Islamist moderation in practice: democratic practices and their shifting meanings

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the causes of Islamist ideological moderation. It focuses on the role of discursive structures and social practices in bringing about this ideational change. Through an in-depth case study of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, a discourse and practice analysis is conducted to provide a theory that traces this group's moderation as a process. The thesis presents the argument that the group's increasing moderation was a result of practicing politics in a structural environment that challenged them strategically and ideologically. Under these environmental conditions, significant contestation arose within the movement. Resolving these debates internally by providing ideological justifications for controversial political practices, and doing so through deliberative democratic processes, provided the legitimacy needed to alter, and moderate, the movement's ideology.

Résumé

L'objectif du présent mémoire est d'examiner les causes qui sous-tendent la modération du discours idéologique des groupes Islamistes. À cet égard, ce mémoire se concentre sur le rôle des structures discursives et des pratiques sociales qui constituent la condition de possibilité de ce changement idéationnel. Grâce à une étude de cas approfondie des Frères Musulmans en Jordanie, ce mémoire mène une analyse du discours et des pratiques sociales pour formuler une théorie qui trace le processus de modération idéologique du dit groupe. Ainsi, ce mémoire présente la thèse que la croissante modération idéologique des Frères Musulmans en Jordanie est le résultat d'une façon de pratiquer la politique dans un environnement structurel qui les défit stratégiquement et idéologiquement. Sous ces conditions structurelles, un important courant de contestation est né au sein du groupe. Le fait de résoudre cette contestation à l'interne en ayant recours à des explications idéologiques pour justifier des pratiques politiques controversées, en plus de le faire en ayant recours à des processus démocratiques délibératifs, a fourni la légitimité nécessaire pour altérer et modérer l'idéologie du groupe.

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Introduction

How do "Islamists" who reject democracy and political pluralism at one point in their ideological history moderate their worldview and embrace both in their struggle with authoritarian regimes? In short, how do Islamists become democrats? What explains this evolution? The various revolutions that spread throughout the Arab world since the overthrow of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali back in January of 2011 has made this question particularly pertinent. The recent elections in Tunis, Egypt and Morocco demonstrate that Islamists are the dominant political force in these countries with the power to either contribute to the transition towards democracy and its future consolidation, or to obstruct the democratization process. The ramifications of this outcome for regional and global security, and for the social and economic development of Arab societies, are not inconsequential. Research dedicated to explaining the moderation of Islamic political groups can therefore, not only contribute to the accumulation of academic knowledge on the subject, but also help inform current policy aimed at supporting democratic governance in that region.

The literature on the topic provides two broad arguments to explain the moderation puzzle. Both these arguments are subsets of a larger hypothesis: *including* Islamists as legitimate players in the political game moderates the worldview of these groups, while excluding them only leads to a hardening of their ideology. Building on this theoretical claim, most of the literature seeks to specify the exact causal mechanisms by which participating in a plural political field moderates Islamists. The first genus of causal mechanisms tells a moderation story based on strategic calculation and the constraining effects of democratic institutions. The alternative story focuses on the different moderating effects of various sociological mechanisms.

Both approaches, however, suffer from fundamental gaps which recent scholarship on the topic has begun to address.

First, most of the studies surveyed for this research neglect to theoretically specify and trace the exact process that links their causal mechanism to the outcome of ideological moderation. This gap applies to both institutionalist and sociological approaches. Without this specification, these theories are unable to explain the numerous empirical anomalies that seem to challenge their conclusions. Second, even though arguments based on rational institutionalism make important contributions by identifying the consequentialist logic that underlies moderation in *behavior*, these theories are ill-equipped to analytically discern, and causally explain, real *ideational* shifts that lead to changes in beliefs and preferences. There is a stark and consequential difference between instrumental behavior and real ideological change. The public debates on the true commitment of Islamists to democratic practices clearly illustrates this difference. Finally, despite the analytical importance of ideational structures (culture) when examining a religious agent, no significant attempt is made to conceptualize its role.

Utilizing various constructivist conceptual frameworks to address some of these gaps, my thesis aims to generate the beginnings of a practice-based theory of Islamist moderation. Through an in-depth case study of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, I trace one of the possible causal paths under the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. In the remaining sections of this introduction, I first examine the existing literature on the topic, highlighting its contributions to the moderation puzzle, and the opportunities for further research. From there, I outline the key concepts used in my thesis, and provide a summary of my argument. Finally, I conclude the introduction with an overview of my research design, and an outline of the upcoming chapters.

0.1 Defining Islamist Moderation

It is perhaps beneficial to begin by conceptually defining both the the term "Islamist" and the term "moderation". In the interest of conceptual standardization, this thesis will rely on the previous definitions of other scholars. In his study *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists*, Omar Ashour defines Islamists as "sociopolitical movements that base and justify their political principles, ideologies, behaviors and objectives on their understanding of Islam or on their understanding of a certain past interpretation of Islam" (2009, 4). A key differentiating attribute of Islamists then is that their logic of action also factors in Islamic religious norms, as they themselves interpret them. An analytical model that relies *exclusively* on the logic of consequences, therefore, misses this crucial driver of Islamist agency.

Most operationalizations of the literature define moderation in democratic terms (Wickham 2004; El-Ghobashy 2005; Schwedler 2006; Ashour 2009; Rubin 2010). Despite the inherent ethnocentrism in this definition, basing moderation on democratic principles is justifiable since Islamists themselves seem to have internalized this criteria as evidence of their moderation.[1] Wickham adopts one of the most robust conceptualizations of moderation in the literature. The author associates moderation with ideological change and defines it as a "shift toward a substantive commitment to democratic principles, including the peaceful alternation of power, ideological and political pluralism, and citizenship rights" (2004, 206). She qualifies her definition further with three additional caveats. First, moderation applies strictly to domestic politics and does not apply to foreign policy. Second, moderation is relational and is comparable

[1] In several of my interviews, when asked how they would define moderation, most interviewees remained within the democratic discourse.

to previously held ideological views. Third, moderation is issue specific, women's rights for example, and accordingly, it need not be even across issue areas. Wickham's conceptualization provides clear indicators that, not only facilitates measurement and cross-case comparisons, but also places moderation within a historical context. More importantly, it facilitates a more nuanced evaluation of moderation than the wholesale labeling of entire groups as either "moderates" or "radicals". Ideological variance can exist within groups, and amongst them. My thesis focuses on reformist Islamist movements who operate within existing regime structures, namely the Muslim Brotherhood, and the causes of their increasing moderation.

0.2 Literature Review

Early theories of Islamist moderation attributed their transformation to being included in the political system (Hudson 1995; Kramer 1995; Anderson 1997; Robinson 1997). The benefits of participating (sharing power, setting up a political party, running for parliament, etc...) came with the constraints (legal and institutional controls) that moderated them over time. Therefore, moderation occurs when the utility of participating under democratic institutions is greater than the utility of remaining outside the political system. In short, democratic rules of the game evolve Islamists into moderates. Empirical case studies in countries as structurally diverse as Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Mauritania *seemed* to provide support for this rational institutionalist argument (Kramer 1995; Norton 1995; Esposito 1997; Boulby 1999; Wiktorowicz 2001; Wickham 2004). But there is a couple of methodological problems that cast doubt on the conclusions of these studies.

First, all these studies operationalize moderation as the pursuit of a political agenda within the existing pluralistic order, not through revolutionary means (violent or otherwise). They proceed to claim that inclusion in this order is what led the Islamist groups under study to forgo their revolutionary strategy. But as Schwedler notes in her critique of these studies, "in many cases, "success" stories are told about actors who certainly qualify as moderate, but who were never really radical – in the sense of seeking to entirely overthrow the existing political order – in the first place" (2006, 15). Second, as the current wave of popular revolutions in the Arab world make obvious, the rules of the game were hardly democratic in most of the countries used in these case studies. If Islamists in these authoritarian countries have indeed become more moderate, something other than democratic institutions caused this change.

There are other empirical and theoretical issues with the institutionalist argument. Numerous empirical anomalies exist where Islamists do not moderate – or moderate at varying degrees – despite their inclusion under a similar institutional structure. A prominent example of this variance is the greater moderation of the Islamic Action Front in Jordan in contrast to the Islah Party in Yemen (Schwedler 2006). There is also evidence, as in the cases of the AK party in Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, that moderation is possible in spite of exclusion, or possibly even because of it (Ashour and Unluckayakli 2006). Theoretically, none of these studies provide a causal story that links their causal mechanism, the structuring effect of political institutions, to ideological moderation. Factoring in the aforementioned empirical anomalies, it is possible that a number of intervening variables (or processes) support the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. Tracing the process of moderation up to the point of ideological change could possibly identify these intervening factors, and explain the empirical anomalies. Schwedler's

identification of at least four distinct causal paths "entangled in the inclusion-moderation hypothesis" (2006, 13) impresses the need for in-depth process tracing when theorizing about Islamist moderation.[2]

Another theoretical issue with the rational institutionalist argument is that the logic of consequences, which underpins its analysis, is not ideal for explaining ideational change or changes in beliefs and preferences. Unless one is prepared to argue that a person's religious beliefs are purely a function of her political or economic interests, the benefits of participating in politics, and the costs of violating the democratic rules of the game, ought not to be the *only* explanation behind ideological moderation. If what was considered a "radical" worldview stemmed from particular religious beliefs, not the utility of that worldview, then moderation of this worldview suggests a change in those beliefs, not a change in their utility. This inability to identify and explain change in beliefs becomes especially significant when one factors in the anxiety of democracy advocates in the West, and in the Muslim world, from the rise of Islamists following the Arab Spring. Warranted or not, this suspicion has long justified the persistence of authoritarianism in that region amongst Western policy makers, and the regimes in these countries. The ability to empirically demonstrate real ideational change can help support alternative policies.

Recently, more studies began to focus on the question of ideational change. El-Ghobashy argues it can be explained by social interaction with other actors, specifically interactions with other parties of the opposition who hold a different worldview, and interactions with oppressive state institutions. According to her, it these interactions, not the "commandments of ideology",

[2] The distinct causal paths Schwedler identifies are a function of changes in the balance of forces between radicals and moderates within an Islamist movement.

that explain the Muslim Brotherhood's "metamorphosis" in the case of Egypt (2005, 90). Wickham examines the Wasat party in the same country and argues that belief change can be explained by "political learning" alongside consequential calculation and political strategy (2004). She defines political learning as "cognitive change" induced by changing experiences and/or "severe crisis, frustrations, and dramatic changes in environment" (2004, 214). These experiences include their role as student activists in university politics and student association elections, their participation in professional syndicate elections, their leadership of large national institutions, their international travels and participation in numerous conferences and global initiatives on humanitarian issues and their collaboration with national opposition parties across the ideological spectrum. All these experiences have led to a "series of adjustments in their broader world view" (ibid, 219). The IR literature on "norm diffusion" and "transnational advocacy networks" supports Wickham's conclusions (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Both these studies make an important contribution by opening up the analysis to previously unexamined dimensions including: sociological interaction; individual social trajectories; and the importance of ideas. Having said that, their conclusions leave many unanswered questions. It is not exactly clear what it is that Islamists are learning? How are these lessons being learnt? And how do these lessons change their ideology? Moreover, is it not theoretically plausible that these same sociological interactions end up reinforcing hardline ideological dispositions rather than moderate ones? Unless there is dissonance between an Islamist's practical experiences and their worldview, we should not expect their experiences to change their ideology. In addition, empirical evidence suggests that similar experiences are triggering different lessons. The Wasat party in Egypt, for example, is a splinter faction of the

Muslim Brotherhood in that same country. Their members' relatively similar experiences nevertheless led to different ideational convictions, and different degrees of moderation. These studies suffer from the same shortcoming highlighted previously with rational institutionalism, i.e. the lack of detailed process tracing.

There is a prominent exception in the literature to this critical theoretical gap, namely Schwedler's comparative study *Faith in Moderation.*[3] Based on extensive ethnographic field research, which this thesis builds upon, Schwedler provides a compelling causal story that explains the varying degrees of moderation between the IAF in Jordan, and the Islah party in Yemen.[4] She also raises a number of valuable methodological concerns that apply to the study of Islamist moderation in general, and the inclusion-moderation hypothesis in particular.[5] Her argument takes account of the environmental changes, political and cultural, that might have served as a catalyst for the ideological shifts that followed. These shifts, according to her research, came about because of party organizational structures that facilitated "changes in the boundaries of what the party can justify on ideological grounds and still recognize as Islamic practices" (2006, 196). One of the most valuable insights of her study is that for moderation to occur, the leaders of Islamist movements must be able to justify their practices based on Islamic religious discourse. Explaining the greater moderation of the IAF in Jordan she notes that the "most pivotal factor that explains moderation is that the IAF leadership as a whole has sought to justify new practices in terms of the party's central ideological commitments while Islah has not" (ibid, 195).

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[3] Omar Ashour's *The De-radicalization of Jihadists* (2009) is another exception to this trend. His study was not included in this review because it deals with jihadi Islamist groups, not mainstream Islamists.

[4] I would like to thank Professor Rex Brynen for pointing me towards this valuable study.

[5] These methodological issues will be addressed later in the research design section of the introduction.

The significance of theological legitimacy highlighted in Schwdler's work requires asking and researching different questions than the ones already addressed in the literature. Questions that lend themselves better to constructivist concepts, methods and analyses. For example, one may inquire into the key ideas that initially cause Islamists to reject democracy as a form of political order. How were these ideas reified in norms, institutions and practices to become part of the naturalized world of Islamists? What unsettled this way of being in the world to create the opportunity for change? What were the key ideas that made democratic legitimation imaginable for some Islamists? What social processes unfolded to allow these ideas to construct new realities? These are but a few examples of the types of questions that are made possible with a constructivist analytical framework.

The previously surveyed literature has gone a long way towards providing important insights into the causes of Islamist moderation. However, as this review has hopefully demonstrated, key aspects of the moderation process remain unexplored. Recognizing this opportunity, my thesis aims to address two key lacunae: (1) an analysis of the shifts in ideational structures that made it possible for Islamists to justify engaging in democratic practices that had a moderating effect on their worldview; and (2) a tracing of the moderation process *in practice.*

0.3 Moderation in Practice

The methodological challenges of operationalizing ideas and culture have kept this pandora's box nicely sealed in the comparative research on Islamists. Referring specifically to these challenges, Ashour asks, "what is culture and how should it be measured in an unbiased manner" (2009, 21). This indeed is a challenge; but a challenge which constructivism has

addressed quite effectively. Addressing it in the study of Islamist moderation could open up an interesting research agenda to enhance our understanding of the ideas underlying Islamist moderation, the logic of action driving their politics and the social processes that construct their political reality. With this prospect in mind, my thesis utilizes the analytical concepts of constructivism, especially Hopf's logics of imaginability and thinkability (2002), and Adler and Pouliot's conceptualization of social practices (2011) to explain two aspects, I claim, are key to understanding Islamist moderation.

First, based on the insights of Hopf's logics of action, I conduct a discourse analysis to try to ascertain the structural shifts in ideas that made it imaginable and thinkable for Islamists to participate in politics in the first place, and to do so in a political field structured by democratic institutions. This is especially important since Islamists have had changing ideological positions on both participating in politics under existing regimes, and the compatibility of Islam with democracy. Second, motivated by Pouliot's call for rectifying the "representational bias" that characterizes most scholarship in our discipline (2010, 14), and by the robustness of placing social practices at the center of my analysis, I conduct a practice analysis that aims to trace how ideological moderation occurred in practice.[6] Through this analytical approach, I hope to provide a theoretical link between the actions of Islamists in the world, and their ideas about it.

Based on my study of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, I argue that moderation necessarily requires a shift in the ideational structures that socially constitute the dominant interpretations of political Islam. These structures of meaning inform every day political practices, making them "imaginable" and "thinkable" (Hopf 2002, 13-15). In Chapter 1, I outline

[6] Chapter 2 elaborates more on the nature of this bias, its epistemological consequences and the analytical advantages of practice-based approaches.

these discursive shifts and provide an interpretive analysis of how they altered the normative appropriateness of democratic practices. Key amongst these discursive shifts was: (1) the recognition that Islam only specifies "general political principles", and that it does not mandate a particular political order; (2) the reconstitution of "shura" as a mandatory political practice between the ruler and ruled, and its reconciliation with modern democratic "mechanisms"; and (3) the marginalization of the Qutbi discourse with its negative casting of the state and society.

Having theorized how it was normatively possible for Islamists to engage in democratic practices that might have an ideologically moderating effect, I then turn in Chapter 2 to the specific practices that increased the ideological moderation of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (JMB). I argue that as the movement reorganized itself to capitalize on the opportunities made possible by the liberalization of political life, it also reconstituted the meaning of its participation in politics, as a *practice*. The meaning of this participation evolved from being understood as a means to achieve the movement's ends in reforming society, to a demonstration of its commitment to democracy. This reconstruction was not without crisis, contestation and political struggle amongst factions with competing ideological commitments. The internal *practice* of resolving ideological crisis through inclusive, deliberative and participatory mechanisms provided the legitimacy needed to alter the meaning of accepted practice in a manner that reified the movement's ideological moderation with repeated performances.

0.4 Research Design

The details of my research design are outlined extensively at the beginning of each chapter. Reconstructing the discursive landscape of Islamists at a specific temporal juncture is an inductive exercise that begins with a reading of a large number of texts from different genres to identify a society's various identity relationships, and the dominant and marginal discursive formations they constitute. From there, an interpretive analysis is undertaken to determine the effects of this landscape on the menu of available social practices. Such an exercise was beyond the scope of this thesis. To overcome this constraint, I relied on the discourse analyses of other scholars and restricted my own interpretive analysis to the primary texts of the JMB following the liberalization of politics in Jordan (1989-1993). I also chose to focus my analysis on themes that constitute indicators of moderation based on my earlier definition. These were: (1) popular sovereignty; (2) pluralism and political competition; (3) participation in politics; and (4) the compatibility of Islam and Democracy.

