, other than to frame such changes as a natural outcome of “democratic habituation,” that is, a gradual adaptation to the norms and values of the political systems in which they are embedded.

The question of whether rational actor models offer a persuasive account of movement deradicalization in the West exceeds the scope of this study. But such models strike me as too simplistic and deterministic to fully capture the dynamics of Islamist movement change. First, the contention that Islamist actors adjust their rhetoric and behavior to maximize group interests hinges on the assumption that such interests are ranked within a well-defined and stable hierarchy accessible to the external observer, enabling him or her to predict their response to environmental cues with a high degree of certainty. This becomes problematic if, as I suggest is the case, Islamist actors and organizations can (and often do) pursue diverse objectives simultaneously and the priority they attach to any one of them is open to internal debate and subject to change over time. Hence, even if the goals and interests of Islamist actors are shaped by the institutional parameters within which they operate, it is difficult to determine a priori how they will respond to a given set of institutional cues. This is particularly the case when Islamist actors and organizations are simultaneously attempting to advance their long-term objectives, maintain the support of their mass base, and effectively manage their relationships with regime authorities and rival social and political forces. In such instances, the costs and benefits associated with any given course of action are susceptible to diverse interpretations—not just by external observers but by Islamist actors themselves.

BEYOND STRATEGIC ADAPTATION

Characterizing Islamist movement change as a process of strategic adaptation is useful but incomplete because it does not address the potentially transformative effects of participation on the ideological commitments of Islamist actors and, in particular, on how the broader purposes of the Islamist movement should be defined. One reason the ideational dimensions of Islamist movement change remain underexplored is that it is extraordinarily difficult to confirm them. em-

pirically. For example, what explains the dramatic shift in the discourse of Islamist groups on democracy from its depiction as an alien system imported from the West to a type of political system mandated by Islam itself? The problem is that this shift is susceptible to conflicting interpretations, each of which implies a different set of causal triggers and dynamics. Here I highlight the distinctive features of these different causal models and explain why I find some of them more persuasive than others.

From one perspective, the rhetoric and behavior of Islamist groups are open to change, but the fundamental character of the movement is not. As characterized by those with this outlook, Islamists are rational, even Machiavellian actors who routinely and systematically adjust their tactics in whatever way they deem necessary to achieve a fixed set of higher goals—namely, to impose a system based on the traditional rulings of Shari'a, or Islamic law. Hence their statements in favor of democracy, pluralism, and equal citizenship rights can be dismissed as a form of strategic posturing, designed to mask their radical intentions behind a moderate veneer. Likewise, Islamist groups' support for democratic procedures can be discounted as purely self-serving, since such procedures offer them a means to convert their mass support into political power. Indeed, widespread doubts and suspicions about the ulterior motives of Islamist leaders have caused them to be routinely accused of practicing *taqiyya* (dissimulation, a term borrowed into mainstream Arab discourse from Shi'ite Islam)—that is, of engaging in a prolonged, deliberate, and self-conscious effort to deceive the wider public. Though this perspective offers a simple and coherent explanation of Islamist movement change, it is nearly impossible to falsify, since any pro-democratic statements and actions by Islamist actors can be dismissed out of hand as strategically motivated, no matter how consistently they express such views or how intense the approbation they incur as a result. Further, the idea that recent shifts in Islamist movement rhetoric, strategy, and organization, involving thousands of individuals over more than twenty years, are the result of some elaborate ruse strikes me as highly implausible given the enormous coordination problems that such a conspiracy would inevitably entail. Indeed, as I will demonstrate in the chapters to come, the portrayal of mainstream Islamist actors as single-mindedly bent on seizing power to achieve a set of fixed goals is a gross oversimplification—indeed a caricature—that cannot survive close empirical scrutiny.

That said, it is nevertheless plausible that shifts in the rhetoric and behavior of Islamist actors and organizations are driven by considerations of group advantage. Hence a second and to my mind more persuasive strategic explanation of Islamist movement change posits that Islamist groups have come to place a greater emphasis on democracy and the expansion of public freedoms not for the purpose of deception but out of a realization that such reforms align with their group interests. As opposition groups in authoritarian settings, Islamist groups would benefit directly from a lifting of restrictions on freedom of expression

and assembly and the establishment of stricter constitutional limits on state power. Further, in countries where the mobilizing power of Islamist groups vastly exceeds that of their secular counterparts, they are likely to perform well in free and fair elections. Hence they have a powerful vested interest in the process of democratic reform.

As I will demonstrate in the chapters to come, the dynamics of Islamist movement change in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco do in fact conform to a strategic logic, at least in part. In particular, considerations of short-term political advantage—the desire to gain (and preserve) a legal foothold in the political system, avoid repression, and gain social acceptance—have encouraged Islamist groups to exercise pragmatic self-restraint in the domains of both rhetoric and practice. For example, such considerations have led Islamist groups to soft-pedal their calls for Shari'a rule by postponing it far into the future and/or by redefining it as the application of a general set of principles rather than equating it with the imposition of traditional rulings inherited from the past. In addition, Islamist groups have limited their participation in competitive elections to avoid too large a margin of victory. Further, they have allied with secular parties and organizations to amplify pressure for democratic reform.

Yet a strategic account of Islamist movement change takes us only so far. This is because it fails to acknowledge and explore the conditions under which the ideological commitments—as well as the strategic interests—of Islamist actors are open to change over time.

The dominance of rational actor models of behavior in the field of political science has diverted attention away from the role of values and ideas—as opposed to interests—as a basis for political action. Yet in recent years a promising field of study has emerged as part of the “constructivist” turn in international relations theory, which focuses on how the preferences of political actors are formed and how and why they change over time. These questions are typically bracketed by rational choice theorists, who tend to treat such preferences as given.² Constructivist scholars emphasize that the preferences of individual actors are socially constructed through their interactions with others within specific institutional and cultural environments.³ Further, unlike strict rational choice theory, which presumes that actors seek, always and everywhere, to maximize their interests, constructivists emphasize the role of identities, values, and beliefs as key drivers of political action. In so doing, they highlight the possibility that changes in the rhetoric and behavior of, say, a state official or an opposition activist may stem from unconscious or conscious change in his/her values and beliefs.⁴

Constructivist scholars identify two distinct causal processes that can produce such change. First, the sustained participation of political actors in new institutional settings can trigger a reflexive and unconscious process of socialization variously described in the literature as “role playing,” “mimicking,” “copying,” and “emulating” prescribed norms of behavior.⁵ When political ac-

tors enter a new institutional environment, they are under pressure to conform with its established rules of speech and conduct. And once they adapt to such expectations, they must justify this adaptation to themselves and others. As a result, "they may later adapt their preferences to these justifications, in this way reducing cognitive dissonance."⁶ *Changes in the behavior of political actors, iterated over time, may thus produce change in their beliefs.* As Zürn and Checkel have argued, "Acting in accordance with role expectations may lead to the internalization of these expectations,"⁷ a situation in which, to borrow an elegant turn of phrase from Suzanne Hoerber Rudolph, "the mask becomes the face."⁸ As Islamist actors have assumed new roles and responsibilities, it can be theorized that they have developed new competencies and skills and adapted their behavior to the norms and expectations of the institutions of which they are a part. As a result, the type of issues they focus on, and the ways they seek to address them, may diverge considerably from their original goals and strategies.

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND VALUE-CHANGE

Islamist movement change can be conceptualized as entailing another set of causal processes that go beyond strategic adaptation. As constructivist scholars observe, new forms of political engagement can also produce self-conscious shifts in the commitments of political actors as a result of new experiences and/or exposure to new information and ideas.⁹ Checkel and his colleagues focused on changes in the preferences of national politicians resulting from processes of deliberation and persuasion within the institutions of the European Union, but this process of value-change can be discerned among other types of actors in other settings as well. For example, studies by Bermeo, Roberts, and McCoy on the evolution of the radical left during "third wave" democratic transitions in southern Europe and Latin America suggest that the views of socialist leaders were fundamentally transformed by their close interactions with leaders of other groups in exile or in prison. Such interactions triggered a process of soul-searching and a critical reexamination of the rigid ideological certainties that had fueled their calls for revolution in the past.¹⁰ Given that the leaders of Islamist groups are more numerous, the institutional environments within which they operate are more diffuse, and the interactions that might exert an influence on their preferences have taken place over a longer period of time, the chains of cause and effect are less tightly connected and therefore more difficult to verify. Nevertheless, it is worth investigating how the experiences gained by Islamist actors as participants in the formal political system—including their involvement in intensive forms of dialogue, deliberation, and cooperation with figures outside the Islamist movement—have affected their values and beliefs. As I will argue in the chapters to come, the participation of Islamist groups in the political process not only generated new strategic interests but also prompted inter-

nal debates about their ultimate goals and purposes. In recent decades, Islamist actors have begun to break out of the insular networks of movement politics and interact on a regular basis with government officials and leaders of other civil and political groups. In addition, they have been sought out by international media outlets, as well as by foreign researchers, party and NGO activists, and even, in some instances, officials of foreign governments. Through such contacts, Islamist leaders have been more intensively exposed to the global discourse on democracy and human rights as well as to local arguments in favor of comprehensive democratic reform. Among some Islamist leaders, such exposure increased the resonance of new and more progressive readings of Islam. The availability of alternative interpretive frameworks, articulated by independent Islamist thinkers with considerable religious authority, facilitated the "hybridization" of democratic values or their re-articulation in a local idiom.¹¹ For the Islamist actors in question, the internalization of new and more progressive interpretations of Islam was not the result of a single discrete event but the cumulative effect of hundreds, if not thousands, of conversations, debates, and arguments in the public domain over many years. Islamist leaders often describe the impact of these experiences on their outlook as a holistic, profound, and emotional-affective journey through which "a whole new world opened up" and their outlook changed "180 degrees." Moreover, such individual trajectories eventually set a wider evolution in motion, as Islamist leaders who were gradually transformed by their experience became proponents of change in the Islamist movement itself.

Indeed, one of the central objectives of this book is to highlight the emergence of a new "reformist" (*islahi*) trend within Arab Islamist opposition groups, which refers here not to the reform of society and state but the reform of the self (*al-islah al-dhati*) or what we might translate into English as "auto-reform." In recent years leaders affiliated with this trend have called for the progressive revision of Islamist groups' traditional positions on such key issues as the scope for political and intellectual pluralism, the rights of women and non-Muslims, and relations with the West. In addition, they have criticized their "culture of obedience," their lack of routinized procedures for selecting leaders and setting policy, and their historic isolation from other forces in society. Finally, though still committed to the ultimate goal of establishing a political system based on Shari'a, Islamists affiliated with the "reformist" trend have begun to articulate a different vision of what this would mean in practice. In particular, they have developed a new Islamist agenda, which—in sharp contrast to the totalizing ambitions of Islamist groups in the past—endorses strict limits on the exercise of state power and the legal protection of a broad range of civil and political rights.

In sum, the emergence of the "reformist" trend has triggered new debates within Islamist circles. Such debates, which have typically occurred behind closed doors in settings removed from public scrutiny, have taken the form of

puzzling, arguing, and deliberating about the modern coordinates of Shari'a rule. And they show that not just the *means* but also the *ends* of the Sunni revivalist movement are open to change over time.

The process of value-change described above occurred first and foremost at the level of individual actors. This seemingly straightforward point has several important implications. First, owing to differences in the life histories, motivations, reasoning patterns, and emotions of Islamist actors, as well as in the positions they occupy within Islamist groups and the character and intensity of their engagement in the broader political system, we cannot expect them to have the same set of experiences or to react to them in the same way. As a result, it is virtually impossible to identify a general matrix of ideological and behavioral shifts that applies to the cadres of the Islamist movement as a whole. On the contrary, Islamist leaders within the same country, and even within the same group, have come to assume very different positions on such "meta-issues" as the definition of Shari'a rule, as well as on various policy matters of the day, such as whether a controversial film should be banned. Such incoherence exposes Islamist groups to the charge that they "speak in a double language," when in fact it reflects differences in their members' personalities, orientations, and beliefs.

Second, value-change proceeds from a particular ideological starting point shaped by the social and cultural milieu of revivalist Islam. It does not entail "wiping the slate clean" so much as a grafting of new ideas and sensibilities into preexisting ideological frameworks by recasting them in movement-valid terms. It should come as no surprise that this process of ideological "hybridization" is fraught with contradictions and ambiguities rather than yielding a seamless integration of the old and new. Third, the pace and scope of ideological revision under way within mainstream Islamist groups is uneven. The support of some Islamist leaders for suicide-bombing operations against civilians in Palestine and Iraq at the same time that they have begun to incorporate the concept of human rights into their agendas at home highlights the selective and contingent nature of value-change and the difficulty of framing it as a monolithic and unilinear process. Fourth, even the most ardent supporters of Islamist movement reform have not suddenly morphed into liberal democrats, nor should we expect them to do so any time soon. Such leaders remain committed to a vision of Islam as *din wa dawla*, both religion and state, and aspire to the eventual establishment of Islamic rule. But *what Islamic rule would mean in practice and how it should be pursued have become moving targets*, with new and more progressive interpretations of Islam being deployed by some members of the movement to challenge the profoundly illiberal conceptions of Islamic rule supported by others.

Finally, understanding value-change as a process of individual—rather than collective—transformation forces us to confront the crucial problem of aggregation. That is, we need to investigate whether, how, and under what conditions

ideological innovation spreads from the level of individual actors to the organizations and movements of which they are a part. More specifically, we need to identify whether and how the advocates of Islamist auto-reform are able to mobilize internal support for their agendas and acquire the capacity to influence the official programs and policies of Islamist groups. It is to these issues that we now turn.

THE SCOPE AND LIMITS OF ISLAMIST SELF-REFORM

The rise of an Islamist reformist trend in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Kuwait is an important phenomenon in its own right, but we cannot determine its significance without assessing its impact on the official policies and practices of mainstream Islamist groups. Do the advocates of movement reform remain "voices in the wilderness," blocked from positions of decision-making power within such organizations and lacking an institutional platform from which to reach their base? Or have they begun to coalesce into a coherent bloc with sufficient resources, networks, and moral authority to challenge the status and power of movement hard-liners? As I will demonstrate in the chapters to come, the influence of the "reformist" trend varies considerably from one Islamist group to another, having achieved the greatest influence, among the cases here, in the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in Morocco. Such variation reflects differences in the power of reformist leaders within the leadership of such groups, as well as in the receptivity of group members to their ideas.

The impact of the reformist trend on mainstream Arab Islamist political organizations is also shaped by domestic, regional, and global developments. In countries like Egypt and Jordan, the chronic vulnerability of Islamist groups to harassment and repression by authoritarian state establishments, as well as unresolved conflicts over territory and power in Palestine and Iraq, long bolstered appeals for Islamic movement unity and solidarity at the expense of calls for internal critique and reform. In addition, the departure of some of the most outspoken and charismatic proponents of reform from these groups diluted the influence of the reformist current within the "mother organizations" they left behind. Hence the impact of the reformist trend was more muted than it might have been under different circumstances.

THE VALUE OF COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The purpose of this book is to identify the scope and limits of Islamist movement change, as well as its underlying causes and dynamics, through a focus on the historical evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and similar Islamist groups in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco. My approach proceeds from the

premise that significant real-world trends and events are rarely, if ever, caused by a small set of factors or “variables” operating in regular and consistent ways across space and time. On the contrary, they are typically the result of the complex interaction of multiple causal factors, the effects of which are shaped by the context in which they are embedded, what Charles Ragin has described as “multiple conjunctural causation.”¹² Rooting my work within the broader tradition of comparative historical analysis in the social sciences, I trace the causal processes that have produced changes in Islamist rhetoric and behavior through a close, in-depth empirical investigation of a small number of cases. As Peter Hall observed, an argument about causes must specify the process by which they generate an outcome, and “the explanatory power of a theory rests, in large measure, on the specification of such a process.” Through “systematic process analysis,” Hall notes, “the causal theories to be tested are interrogated for the predictions they contain about how events will unfold. . . . The point is to see if the multiple actions and statements of the actors at each stage of the causal process are consistent with the image of the world implied by each theory.” According to Hall, the ultimate purpose of such analysis is to establish the superiority of one theory over others, based on the “congruence between predictions and observations.”¹³ Yet there are times when the observations we gather in the field are susceptible to a “double interpretation”; that is, they are consistent with conflicting causal explanations.¹⁴ In such cases, I would argue, we need to assess how closely a given sequence of events conforms to the logic of a particular causal process while remaining open to the possibility that a single outcome or set of outcomes might be generated by multiple causal processes operating at the same time.

Another distinctive feature of this book is that it traces the evolution of Islamist rhetoric, behavior, and practices over a long time frame. In Chapters 2 through 7 and in Chapter 9, I trace the development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt from its formation in 1928 to the election of Muhammad Mursi as president in 2012, an arc of more than eighty years. In Chapter 8, I examine the trajectories of mainstream Islamist opposition groups in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco beginning with the formation of their movement associations in the 1940s, 1960s, and 1970s, respectively. By starting at the beginning, so to speak, I am able to identify the core characteristics of Islamist organizations *before* they entered the fray of competitive electoral politics, establishing a clear baseline against which subsequent developments can be judged. Further, as Hall and other advocates and practitioners of comparative historical analysis have observed, tracking the development of groups and institutions over a long period enables us to investigate how decisions made in the distant past impact later outcomes. This is true whether we conceive of “path dependence” as a series of “critical junctures” at which a group or institution undergoes an abrupt and dramatic shift in course and/or as the cumulative impact of more incremental and continuous processes of change. Further, the close examination of

a single case or a limited number of cases over time enables us to establish tighter and better empirically supported relationships of cause and effect than is possible in large-*n* studies, which of necessity characterize patterns of causation in more schematic terms. Of particular importance for my purposes, the close examination of discrete trends and events over time *permits an investigation of both the strategic and nonstrategic dimensions of Islamist movement change within a unified analytic framework.*

In sum, by “telling the story” of the evolution of mainstream Islamist groups in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco through parallel historical narratives, the book aims to specify the causal processes at work in each case, as well as to identify the broader pattern of Islamist movement change suggested by the elements they have in common. My central argument is that observable changes in Islamist group rhetoric and behavior cannot be explained as an outcome of *either* strategic adaptation *or* ideational change but rather exhibit features of both. It is hence an argument for complexity over parsimony both in the analysis of the motivations of Islamist actors and in the analysis of the wider developments in the movements and organizations of which they are a part.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

In Chapter 2, I trace the early history of the Brotherhood from its founding in 1928 through the end of the Sadat era. In so doing, I seek to provide a more nuanced and complex picture of the “starting point” for the changes in Brotherhood ideology, strategy, and organization that occurred from the mid-1980s forward. In Chapter 3, I trace the Brotherhood’s entry into parliament, professional associations, and faculty clubs from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s and demonstrate how its leaders justified the group’s participation in electoral politics in an “unIslamic” regime. Further, I show that the professional associations in particular became important sites of contact between Islamist and secular public figures and that the cross-partisan interactions within them helped nurture the formation of a new “reformist trend” within the Brotherhood’s ranks. I show that leaders affiliated with this trend launched a critical reassessment of the movement’s anti-system past and called for a redefinition of its historic mission based on new and more progressive interpretations of Islam. Yet I also demonstrate that calls for movement reform encountered stiff resistance from “old-guard” leaders who retained a monopoly of seats on the Brotherhood’s executive board.

Chapter 4 explains how and why growing internal tensions led to a rift in the Brotherhood’s ranks in the mid-1990s with the formation of the Wasat (Center) party by a breakaway group of reformist leaders. I demonstrate that this rift occurred in the context of—and in reaction to—a new wave of repression directed at violent and nonviolent Islamist groups alike. I show that rather than

augment and embolden the reformist current within the Brotherhood, the Wasat initiative actually worked to undermine it by splitting the reformist camp in two and diluting its influence within the Brotherhood itself.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I analyze the path taken by the Brotherhood during the final decade of the Mubarak era. I demonstrate that the Brotherhood's efforts to navigate an unforgiving political environment yielded a zigzag course, with periods of bold self-assertion followed by periods of retreat. These chapters highlight the waning influence of the reformist trend within the Brotherhood in the context of a closing political environment, the conservative *da'wa* faction's success in achieving a near total monopoly of power in the Guidance Bureau, and the growing influence of the Salafi trend among the members of its base.

In Chapter 7, I analyze the role of the Brotherhood in the 2011 Egyptian uprising and the course it pursued after the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) assumed power and launched a transition to a new political order. I show that although the Brotherhood did not lead the uprising, it ended up as one of its greatest beneficiaries. While moving quickly to form a party and gear up for parliamentary elections in the fall, the Brotherhood took pains to emphasize that it sought to "participate, not dominate" the new political institutions that would be seated by popular vote.

Chapter 8 compares the evolution of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood with those of its counterparts in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco. In so doing, it enables us to discern a general pattern of Islamist movement change that transcends the particulars of any single country case. Yet Chapter 8 also shows that the trajectory of each Islamist group was shaped by the institutional environment in which it was embedded, the social profile of its base, and the balance of power among its internal factions. More broadly, each group's evolution bears the imprint of the distinctive features of its host country's society and culture, producing a set of outcomes best described as "variations on a theme."

In Chapter 9, I return to the case of Egypt, highlighting the Brotherhood's striking gains in recent parliamentary and presidential elections, as well as the series of constitutional and political crises that attended its rise to new heights of political power. Though the Brotherhood has emerged as the clear victor in recent elections, it has confronted significant pushback from the institutions of the "deep state" carried over from the Mubarak era. The Brotherhood has thus been forced to walk a fine line, attempting to defend its mandate to govern without provoking a backlash that could place the transition—and its own gains—at risk.

At the same time, Brotherhood leaders have come to realize that the consolidation of Egypt's fragile democratic institutions and the revival of economic growth will require the support of domestic and foreign actors external to—and in some cases deeply suspicious of—the Islamist movement. Against this backdrop, the Brotherhood faces a second challenge: winning the trust and cooper-

ation of other groups while assuring supporters of its fidelity to the Islamic cause.

