

**The Muslim Brotherhood in the 2007 Jordanian
Parliamentary Elections:
A Passing 'Political Setback' or Diminished
Popularity?**



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November 2007**



Published in 2007 by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Amman Office / Michael Bröning
P.O. Box 926238, Amman
11110 - Jordan

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Printing: Economic Printing Press, Amman, Jordan

Translation: Issam Daoud Khoury, Amman Jordan

Design and layout: Maya Chami, Beirut, Lebanon

Editing and proofing: Mona Abu Rayyan, Beirut, Lebanon

ISBN: 978-9957-484-03-3

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Preface

What role does 'Political Islam' play in contemporary Jordan?

How does Islam define politics in the Hashemite Kingdom? And how have relations changed between the state and the Muslim Brotherhood in the period subsequent to the 2007 parliamentary elections?

These and other pressing questions are discussed in the following analysis by Mohammad Abu Rumman, one of the most distinguished experts on the Islamist movement of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. In his essay, the author discusses the reasons for the electoral defeat of the Islamist movement in the 2007 parliamentary elections. Far from offering simplistic or mono-causal explanations, the author demonstrates that this defeat is based on several factors including causes deeply rooted within the Islamic movement itself. However, the study does not stop at an analysis of what happened in the last months of 2007. Rather, it delves further to discuss the different scenarios that might affect the Islamic movement's future in Jordan.

While it is difficult to ascertain whether the current defeat of the Islamic movement's political wing will prove permanent, it is safe to say that the Muslim Brotherhood, as a socio-cultural movement, will not disappear from the Jordanian political landscape anytime soon.

Political Islam is here to stay. Questions that also need to be raised within this context include: How can the integration of Political Islam into the political system of Jordan be guaranteed in view of recent developments? Is it to be taken for granted that a representation of Islam in the political sphere in Jordan is not only in the best interest of the Islamic movement itself, but also in the interest of the Jordanian

public, in general? These issues add to the challenging and intriguing questions that need to be examined with great care and deliberation. In view of the importance of these questions, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Amman will issue a series of studies of which the following analysis represents the first volume. If the study contributes to fostering a thorough debate on these questions, we will have achieved our aim.

Dr. Michael Bröning
Resident Representative
FES – Jordan
15-12-2007



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Introduction

The humble electoral results achieved by the Muslim Brotherhood in the Jordanian parliamentary elections of November 20, 2007 shocked most observers and analysts. The extent of the poor results was a surprise even to those who had predicted that the popularity of the Brotherhood was retreating. Even the most pessimistic estimates did not expect the limited amount of parliamentary seats gained by the Brotherhood, 6 out of 110 seats.

Directly after the announcement of the results, the retreat of the Brotherhood became a major subject of media debate and political analyses among researchers, journalists and politicians. The debate not only took place on the level of the election's local implications, but also on the level of its implications on Islamic political movements in general.

Compounding a regional situation, the Jordanian elections took place only a few weeks after the Islamic Justice and Development Party also failed to achieve expected results in the Moroccan legislative elections. Furthermore, the dismal electoral results of the Jordanian Brotherhood came at a time when their 'brothers' in the Hamas Movement took over full control of the Gaza Strip; and as a result, are facing a precarious period, negative media coverage and political commentaries and analyses also projecting a retreat in popularity for this movement.

In analyzing the variables leading to these results, as well as the extent of the repercussions and questions raised by these results, this study will attempt to answer the following:

To what extent does this result reflect a retreat in the Brotherhood's popularity, political stature and standing with the masses?

Does this result reflect the influence of new policies taken by the state institution towards the Brotherhood, or does it also reflect an internal crisis within the party?

In the case that these results are indicative of a definite retreat in the party's political presence, is it an exceptional retreat or a 'surprise upset' outside the norm? Or is it the result of a series of historical accumulations and several significant catalysts?

To answer these questions and to be able to extract the full dimension of the Brotherhood's defeat and the transformation of their political stature requires going beyond merely analyzing the electoral results. The major variables and elements that explain the transformations and changes which the Brotherhood has passed through must be discussed. The first is the relationship of the party with the state since the establishment of the Kingdom in 1946 up to 2007. The second variable is the relationship of the party with society, its social 'welfare' role and the tools it used in its popular and mass communication strategy. The third is the evolution that took place on the level of the Brotherhood's discourse, its prevailing practices and active movements or rising trends within the party.