As Adler and Pouliot point out in their article *International Practices* (2011, 4), there is not a single theory that deals with social practice. Instead, there are a multitude of analytical frameworks that privilege practice when studying political life. I rely on their conceptual definitions and attributes to design a broad analytical approach from which to examine the practices I argue had a moderating effect on the JMB. Again, due to the constraints of scope, I focus on a single practice, namely, participation in politics. The logic behind my choice, and the analytical advantages of selecting this practice, are outlined in chapter 2. In that chapter, I trace the evolution of this practice and its effect on the JMB's moderation. I also situate it within its

social context by examining the political opportunity structure (Tarrow 1998, 19) and the social cognitive structure (Hopf 2002, 5) during the same liberalization time period.

Schwedler's methodological insights and ethnographic research were especially valuable for this part of my thesis too. In terms of analytical design, my analysis of the changes to the political opportunity structure took into account the ways in which "even limited openings may produce considerable dynamic change in public political space" (2006, 6). Her emphasis that moderation is issue specific (ibid, 10-11) and ought to be analyzed accordingly, informed my operationalization of moderation around the themes outlined previously. Much of the data for my practice analysis came from her ethnographic field work, in addition to the interviews I myself conducted.

0.5 Case Study

The moderation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan provides many interesting opportunities as a case study for my research. Throughout its history, the country has been ruled by an authoritarian monarchy that has generally curtailed political participation, and only ushered in short-lived interruptions of political liberalization. Even in the most tolerant political climates, the Islamists have typically had their influence curtailed by various Jordanian governments. This relative exclusion from political participation allows for the control of institutions as a causal factor in Islamist moderation. Moreover, the fact that different Islamic political actors in Jordan hold varying and contradicting positions on democracy and political participation, despite their similar structural environment and socioeconomic background, allows me to focus on the endogenous processes of Islamist moderation.

The JMB's case also exhibits varying, non-linear and significant qualitative shifts in its degrees of moderation. For example, since its founding, the group's ideology has gone from rejecting multi-party systems as divisive and politically corrupt, to embracing social and political pluralism as "divinely ordained by Quranic principle". Its position on the political and civil rights of women has also changed from a restrictive interpretation of shari'a that envisioned no role for women in politics, for instance, to a more egalitarian interpretation that excluded women "only" from the office of the presidency. These marked shifts in moderation across time are ideal for a diachronic comparative research design within the case to trace the path of moderation and its constitutive social and political processes.

One final opportunity presented by the case is its potential for generalizability. Many of Jordan's structural attributes are shared by numerous countries in the Middle East. The authoritarian character of its governing institutions; the rentier economic structure; the Arab and Islamic cultural influence. These are but some of the environmental attributes Jordan shares with its neighbors in the region. Moreover, the Islamic practices of Jordanians can be uncontroversially categorized within mainstream orthodoxy, which further strengthens the case's potential for generalizability. There has also been empirical evidence suggesting that moderation patterns could be similar amongst the different Muslim Brotherhood organizations across the Middle East, despite their organizational autonomy (Rubin 2010).

In conclusion, the proposed design meets most of the criteria suggested by Van Evera for selecting case studies for the purpose of theory generation (1997, 88). First, the richness of the available data, whether secondary research, archival data or access to participants, is at the very least comparable to other Middle Eastern cases. Second, as highlighted previously, there is large

within-case variance on the dependent variable across an extended time horizon. Third, the background characteristics of Islamist moderation in Jordan can be considered "prototypical" as outlined in the preceding paragraph. This similarity suggests that lessons learnt from studying Jordan are transferable to other areas of policy interest – Van Evera's fourth case selection criteria. All the aforementioned opportunities make Jordan a useful heuristic case study for theory generation (George and Bennett 2005, 213).

Chapter 1: The Discursive Structures of Moderation

The causal argument advanced in this thesis can be broken up into two broad processes: the discursive shifts that made future moderation-inducing practices *imaginable*; and the reification of this moderation in and through democratic practices. This chapter is concerned mainly with the former process of imaginability. I begin by outlining the theoretical concepts that explain this logic of action, and also provide the justification for examining Islamist political discourses. Having established the grounds for my discourse analysis, I provide the analytical link between discursive landscapes and social practice. Next, I discuss the method, scope and limits of my discourse analysis. Finally, I conclude with the discursive formations that structured the moderation process, and functioned as obstacles and enablers.

1.1 Imagining Practices

Agency can be explained by a number of different logics. In addition to the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness most commonly used in the literature, constructivist scholars in IR have recently theorized a number of additional logics. These include the logics of imaginability and thinkability (Hopf 2002), and the logic of practice (Pouliot 2010). As Hopf points out, in any given situation, "individuals routinely choose only a small fraction of the actions, verbal and otherwise, that are objectively available to them" (2002, 5). These limited and repeated choices explain the patterned nature of social life. For Hopf, intersubjective social structures, or what he calls "social cognitive structures" (ibid), delimit the menu of choice available for agents. This limitation is cognitively experienced as objective in the minds of agents.

Accordingly, before agents can even reflect upon the consequences or appropriateness of their action, this action must first be either imaginable or thinkable. Therefore, if practices such as running for parliament, participating in government and cooperating with the opposition are to have a moderating effect on Islamists, they must first be imaginable or thinkable. The differences are subtle between these two logics. The logic of thinkability is rooted in the practical memory of engaging in these practices before. Put differently, certain actions enter into our menu of choice because we have done them before, and have memory of doing them (Hopf 2002, 13-14). The logic of thinkability also influences the *probability* of assigning specific interpretations to events, actions and other agents given our identities and the social context (ibid). It is worth noting that this logic does not determine agency. It only predisposes it according to past experience, and social structures. The logic of imaginability operates in the same way as thinkability only it is not bound by what was historically possible from experience (ibid).

One way of thinking about social cognitive structures is that they provide the content that populates the menu of agency. This content is historical, intersubjective and socially constituted. Hopf draws an analogy between his concept and that of Michel Foucault's discursive formation, Bourdieu's habitus and Clifford Geertz's web of meaning (ibid, 5). A social cognitive structure is made up of various identities, and the discursive formations they constitute (ibid, 20). All individuals in a society operate within this structure, and understand their world through its discourses. It is this structure that drives the logics highlighted previously. Determining what was imaginable or thinkable for a particular agent therefore requires reconstructing the dominant discourses that prevailed in their sociohistorical space.

There are several implications that follow directly from this analytical framework. First, the logics of imaginability and thinkability are prior to both the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences. Therefore, understanding how certain democratic practices and their moderating effects became religiously appropriate for Islamists requires reconstructing the webs of the imaginable and thinkable in their world. This is especially important since the appropriateness of participation in politics and government cannot be assumed away as it was previously rejected on ideological grounds for the JMB, as well as many other mainstream Islamist groups in the Muslim world. Some Islamists – jihadi salafists and Hizb al-Tahrir for example – still reject participation even today. Put differently, the moderating effects of inclusion argued in the literature would not have unfolded had Islamists voluntarily remained outside of the political system. In short, this system and its related practices had to be socially constructed as religiously legitimate so that it can start influencing Islamist practitioners.

Second, if these logics are determined by the social cognitive structure that Islamists operate within – and which they produce and reproduce by their practices – then by necessity, changes in the appropriateness of moderating practices implies changes to this structure's discursive formations. Changes that make practices imaginable or thinkable given a particular social context. A revealing episode from my case study highlights this point quite effectively. When Dr. Ishaq Farhan, a prominent leader in the JMB, was offered a cabinet position in the 1970 government, he had to consult the movement's leaders before accepting this position. At the time, neither the JMB nor Dr. Farhan had a ready response for the prime minister.[7] It was the first time a cabinet position was offered to an Islamist in Jordan. For the JMB, it was neither

[7] Interview with author, May 8, 2011, Amman.

thinkable from previous practice, nor was it even imaginable given their discursive landscape. After waiting for a response from the movement's leadership and not receiving one promptly, Dr. Farhan opted for accepting the cabinet position after giving it some thought, and seeking spiritual guidance. Had the practice of participating in government been a repeated performance, Dr. Farhan and the JMB would have had a ready response for, or against, participation. Furthermore, even without this practical knowledge, had it even been part of the imagined horizon of political action for the group, they would have had a religious norm from which to decide appropriate action. Today, government and parliamentary participation is not only thinkable, it is a practice. It is discursive changes that made this reality possible. Returning back to Dr. Farhan, his participation in the 1970 Wasfi al-Tal government ultimately resulted in his suspension from the JMB for ten years as the movement ultimately decided against participation (Gharaybeh 1996, 80).[8]

There is another example from the Jordanian case that demonstrates the value of analyzing Islamist moderation from the analytical vantage point of cognitive structures, and the previously outlined logics of action. Prior to the mid 1990s, the issue of participation was debated fiercely in terms of religious appropriateness. Since then, the JMB still vigorously debates the issue, only now the terms of the debate have shifted to politics and utility. They are now about the strategic benefits and costs of participation in the context of the movement's objectives, and not about the religious appropriateness of participation in politics. In short, on consequential logic. Moreover, when Islamists look back on this part of their cognitive history, they are amazed at the very fact that they used to debate the issue on terms of religious

[8] Suspension was confirmed in the author's interview with Dr. Farhan.

appropriateness (Farhan 2009). In hindsight this mindset appears to them to be "backward" and "underdeveloped" (Abul Futoh 2011). The change in the way this practice has been understood by Islamists, how it is *thinkable,* can also be explained by discursive changes in their cognitive structure. It is to these changes that I now turn.

1.2 Discourses of Moderation

Hopf outlines a robust methodology to help researchers reconstruct the discursive formations that constitute a social cognitive structure (2002, 23). Epistemologically, his methods rely on phenomenology, induction and interpretation (ibid). He begins by scoping out the texts to be analyzed. As a rule of thumb, they ought to be those most widely read during the historical period under study. The genres could include: official statements and speeches; articles in the press; academic and professional journals; popular novels and non-fiction books; and high school textbooks (ibid, 24). Next comes the step of inductively recovering identities from the texts without any a priori assumptions about: what these identities might be; what they might mean; or what relationships they may have to one another (ibid, 25). By the end of the reading, through thick narrative analysis, a narrow set of identities and their meanings begin to cluster quantitatively around a dominant few across the textual landscape. The last step in Hopf's methodology requires establishing the final meaning of these identities, intertextually, then aggregating them into discursive formations.

The extent of work required by this methodology is well beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, I relied on a modified approach that worked within my constraints. First, I reduced the number of genres included in my discourse analysis. I focused mostly on: (1) influential texts of

Islamic political thought that informed the JMB's political practices; (2) the JMB's party literature; (3) texts and memoirs written by party leaders; (4) speeches and statements made to the press; and (5) interviews conducted with journalists and academic researchers. The time horizon of the discourse analysis was limited to the reform phase in the movement's history (late 1980s) and the early phase of their parliamentary participation (1989-1997). Influential political texts were identified based on my interviews. Since these texts were likely to address a wide range of topics, my focus was on the themes that make up the qualitative indicators of moderation (my dependent variable): (1) popular sovereignty; (2) pluralism and political competition; (3) participation in politics; and (4) the compatibility of Islam and Democracy.[9] They are also the most prevalent and contested in the literature surveyed for this analysis.

The limited scope of this thesis also meant that I had to rely on secondary sources. I utilized a number of political studies that traced the discursive evolution of the JMB. A significant number of these studies were conducted by Jordanian scholars with native linguistic skills, some of whom were previous members of the JMB (Gharaybeh 1996; Tamimi 2001, 2007; Bdoor 2011). I also relied on a number of studies that focused exclusively on Islamist political discourse analysis (Moussali 1999; Sadiki 2004; Abu-Rumman 2007, 2010). In addition to using secondary sources to identify historical discursive formations, I validated the influence of these discourses by tracing them within the primary texts I myself analyzed.

There are some unavoidable limitations that result from this approach that are worth highlighting. First, none of the studies utilized in my research were transparent about the methods used in their discourse analysis. I was unable to identify any studies that did outline

[9] See section 0.1 "Defining Islamist Moderation" for a more detailed explanation for choosing these themes.

their methods during my research. The literature I surveyed included academic articles published in Western peer-reviewed journals, as well as academic books. Therefore, it was not possible to critically validate their interpretations by way of scrutinizing their methods. Because of that, I was not able to confirm that the interpretations I utilized in my study were inductive, phenomenological, and atheoretical in their reconstructions of discursive formations. Second, the primary discourse analysis I conducted did not reconstruct cognitive structures from the bottom up. Instead, I only compared the discursive practices in the primary texts to the dominant discursive formations identified in the secondary sources. This enabled me to determine how these discourses structured the meanings the JMB attributed to their political practices. Again, the scope of this thesis made this approach unavoidable. These limitations, however, do not necessarily invalidate my analytical conclusions. The validity of my interpretations are dependent, though, on the validity of my secondary sources.

1.3 Early Reform Discourses

Democratic practices such as multiparty contestation, parliamentary elections and public accountability first entered the realm of the imaginable in Muslim societies with the reform discourses of 19th century modernizers. The encounter with European culture and civilization, especially the traumatic experiences of invasion and colonialism, unleashed significant introspection. Intellectuals debated the causes of Muslim decline and, conversely, the rise of European power, culture and scientific development. Napoleon's brief occupation of Egypt between 1798 and 1801 made this decline humiliatingly obvious. After Egypt’s liberation by Mamluk forces, its new ruler Muhammad Ali Pasha sent the first educational mission of students

and professionals to France during the 1820s to support his program of modernizing Egypt through the "import" of European sciences (Tamimi 2007, 42). This program of cultural modernization spanned various fields including military technology, historiography, sociology, philosophy, natural sciences and many other disciplines. Subsequently, a dominant political discourse began to clearly emerge amongst 19th century reformers: "despotism was a major source of 'Muslim sickness'...the remedy is not to be found only within Muslim culture and society but should also be sought elsewhere as well, specifically in Europe" (ibid, 42-43).

These early reformers would establish the initial discursive building blocks of the imaginable and thinkable in the social cognitive structure of future Islamists. Key amongst these reformers were: Egyptian Rifa'ah al-Tahtawi (1801–73); Tunisian Khayr al-din al-Tunisi (1810–99); Persian Jamal al-din al-Afghani (1838–97); Egyptian Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905); and Syrians Abdurrahman al-Kawakibi (1849–1903) and Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935). A number of important similarities and differences between these thinkers' analyses of the modern Muslim predicament structured the discourses and debates of future Islamic movements. Beginning with their areas of consensus, despite their differences on the solution to revitalizing the Muslim umma[10], all reformers agreed that absolute rule, the lack of popular participation in politics and the absence of accountability to the umma represent the primary causes of decline. Moreover, authoritarian rule was not considered an inherent religious principle of political authority in Islam. Instead, it was considered a temporal practice of Muslims without any normative status when considering alternative models of political governance. Second, all reformers advocated adopting some element of European democratic institutions. Political

[10] The whole community of Muslims bound together by ties of religion.

parties, popular elections, republican government, parliamentary systems, constitutional authority and rational administrative rules were all among the institutions proposed in their reforms. Finally, notwithstanding their varying casting of the European "other", all early reformers held, at the very least, a positive outlook towards European systems of government and administration. This amicable casting of the European identity would not persist as the social cognitive structure evolves with the historical developments of the 20th century.

A number of crucial differences did emerge amongst this early group of reformers that persisted and evolved in the discursive landscape of future Islamists. First, there were significant differences in their openness to European emulation. At one end of the spectrum stood those thinkers who advocated learning and adopting all aspects of European culture that did not violate the "fundamentals" of the Islamic faith. For these thinkers, human civilizations were cumulative; and like the European civilization before them, it was now their turn to borrow from other civilizations, and build upon their achievements. They cautioned against ignoring the experiences of other nations, and considered "deluded" those who thought it was possible to remain isolated from other civilizations. It is important to highlight that at this early stage of discursive formation, the opposite end of the spectrum was not populated by cultural isolationists, or by those whose identity narrative constituted the European "other" in a relationship of enmity. This more polarized casting would develop in future Islamist discourses with important effects on the thinkability of democratic practices that will be discussed later on in the chapter.

Jamal al-din al-Afghani, who had direct influence on many future reformers and Islamist revivalists, was amongst the first thinkers to contest the enthusiasm for European emulation. Afghani cautioned against leaders who "aped" the European model without modifying it to fit

the conditions of Muslim society, or its values and traditions. In doing so, Afghani believed these leaders were threatening the sovereignty of the Muslim umma (Tamimi 2007, 45). The feeling of threat was likely amplified by the rise of a secular nationalist discourse in the Arab public sphere. This discourse was significantly influenced by French and English liberal thought, and was strongly supported by a growing number of Arab thinkers with profuse writings. Instead of the unadulterated adoption of European democratic institutions, Afghani and his followers began "Islamizing" Western political concepts by reconstituting Islamic concepts such as *shura, ijm'a* and *masḷaha.* These Islamic concepts were equated with democracy, popular consensus and utilitarianism respectively as a kind of metamorphosis of European political theory through Islamic discourse. The extent to which early reformers attempted to Islamize their political discourse was the second key differentiating attribute between them.

Third, reformists also varied in the extent to which they called for a return to "true" Islamic practice depending on the degree to which they were influenced by the Wahabi discourse dominant in the Arabian peninsula. Affected less by the encounter with Europe, and more by the effects of Sufism and paganism on the faith and practices of Muslims, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-91) attempted to "cleanse" Islam from the "impurities" and innovations that have infiltrated the religion. His philosophy advocated reviving the tradition and practice of the Prophet Muhammad and his first generation of followers (the salaf) to achieve this end. The focus of his writings was on religious creed and practice, not on political theory; however, his discourse would plant the seeds for the emergence of future fundamentalists[11] who would call for revolution against all political forms and state models they deemed "un-Islamic". For a minority

[11] The use of the term fundamentalist here refers not to violent extremist groups, but rather to groups who advocate the return to Islamic fundamentals as a method of revival.

of fundamentalists, these models included the nation-state, and democratic politics. At this stage, however, reformers influenced by the Wahabi discourse simply equated Islamized democratic politics with "true" Islam. They considered the historical practice of despotism an aberration that ought to be rectified. Muhammad Rashid Rida was the leading proponent of this discourse. It was from his circle of students that Hasan al-Banna, the future influential founder and *Murshid* (guide and leader) of the Muslim Brotherhood, would emerge. During Rida's time, this discourse would enjoy only marginal status in the Muslim social cognitive structure. The rapid growth and populism of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as the unfolding political and social developments of the 20th century, would later elevate this discourse to dominant status.