Chapter 9 concludes with a summary of the book's main analytic findings, a key one of which is that some dimensions of Islamist movement change conform to a strategic logic and others do not. By highlighting the ideational dimension of Islamist movement change, I reveal the speciousness of the premise that the ideological commitments of Islamist actors and organizations are fixed, as well as the inability of strict rational actor models to explain when, why, and how they change over time. Hence I show that findings derived from contextually grounded, finely grained small-n research can help problematize reigning paradigms in the discipline of political science and provide a more nuanced and persuasive account of real-world social and political change.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Wasat Party Initiative and the Brotherhood's Response

IN RETROSPECT, THE FIRST decade of Mubarak's rule can be seen as the high point of the Brotherhood's participation within a system of authoritarian rule. During that time, the *jama'a* enjoyed a greater margin of freedom than at any time since 1952,¹ only to see it erode considerably in the years to come. The regime's hands-off approach to the Brotherhood at the time did not signal its acceptance of the group as a legitimate political actor so much as its desire to avoid conflict and maintain the social peace. As Egyptian scholar Ahmed Abdalla observed:

Deferring confrontation was an instinctual trade-off, not a carefully thought out state policy. The government turned a blind eye to Islamist grassroots power. In return, the Islamists did not confront state corruption and inefficiency.²

Yet by the late 1980s, the Brotherhood's growing influence began to provoke concern within regime circles, prompting a revival of the charge that the Brotherhood and jihadist groups were in fact two sides of the same coin. As Zaki Badr, then minister of the interior, stated in 1989: "There is no conflict between the two tendencies, as some want to believe, and they are in fact a single association."³ In 1990, the Brotherhood's boycott of the parliamentary elections was seen as a move to embarrass the government, as was its outspoken criticism of regime policy. For example, after parliament renewed the country's Emergency Laws, Brotherhood spokesman Mamoun Hudeibi declared, "The government system is based on oppression and dictatorship, which is why it hides behind emergency laws."⁴ A few months later, on January 20, 1991, the Brotherhood-led syndicates issued a joint statement denouncing the involvement of Egyptian troops in the Gulf War.⁵ As 'Esam al-'Aryan recalled,

I see it as the straw that broke the camel's back. When we met in the medical syndicate to write the statement, we did so in a very provocative manner. Only then do I

assume that the regime said to itself, "That is enough. The syndicates have overstepped the line," where the lines comprised the state's foreign policy and the army.⁶

Tensions mounted in October when the Brotherhood issued a public statement condemning Egypt's participation in the Madrid peace talks and the Islamist-controlled doctors' syndicate organized a rally, attended by twenty thousand demonstrators, in protest. The rally culminated in the arrest of fifteen Brotherhood members who were described by the state as "extremists, terrorists, fanatics and infiltrators."⁷ In the wake of the arrests, the Ministry of the Interior redoubled its efforts to gather information on the Brotherhood's leadership and operations. In February 1992, security agents raided the offices of the Salsabil firm and seized a large cache of documents that were later cited by the government as proof of the group's efforts to "revive an illegal organization opposed to the state and the public order."⁸

The regime's dawning perception that the Brotherhood posed a threat to its vital interests was reinforced after a major earthquake struck Cairo and surrounding areas on October 12, 1992. The Brotherhood-led doctors' and engineers' syndicates were first on the scene providing tents, blankets, food, and clothes to the victims, which they dispensed from first aid clinics and emergency shelters plastered with banners and posters declaring "Islam Is the Solution."⁹ The Brotherhood's quick response to the earthquake and its efficient mobilization of relief funds and supplies in the days that followed through such groups as the doctors' syndicate-affiliated Humanitarian Relief Committee was in stark contrast to the government's slow-footed response, exacerbated by the fact that President Mubarak was in China at the time and the earthquake occurred on a Thursday after most state offices had closed for the weekend. As Sa'd al-Din Ibrahim noted, "By the time the government got its act together, 36 hours had passed."¹⁰ The holdup was widely reported in the Arab and Western media, tarnishing the government's image at home and abroad.

The Brotherhood's high-profile relief drive following the 1992 earthquake convinced some government officials that the unchecked expansion of its activity in the public domain could no longer be tolerated. As Abdel Halim Musa, the minister of the interior, complained: "What is going on here? Do we have a state within the state?"¹¹ Together with the Brotherhood's electoral victory in the lawyers' syndicate the previous month, the doctors' and engineers' syndicates' upstaging of the government after the earthquake prompted the government to solicit a confidential report on the Brotherhood's activities in the syndicates from Amani Qandil, an Egyptian expert on civil society groups. As Qandil recalled:

Obviously the regime still did not have a clue about what was going on in the syndicates, but was troubled and puzzled by the ability of the Islamists to secure a majority in their elections. In my report to the regime, I tried to identify the mech-

anisms of the Brothers' influence and to explain why they had become a legitimate force in the syndicates.¹²

Regime efforts to wrest the syndicates from Brotherhood control began the following year. On February 16, 1993, the National Democratic Party hastily passed a new bill through parliament. Titled the "Law to Guarantee Democracy in the Professional Associations," the bill established a minimum voter turnout rate for syndicate elections (50% in the first round and 33% in the second); if not met, the results would be voided and the association would be placed under the supervision of a panel of appointed judges.¹³ According to its backers, the new law would prevent an "organized minority" from dominating the syndicates for its own political ends.¹⁴ The law triggered a chorus of protest from the Brotherhood and other opposition groups. At one demonstration in front of the Cairo headquarters of the engineers' syndicate, an estimated fifteen thousand professionals listened to impassioned speeches against the law, the ruling party, and the Mubarak regime amid posters denouncing the "earthquake of February 16" and the "assassination of the professional associations in parliament."¹⁵ In May, after accusing the Islamist-controlled board of financial mismanagement, the government placed the engineers' syndicate under judicial sequestration. Further, in a move to limit the power of the Brotherhood-dominated faculty clubs, the Egyptian Universities Act was amended in June 1994 to repeal the election of faculty deans and limit representation in university councils, formerly constituted mostly of elected members, to government appointees.¹⁶

The regime's efforts to rein in the Brotherhood occurred against the backdrop of a sharp increase in violent attacks by militant Islamist groups. As Sa'd al-Din Ibrahim observed, Islamist violence produced 33 casualties (the total number of deaths and injuries) in the period from 1982 to 1985, but that number rose to 1,164 from 1990 to 1993, marking that period as "by far the bloodiest, not only during the Mubarak presidency but also in this century."¹⁷ Islamic militants assassinated Rif at al-Mahgoub, a former Speaker of Parliament, as well as four police generals, and made attempts on the lives of the minister of information, the minister of the interior, and the prime minister. In June 1992 they assassinated Egypt's most prominent secular critic of the Islamist movement, Farag Fouda, and eventually broadened their attacks to include a wider range of civilian targets, such as Coptic Christians and secular Muslim intellectuals, as well as cinemas, nightclubs, cafés, and video shops.¹⁸

The tactics of Islamist militants during this period exhibited a marked increase in skill and sophistication, due in part to the return of combat-hardened veterans from the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan. As Sa'd al-Din Ibrahim noted, "Not only did they demonstrate skillful use of arms, explosives, and remote control devices, but also manufactured some [of them] themselves. They [also] displayed remarkable abilities in their system of intelligence."¹⁹ The escalation in violence provided regime officials with an opportunity to paint the

Brotherhood as guilty by association with the movement's more radical elements. Around this time, the regime launched a campaign against the Brotherhood in the semiofficial media, characterizing it as an illegal organization opposed to the existing order and accusing it of providing material, logistical, and moral support to jihadist groups.²⁰ Such accusations escalated after a march by several hundred lawyers on May 17, 1994, to protest the death in state custody of Abd al-Harith Madani, a defense lawyer for some of the militants caught up in the latest wave of arrests. As the dominant force in the lawyers' syndicate, the Brotherhood was held responsible for the march and the public uproar that followed.²¹

The regime's new zero-tolerance approach to the Brotherhood was starkly revealed in several interviews President Mubarak gave to members of the foreign press. For example, in an interview with the American journalist Mary Ann Weaver in late 1994, published in the *New Yorker* in January 1995, Mubarak ominously warned,

I must tell you, this whole problem of terrorism throughout the Middle East is a by-product of our own illegal Muslim Brotherhood—whether it is al-Jihad, Hizbollah in Lebanon or Hamas, they all spring from underneath the umbrella of the Muslim Brotherhood. They say that they have renounced violence, but in reality they are responsible for all the violence, and the time will come when they will be uncovered.²²

Following a series of small-scale arrests in the early 1990s, the regime's offensive against the Brotherhood intensified in 1995. During that year, hundreds of Brotherhood members were arrested, and the cases of eighty-one prominent leaders were transferred to military courts for the first time since 1965.²³ Those charged in the military trials of 1995 included several key figures with direct responsibility for the Brotherhood's activities in the professional associations, as well as the faculty clubs and student groups on university campuses. Rather than targeting the organization's old guard, the trials aimed to disrupt the work of the middle-generation activists who had spearheaded the dramatic expansion of the group's involvement in public life.²⁴

Following trials in military court, fifty-four of the Brotherhood defendants received sentences of up to five years with hard labor. In conjunction with these sentences, the court shut down the Brotherhood's headquarters in the Tawfiqiyya district of downtown Cairo and confiscated its funds.²⁵

The timing of the sentences, which were handed down just a week before parliamentary elections commenced on November 29, suggests that they were intended by the regime to undermine the Brotherhood's ability to run an effective electoral campaign. As al-Awadi observed, the stakes of that year's elections were especially high because the 1995 assembly was set to nominate Mubarak for a fourth term as president. If the Brotherhood won more than a third of the

seats, it would be in a position to obstruct his nomination.²⁶ Senior regime officials feared that “Egypt could become another Algeria,” a reference to the fact that in January 1992, Islamists there had been poised to win control of parliament before the military stepped in and canceled the results. Makram Mohamad Ahmad, editor of the semiofficial journal *al-Musawwar*, explained the regime’s anxiety:

The *Ikhwan* are very organized and extremely popular, and if they contested the elections, they could easily win against the NDP. A trend within the regime thinks that the *Ikhwan* constitute the greatest political threat to Mubarak, and fears that what happened in Algeria could happen in Egypt.²⁷

It is thus not surprising that the parliamentary elections of 1995 exhibited an unprecedented level of government intervention, including widespread harassment and intimidation of voters by state security officers and police. By the end of the two-day voting period, over eight hundred people had been injured and fifty-one had died.²⁸ According to the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, security forces arrested over a thousand Islamist campaign workers and sympathizers and “systematically targeted Islamist candidates country-wide, using techniques such as intimidation, illegal search and seizure of campaign offices, and arbitrary arrests.”²⁹ Under the new electoral system introduced in 1990, candidates in the elections ran as independents rather than on party lists. Although the Brotherhood put forward an estimated 150 candidates, it won only one seat, which was subsequently contested in court.³⁰

The regime’s campaign against the Brotherhood, though justified in terms of its alleged ties with jihadist groups, arguably sought to contain a highly visible and dynamic organization operating within legal channels, a point not lost on members of the Brotherhood itself. As Mustafa Mashhour, then first deputy to the Supreme Guide, observed,

The Brotherhood has shown that it has been successful in the professional associations because those elections were generally free and without irregularities, and this indicates that the opinion of the educated class is with the Brotherhood. And perhaps the government is afraid that if the Brotherhood forms a political party or is allowed to participate in political life more generally, then it will be able to turn public opinion to its side. . . . If free elections were held for the People’s Assembly the Brotherhood would win, and this would de-stabilize the position of those who occupy the senior most positions in the state. . . . They want to remain in power and hence they place restrictions on us and try to freeze our activities and falsify election results so our candidates don’t win, and that is the reason for all of the harassment which the Brotherhood has endured.³¹

The repression of the mid-1990s dealt a serious blow to the Brotherhood. The sentences handed down in the military trials of 1995 placed some of its most capable and experienced leaders behind bars and, according to Egyptian

law, blocked them from contesting seats in parliament and serving on the boards of public organizations for a period of time equal to double their sentences (ten years for defendants who received the maximum sentence) after their release.³² In addition, the crackdown exacerbated ideological and generational tensions within the Brotherhood’s own ranks, culminating in the eruption of an open rift in 1996. We now turn to the sequence of events leading up to this rift and its impact on the evolution of the Brotherhood in the years that followed.

THE WASAT PARTY INITIATIVE

On January 10, 1996, a group of leaders associated with the Brotherhood’s “reformist” current, led by thirty-seven-year-old engineer Aboul ‘Ela Madi, announced their plans to form a new party and submitted their proposal to the government’s Political Parties Committee. Defined by Madi as “a civic platform based on the Islamic faith, which believes in pluralism and the alternation of power,” the Wasat (Center) party built directly on the earlier party programs that had been raised—and shelved—by the Brotherhood. Sixty-two of the party’s seventy-four founders were members of the Brotherhood; the other twelve included several women and Christians.³³ At first the regime viewed the initiative as a Brotherhood ploy, and Madi and two other cofounders were among thirteen Brotherhood members arrested on April 2 and accused by the State Security Prosecution Office of “belonging to an illegal organization,” “preparing anti-regime publications,” “carrying out political activities without permission,” and “attempting to form the *Wasat* party as a front from the banned Muslim Brotherhood.”³⁴ Yet it soon became clear that the party founders were acting on their own, a point underscored by the hostile response of the Brotherhood’s senior leadership. In August, Madi and his colleagues were released without ever standing trial or being formally charged.³⁵

In interviews with the press, Mamoun Hudeibi, a prominent figure in the Brotherhood’s Guidance Bureau and an official spokesman for the group, explained that although the idea of forming a party was nothing new and was accepted in principle, the Wasat party founders had erred by rushing to pursue it before the time was right. Given that regime authorities remained adamantly opposed to a party based on religion, any effort to force the issue was not just foolhardy but dangerous, as it could set the Brotherhood on a collision course with the government.³⁶ In stark contrast with such reasoned public discourse, the Brotherhood’s old guard reacted furiously behind the scenes to what they regarded as an intolerable affront to their authority. According to various news reports, Hudeibi ordered the Brothers on the Wasat party list to withdraw their names or risk expulsion, a directive to which many of them acquiesced. This decreased the number of registrants to below the minimum number of fifty,

leading the Political Parties Committee to reject the proposal on procedural grounds on May 13.³⁷ On May 27, in his capacity as the Wasat founders' lawyer, Muhammad Salim al-'Awa filed an appeal in High Administrative Court against the government's ruling, which was signed by several prominent secular lawyers as well.³⁸ As 'Esam Sultan recalled, after al-'Awa read the appeal at the court hearing, lawyers for the Brotherhood took the floor and spoke against it.³⁹ Later that year, as pressure from the Brotherhood leadership mounted, Madi and fifteen other Wasat founders submitted their resignations from the Brotherhood to the Supreme Guide.⁴⁰

Over the next year, with its legal appeal pending, the Wasat party received vocal encouragement and support from leaders in the secular opposition, as well as from independent Islamist figures such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi.⁴¹ By contrast, the Brotherhood's old guard denounced the initiative, placing them in the awkward position of siding with the regime and the die-hard anti-Islamist left. As Salah 'Isa, a leftist intellectual supportive of the Wasat trend, observed with unconcealed derision,

Hence this laughable front has been formed, full of contradictions, which includes the government, and the Tagammu' Party, together with the Brotherhood's old guard and the *jihadists*, all working together on behalf of one goal: to bring down the project to establish the *Wasat* Party.⁴²

On May 9, 1998, the High Administrative Court announced that it had rejected the party's appeal on the grounds that the party "did not contribute anything new to the existing political parties" and hence failed to meet the requirements of the Political Parties Law of 1977.⁴³ Undeterred, Madi submitted a revised and expanded party platform, called Hizb al-Wasat al-Misri (Egyptian Center Party), to the Political Parties Committee two days later. Of the expanded list of ninety-three founding members, only twenty-four were ex-Brothers; the group also included nineteen women and three Christians. The Political Parties Committee rejected the second Wasat party bid for legal status on September 21, 1998. In an unprecedented move, Madi demanded a meeting with committee members to discuss the grounds for their decision, a right which, though stipulated by the Political Parties Law of 1977, had never been invoked. In the ensuing meeting, Madi recalled that he sat across an oval table from several high-ranking government officials, including the minister of the interior and the minister of parliamentary affairs, but they refused to engage in any serious discussion of the party's ideas.⁴⁴ The Wasat party once again appealed the committee's decision in the High Administrative Court, which ruled against their appeal on June 5, 1999.⁴⁵ Madi would eventually submit a third proposal to the Political Parties Committee for Hizb al-Wasat al-Jadid (New Wasat Party), with an expanded membership and more detailed platform, in 2004.

The platform of the Egyptian Wasat party, drafted by Islamist engineer Salah Abd al-Karim in consultation with other party members, was a forty-nine-page document that elaborated on the party's vision and objectives in substantial depth.⁴⁶ As I have analyzed the platform in detail elsewhere,⁴⁷ it will suffice here to highlight a few of its most salient themes. First, the party sought to establish a "center" or "middle" position between the rigid defense of Islamic tradition and the wholesale adoption of values and institutions imported from the West. Second, in contrast to the traditional Islamist conception of the *umma* as the Muslim community of believers, the platform defined the *umma* as encompassing all Egyptians, Muslims, and Christians who shared a common cultural reference and identity shaped by the history and values of Arab-Islamic civilization. Third, the platform asserted that the "most important civilizational principle of our *umma*, and hence of the public order of the *umma*, is pluralism," elaborating that "we mean pluralism in its many dimensions, not just political pluralism, because the *umma* has been based throughout history on religious, cultural and social pluralism, as well as other types," and observing that "pluralism within a single civilizational framework" was in reality not a weakness but a source of the *umma*'s strength.⁴⁸ Fourth, the platform defined the *umma* as the "first" and "only" source of all political authority; emphasized its right to select its representatives in "a genuine choice free of coercion or material or psychological pressure"; and affirmed the equal rights and obligations of all citizens irrespective of religious affiliation or gender.⁴⁹

If in these respects the Wasat platform conformed with the norms and values of secular democracy, it departed from them in others. First, the platform did not advocate the separation of religion and state but affirmed the primacy of Shari'a, or Islamic law, as the basis of the constitutional order. Second, it stipulated that the "clear rulings" contained in the sacred texts of Islam must be applied to all Muslims. At the same time, the platform emphasized that given the limited number of such explicit rulings, the scope for human legislation was in fact quite broad and affirmed the right of all citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to engage in *ijtihad* (human reasoning) to adapt Shari'a principles to the circumstances of modern times. The platform remained vague on the critical question of which individuals or institutions possessed the legal authority to interpret the Shari'a and to veto legislation deemed to violate its content and spirit. Rather, it simply stated that all legislation must be grounded within an Islamic frame of reference (*marja'iyya islamiyya*) or, as phrased elsewhere in the platform, must be consistent with the "enduring values of the nation" (*thawabet al-umma*). The platform did not provide a detailed and comprehensive definition of these values but emphasized two constitutive elements of the Arab-Islamic heritage: the identity of the family, rather than the individual, as its primary social unit, and the religious character of society. By defining these elements as essential features of Arab-Islamic culture and identity, it removed

them from the domain of public debate, in effect granting them the same transcendent status accorded to the "clear rulings" in Islam's sacred texts.⁵⁰ The party platform can thus be said to exhibit a tension between two competing impulses: to enlarge the sphere for free political, intellectual, and cultural expression on the one hand, and to defend the conservative religious values and institutions of the *umma* against the depredations of Western secularism and individualism on the other.

More than a decade after its release, the Wasat party platform of 1998 can be seen as a work in progress, reflecting the consensus of its founders at a particular point in time, which would undergo further revision in the years to come. The main themes of the platform bore the imprint of the New Islamic Discourse, and especially the ideas of Muhammad Salim al-'Awa and Tariq Bishri, with whom its founders consulted on a regular basis and upon whom they relied for authoritative (re-)interpretations of Islam's historical precedents and sacred texts.⁵¹ At the same time, the platform reflected changes in the interests, values, and priorities of middle-generation activists that stemmed from their close engagement with leaders from other political and ideological trends over the preceding decade.

Given the group's strong endorsement of pluralism and equal citizenship rights for women and non-Muslims, the novelty of which was accentuated by its founders' historic ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Wasat party initiative generated enormous attention in the Egyptian and Arab press. Dozens of articles about the party, including lengthy interviews with Aboul 'Ela Madi, its affable and charismatic founder, appeared in numerous regional newspapers and journals, frequently adorned by large photos or artist sketches of his face.⁵² In addition, Madi and other Wasat party Islamists made the rounds on Arabic satellite television programs and sat for lengthy interviews with journalists from Europe, the United States, and Japan. They also elaborated on the party's agenda, which they pointedly described as a "human interpretation of Islam open to discussion" in various seminars and workshops sponsored by secular civil society groups.⁵³ The Wasat initiative received support from several influential secular commentators, such as leftist Salah 'Isa, editor in chief of *al-Qahira*, a weekly journal. As 'Isa remarked:

We must open a democratic space for engagement with the Islamists in order to encourage their moderation. We welcomed the Wasat party, seeing it as the most important trend toward moderation in the Islamic trend, because its platform is based on citizenship and not on religion. I can accept the idea of a shared identity rooted in Arab-Islamic civilization, but if you say that we have to apply Islamic juridical rulings, that is a problem.⁵⁴

Although generally receptive to the Wasat initiative, 'Isa and other secular Egyptian figures objected to certain elements of the party's agenda, especially its seeming elevation of the Shari'a and *thawabet al-umma* beyond the reach of

public scrutiny and debate.⁵⁵ For example, the concept of *thawabet al-umma* came under harsh criticism at a seminar titled "Political Forces and Their Positions on Freedom of Opinion and Thought and Belief," organized by the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights on October 14, 1996, in which Madi participated. Shaken by the verbal attacks directed by some of the speakers "on everything Islamic," Madi wrote a response, published in *al-Sha'b* on October 25, in which he strongly defended the idea that freedom of expression must be bound by respect for the community's shared values and beliefs. As he asked with no small amount of exasperation,

Is it all right to abuse and insult sacred principles (*al-muqaddasat*) in the name of freedom? From the viewpoint of belief, and from the perspective of morals, is the call for, say, sexual licentiousness included in the freedoms which some people call for or not? Are there limits to these freedoms or not? This question must be answered: Are there religious and moral values of this society or not? And what are they; we need to define them so that no one oversteps them or adds anything to them.⁵⁶

In contrast to the secular commentators who endorsed the Wasat party initiative but remained ill at ease with certain aspects of its platform, other secularists rejected the Wasat party experiment altogether, characterizing it as a front for the Brotherhood and/or openly deriding its alleged moderation. As Muhammad al-Shibh opined in a December 1996 article, "its founders, as Islamist student leaders in the 1970s, never once showed a concern for democracy or pluralism, so why should we believe they support them now?"⁵⁷

THE BACK STORY OF THE WASAT FOUNDERS' SPLIT FROM THE BROTHERHOOD

The Wasat party initiative did not emerge out of thin air but was the culmination of growing tensions between the Brotherhood's old guard and their internal critics. Why did such conflict reach a peak in the mid-1990s and ultimately trigger an open rift?

Middle-generation leaders' frustrations with the perceived ideological rigidity of the Brotherhood's old guard reached a new height before the break. Several factors contributed to this development. At the conclusion of the joint professional syndicates' conference titled "Freedoms and Civil Society" in October 1994, which extended the discussion of issues first raised during a conference called "The National Dialogue" the preceding February, a committee was formed to draft a National Charter (*Mithaq al-Wifaq al-Watani*) representing a national consensus on a framework for constitutional and political reform. Mamoun Hudeibi, Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futouh, and Aboul 'Ela Madi, served on the committee—Hudeibi and Abu al-Futouh as Brotherhood delegates and

Madi as a representative of the professional syndicates. During the committee's sessions, which took place over a period of ten months from October 1994 to August 1995, heated debates broke out between Hudeibi and secular civic and political leaders on the status of the Shari'a in the constitution of the state. Sayyid al-Naggar, the founder of the liberal New Civic Forum, was particularly adamant that the charter make no reference to the Shari'a or religion over the bitter objections of Mamoun Hudeibi. As al-Naggar recalled:

I said this charter is not going to have one word about religion, for the reason that 10% of the population are non-Muslims. You can't speak about Shari'a if 10% of the people are Copts. This is discrimination. Hudeibi said, "Are you against Article 2 of the Constitution?" and I said, "Yes, this was a mistake. It was imposed as a matter of political expediency." Hudeibi and I had many heated discussions on this issue. I said, "You want to cut off the hand of the thief and throw stones at adulterers?" and he answered, "This is in the Quran," and I replied, "This was for seventh-century Muslims, not for Muslims of the twentieth century," and he said, "That is *kufr* [unbelief]."⁵⁸

Interestingly, al-Naggar's acquaintance with Hudeibi went back fifty years. As al-Naggar noted:

I graduated from the faculty of law in 1942, and some of the members of my generation fell under the influence of the Brotherhood. Hudeibi was in the same class as I was. I was the number one student and he was number nine or ten. We studied together but eventually we had a falling out. . . . I am a thorough secularist, so I absolutely refuse to cite religion when I am dealing with a secular question. I reject the line of reasoning that "Umar [the second caliph] said this, or such-and-such a verse of the Quran says that." Our foundation is an enlightened faith in the human mind, in the ability of the human mind to deal with problems in a manner derived from the surrounding culture of our society. So I wanted to see no reference in the charter to religion at all. This was accepted by all of the other members of the committee except Hudeibi. At our last meeting, he declared "this is an atheist National Charter" and refused to sign it because it made no reference to the Shari'a and Islam.⁵⁹

In the end, the initiative collapsed in August 1995 when only six of the original twelve members of the committee signed the National Charter. As Madi and other middle-generation leaders saw it, Hudeibi's intransigence not only triggered the breakdown of an important civil initiative but also reinforced public perceptions of the Brotherhood as an obstacle to democratic reform and contributed to the overwhelming defeat of Brotherhood candidates in the November parliamentary elections.⁶⁰

More generally, Mamoun Hudeibi, with his strong personality and combative rhetoric, served as a flashpoint for the grievances of younger leaders, who complained about his arrogance and high-handedness in meetings and discus-

sions with other Brotherhood members.⁶¹ Hudeibi, a longtime member of the Guidance Bureau and an official spokesman for the group, was also criticized for arrogating dictatorial powers to himself and making policy decisions without consulting others. Especially galling to reformist trend leaders was his refusal to move forward with plans to establish a party to represent the Brotherhood in public life. As Madi noted in a 2003 article in *Sawt al-Umma*:

If you spoke with him for two minutes, his answer would take ten minutes, [and he'd become] very agitated . . . he would try to impose his point of view; the *Majlis al-Shura* (the Brotherhood's legislative assembly) issued several decisions to form a party for the Brotherhood, but he always blocked them, despite the fact that 90% of the members of the Assembly supported them, and after all that Hudeibi would say that we must respect the decisions of the *jama'a*, so why didn't he do so himself?⁶²

Just as vexing was the old guard's continued monopoly of power in the Guidance Bureau and control over appointments in the Brotherhood's branch offices, which deprived the reformists of an institutional platform from which to connect with members of the group's base.