In order to discuss the above, the study will deal with the results of the 2007 parliamentary elections within a general context by analyzing the following points:

- The position of the Muslim Brotherhood within the map of political Islam and among other political Islamic movements in Jordan, along with the Brotherhood's main political stands;
- The evolution of the relationship between the state and the Brotherhood from alliance to crisis;
- The dynamics between the state and the Brotherhood, an explanation of these dynamics and the factors influencing the relationship between the two;
- A reading and an analysis of the political and intellectual debates which have influenced and reflected polarizations within the Brotherhood's organization;
- Reviewing features of the Brotherhood's political discourse, its perspective on democracy and the extent of its political reality; as well as, discussing to what extent the Brotherhood's discourse has served and assisted its integration into the political system? Finally, what are the limits of the conflict between the Brotherhood's discourse, its political stands and state policy?
- The factors that led to the acute internal crisis in the Brotherhood on the eve of the parliamentary elections. What is the extent of this crisis, and its consequences?
- The Brotherhood's electoral platform; and, to what extent did this platform include a new and realistic vision?
- The causes and factors explaining the Brotherhood's defeat in the 2007 parliamentary elections;
- Projections on the future scope of the Brotherhood's political role and its relationship with the state.



1. Islamic Movements and the Political Game

The Muslim Brotherhood (and the Islamic Action Front Party) represent(s) the Greater Islamic Movement, which openly and systematically participates in Jordanian political and civil life through parliamentary and municipal elections, and in trade unions and other forms of public life. However, this presence does not negate the fact that other Islamic movements actively compete with the Brotherhood for their share in the popular support base, and rival their standing as the ‘authoritative’ Islamic political representatives in public life. These Islamic movements and groups represent several different positions, many times contradictory in political vision and official stands on internal and external issues.

Therefore, a main challenge lies in the power-mapping of these Islamic movements and in classifying them politically. The next challenge will be to delineate where the Muslim Brotherhood exists within this political mapping in relation to other powers, and with regard to its political ideas and stands and its influence on the masses.

Historical Development

Islamic activism started as early as the independence of Jordan in 1946, when the Muslim Brotherhood Party was established under the patronage of King Abdullah I and several members of the Brotherhood in Egypt¹. A few years later, Sheikh Taki Eddin Al-Nabhani (one of the figures close to the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine and Jordan) established a new party, which he called “The Islamic Liberation Party”. The founders tried to register the party in Amman, but failed due to the party’s strict, conservative ideology with regard to prevailing political systems, calling for the reinstatement of the Islamic Caliphate².

Nevertheless, the Liberation Party, along with the Muslim Brotherhood took part in the Jordanian parliamentary elections in 1956, winning only a limited number of seats in light of the strength of nationalistic and leftist movements at the time. As a result, the Liberation Party reconsidered its political decision to participate openly in Arab politics and limited its political role in public life. It would subsequently try to export its activities and ideas outside Jordan, where failed attempts at military

coups in Syria and Iraq led to the execution of a number of its leaders³ at the hands of those regimes.

'*Salafi*' groups began to emerge as a social phenomenon in the early 1980s when one of their renowned leaders, Sheikh Nasser Eddin Al-Albani, settled in Jordan. Although, the *Salafis* declared from the outset that they were not concerned with political life and its particulars, that they outwardly refused the concepts and principles of "political partisanship" and that their duty was "to obey", an intense competition, even struggle, would occur between the Brotherhood and the *Salafis*. The struggle was for *Salafis* to win over traditional supporters of the Brotherhood and to gain control of the mosques that the Brotherhood used to recruit new members, mobilize supporters and build their social base⁴.

The interesting paradox was that the state, which once prevented the Sheikh of the *Salafis*, Nasser Eddin Al-Albani, from preaching and teaching in mosques (under pressure of *Sufi* groups that had the support of the state), began to provide support to his followers in the early 1990s, such as providing public service opportunities for them, in an effort to break the backbone of the Muslim Brotherhood and its power base.

In the 1980s and within the context of the changing public temperament towards Islamic movements, signs of militant Islamic action began to emerge. This rise was symbolized by the condition of "Islamization" of members of Palestinian organizations, who were influenced by the success of Khomeini's revolution in Iran in 1979 and the assassination of Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, by radical Muslims in Egypt in 1981 – two major milestones which gave a great push forward for the ideas of "revolutionary" Islam⁵.