A final attribute of differentiation amongst the reform discourses of the 19th century was their polarized stance on multiparty politics. Opposition was argued on the basis that multiparty democratic systems could fracture and divide the polity and the umma, weakening its unity, and sowing the seeds of future civil conflict. Those in favor of multiparty politics argued that it resembled the jurisprudential pluralism in the Islamic tradition, which only enriched and strengthened the umma. They also argued that the experience of pluralism in Europe demonstrates that European parties were only divided over competing political programs in service of a single national interest. These parties were not divided over the rules that organized politics, which all parties upheld, nor over the legitimacy of the state.

These early discourses would be produced and reproduced by Islamic movements throughout the 20th century. They significantly altered the ideational structures of future Islamists by: (1) restructuring the imaginability of Muslim politics along democratic principles; (2) drawing out the terms of future debate and contestation; and (3) by providing Islamists with

the conceptual and epistemological frameworks they would utilize to further Islamize Western democratic theory, and human rights discourse. The most democratizing effect of these discourses was realized through the reinterpretation of the historical practice of shura. The Qur'anic discourse enjoins Muslims and their leaders to arrive at public decisions which affect the umma through deliberation and consultation. Describing the characteristics of true believers, one Qur'anic verse states they are those "who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation" (Shura: 38). In another verse addressing the prophet, the Qur'an instructs him to "consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in Allah" (Al Umran: 159).

Throughout the history of Islamic political practice, shura and public consultation were not constituted as a mandatory principle of Muslim governance. The Khalifah (supreme leader of the umma) and his provincial rulers did not, as a practice, consult with the public on any of their decisions. Even when they did, they were not obliged through any formal or informal institutions to abide by public opinion. Furthermore, those being consulted where a council of religious scholars (ulema) and social notables (ahl al-hal wa al-aqd), not the wider umma. The reform discourses reinterpreted shura from a voluntary practice to a mandatory obligation required to legitimize political rule. It also expanded consent and consultation from an elite minority, to the entire umma. This reinterpretation follows naturally from an analysis that views despotism as the central cause of Muslim decline.

Another critical departure from historical practice made possible by this reinterpretation of shura was the *religious* rejection of despotism. Throughout the history of the Islamic Caliphate, most schools of jurisprudence legitimized absolute rule, even tyrannical rule, if rulers

upheld the sharia when governing the affairs of Muslims. The reform discourses relocated the source of sovereignty in the Muslim umma, which must grant its consent periodically to "contracted" leaders. The mandate of these leaders was serving the interests of the umma, as determined by ijm'a (consensus), and not just upholding sharia. Republican constitutional government, parliamentary politics and elections were considered the modern institutions that would enable the umma to exercise its sovereignty. The question of the legitimacy of absolute rule remains a subject of contestation in Islamic political discourse even today.

The reform discourses also highlight the beginning of an Islamist anxiety with Western cultural infiltration, and the local forces of Westernization and secularism. This anxiety would only increase down the line, and congeal into a number of discourses debating the "compatibility" of Islam with democracy and Western modernity. Dominant Islamist discourses would stabilize around either a complete rejection of Western culture, or a reconciliation with Muslim conditions through Islamization. The effects of this polarized identity casting would make it more difficult to adopt Western democratic values and institutions, even when Islamized, as opponents to democratization considered Western democracy a product of an alien and "un-Islamic" culture.

1.4 Current Discursive Landscape

The Islamist discursive landscape that constituted the imaginability of democratic political practices was significantly shaped by the political thought of five key thinkers: Hasan al-Banna, Sayed Qutb, Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, Rashid al-Ghannouchi and Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi. In every one of my interviews with members of the JMB, the arguments and view points of these

thinkers were cited directly to symbolically support the interviewee's claims. Moreover, the discourses of Sayed Qutb were identified specifically as possible obstacles to the moderation of the Islamic movement. The thought of Qaradawi, Turabi and Ghannouchi were also cited as imperative to the democratization of Islamic political thought. Accordingly, this section will review the discourses of these thinkers, focusing on the same themes of: (1) the compatibility of Islam with Western democracy; (2) popular sovereignty; (3) political pluralism; and (4) participation in politics under "un-Islamic" regimes. It will outline the discursive obstacles and enablers of democratic political practices. To highlight their effects on the practices of the JMB, a tracing of these discourses in the texts of the party will also be conducted.

1.4.1 Islam's Compatibility with Democracy

There is a consensus amongst all the previously outlined thinkers that Islam does not prescribe specific social systems in its Qur'anic scripture, or in the practice of its prophet. This conclusion also applies to the political system. Instead, Islam offers *general principles* only, and allows for the continuous development of temporal systems based on the needs and interests of evolving societies. Hasan al-Banna, the founding father of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, argued:

> "Islam has been careful not to postulate any permanent temporal systems, but its general principles allow for continuos development of philosophical and intellectual systems. This enhances the chances of perfection and deters imperfection...priority is given to the individual more than to the system, since it is human nature, and not systems, that should be perfected. Human adjustment is required in accordance with the spirit of the ages" (Quoted in Moussalli 1999, 47-48).

Dr. al-Qaradawi, one of Sunni Islam's most prominent jurisprudential scholars, postulates that: (1) governance by shura; (2) leadership through bay'ah (explicit or implicit allegiance); (3) the enjoining of good and the forbidding of evil; (4) public accountability; (5) the upholding of justice and the elimination of injustice; (6) the pursuit of public interests; and (7) the prevention of public corruption all constitute the general political principles of Islam, and the ultimate ends of its sharia (2006, 5).

The general principles discourse provides a supportive discursive environment for the emergence of democratic political practices for various reasons. First, it allows for the imaginability of multiple political systems and practices, including moderate democratic practices. If religious scripture does not explicitly specify forms of political rule, and only specifies general principles, then the historical practice of absolute rule in the Islamic Caliphate does not constitute the *only* possible mode of political governance legitimate in Islam. Absolute rule can now, at best, be considered a possible mode of governance that may or may not adhere to general Islamic principles. This discourse also supports the imaginability of alternatives by attributing no normative priority to any temporal practices of Muslims, whether historically, or in the present. All practices are constituted as human interpretations, influenced by the spatio-temporal social context, and by the public interest that drives them at the time. As a result of this conceptualization, historical practices may or may not be helpful in addressing the modern needs of the Muslim umma. It is consensus that determines their reproduction as practices in modern conditions, provided that same consensus also determines they do not violate the general principles of Islam.

For al-Banna, "Islam contains basic legal material...its denotations and connotations cannot be restricted to or derived from only past historical paradigms...Islamic thought must account for and deal with modernity" (Quoted in Moussalli 1999, 85). Dr. Hassan al-Turabi goes even further than al-Banna arguing that:

> "both the specifics and the organizing principles of religion are historically developed and, consequently, subject to change according to the community's needs. The historical nature of these principles means that no normative standing is attributed to them and that their replacement with new specifics and principles is not in violation of religion" (Quoted in Moussalli 1999, 90).

Dr. al-Qaradawi's response to critics of term limits for political leaders on the basis of historical practices is based on the same discourse of al-Banna and al-Turabi (author translation, al-Qaradawi 1997, 83-87). The scholar reminds critics that the same Enlightened Caliphs (khulafa' al-rashideen), whose historical political practices they advocate today, innovated alternative practices to the practices of the Prophet himself, where religiously permissible.[12] They did so when the public interests recognized by sharia could be addressed more effectively with new innovations, or when the public interest had changed over time. Hence, if the Enlightened Caliphs adopted alternative practices to the Prophet, who is a greater religious authority, how could it not be permissible for modern day Muslims to adopt democratic political practices. The caveat of course is that these democratic innovations must better serve the public interest; must be implemented within the framework of Islam's general principles; and must realize the overall objectives of sharia. The mere fact of historical precedent does not render

[12] Based on mainstream schools of jurisprudence, not all the Prophet's actions are considered religious obligations on Muslims by default. Evidence from scripture is required to attribute normative authority to the Prophet's actions.

historical practices obligatory. These practices were simply appropriate for their place, their time and their context.

The very fact that the JMB formed a political party, contested parliamentary elections and advocated democratic reforms in their party literature is empirical evidence of the valorization of this new discourse in the social cognitive structure. In other words, as agents, the JMB produce and reproduce this discourse in practice. But for more explicit textual evidence, the discourse of generality and openness to innovation is traceable in their literature too:

> "On the question of state of organization, Islam was satisfied with legislating a number of rules, and emphasizing a number of general objectives, leaving significant space and leeway for the Muslim mind to interact with the changing and diverse circumstances of its time and place" (author translation, Gharaybeh 1996, 97).

The second reason the general principles discourse provides a supportive discursive environment for democratic practices is because it places the democratic discourse on par normatively with competing political discourses. Once the idea of generality is acknowledged and legitimized, not a single modern political theory or reform discourse can claim greater religious authority. The tone of the JMB's literature corroborates this hypothesis. Before laying out any of their ideas for political reform in Jordan, the JMB typically begins with this pluralistic disclaimer:

> "The positions of the Islamist movement and its programs are not fixed positions or provisions. Its vision on issues does not constitute religion, good or evil, wrong or right, belief or disbelief; rather, they are judgements (ijtihadat) in understanding our surrounding reality, and evaluations in how best we can deal with this reality. Once this reality is understood, we extrapolate the rules of sharia that best suit the needs of our community in its different phases" (author translation, Gharaybeh 1996, 95).

Once the democratic discourse is normatively on par with all other competing discourses in Muslim societies, its valorization becomes a function of: power struggles; the socially constructed public interest of the umma; and the contingent and contested social consensus. Having said that, I would argue that, in the realm of ideas and theory, the legitimation of the general principles discourse favors democratic government. To borrow from the Islamist discourse, the "spirit of our age" is undoubtedly democratic. The various uprisings of the Arab Spring, as well as the practices and discourses of mainstream Islamists, support this claim. Moreover, if one sets asides the role of power, determining which practices to adopt in the absence of continued revelation through prophets is, by the very logic of the general principles discourse, a matter for social consensus. If this consensus is not manufactured or coerced, it necessarily implies democratic processes. The internal organization of the JMB, and the democratic mechanisms with which they resolve internal religious differences (next chapter), is but one practical example of how the general principles discourse favors democratic practices.

The final reason the general principles discourse provides a supportive discursive environment for the emergence of democratic political practices is because it legitimizes emulation from all foreign systems, including Western democracy, provided these systems do not violate the general principles of Islam. Since Islam has no revealed or fixed systems, only general guidelines, and since modern systems exist that have already been linked with justice and development in Muslim discourse, emulation of systems perceived as successful and just is only natural. Having said that, discourses advocating emulation are likely to emphasize adapting emulated systems to Muslim social conditions, community values and cultural heritage. All this is in sharp contrast to competing fundamentalist discourses that cast the West in a relationship of

enmity and threat to the Muslim umma and its cultural heritage, thereby rejecting all its cultural products.

Close to a century ago, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Banna, argued that not only does shura not conflict with Western democracy, but that it "absorbs it" since it covers all aspects of a community's social life, not only its politics (quoted in Moussalli 1999, 121). This appropriation of democratic practice was also echoed in my interviews with different Islamic Action Front (IAF) party members.[13] In one of these interviews, Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, former speaker of the Jordanian parliament and former leader of the IAF, went as far as claiming democracy for Islam. He argued that the Prophet had established the first constitutional government in history in Madinah, and that the Caliph Abu Bakr happened to be the first democratically elected leader of a republic in history. Muslims, according to Dr. Arabiyat, had gone astray and suspended this early practice of shura. They were on a trajectory of democratic transformation but were sidetracked.[14]

Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradwi and Rachid Ghannouchi similarly see no conflict or incompatibility between the general principles of Islam and Western democracy. For Turabi, implementing sharia "does not exclude non-Islamic doctrines and institutions, especially if an Islamic society needs them...Justice does not mean only one thing throughout history; therefore its individual interpretations must change from one time to another" (quoted in Moussalli 1997, 91). The Islamic state, for al-Qaradawi, "ought to be founded on what is the best principles of democracy, but not an exact copy of the Western democratic state" (author translation, al-Qaradawi 1997, 36). The scholar continues:

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[13] The IAF is the JMB's political party in Jordan.

[14] Interview with the author, April 17, 2011, Amman.

> "for what is wrong with Islamizing knowledge? Or Islamizing social systems? Or Islamizing culture? Wouldn't the Islamization of culture entail the liberation of this culture from Western domination so that it becomes an authentic culture that reflects the conscience and reason of the umma?... This requires that we take a new approach to our social systems. An approach that does not blindly emulate the West, nor completely rejects everything Western" (author translation, al-Qaradawi 1997, 75).

Ghannouchi adopts an even more universalizing discourse. He argues that:

> "civilizational products and achievements are universal. What may be called Greek, Islamic, or Western civilizations are only phases in a single human civilizational cycle, and thus the material and intellectual products of any particular phase are inheritable by subsequent phases." (quoted in Tamimi 2001, 200).

The discourse of the JMB is more aligned with the Islamizing discourse of al-Qaradawi and al-Banna than with Ghannouchi's universalizing discourse. In his own contribution to Islamic political thought, Dr. Ishaq Farhan, former leader of the IAF, argues that "democracy is a Western concept, and if we presuppose that it is not permissible to completely adopt any alien system to our religion and society, we ought to take from it that which suits our faith, our values and our good traditions" (author translation, Farhan 1996, 19).

1.4.2 Popular Sovereignty

Once the compatibility of Islam and democracy is established in discourse, the Islamization of democracy begins. The discourses on popular sovereignty offer an abundance of religious and secular justifications in support of the people's sovereignty in an Islamic state. However, all the dominant Islamist political discourses qualify this sovereignty with the constraint that sharia takes precedent over the will of the majority in matters where there happens

to be a clear Islamic ruling, which cannot be overturned by this majority. This is a critical caveat as competing Islamist political discourses often reject democracy on the basis that its philosophy displaces God as the sovereign. The response to this rejection reveals significant insight into the mainstream's conceptualization of democracy and popular sovereignty.

Al-Qaradawi's treatise on the Islamic state argues that rejectionists who claim that democracy violates a fundamental divine prerogative – governance (*hakimiyya*) – have erroneously understood both democracy and the Islamized democratic discourse. The prominent scholar considers the essence of democracy to be: (1) that people have a say in how they are governed, and who gets to govern them; (2) that they are able to hold their leaders accountable; and (3) that they are able to replace leaders when they fail to govern in their interests (author translation, al-Qaradawi 1997, 132). This conceptualization is procedural at its core, and eschews the secular and liberal philosophical underpinnings of the Western democratic state. The mainstream discourse makes no equivocations on this matter. It goes to great lengths to point out its rejection of the philosophy behind Western democracy. What it accepts is implementing the West's tried and tested "mechanisms". Al-Qaradawi believes that, through its long struggle with tyranny and injustice, democracy has evolved a number of "formats" and "instruments" that are today considered the best guarantees against the domination of tyrants (author translation, al-Qaradawi 1997, 137). Al-Qaradawi explicitly rejects democracy's Western philosophy which he considers to be amoral, materialistic, spiritually hollow and economically unjust (ibid, 36).

These same critiques have also been outlined by other Islamist thinkers including Ghannouchi (quoted in Tamimi 2001, 85-88), Banna (quoted in Moussalli 1999, 129-131) and Qutb (quoted in Moussalli 1999, 144-149). Despite what these scholars consider as flaws in

Western democracy, they still believe it is "a thousand times better than despotism that is grinding the masses in some of the Arab countries where the state has been turned into a highly sophisticated machine of repression" (Ghannouchi quoted in Tamimi 2001, 88). It is clear from this discourse that mainstream Islamists essentialize democracy as the antithesis of authoritarianism. The substance of their critiques does not represent an obstacle to the development of political pluralism in their societies.

These moderate discourses also shift the terms of the debate from the rejectionists' spurious dichotomy of people's sovereignty versus God's sovereignty, to the dichotomy of people's rule versus tyrannical rule (al-Qaradawi 1997, 139). Since no legislation in the envisioned Islamic state can overturn the undisputed fundamentals of the religion for all Islamists, the rejectionist argument from God's sovereignty is a fallacious argument. The people's legislative sovereignty is only over matters where sharia has no ruling. This is a vast realm which Islam has left to reason, science and social context. Al-Qaradawi advocates constitutional guarantees to define and constrain popular sovereignty accordingly (1997, 141).

The influence of this discourse is clearly evident in the JMB's literature. Dr. Ishaq Farhan makes clear in his own treatise that his use of the concept democracy refers to the people's participation in government through the mechanism of electing representatives who implement legislation that suits their lives, and that this conceptualization does not contradict with Islamic principles (author translation, Farhan 1996, 19). The party's internal literature directly cites al-Banna's argument that constitutional government can be understood as legitimate authority bestowed upon any government by its people through the exercise of that people's sovereignty. Al-Banna considers that constitutional government also implies the accountability of leaders to

their people, and the clear delineation and separation of powers. All these principles, he argues, "completely adhere to the teachings of Islam, and the rules and systems related to governance. Therefore the Muslim Brothers believes that constitutional government is the closest existing governance system to Islam, and they seek no alternatives to replace it" (author translation, quoted in Gharaybeh 1996, 105).