In what Madi described as the "Great Theft" (*al-satw al-kubra*):

Those of us in the reformist group worked in public relations, while the old guard worked to control the organization [*tandhim*]. They controlled the backbone of the organization and this enabled them to steal the younger generation from us. The old guard leaders would say, "Loyalty should be to the *jama'a*, not to individuals," but in reality this meant loyalty to them. Hence the views of the new generations, those who entered the *jama'a* in the 1980s and 1990s, were based on what the old guard said.⁶³

REVISITING THE REPRESSION-RADICALIZATION THESIS

If the split of the Wasat party founders from the Brotherhood reflected the culmination of a long history of internal conflict, its proximate trigger was a spike in repression that peaked with the military trials of 1995 and the government's campaign against Brotherhood candidates and their supporters in the parliamentary elections that same year. The sentencing of some of the Brotherhood's most prominent middle-generation figures to prison, including Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futouh, 'Esam al-'Aryan, Sayyid Abd al-Sattar, and Ibrahim al-Za'farani, triggered a bitter outcry from other middle-generation leaders, who accused the old guard of trapping the *jama'a* in an ongoing confrontation with the state, of which they were the greatest victims.⁶⁴ They were also angered when, after four members of the Guidance Bureau were sent to prison, Hudeibi and other members of the Executive Council handpicked their replacements, violating group rules requiring that they be chosen through internal elections.⁶⁵

Further, the Brotherhood's abysmal showing in the parliamentary elections of November and December 1995 reinforced middle-generation leaders' conviction that as long as the Brotherhood remained deprived of legal status, its opportunity for meaningful participation in the political system would be blocked. As a candidate for the district of Helwan (an industrial area of Cairo), Madi witnessed the government's interference in the race firsthand, as did twelve other founding members of the Wasat party who stood as candidates.⁶⁶ As a result, they became even more determined to shed the handicap of illegality and secure the status of a "normal" political actor. As Madi explained in *al-Anba'* in March 1996, the formation of the Wasat party "reflects our commitment to peaceful work (*al-'amal al-silmi*) as the only alternative in light of the circumstances which the *umma* faces today." He went on:

We declared our commitment to peaceful work in the aftermath of the great waves of anger which welled up from Egyptian society after the announcement of the last parliamentary elections, and the party saw at that time that there was a broad reaction that violence is the solution, but we said to them that peaceful work is the solution, and our positions were astonishing to everyone given that the Islamic Trend suffered the greatest harm and endured the greatest losses in those elections.⁶⁷

The response of the Wasat party founders to the regime crackdown flies in the face of conventional arguments that the exclusion and repression of opposition groups encourages their radicalization. For example, in "Fulfilling Prophecies: State Policy and Islamist Radicalism," Lisa Anderson cited Giovanni Sartori on the effects of political exclusion on the development of opposition groups in Europe:

An opposition which knows that it may be called to "respond," i.e.[,] which is oriented towards governing and has a reasonable chance to govern, or to have access to governmental responsibility, is likely to behave responsibly, in a restrained and responsible way. On the other hand, a "permanent opposition" which is far removed from government turnover and thereby knows that it will *not* be called to "respond," is likely to take the path of "irresponsible opposition," that is, the path of promising wildly and outbidding.⁶⁸

Extending the same logic to the behavior of Islamist opposition groups in the Arab world, Anderson argued:

By the very fact that they are illegal, unrecognized Islamist movements had no motivation to accommodate their opponents and embrace democracy and ample incentives to adopt a "rejectionist" posture. . . . Arbitrary and unpredictable government behavior engenders its own opposition. . . . The goals of opposition in these circumstances cannot be but the overthrow of the system and the establishment of another regime in which the disenfranchised will benefit.⁶⁹

Yet the exclusionary policies of authoritarian regimes do not always produce the radical and irresponsible type of opposition they so richly deserve. There is no doubt that in some cases, state repression triggered the radicalization and militarization of elements within the Islamist movement. This occurred after the military aborted the democratic process and banned the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria in 1992, a case highlighted by Anderson in support of her broader claims. But as the Wasat party founders' response to the sequence of events described above indicates, the reaction of opposition actors to exclusion and repression can assume different forms. To this group of Islamists, the repressive turn of the mid-1990s did not demonstrate the necessity of militancy but rather underscored its futility. Just as the Brotherhood's ordeal in the Nasser era generated divergent responses, pushing some members toward radicalization while persuading others, including the Supreme Guide and his closest associates, of the risks of direct confrontation with a police state, the Mubarak regime's crackdown on the Brotherhood in the mid-1990s was open to conflicting interpretations. In this instance, it increased the determination of Brotherhood reformers to obtain a legal foothold in the system as a means to operate effectively under existing political constraints.

The escalation of regime pressure on the Brotherhood in the mid-1990s increased the perceived costs of the *jama'a's* continued existence outside the formal political order, while the old guard's continued monopoly on power within it diminished the perceived prospects for meaningful change. As Aboul 'Ela Madi noted, "When we realized that a transition toward legal status was not in the interest of the most influential leaders in the Brotherhood, I personally felt a loss of hope . . . especially after elections in January 1995 for vacant posts in the Guidance Bureau produced 0% change."⁷⁰ Hence a group of middle-generation leaders decided to seize the initiative and establish a party of their own. As Salah Abd al-Karim explained,

*The crisis manifested itself over a period of about ten years. We always felt we had something to give to society and the state, but the [Brotherhood] leadership always denied us. So we decided to give the Wasat a trial run.*⁷¹

BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER: THE REFORMIST CRITIQUE OF THE OLD GUARD BECOMES PUBLIC

The intensive media coverage of the Wasat party initiative, prolonged by the fits and starts of its successive bids for legal status, placed the Brotherhood in an awkward position. Discussions in the press, including lengthy interviews with party founders, highlighted the Wasat party's "progressive" and "liberal" interpretation of Islam and invariably cast the Brotherhood, either implicitly or through direct comparison, in a negative light. But even more damaging was

the public criticism directed by Brotherhood “insiders” against the group’s leaders and institutional culture. Freed from disciplinary pressures, the Wasat party founders no longer felt obligated to censor their opinions. As Madi bluntly asserted,

We sought to make a difference inside the organization itself by pushing for more internal democracy and accountability. We also worked hard to push the organization to take more progressive positions on a wide array of issues including democracy, and equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender or religion. After almost twenty years of repeated frustrations, we realized that such changes were vehemently resisted by the powers that be inside the organization. At that point we decided to quit and establish our own more progressive and tolerant project: the Wasat party.⁷²

The Wasat leaders’ critique was particularly devastating because it was mounted by figures with a long history of involvement in the Brotherhood itself. Such insider status gave them privileged access to intimate details about how the organization was run and what transpired during its meetings and discussions, lending their claims added force. Particularly embarrassing was the Wasat founders’ claim that while their ideas had evolved and matured as a result of their extensive interaction with other social and political forces at home and abroad, the mentality of the Brothers’ senior leaders had remained trapped in the past. As Madi stated in numerous interviews with the press, his countless meetings and discussions with secular activists and intellectuals, as well as his various missions to other Arab countries and to Europe and the United States—for example, to raise funds for Bosnian refugees—had a profound effect on his thinking, a trend that extended to other leaders of the Wasat cohort as well. The most important development, he emphasized, was “our realization that we don’t have a monopoly on the Truth.” Hence, Madi and other Wasat founders explained, they offered their party program as a “human interpretation of Islam” open to discussion and debate.⁷³ By contrast, they argued, the Brotherhood’s veteran leaders, who had insulated themselves from other forces in society, clung to the traditional conception of the Brotherhood’s mission as an expression of Islam itself.

New information on the history of internal conflict within the Brotherhood came to light with the publication in early 1997 of Tal’at Ramih’s book, *Al-Wasat wa al-Ikhwān* (The Wasat and the Brotherhood).⁷⁴ Tracing the events leading to the formation of the Wasat party from a highly sympathetic point of view, the book describes Aboul ‘Ela Madi and other middle-generation leaders in glowing, almost reverential terms as a dynamic and progressive force that had struggled to assert itself within the Brotherhood for over a decade. Among the most revealing sections of the book are previously unpublished documents highlighting the middle generation’s critique of the old guard as the conflict between them was unfolding. Among them was a lecture titled “[Toward a]

Broad Psychological and Practical Opening” (al-Infatih al-Nafsi wa al-‘Amali al-‘Am), which was presented by a Wasat party leader to a Brotherhood audience, though its date and location are not identified. Given the highly evocative tone and content of the lecture, it is worth excerpting here:

The reality of Muslims in the modern era at both the local and global levels is one of backwardness and defeat, and tension in the relations between Muslims and those who have defeated them, and culture wars and a global rejection of everything Islamic. And such conditions have led to reactions to the situation of Muslims ranging from buried feelings of defeatism and retreat, and a lack of self-confidence and an inability to confront the Other and embarrassment and hiding behind religion, to the opposite psychological state of excessive arrogance and feelings of superiority, and accusations against the Other (all Others). . . .

And conditions in the world have shifted from rejection and wars to mutual acceptance and truce and co-existence and understanding and admiration, but this global change in views on Islam and Muslims has not been accompanied by a change in our repertoires of activity and our movement which would enable Muslims to benefit from this development. And thus a golden opportunity has been squandered, and tensions have resumed.

The lecture goes on to identify a wide repertoire of damaging behaviors, including the “tribal” (clannish) practice of limiting one’s interactions to others in the movement; painting a harsh and rigid picture of what a Muslim should be; a pattern of self-concealment and isolation from advocates of reform; and an unwillingness to adapt the Brotherhood’s methods to changing circumstances.

Likewise, the lecture criticizes the atavistic character of current Islamist rhetoric, as indicated by:

1. “The use of historic terms which frighten others and are not accepted in modern times in our interactions with non-Muslims, like *Dar al-Harb* [the domain of war] and *Dar al-Islam* [the domain of Islam] and the *jizya* [the poll tax paid by non-Muslims under Islamic rule]”;
2. “The use of frightening and absolutist expressions in our relations with Muslims which emphasize our differences and cloak us with an aura of superiority—like ‘penetration’ and ‘inundation’ and ‘challenge’ as a means to describe our mission and our guidance and service to the people”; and
3. “Demanding the impossible from people and the lack of [a commitment to] gradualism.”

Finally, the lecture warns against

[t]aking positions which the Shari’a does not require of us, and indeed which flow from the personal views of individuals, and may even lead to consequences which contradict what the Shari’a demands.⁷⁵

Perhaps more than any articles in the press, this lecture—not intended for public consumption but directed to the Brotherhood's own ranks—illuminates the sea change in the worldview of its reformist cadres and reveals that their calls for change in the Brotherhood's goals and strategies were bound up with a profound and far-reaching critique of the defensive psychological complexes created and reproduced by the group's institutional culture.

With the departure of the Wasat party founders billed in the press as an "explosion" and as the "greatest conflict in the Brotherhood's history," Hudeibi and other senior leaders sought to downplay the threat it posed to the *jama'a's* ideological and organizational unity. In an interview with *al-Hayat* on February 20, 1996, Hudeibi protested the characterization of the incident as a "schism," asking "how many people have actually left the *jama'a*?" In addition, he stressed, the Brotherhood's objection to the initiative stemmed from its overriding concern with "the preservation of the *jama'a* itself, and the principles and rules and foundations upon which it is based, which have always come before anything else, and have preserved the *jama'a* since its establishment in 1928."⁷⁶

The Wasat party initiative placed middle-generation reformers who chose to stay with the Brotherhood in an especially difficult position. Such figures subscribed to the same ideas as the Wasat party founders but remained subject to the group's disciplinary pressures and were hence obliged, at least in public, to back those at its helm. Several reformist figures were reportedly upset by the old guard's harsh response to the Wasat party initiative, and one sent a letter to the Supreme Guide from prison to register his objections.⁷⁷ At the same time, however, they contributed to the group's collective efforts at damage control by framing the Brotherhood's dispute with the Wasat party as simply a matter of strategy and timing. In particular, they argued that the ideas expressed by the Wasat party leaders had also become part of the overarching vision of the Brotherhood itself.

The Wasat party experiment highlighted an influential trend of self-critique and self-reform within the Brotherhood. Yet it also revealed the limits of the reformist impulse in two crucial respects.

First, while scores of media reports waxed rhapsodic about the "liberal," "tolerant," "moderate," and "democratic" aspects of the Wasat party platform, a closer reading indicates that it remained firmly committed to the revivalist Islamist understanding of Islam as *din wa dawla*, that is, both a matter of private belief and practice and the guiding principle for the organization of society and state. While the platform exhibited a significant set of ideological developments, particularly with respect to its definition of Islam as a civilizational reference, its emphasis on pluralism, and its support for the full citizenship rights of women and non-Muslims, it also exhibited a clear continuity with the past in its efforts to defend conservative religious values. *By defining such values as intrinsic features of Arab-Islamic culture and identity, the Wasat platform placed them*

beyond the reach of public scrutiny and debate. In sum, the Wasat platforms of 1996 and 1998 did not constitute a sharp break from the central priorities of the Islamist movement. Rather, they represented an effort to articulate an Islamist ideological framework more consistent with reformist sensibilities and better adapted to existing political constraints. Further, they sought to translate the vague and abstract slogans of the Islamist movement into concrete policy positions and programs and, in doing so, to differentiate the Wasat party from the Brotherhood on the one hand, and the secular opposition on the other.

The Wasat party initiative, and the old guard's response to it, exposed the limits of the reformist impulse in a second way as well. On the question of whether the initiative could be characterized as a schism within the Brotherhood's ranks, Hudeibi was right. It did not represent a schism because it had no significant impact on the Brotherhood's core structures and bases of power. The overwhelming majority of the *jama'a's* members remained loyal to its senior leadership, due in part to the fact that Hudeibi and other members of the Guidance Bureau had managed to fill strategic administrative posts in the group's regional and local branches with individuals beholden to them and vested in their conception of the group's mission. Against this backdrop, the Wasat party initiative can more accurately be described as a split in the cadre of middle-generation leaders who had pushed for internal reform of the movement over the preceding decade. Further, the departure of the Wasat party founders diluted the influence of the reformist trend within the Brotherhood itself. While reformists who remained, like Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futouh, continued to lobby for progressive changes in the Brotherhood's policy positions and internal practices and in favor of deeper engagement with other groups in society, they became increasingly marginalized in the face of heightened security pressures on the Brotherhood on the one hand and a strengthening of the conservative faction at the apex of the group on the other.

During the second half of the 1990s, the old guard reasserted its control over the Brotherhood and reaffirmed the relevance and wisdom of its historic mission. In the wake of the public uproar sparked by the Wasat party split, the Brotherhood's senior leaders issued a statement, "Fawa'id Min al-Shada'id" (The Virtues of Hardship), directed at the members of its base. At certain times, the statement observed, it is necessary to review one's course in order to ascertain whether it is still on the right path and ensure that, in the sweep of events, it has not lost its sense of purpose or become detached from its foundations. With numerous references to the Quran, the Hadith, and the example set by the Prophet and his Companions, the statement affirmed that the higher purpose of the Brotherhood remained the same as it was in the past. At the core of our belief, it claimed, is that "Our *da'wa* [call or mission] is the call to God, and that God is its protector and defender." It went on to explain that "trials and hardships are one of the obligations of the *da'wa* mission" and hence that Brothers must take this burden upon themselves whether they are under the protection

of a legal cover or not. The statement asked rhetorically whether anyone seriously believed that gaining legal status would protect those engaged in the *da'wa*, noting that the Brotherhood's adversaries would never grant the *jama'a* legal status, "since when have they ever respected the law or the constitution or justice or reason or honor?"

The statement went on to explain why the formation of a party under present circumstances contravened the Brotherhood's higher mission. Islam, it noted, is a *comprehensive religion that covers all aspects of life*. Therefore, "the *da'wa* cannot be restricted to the framework of a political party governed by laws which prohibit the establishment of parties on a religious basis and determine the scope of its activities and restrict its operations to the field of politics only without embracing the other dimensions of life." In short, political work subject to governmental control could not substitute for ongoing religious outreach in society at large.

The statement then addressed how differences in opinion among Brotherhood members should be adjudicated to ensure that they did not undermine the *jama'a's* unity or higher purpose. It affirmed that *shura* (consultation) is an Islamic principle, not just in politics but in all fields of human endeavor, but insisted that it conform with certain rules and protocols. In particular, one should not insist on the rightness of his opinion if it goes against the preferences of the majority, for this is the height of tyranny and arrogance. Once a decision is made and confirmed by the *jama'a's* established leadership, it is necessary for its members to listen and obey and to express their confidence in the *da'wa* and the leaders who work on its behalf. Further, internal disputes must be resolved through proper channels, not outside them; if not, they will lead to conflict (*fitna*) and chaos (*fawda*).

In conclusion, the statement noted that "respect for one's elders is a duty of the faith," particularly given that the steadfastness of the *jama'a's* veteran leaders was among the main reasons the *da'wa* and its principles had survived. Hence members must give them respect, affirm their full confidence in them, and offer them their thanks. The statement warned members of the *jama'a* not to allow internal disputes to form the basis of "reports" and "stories" that would distract them from the group's higher purpose and lead to a dissipation of its time and effort. Instead they should align their loyalties with the *jama'a*, noting that "the obligation of allegiance is grounded in the morals of our faith."⁷⁸

Around the same time, the Brotherhood sought to explain its mission to a Western audience with the publication in 1997 of a booklet by Mamoun Hudeibi titled *Politics in Islam*.⁷⁹ The booklet, which offers a detailed exposition of the Brotherhood's *da'wa* mission and positions on key issues in English, has an interesting provenance, as it was written in response to a query from the student-run *Harvard International Review*. Like the Brotherhood position papers released in 1994 and 1995, *Politics in Islam* exhibits an incoherent mix of religious and democratic themes. For example, it asserts that the "*umma* is the

source of authority" but immediately undercuts this statement by emphasizing that members of the *umma* are obligated to submit to the provisions of Islamic law. As it declares,

The Muslim Nation is obligated to submit to Allah alone and to sanctify the laws of the Glorious Quran and the blessed Sunna [Traditions of the Prophet], and believes that man does not have the right to rule except with that which was revealed by Allah in the form of Shari'a. In that sense, it cannot nominate anyone to act on its behalf except if he is willing to rule in accordance with the Law of Allah.⁸⁰

Elsewhere the text affirms that the specific rulings contained in the sacred texts of Islam must be enforced:

The Shari'a includes texts relating to systems which nowadays are considered to be an integral part of politics. We, the Muslim Brotherhood, demand that these particular Islamic injunctions be adhered to and acted upon. They cannot be disregarded, neglected, or their application and enforcement ignored.⁸¹

Hence even in a statement directed to a Western audience, Hudeibi continued to frame the program of the Brotherhood as aiming toward the ultimate establishment of Shari'a rule.

In sum, the Brotherhood's veteran leaders responded to growing external and internal criticism by affirming their commitment to the Brotherhood's historic *da'wa* mission and emphasizing the duty of absolute loyalty and obedience to those at its helm. Indeed, if anything, the embarrassing public rift with the Wasat party founders accentuated their determination to manage the group's internal conflicts and prevent such an incident from happening again. At the same time, the repressive turn of the mid-1990s and the additional waves of arrests that followed underscored the Brotherhood's vulnerability to state repression and prompted its senior leaders to exercise greater self-restraint in their public rhetoric and behavior. Seeking to cultivate new allies and avoid another direct confrontation with the state, the Brotherhood began to soften its calls for the immediate application of Shari'a rule and attempt to recast itself as an agent of democratic reform. These trends are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Egypt's Islamist Movement in Comparative Perspective

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE EVOLUTION of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt reflect a wider pattern of Islamist movement change? This chapter places the Brotherhood in comparative perspective by considering the paths taken by its counterparts in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco. My aim is not to offer a full account of the development of such groups. Rather, drawing on research I conducted in each country in the mid-2000s and building on the work of other scholars, I sketch the broad outlines of Islamist movement change in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco, highlighting key parallels with—and divergences from—the Egyptian case.

THE ORIGINS OF SUNNI REVIVALIST GROUPS
IN JORDAN, KUWAIT, AND MOROCCO

The three organizations I focus on here—the Islamic Front Party (IAF) in Jordan, the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) in Kuwait, and the Parti de Justice et Developpement (PJD) in Morocco—are rooted in the movement of Sunni revivalist Islam that first took organized expression with the formation of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood more than eighty years ago. In Egypt, the *da'wa* and political functions of the Muslim Brotherhood remained fused within one movement organization until the formation of the Freedom and Justice Party in 2011. By contrast, the Brotherhood's counterparts in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco developed separate political arms much earlier, permitting a functional division of labor. While the movement association (*jama'a*) focuses on religious outreach and social services, the party (or, in Kuwait, bloc) represents the movement in the formal political arena. Let us begin by examining the origins of the Sunni Islamist movement associations (*jama'at*, the plural of *jama'a*) in each country and the circumstances under which they established separate political arms to represent the movement in electoral contests for political power.

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN JORDAN

The Muslim Brotherhood Society in Jordan was founded by Sheikh Abd al-Latif Abu Qurah in November 1945 and was formally registered as a charitable society in January 1946. A fervent admirer of Hasan al-Banna, especially his call for a jihad to expel the Jewish community in Palestine, Abu Qurah met with Brotherhood leaders in Cairo and decided to establish a branch of the group in Jordan.¹ The society's inaugural meeting was attended by King Abdullah, reflecting the close relationship between the monarch and the East Bank merchants and property owners who headed the group at the time. While adopting the Egyptian Brotherhood's broad conception of Islam as *din wa dawla*, the Jordanian branch avoided calling directly for Islamic rule so as not to alienate regime authorities.² In 1953, just a year before the Egyptian Brotherhood was disbanded and forced underground, the Jordanian government elevated its counterpart from a charitable society to a "general multi-function Islamic group," allowing it to spread its ideas in mosques and public places and open new branches free of security interference.³ As a supplement to its *da'wa* and social service activities, the Brotherhood fielded several candidates for parliament as independents in 1951 and 1954, and under its own banner in 1956. In both 1954 and 1956 the group won four seats out of forty. Though Abu Qurah opposed the decision to participate on the grounds that the "time was not yet ripe for a strong performance," most of the group's members favored the move as a means to "spread the group's ideas and introduce its activists to the public."⁴

The Brotherhood chose not to challenge the Hashemite monarchy positioned at the apex of the Jordanian state. This stemmed in part from their acknowledgment of the special status of the Hashemite rulers, whose lineage could be traced back to the family of the Prophet. In addition, it reflected the conservative religious values and personal and family ties linking the Brotherhood's East Bank leaders with regime officials. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Brotherhood sided with the regime against the Arab nationalist and leftist opposition; despite its growing discomfort with the regime's pro-West orientation. Whatever the monarchy's flaws, Brotherhood leaders understood that their fate under an Arab nationalist government would likely be far worse. As Yusuf al-'Azm, a Brotherhood leader, explained:

The Muslim Brotherhood did not rise against the King because it was not possible for us to open fronts with all the sides all at once. We stood by the King in order to protect ourselves, for if it were left to Abdel Nasser to enter Jordan . . . he would have eliminated us as he did to the *Ikhwan* in Egypt.⁵

The Brotherhood was rewarded for its loyalty. For example, when political parties were banned in 1956, the Brotherhood, as a nonparty association, was exempt from the restrictions imposed on its secular counterparts and was able to

expand its support base at a time that other groups were suppressed. As Ellen Lust-Okar observed,

When political parties were banned and venues of participation were shut down, the Brotherhood was allowed to act as a charitable association, given ministers with socially oriented portfolios (particularly in Education and Religious Affairs) and enjoyed the freedom to establish and build a large network of social organizations—including schools, hospitals, health clinics, etc.⁶

Among the institutions established by the Brotherhood was the Islamic Center Charity Society (ICCS), licensed in 1963, which in later decades would channel donations by those who had made their fortunes in the Gulf into clinics and schools under the Brotherhood's control.⁷ As Quintan Wiktorowicz noted, the financial resources of the ICCS eventually exceeded those of any other NGO in the country except those under royal patronage.⁸

Israel's victory in the June War of 1967 dealt a lethal blow to Arab nationalism and fueled the expansion and radicalization of Islamist groups across the region. In the war's aftermath, Palestinian guerrilla forces (*fidaiyyiin*) based in Jordan launched attacks on Israel in which several Brotherhood members participated. Tensions between the Hashemite regime and Palestinian militants came to a head in the early 1970s, when Jordanian troops expelled the Palestinian Liberation Organization from Palestinian refugee camps in Jordanian territory. *But the Brotherhood remained on the sidelines in this conflict, presumably out of concern for its own survival.*

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Brotherhood expanded its role in public life. Some of its leaders assumed positions in the Ministry of Education, where they helped set the country's educational curriculum and, through their control over school budgets and appointments, channeled patronage to their supporters.⁹ Further, a few individuals accepted senior posts in the government. For example, in 1970, Ishaq Farhan accepted a joint appointment as minister of education and minister of religious endowments, and Abd al-Latif 'Arabiyyat was appointed director general of the Amman Department of Education (1981–82) and later served as the Ministry of Education's secretary-general (1982–85).¹⁰ During the same time period, in a direct parallel with Egypt, the Brotherhood emerged as the dominant force in Jordan's student unions and professional associations. Further, when parliament was restored after a fourteen-year hiatus in 1984, the Brotherhood won three of the eight vacant seats.¹¹

By the 1980s, several distinct trends had coalesced within the Jordanian Brotherhood, reflecting profound differences of opinion on the group's proper relationship with the regime and other sectors of society. As Mansour Moaddel observed, one trend, associated with such figures as Yusuf al-'Azam, Ahmad Azaideh, and Ishaq Farhan, favored "closer interaction with political trends in society and dialogue with the government," while a second trend, represented

by hard-liners such as Muhammad Abu Faris and Hammam Sa'eed, "took a more puritan and politically isolationist approach."¹² In addition, the Brotherhood was internally divided on the priority to be given to the liberation of Palestine over domestic affairs. Such discord reflected the diversification of the Brotherhood's base, which now included a mix of East Bank Jordanians and Palestinians. While East Bank, ethnically Jordanian leaders had a history of cordial relations with the Hashemite regime, the Palestinians who entered the group in 1948 and 1967 injected a new strain of radical activism into the group's ranks. Indeed, over time the Brotherhood became the primary vehicle for the incorporation of Palestinians into the Jordanian polity and the most important venue for the articulation of their demands. The Brotherhood's eventual adoption of a hard-line stance against any accommodation with the "forces of Zionism and imperialism" created new tensions with the regime and strained the pattern of cohabitation they had forged in the past.

But unlike in Egypt, both the regime and the Brotherhood sought to prevent these strains from reaching a breaking point. Periods of tension were typically followed by periods of rapprochement, with each side anxious to avoid the trauma of an open conflict. Though increasingly outspoken in its opposition to regime policy, the Brotherhood stopped short of challenging the legitimacy of the monarchy itself. In return, the regime allowed the Brotherhood to function in the open and maintain a large network of mosques and charitable and social service organizations, enabling it to build a mass base far exceeding that of any secular group. The Brotherhood was thus uniquely positioned to benefit from the opening that ushered in a new era of Jordanian politics in the early 1990s.

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN KUWAIT

Less is known about the history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait, and published studies of the group, whether in English or Arabic, are few in number and difficult to access. Nevertheless, piecing together bits of information from different sources, a picture emerges that exhibits numerous parallels with the Jordanian case. In Kuwait, the Muslim Brotherhood first took organized expression as the Islamic Guidance Society in 1952 and was relaunched after Kuwait gained independence from Britain in 1962 as the Social Reform Society.¹³ As in Jordan, the Kuwaiti branch looked to the Egyptian Brotherhood for inspiration and guidance. In addition, it was directly influenced by Brotherhood teachers and other professionals who fled Nasser's Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s and established new lives in the Gulf. In contrast with the Jordanian Brotherhood, the Kuwaiti branch was not formally registered but operated informally, conducting its affairs away from the public eye.¹⁴

Like its counterparts in Egypt and Jordan, the Kuwaiti Social Reform Society directed the bulk of its energies to grassroots outreach, establishing a network

of mosques and social service organizations funded by donations from private individuals and Brotherhood-affiliated companies and investment banks. In its early years, the Kuwaiti Brotherhood's understanding of Islam was influenced by radical Egyptian ideologues like Sayyid Qutb, as well as by the ultrapuritanical Wahhabi strand of Islam that prevailed in Saudi Arabia: But from the outset, it eschewed violence and avoided direct confrontation with the Sabah monarchy, opting to promote Islamization within—rather than against—the institutions of Kuwaiti society and state.¹⁵

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Brotherhood remained aloof from conflict between the Sabah regime and Arab nationalist and leftist groups in parliament, whose demands for greater oversight of regime policy led the emir to suspend the legislature in 1976. The Brotherhood did not challenge the emir's decision and was rewarded with the appointment of its chairman, Yusuf al-Hajji, as the minister of religious endowments. Other Brotherhood members were appointed to positions in the state bureaucracy, particularly in the Ministries of Education and Communication, where they pushed for a greater focus on religious themes in school textbooks and television programs.¹⁶

Emboldened by the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Brotherhood extended its reach into new domains in the 1980s. Like its counterparts in Egypt and Jordan, it ran candidates for the boards of student unions and professional associations and scored striking gains, particularly in the scientific and technical fields.¹⁷ When parliament was restored and elections were held in 1981, the Brotherhood, together with Salafi groups, outperformed leftist and liberal forces for the first time. In part, this was a result of the government's decision to expand the country's electoral system by adding several new districts in tribal areas outside the country's main urban centers.¹⁸ Ostensibly intended to boost the representation of pro-regime tribal deputies in parliament, the addition of the new districts was a boon for Islamist groups as well. Beginning in the early 1980s, the Brotherhood tapped into the economic grievances of the Bedouin population, who resented city dwellers' privileged access to government benefits and services, and exploited their anxiety about the loosening of traditional patriarchal authority structures in a period of rapid social change.

By appealing to the country's newly naturalized Bedouin tribes, the Brotherhood was able to expand its base of support. At the same time, its close association with the Bedouin community reinforced its conservative positions on social and moral issues. As Ghanim al-Najjar, a Kuwaiti political scientist, observed, the incorporation of the Bedouin tribes contributed to the "desertization" of Kuwaiti politics, eroding the cosmopolitan norms and values associated with the country's urban merchant, professional, and intellectual elites.¹⁹

Islamist and secular deputies in parliament were deeply divided on social and moral issues. For example, after the elections in 1981 and 1985, the Brotherhood and Salafi groups introduced a series of bills that called for elevating the status of the Shari'a in the constitution from a *primary source* to *the source of*

legislation.²⁰ In another controversial move, they demanded the stricter segregation of men and women in public places. Yet on other matters, Brotherhood deputies cooperated with their liberal and leftist counterparts. After the 1985 elections, they joined forces to assert the right of parliament to greater oversight of the executive functions of the ruling family.²¹ For example, they both participated in the aggressive interpellation (*istijwab*) of individual cabinet members, eventually leading the prime minister (per tradition, the Crown Prince) and his cabinet to resign on July 1, 1986, claiming that parliament's relentless interference had made it impossible for them to govern.²²

During the next four years, the emir ruled the country by decree. Against this backdrop, a pro-democracy movement emerged, encompassing merchants, professionals, and intellectuals from across the ideological spectrum. To circumvent the government's ban on political meetings, the opposition revived the Kuwaiti tradition of holding informal gatherings or salons (*diwaniyyaat*) in private homes. As the movement coalesced, it developed a common set of demands, "focused on the restoration of parliament, the full implementation of the 1962 constitution, and the lifting of restrictions on free speech and on the right to peaceful assembly."²³ In January 1990, opposition leaders organized a demonstration calling for the reopening of parliament, which, in a move uncharacteristic for a regime that had rarely resorted to outright repression in the past, was forcibly dispersed by baton-wielding riot police. In an effort to defuse the situation, the emir invited the opposition to participate in a national dialogue and, in April, established a new advisory body to "study the advisability and feasibility of a restoration of parliament." Leaders of the pro-democracy movement rejected these moves as a stalling tactic and remained firm in their demand for the immediate restoration of parliament and the 1962 constitution.²⁴ Though cut short by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the democracy movement exerted a defining influence on the priorities and objectives of the new political blocs formed after the end of the Iraqi occupation in 1991, including the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM).

THE SHABIBA MOVEMENT AND ITS SUCCESSORS IN MOROCCO

As in Jordan, the Moroccan state is headed by a monarchy that traces its lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad, but the authorities of the Moroccan king were even more expansive. Defined by the constitution as the "supreme representative of the nation," he served not only as the highest political authority and commander of the army but also as the country's supreme religious authority, as indicated by his designation as "commander of the faithful" (*amir al-mu'minin*). This double political and religious authority, rooted in both tradition and the Moroccan constitution, distinguishes the Moroccan king from other rulers in the Arab world.²⁵ Hence Islamist groups in Morocco are forced

to contend with a powerful state religious establishment that claims to possess the ultimate authority to adjudicate on all matters pertaining to Shari'a and Islam.

During the 1960s, under the reign of King Hassan II, a Sunni revivalist movement with clear ideological affinities to the Muslim Brotherhood began to coalesce in Morocco with a base in the country's universities and secondary schools. Jam'iyyat al-Shabiba al-Islamiyya (The Association of Islamic Youth) was founded by 'Abdelkrim Muti'. Though independent of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Shabiba movement drew on its ideas and was particularly influenced by the ideas of Sayyid Qutb. As 'Abdalla Bagha, a PJD leader who was a member of al-Shabiba at the time, recalled:

We were revolutionary in our outlook, reflecting the view of Sayyid Qutb and our own radical interpretation of the Quran and the Hadith. The cultural atmosphere at the time encouraged radical thinking among all groups—a rejection of reality—not just by Islamists but also on the left.²⁶

When al-Shabiba was implicated in the 1975 assassination of 'Umar Ben Jalloun, a prominent leftist trade union leader, the group was dissolved, several leaders were arrested, and Muti fled into exile.²⁷ Such events triggered a process of soul-searching within al-Shabiba's ranks. As Abd al-Qadir 'Umara, a member of the PJD Executive Council, explained:

The assassination of Ben Jalloun was a critical juncture for the movement. It raised a number of fundamental questions that became a focus of heated internal debate: Who are we? What do we want? What is our relationship with the political system, the king, and other groups? Is it possible to impose Islam by force? When we arrived at answers to these questions, we advanced.²⁸

In the early 1980s, a group of Shabiba leaders based in Rabat broke from Muti and formed a new association, Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group).²⁹ Its founding leaders, then in their thirties, included 'Abdalla Bagha, Muhammad Yatim, and 'Abdalla Benkirane. This group set the movement on a new course. As Michael Willis observed:

From the outset, it was apparent that the new grouping was intent on breaking not only with Abdelkrim Mouti's leadership, but also with his whole approach when seeking the application of Islamic values and doctrines in Morocco. Whereas *Al-Shabiba* under Mouti's leadership had been renowned for its belligerence and criticism of the regime and had even been implicated in violence against its opponents, *al-Jama'a* adopted a very different approach. It both explicitly accepted the legitimacy of the Moroccan regime—fundamentally the monarchy—and renounced the use of violence. Emphasis was, instead, placed on the promotion of Islamic values through gradualist and peaceful means.³⁰

Over the next ten years, this evolution progressed. As Muhammad Tozy noted, "They asked themselves, 'Is our interpretation of Islam the only one? Is

it the right one?'"—moving from a stress on absolutes toward greater ideological flexibility and openness to dialogue with other groups.³¹

As part of this wider shift, the Islamic Group attempted to normalize its relationship with the regime and acquire a legal foothold in the political system. After their bid for legal status was denied in 1983, Islamic Group leaders wrote a series of letters to government officials emphasizing their loyalty to the king and the Moroccan state. Soon after, they moved to create a party that would function alongside the movement association and represent the latter in the political system. In 1992, their application to form Hizb al-Tajdid al-Watani (The National Renewal Party) was denied. As Muhammad Darif observed, the regime was determined to avoid what had happened in Algeria, where the stunning victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (known by its French acronym, FIS) in parliamentary elections in December 1991 prompted the army to intervene and declare martial law.³² In an effort to distinguish itself from the FIS and defuse the allegation that it claimed the exclusive right to represent Islam, the Islamic Group changed its name to al-Islah wa al-Tajdid (Reform and Renewal).

It also began to explore other ways to enter the political arena. After an attempt to merge with the large and well-established Moroccan nationalist Istiqlal party failed, it reached out to the Mouvement Populaire Democratique and Constitutionnel (MPDC), a small Berber party close to the palace led by Abdelkrim Khatib. The MPDC was such a marginal group that it had not won a seat in parliament in over twenty years. Negotiations between al-Islah wa al-Tajdid and the MPDC began in 1992 and culminated in the holding of an extraordinary Party Congress in 1996, when several movement leaders were appointed to the MPDC's executive committee. This was a watershed moment for al-Islah wa al-Tajdid. As Willis observed, "[T]he objective of finding a party political vehicle had been achieved and the perceived isolation of the Islamist movement from the formal political process had been broken."³³ Later that year, the group merged with a smaller Islamist association, Rabitat al-Mustaqbal al-Islami, and changed its name to Harakat al-Tawhid wa al-Islah (Movement of Unity and Reform, or MUR).³⁴ The MPDC, which was renamed the Justice and Development Party (Parti de Justice et Developpement, or PJD) in 1998, would function from then on as the political arm of the MUR.

Morocco experts emphasize that the Islamist trend could not have gained a legal foothold in the political system without the king's blessing. As noted earlier, movement leaders set the stage for this breakthrough by attempting to persuade the king, for the better part of a decade, that they sought to work within the existing order rather than against it. This helped soften the regime's perception of the group as a threat. More generally, Muhammad Darif explained, al-Islah wa al-Tajdid's willingness to join the party system via a pro-palace party, and the monarchy's acquiescence to it, can be understood as an effort by both sides to manage their relationship in such a way that the Algerian experience could be avoided.³⁵

What is most striking is that *the political inclusion of al-Islah wa al-Tajdid (later, the MUR) was preceded by the self-conscious break of its leaders from the radical ideas associated with the movement's anti-system past.* In Jordan and Kuwait, where the relationship of Sunni revivalist groups with reigning monarchs was less antagonistic to begin with, there was less external pressure on group leaders to critically reexamine the movement's absolutist foundations, such as their claim to speak for all Muslims and the definition of their ideas as the "correct" interpretation of Islam. In Egypt, younger members in the Brotherhood began to call for progressive changes in the group's agenda beginning in the mid-1980s, but they were blocked from assuming top leadership positions by the old guard. By contrast, the split of current MUR and PJD leaders from the Shabiba movement in the mid-1970s set the stage for a qualitative shift in the movement's core ideology. As Abd al-Qadir 'Umara put it,

Over a period of more than ten years, through a process of ongoing discussion and debates, what started out as a closed and insular movement characterized by a belief in absolutes was transformed into a participatory movement characterized by an acceptance of the Other [*qubuul bi'l-'akhar*]. This shift was solidified by 1990.³⁶

Longtime observers of Moroccan politics agree that the ideological orientations of MUR and PJD leaders changed significantly over time. The early onset of this shift, and the extent to which it shaped the PJD's later evolution, make the Moroccan group something of a special case.

In recent decades, the Jordanian, Kuwaiti, and Moroccan groups, like the Brotherhood in Egypt, expanded their participation in electoral politics. Let us look at the impact of participation on each group below.

THE TRAJECTORY OF ISLAMIST PARTICIPATION IN JORDAN

In April 1989, riots broke out in the southern Jordanian city of Maan that quickly spread to other parts of the country. The immediate trigger of the protests was a set of austerity measures implemented by the regime under pressure from the International Monetary Fund, including cuts in subsidies that led to sharp increases in the cost of food and other staple items. The riots came as a shock to the regime, which was amplified by the fact that they originated in tribal areas of the south, historically a strong base of regime support. As Curtis Ryan observed, the regime of King Hussein responded by launching a process of "defensive liberalization," through which it "attempted to mollify its domestic critics and open the system to more meaningful levels of political participation than had been the case thus far."³⁷

Jordan's political opening began with the holding of parliamentary elections in November 1989, the first general elections since 1967. With the country's secular groups in disarray, the Muslim Brotherhood was virtually the only or-

ganized group capable of running an effective campaign. Yet in a pattern that would repeat itself in future elections, the Brotherhood opted not to run for all eighty seats, fielding candidates for less than a third. As Ishaq Farhan observed, participation in elections was not a high priority for the group at the time, and moreover if the Brotherhood had sought and won a larger number of seats, "the dose would have been too heavy" for the Jordanian polity to bear.³⁸ Mobilizing the base it had cultivated over the preceding decades, the Brotherhood won twenty-two seats, 85% of the seats it contested and more than a quarter of the eighty seats in total. An additional twelve Islamist candidates won seats as independents. Arab nationalist and leftist groups won a total of thirteen seats, with the remainder going to pro-regime candidates.

Brotherhood leaders interpreted the group's strong showing as a sign of widespread support for its agenda. After the elections, they issued a statement declaring that the group's "most important duty" was to "exert every possible effort to revise all laws and regulations in Jordan so that they completely conform with the Islamic Shari'a."³⁹ The Brotherhood stressed that it would pursue such goals through the legislative process rather than outside it. In addition, it participated in negotiations to establish a framework for the new political order. In April 1990, six Brotherhood leaders joined a sixty-member commission appointed by the king to draft a National Charter (*mithaq watani*). Formally adopted in June 1991, the charter represented a compromise between the king and the country's main political trends. While defining Jordan's system of government as a hereditary monarchy, it enshrined the principle of political pluralism by affirming the right of citizens to form parties, as long as their methods were peaceful and their objectives did not violate the constitution. While stressing the pluralistic character of the new system, the charter acknowledged the special status of Islam as the religion of the state and of the Shari'a as the primary source of legislation.⁴⁰ Hence the charter incorporated a mix of democratic and religious elements, leaving the question of how they should be reconciled open to interpretation.

In 1992, after martial law was lifted and a new political parties law was passed, the Brotherhood established the Islamic Action Front party (Jabha al-'Amal al-Islami), or IAF. Though the party initially included a number of Islamist independents, it became clear early on that who would run it and what positions it would take were subject to Brotherhood direction. Though formally independent, the IAF hence functioned in practice as the Brotherhood's political arm, reflecting a division of labor in which the *jama'a* retained control of the movement's *da'wa* and social service networks while the IAF represented the movement in electoral politics.

Less than a year after the IAF was established, the regime changed the country's electoral laws to limit its presence in parliament. Further, to contain growing opposition to the country's 1994 peace treaty with Israel and, later, to U.S.-led military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the monarchy imposed new

restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly and increased the powers of the state security establishment (*mukhabarat*). Such deliberalizing measures triggered a striking shift in the IAF's discourse away from calls for the immediate application of Shari'a toward an emphasis on the urgent need for constitutional and political reform. This shift is examined in greater detail next.

THE IAF'S RHETORICAL SHIFT TO DEMOCRACY

The Brotherhood's strong showing in the 1989 parliamentary elections came as a surprise to the regime, which had predicted that it would gain about ten seats, less than half the number it actually won. From the viewpoint of regime officials, the electoral system in place at the time, in which citizens chose candidates for all of the seats in their multimember districts, with each seat won by a simple plurality, had enabled the Brotherhood to achieve a level of representation greater than its support in society at large. The election tally backs up this claim, since the Brotherhood won 12% of the popular vote but managed to gain 27% of the seats in parliament.⁴¹ Before the next round of parliamentary elections in 1993, the regime altered the country's electoral laws: citizens would be permitted to vote for only one candidate in each multimember district. In a society where tribal and clan loyalties ran strong, the "one person, one vote" law essentially forced voters to choose between their favored tribal candidate and candidates fielded by the IAF and other parties. In addition, the regime adjusted the number of seats allocated to each district, padding the representation of historically pro-regime rural areas and limiting that of large urban centers like Amman and Zarqa where support for the Brotherhood and other opposition parties was concentrated.

The IAF denounced the electoral reform as a flagrant instance of government intervention in the democratic process in order to limit Islamist gains. As Ishaq Farhan stated:

The government says this is a one-person, one-vote system, but the weight of individual votes are not the same. . . . The government knows that we have considerable popular support, which is why they have corrupted the democratic process in order to prevent us from achieving a majority.⁴²

In 1993 the Brotherhood's share of seats in parliament dropped from 28% to 20%, even though its share of the popular vote increased.⁴³ The following year, the Jordanian government signed a peace treaty with Israel over the vigorous objections of the IAF and secular nationalist parties. Soon after, these groups launched an "anti-normalization" campaign within Jordan's professional syndicates. To contain growing opposition to the treaty as well as the grievances triggered by a new round of economic reforms, the regime imposed new re-

strictions on freedom of expression and assembly, including the establishment of a controversial press and publications law in 1997. In July of that year, the IAF and several secular parties called for a boycott of the parliamentary elections scheduled for the fall. Further, the IAF shifted its attention from religious matters to the regime's dictatorial practices. As Schwedler observed, other than opening and closing with brief verses from the Quran, the IAF's statement made no references to Islam and stressed the urgent need for political reform.⁴⁴

In sum, by the mid-1990s, we see a clear shift in the IAF's discourse toward a new emphasis on public freedoms and democracy. This shift was clearly grounded in self-interest since the Brotherhood, as the largest and best-organized sector of the opposition, would benefit most from a lifting of the restrictive laws then in place. As Shadi Hamid put it, "As the Muslim Brotherhood and IAF were fighting for, literally, their very freedom, they were forced to prioritize and redefine their focus."⁴⁵ Yet what began as a tactical adjustment yielded a broader and more lasting ideological shift, in which the call for Shari'a rule was redefined as consistent with the strengthening of democratic rules and procedures.

Developments in Jordan after the ascension of King Abdallah II to the throne in 1999 reinforced this trend. The breakdown of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the onset of the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq created new flashpoints of conflict between the Brotherhood and the regime. At the same time, a new round of economic reforms triggered unrest around the country. With opposition growing on multiple fronts, King Abdallah suspended parliament in 2001 and ruled by decree until 2003, when long-delayed elections were finally held in June. Although more elections followed in 2007 and 2010, the "one person, one vote" election law prevented the IAF from achieving any meaningful gains.