The party's campaign literature also echoes the constraining power of sharia on the people's sovereignty. In the section on legislative policy, the IAF promises to "purify" Jordanian laws from everything that violates Islamic sharia (Islamic Action Front Party Program 1993, 7). The IAF's vision for reform in Jordan, published recently in 2005, also reiterates that Islamic sharia and it objectives ought to be the source of all legislation in the country (Islamic Action Front 2005, 19), and that this ought to be outlined in the Jordanian constitution (ibid, 26).

To support their rejection of authoritarianism, and their advocation of Islamized democratic rule, Islamists resort to evidence from religious scripture. Al-Banna argues, "equality among human beings is postulated by the Qur'an. That this equality means equal political rights and duties is only a rational derivation...no individual or group can claim a privileged position, whether political or religious" (quoted in Moussalli 1999, 126). Al-Qaradawi cites a number of Qur'anic verses that admonishes historical tyrants and their supporters. He also cites scripture that requires people to be led by those whom they choose and love (al-Qaradawi 1997, 134-139). But the most important, and most widely referenced, religious argument in favor of democratic governance is the argument from the principle of shura. The majority of Islamists have adopted the reinterpretation of shura first introduced by the early reformists. Reconstituting the historical practice of shura into an obligatory principle of governance, and expanding its domain to the

entire public, represents the cornerstone of the mainstream's Islamization of democratic theory (al-Qaradawi 1997, 138-148; al-Banna in Moussalli 2001, 121; Gharaybeh 1996, 100; Ghannouchi in Tamimi 2001, 99-102). The JMB's own approach also places shura at the center of its vision for political and social reform (Farhan 1996, 19-20; Islamic Action Front 1993, 2003, 2005, 2007).

1.4.3 Political Pluralism

The legitimacy of political pluralism is a subject of contestation in Islamist political discourse. It is understood as the practice of forming a political party to compete with other parties over political power. The various discourses on the question of pluralism cluster around three positions: (1) absolute rejection; (2) conditional acceptance of pluralism under an Islamic framework; and (3) absolute acceptance of pluralism excluding no ideological or political trend in society. The majority of Islamists, including the JMB, fall within the second discourse; but this was not always the case. The formation of the IAF in 1992 was not without controversy. Its legitimation within the movement required significant ideological debate, as participation in parliamentary elections did not necessarily require the formation of a political party. Islamist candidates could run as independents after all, and pursing the movements reform agenda could be achieved through parliamentary legislation and participation in government. Therefore, political pluralism and partisanship cannot be taken for granted in an Islamized democratic theory. The practice needs an enabling discourse.

The rejectionist argument surfaced early on in the discursive landscape of Islamists. Hasan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood's influential founder, rejected political pluralism and

the partisanship of Egyptian politics during his time (Tamimi 2007, 48-49; al-Qaradawi 1997, 157). Al-Banna's condemnation of party life in Egypt has been attributed to the corruption and foreign penetration of parties at the time. Furthermore, the movement's founder warned that "fragmented and drowned in disputes, the Umma could never confront the threat of British control not only of Egypt but also of much of the Muslim world" (Tamimi 2007, 49). The rejectionist discourse was further empowered when another influential theorist and Muslim Brotherhood leader, Sayyid Qutb, also condemned party politics. For Qutb, the communal interest in social peace required ideological and political unity. Party life threatens that unity, encourages political elitism and leads to the prioritization of special interests, including the personal interests of party elites (quoted in Moussalli 1999, 99).

The current rejectionist discourse relies on the symbolic power of these two important Islamic thinkers to legitimize its position (al-Qaradawi 1997, 157). Referencing the literature of both Qutb and al-Banna, especially the latter, is particularly empowering within the movement of the Muslim Brothers.[15] In addition to this symbolic strategy, rejectionists also produce several new arguments of their own. First, Qur'anic verses advocating unity amongst Muslims, and admonishing fragmentation, are interpreted in a manner to support a discourse that claims that Islam imposes unity and forbids party life. Hence, legitimizing pluralism would constitute an injury to the religion itself (quoted in al-Qaradawi 1997, 155). Second, political parties are considered an alien institution originating from the "un-Islamic" principles of a foreign (Western) culture. Accordingly, adopting political pluralism is considered cultural dependence and subordination. A number of sayings from the Prophet Muhammad urging Muslims not to

[15] In almost every interview, members of the JMB referred to al-Banna's thought to legitimize whichever position they happened to be defending at the time.

emulate other nations are also cited in support of the foreign culture argument. Finally, the rejectionist discourse claims that pluralism divides a citizen's loyalty between her party and the state she has sworn allegiance and obedience too (ibid, 155-158).

By the early 1990s, the dominant discourse on political pluralism shifts to endorsing party politics. The JMB's position on the issue adjusts accordingly. This new legitimizing discourse responds to the rejectionists' arguments and establishes the ideational basis for pluralism in an Islamic state. Beginning with the historical position of both al-Banna and Qutb, it acknowledges their arguments as respected opinions of Islam's greatest modern thinkers, but highlights that they are only just that: opinions, without any normative priority (al-Qaradawi 1997, 157). It also reminds those who attribute symbolic value to the thought of al-Banna and Qutb that both leaders insisted during their life that there was no harm in their followers adopting a different position on any issue, especially when conditions change, and the interests of the umma are better served by a change in opinion.

In response to the argument that pluralism defies Islam's injunction against fragmentation, the legitimizing discourse points out that pluralism need not result in division and dispersion. Furthermore, it reminds Muslims that not all difference is condemned in Islam. In fact, differences in ijtihad (application of reason to extract sharia rulings), for example, are encouraged and considered a blessing due to the flexibility in religion they engender (author translation, al-Qaradawi 1997, 153). It is only differences that are intrinsically antagonistic, not differences of diversity that enrich the umma, that are condemned in Islam (ibid, 154). Unity ought to be only around the vital interests of the umma such as its existential integrity, its Islamic

creed and the upholding of its sharia. When differences are tolerated and respected, not vilified and demonized, they would not lead to fragmentation and animosity (ibid).

The objection from emulating a Western political principle is also addressed in the legitimizing discourse. It considers "blind emulation" which turns Muslims into subordinates, always following and never leading, to be the act forbidden in the Islamic injunction. In addition, it restricts the Prophet's injunction to the context of cultural appropriation, wherein other cultures' symbols, icons and religious rituals are copied. Emulation of temporal matters, on the other hand, is not forbidden. Muslims ought to always seek knowledge and progress wherever they find it (ibid, 155). It also references several examples of secular emulation from Islamic history, including the time of the Prophet. Therefore, if adopting Western political pluralism brings about greater benefit to the umma than harm, this emulation ought to be encouraged so long as it is modified to meet local conditions and Islamic values (ibid).

Finally, with respect to the rejectionist premise that pluralism fractures a citizen's loyalties between state and party, the legitimizing discourse argues that this is only the case when a citizen is dogmatic in their loyalty, i.e. when there is total opposition to the state and total support for the party. In the absence of this dogmatism, there is no contradiction between having membership in various social organizations, including parties, and having loyalty to the state. After all, all loyalties fall under the encompassing umbrella of loyalty to God and His Prophet (ibid, 158).

Besides offering rejoinders to the arguments of the rejectionist discourse, the new discourse also provides several legitimizing grounds in support of political pluralism. First, based on the diversity of Islamic jurisprudence, it considers Islam already pluralistic in practice

(Tamimi 2001, 139; al-Banna in Moussalli 1999, 85; al-Qaradawi 1997, 151). Therefore, if Muslims consider jurisprudential pluralism religiously appropriate and enriching to the umma, why should the matter be any different in the realm of politics. Second, the discourse outlines a number of Qur'anic texts with interpretations supporting pluralism. These include texts which explicitly state that God has intentionally created differences amongst mankind for their benefit, and therefore, how could Muslims deny this diversity and its benefits. This discourse is replicated in the JMB's own literature: "We believe that God has created people different...and the lesson we ought to take from this is not discord and disharmony, but interaction and cooperation. Based on this, we consider pluralism in religion, in ideology, in philosophy, part of God's creation" (Farhan 1996, 25). Another Qur'anic text cited in support of party life states that in matters of faith and creed, there can be no coercion. From this text, the discourse derives various political and civil rights, including freedom of religion and freedom of expression to advocate for any creed or ideology. Since in modern conditions this advocacy is best organized through associations, including parties, pluralism becomes an attribute of Islamic civil society (Gharaybeh 1997, 98). This argument is also reproduced in the literature of the JMB (Farhan 1996, 25). Third, the discourse refers to a general principle adopted by all the different schools of Islamic jurisprudence which considers permissibility to be the original normative position of Islam on all matters, so long as no text explicitly states otherwise. Accordingly, since there is no text which forbids Muslims from forming associations, rejectionists have no Islamic grounds for opposing pluralism (al-Qaradawi 1997, 147). This principle is also cited in the JMB's literature (Gharaybeh 1997, 98).

The final religious argument outlined in the legitimizing discourse considers the formation of parties an instrumental necessity for the realization of two fundamental religious principles in Islam: enjoining good and forbidding evil; and shura (al-Qaradawi 1997, 151). The first is necessarily a collective act which requires the formation of organizations under modern conditions. Since this principle also applies to those in power, holding them accountable would require the structures of a political party. As for shura, the very nature of the concept of consultation conflicts with single party rule, as that party can only ever represent a faction of society (al-Banna quoted in Moussali 1999, 86). Furthermore, shura also necessitates the existence of multiple ijtihadat (opinions) for the umma to choose from; hence, shura requires pluralism (Turabi quoted in Moussalli 1999, 90).

One last important justification in support of pluralism argues from the interests of the community in a pluralistic system. Under the umbrella of one constitution, free competition amongst different parties should serve the national interest, and the interests of citizens, since all party programs are structured around different visions for serving the same national interest. Other benefits outlined in the discourse include the peaceful transfer of power amongst competing political forces, and the prevention of authoritarianism. Al-Qaradawi proclaims, "in our time, and after bitter struggle, humanity has devised an effective mechanism to check political authority without bloodshed. This mechanism is the existence of multiple political forces, not easily eliminated by those in power. This mechanism is called parties" (author translation, al-Qaradawi 1997, 149). For the JMB's leader, Ishaq Farhan, pluralism "has proved, through the experience of modern societies, that it is a suitable peaceful mechanism for the

transfer of power, without burdening people with the negative effects of military coups, or popular revolutions" (1996, 26).

Stating their commitment to pluralism has become second nature to the JMB; so much so that in every interview I conducted, the word pluralism itself was a mantra. Having said that, this commitment has limits in the dominant discourse. Atheistic parties that reject religion, all religion and not just Islam, would not be permitted in an Islamic state. This is justified on the grounds that the majority and minority in the Muslim world accepts religion. Therefore atheistic parties are outside the consensus of society, and there very existence threatens its unity (al-Qaradawi 1997, 148).[16] This proscription was not considered a violation of freedoms based on the majoritarian argument that if Islam is democratically chosen as the basis for government and society, than opposing Islam is tantamount to opposing society (al-Banna quoted in Moussalli 1999, 86). The JMB does not endorse this constraint on political pluralism as it believes that Islam is capable of defending itself in the battle of ideas and therefore sees no real threat from atheistic parties who ought to enjoy about as much popularity in Jordan as an Islamic or communist party would enjoy in England or the United States (Gharaybeh 1997, 102). The JMB is not alone in its liberal conception of pluralism. Ghannouchi, current leader of al-Nahda Party in Tunis, also argues that Islam guarantees the rights of all parties since it advocates that there is no coercion in religion, and since it guarantees freedom of religion (Ghannouchi quoted in Tamimi 2001, 95).

[16] There was no substantive argument provided as to how this might occur. It was strictly an assertion.

1.4.4 Participation in Government

The imaginability of democratic political practice was strongly affected by another key shift in the Islamists' discursive landscape, namely: the debate on the legitimacy of participation in a political system that unequivocally violates Islamic sharia. This violation can either be positive, i.e. permitting the sale of alcohol or interest based finance; or negative, by failing to fully enforce sharia. It is important to highlight that the issue at stake here is sharia, *not* democracy. Refusing to participate in a political system that is organized democratically after liberalization is not necessarily a rejection of democracy. It could also signify a rejection of a political order that does not uphold sharia. Hence, not all Islamist parties who reject participation in a liberalized political order necessarily reject democracy.

It is fair to assume that, as religious agents, when Islamists take part in a pluralistic political order structured by democratic institutions, they must believe that this participation does not violate their religion. Moreover, in light of a discursive context which vigorously contests the compatibility of Islam and democracy, participation also implies some degree of acceptance of a democratic order and its institutions. Therefore, inclusion in the political process only congeals, through practice, an existing shift in the Islamist world view towards democracy. It does not radically alter it. In other words, the democratic political process is an enforcing or reifying (intervening) mechanism. It is neither a necessary nor sufficient cause of Islamist moderation. The feeble nature of political reform in the Arab world at the time also supports this argument. My own causal story considers the discursive shifts outlined in this chapter to be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for Islamist democratization. The democratic process only plays

a supporting role in my story. It puts into play the supporting conditions and practices needed for the reification and internalization of a moderate worldview (next chapter).

The discursive shift on the legitimacy of participation in an "un-Islamic" government is important in my causal story for various reasons. First, as discussed earlier, it allows for the moderating practices of democratic politics to come into play. Without this new legitimacy, the commitment to shura would remain in the theoretical realm of imaginability, without the congealing effects of practices such as electoral contestation, party formation, parliamentary politics and cooperation with parties of the opposition. Second, legitimizing participation is also important because it helps identify, and isolate, hardline activists within the movement who cloak their rejection of democracy with the objection to participation in an "un-Islamic" government. Finally, this discursive shift is also important because it radically alters the capital structure amongst competing movement elites. Capital such as public service experience, organizational skill, public appeal and public relations skills is valorized at the expense of religious symbolic capital. This revaluation of capital is extremely important as it leads to the rapid rise of the moderate faction within the JMB, and the decline of hardliners. These changes to the internal power structure of the JMB play a significant role in the moderation of the movement.

The notion that Arab regimes are "un-Islamic" is not contested by the discourse that legitimizes participation. Neither does this discourse contest that, as a *general* principle, Islamists ought not to be part of any governing structure that does not uphold sharia (al-Qaradawi 1997, 180-1). What it does challenge, however, is the idea that this principle ought to apply under current conditions of Muslim societies. Since Islamists advocate reform in their

countries, and since they lack the power to affect this reform, refusing to participate in the political system unless the regime fully implements sharia amounts to an idealistic maximalism not likely to advance the cause of reform. This "all or nothing" philosophy is rejected both religiously and pragmatically by the contesting discourse (ibid, 182). A number of religious texts from the Quran and Sunnah (the Prophet Muhammad's teachings and practice) are cited as evidence for this rejection. It also considers gradualism to be part of God's law in creation, and in sharia (ibid, 184).[17]

Recognizing Islam's sensitivity to the conditions of Muslims, all the major schools of jurisprudence allow for the violation of Islamic sharia under certain conditions. The discourse advocating participation outlines these conditions, and highlights how they apply in current circumstances (ibid, 182-184). First, Muslims are permitted to violate a law of sharia if doing so ameliorates an injustice, or a graver evil. Second, Muslims can commit a wrong to prevent another with a more damaging effect. Third, when practical circumstances make it contingently impossible to realize the ideal, it is possible to override it to realize the community's interests so as not to compromise their temporal interests too. Finally, when, due to weakness, Muslims must accept what they otherwise would not accept in conditions of strength.

Based on these jurisprudential principles, the discourse of participation makes its case for gradual reform through the opportunities made possible by political liberalization. Because of their relative weakness compared to the state, Islamists must utilize every opportunity possible to reform the state and society. Dr. Farhan of the IAF argues that leaving politics to the corrupt and the unjust would bring about greater harm to the umma than participation (1996, 22). In my

[17] A clarifying example: alcohol was gradually prohibited in Islam. At first, Muslims were only forbidden from praying while intoxicated.

interviews, he repeatedly reaffirmed that even the slightest improvement to the status quo would serve as legitimate grounds for participation.[18] Some of the justifications he provides in his political treatise include: (a) helping to steer the regime towards an increased implementation of sharia; (b) preventing certain evils and corruptions; (c) increasing the number of Islamic associations that spread virtue, and isolating those associations that spread vice; (d) regaining the peoples confidence in Islam, and in the ability of Islamists to manage public life; and (e) acquiring valuable governance experience. These same justifications are offered elsewhere in the party's literature (al-Bdoor 2011, 25-31; Gharaybeh 1996, 108-110; Akayleh 2002).

Having argued the legitimacy of participation in "un-Islamic" governance structures, the new religious discourse attempts to ground this participation in the public interests of the community (al-Qaradawi 1997, 186-187). It requires that participation be "real", meaning Islamists ought to have the power to influence government policy in order to support rights, justice and reform. Furthermore, it rejects any participation in authoritarian regimes, and only sanctions being part of a democratic political order. Islamists must also have the right to oppose all policies that infringe on sharia, or if not outright opposition, then reservation at the very least. This applies to minor violations only; however, when a major offense is committed, Islamists must resign immediately from any role in government. The final condition requires a periodic evaluation of participation to determine its efficacy and its overall costs and benefits. The JMB adopts these very same criteria when debating its own participation in Jordanian parliamentary elections (al-Bdoor 2011, 26-27).

[18] Interview with author, May 12, 2011, Amman.

The discourse favoring participation has several interesting attributes. First, in contrast to the all or nothing idealism of the previous discourse, its emphasis on pragmatism and gradualism is by itself a characteristic more conducive to democratic politics. Second, by casting idealistic maximalism as an invalid religious opinion, rather than an equally legitimate difference in opinion, it lays the discursive groundwork for the symbolic and political isolation of hardliners. Third, by tightly coupling participation in "un-Islamic" governments with the public interest, it shifts the terms of justification beyond the typical religious logic, to the logic of politics and utilitarianism. Finally, the vague nature of determining the utility of participation keeps the issue open to future contestation.