Further, beginning in the mid-2000s, the Brotherhood's public endorsement of violent acts of resistance in Palestine and Iraq prompted a number of senior figures in the state establishment to conclude that the group had begun to pose a threat to national security. In 2004, the government arrested several Brotherhood preachers for "excessive criticism of the regime," and in 2005 it sought to rein in the Brotherhood-dominated professional syndicates by banning the holding of any event, meeting, or gathering without the government's approval.⁴⁶ The bombing of three luxury hotels in Amman by an affiliate of al-Qa'ida in November 2005 on the orders of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a former Jordanian national, prompted new restrictions on preaching in mosques and the introduction of a new anti-terrorism law that expanded the powers of the state security and police.⁴⁷ Although the Brotherhood and the IAF were not directly implicated in the bombings, some of their leaders saw Zarqawi as an icon of resistance. After Zarqawi's death in 2006, IAF hard-liner Muhammad Abu-Faris lauded him as a "martyr" and several IAF parliamentarians paid a condolence call to his family.

Further, the victory of Hamas in the Palestinian legislative elections of January 2006 raised fears that a newly triumphant Hamas would exert a radicalizing influence on its sister movement in Jordan. Emboldened by Hamas's success, 'Azzam Huneidi, head of the IAF's bloc in parliament, declared that the IAF could win as much as 50% of the vote in free and fair elections, and urged the regime to stop trying to "downsize" the movement by manipulating the country's electoral laws to reduce their electoral weight.⁴⁸

The IAF participated in the 2003 and 2007 parliamentary elections, but its margin of representation continued to erode. In 2003, it won seventeen of the thirty seats it contested, a respectable success rate of 57%. But in an expanded parliament of 110 members, its share of seats declined to 16% (compared with 20% in 1993 and 28% in 1989). In 2007, with tensions between the regime and the Brotherhood at a new height, the IAF only contested twenty-two seats and avoided running pro-Hamas and anti-government candidates.⁴⁹ Amid widespread allegations of vote rigging and fraud, the IAF won six seats, just 27% of the seats it contested and less than 6% of the total, its worst performance yet. Bitter recriminations among the group's internal factions ensued, with each side seeking to deflect blame for the party's losses onto their rivals.⁵⁰ More broadly, the results underscored the regime's determination to block the Brotherhood from achieving an effective presence in parliament, triggering growing cynicism and frustration with the electoral process.

By the time a new round of elections approached in 2010, an internal poll indicated that over 70% of IAF members favored a boycott. As IAF secretary-general Hamza Mansour explained, the boycott was "a political act and a logical consequence of the political impasse," as well as a means to signal the group's protest against the country's rising poverty levels.⁵¹ The most notable feature of the Brotherhood's call for a boycott of the November 2010 elections was that it was led by leaders of the "moderate" or "dovish" wing of the party who had strongly endorsed participation in the past. In an effort to "transform the boycott into a political platform," prominent "moderates" joined with counterparts from secular parties and civil society organizations to call for the transformation of the system into a parliamentary monarchy in which the powers of the king would be sharply circumscribed.⁵² In sum, in a direct parallel with Egypt, by 2010 the reformist wing of the Brotherhood had concluded that participation by the regime's rules had reached a dead end and that future participation would not be productive unless those rules were fundamentally revised.

THE SCOPE AND LIMITS OF THE IAF'S DEMOCRATIC SHIFT

Like the Brotherhood in Egypt, the Jordanian Brotherhood and its political arm, the IAF, began to challenge the rules and practices of authoritarian leaders by joining the call for democratic reform. Though glimmers of this trend sur-

faced as far back as the mid-1990s, it became even more pronounced in the years that followed. As Shadi Hamid observed, the IAF's 2003 electoral program prominently featured two democratic concepts—the "alternation of power" and "the people are the source of authority"—for the first time, and they have become a Brotherhood rallying cry ever since.⁵³ Likewise, the detailed reform program released by the IAF in 2005 endorsed a wide range of civic and political freedoms.⁵⁴

This striking rhetorical shift, and the fact that Brotherhood and IAF leaders have remained "surprisingly on-message,"⁵⁵ has been pointed to by experts as proof that the Brotherhood has embraced the democratic cause as its own. As Juan Stemman observed, "[D]eclarations that democracy was anathema to Islam and calls for an Islamic state ruled solely by Shari'a are a thing of the past." Or as Hamid put it,

The fact that the IAF was arguing in favor of popular as opposed to divine sovereignty could only be taken as an implicit retreat from advocating the creation of an actual Islamic state. . . . Democracy is assumed to be compatible with the Shari'a, *a priori*. . . . In effect, liberal democracy has absorbed Islamist thought, proving the ideological power of the democratic ideal.⁵⁶

Indeed, Hamid argued,

It is true that Islamic movements in certain countries have been guilty of political equivocation on the issue of democracy. This, however, is not the case in Jordan. An objective analysis of what the Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF have said and written in recent years should put alarmist concerns to rest.⁵⁷

The IAF's ideological shift was less coherent and encompassing than such comments suggest, however. In a parallel with the Brotherhood in Egypt, the IAF's commitment to democracy continues to be tempered by its opposition to individual freedom and equality when they are seen as conflicting with the Shari'a and the fixed values of Jordanian society as they define them. Let us look at such tensions in greater detail.

First, although Brotherhood leaders repeatedly emphasized their commitment to political pluralism in statements to the press, a closer look at their discourse suggests that this commitment was not absolute. For example, IAF leader Abd al-Latif 'Arabiyyat argued that the Brotherhood's commitment to pluralism is proven by its endorsement of the National Charter of 1991.⁵⁸ But the charter is in fact an ambiguous document. In addition to affirming the principle of party pluralism, it asserts that Islam is the religion of the state and the Shari'a is the primary source of legislation. According to the terms of the charter, then, whether or not Jordanian parties must accept the privileged status of the Shari'a is open to interpretation. That the charter can be invoked as a *constraint* on political pluralism can be seen in the comments of 'Azzam Huneidi, who at the time of our interview in 2004 was the head of the IAF's parliamen-

tary bloc. When asked if he supported the right of communists to form their own party, Huneidi replied:

The communists can participate according to the terms of the National Charter. But every country has its limits, don't they? Can one be a member of the Communist Party in the United States? In Turkey, those who criticize Ataturk are considered criminals, and the U.S. considers Turkey a democracy. So why can't we say that those who attack Islam are rejected?⁵⁹

Second, although all of the IAF leaders I interviewed in 2004 stressed that the "people are the source of all authority," they did so with the full expectation that a parliament formed through free elections would be dominated by members of their own party, along with conservative tribal MPs who shared their agenda. When asked if the IAF would respect the outcome of an election that brought a communist party to power, the leaders I interviewed said that they would because they respect the people's will. As Hamza Mansour (secretary-general of the IAF for two terms, 2002–6 and 2010–present) said:

If there were free elections based on just and fair electoral laws, we would respect the outcome no matter what. If a leftist party won a majority, we would sit in the opposition [and pursue our objectives from there]. We respect the will of the citizens.⁶⁰

Yet IAF leaders also stressed that such an outcome would never happen because the people favor a political system based on Islam. As Mansour observed,

If we gave Jordanian citizens complete freedom they would choose Islam. This is because it is in harmony with human conscience [*damir insani*] and with human nature as God created it. The government knows that the people respect the authority of God and want a system based on submission to God [*al-taqwa li-llah*]. That is why the government will not permit free and fair elections and the real alternation of power.⁶¹

Third, all of the IAF leaders I interviewed opposed extending the unbridled freedoms available in the West to citizens in Jordan, arguing that this would undermine public morals and weaken the institution of the family. Every society, they stressed, should have the right to strike its own balance between respect for individual rights and deference to public sensibilities, noting that even in the West people cannot walk in the street naked or have sex in public. *While advocating the expansion of citizens' rights in the political domain, the IAF simultaneously supported the stricter regulation of their private behavior.* IAF leaders saw no contradiction here; on the contrary, they framed such positions as complementary. As Mansour noted: "One of our main goals is to overcome corruption of all types—political, financial, economic, and moral. We seek to put an end to the marketing of values and behavior that are not in harmony with our own Arab and Islamic values."⁶² When asked to give some examples of what the

IAF opposed, Mansour mentioned the spread of nightclubs, mixed-gender swimming pools, and deviant forms of massage.

IAF leaders were quick to stress that they did not seek to impose conformity with Islamic standards of behavior by force. Noting that there is "no coercion in religion" (*la ikrah fi'l-din*), the only way to promote correct behavior was through persuasion (*iqna*). For example, although all of the IAF leaders I interviewed regarded veiling (wearing the hijab) as a religious requirement for all Muslim women, they stressed that their goal was to convince women to adopt it by choice.

But from a civil rights perspective, two problems persisted in the IAF's efforts to promote the veil and, by extension, other types of Islamically correct behavior. First, it remained unclear whether the IAF was willing to grant those with conflicting opinions—including different views of Islam—the same access to the media, the schools, and the mosques they sought for themselves. Second, IAF leaders differed on whether the state should legally mandate veiling at some point in the future. While some IAF leaders I interviewed, like Raheel Gharibeh, stressed that whether or not a woman veiled should be left to her individual conscience, others disagreed. For example, both Hamza Mansour and 'Azzam Huneidi suggested that after an initial phase of consciousness-raising (*taw'iya*) to educate women of their duties in Islam, a bill requiring veiling should be proposed, to be converted into law by popular vote. Just as Mansour claimed that "the people want Shari'a," so too he insisted that "the vast majority of Jordanian women, as believing Muslims, are already receptive to the hijab by their very nature (*bil-fitra*)."⁶³

More broadly, IAF leaders emphasized that they did not oppose women's rights but sought to advance them within an Islamic framework. For example, while Westerners might see the veil as a hardship, 'Azzam Huneidi noted, "To us, it is a form of respect [*takrim*] for women."⁶⁴ The IAF's stance on women's rights cannot be simply framed as based on "Islam," since, like all religions, Islam is open to multiple and conflicting interpretations. Indeed, the IAF's selective reading of Islam exhibited the influence of conservative tribal norms and customs, particularly on matters concerning women's sexual and personal autonomy. The IAF's opposition to two reform bills proposed by the Jordanian government in recent years exhibits in sharp relief the limits of its support for women's rights.

THE IAF'S OPPOSITION TO THE REFORM OF GENDER-DISCRIMINATORY LAWS

Over the past decade, IAF deputies in parliament have repeatedly blocked efforts to reform provisions of Jordan's criminal and civil status codes that discriminate against women. For example, they opposed changes in the penal code

that would have stiffened the penalties for "honor crimes," cases in which one family member injures or kills another in order to restore the family's honor. According to Article 340, a man who kills or attacks his wife or any female relative in the act of committing adultery or in an "unlawful bed" is granted an exemption from punishment. In 1998, the Jordanian National Commission for Women, headed by Princess Basma, the sister of King Hussein, urged the government to change the law, and later that year, a group called the Campaign for the Elimination of So-Called "Crimes of Honor" led by Rana Hussein and other women's rights activists drafted a reform petition that gained over 15,000 signatures.⁶⁵ In 1999 the government issued a temporary law repealing the article, which was sent to parliament twice, in November 1999 and again in January 2000. Both times the lower house rejected it. In 2001, when parliament was suspended, the government issued another temporary law that amended Article 340 in two ways. First, rather than fully exonerate defendants in honor crimes cases, it treated such circumstances as the basis for a reduction in punishment; second, it granted women who attacked their husbands the same consideration. After the parliamentary elections of 2003, the amended law was brought to a vote several times and each time it was rejected.⁶⁶

Although adultery (*al-zina*), defined broadly as sexual relations outside the framework of marriage, is considered a crime according to Shari'a, IAF leaders acknowledged that Islam does not allow an individual to take the law into his hands. As Abd al-Latif 'Arabiyyat, then president of the IAF's Shura Council, noted:

Killing people in this way is against the Shari'a. No one is authorized to apply the law himself. Everything must go through the courts and follow proper procedures, for example, there must be four witnesses to the event. It can't be based on rumors.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, IAF leaders denounced the proposed reforms as buckling to foreign pressure and claimed they would ease the way to adultery.⁶⁸

The IAF also opposed the reform of Jordan's civil status code to grant women the unrestricted right to divorce their husbands. According to the rules of standard divorce (*talaaq*) in Jordan, a woman can only appeal for a divorce on a number of specific grounds; if the judge rules in her favor, she is granted the divorce with no financial penalty. Under the new bill, a woman could initiate a divorce without justification if she returned the dowry she had received at the time of marriage, a type of divorce known as *khul'*. Like the penal code reform, the *khul'* provision was introduced as a temporary law when parliament was suspended.⁶⁹ Issued in 2001, it was presented to parliament in August 2003 and was rejected by the elected lower house. In June 2004, the lower house once again voted against the *khul'* provision, this time by a margin of five votes.

Islamist and tribal MPs who voted against the bill claimed that it "would encourage immorality, is against Islamic Shari'a and disintegrates family val-

ues."⁷⁰ Yet the claim that *khul'* divorce was against the Shari'a was strongly challenged by women's rights activists, as well as by a number of prominent Jordanian religious scholars who argued that it was supported by extensive Islamic sources, including a well-known Hadith in which the Prophet himself allowed a woman who was unhappy in her marriage to divorce without her husband's consent. While Muhammad Abu Faris argued that this was "an exceptional case," other IAF leaders conceded that *khul'* was in fact supported by the Shari'a. They rejected the bill, they explained, because it eliminated the role of the judge in the process. Without an independent authority to assess the validity of a woman's case, the bill opened the door to baseless petitions for divorce, putting the family at risk. As Abd al-Latif 'Arabiyyat explained,

Khul' is permitted in the Shari'a. Our disagreement with the law concerns the role of the judge, which is eliminated in the new law. Some women want the authority to divorce at will. But some of them have no justification. The judge must share in the decision; it's not enough for a woman to say she's unhappy and give no reason. Maybe she just wants to be with someone else. The interests of the children and the family must also be taken into consideration.⁷¹

IAF and tribal deputies opposed two other provisions of the reform bill as well. They opposed increasing the minimum age of marriage from sixteen for boys and fifteen for girls to eighteen for both sexes, claiming this would encourage promiscuity, as young men would resort to extramarital sex. Likewise, they objected to a provision authorizing the court to inform a woman if her husband took another wife, arguing that this was a matter that should be left to the husband's discretion. Women's rights activists noted that the IAF's stance against progressive changes in Jordan's penal and civil status codes was in part a means to embarrass the new king and demonstrate that its support could not be taken for granted. But it also exposed the fact that many IAF members viewed women as weaker in mind and judgment and hence believed that their behavior must be subject to patriarchal control. As Rana Hussein noted, "When we called attention to the plight of women at risk of being killed by their own families for so-called honor crimes, the IAF argued that anyone who defends these women is defending adultery, defending prostitutes."⁷²

To undermine the credibility of women's rights advocates, IAF leaders accused them of exaggerating the problems in Jordanian society and promoting Western ideas at odds with its culture. As Rana Hussein noted, "I've been accused of everything, of being a Western agent, a Zionist agent, of encouraging sexual liberation. They say the West is using me, as if I don't have a brain of my own. It's insulting." More generally, Hussein observed, IAF and tribal deputies do not like people criticizing deeply entrenched social practices. "They say, 'This is our tradition, this is our culture.' They say, 'This is a perfect society.' That is a problem. We can't accept self-criticism, we can't admit to our mistakes. Instead we always blame everything on Israel and the United States."⁷³

While many IAF leaders retain a deeply conservative outlook on social and moral issues, others have begun to gravitate toward more progressive interpretations of Islam that entail a more robust commitment to pluralism and civil rights. In a parallel with the fissures that emerged in the Brotherhood in Egypt, several of the IAF's most progressive figures eventually broke from the party, either to become independents or to form new groups of their own. For example, in 2000 about twelve leaders, all from the Salt branch of the IAF, tendered their resignations and joined with independent Islamists in 2001 to form the Islamic Center (Wasat) party as an explicit alternative to the IAF.⁷⁴

Why did these leaders leave the IAF? It is to this question that we now turn.

THE REFORMIST TREND IN JORDAN

Senior IAF leaders explain the defection of those involved in the Wasat initiative as a dispute over tactics, most notably over the IAF's boycott of the parliamentary elections in 1997, which they opposed. Yet the causes of their alienation were far deeper. As Marwan Fawri, a founder of the Wasat party, noted:

It is claimed that the IAF is independent from the Brotherhood, but this is independence in form only. In terms of financing, membership, and decisions, the IAF remains under the Brotherhood's control. . . . We reached the conclusion that there is a big need for an Islamic political party which can represent the Islamic trend that is independent of the Brotherhood.

Among other things, Fawri explained, the continued influence of the Brotherhood on the IAF created powerful pressures for ideological and behavioral conformity:

The Brotherhood concentrates on guiding the behavior of the individual through proper religious instruction, or *tarbiya*. If anyone has Islamic tendencies but is not as strict in his Islamic behavior, they will feel very uncomfortable. The Brotherhood has specific regulations: no beer, no cigarettes, all the women must veil, and more. Most of the leaders and members of the IAF are members of the Brotherhood, so those who do not share the Brotherhood's orientations feel isolated.⁷⁵

In a striking parallel with developments in Egypt, the departure of Fawri and his associates was preceded by efforts to reform the IAF from within. As Fawri recalled,

Since the 1980s we tried to achieve changes in the structure of the IAF, in the system and its laws, for example, insisting that the position of secretary-general only be for two years and renewable once, to achieve a real alternation of power. Some of the Brotherhood leaders supported this, but others opposed it.⁷⁶

Moreover, they questioned the wisdom of the IAF's confrontational stance toward the regime, as well as the diversion of its energy and focus to regional issues at the expense of national development. In addition, they opposed IAF hard-liners' rigid interpretation of Islam. As Bassam 'Emoush, another Wasat founder, explained,

I was in the Brotherhood for thirty years, and represented them in parliament from 1993 to 1997. But I became put off by their ideological rigidity [*jumud*]. The hard-liners in the group favor confrontation and don't accept the legitimacy of the state. A lot of them are Palestinians, people like Abd al-Mun'im Abu Zant, Muhammad Abu Faris, and Hammam Sa'eed. They don't have useful ideas. For example, they call for jihad against Israel when we don't have the ability to wage war, so this is not realistic. In addition, they don't accept the views of others, they have a problem with pluralism. They say those who are not with us are against us and they want to impose their views. But Islam accepts *fiqhi* [jurisprudential], political, and religious pluralism. Creation is pluralistic, so God must have wanted it that way. It is very revealing of the hawks' mind-set that they don't criticize repressive Islamic systems in the Sudan or Iran where people are forced to submit to Islamic rule.⁷⁷

Further, 'Emoush and other Wasat party leaders openly criticized prevailing tribal norms as at odds with the progressive and egalitarian spirit of Islam. For example, 'Emoush stressed that he personally supported raising the minimum age of marriage and granting women the option of a *khul'* divorce, noting that "marriage should not be a prison."

The Wasat party founders also diverged from mainstream opinion in the IAF in supporting the "real participation of women and youth" in the party's decision-making structures. The IAF's platform acknowledges the right of women to participate in public life "within the framework of Islamic virtues and values."⁷⁸ Since its founding in 1992, women have played a central role in fundraising and mobilizing voters during elections. In addition, they have occupied leadership positions in Brotherhood-affiliated schools and charitable associations, and contributed to the Brotherhood's impressive victories in Jordan's student unions and professional associations.⁷⁹ Yet as Janine Clark and Jillian Schwedler observed, the participation of women was channeled into a parallel women's sector, reflecting "the efforts of party leaders to ghettoize women's activities rather than envision meaningful gender equality within the party."⁸⁰ Whether it was appropriate for women to serve in the party's central decision-making bodies and represent the IAF in parliament were matters of dispute. For example, while Ishaq Farhan advocated the participation of women in the IAF's Shura Council (legislative assembly) and the nomination of women as IAF candidates for parliament, Muhammad Abu Faris and Hammam Sa'eed adamantly opposed such moves. Nawal Fawri (unrelated to Marwan Fawri), a respected school administrator and female activist in the town of Madaba, was the first

woman elected to the Shura Council in 1993. In the 2002 Shura Council elections, six women were elected, and by 2008 the number of women had increased to nine.⁸¹ Further, in 2003 the IAF included a few women on its list of candidates for parliament for the first time. While none of them won an open seat, Hayat al-Misimi, a pharmacist from al-Zarqa, won one of the six seats reserved for women according to the new women's quota established shortly before the elections commenced.⁸²

According to Hayat al-Misimi, women could have achieved an even greater presence in the IAF's central decision-making bodies had they wanted to. As she noted, "We decided to run seven candidates for the Shura Council in 2002 and six won. If we had wanted more seats, we would have run more candidates." Yet, al-Misimi noted, IAF women were in agreement that it was still early to expand their role, not because they were incapable but "due to the nature of the work," which entailed long meetings and diverted time and energy away from their responsibilities at home.⁸³ By contrast, those who broke from the IAF to form the Wasat party argued that the underrepresentation of women in the IAF's leadership structures, and the continued expectation that they defer to their male counterparts within them, deprived women of a meaningful role in the conduct of party affairs. As 'Emoush observed, "The norm is that they sit far away from the men, and they are told it is better for them not to speak, because a woman's voice is *'awra* [a source of sexual temptation]." Hence, he noted, the IAF's commitment to women's participation is more superficial than real.⁸⁴ Nawal Fawri, the first woman elected to the IAF's Shura Council and another founding member of the Wasat party, recalled her long struggle to overcome internal resistance to women's involvement in party affairs:

In 1993, no one even imagined having women on the Shura Council; the leaders said, "It is not suitable for women to participate." [But] I didn't look at Islam as they envisioned it in their minds, I took my understanding of Islam from the sacred texts. I have long experience as an activist in the Brotherhood, which I joined when I was fourteen. When I entered the Shura Council, it wasn't easy for some people to accept me. The conservatives didn't want women to assume leadership positions, they said, "This is *kufir* [unbelief]." I told them to let women acquire the skills and experience needed to be effective leaders, but from their point of view, this would have been a revolution [*inqilab*!] They rejected all my ideas; even the IAF women didn't agree with me. Hayat al-Misimi said to me, "Why do you insist [on pushing for women's involvement in the IAF's leadership bodies]? We need to organize ourselves first." And I said, "I would have to wait ten years, and I refuse to wait that long!"⁸⁵

Though difficult and frustrating, Fawri noted, her experience paved the way for other women to assume a greater role in the party.

When Fawri left the IAF, she initially considered forming a women's party that would encompass Islamist and secular gender activists. But in the end she

decided "that it was a good thing to have a party in which men and women worked together" and helped establish the Wasat party. At the time, King Abdallah was promoting a moderate image of Islam, which she and other Wasat party founders endorsed. While at odds with conservative Islamist opinion, she stressed, "Our interpretation of Islam is also based on the sacred texts. They have their methods of interpretation, and we have ours." What distinguished the Wasat party's vision, she noted, was that "it rejects working in the realm of idealism [*mithaliyya*] and instead seeks to work in the realm of the possible, starting from an understanding of the realities of our society."⁸⁶

Like its counterpart in Egypt, the Jordanian Wasat party was a small organization, with limited name recognition and support. Further, though Wasat party leaders forged close ties with secular democracy activists, their relationship with the Brotherhood and the IAF was strained. As Marwan Fawri noted, "There is a debate within the Brotherhood about us. More moderate leaders support our presence, but others think that any gains on our part come at their expense."⁸⁷ IAF leaders criticized the Wasat party for accepting financial support from the government for an expensive and well-publicized international conference called "Moderation in Islam," which their leaders hosted in June 2004,⁸⁸ and boycotted its proceedings. But the real reason the IAF shunned the Wasat party, Marwan Fawri argued, was that "They don't want another party which speaks from an Islamic perspective and is not under their control."⁸⁹ Or as Nawal Fawri put it, "They want to be the only ones."⁹⁰

As in Egypt, the departure of some of the IAF's most progressive figures diluted the influence of the reformist trend within the IAF itself. Nevertheless, the IAF continued to encompass a wide range of factions, which largely replicated those present in the Brotherhood, and none of them managed to achieve full control of the party's agenda.⁹¹ Rather than representing different positions along a single ideological spectrum, such factions were fluid and shifting, depending on the issue at hand. Hence leaders might adopt a "moderate" position on some issues and a "hard-line" position on others. As a result of these shifting alliances and coalitions, a known religious conservative or Palestinian hard-liner would be elected as the Brotherhood or IAF secretary-general in one election, only to be replaced by a "moderate" or "centrist" in the next. This alternation of power among the Jordanian Brotherhood's internal factions stands in sharp contrast to the Brotherhood in Egypt, where aging leaders associated with the conservative wing of the movement have retained a dominant position on the executive board.

Nevertheless, the advance of progressive ideas within the IAF is blocked by a number of hard constraints. First, the Brotherhood's continued influence within IAF circles creates powerful pressures for ideological and behavioral conformity, limiting the space for unorthodox self-expression within its ranks. Second, progressive figures like Raheel Gharaibeh, whose views do not differ

substantially from those who broke from the IAF to form the Wasat party, must compete with ideological conservatives and Palestinian hard-liners in shaping the party's agenda. Third, any progressive changes in the IAF's positions on social and moral issues expose party leaders to the charge that they have strayed too far from Shari'a mandates. As Hani Hourani, a Jordanian researcher, noted, IAF leaders "don't want to be criticized for not being Islamic enough, of supporting something that violates this or that *aya* [verse] of the Quran."⁹² As Jordanian political analysts have observed, the Brotherhood's mass appeal derives largely from its reference to the Shari'a and its calls for resistance to "Western and Zionist domination," including the spread of ideas seen as threatening Arab-Islamic values and culture. Against this backdrop, the ideas of progressive leaders do not have much traction among the party's supporters. Indeed, while the IAF has exhibited an impressive record of fidelity to democratic procedures in selecting leaders and setting policy by majority vote, *the very responsiveness of the IAF's leaders to the views of its base has impeded progressive reform in the group's agenda.*

The participation of the Muslim Brotherhood in electoral politics in Jordan prompted a shift in its discourse toward a new emphasis on the merits of democratic institutions and procedures, but its internalization of the cultural values of democracy has been partial and incomplete. Persistent ideological divisions within the Brotherhood and the IAF, as well as the continued influence of conservative tribal norms and values in Jordanian society at large, have limited the IAF's embrace of more progressive interpretations of Islam that are closer in spirit to the ethos of pluralism and toleration associated with democracy in the West. Indeed, as I have argued, such a shift would likely alienate IAF hard-liners and dilute the party's mass appeal.

That said, some of the most ideologically conservative leaders in the IAF have shifted their positions over time. A case in point is Muhammad Abu Faris, who vigorously opposed the election of women to the Shura Council and the nomination of women candidates for parliament. At a party conference in December 2001, which included a brief speech by a representative of the IAF's women sector, Abu Faris led a walkout by some members who "rejected the idea of a woman speaking before a public gathering of men."⁹³ Abu Faris was similarly nonplussed when Hayat al-Misimi joined the IAF's parliamentary bloc after the 2003 elections. As al-Misimi recalled, he was visibly uncomfortable with her presence in the group's first meetings. Yet over time Abu Faris came to admire al-Misimi's dedication and seriousness of purpose and eventually acknowledged her effectiveness, both in conversations with her and with other IAF leaders. As al-Misimi observed, "Even some of those who were most opposed to us in the beginning have come around to accepting our presence."⁹⁴ Though Abu Faris is hardly an advocate of full gender equality, this shift highlights the ways that life experience can fundamentally alter an Islamist actor's values and beliefs.

THE ISLAMIC CONSTITUTIONAL MOVEMENT IN KUWAIT

The trajectory of the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) in Kuwait exhibits some striking parallels with that of the IAF in Jordan. At the same time, it bears the imprint of distinctive features of Kuwaiti politics and society. The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait from 1990 to 1991 weakened the position of the Sabah royal family, which fled into exile. When Kuwait's sovereignty was restored, those who had stayed in Kuwait and participated in the resistance movement assumed an active role in public life. Forming parties was not an option, since they were prohibited under Kuwait law. Instead, like some of Kuwait's secular groups, the Brotherhood took advantage of the country's political opening by forming a separate bloc to represent the group in future elections, called the Islamic Constitutional Movement. The ICM joined Arab nationalists and liberals in demanding a strengthening of the oversight functions of parliament vis-à-vis the state administration and the royal family. Further, some ICM leaders began to gravitate toward more progressive interpretations of Islam. However, as was the case in Jordan, the scope and pace of movement reform were limited by pushback from ideological hard-liners, as well as by fears that adopting positions out of sync with the conservative values of the ICM's base would be costly at the polls. Let us look more closely at such developments.

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, which lasted from August 2, 1990, to February 28, 1991, tilted the balance of power between state and society, emboldening Kuwaiti activists demanding the restoration of parliament and the implementation of broader political reforms. While members of the royal family sat out the occupation in Saudi Arabia, many of those who remained in Kuwait risked their lives as part of a resistance network operating under the nose of the Iraqi authorities. When the Sabah royal family returned to Kuwait, members of the resistance "had to be convinced that their sacrifices would not be in vain" and that "the ousting of Iraqi troops would not be followed by a return to 'politics as usual.'"⁹⁵

During the occupation, the emir also faced intense pressure from the United States, which led a major military operation to liberate Kuwait. As Thomas Friedman noted in the *New York Times*, the United States should not go to war "to make the world safe for feudalism."⁹⁶ Against this backdrop, the emir organized a three-day conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in October 1990, involving 1,200 figures from a broad cross-section of Kuwaiti society. The conference produced a deal between the ruling family and the opposition: "The latter agreed to stand by the emir, reaffirm its loyalty toward him and acknowledge him as the legitimate ruler of the country. In exchange, the emir promised that liberation would be followed by far-reaching political reforms that would include the restoration of parliament."⁹⁷

After the occupation ended, leaders from various sectors of the opposition began to assert themselves. On March 2, 1991, the Kuwait Democratic Forum (*al manbar al-dimuqrati al-kuwayti*), or KDF, was formed, representing an alliance between two Arab nationalist groups dating back to the 1960s. Shortly thereafter, on March 31, the Islamic Constitutional Movement (*al haraka al-dustouriyya al-islamiyya*) was established by leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. During the occupation, a younger generation of Brotherhood activists with roots in the Islamist student movement on university campuses played a leading role in the resistance, "gaining stature at the expense of the older generation and those who had fled."⁹⁸ These younger activists spearheaded the formation of the ICM as an organization independent of the Brotherhood. As indicated by its name, the ICM emphasized its fidelity to the Kuwaiti constitution and, by extension, the Kuwaiti state. As Muhammad Dalal, an ICM leader, noted, by affirming its commitment to the existing constitutional framework, the ICM laid to rest any fears that the Brotherhood would exploit the instability created by the occupation to undermine the regime. With the formation of the ICM, he observed, "No one could question our commitment to the interests of the nation."⁹⁹ In addition, the ICM publicly broke its ties with the international Muslim Brotherhood because the latter supported Saddam Hussein during the occupation of Kuwait.

Unlike its counterparts in Egypt and Jordan, the ICM was but one of several Islamist groups active on the political scene, each with its own distinct agenda. In addition to the ICM, two other major Islamist blocs emerged in the wake of the occupation, the Islamic Popular Alliance (IPA), a conservative religious Salafi bloc, and the National Islamic Coalition (NIC), a Shi'ite bloc encompassing religious and secular figures who sought to advance the interests of Kuwait's Shi'ite community, which represented about 30% of the population.¹⁰⁰ Other Islamists ran for parliament as independents. Kuwait's diverse political landscape also included Arab nationalist groups like the KDF, liberal activists, and members of the country's prominent merchant families. Further, in parliamentary elections, the ICM competed not only with other political blocs but also with pro-regime "service deputies" and independent tribal candidates, particularly in outlying Bedouin districts. As a result, the ICM's representation in the fifty-member Kuwaiti parliament, while exhibiting some fluctuation, never exceeded more than a handful of seats. It won four in 1992, five in 1996, four in 1999, two in 2003, six in 2006, three in 2008, and one in 2009, a share ranging from 2% at its lowest to 12% at its height.¹⁰¹

During the 1990s, the ICM joined secular nationalist and liberal MPs in an effort to strengthen parliamentary control over the use of public funds, including the government's overseas investments.¹⁰² In addition to demanding the investigation of high-level corruption and financial mismanagement, deputies in parliament called individual ministers to the assembly for interpellation, in which ICM leaders played a leading role. Accusing parliament of making it

impossible for the cabinet to govern, the emir suspended the assembly in 1999 (but did so constitutionally by promptly calling for new elections).¹⁰³

At the same time, the ICM allied with Salafi and tribal deputies in a push for social and moral reforms. In December 1991 the government established a higher consultative committee to complete the harmonization of Kuwaiti laws with Shari'a mandates, but it was given no enforcement powers and progress was slow.¹⁰⁴ In addition to criticizing the government for its sluggish response, ICM and Salafi deputies demanded that the reference to the Shari'a in Article 2 of the Kuwaiti Constitution be elevated from "a principle source of legislation" to "the source of legislation" (*masdar al-tashri*). In 1994, a bill to that effect was signed by thirty-five of the fifty members in parliament and delivered to the emir. Although supported by a majority of *elected* MPs, the bill did not pass. In what Nathan Brown and 'Amr Hamzawy describe as "a Kuwaiti constitutional oddity," non-elected government ministers are also granted a vote in parliament on most issues.¹⁰⁵ This typically adds sixteen or seventeen votes on important bills, with ministers tending to vote en bloc in support of the government. For a bill to become law, it must gain the support of a two-thirds majority of parliament (including government ministers), as well as the approval of the emir, a bar the Islamists failed to cross.¹⁰⁶

In the early 1990s, the ICM and other Islamist deputies also circulated a bill to establish a public authority to "direct the public to do good and refrain from evil" (*al-'amr bi'l-ma'arouf wa'n-nahy 'an il-munkar*), a phrase derived from the Quran. With offices in every district, the commission would promote religiously correct behavior through lectures, pamphlets, and books, and report on "any phenomena contradicting public decency." Sharply criticized by secular and liberal figures in the media, the bill was ultimately defeated.¹⁰⁷

Yet as part of a wider coalition of Islamists and conservative tribal deputies, the ICM also scored some important gains. A bill mandating the gender segregation of Kuwait University was narrowly defeated in 1994 but passed in 1996, based on a compromise that gave the university five years to segregate its classes and facilities and ensured government noninterference in co-ed private schools.¹⁰⁸ The bill was portrayed in the media as a major victory for the Islamists, who favored the stricter supervision of Kuwaiti teenagers in order to prevent the formation of illicit sexual relationships. As Mubarak Duwaileh, an ICM MP who supported the bill, explained:

Adolescence is a sensitive age, and students arriving at the university are pushed from a conservative atmosphere into a free atmosphere. This can lead to bad results, that is, to sexual relations outside marriage. Before coming to university, the girl is controlled by her father, she goes out with a driver and comes home with a driver. We know everything that goes on. But now all of a sudden she is out from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. with no supervision, and no one knows what she is doing between classes. . . . The bad students can influence the good students. A lot of

accidents happened, unwanted pregnancies and things like that. Once she graduates, it is a very different situation. If she becomes an employee, she must punch a time clock and must wear respectable clothes. Also she is older, more mature, and is likely to get married. So the period of study at the university is especially sensitive.¹⁰⁹

The logistical and financial challenges created by the gender segregation law were noted by several Kuwaiti professors I interviewed in 2004. As Ghanim al-Najjar observed, Kuwait University must now maintain separate buildings, libraries, and courses for male and female students: "About 70% of courses are now segregated. Remember that about two-thirds of students are women, and sometimes you don't have enough men enrolled in a course so you have to cancel it. Both male and female students are complaining that they can't get enough courses."¹¹⁰

Islamist deputies in parliament also sought to censure Kuwaiti scholars and writers accused of offending Islamic values. For example, they condemned 'Alya Shu'ayb, a professor of philosophy at Kuwait University, for "spreading degenerative ideas" when she stated in an interview that lesbian relationships were widespread among university students. Likewise, in January 1997, under pressure from Islamists, a female writer was hauled to court for a book of short stories describing love relationships, prompting liberals to protest that the Islamists were leading "an organized campaign against freedom of thought."¹¹¹ Further, Islamist deputies accused Ahmad al-Baghdadi of insulting the Prophet Muhammad. In an interview with a Kuwaiti newspaper, al-Baghdadi observed that the Prophet had "failed" in Mecca and hence was forced to move to Medina. As Shafiq Ghabra observed:

The word "failed" became an issue. Several Islamists took it to parliament and called for punishment and resignation. Others threatened al-Baghdadi's life, and some sued him in court, while others wanted to force him to divorce his wife.¹¹²

Al-Baghdadi was arrested and spent two weeks in prison before he was released.¹¹³

The role of the ICM—as distinct from that of Salafi groups—in the drive to censor Kuwaiti intellectuals and writers is unclear because media reports described its instigators generically as "Islamists." At a minimum, I found no evidence of ICM deputies actively defending those targeted in the campaigns. Further, in interviews I conducted in 2004, it became evident that ICM leaders' commitment to political and intellectual pluralism did not extend to supporting free speech that violated the core values and principles of Islam as they defined them.

ICM leaders framed calls for censorship, especially on matters of religion, as consistent with the mandates of the Kuwaiti Constitution, which asserts that "[t]he State protects the freedom of practicing religion *in accordance with established customs, provided that it does not conflict with public policy or morals*

[emphasis added]." Among those who invoked the constitution in this way was Muhammad Dalal, a member of the ICM political bureau:

'We respect all opinions, even those which oppose our views. We criticize each other, and that is not a problem. But on matters of religious belief, it is different. Attacks on religion destroy the higher values of society—faith [*iman*] and respect for God, the Prophet, and his Companions. These are things all citizens must respect. Everyone can say what he wants, but if he goes against the high values, that means he is against the constitution, and we can take him to court.'¹¹⁴

THE ICM AND THE DEBATE OVER WOMEN'S POLITICAL RIGHTS IN KUWAIT

In November 1999, ICM leaders in parliament, together with conservative Salafi and tribal deputies, voted down a bill that would have granted women the right to vote and run for parliament. The bill was one of sixty-three temporary laws issued by the emir after he had suspended parliament and before new elections had occurred. When the bill was put to a vote in parliament, forty-one members voted against it and twenty-two in favor. The bill's defeat provoked an outcry from Kuwaiti women's rights groups, which had been urging the government to move on the issue for a long time. As Rola Dashti, a prominent activist, noted with exasperation, "We have scored a first in history. A parliament votes to limit democracy—what a farce."¹¹⁵

ICM leaders explained that their vote against the bill was, in part, a protest against the issuing of laws by decree. As Badir al-Nashi' noted, "We rejected all of the laws proposed by the government during that period [when parliament was suspended]."¹¹⁶ But the ICM's position also reflected the fact that some ICM leaders opposed the decree on principle. As ICM deputy Mubarak Duwaileh stated in 1996, "Politics is not a right for women; it is a man's right only."¹¹⁷ During group meetings held by the ICM after the decree's announcement in May 1999, it became clear that its leaders were sharply divided on the issue, with some opposing both women's voting and candidacy rights, some supporting women's right to vote but not to run for elected office, and others supporting the extension of rights to women on both counts. Nasser al-Sani' recalled such internal discussions:

Before the vote in 1999 we held a series of meetings to discuss these issues, to which we invited members of the 'ulema, social scientists, and women activists from within the ICM. The women sat in another room, rather than talking face-to-face with the men, because the culture of the ICM prevented men and women from sitting together. But the women offered their opinions using microphones.

ICM leaders also conducted an internal poll, which indicated that a majority of its members opposed the bill. One of the main concerns, al-Sani' explained,

was that the extension of political rights to women without clear rules and regulations could lead to inappropriate contact between women and unrelated men. Some ICM leaders, he noted, were willing to grant women political rights but only if measures were taken to prevent social harm. By framing the bill as an “up or down” vote on voting and candidacy rights, al-Sani’ argued, its liberal supporters doomed it to failure. “Like President Bush,” al-Sani’ wryly observed, “supporters of the bill said, ‘You are either with us or against us’; there was no middle ground. I spoke with some of the women’s rights activists later and told them, ‘It’s because of your arrogance that you lost.’”¹¹⁸

THE ICM’S NEW LEADERSHIP

During the mid-2000s the ICM underwent a major administrative overhaul that catapulted a new cadre of leaders in their thirties and forties into top positions at its helm. The turnover was prompted in part by the ICM’s poor showing in the 2003 parliamentary elections, when the number of its deputies dropped from four to two, triggering a wave of self-critical reflection. Younger activists like Badir al-Nashi’, Muhammad Dalal, and Sa’d al-Dafiri, many of whom were former leaders in the Kuwait Student Union, argued for greater transparency in the organization, more clarity in its programs, and greater cooperation with other forces in Kuwaiti society, including those with whom it had clashed in the past. As Muhammad Dalal noted, before the 2003 elections, “the situation had deteriorated to the point that all the trends were fighting each other, putting each other down. This made all of us look bad in front of the voters.” Though younger-generation leaders led the call for change, it was supported by some older leaders as well. For example, ‘Isa Shahin, a veteran ICM leader, opened the door to turnover in the group’s leadership by deciding not to run for the position of secretary-general. In 2004, Badir al-Nashi’ was elected as the ICM’s secretary-general, and a new Political Bureau (*maktab siyasi*) was formed, dominated by younger leaders who sought to give the movement a more “modern” cast. As Dalal noted in 2004, “We are trying to put a new face on the movement, to be more open to other trends, and to make more of an effort to find common ground.”¹¹⁹

As part of this general reorientation, the ICM called for reforms to strengthen parliament, legalize parties, and expand press freedoms. It also joined liberal and leftist groups and the youth-led Orange Movement in demanding a reduction in the number of the country’s electoral districts from twenty-five to five. Creating larger districts was viewed as a means to limit the corruption and vote buying that gave an edge to local tribal leaders and wealthy businessmen. The ICM also called for greater transparency in government decision making, reducing waste and corruption, upgrading educational technology and curricula, and economic development and job creation.¹²⁰

The ICM’s positions on political and economic reform differed little from those of its secular counterparts. As Nasser al-Sani’ noted, “On political reform we share the same priorities—we all want to change electoral laws and party laws to expand rights of assembly, we all want to fight corruption, and we all want to strengthen parliament so that it can hold the government accountable for its actions.” However, the ICM and secular groups continued to disagree on social and moral issues. In addition to supporting political and economic reform, al-Sani’ noted, the ICM sought to “protect and strengthen Kuwait’s Islamic heritage, identity, culture, and traditions.”¹²¹ By the mid-2000s, rather than continue to push for change in the wording of Article 2 of the constitution, the ICM opted for a more “practical” approach, advocating the Islamization of individual laws that violated Shari’a precepts. In addition, they proposed revising Article 79, which makes the passage of new legislation contingent on the approval of parliament and the emir, to include a provision that it must also conform with the Shari’a.

According to al-Sani’, the primary point of difference between the ICM and the liberal opposition in Kuwait is in “how they view the social structure.” Liberals, al-Sani’ observed, “don’t mind the existence of relations between the sexes, even if that takes the form of ‘girlfriends’ and ‘boyfriends’ as you have in the West, with sex before marriage. But Kuwait is a conservative society. They [the liberals] are trying to push society in the direction of Westernization.”¹²² While liberals objected to stricter controls on private speech and behavior as a “civil liberties” issue, the ICM viewed such controls as necessary to prevent social harm (akin, one might say, to the rationale for laws restricting gambling, pornography, and drug use in the West).

Likewise, the ICM framed its objection to the extension of political rights to women as a defense of the public interest (*al-maslaha al-amma*). Conceding that Shari’a scholars disagreed on whether the participation of women in elections was religiously permissible, the ICM leaders I interviewed in 2004 emphasized that the group’s position on the matter was not a question of *halal* and *haram* (what is religiously permitted and forbidden) but reflected its concerns about the adverse consequences that might result from women mixing with unrelated men. As Muhammad Dalal observed,

There are different Shari’a opinions on these matters, and since they are subject to religious dispute, we are free to take any position. It is not a matter of Shari’a but what is good for society, is the timing right, are the conditions appropriate or not. Some members argue that women’s participation will damage society.¹²³

Mubarak Duwaileh, an ICM deputy in parliament who noted with a wry laugh that he is considered a hard-liner (*mutashaddid*) on the issue, elaborated on such concerns:

Let’s say that parliament grants political rights to women in my district. Its composition is half urban and half Bedouin. Let’s say I have a campaign rally with speeches

that go on from 9–12 P.M. The ladies will be busy with such meetings and campaigns and will not return home until midnight. First of all, they will have neglected their families, and second, it will cause problems between them and their husbands. The husband will say, "Where you have been?" The older child has an exam tomorrow and his dinner is not ready; another child is sick and needs attention. In addition, this will give bad girls and wives an opportunity to do something wrong. She can say she was at a campaign meeting but who knows where she really went? Also, let's say a man is sitting with his wife and there is a knock at the door. It's me and my campaign staff, and we say that we want to speak with his wife—that is an abnormal situation. For the sake of our community, for the interests of our families, for the sake of social relations, we oppose granting women political rights.¹²⁴

Several ICM leaders I interviewed, including Badir al-Nashi', Isma'il al-Shati', and Nasser al-Sani', stressed that they personally supported women's political rights but that this position was rejected by a majority of the ICM's members when the matter was put to an internal vote. As Isma'il al-Shati' observed, the ICM has performed an important social function by integrating members of the country's recently naturalized Bedouin tribes into the Kuwaiti polity. But such inclusion has come at a price, in forcing the ICM to harmonize its positions with conservative tribal values. To underscore this point, al-Shati' offered an example:

Muhammad al-Basiri is from the Ijma' tribe, which is a big tribe. He believes in women's political rights on the inside but cannot say that to his voters because they still believe in their traditions. He says, "Look, everything can succeed if you do it gradually. If you do it quickly, you'll cause a shock, and it may have the opposite effect by triggering an even harsher reaction."

Other ICM leaders, al-Shati' noted, said the same thing: "The people inside our districts won't accept it." He went on, "If we drive the vehicle at a hundred kilometers per hour we will alienate our base, so we can only drive it at fifty kilometers per hour. If you want to influence them, you should expect that they will also influence you." But al-Shati' also highlighted the contradiction between the ICM's opposition to women's political rights and its historic reliance on women's votes to win elections in the country's student unions and professional associations.¹²⁵

Secular political leaders agreed that fear of alienating its base had blocked the ICM from evolving in a more progressive direction. As Ahmad' al-Baghdadi observed: "If they vote in favor of women's rights, they will lose the votes of their tribal supporters, and they don't want this." While Salafi Islamists opposed the extension of political rights to women on principle, he argued, the ICM based its positions on political interests. Yet ironically, al-Baghdadi predicted, if women are granted voting rights, "a majority of them will likely vote for Islamist groups and we liberals will lose."¹²⁶

A bill extending voting and candidacy rights to women was presented to parliament several times in the six years after the first vote in 1999, and each

time the ICM voted against it. In May 2005 the bill was raised in parliament once again, and this time it won by a vote of thirty-five to twenty-three (with one abstention). The bill passed *despite the fact that a majority of elected members of parliament voted against it*, with government ministers voting en bloc enabling its approval. According to press reports at the time, to pick up the additional votes needed to ensure that the bill passed, the government "bought off" a number of deputies, though it was not clear exactly what, if anything, was promised to whom. Further, the vote was preceded by nine hours of debate, during which ICM deputies managed to attach a rider to the bill requiring that "women adhere to the rules and provisions of Islamic law when it comes to voting and candidacy." As Badir al-Nashi' explained, this was "to ensure that the law did not violate the Islamic identity of Kuwaiti society." For example, it would require the establishment of separate polling centers for men and women, as well as a law to regulate women's participation in elections.¹²⁷ Women voted in parliamentary elections in 2006, 2008, and 2009. In addition, women candidates have run for seats since 2006. In 2009, four women were elected to the parliament for the first time, all in mostly urban districts. This breakthrough was all the more significant because they won their seats without the benefit of a women's quota.