Summary

There is a simple hypothesis that drives the analysis undertaken in this chapter: in order for democratic institutions and practices to have any effect on an Islamist group's ideology, these institutions and practices must also be religiously appropriate. As discussed previously, the participation of Islamists in a democratic political order cannot be taken for granted. Situated within the Islamist's social cognitive structure, the debates on the compatibility of Islam and democracy are, at their essence, about whether the philosophy and practices of Western liberal democracy conflict with Islamic sharia. Had the dominant answer to this question considered the two incompatible, most Islamists would not have taken up democratic practices. Therefore, if democratic practices do indeed have a moderating effect as argued in the literature, a social cognitive structure that made these practices *imaginable* and *appropriate* is a necessary condition for Islamist ideological moderation.

Identifying the origins of this cognitively enabling structure led to the early texts of 19th century Muslim reformers. These texts established the discursive ground work that shaped how future Islamists thought about democratic practices. The interpretive analysis in this chapter outlined various propositions suggesting how these foundational discourses paved the way for the religious justification of these practices. Key amongst these cognitive enablers were : (1) the diagnosis of despotism as the primary cause of Muslim decline, and the corollary panacea of democratic reforms modeled on European institutions; (2) the coupling of this secular diagnosis with a religious condemnation of absolute rule; (3) the devalorization of historical political practices, and casting them as temporal practices without any normative priority; and (4) the discursive reconstitution of historical practices such as shura and ijm'a to reflect new democratic meanings not previously attributed to these practices.

The rise of Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and others with a fundamentalist[19] reform agenda ushered in important changes to the cognitive structure that altered the meaning of these same democratic practices. Their anti-imperialist and cultural threat paradigms ironically meant that greater discursive energies were expended Islamizing Western democratic practices. Islamist thinkers theorizing for this new fundamentalist trend emphasized the need for adapting European institutions to the general political principles of Islam, and the values and customs of Muslim societies. This discursive trend in fundamentalist thinking had its opponents within the same camp opposed to all things Western, including democracy. The debates amongst these two trends further developed the Islamization of democratic practices by forcing the issue of religious appropriateness to a dominant position in their shared cognitive

[19] The use of the term here refers to diverse groups with different ideologies all advocating the return to Islamic fundamentals as practiced by the prophet and the first generation of Muslims, not militant extremists.

structure. The broad outcome of this dialectical process was a mainstream fundamentalism opposed to the general "philosophy" of Western democracy, but committed to its modern "mechanisms".

The discursive structures outlined in this chapter represent part of the ideational context that all Islamists in Jordan, including the JMB, operated within when the monarchy decided to liberalize the political regime by reintroducing democratic practices. The next chapter will focus on the ways in which these practices produced their own contradictions, ideological controversies and discursive formations. By addressing these ideational structures first, I was not suggesting that all these discursive enablers preceded these practices in time.[20] In fact, many of the practices addressed in the next chapter had an impact on the structures outlined previously. Addressing them in this manner is strictly a heuristic device to artificially separate the ideational enablers of moderation from those enablers that came about it in practice. It is to the latter that I now turn.

[20] I would like to thank Professor Vincent Pouliot for highlighting this issue.

Chapter 2: Moderation through the Practice of Participation

In the previous chapter, I attempted to re-spin the "webs of meaning" that constituted the different ways in which Islamists in general, and the JMB in particular, thought about democracy and its related practices. My objective in doing so was to enable me to determine how it was even possible for Islamists to engage in democratic practices that might have an ideologically moderating effect, as argued in the literature. This is analytically significant since taking part in a democratic political order cannot be taken for granted for all Islamists. The discourse analysis in the previous chapter highlights that a dominant narrative in the Islamist field considers most Arab regimes "un-Islamic" due to their failure to fully implement sharia. It also demonstrates that democratic institutions and practices are not uncontroversial amongst Islamists, and that they are vibrantly contested. Therefore, identifying how the practice of participation in an "un-Islamic" political order became *imaginable* and *thinkable* discursively is one explanatory step in unraveling the moderation puzzle. The previous chapter dealt with that ideational part of the puzzle. This chapter will focus on the specific practices of Islamists – what Islamists *do* in the world – and how these practices advanced their ideological moderation.

My central thesis in this chapter is that the increased ideological moderation of the JMB came about *in practice*. As the movement reorganized itself to capitalize on the opportunities made possible by the liberalization of political life, it also reconstituted the meaning of its participation in politics, as a *practice*. The meaning of this participation evolved from being understood as a means to achieve the movement's ends in reforming society, to a demonstration of its commitment to democracy. This reconstruction was not without crisis, contestation and political struggle amongst factions with competing ideological commitments. The internal

practice of resolving ideological crisis through inclusive, deliberative and participatory mechanisms (shura) provided the legitimacy needed to alter the boundaries of accepted practice and discourse in a manner that reified the movement's ideological moderation. This chapter will trace the moderation process as it unfolded.

I begin by outlining the theoretical concepts that inform my analysis of JMB practices. That section will also lay out the broad structure of the analytical framework that will drive my empirical analysis. My focus will be primarily on the practice of "political participation" (al-musharakah al-siyaseyah) as it represents *the* focal practice contested ideologically by members of the JMB. The empirical section will situate this practice in the social environment which gave it its meaning. It will also trace how this meaning evolved with the JMB's continued participation in a changing political environment that drove the movement further down the road of ideological moderation.

2.1 Theoretical Concepts

My choice of studying Islamist moderation through the entry point of social practice was strongly influenced by the "practice turn" in IR theory.[21] In his study of the politics of NATO-Russian diplomacy as *security practice*, Pouliot highlights an important bias in the way political scientists continue to study political phenomenon. He refers to this dominant scholastic preference as the "representational bias" (2010, 14). The bias can be summarized as the tendency of political theorists to privilege the ways in which social agents represent and think about the world, over their practical relationship to it. Practicality stems from the very act of doing and can

[21] See (Adler and Pouliot 2011, 2).

be nicely illustrated with the distinction people (and political elites) often draw between academic theory in its "ivory towers" and their "real world". Ironically, as Pouliot points out, this bias towards representation comes from what social scientists *do* in the world, i.e. "spend careers and lives thinking about ideas, deliberating about theories and representing knowledge" (2010, 15). Obviously, this is not the relationship social agents have to their world. Formulating theories as if this was the case has important epistemological drawbacks. One of them is a kind of "ethnocentrism of the scientist [which] leads to substituting the practical relation to the world for the observer's (theoretical) relation to practice" (ibid).

Having been alerted to this bias and its epistemological consequences, I opted to place political practice at the center of my analysis. Doing so required that I determine the conceptual relationship between ideology and practice. Essentially I was asking: how does practice change ideology? More specifically, which practices changed the ideology of the JMB making it more open and tolerant to an alternative worldview, and through which causal mechanisms? I utilized a robust conceptual architecture from Adler and Pouliot (2011) to put together an analytical model to help answer these questions.

Adler and Pouliot point out in their article *International Practices* that there is not a single theory that deals with practice (2011, 4). Instead, there exists a multitude of analytical frameworks that privilege practice when studying political life. This, they argue, is an implication of the nature of practices which simultaneously engage various objects of political analysis including: structures, agency, ideas, matter, rationality, practicality, stability and change (ibid). I rely on their conceptual definitions and attributes to design a broad analytical approach from which to examine the practices I argue had a moderating effect on the JMB.

The scholars define practices as "socially meaningful patterns of action, which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world" (2011, 4). Various implications follow from this definition. First, practices are not strictly physical actions, but are rather actions laden with meanings.[22] More importantly, as they point out, these meanings are social and intersubjective, and not inherent in the very materiality of the act itself. For example, when a witness in a court of law raises her hand to pledge that her testimony will be truthful, nothing in the physicality of her act signifies pledging, or truth for that matter. It is only understood as such because of the social context she's in, and because of centuries of judicial practice. As my analysis will later show, the same practice of political participation will signify different things to the JMB at different times in their history. This would not have been the case had the meaning of political participation been inherent in the very materiality of the act itself. Simply put, practices are "culture in action" (Swidler 1986).

Second, the fact that the meanings embodied in practices are social implies that their construction involves interactive processes. As Adler and Pouliot point out, "through social interaction, people attribute meanings to their activities and build on these to interact further. In order for practices to make sense, then, practitioners must establish (contest, negotiate, and communicate) their significance" (2011, 15). It is this dynamism, epitomized in the term interactive, which allows for the evolution of ideational structures by the agency of social actors. An actor's ideology will necessary predispose her to specific significations when she is contesting the meaning of practices with other practitioners. But these interactions may also shift

[22] See (Adler and Pouliot 2011, 5) for a useful distinction between behavior, action and practice.

her dispositions towards a more open, less ideological, worldview. Also too, the structure of this interaction, and how it is organized procedurally, could impede or foster these shifts.[23] As my analysis will later demonstrate, the inclusive deliberative organization of contestation within the JMB allowed its leadership to alter the meaning of its practices by endowing these new meanings with democratic legitimacy.

Third, a component of the social meaning that is "shot through" in practices with important consequences for agency is social identity. Discussing the "agential" and "structural" synthesis characteristic of practice centered analyses, Adler and Pouliot note that "practices are agential... because they frame actors, who, thanks to this framing, know who they are and how to act in an adequate and socially recognizable way" (ibid, 16). Particular identity framings might clash with an agent's ideology. This could provide an opportunity for ideological change. Moreover, norms of adequate performance are also a powerful structural force that might rub against an agent's ideology. Adler and Pouliot consider competence the *primary* structuring mechanism of practices. They note that the "structured dimension of practice stems not only from repetition but also, and in fact primarily, from the fact that groups of individuals tend to interpret its performance along similar standards" (ibid, 6). The structuring effect exerted by norms of competence played an important role in the moderation of the JMB. The fact that the competence of their political practices was being judged based on democratic norms produced significant ideological dilemmas for the movement. These dilemmas would become triggers for their future moderation.

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[23] Power differentials are a key aspect of this structure.

The final implication I drew from Adler and Pouliot's conceptual definitions has to do with the relationship between discourse and practice. The scholars consider practices the stitch that weaves together the discursive and the material worlds. They argue that "without language, communication, and discourse, people could not tell the difference between behavior and practice. Not only is language the conduit of meaning, which turns practices into the location and engine of social action, but it is itself an enactment or doing" (ibid, 7). Practice is an instantiation of discourse in the material world; its manifestation and production through the agency of individuals. Repeated performances reproduce discourse, reifying it into an ideational structure that shapes agency. But within every repeated performance, as Adler and Pouliot point out, lies some "wiggle room" that allows agency to alter and evolve ideational structures (ibid, 6). Any analysis of practice must therefore identify the discourse it embodies. The discourse analysis of chapter 1 was driven by this assumption. This chapter looks at how repeated performances altered these discourses to moderate ideologies.

Reflecting on the different ways in which practice can change our ideas about the world, Adler and Pouliot note that "practice typically is enacted in and on the world, and thus can change the physical environment as well as the ideas that individually and collectively people hold about the world" (ibid, 7). An ideology is a cohesive, coherent, total and often closed view about the world. The various conceptual attributes highlighted above outline the different ways practice can interact with an agent's ideology. They can stabilize and reify a worldview, or they can dislodge and change it. Change becomes possible because of agency; because of practices and interactions in a contingent environment that keeps evolving ideationally and materially. As it evolves, it rubs up against an agent's ideology creating opportunities for reification, if it

reinforces their world view, or the possibility of change, if it does not. In the latter case, contestation of meanings with other practitioners is likely to occur. After a period of high fluidity due to this contestation and crisis, new meanings are likely to stabilize and turn into background, taken for granted knowledge with the repeated performances of practices that embody them. As my practice analysis will hopefully demonstrate, this is a key causal mechanism in the moderation of the JMB.

Before I could structure an analytical model, I needed to select the practices that were relevant for my research question. The scope of my thesis required that I focus on a single practice. "Political participation" (al-musharakah al-siyasiyah) emerged as an ideal practice for my design criteria. To begin with, it is the gatekeeper to all other practices in the political field. Despite that, its significance is ignored as most of the literature begins with the implicit assumption that Islamists would always want to participate by default. This is not necessarily the case. Another reason it was ideal was its constitution as a distinct practice by *practitioners* on the ground, and not by any scholastic a priori assumptions. In other words, it was inductively selected during my field work, which helps reduce biases of representation. This constitution was evident in: (1) JMB discursive practices; (2) discussions during interviews; (3) public rhetoric; and (4) internal JMB debates. My field work also suggested that the practice produced the most significant levels of ideological crisis and contestation. This is ideal because during crisis, tacit background knowledge is denaturalized, and meanings become more transparent. Through ideological crisis, I could also clearly examine the interactive processes of establishing new meanings, which is central to ideational change. The final reason for selecting it was that, in the

case of the JMB, its performance was itself an *indicator* of moderation. The practice embodies a discourse of openness towards the state, society and democratic mechanisms.

Having identified the main object of my analysis, I needed to specify its time boundaries. Three criterion informed my demarcation of the study's time horizon: variation, sufficient iteration and the presence of ideological contestation. Substantive variation in the meaning of political participation would allow me to trace the mechanisms that were involved in the process, and their effects and relationships to ideology. Multiple iterations would highlight the effects of repeated performances in stabilizing or changing cognitive structures. And ideological contestation would be evidence of the potential for ideational change. I begin the analysis with the first instance of participation for the JMB, which happened to be in 1956. The objective was to identify a marker for the variation in the practice's meaning. That year was also the immediate performance prior to the period I focus on the most in my analysis: 1989-1993.[24] These five years were a critical period for both Jordan and the JMB. It was the period of democratization and the introduction of new political practices. Ideological crisis was also at its peak during those years for the JMB. It also includes three separate performances with significant shifts in meanings.

The final step in my analytical design required situating the practice within its social context, and tracing the effects of its performance. I chose three environmental dimensions for this step: (1) contingent political developments; (2) the political opportunity structure; and (3) the social cognitive structure. Contingencies are often the catalysts for change. By reviewing events with significant political consequences, I was able to identify triggers for ideological

[24] Political participation was basically frozen in Jordan between 1967 and 1984 due to the annexation of the West Bank after the war with Israel. The country was ruled by martial law for most of this period.

change. These events were then mapped unto the opportunities and constraints they created for the JMB, which establishes the movement's strategic incentives for change. Embedding political contingencies and the opportunity structure within a discursive landscape allowed me to interpret their significance and meaning for the JMB. I could therefore better understand how they rubbed against the movement's ideology. Finally, I traced the interactive social processes that were implicated in the establishment of new meanings. I did this for the broader political environment, but focused more specifically on processes within the movement. The next section will present the findings of my analysis.

2.2 The Historical Meaning of Political Participation

Political participation did not figure prominently on the agenda of the JMB for close to four decades since its founding in 1944. This was partially a function of the movement's ideology which emphasized reform at the grass-roots level. To achieve its aspired Islamic renaissance, the Muslim Brotherhood sought to revitalize Islam with new doctrinal interpretations adapted to modern conditions. As Boulby notes, their objective was to "create a new generation of believers who provide the basis for a rejuvenated Islamic society" (1999, 43). Religious propagation and education (d'awah), therefore, became the JMB's primary focus. Dr. Ishaq Farhan, a prominent leader in the JMB, considers the 90s to be the period in which the movement completed the entire "circle" of public service with its active participation in politics.[25] Before then, Farhan broadly sketches the history of the JMB as an organization

[25] Interview with author, May 12, 2001, Amman.

focused on: religious propagation and education in the 50s; charity work and social services in the 60s; and student and labor union activism in the 70s and 80s.

Another fundamental reason behind the JMB's modest political role in its early history was the powerful strength of the nationalist and leftist political currents in Jordan, and the Arab world in general. The Arab world's collective consciousness was captivated by the promise of a unifying Arab nationalism, and the discourse of social justice and modern development advocated by secular leftist parties. This enchantment produced revolutions in many Arab states including Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Iraq. In Jordan, the strength of this current produced three nationalist leftist parties: the B'athists, the National Socialists and the Communists. These parties shared a commitment to the formation of a pan-Arab state comprising Egypt, Syria and Iraq as the most effective means of dealing with the Zionist "threat" (Boulby 1999, 18).

The strength of this current, demonstrated in their ability to mobilize popular protest against government policy, forced the hand of King Hussein on several occasions. Key amongst those was his withdrawal from plans to join the unpopular Baghdad Pact in 1955; his dismissal of the British Commander of the Jordanian armed forces at the time, General John Bagot Glubb; and his acceding to demands for free elections (ibid, 20). These elections, held in 1956, produced the first, and only, popularly elected government in Jordan's history. The National Socialist Party won a majority, and its leader, Sulayman al-Nabulsi, became the country's prime minister. The threat these revolutionary currents posed to both the regime, and to the JMB, pushed the King to enlist the political support of the movement "thus cementing a tacit alliance with it which would endure through the 1980s" (ibid). The political left and the JMB would consider one another existential enemies for many decades to come.

The only political goal the JMB was actively involved in ever since its founding was the liberation of Palestine. A program published in 1954 outlining its goals states that "the Muslim Brotherhood considers the Palestinian problem an Islamic problem and will mobilize all material and spiritual forces for the liberation of Palestine" (quoted in Boulby 1999, 54). Members with strong ties to the merchant class in Jordan were actively involved in raising funds to support the early resistance in Palestine (ibid, 48). The JMB also recruited and trained a small brigade of 100 men to support the war effort in 1948 (Gharaybeh 1997, 54). During the period from 1968 to 1970, they also established three guerrilla training camps in Jordan, and conducted several military operations against Israeli military targets (ibid, 77). By 1970, these camps employed over 180 dedicated activists to manage the operation, and many more volunteers. The Palestinian question remains until this day a key political priority for the JMB, and a fundamental wedge issue between its competing factions (Abu Rumman 2007, 30).

Focusing on building their Islamic state from the ground up, however, did not prevent the JMB from participating in formal political processes. The movement contested two parliamentary elections prior to the suspension of parliamentary life due to Israel's occupation of the West Bank in 1967. In the 1956 elections, six candidates were nominated by the JMB, four of whom won seats in the forty member parliament (Gharybeh 1997, 66). The number of JMB parliamentary representatives decreased in 1963 to only two representatives – a decrease attributed by Gharaybeh to their reduced popularity and influence with the Jordanian public (ibid, 68). According to Muhammad Abdul-Rahman Khalifah, 40 year leader of the JMB, the movement also had the opportunity to form a government in 1957. King Hussein had offered the premiership to Khalifah, but he turned it down due to the political inexperience and youth of his

movement's members (ibid, 68).[26] In addition to this formal participation, the JMB also organized several popular protests. Most of their dissent centered around opposition to foreign intervention in Jordanian politics, which has been a central theme in their political discourse since their establishment. They mobilized their base to demonstrate against: the presence of British officers in the Jordanian army; the government's plan to join the Baghdad Pact; and the Eisenhower doctrine and the prospect of closer economic and military ties to the United States (ibid, 67).

As this short summary highlights, even though the JMB's core activities were not focused on politics, political participation was not a recent evolution in the movement's practices. But this participation did not go uncontested, even at this early stage of the JMB's history. In fact, opposition came from the movement's leader at the time, Abdul-Lateef Abu Qurah. His son reports that his father resigned from the movement as a result of this participation (Schwedler 2006, 155). Abu Qurah saw that "the Brotherhood should not take part unless they could put up enough candidates to garner a parliamentary majority. A minority presence in parliament will not enable Brotherhood leadership to implement Islamic law" (ibid). The majority of leadership opinion rejected this view and refused to remain on the sidelines arguing that "staying away from the house would not offer them the chance to voice their views, oppose policies they do not approve of, or introduce Islamic ideas better than if they were under the dome" (ibid).

There are several important attributes that stand out from this early episode of contestation. First, the debate amongst the leadership on the question of participation was not

[26] Khalifah's account was corroborated by Dr. Ishaq Farhan in my interview with him May 8, 2011, Amman.

structured by a religious discourse. The religious appropriateness of participation was not the reason behind Abu Qurah's objection. Instead, the leader questioned the value of participation without the majority needed to realize the movements primary interest, i.e. the state's rule by Islamic sharia. The Qutbi discourse (discussed in the previous chapter), which condemned the state and society as "un-Islamic", was not yet dominant in the Islamic cognitive structure. Having said that, the movement's program in 1954 did explicitly state that "the Muslim Brotherhood refuses to accept any system which does not support Islamic principles", and that they "will not support any government until it implements the sharia of God in Jordan" (Boulby 1999, 54). But as Boulby notes, the JMB had great flexibility in interpreting these principles since their lack of ideological rigor did not provide a blue print for an Islamic state (ibid, 55). Furthermore, as direct decedents of the Prophet Muhammad, the Hashemite monarchy in Jordan also established their legitimacy on an Islamic narrative. For most of its history, the JMB preferred to coexist with the state and reform its Islamic discrepancies, rather than advocate revolutionary change. This explains the majority's preference in utilizing the institution of parliament for effecting Islamic reform within the existing political system.

The second interesting attribute highlighted by this episode is the inclusive manner in which this debate was resolved. Even though it was the founding leader who opposed political participation, the movement still adopted the opinion of the majority. Abu Qurah enjoyed no institutional authority to override the will of the majority. This demonstrates the early commitment of the JMB to the practice of shura, as it was reconstituted by the early reformist discourses, and by the discourse of its founder Hassan al-Banna. Finally, what this early debate also illustrates is the absence of the democratic compatibility discourse from the cognitive

structure of JMB elites. At no point in this debate did the legitimacy of democratic institutions come up as a topic of deliberation. This is not because the legitimacy of democratic institutions was taken for granted; rather, it is because, as practitioners, Jordanian political elites did not understand their practices as instantiations of the democratic discourse. In other words, neither the regime, nor the opposition, valorized democracy as a political norm in Jordanian politics. This would change with the liberalization of politics in 1989.

2.3 The Limits of Liberalization

The political liberalization the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan experienced in 1989 was the regime's strategic response to increasing popular dissent in the country due to economic hardship (Brynen 1992). Jordan's economy began its contraction in the early 1980s triggered by a sustained decline in world oil prices. This decline adversely affected the government's fiscal position by reducing its rents from two key sources it still depends on to this day: remittances from expatriate Jordanians working in oil-rich countries of the Arabian Gulf; and petrodollar foreign aid from the governments of these same countries. Despite this contraction in fiscal resources, from the period of 1980 until 1989, consecutive Jordanian governments refrained from reducing state subsidies on key daily staples. They feared doing so would rupture the neopatrimonial social contract that was the basis of state legitimacy. Instead, these governments opted to balance their deficits by expanding the national debt, mainly through loans from Europe. The country's external debt grew by three times in the period between 1980 and 1987 (ibid). This set the stage for future economic deterioration that would culminate in the breakout of nation-wide protests and rioting.

As Jordan's economic woes deepened, citizens and investors lost confidence in the government's ability to sustain the value of its currency. Significant capital outflows and an increasing demand for foreign currencies shrunk the country's foreign reserves prompting a 30 percent devaluation of its currency. This devaluation, coupled with the austerity program required by the IMF as part of its 1989 credit package, rapidly increased inflationary pressures on low income groups across Jordan. State subsidies were eliminated on several critical goods for this vulnerable socioeconomic group including: wheat, cigarettes, beverages and fuel. The costs of irrigation water and telecommunication services also increased, further raising the pressures of inflation (Cowell 1989). Within a couple of days from the announcement of price increases on April 16th, 1989, protests began in the southern town of M'aan and spread throughout the country.[27]

Prior to the eruption of these protests, political participation was significantly limited in Jordan (Boulby 1999, 17-36). Israel's annexation of the West Bank back in 1967 altered the country's political landscape. The threat to the monarchy's stability caused by this defeat, and the regimes's own authoritarian tendencies, prompted the late King Hussein to reinstitute martial law. The parliamentary system was also suspended in 1971 since elections were impossible so long as the West Bank remained under Israeli occupation. At the time of the protests, political parties were also illegal ever since they were first dissolved in the late 50s following an attempted coup in 1957 that threatened to end King Hussein's reign. Turmoil in the country was blamed on nationalist and socialist parties, and the draconian measures instituted by the King to consolidate his power abolished party life completely. A free press was also nonexistent as most

[27] See New York Times article "5 Are Killed in South Jordan as Rioting Over Food Prices Spreads" dated April 20, 1989, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/04/20/world/5-are-killed-in-south-jordan-as-rioting-over-food-prices-spreads.html .

media outlets were state-owned, strictly censored and heavily intimidated by the security apparatus. This restrictive environment would significantly change as a direct result of the 1989 protests.

A debate commenced amongst the King and his closest advisors on how best to deal with the unrest on the streets of Jordan (Schwedler 2006, 49-51). The monarch ultimately sided with the arguments put forward in favor of preemptive liberalization. Those supporting political reforms provided several justifications for their recommendation. First, they argued that the needed economic restructuring required the legitimacy of representative government if the regime was not to resort to coercion. For many of the officials involved in these palace deliberations, "violence was simply out of the question" (ibid). Second, the reform faction also argued that it was important for the state to provide citizens with legal and peaceful channels for present and future dissent to prevent protests from turning violent. Finally, the reformers believed that liberalizing politics in the country would prevent the emergence of an organized opposition front that might favor confrontation with the regime. Based on this evidence, many scholars argue that Jordan fits the transition paradigm's model of elite-led transition from authoritarianism (Boulby 1999; Brynen 1992; Wiktorowicz 2001).

Even though the democratization process would encounter significant setbacks by the mid 1990s, the reforms introduced by the late King Hussein would nevertheless significantly alter the structure of politics in Jordan. In July of of 1989, the monarch announced his decision to hold full parliamentary elections later in the year, marking a "significant turning point in the regime's history" (Boulby 1999, 36). By all accounts, including those of opposition members interviewed for this research, these elections were considered free and fair. The JMB won 22 of

the contested 80 seats, and with the seats secured by independent candidates, the Islamists ultimately controlled 42 percent (34 seats) of total seats in parliament (Rubin 2010, 59). The fairness of these elections, in contrast to future elections, has been attributed to the regime's need to gauge the true level of popular support enjoyed by Islamists in the country.

Another significant reform introduced by the regime following the 89 protests was the adoption of the National Charter in June of 1991. This charter was considered a "social contract" by the King which outlined "the foundations on which the state was created" (quoted in Boulby 1999, 139). The charter was drafted with the participation and consultation of all political forces in the country. It committed the regime to a multiparty democratic system, greater civil and political liberties and an enhanced freedom of the press. The document also served as a reference for the pluralistic rules that would supposedly govern the behavior of all political forces in the kingdom, including that of government. Boulby considers this charter a "contract between the regime and the people, guaranteeing a pluralistic system in return for the allegiance of all political parties to the monarchy" (ibid, 138). Based on the provisions of the charter, the government would once again legalize political parties in September of 1992, and a freer press and publication law was introduced in 1993.

The structure of the implemented reforms, as well as the regime's behavior following their adoption, however, made it clear that the monarchy was not interested in real democratization. Even though parliamentary life was reinstated in the country, the King retained overwhelming constitutional power over all branches of government (Boulby 1999, 139). The constitution still empowered the monarch to pick the prime minister and cabinet members without any regard to the composition of parliament. Moreover, cabinet ministers answered only

to the King with little or no legislative oversight. New laws introduced by the lower house of parliament still required the approval of the Senate – a body whose members the monarch appoints – and the King still retained veto power over all new legislation. In addition to these powers, the constitution granted the monarch the discretionary authority to dissolve parliament, as well as the authority to pass new laws by royal decree during its dissolution. King Hussein, and the current King Abdullah II, would frequently resort to these constitutional powers to exercise authoritarian control over political life in Jordan.

One egregious example of the regime's authoritarian practices, with significant implications for the development of a pluralistic democracy in Jordan, was the dissolution of parliament in 1993 in order to legislate, by royal decree, a new electoral law designed to curtail the power of political parties (ibid, 155-156). Opposition to a planned peace treaty with Israel was significant, and having decided to press on with the treaty despite this opposition, the King decreed a law whose effects would produce a parliament dominated by independent regime loyalists. These new representatives were elected to parliament due to their familial and tribal connections, not their party affiliation or political platform. The newly elected parliament would ratify Jordan's 1996 peace treaty with Israel, and the 1993 electoral law would remain a serious source of contention between the regime and the opposition until it was amended in 2011, courtesy of the Arab Spring.

Besides manipulating the electoral process to produce desired outcomes, the regime also continued its crackdown on civil and political liberties with the help of its security apparatus. In but one minor example, in 1991, six Jordanian political activists were arrested on charges of slandering then Prime Minister Mudar Badran (ibid, 140). The security apparatus also continued

its harassment and unofficial censorship of the local press. Moreover, in 1997, the government amended the 1993 press law to curtail recently granted freedoms. The amendment raised the capital requirements for media organizations, and expanded the list of "security issues" deemed off limits to public discourse.

These authoritarian reversals have important theoretical implications for the question of Islamist moderation. First, the practices of the regime highlighted above, along with the structure of institutions following the "reforms" of 1989, suggest that democratic institutions and a deliberative democratic public sphere are not behind the moderation of the JMB. In other words, the preferences and strategies of all political actors in Jordan, including the Muslim Brotherhood, were not structured by a political game whose rules are democratic. Regime practices hollowed out any real democratic substance from participatory institutions and electoral mechanisms. Therefore theories of Islamist moderation by inclusion in a democratic order do not apply to the case of the JMB.

Second, since sharing power with the regime was not on the horizon of political possibility in Jordan, the "carrot" of sharing governance had no bearing on the utility equation of Islamists. This also means that the reality and challenges of governance (i.e. pragmatic moderation) was not the causal mechanism either. Third, as Schwedler points out, the JMB's relationship with the regime at the time of liberalization was not at all acrimonious. She in fact considers them allies and concludes that "the Islamists in Jordan...should not be mistaken for political opposition brought into the system as a result of democratic political openings" (2006, 65). Hence, in contrast to the ruling AKP in Turkey who had been previously excluded from politics on account of their Islamic ideology, the moderation of the JMB was not a quid pro quo

for its inclusion by the regime. All of this suggests that an alternative causal story unfolded in Jordan. A story not accounted for completely in the literature. A story based on ideational structures, and the practices that change them.

2.4 The Opportunities and Threats of Liberalization

Despite the authoritarian reversals outlined previously, the structure of the political field was still radically reconfigured in Jordan. This new environment played an important role in moderating the JMB. In this section, I focus on how changes in the political opportunity structure created a strong incentive for the movement to participate in politics after the regime liberalized. By political opportunity structure I refer to Tarrow's definition in social movement theory which conceptualizes it as "consistent – but necessarily formal, permanent, or national – dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action" (1998, 19). I also examine changes in the social cognitive structure (defined in previous chapter) that altered the meaning of this participation for the movement, and the meaning of political practices in the new liberalized environment. These shifts in the opportunity and cognitive structures represent structural variables in the operating environment that created conditions conducive to the JMB's ideological moderation. The following sections will address the agency of the JMB and its political counterparts in affecting this moderation through their political interaction and practices.

The planned reforms proposed by the regime created new opportunities, and threats, for the JMB. On the opportunity side, new formal and informal channels were now being made available for influencing and contesting government policy. Parliament could once again be

utilized as a forum for: proposing and affecting legislation; opposing government policies; voicing political ideas; and pushing a political agenda. A strong electoral showing could also be a ticket into cabinet. It would place significant pressure on the King to include members of the JMB in government, if he expected to secure their support in parliament. From these cabinet portfolios, JMB ministers could be able to implement parts of their Islamic reform agenda. The legalization of political parties also gave the movement the opportunity to organize itself politically, to consolidate and grow its base within society.

In addition to these institutional opportunities, the regime's commitment to greater political and civil freedoms expanded the repertoire of informal channels available for political contestation and leverage. If it chose to participate, the JMB could now: set up its own party newspaper; organize political and social events around its agenda; garner greater media attention; build alliances with opposition and civil society organizations; and mobilize popular demonstrations to contest government policy. Through both formal and informal channels there was now also an opportunity to address another key interest for the movement: ameliorating the regime's crackdown on its activists and leaders.

Besides these compelling incentives to participate in the new liberalized environment, there were also strong disincentives for boycotting politics and remaining spectators on the sidelines. The main threat was inviting a confrontation with the regime at a politically sensitive juncture in the country's history. The powerful reverberations from numerous economic crises, structural reforms, popular protests, rioting, and the political fallout from the King's decision to relinquish legal and administrative control of the West Bank to Israel and the PLO[28] placed

[28] This decision fueled the anxiety of the Palestinian community in Jordan and exacerbated the country's identity problem.

significant pressure on the regime in Jordan. Boycotting the process could undermine the legitimacy of the regime's reforms, and their effectiveness in containing contention. This was an outcome not likely to solicit anything but an even harsher government crackdown. Tensions had already existed between the regime and the JMB at the time. The King's rapprochement with Syria at this juncture came at the expense of the JMB who were blamed for the rift between the two countries. In an overture to the Asad regime which had been in conflict with the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, the government of Zayd Al-Rifai: purged JMB members from various state institutions; regulated mosques and religious sermons to reduce their influence; arrested several of their prominent leaders in a security crackdown; confiscated the passports of a large number of their members; and denied them the security clearance required for employment in many private sector institutions (Gharaybeh 1997, 84-86). The threat of escalating these tensions even further created a strong incentive for participation.[29]

Ever since parties were dissolved in the late 1950s, the JMB was the only party allowed to maintain its organization and social activities. The movement was considered a religious and charitable organization by the authorities, and therefore permitted to continue its operations.[30] This gave them considerable leverage over their political rivals as they continued to expand their support base and organizational structure for three decades while their rivals were on the sidelines. The proposed reforms would now allow liberal, nationalist and leftists parties to reconstitute their organizations, and pursuit their political agendas. Leaving the political arena

[29] Dr. Farhan talked about the political sensitivity of this time period and the pressures from the palace on the JMB to participate. Interview with the author, May 8, 2011, Amman.

[30] The core activities of the JMB at this stage did reflect this classification.

for their competitors, by choosing not to participate, could therefore threaten to undermine the political gains the JMB managed to accumulate over the past three decades.

The analysis of the various opportunities and threats constituting the JMB's strategic field clearly highlights that the movement had a strong incentive to participate in politics. Participation manifests itself on the ground in a number of practices whose social meanings are reified in discursive structures. Liberalization did not only change the strategic operating environment, it also changed the meaning practitioners attributed to the same practices they were engaged in previously. In short, liberalization altered the social cognitive structure by valorizing the democracy and human rights discourse. The next section will address how this valorization played a role in moderating the JMB.

2.5 Same Practices, Different Meanings

For all actors involved, political practices this time around took on a whole different meaning. The regime, as a matter of discursive practice, explained its reforms as the beginning of a new era of democratization in Jordan. In many of his speeches, King Hussein repeatedly celebrated this phase in the country's political history, and assured Jordanians of his commitment to their democratic rights and freedoms (Gharaybeh 1997, 87). As Schwedler notes, the regime "pushed the language of democracy to the center of public political debates" (2006, 128). Prior to this valorization of the democratic discourse, not a single party in Jordan, including the JMB, advocated democratic reforms as part of their agenda. Democratic themes and demands only began to appear in the programs and literature of the JMB after 1992 (ibid, 92). The topic of democracy was virtually taboo in Jordan's public space. For obvious reasons, political actors in

the opposition enthusiastically championed the new democracy narrative for the opportunities it created, and saw no reason to contest the official discourse.