While celebrated as a major victory for women's rights groups in Kuwait, the extension of political rights to women was also a boon to the ICM. Once the bill became law, the ICM launched a major effort to mobilize women voters. Two months after the bill passed, Muhammad al-Basiri, an ICM leader, explained this seeming shift of course:

We have already closed this chapter and are looking forward to women's active participation in political life but according to the limits and laws given by our religion. The ICM is thinking seriously about future issues, including ways to ensure society's maximum participation in the electoral system and currently we are targeting the women vote bank. We aim to launch political awareness programs directed mainly at women to attract their votes.¹²⁸

The ICM benefited significantly from the women's vote in 2006. As Brown and Hamzawy observed, "Members recount how one of their leading parliamentarians, Nasser al-Sani', was going down to defeat . . . until the women's ballots (cast separately in gender-segregated polling) were counted."¹²⁹

THE SCOPE AND LIMITS OF ISLAMIST MOVEMENT CHANGE IN KUWAIT

The ICM's administrative overhaul in 2004 brought a new generation of leaders into top posts in the Political Office (*al maktab al-siyasi*), the body responsible for running the group's day-to-day affairs. Most of these leaders were urban professionals in their thirties and forties, and many had roots in the Kuwaiti

student movement. Both in terms of their life experience and wider outlook and sensibilities, they bore a close resemblance to middle-generation reformists in the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The ICM's new leadership pushed the organization toward greater transparency. For example, in 2004 they publicly identified the members of the Political Office for the first time and launched the publication of a bulletin laying out the group's priorities and explaining its positions on key issues. According to Kuwaiti analysts, the leaders at the ICM's helm aimed to give the group a more "modern" image and to overcome the suspicion and hostility that had marred its relations with other groups in the past. After 2004, the ICM participated in several cross-partisan initiatives, including a campaign to reduce the number of Kuwait's electoral districts. Supported by a wide range of political factions and civil society groups, the redistricting bill was approved by parliament in 2006. The ICM also joined secular opposition figures in pushing for the legalization of political parties and asserting parliament's right to select the country's prime minister.

Further, the ICM attempted to position itself as a bridge between the country's urban and tribal communities, and between Kuwaiti liberals and hard-line Salafi conservatives. As Badir al-Nashi' observed, "One of the main strengths of our movement is that we are in the center [*wasat*] and can build bridges with the other trends."¹³⁰ Yet in attempting to forge a "middle" path, the ICM opened itself up to criticism from both sides of the ideological spectrum. Arab nationalists and liberals complained that the ICM's positions on key issues were marked by a lack of clarity and consistency. As Ahmad Bishara, a leader in the National Democratic Front (al-Tajammu' al-Watani al-Dimuqrati) and one of the ICM's most outspoken critics, observed,

I find it really difficult to know where they stand. You have to read between the lines and cross-reference their statements. Their double-talk and slippery statements are often accepted because people aren't paying close attention. I try to expose the contradictions in their statements and make them public, and they don't like that. They try to discredit me, calling me an Americanized liberal, trying to find something to kill me politically, but they can't.¹³¹

According to Khalil Haydar, a progressive Shi'ite Kuwaiti writer, the problem is that:

They confuse Islam with the Islamic movement, and when they assert that something is required by Islam, you don't have the right to discuss it or reinterpret it. For the Islamists to absorb human rights principles, they will need to overcome many barriers. Most leaders in the ICM are not ready to support freedom of religion, the equality of men and women, and the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims.

According to Haydar, the views of some figures in the ICM, like Isma'il al-Shati', appeared to have genuinely changed, but they lacked a coherent approach (*minhaj*) to the reinterpretation of religious texts that would allow them

to justify their positions according to the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).¹³²

Likewise, secular analysts claimed, a lot was revealed by what ICM leaders *didn't say* when they discussed issues of political reform. As Ahmad al-Diyyan, a journalist affiliated with the Arab nationalist trend, noted:

When you look at the discourse of the ICM since 1992, you will see references to the constitution, parliamentary life, elections, popular participation, and the right of women to vote. But they don't mention freedom of belief, personal freedoms, or gender and religious equality.¹³³

At the same time, the ICM was portrayed by Salafi hard-liners and tribal leaders as having strayed too far from Islamic mandates. The ICM's losses in the parliamentary elections of 2008 and 2009 were due in part to fierce competition from Salafi and tribal candidates, especially in outlying Bedouin districts. From a high point of six deputies in 2006, the ICM's representation dropped to three in 2008 and one in 2009. As Brown and Hamzawy observed, the reasons for the ICM's electoral decline after 2006 were varied and complex. It stemmed in part from tactical errors, such as the ICM's attempt to form electoral alliances with Salafis, only to have them defect at the last minute. But even more decisive was the conversion of two of Kuwait's five electoral districts into "the exclusive preserve of tribal candidates, selected before the election in illegal but increasingly sophisticated tribal primaries." Voters in such primaries "opted for candidates who generally combined intense social conservative views with fierce loyalty to the tribal population—and an insistence on securing government benefits."¹³⁴

Although the ICM's electoral losses were caused in part by factors outside its control, they made it more difficult for younger-generation leaders to push the organization in a more progressive direction. Shortly after the May 2009 election results were announced, Badir al-Nashi' submitted his resignation as secretary-general, as did all the members of his Political Office.¹³⁵ In September, Nasser al-Sani' was elected as al-Nashi's replacement, and over the ensuing months he launched an inquiry into "what went wrong."¹³⁶ In a May 2010 interview al-Sani' noted that the ICM had erred by fielding candidates from smaller tribes who could not compete against members of larger tribes in outlying districts. Looking ahead, he said, the group would launch a new phase of "institution-building" to strengthen its presence at the grassroots level. In addition, al-Sani', who chose a new team for the Political Office that month, said he wanted the ICM "to re-focus on 'Islamist issues'"—such as the gradual implementation of Shari'a—that he believed were the root of its previous successes, before it was "politicized." As he stressed: "This is what our followers and members traditionally love, this is the mainstream, I would say. Some people think we have shifted a little bit away from that so we have to get it back."¹³⁷

In sum, as the new secretary-general saw it, the ICM's shift away from the social and moral issues it had prioritized in the past had cost it at the polls. Like

the IAF in Jordan, the more attuned ICM leaders were to the views of its base, the more difficult it was to adopt progressive positions out of sync with the conservative values of its supporters. Such constraints were amplified by the fact that the ICM's main electoral competitors were Salafis and tribal leaders who outflanked it on the right.

ICM leaders who subscribed to a more progressive interpretation of Islam were quick to categorize their views as "personal opinions," highlighting the gap between such views and mainstream opinion within the ICM's ranks. In recent years, some observers argue, the progressive wing of the ICM has become increasingly marginalized; for example, Isma'il al-Shati', one of its most iconic figures, has left the group altogether. Meanwhile, in response to pressure from below, the new Political Office has moved to revive the group's conservative religious agenda. As Khalil Haydar observed:

Some of the ICM's leaders are more open but their base [*jumhur*] is very conservative. The base places limits on the extent of change that is possible. In the end, the ICM is a populist movement [*haraka sha'biyya*] so they say things to make the people happy. Populism is a big problem for the Islamic movement.¹³⁸

To be clear, the primary constraint on the progressive reform of the ICM's agenda was not "Islam" per se but a particular reading of Islam inflected by deeply rooted conservative social norms and customs. As Kuwaiti liberals were the first to admit, such ideas as gender equality and civil rights have yet to gain much traction beyond the country's urban educated elite. As Ahmad al-Baghdadi observed, "Kuwait has liberals, but there is no liberalism. There is a big difference between the two. You will find liberal individuals, but liberalism as a concept in society remains weak. This is the main problem."¹³⁹

Certainly such broader conditions are open to change, as is the ICM's agenda. Yet in the future, as now, the ICM's development will be shaped by the values and interests of its constituents.

THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY IN MOROCCO

Like its counterparts in Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait, the Parti de Justice et de Developpement (PJD) in Morocco joined the political system to change it. Like the IAF in Jordan and the ICM in Kuwait, it serves as the political arm of a "parent" *da'wa* association, representing the movement in the field of electoral politics. Like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the IAF in Jordan, the PJD has exercised self-restraint in parliamentary elections, deliberately fielding a limited number of candidates in order to avoid achieving "too large" a victory that might alarm the regime and jeopardize its own survival. Indeed, it was not until 2007 that the PJD ran a full complement of candidates for parliament, comparable to that of its main competitors, for the first time.

Yet despite these similarities, the PJD is something of a special case. Of the Islamist groups included in this study, the PJD has gone the furthest to downplay its call for Shari'a rule and has been the most restrained in pursuit of its conservative social and moral agenda. Further, the PJD has evolved further than its counterparts into a professional, routinized, and transparent political organization. Of the groups under study here, the PJD exhibits the greatest shift away from the Sunni revivalist movement's anti-system past.

The PJD's trajectory bears the imprint of the political and social environment in which it is embedded. It conceded early on to the supreme religious authority of the Moroccan king and the official religious establishment rather than claim to possess the exclusive right to speak in Islam's name. In addition, its evolution has been shaped by the presence of secular parties and civil society organizations with sufficient resources and mass support to serve as an effective counterweight to—and constraint upon—the PJD's power.

The PJD's restrained approach to controversial social and moral issues also reflects the relative strength of pragmatic and ideologically flexible figures within the group's leadership ranks. Indeed, most "older generation" PJD leaders are closer in outlook to reformist figures in the Egyptian Brotherhood than to members of the Brotherhood's old guard. Nevertheless, like the Egyptian Brotherhood and its affiliates in Jordan and Kuwait, the PJD has yet to fully reconcile its new commitments to democracy and pluralism with older Islamic precepts carried over from the past.

JOINING THE SYSTEM IN ORDER TO CHANGE IT

In the mid-1970s, what now counts as the older generation of PJD leaders broke from the radical Shabiba organization and set the movement on a new course. Unlike the Justice and Charity (al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan) movement, a parallel Islamist organization led by Abd al-Salam Yasin, the ex-members of al-Shabiba publicly acknowledged the supreme authority of the king as the Commander of the Faithful and the guardian of the Islamic character of the Moroccan state. Further, while Justice and Charity denounced the political order as un-Islamic, the ex-Shabiba leaders decided to join it. In 1996 they finally gained a foothold in the system by merging with a small legal party, the MPDC, which was renamed the PJD in 1998.

The PJD initially emphasized the Islamist character of its platform. When a new government with secular and progressive leanings was appointed in 1998, the PJD was sharply critical of its policies. Known as the "alternance" government, the new cabinet was headed by Abdel Rahman Youssefi, the leader of the Union Socialiste des Union Nationale des Forces Populaires (USFP), and included other ministers from the Kutla, an alliance of the USFP, Istiqlal (a nationalist party with roots in the country's fight for independence), and a few

other secular parties that had together gained a plurality of seats in the last elections. The alternance government, which included prominent opposition figures in the cabinet for the first time, was heralded as a sign of the king's commitment to democratic reform. Yet as Marina Ottaway and Meredith Riley observed, it "did not in any way limit royal power or change the balance between the palace and elected officials."¹⁴⁰

In the domain of social policy, however, the alternance government launched a bold new course. In March 1999, with the backing of the World Bank and Moroccan women's rights groups, Sa'd Saadi, the minister of childhood and family issues, rolled out a major new initiative to improve the legal and social status of women. The National Action Plan for the Integration of Women in Development (hereafter, the Plan) identified four main priorities: (1) expanding education and combating illiteracy; (2) promoting the health of women and children; (3) integrating women into economic development; and (4) raising the status of women in the legal, political, and public institutional spheres.¹⁴¹ The most controversial element of the Plan was its call for the reform of the *Mudawwana*, Morocco's personal status code. It called for:

Abolishing the perpetual guardianship of women, which would, among other things, allow them to marry and work without permission; raising the official minimum marriage age from 15 to 18; abolishing polygamy; equalizing the right of divorce and making it subject to the courts . . . ; conferring half of the husband's wealth on the wife in the event of divorce or the husband's death; and giving women the right to retain custody of her children in the event she remarried.¹⁴²

Such provisions directly undermined the authority historically granted to male heads of households in Morocco under the provisions of *Shari'a*. Not surprisingly, they were quickly denounced by senior members of the religious establishment, including the minister of Islamic affairs and the Moroccan League of *'Ulama*, an official state body that "declared that the plan would denigrate Islamic jurisprudence" and, "by unjustly interfering in the affairs of the family," would "deter men from marriage and encourage prostitution and the loosening of morals."¹⁴³ The PJD also expressed strong objections to the Plan. Indeed, it took the lead in forming a large umbrella group, *L'Instance National Pour le Protection de la Famille Marocaine*, comprising forty-one associations, to oppose it. In March 2000, women's rights groups together with secular civil society organizations and parties staged a mass rally in support of the Plan in Rabat, while in Casablanca, the PJD and other Islamist groups simultaneously held a much larger demonstration against it. At the latter event, signs carried by marchers framed the Plan as a sell-out to foreign pressure and an effort by secular politicians to impose a radical social agenda rejected by a majority of the Moroccan people.¹⁴⁴

That the PJD felt free to voice its objections to the Plan reflected the fact that it emanated from liberal and leftist-leaning figures in the government rather

than the monarchy itself. Further, according to Moroccan analysts, the death of King Hassan II and the succession of his son Muhammad VI to the throne in July 1999 created an opening for Islamist groups to assume a larger role in public affairs.¹⁴⁵ Confronted by a strong outpouring of Islamist opposition, the Youssefi government shelved the reform project and appealed to the king to arbitrate among its supporters and its critics.

As the 2002 parliamentary elections approached, the PJD, with a more robust party organization and a larger base of support, was in a much stronger position to compete than it had been in the past. In addition to its deputies in parliament, it now had more than a hundred local councillors and six local commune presidents. As Sa'd al-Din 'al-Uthmani, the party's deputy secretary-general, observed, the party had made the transition from "being a small party to a medium-sized one."¹⁴⁶ Further, as Willis noted, the party stood to gain from its conservative stance on social and moral issues and the reputation of its local representatives for honesty and hard work.¹⁴⁷ The disappointing performance of the alternance government in addressing the country's social and economic problems, as well as growing popular anger over the U.S. "war on terrorism" and growing violence in Palestine and Iraq, further enhanced the PJD's appeal.

THE PJD'S ELECTORAL SELF-RESTRAINT

Yet as the party's electoral prospects improved, so too did the pressures it faced to limit its gains to acceptable levels. As Willis noted, the party confronted a dilemma when it came to contesting elections: "The party clearly wanted to increase its representation in local and national government but did not want to be seen to do well and raise the fear of an Islamist run or dominated government." Indeed, in candid statements before the election, PJD leaders "acknowledged that massive gains, or even victory, for the PJD in the elections was not in its own interest."¹⁴⁸ The risks of "performing too well" were accentuated by the Algerian experience, which weighed heavily on the minds of regime authorities and the PJD alike. As Sa'd al-Din al-'Uthmani explained in 2000, "We are frightened of frightening people."¹⁴⁹

Hence in the 2002 parliamentary elections, the PJD fielded candidates in just fifty-five, or roughly 60%, of the country's ninety-one electoral districts. Although this represented an increase from 1997, when it ran in 43% of the districts, it still diverged significantly from the strategy of the country's main secular parties. For example, the USFP and the *Istiqlal* both ran candidates in 100% of the districts. Despite these self-imposed limitations, the PJD won a respectable forty-two seats, emerging as the third-largest party in parliament after the USFP and the *Istiqlal*.¹⁵⁰ Further, as some Moroccan analysts observed, the PJD's gains would have been even greater were it not for regime interven-

tion in the vote counting. Yet rather than protest such interference, Willis noted, the PJD appeared "quite content to have a reduced presence in the parliament and thus reduce the risk of the sort of backlash that [had] occurred in Algeria against the FIS after its strong electoral performance."¹⁵¹

The PJD came under even greater pressure after a series of bombings wracked Casablanca on May 16, 2003. In what came to be known as "Morocco's 9/11," the attacks, waged by an underground Islamic militant cell, caused thirty-seven deaths and traumatized the country. Though not directly implicated in the bombings, the PJD was deemed guilty by association by its rivals. As Willis observed, opponents of the party accused it of "having helped prepare the ground for the attacks through their sustained and intemperate rhetoric against the West and Israel (all of the targets of bombings had been Western or Jewish establishments) in the party's newspaper and official statements." For example, the deputy secretary-general of the USPF, Muhammad al-Yazigh, publicly called on the PJD to "apologize to the Moroccan people" for creating an environment in which Islamic extremism thrived. In addition, rumors circulated that senior figures in the security establishment were urging the party's dissolution.¹⁵²

While seeking to defend itself against such criticism, Willis noted, the PJD also "understood that the atmosphere was sufficiently hostile . . . to necessitate some sacrifices."¹⁵³ Under direct pressure from the Ministry of the Interior, the party's senior leadership drastically cut back the number of candidates it fielded in the September 2003 municipal elections.¹⁵⁴ This decision triggered protest from local party activists, who viewed the leadership's approach as "too compromising." Further, unlike in the 2002 parliamentary elections, in which 90% of the PJD's candidates were chosen by its base, the party's Executive Council intervened directly in the selection of candidates in the 2003 municipal elections, favoring candidates with technical and professional expertise over more popular, and politically assertive, candidates.¹⁵⁵ Later that year, when the PJD's parliamentary bloc elected Mustafa Ramid, a prominent regime critic, as its president, the Ministry of the Interior warned the party that this choice was unacceptable. Under pressure from senior leaders in the party, Ramid resigned rather than risk being forced out.¹⁵⁶

PRAGMATISM OVER IDEOLOGY

From the mid-2000s forward, the PJD moved toward greater self-restraint in its approach to social and moral issues as well. In October 2003, King Muhammad VI presented parliament with a bill replacing the Mudawwana with a new "modern Family Law." Unlike the "Plan d'Integration," the bill was drafted by a royal commission that included prominent members of the Moroccan ulema.

In announcing the reform bill, the king situated himself above the fray of partisan conflict:

As the King of all Morocco, I do not make legislation for a given segment of the populace or a specific party. Rather, I seek to reflect the general will of the Nation.¹⁵⁷

The king announced that the bill "meant to free women from the injustices they endure, in addition to protecting children's rights and safeguarding men's dignity." With numerous references to the Quran and Shari'a jurisprudence, the king emphasized that the bill was in harmony with the "tolerant aims of Islam." Further, he framed it as a legitimate exercise in *ijtihad* (human interpretation), a standard method used by Islamic jurists to apply the constants of the sacred texts to changing times.¹⁵⁸ Though the bill was depicted as in full accord with the values of the Moroccan people and the religion of Islam, its provisions differed little in substance from those that the PJD and other Islamist groups had vigorously opposed four years earlier.

When the bill was put to vote in parliament in January 2004, the PJD supported it. When I asked about this seeming about-face in an interview two years later, Abd al-Qadir 'Umara, a member of the PJD's Executive Council, explained that unlike the earlier reform, the 2004 bill was an outcome of broad consultation with a wide range of civic and religious leaders and was anchored within an Islamic frame of reference. In addition, it was not narrowly focused on the rights of women but sought to advance the well-being of the family as a whole.¹⁵⁹

But according to Moroccan analysts, the main reason the PJD acquiesced to the Mudawwana reform was that it had been placed on the defensive by the May 2003 bombings and was no longer in a position to oppose it, particularly once the reform acquired the imprimatur of the king. As Abu Bakr al-Jami'i recalled, when PJD deputies expressed some reservations about the bill in parliamentary committee, the minister leading the session bluntly told them, "I'm here to tell you what the Commander of the Faithful has decided, not to debate this with you." Nevertheless, the PJD managed to introduce some qualifications to the bill before it received parliamentary approval. As al-Jami'i noted, "On each contentious point, they inserted an exceptionality clause, for example, marriage before the age of eighteen is prohibited *except* in the following circumstances; judges will apply the law *except* in such and such cases, etcetera." Similarly, though the bill restricted the practice of polygamy, it was not completely banned, allowing judges to approve it in certain cases. Having succeeded in adding these clauses, al-Jami'i observed, "the PJD could say, 'We won.'"¹⁶⁰

In sum, the PJD's support of the Mudawwana reform was less the result of a systemic shift in the party's core ideology than a concession to external pressures. In particular, it reflected the fact that the party's senior leadership prioritized averting a direct confrontation with the regime over advancing the

group's conservative social agenda. Indeed, in the interviews I conducted with PJD leaders in 2006, it became clear that many of them still had reservations about the new family code, which, they believed, would cause more harm than good if it failed to take into account social realities on the ground. As 'Aziz Rbah, a member of the Executive Council, noted:

The law allows a woman when she reaches the age of majority to get married without the permission of her *wali* [male guardian]. I am from the countryside, near Kneitra. For a girl to do this in my district would go against our traditions. It would be difficult for the head of the household, because it would cause a loss of face. Further, if a young woman marries without her parents' authorization, it could cause problems for her as well. If there is a problem in the marriage, where will she turn? Who will support her? She needs her family. People often assume that parental controls on children are a form of persecution, but this is not true. Such controls are a way to protect their well-being.¹⁶¹

At its fifth Party Congress in April 2004, figures associated with the PJD's more "accommodationist" wing were elected to senior positions in the party.¹⁶² Such leaders have attempted to balance the party's bid for social acceptance with continued responsiveness to the views of its base. As Muhammad Tozy observed, party leaders have struggled with the question, "How can we maintain a popular base which has been mobilized through a *da'wa* project which is traditional, Islamic, and conservative, while at the same time managing to co-exist with other political forces who are critical of such ideas?"¹⁶³

The evolution of the PJD's discourse on Shari'a is instructive here. In September 2002, Mustafa Ramid, a charismatic hard-liner, declared in a press interview that in the long term, the PJD wanted Shari'a applied completely, including the application of the *hudoud* punishments, such as cutting off a hand as punishment for theft, that are stipulated in the Quran. This triggered an outcry in the secular press, and other PJD leaders quickly distanced themselves from Ramid's remarks. Further, Ramid himself declared that his views had been misinterpreted and that the Shari'a would be applied only when the people themselves supported it.¹⁶⁴ In an interview with Reuters in the midst of the controversy, 'Abdalla Benkirane, a senior PJD leader, noted that though the party favored the gradual implementation of Shari'a in Moroccan daily life, such as by banning alcoholic drinks, casinos, and lotteries, radical change was not on its agenda. As he stressed, "what we want is to give a job to the millions of unemployed, not cut the hand of thieves."¹⁶⁵

A few years later, none of the PJD's senior leaders was openly calling for the implementation of Shari'a, which, as Abu Bakr al-Jami'i observed, would be "ostentatious." Instead, al-Jami'i noted, to demonstrate their moderation, PJD leaders now "emphasize that they are *not* asking for the Shari'a to be the primary source of legislation," claiming that such matters should be decided by the

country's elected representatives in parliament. As Moroccan academic Muhammad Darif explained:

They know they can't lead off with a call for Shari'a rule. In a country where a lot of people don't pray and don't wear the hijab, the application of Shari'a is not a possible goal and they know it. In today's climate that would never be accepted. So they emphasize that Shari'a will only be applied once it has the support of the people. This is the main difference between the Salafis and the PJD; for the PJD, you can only apply the Shari'a if the people and their representatives agree to it.¹⁶⁶

In a different vein, 'Aziz Rbah argued that it is neither the party nor the masses but qualified Islamic jurists who should harmonize the country's laws with the principles of Shari'a. As he explained,

This is not a party issue [*qadiyat hizb*], it is a matter to be left to the *ijtihad* of the jurists and the ulema. The Moroccan Constitution stipulates that Morocco is an Islamic state. This is enough. We say that laws should not contradict Islam, but thank God most of our laws are already consistent with Islam. There are some outstanding issues in the Shari'a, like the *hudoud* punishments, which require further study. In addition, there are such issues as the prohibition on the charging of interest and the sale and consumption of alcohol. But it is not my job as a party to interpret Islam; the party is not a *faqih* [Islamist jurist]! This is the duty of the Constitutional Assembly, the Council of 'Ulema, and the Council of Jurists.¹⁶⁷

Other PJD leaders have worked to rehabilitate the concept of Shari'a by defining it as a set of general principles rather than a cluster of fixed rulings inherited from the past. As 'Abdalla Bagha, deputy secretary-general, noted:

What does this mean, "Shari'a"? We apply it now, when we apply the principle of transparency and make our party conferences open to all, that is Shari'a. When we confront corruption, that is Shari'a. When we call for social justice, that is Shari'a. For something like the *hudoud* punishments, there must be conditions under which certain rulings are applied, and if society doesn't accept them, that's OK. We apply the divine rules through our own practice, not by force. We are against dictatorship [*istibdad*] in the name of Islam, like the system of *vilayet i-faqih* in Iran. For us, an Islamic state is a civil state.¹⁶⁸

Muhammad Yatim, a progressive PJD intellectual and activist, went even further, arguing that the Shari'a contains a set of higher objectives (*maqasid*) that constrain the act of human legislation, including the application of rulings (*ahkam*) contained in the Quran. As Yatim noted:

The rulings in the Quran don't get adjusted; what changes is our interpretation [*tafsir*] and application [*tatbiq*] of them. There is a Hadith which exhorts us not to apply a ruling if the results will violate Islam's higher objectives. Sometimes the

Shari'a says not to apply the Shari'a. That is, don't apply rulings if they go against Islam's higher principles or against the public interest.¹⁶⁹

Yatim's views cannot be said to represent the PJD as a whole, but they demonstrate that the party encompasses leaders who have self-consciously rejected the literalist and absolutist ideas that characterized the movement in the past.