As a result of this cognitive shift, political elites would now understand their practices in democratic terms. As noted previously, practices instantiate discourse. They also frame actors by giving them an identity based on what they are *doing,* and towards which ends. In contrast to the previous cognitive environment of the 1950s, practicing politics in the 1990s would now more explicitly frame practitioners as *democrats*, engaged in *democratic* practices and doing so to advance *democratization* in Jordan. More importantly, the competence of their political performances would now be evaluated by other practitioners based on how they measured up to democratic norms. The codification of these norms in the National Charter would also institutionalize them in a kind of new pact between all political actors in the country. As the next section will highlight, these new standards of competence will play an important role in moderating the JMB.

The strategic (instrumental) incentive of authoritarian regimes in appealing to the democratic discourse in order to contain growing dissent is undeniable. However, once it goes down that route, the regime entangles itself in a web of implications that forever changes the structure of politics. This entanglement partially stems from the normative power of democracy as a political ideal. Since the establishment of the Jordanian nation-state by King Abdullah I, the Hashemite regime partially established its legitimacy based on the promise of a constitutional monarchy (Boulby 1999, 5, f.8). With the valorization of the democratic discourse, his grandson King Hussein evolved this promise to include a democratic state governed by the rule of law. The King officially formalized this promise in the National Charter. The first article of the second

chapter states that: "The State of Law is a democratic state committed to the principle of the supremacy of the law and derives its legitimacy, authority and effectiveness from the free will of the people."[31] This valorization of the democratic discourse, therefore, "had the effect of entrenching the norm of democracy as central to regime legitimacy", as Lynch notes (1999, 107).

There are various empirical indicators of this democratic entanglement. The 1993 amendment to the electoral law is but one illuminating example. The amendment was designed by the government to reduce what it considered the "exaggerated" representation of the Islamist current in parliament (Schwedler 2006, 53). In an act of electoral re-engineering, the government changed the electoral rules in a manner that privileges tribal and familial voting incentives over party affiliation.[32] The amendment was interestingly introduced to the public as the "one man, one vote" law. Because of this law, and because of the disproportionately larger number of seats in parliament allocated to rural districts, the presence and power of political parties in parliament was reduced. Both the regime and the opposition contested the legitimacy of this law by *appealing to democratic norms*. The official government narrative stressed that this law was designed to align the Jordanian electoral system with the best practices of the world's greatest democracies (ibid, 55).

The structuring effects of discursive practices is nicely illustrated by the previous example. Once elites adopt specific discourses to situate their practices, legitimate strategies of action become constrained by these very discursive practices. The standards of competent political performances in Jordan's new liberalized environment became democratic norms. All

[31] http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/charter-national.html

[32] Prior to this amendment, voters could cast as many votes as there were seats allocated to their district. This allowed the voter to choose multiple candidates based on her different preferences (tribal, ideological, party, etc..). The social importance of tribal structures in Jordan meant that with only one vote, she was more likely to vote for the candidate who represented her tribe.

practitioners, including the state, were now subject to its effects. The argument here is not that Jordan's political elites were now deterministically adhering to democratic norms. It is only to argue that discursive practices produce politically consequential effects, including altering the menu of legitimate strategies. For example, the rising prominence of the democratic discourse in Jordan's social cognitive structure provided the opposition, including the JMB, new opportunities and strategies for political contestation based on the democratic discourse. But these opportunities also came at the constraining cost of being judged by the same standards of competence.

Changes in the transnational social cognitive structure of Islamists since the 1950s also altered the meaning of JMB participation in the new liberalized environment.[33] Political violence between Naser's regime in Egypt and the Islamists in that country during the 1960s produced the revolutionary Qutbi discourse that condemned both the state and society. Qutb's thought would later inspire various revolutionary currents that advocated different means (not all violent) to replace, rather than reform, the social and political order. This continued to feed the vicious cycle of violence between the regime and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood until its costs on the movement and society prompted its leaders to reform its ideology in the 1970s (Ashour 2009). The *jahilya* discourse of Qutb was critiqued and attributed to the violence experienced by members of the movement while being imprisoned and tortured by state security.[34] The leadership rejected Qutb's view of society and advocated nonviolent reform that engaged actively and constructively with the state and society.

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[33] The previous chapter discusses this evolution in greater detail.

[34] Sayid Qutb was himself a prominent leader in the Muslim Brotherhood. He was imprisoned, tortured and ultimately executed by Naser's regime in 1966 for "attempting to overthrow the state".

It wasn't long before the reformist discourse would rise to a dominant position in the Islamist cognitive structure. The symbolic prominence of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and the size of its regional base, would facilitate this rise. This discourse was also supported by the thought of influential religious and political leaders including: Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, Dr. Hassan al-Turabi and Rashid al-Ghannushi. But the rise of this discourse did not imply the complete marginalization and irrelevance of Qutb's revolutionary discourse. A number of splinter groups still wedded to the need for total revolution continued to contest the "accommodating" discourse and practice of Islamist reformers.[35] They were supported by the powerful example of the successful Islamic revolution in Iran.

The permeability of the Arab public space meant that the JMB was very much in the midst of these changes. In contrast to its sister organization in Egypt, members still committed to Qutb's revolutionary discourse did not break away from its organization and still remained within its ranks (Gharybeh 1997, 76). They continued to exert power over the movement's ideology and educational programs until a new leadership began revising the group's literature and weeding out Qutb's thought in 1978. According to Gharybeh, by 1982, two competing ideological trends began to clearly emerge within the movement (ibid, 82). The first current, referred to by the Jordanian media as the "hawks", continued to uphold Qutb's view of the state and society while rejecting any engagement in public life that would only serve to prop up the order of *jahiliya.* They believed the movement should focus exclusively on reforming society one individual and family at a time through religious education. Their approach was opposed by the "doves" who espoused a more tolerant view of the state and society, and believed the

[35] Al-Qaeda is but one of the offspring of these splinter groups. Not all revolutionary movements were violent though. Some advocated "emigration" and the formation of parallel societies.

movement should be active in all forums of public life, including politics. Both trends were represented in the the key decision making bodies of the movement (ibid, 89-90).

The implications of the outlined evolution in both the political opportunity and social cognitive structures posed significant ideological challenges for the JMB. First, the regime's valorization of the democratic discourse placed the question of the compatibility between Islam and democracy front and center within the movement. Second, after decades of casting their secular and leftist political rivals as "infidels", and arguing that their ideologies were "un-Islamic", the JMB now had to recognize them, and their political philosophies, as equals. Finally, shifts in the transnational Islamist cognitive structure meant that the practice of participation itself was now controversial. Furthermore, some of the democratic practices this participation entailed were considered forbidden by some religious discourses. All these challenges would create significant contestation and crisis within the movement. How this contestation was resolved, as these challenges emerged in practice, explains the JMB's moderation.

2.6 Practice and the Shifting Meanings of Participation

When the JMB first decided to take part in the 1989 parliamentary elections, its interest in this participation was mainly to advance Islamic reform in the country. Supporting and strengthening the path towards pluralism and democratization was not part of their agenda. Boubly notes that at the time of these elections, "it seems clear that the Muslim Brotherhood does not ultimately seek a pluralist parliamentary system based on popular sovereignty" (1999, 134). The fact that the movement did not make this a priority, however, does not imply that they opposed such a system. In fact, several of their key leaders had already reconciled the

compatibility of democratic practices with their Islamic ideology (Schwedler 2006, 158). What is important to note though is that at this point in their moderation process, the JMB does not consider democracy an end in itself. They also did not justify their participation in politics based on the need to further Jordan's transition towards democracy. The movement viewed democratic practices in instrumental terms, i.e. how they could serve in furthering their political priorities.

As discussed in the previous section, shifts in the Islamist cognitive structure made participating in politics more ideologically contentious this time around. The language of contestation, and the reasons advanced for and against political participation, provide strong evidence in support of the argument that participation was strategic for the JMB at first – even for its moderate faction. Beginning first with the arguments of those elites opposed to participation, this faction had both religious and political objections to contesting the 1989 elections. Religiously, they rejected democracy and its practices as an "invading non-Islamic concept and a secular approach to community management" (Kazem quoted in Schwedler 2006, 158). Based on Qutb's doctrine of *jahilya*, they also considered the current regime in Jordan "un-Islamic", and therefore that it would be forbidden religiously to participate in any of its governing institutions. On the political side, this group believed the movement should continue to focus its efforts on reforming society from the ground up, and not get distracted by political campaigning, coalition building and negotiating with the government and opposition. They were also concerned that political participation would give the government the instruments it would need to control, and maybe even co-opt the movement.[36]

[36] Interview with Dr. Ishaq Farhan, May 12, 2011, Amman.

The marginality of the *jahiliya* discourse in the Islamist's cognitive structure at this stage favored the position of elites who pushed for participation. Various discursive developments had legitimized democratic and pluralistic practices, and the lack of a religious hierarchy of authority within the JMB meant that both religious opinions were equally valid. But the discursive practices of elites favoring participation reveals an instrumental conceptualization of democracy and its institutions. To Arabiyat, future speaker of parliament and a leading proponent of participation, "every government should be accountable to its people, and democratic institutions are simply *one institutional means of achieving that end* " (my emphasis, quoted in Schwedler 2006, 157). Arabiyat also had a similar instrumental view of parliament. He argued that "because parliament is a consultative body that can affect change in the constitution as well as in legislation, it is therefore a *highly relevant site for Islamist activism*" (my emphasis, ibid, 157).

The religious objection from participating in an "un-Islamic" political order further strengthened the instrumental justification of participation. All Islamists, including those who favor political participation, generally concede that the state does not implement sharia, and is therefore illegitimate. To ideologically justify participating in this environment, conditions governing this participation were suggested. The first condition was "realizing the fundamental interests of Islam, and the Islamist movement" (author translation, al-Bdoor 2011, 26). Moreover, the movement explicitly rejects "participation for participation's sake" and recommends identifying clear indicators to measure its benefits and costs periodically to determine whether it ought to continue its role in politics (ibid). Furthering democratic development was not part of the interests identified in their cost/benefit analysis at this stage.

Various factors undermined the hardline position of those elites opposed to participation. First, the JMB itself had a history of participation in the 50s and therefore there was a precedent for pluralistic practices. Second, their symbolically powerful sister organization in Egypt had recently contested their own parliamentary elections as independent candidates.[37] Third, the global organization had circulated a memo to all its members in the different countries informing them that political participation is permissible, and that participation is a political not religious question. According to Arabiyat, this significantly weakened the position of the hawks in this debate.[38] Third, a younger generation of members now filled the ranks of the movement's base and decision making bodies. This generation was already very active in public life, contesting elections in student and labor organizations. Their support would secure a majority in favor of participating in the 1989 elections.

The decision to participate in the 1989 elections would produce several outcomes with moderating consequences. First, it allowed the movement to evaluate the fairness of the electoral process on the ground, and through its own experience. After the elections, the JMB emerged as the dominant political force in parliament. They had nominated 29 candidates on one electoral list, 22 of whom were elected to parliament (Gharaybeh 1997, 119). Twelve other Islamists were also elected as independents, giving the Islamic current 34 of the 80 seats (42 percent) available in parliament. Leftists, liberals and nationalists only held 13 seats (16 percent) collectively (ibid). Second, the strength of their performance gave the JMB the confidence that they have the support of the public in pursuing their Islamic reform agenda.[39] Furthermore, the government's

[37] The Muslim Brotherhood was banned from political participation until the Egyptian revolution in 2011.

[38] Interview with the author, May 3, 2011, Amman.

[39] Interview with Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, May 3, 2011, Amman.

fair handling of the elections strengthened the movement's faith in affecting change through formal democratic channels. With their new found parliamentary power, they could now pursuit their agenda through: legislative proposals in parliament; granting governments their confidence only if they accommodated their interests; and cabinet positions with the executive power to affect change.

The third consequence of the movement's strong showing in the elections was a reduction in the anxiety and animosity they felt towards competing ideological trends in the country. With only sixteen percent between all parties of the opposition, the JMB could feel confident it had won the war over the identity and cultural orientation of the country. The feeling that Islam was under threat by secular forces was now unwarranted based on their relative electoral performance. Their dominant position would also ensure that they would have control over the terms of any future cooperation with the opposition. The 1991 signing of the National Charter by all political currents in the country further reduced the JMB's anxiety. In this charter, the Islamic character of the Jordanian state was reaffirmed. The charter outlines the following principles as foundational:[40]

> THIRD: Faith in God, respect for spiritual values, adherence to higher principles...
> FOURTH: Islam is the religion of the state, and Islamic law is the principal source of legislation.
> FIFTH: Arab Islamic civilization, open to world civilization, is the defining aspect of the national identity of the Jordanian people...

The final moderating consequence of all the outlined outcomes is that they strengthened the position of elites who advocated participation. They quickly came to dominate both the shura and executive councils within the organization – two key decision making bodies (Gharaybeh

[40] http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/charter-national.html

1997, 138-144). Moreover, the appeal of participation and democratic practices strengthened within the base of the movement. This appeal would become clearly evident with sweeping votes in favor of continued participation at future critical junctures of contestation.

Once the JMB went down the path of participation, political developments in an environment ideationally structured by democratic norms of competence pushed the movement further down the path of moderation. These contingent developments entangled the movement and forced them to adopt moderate positions that caused significant contestation. To begin with, the JMB did not anticipate King Hussein's National Charter initiative. The Charter would codify the state's commitment to ideological pluralism in the country. By signing on to it, the movement was officially recognizing the equal legitimacy of secular rivals in Jordan. As Schwedler notes, the party managed to evade this issue earlier by expressing its commitment to pluralism while "calling for a fight against sectarian, regional, and ethnic chauvinism, which threatens the nation's unity and undermines the country's integrity" (2006, 159). This was an implicit denunciation of nationalist and leftist parties in the country, and served to downplay its acceptance of them as legitimate players. No such equivocations were possible with the new Charter.

A more serious development occurred that same year. JMB deputies put forward a legislative proposal in parliament that would seek to amend the constitution to state that sharia was not only a *primary* source of legislation, but *the* source of legislation (ibid, 162). This would allow them to then push for a review of all legislation in the country to ensure it was in harmony with Islamic sharia. The proposal was both ideologically contentious, and politically risky, to undertake. Ideologically, putting the legislation to parliament implied that the question of

governing by Islamic sharia was a matter open to debate, and that a majority could opt out of implementing religious law, if it so chooses. The presence of religious minorities and secular deputies in parliament also meant that they had an equal say in the decision. Loosing the vote could also open up the issue of participation, once again, to contestation. On the political side, in the event they did end up loosing the vote, they would suffer costs whether they remained within the political process, or had they decided to exit. Remaining in parliament, despite loosing the vote, could compromise their position with their base. On the other hand, resigning from parliament would leave them vulnerable to the charge that they had no real commitment to the democratic transition in the country.

To complicate things further, King Hussein came out against the proposed legislation. Many of those MP's the JMB had hoped would vote in favor of the amendment decided to vote against it after the King's public opposition. In the end, they were unable to secure the majority needed to pass the proposed constitutional amendment. This was a devastating loss for the movement and would result in tremendous internal debate, both immediately, and in the future. The shura council debated the issue vigorously right after the incident. They opted to respect the parliament's decision and to remain part of the political process. As Schwedler notes, "to reject the outcome of the vote as illegitimate would mean not only withdrawing from parliament and running counter to the popular democratization process, but contradicting the group's repeatedly stated commitment to honoring democratic outcomes" (ibid, 163). These statements and repeated commitments were expressed because of the saliency of the democratic discourse in Jordanian public space. The performance of the JMB was clearly being measured based on democratic norms of competence. Thus, for the first time since they began taking part in politics, the JMB

would now justify their participation, not because of its strategic value, but because it demonstrates a commitment to democracy.

Contention within the movement reached its peak with the decision to form a political party to represent the Brotherhood and the Islamic current in Jordan. The government had once again legalized parties in 1992, and the new leadership decided to capitalize on that opportunity to establish the Islamic Action Front (IAF). Partisan politics had already been condemned by the movement's founder, Hassan al-Banna, and it was considered a violation of Islam's injunction against the division of the umma by many religious discourses. The accumulation of dissent over the past few years prompted the leadership to organize a large public forum to debate the various issues of contention. Commenting on this period, Ghaith al-Qudah, IAF leader in charge of youth organization, discussed some of the contradictions the JMB's participation produced. "Our leaders were now cabinet ministers and MP's, they had political power, they drove around in customs-free Mercedes, shaking hands with the Queen [41] and recognizing the legitimacy of our existential enemies".[42]

Religious arguments were still at the center of the 1992 forum. Dr. Muhammad Abu Faris was the leading JMB member presenting the religious argument against participation and the formation of the IAF, while Omar al-Ashqar presented the opposing view (Gharaybeh 1997, 109-110). Prior to the forum, both religious scholars drafted their arguments in a booklet that was widely circulated within the movement. Their debate was also videotaped and distributed to all the JMB's organizational offices for those members unable to attend the forum.[43] In addition to

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[41] Shaking a woman's hand is considered forbidden by some Islamic schools of jurisprudence.

[42] Interview with the author, May 18, 2011, Amman.

[43] Interview with Dr. Ishaq Farhan, May 12, 2011, Amman.

debating the issue religiously, both men also presented political arguments. Abu Faris emphasized the regime's emerging rapprochement with Israel as a fundamental contradiction to the movement's commitment to Palestinian rights, while al-Ashqar outlined the various achievements realized in Jordan and elsewhere for the Muslim Brotherhood (Schwedler 2006, 164). This forum would be the last time religion structures the terms of the debate on JMB political participation. As Schwedler notes, "al-Ashqar's arguments and justifications for continued participation most closely reflected the group's center, while those of Abu Faris were becoming increasingly marginalized" (ibid).

Two final developments reified the moderate positions adopted by the JMB in practice. These were: (1) the decree of the "one man, one vote" electoral law; and (2) the parliament's ratification of the peace treaty with Israel. Both these developments could have provided the leadership with sufficient political cover to boycott the political process without having their commitment to democracy questioned and wielded by the regime and political rivals. The government's electoral law was considered a subversion of democratic practice by most parties in the opposition (Gharaybeh 1997, 128). The manner in which it was passed[44], and its intervention to weaken the power of parties by design, strengthened this impression. Despite growing calls for boycotting the 1993 elections in protest of government manipulation, the IAF shura council voted overwhelmingly in favor of continued participation: 87 of 101 members opposed the boycott (ibid, 129).

In a revealing example of the structuring effect of democratic norms, those in favor of boycotting the elections argued that "a boycott would not be tantamount to a rejection of

[44] The King dissolved parliament and passed the law by royal decree.

democratic processes per se, because the election law was undemocratic" (Schwedler 2006, 166). The JMB's overseer general, Mohammed Khalifah, issued a press release in which he stated, "the Brotherhood has decided to participate in the elections in response to King Hussein's appeal to safeguard the nation and its stability, and to ensure the success of democracy and shura" (author translation, Gharaybeh 1997, 129). Dr. Ishaq Farhan also wrote several columns in Jordanian news papers explaining the IAF's decision not to boycott. Farhan explained, "to boycott would not contribute to the strengthening of democracy in Jordan, and we are very committed to seeing that process thrive" (Schwedler 2006, 167). Religious debates were entirely absent in the shura council's deliberations (ibid). This is a stark *moderate* shift in discursive and political practice for the JMB. Participation had now become also about their interest in democracy itself, and more importantly, this was justifiable ideologically.

When the government signed a peace treaty with Israel and put it up for ratification by parliament, a serious internal crisis erupted within the movement. A vocal group, once again headed by Abu Faris, demanded that IAF deputies resign immediately. The leadership also responded once again with an open public forum where "hundreds squeezed into a crowded hall in Amman to debate the issue" (Schwedler 2006, 170). The event was audio and video taped and circulated to members not in attendance. A number of booklets were also published articulating each faction's position on the issue. In this debate, the legitimacy of democratic practices, and their congruency with Islamic principles, was reiterated. Leaders also claimed, in a shift clearly brought about *in practice*, that "participation had never been merely tactical" (ibid). They also highlighted that withdrawing from parliament, even on an issue that enjoyed great popular support, showed contempt for the democratic system (ibid, 171).

A few weeks later, in a kind of compromise, the IAF shura council voted to continue it participation in parliament, but refused to join any government at the cabinet level. This was largely a symbolic gesture as no prime minister has yet to offer the JMB any cabinet position until this day.[45] This decision, as Schwedler notes, "illustrates that the IAF was now willing to accept outcomes that fundamentally contradicted its primary objectives *as long as they were processed through democratic channels*" (my emphasis, ibid). It also suggests that practical political experience led them to rethink there conditional, instrumental understanding of political participation.

Both these reviewed contingencies, the electoral amendment and the peace treaty, would establish the basis for a new cooperative relationship between the JMB and their historic rivals. They were equally weakened by the new law, and had a similar ideological interest in undermining the peace treaty with Israel. They would form the "High Coordinating Committee of Opposition Parties" to institutionalize this cooperation, and would organize various initiatives to resist normalization with Israel, and mobilize popular demonstrations against Israeli policy. This new relationship was a clear departure from the JMB's previous practice. The logic of the new environment demanded a more tolerant and open (moderate) view towards the "other" built on the premise that they shared common interests.[46] The leadership's previous discursive practices of legitimizing pluralism also grounded this cooperation with ideological legitimacy.

As outlined throughout this section, the new moderate leadership did not shy away from openly and publicly debating its policies and decisions. Critically, it justified these policies

[45] The JMB only had a short stint in cabinet in the Badran government of 1991. The government resigned 6 months after they joined.

[46] Interview with Dr. Nabil Al-Kofahi, April 2011, Amman.

ideologically at every juncture when religious appropriateness was being contested. It always followed majority opinion, even when the executive council, or the Overseer-General, disagreed. This *democratic practice* internally allowed the leadership to reconstitute the ends of participation, and the meaning of practices, because it gave these new meanings the legitimacy to stick. The party discipline it engendered ended contestation and allowed for the repeated performance of these practices, which would ultimately reify these new meanings into background knowledge. By 1993, for example, the religious appropriateness of participation was taken for granted. This internal practice of resolving ideological crisis through inclusive, deliberative and participatory mechanisms (shura) altered the boundaries of accepted practice and discourse in a manner that reified the movement's ideological moderation. In her comparative study of Jordan and Yemen, Schwedler identifies this practice as one of the key variances between the IAF in Jordan and the Islah party in Yemen which explain "not only why the IAF has become more moderate, *but more crucially, why the Islah party as whole has not*" (my emphasis, Schwedler 2006, 197).

Conclusion

The hypothesis that inclusion in the political process moderates Islamists is widely accepted in academic and policy circles. Many voices in the public sphere also echo this argument based on normative and/or strategic imperatives. The evidence examined in this study suggests that: (a) the political party of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), has in fact moderated over time; and (b) that this moderation increased due to its participation in a liberalized political process. Based on this evidence, this thesis validates the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. But the validation of this hypothesis was not the main thrust behind this somewhat uncontroversial argument. Instead, the objective was to specify the exact causal process that explains how moderation unfolds. This represents a key gap in our knowledge of the topic. Another important blind spot is the role ideational structures played in this process.

Much of the existing literature looks at the question through the analytical lens of rational choice theory. Different causal mechanisms are posited, and their consequential effects on rational actors are the *implied* explanation for ideational change. The most prominent argument in that genre of academic theory focuses on the constraining effects of democratic institutions. Incentivized by the benefits of participation, political or otherwise, Islamists take part in a political process which moderates them over time through the legal constraints of democratic institutions. Various empirical anomalies cast doubt on the institutionalist explanation to moderation. There were cases where Islamists moderated at varying degrees despite similar institutional structures. In some countries moderation was evident despite (or because) of exclusion. A more serious empirical challenge to the

argument stems from the fact that regimes in most countries of the Muslim world tend to be authoritarian. These empirical contradictions suggest that some other mechanism, competing or intervening, is causing moderation.

Even if these important anomalies had not existed, the rational institutionalist argument still has one critical theoretical weakness: its inability to endogenously explain ideational change. Changes to an agent's opportunity structure can undoubtedly create an incentive for a change in *behavior*. But behavioral change is not the same as *cognitive* change, or change in beliefs and preferences. As a result, this approach is ineffective for differentiating between instrumental gaming of the system, and true ideological moderation. Concerns over the consolidation of democratic transitions in the Arab world following the rise of Islamist parties after the Arab Spring make this a key distinction.

Studies that recognize the importance of this issue offer alternative insights. Social interaction and deliberation with other actors with an alternative worldview is suggested as a possible explanation. Other studies argued that political learning from severe crisis and new experiences lead Islamists to moderate. Even though these studies were more focused on the question of ideational change, their causal processes remain poorly specified. It is not clear, for instance, why these experiences and interactions might not reinforce an agent's ideology rather than change it. Furthermore, in various empirical cases, Islamists under similar sociological contexts seems to be learning different lessons.

To address these critical gaps, this study traced the moderation of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (JMB) in great detail. It focused on two analytical dimensions that are key to an agent's cognitive processes: (1) discursive structures; and (2) social practice.

The choice of these explanatory variables was driven by two simple assumptions. First, the acceptance or rejection of democratic practices is cultural. Changes in ideational structures may, therefore, help explain changes in beliefs. Second, social practices are an engine of cultural change. As culture in action, they produce and reproduce ideational structures through the agency of individuals. But as much as practices can stabilize and reify discursive structures, they can also subvert and change them, again through the agency of individuals. Hence, new political practices can alter cognitive structures and moderate them.

Based on this analytical model, this study attempts to identify the discursive enablers of practices that would have a moderating effect when performed by the JMB. It concentrates on the specific practice of political participation as its main object of analysis. The dominance of the democratic discourse in Jordanian politics following the liberalization of the regime in 1989 meant that political participation would be understood as an explicit endorsement of democratic practices and institutions, as well as the regime in Jordan. Since this endorsement has been contingent for the JMB, and Islamists in general, the first part of the study traced the discursive shifts that made participation under this new liberalized environment *imaginable* and *thinkable.*

Various discursive enablers, reaching far back into the reform era of the late 19th century, created the necessary conditions of possibility for the JMB to participate in politics. First, a dominant discourse in the Islamist cognitive structure posits that Islam does not advocate a particular political order, and instead, offers general political principles to be upheld by all systems. By implication, this same discourse attributes no normative

priority to the historical practice of absolute rule throughout Muslim history. Amongst the general principles this discourse outlines are the key practices of *shura* and *ijm'a*. The reconstitution of these practices along modern democratic norms represents the second key discursive enabler this thesis identifies. No longer were these practices consultative, optional and restricted to a privileged few. They are recast discursively to represent constitutional government, elected by all citizens, and accountable to their representatives. Moreover, the multitude of social, economic and political problems experienced in the Muslim world are all attributed to despotism in this discourse. Third, the mainstream fundamentalist current's Islamizing of democratic practices by reconciling specific "mechanisms" of democracy, not its secular liberal philosophy, with the general principles of Islam legitimizes political participation through these practices. Finally, the discursive practice of acknowledging the "un-Islamic" nature of current regimes, yet providing theological arguments justifying participation based on the interests of the movement, as well as the umma, provides the utilitarian (instrumental) logic for participation.

After identifying the discursive enablers that made participation in politics imaginable and thinkable for the JMB, this study traces the effects of this participation on the movement's ideology by analyzing how the meaning of this participation shifted *in practice*. Shifts in meaning could suggest changes in ideology. As the movement reorganized itself to capitalize on the opportunities made possible by the liberalization of political life, it also reconstituted the meaning of its participation in politics, as a practice. The meaning of this participation evolved from being understood as a means to achieve the movement's ends in reforming society, to a demonstration of its commitment to

democracy. The driving force for this shift was participating in politics in a social cognitive structure where the democratic discourse was dominant. As a direct result of this discursive landscape, the competence of the JMB's participation was always being evaluated based on the norms of the democratic discourse. This reconstruction of the meaning of political participation, however, was not without crisis, contestation and political struggle amongst factions with competing ideological commitments. The internal practice of resolving ideological crisis through inclusive, deliberative and participatory mechanisms provides the legitimacy needed to alter the boundaries of accepted practice and discourse in a manner that reifies the movement's ideological moderation.

To summarize the factors involved in the JMB's moderation, they are both structural – changes in the political opportunity and social cognitive structures – and practical – the practices of participation, and ideological justification through internal shura. Before I highlight the theoretical insights of this study, let me first outline some of its limitations. First, the applicability of this causal process is probably more relevant to cases where the Islamists under study are: (1) a mainstream movement committed to achieving its agenda through nonviolent reform of existing regimes, not through revolutionary change; and (2) they are part of the majority Sunni branch of Islam. Second, different structural factors, cognitive and political, than the ones this case study identifies may also create an environmental incentive for moderation. Having said that, what should remain consistent though is: (1) a discursive landscape that makes moderating practices imaginable, and religiously legitimate; (2) a domestic cognitive structure that valorizes the democratic discourse; and (3) a political opportunity structure that channels the

opportunities and constraints of participation through democratic practices, even if it remains authoritarian at its core.[47] Third, the causal process traced in this case study only represents one possible path in the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, namely, the path where inclusion leads to moderation by increasing the number of moderates and reducing the number of radicals within a movement. As Schwedler has already pointed out, there are at least three other paths, that may or may not involve similar factors (2006, 13). Finally, my study focused on a single practice, political participation, as a kind of meta practice that absorbs others. This is not to suggest that other practices could not have also moderated the JMB.

There are several insights that can be drawn from this case study. First, despite the authoritarian reversals experienced in Jordan, even the limited openings ushered in by the regime resulted in significant changes. It introduced new practices (party formation, parliamentary elections, grass roots mobilization, etc...) that were valuable to the opposition, and new legal and *discursive* constraints. Because this study was focused on practices and cognitive structures, I was able to identify these important changes, and to evaluate their impact on ideological moderation. Had I chosen to adopt the regime centric model of the transitions paradigm, these effects would have likely gone undetected as Jordan can be categorized as a "stalled" democratic transition.[48] The case itself would be neglected.

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[47] This is because even artificially democratic practices generate the same ideological controversies within an Islamist movement.

[48] Schwedler's methodological insights (2006, 6-7) were instrumental in my own research design.

Second, the case suggests that discursive structures, in addition to making practices imaginable and thinkable, also have constraining effects on agency as analytically significant as formal institutions. One of they key structuring effects of participating in politics for the JMB was having the competence of this participation evaluated by other practitioners based on the norms of democracy and the human rights discourse. Not only did this trigger an ideological crisis within the movement, it also constrained what they considered legitimate and justifiable strategies. This highlights the importance of including discursive structures in any political analysis.

A final theoretical insight that can be drawn from this study is the analytical feasibility of identifying ideational change in collective agents. Many studies reiterate the difficulties in detecting the "true" beliefs of agents and opt to focus instead on their rational strategies. Without a cognitive and psychological analysis, it is, no doubt, difficult to measure and operationalize the beliefs of *individuals.* When it comes to *groups* though, evidence of these beliefs and values are reified in discourse, practice, institutions and many other social artifacts. Placing these artifacts at the center of our analysis can provide interesting opportunities for further research on ideological change, and other political questions.

Given the current radically changing political environment of the Middle East, it is perhaps almost cliche to ask how the Arab Spring might bode for future Islamist moderation. A growing number of analysts argue that the Middle East has entered a "post-Islamist" phase in its history. The revolutions mobilized millions in Tunis, Egypt and Yemen not in the name of Islamist rule, but in the name of liberty, human dignity and

social justice. The Arab Spring is not about ideology. It is about human rights, corruption and economic inequality. Islamists are rising to power through fair elections in Tunis and Egypt not because they promise to usher in the Islamic state, but because of their long struggles against corruption and authoritarianism; an effective organizational structure built over many decades; their activism at the grass-roots level; and also because their moderate Islamism better represents the values of the majority. The language of religion and ideology is virtually absent in the discourse of mainstream Islamists. All this suggests that a new *revolutionary* legitimacy will underpin rule in many countries of the Middle East. A legitimacy strongly based on the norms of democracy and the respect for human rights. Islamists were not passive observants in this process.They were amongst the social forces that brought about this change. Therefore, in this post-Islamist phase of Middle East history, it is perhaps besides the point to ponder how all this might bode for Islamist moderation.

Appendix A: Methods Memo

1.0 Interviewee Data

Name	Position	Date(s)	Location
Dr. Ishaq Farhan	Secretary General - Islamic Action Front	8/5/2011, 12/5/2011	Home
Dr. Abdel Latif Arabiyat	Secretary General - Islamic Action Front	17/4/2011, 3/5/2011	Home
Ghaith Al Qudah	Youth Leader - Islamic Action Front	18/5/2011	Office
Dr. Nabil Al Kofahi	Executive Bureau - Islamic Action Front	19/4/2011	Research Center
Eng. Ali Abul Sukkar	President of Shura Council - Islamic Action Front	12/4/2011	Party HQ
Yahya Abdel Latif	Member - Muslim Brotherhood	1/4/2011	Home
Jameel Abu Bakr	Executive Bureau - Muslim Brotherhood	16/5/2011	Party HQ
Lamis Andoni	Journalist	24/3/2011	Home
Mohammad Abu Rumman	Political Analyst - Center for Strategic Studies	24/5/2011	Research Center
Hani Horani	Director - Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center	15/5/2011	Research Center

2.0 Selection Criteria

The thesis focused on the time period of political liberalization in Jordan. During this period, the Muslim Brotherhood -- and their political wing the Islamic Action Front -- experienced significant internal crisis that ultimately led to their democratic transformation. I interviewed party leaders who either directly shaped those events, or those who were active participants and witnesses. Members representing different internal factions were selected. In addition to these participants, I also interviewed journalists, researchers and academics who cover the Islamic movement in Jordan, and are well versed in the country's politics and history.

3.0 Questionnaire

Topic: Democratic Transition

1. What were the key milestones and phases along the road to the democratization of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB)?
2. How did this transformation come about within the movement?
3. What external factors contributed towards this transformation?
4. On what grounds did the movement consider democracy illegitimate previously?
5. On what grounds was the transformation legitimized?

Topic: Democratic Conceptualization

1. How does the MB define democracy?
2. How did this definition evolve over time?
3. What explains this evolution?
4. What textual references outline the MB's position on democracy?
5. How do you see the difference between the MB's conceptualization and the West's conceptualization?
6. What are the different ideational currents within the movement that have competing conceptualizations?
7. Who are the key members that represent each current?
8. What factors do you think explain why specific individual members end up adopting the ideational commitments (religious/political) they do?
9. What role does the MB envision for shari'a in public/political life, and are there differences in this conceptualization?
10. In what ways does shari'a shape the MB conceptualization of democracy?

Topic: Factional Struggles

1. During the democratic transition phase, who were the key figures supporting/opposing it?
2. On what grounds did they base their support/opposition?
3. What official positions did they occupy and what organizational resources did they command?
4. How did these positions and resources influence their ability to shape the outcome of this debate?
5. What strategies did each faction use to influence the outcome of this debate?
6. How did the commitment towards democracy finally get entrenched within the movement?
7. Historically, certain factions have dominated key institutions within the movement, how does this come about?

Topic: Religious/Ideational Authority

1. How are religious or ideational differences settled within the MB?
2. What institutional mechanisms are there for the settlement of differences?
3. Are there specific institutions responsible for religious/ideational doctrine and education?
4. If these institutions exist, how are there members nominated and selected?

5. Who were the key religious authorities on the question of democracy within the movement?
6. How much influence do these institutions have on shaping members world views?
7. What channels are available for party members to influence/challenge doctrine?
8. How do political struggles come into play?
9. What allows any individual member to speak authoritatively on religious or ideational matters within the movement?
10. Has the nature/structure of religious and ideational authority changed over the years?

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