The PJD's reluctance to articulate a strong stand in support of Shari'a rule reflected the constraining influence of other forces in Moroccan society. To a greater extent than in Egypt, Jordan, or Kuwait, the political scene in Morocco encompasses robust secular political parties, media outlets, and civil society organizations that serve as a counterweight to the PJD and limit its freedom of maneuver. As Muhammad Hafid, editor in chief of *al-Sahifa*, observed:

The PJD's discourse is limited by the situation they are in, which places restrictions [*quyud*] on what they can say and do. Most human rights and women's organizations in Morocco are not Islamist, and we have a strong independent press, strong civil society groups, a long experience of leftist activism, and prominent secular cultural figures. There are countervailing blocs of power that limit the PJD's capacity to do what they wanted, even if they had mass support.¹⁷⁰

Rather than call for the application of Shari'a, PJD leaders have campaigned in recent years for the "moralization" (*takhliq*) of public life. For example, PJD leaders have called for restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcohol, sought to prohibit open-air evening musical concerts that encourage drunkenness and the open mixing of the sexes, called for the censorship of films, books, and art deemed offensive to public morals and religion, and demanded the stricter regulation of Morocco's tourism industry to combat the scourge of pedophilia and prostitution. As a general rule, the PJD leaders I interviewed in 2006 argued that greater social controls were necessary to achieve a proper balance between individual freedoms and the protection of Morocco's religious values and identity. But they differed significantly in the priority they attached to social and moral issues, as well as on how stringently art, entertainment, and culture, as well as the private behavior of Moroccan citizens, should be regulated by the state.

While senior leaders of the PJD calibrated their public statements to avoid controversy, the MUR, its parent movement association, was less circumspect. For example, in December 2004, the MUR's newspaper, *al-Tajdid*, published a front-page article describing the tsunami that had ravaged the coast of Southeast Asia as God's punishment for the acts of moral depravity that had taken place on its shores. Likewise, in 2006 it condemned the distribution of *Le Maroc*, a provocative film about a love affair between a Muslim teenage girl and Moroccan Jewish teenage boy, and demanded that its license be withdrawn.

The functional separation of the MUR and the PJD permitted the PJD to distance itself from the MUR's inflammatory rhetoric. As Abu Bakr al-Jami'i observed, the PJD "uses the framework of the MUR to say things they couldn't say otherwise," and when a backlash occurs, party leaders deny responsibility, saying, "That was the newspaper of the MUR, not the PJD."¹⁷¹ But many PJD leaders also occupy top positions in the MUR. For example, in 2006, Benkirane served both as president of the PJD's parliamentary bloc and as general director of *al-Tajdid*. Moreover, some of the movement's most assertive hard-liners, like Mustafa Ramid, were based in the PJD rather than the MUR. Hence the different opinions expressed through MUR and PJD channels actually signaled ideological disagreement within the PJD itself. Senior PJD leaders were quick to acknowledge such dissension. For example, in 2006 Benkirane told me that while he agreed with Sa'd al-Din al-'Uthmani, the party's secretary-general, on most issues, there were instances when he felt al-'Uthmani was too "soft," adding, "Uthmani is very progressive, too much, in my opinion." Benkirane also opposed al-'Uthmani's decision to accept an invitation from a U.S.-based group to visit America at a time when the U.S. administration was supporting Israeli aggression in Palestine and engaging in systematic violence against Muslims as part of the "war on terrorism" and the military occupation of Iraq. While the PJD's Executive Council approved al-'Uthmani's visit, Benkirane noted, "I personally would not have gone." Such disagreements, Benkirane opined, have fueled allegations that the PJD "speaks in a double language," when, in fact, they reflect genuine differences in party leaders' convictions.¹⁷²

Although some PJD leaders favor the stricter regulation of private citizens' behavior, the public expression of such views routinely triggers a firestorm of criticism from the country's secular parties, media outlets, and human rights groups, which carefully scrutinize everything that party leaders do and say. As Benkirane noted, "We are constantly being criticized, and our adversaries are always trying to provoke suspicions against us."¹⁷³ Jamal Hashim, a professor of philosophy, described himself as part of a network of Moroccan democracy activists who oppose the Islamist project for society "au fond" (at the core) and are unafraid to confront it in the public domain:

We are the avant-garde. I write about them [the PJD] almost every day. I challenge them, by asking "Why did you say this? Why did you do that?"

For example, when *al-Tajdid* called for a ban on the film *Le Maroc*, Hashim was quick to respond. "They say, 'We are moderate,'" Hashim observed, "but when you say that the producer of a film is outside the frame of morals, you are indirectly abetting violence against her." Hashim noted that he and other Moroccan democrats are committed to humanistic values (*qiyam insaniyya*) and want Morocco to be "a modern, democratic, and secular society." If the PJD gains power, he warned, "they will decide what film I can watch, whether I can drink alcohol,

whether a woman can wear a bathing suit on the beach." Further, Hashim criticized the PJD for categorizing films, music, and literature as *halal* or *haram* rather than judging them on the basis of their artistic merit. More broadly, Hashim noted, "PJD leaders say, 'We have an Islamic frame of reference,' and hence by definition those who disagree with them are placed outside the Islamic framework. [By contrast], we say that religion belongs to society."¹⁷⁴

The effect of such external pressures can be seen in the PJD's discourse on the hijab. To a greater degree than their counterparts in Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait, PJD leaders are quick to emphasize that whether or not a woman covers her hair and body should be left to the dictates of her own conscience. Whether this reflects an ideological shift or a response to existing constraints is difficult to determine and likely varies from one leader to another. But what is striking is that the PJD, unlike its counterparts, counts unveiled women among its members, and PJD leaders often point to their presence as a sign of the party's tolerance and enlightenment.

Another spur to pragmatism was the PJD's effort to demonstrate its capacity for effective governance. For example, when a PJD leader was elected mayor of Kneifra, a small, impoverished town on the coast where many women earn a living through prostitution, he did not ban the practice but sought to attract investment to the area to create other job opportunities for its residents. Likewise, the PJD mayor of Temara focused his energies not on moral issues but on infrastructure and economic development. As 'Aziz Rbah proudly exclaimed:

Go to Temara if you can so you can see the mayor's wonderful achievements. He didn't impose the veil on anyone, and while he didn't authorize the opening of any new bar, he didn't close down the existing ones. His work has focused on creating jobs, infrastructure, electricity, and addressing the needs of the citizens.¹⁷⁵

Further, to a greater degree than any other party in Morocco, the PJD has established strict performance standards for its representatives in parliament and local government. While Moroccan parliamentarians are notorious for their absenteeism, as indicated by the sparsely attended legislative sessions broadcast on television, the PJD requires its deputies to attend all general assembly meetings and publishes their attendance record in the party's newspaper. In addition, PJD deputies are required to pose at least one oral question per week, one written question per month, and one bill per legislative year.¹⁷⁶ Such measures have enhanced the PJD's reputation as a party that takes its electoral mandate seriously and is working hard to address the country's problems.

The PJD's General Secretariat also monitors the work of party delegates at the municipal level. As Eva Wegner observed, whether in parliament or local government, PJD deputies deemed to be underperforming risk being left off the party's list in subsequent elections. This has minimized PJD members' use of public office for private gain and has enhanced the party's image as serious, honest, and responsive to the needs of their constituents.

Since the mid-2000s, the General Secretariat has also required PJD deputies in parliament to vote the party line and has intervened in the selection of the parliamentary bloc's key appointments. Further, the Forum du Developpement (FDD), a technical commission headed by a member of the Secretariat, has weighed in on important legislative bills, cutting into the authority of the party's elected deputies. Such measures, Wegner observed, represent an effort by the pragmatic wing of the PJD that dominates the party's Executive Council to dictate party policies, whether or not they are supported by the party's base. The PJD's pragmatic leadership has imposed strict party discipline in part to prevent members from acting in ways that could place the group in jeopardy. As Wegner put it, the risk of the discontentment of the base was judged to be less important than the risks deriving from the environment within which the party was embedded.¹⁷⁷

THE LIMITS OF THE PJD'S PROGRESSIVE SHIFT

Though the PJD refrains from calling for the strict application of Shari'a, it has yet to call for fundamental change in the patriarchal structure of Moroccan society. For example, PJD leaders claim to support the rights of women and children, but they have not taken a proactive stance against domestic violence, incest, or child abuse, or in favor of expanding access to contraception and abortion and equalizing the rights of men and women in matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Further, though PJD leaders claim to endorse a "relativistic" approach to religion involving the ongoing (re)interpretation of sacred texts, such flexibility has its limits. For example, Mustafa Abu Bindi, a professor of Semitic religions, was shunned by his PJD colleagues after he published a book in the early 1990s that challenged the validity of several Hadith attributed to Abu Ghayra, a companion of the Prophet. As Abu Bindi recalled, "I said that his view didn't represent the will of the Prophet, but rather reflected the political context of the time." As a result, Abu Bindi became a persona non grata in Islamist circles. As he noted, "There was a vicious campaign against me in *al-Tajdid* and other Islamist papers, and in the mosques I was called a *kafir* [infidel]."¹⁷⁸

Abu Bindi eventually left the PJD, but he has continued to write and speak publicly in an effort to influence the movement's direction. In 2006 I had an opportunity to interview him. Though PJD leaders profess their support for pluralism and democracy, he observed, such concepts "require an important cultural change in mind-set. You can't just roll them off your tongue and that's it." What is needed, Abu Bindi argued, is a "break from a certain cluster of ideological precedents [*kasr min majmu'a min al-musabaqat al-fikriyya*]," something he and other like-minded Islamist intellectuals are trying to promote.¹⁷⁹

Certain figures in the PJD's leadership are committed to deepening the values of democracy, both within the party and in Moroccan society as a whole.

According to secular democracy activists, Muhammad Yatim stands out in this regard. He frames the PJD's mission as an effort to "build a democratic culture, not just in the domain of political institutions and elections but also in the family, in relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, and in the workplace." According to Yatim, this mission reflects the centrality of the principle of *shura* (consultation) in Islam, "which pertains not just to affairs at the level of the nation but also to relations in the family and daily behavior."¹⁸⁰ What is far from clear, however, is the extent to which Yatim's views resonate with—and are shared by—wider sectors of the PJD's leadership and mass base.

PRAGMATISM AS A CONSTRAINT ON THE PJD'S SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Like the Egyptian Brotherhood under Mubarak, the PJD has endorsed calls for constitutional and political reforms but has been unwilling to push too hard on their behalf. Indeed, over the past decade, while a number of small leftist parties and civil society groups have begun to agitate for change in the constitution to strengthen parliament and reduce the power of the unelected king, the PJD has remained conspicuously accommodating of the king's authority to set the agenda of the Moroccan state. By limiting themselves to supporting a gradual process of reform contingent on the king's consent, al-'Uthmani, Benkirane, and other senior figures have positioned the PJD as a pillar of the existing order rather than a challenge to it. As Muhammad Hafid observed, "The leftists want a system in which the king reigns but does not rule. By contrast, the PJD has taken no pivotal positions in favor of a fundamental change in the character of the system."¹⁸¹

The PJD's deferential approach to the king and the state establishment has triggered internal criticism. Most notably, Mustafa Ramid and his supporters have taken a more confrontational stance, arguing that real progress is impossible unless and until the country's elected representatives break the king's monopoly on power. As Abu Bakr al-Jami'i observed,

Ramid says, look, we weren't elected to be disciplined parliamentarians, we were elected to solve the people's problems. Now when we go back to our constituents, what have we done for them? Why haven't we accomplished more? The constitution must be changed, the parliament must be given more authority.¹⁸²

The parliamentary elections of 2007 and the municipal elections of 2009 signaled voters' growing alienation from all of the country's established parties, including the PJD. In 2007 the PJD decided to run candidates for nearly all of the seats in parliament for the first time, with leaders anticipating that it would win 25–30% of the vote and sixty to seventy seats. Some sources predicted even larger gains. For example, a report by the U.S.-based International Republican

Institute, based on two opinion polls, indicated that the PJD could win as much as 50% of the popular vote, fueling widespread fears of a resounding Islamist victory.

Yet the PJD did not come close to meeting these predictions, winning just 11% of the votes cast and forty-six seats. As Willis noted, two features distinguished the 2007 parliamentary elections from previous polls: the conspicuous low turnout (officially estimated at 37%, down from 52% in 2002) and the high number of spoiled or invalid ballots, which included over a million ballot papers and 19% of the votes cast, "more than the score of the two leading parties, the PJD and the Istiqlal, combined."¹⁸³ Such results appeared to indicate voters' growing frustration with the seeming inability of any of the country's political parties to address the urgent problems of unemployment, urban overcrowding, dilapidated infrastructure, and rising prices that concerned them most. As Brown and Hamzawy observed, "Wide segments of the population have come to see the parliament as a failed institution that can do little to solve their pressing economic and social problems."¹⁸⁴ A study carried out by the U.S.-based National Democratic Institute after the election to determine why turnout was so low appeared to confirm these impressions, as did anecdotal evidence collected by journalists and researchers during the campaign period: "Derogatory comments about politicians and the political parties were matched by observations that the parliament was a waste of time and could change nothing in the country . . . because all meaningful power was in the hands of the King."¹⁸⁵

The PJD's "failure" in the 2007 elections was a relative one. Though its gains fell short of expectations, the party nevertheless increased its presence by four seats and went from being the third largest party (after the Istiqlal and USFP) to the second largest (having outperformed the USFP).¹⁸⁶ But the PJD's accommodative approach to the monarchy undermined its ability to present itself as an agent of systemic change. The PJD's seeming complicity in a political system incapable of addressing the most urgent problems of Moroccan citizens arguably helps explain its disappointing showing at the polls. In a continuation of this trend, the PJD contested approximately 40% of the seats in the municipal elections of June 2009, winning just 1,509, or 13.6%, of the seats it contested and 5.43% of the seats in total.

A PJD PRIME MINISTER

Just two years later, the PJD's fortunes experienced a sudden and dramatic improvement as a result of events largely beyond its control. With mass protests leading to the ouster of President Zein el-Abidine Ben Ali in neighboring Tunisia in January 2011 and demonstrations breaking out in Egypt and other Arab states, the convulsions of the Arab Spring quickly spread to Morocco as well. Beginning on February 20, thousands of demonstrators poured into the streets

in several Moroccan towns and cities chanting slogans such as "Down with Autocracy" and "The People Want to Change the Constitution." While not calling for the king's ouster, protestors demanded stricter constitutional limits on his power. In addition, they called for more jobs; better health care, education, and housing; and an investigation into government corruption and mismanagement. As in Egypt, the main instigator of the demonstrations was not the PJD or any other organized group but a loose network of Moroccan youth groups and civil society organizations encompassing individuals from a wide range of political and ideological backgrounds. Although those who founded the "February 20 Movement" were mostly middle-class students and graduates of Muhammad V University in Rabat, the movement eventually attracted supporters from poorer areas of such cities as Casablanca and Tangiers as well.¹⁸⁷

In response to the protests, King Muhammad V delivered a televised address on March 9 in which he promised constitutional reforms. On June 17 he outlined the proposed changes, and on July 1 they were approved via popular referendum by an overwhelming majority. As critics pointed out, the new constitution fell short of endorsing the principle of popular sovereignty. While requiring the king to appoint the leader of the largest party in parliament as prime minister, increasing the powers of parliament, and strengthening the independence of the judiciary, it also confirmed the position of the king as the spiritual and political head of the Moroccan state. Leaders of the February 20 Movement rejected the reforms as insufficient and called for a boycott of the referendum. After the new constitution was approved, many activists vowed to continue agitating for a "truly democratic constitution and a parliamentary monarchy."¹⁸⁸

By contrast, the majority of the country's political parties, including the PJD, endorsed the new constitution and urged their members to support it. While smaller pro-democracy demonstrations continued through the fall, the PJD and other political parties focused on preparing for the upcoming parliamentary elections, which took place in November. In a sign of some measure of renewed faith in the political system, voter turnout increased to 45.4% in 2011 from 37% in 2007, though once again, about 20% of the ballots were invalid. As in 2007, the PJD decided to run candidates in nearly every district, as did its closest competitors. According to the official results, the PJD achieved its best showing yet, winning 107 seats, more than double the number it had won in 2007 and far ahead of the Istiqlal party, which, with sixty seats, came in second.

Moroccan analysts interpreted the PJD's gains as a vote for change and as stemming more from the party's populist economic orientation than from its conservative social agenda. Further, Muhammad Tozy noted, voters cast their ballots for the PJD to punish the current government as well to signal their disenchantment with established parties, like the USPF, which they felt had let them down.¹⁸⁹

On November 30, 2011, in keeping with the provisions of the new constitution, King Muhammad V appointed 'Abdalla Benkirane, who had replaced Sa'd al-Din 'Uthmani as secretary-general of the PJD in 2008, as prime minister. Though known as a staunch defender of the king, Benkirane had sparked controversy in the past because of his blunt personality and his conservative take on social and moral issues. For example, Benkirane was still remembered for his verbal lashing of a scantily dressed camerawoman during a session of parliament in 2001. Recalling this incident after the elections, sociologist Samira Kassimi noted that "there is a fear that the new head of government could meddle in Moroccans' private lives, and particularly women's lives."¹⁹⁰ Attuned to such concerns, Benkirane and other senior PJD leaders stressed that the party would focus on addressing the country's urgent social and economic problems rather than on citizens' private behavior. As Benkirane stated at a press conference in Rabat on November 27, the PJD "would not touch Moroccans' civil liberties," noting, for example, that "his party had no intention of attacking those who drink alcohol or dictating to women what they should wear."¹⁹¹ Likewise, in a public interview in December, Benkirane attempted to reassure Morocco's European trading partners of his benign intentions: "Let Europeans be assured that I will not interfere in people's private lives. Don't count on me to go around checking the length of women's skirts."¹⁹²

Regardless of the PJD's intentions, it is hardly in a position to dictate government policy on its own. Because of the fragmented nature of the Moroccan political system and the allocation of seats in parliament by proportional representation, it is virtually impossible for any party to gain a resounding majority. Although the PJD emerged from the November 2011 elections as the largest bloc in parliament, it still controlled less than 25% of the seats, forcing it to enter into a coalition with other parties in order to form a government. The PJD not only will have to compromise with its coalition partners in order to govern effectively but, even more consequentially, will have to share power with the king, who retains control over the country's defense and internal security and continues to claim ultimate authority on matters pertaining to Islam. For example, in the negotiations preceding the announcement of the new government, Benkirane acceded to the king's control over the portfolios of Defense and Religious Affairs.¹⁹³

The protests of the Arab Spring did not produce democratic regime change in Morocco. Instead they prompted a gradual opening of the political system, which enabled the monarchy to retain its privileged position while rewarding the PJD for its self-restraint. Even though the PJD's secretary-general became head of the new government in January 2012, its freedom to maneuver will remain limited by other centers of power, as well as by an electorate that is apt to judge the PJD above all on its ability to address the country's dire economic woes. Further, the Moroccan political environment has favored the ascension of

more pragmatic leaders to top posts in the PJD's leadership, as well as a conspicuous softening of its positions on sensitive social and moral issues.

Of course, the balance of power among the PJD's internal factions could change over time, but a dramatic radicalization of its agenda is unlikely. As noted earlier, the PJD's evolution hinged on its leaders' critical examination of the absolutist foundations of the Sunni revivalist movement, a process that began earlier, and has proceeded further, than it has in Egypt, Jordan, or Kuwait. As a result, the PJD's senior leadership is generally more progressive than its counterparts, as indicated by their more elastic conception of Shari'a rule and their tolerance of behaviors—such as women choosing not to veil or people consuming alcohol—which violate traditional Islamic norms. Such views are likely out ahead of those that prevail among members of the party's base, whom Moroccan analysts describe as more traditional and conservative in orientation. What distinguishes the PJD is not the existence of a progressive ideological consensus extending across the party's ranks but the stronger position of more pragmatic and more ideologically flexible leaders at its helm. It is such figures—rather than movement hard-liners—who are likely to set the party's course as it adjusts to the new influence it has gained in the wake of the Arab Spring.

CHAPTER NINE

The Muslim Brotherhood in (Egypt's) Transition

WHAT PATH HAS THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD taken in the wake of the Egyptian uprising, and what role will it play in shaping the country's new political order? This chapter leads off with an effort to address these questions, focusing on the Brotherhood's stunning victories in recent parliamentary and presidential elections and the pushback it has encountered from other forces in Egyptian society. As we will see, the Brotherhood's actions exhibit the same uneasy mix of self-assertion and self-restraint that marked its behavior during the Mubarak era, albeit under a very different set of circumstances. Which of these impulses will prevail at any juncture is hard to predict, but one thing is clear. Despite its success at the polls, the scope of the Brotherhood's authority and the purposes to which it is directed will be contested for a long time to come. And how the Brotherhood handles the opposition its choices inspire will serve as a signal test of its commitment to an open and inclusive political order.

At the end of the chapter, I summarize the book's core analytic findings, highlighting the broad features of Islamist movement change in the Arab world and explaining why observable shifts in Islamist actors' rhetoric and behavior cannot be attributed to a single strand of cause and effect. By demonstrating that the processes of change within Islamist groups encompassed strategic and ideational components and proceeded unevenly across their internal factions, I highlight the value of complexity over parsimony in the analysis of Islamist movement politics and, by extension, in the study of social movements and contentious politics more generally.

THE BROTHERHOOD ASCENDANT

The Muslim Brotherhood has achieved a level of influence virtually unimaginable before the Arab Spring. It emerged as the resounding victor in the parliamentary elections of November 2011 to January 2012, and five months later