The decade of the 1990s would mark the real birth of Islamic groups that now adopted military action. At first, the catalyst was provided by fighters returning from the war in Afghanistan, who began to organize themselves into military units. These groups would attempt to impose their religious/political agenda by internal 'operations' such as bombing cinemas or through military actions across the border between Jordan and occupied Palestine.

The 1990s simultaneously witnessed a great transformation in policy symbolized by Jordan's decision to enter into peace talks with Israel. Much legislation would be passed restricting civic action and the opposition's ability to mobilize. These events would occur in a context where prevailing social and political temperaments were already saturated by an accumulated political discourse over the previous decades to oppose peace and normalization⁶.

Throughout the same decade, society would also begin to feel the effects of transformations in economic policy and the implementation of reform programs,

including economic 'restructuring', the rise of the 'privatization' project, the regressing role of the state in terms of social welfare and care, and an unsettling and weakening of the 'client' relationship between citizen and state. Fissures in Jordan's socio-economic and socio-political fabric exacerbated by these factors would help give rise to extreme radical movements⁷.

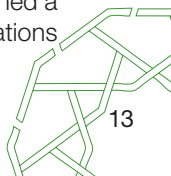
A new, more methodical face – both in abstract and concrete terms – of radical political Islam would emerge in the year 1994 with the official announcement of the arrest of Issam Al-Barqawi (alias 'Abu Mohammad Al-Maqdisi'). During the time of the arrest, Barqawi's followers were publishing underground books which called for a new *Salafiya* – a *Salifiya* different from the *Salafiya* of the Al-Albani group. The new *Salafi* (*Jihadist Salifiya*) branded the Jordanian political regime as well as all other Arab regimes as 'infidel' regimes, including Saudi Arabia. It also called for the rule of Islamic *Sharia* (religious law), the rejection of working openly in local politics or public services, and finally, endorsed the belief that change cannot occur except through military action⁸.

The activities of this *Jihadist Salafiya* flourished in the 1990s. Cases submitted against *Salifis* in the State Military Security Court were as numerous as they were diverse. They included illegal military activity, terrorism and labeling persons as infidels. Hundreds influenced by this new brand of *Salafiya* were detained and imprisoned. But the court cases would increase; and Al-Maqdisi's books would continue to be printed and distributed secretly. Simultaneous to Al-Maqdisi's books, books authored by Omar Mahmud Abu Omar (alias 'Abu Kutada the Palestinian', a Jordanian of Palestinian origin living in London) would also be distributed in the 'underground'. Omar also published *Al-Minhaj* magazine and was considered of the most prominent leaders of the *Salafiya* groups fighting in North Africa, particularly Libya and Algeria⁹.

In 1999, the late Jordanian King Hussein granted a general amnesty for those convicted in political cases related to terrorism. He released members of *Jihadist Salafiya*, with Al-Maqdisi and Abu Musaab Al-Zarqawi in the lead. The latter, accompanied by a number of his associates, left to Afghanistan and then on to Iraq to establish what would later be called the 'Qaeda of Jihad in Mesopotamia'.

In recent years a 'security' battle has raged between the Jordanian authorities and the followers of the *Jihadist Salafiya* movement or trend. Bombings and assassinations have taken place, with tens of court cases submitted to the State Military Security Court. The ongoing confrontation would reach its peak in the Amman Hotel Bombings on the 9th of November, 2005 which killed and wounded tens of victims.

In 2001, a group which splintered off from the Muslim Brotherhood established a new party called the 'Islamic Middle Party'. This group would have good relations



with the state. It did not participate in the 2003 elections with an official list of nominees, although they would later announce that it had 11 parliamentarians who represented the party in an ‘undeclared’ way¹⁰. Later, the Middle Party would establish an intellectual international forum entitled the “Middle Forum for Intellect and Culture”. The Middle Party participated in the last elections, again with a “secret” list. As of the publication of this study, the party had still not announced the names of those members who won seats in the elections.

Characteristics of the Struggle and Political Agenda of Islamic Groups

Distinct attributes in common amongst most Islamic groups and ‘brotherhoods’ has been a social and intellectual struggle and intense competition to win over the ‘religious’ grassroots population. Each group vehemently asserts that it is the only representative of the ‘true Islam’.

The extent of disagreements between the groups ranges from religious jurisprudence to political and ideological issues. Many times these disagreements lead to deep animosities and reciprocal accusations of ‘infidel’ despite what may appear as common long-term objectives among the majority of these groups. These common aims include the ‘Islamization’ of society’s behaviors and norms and the establishment of a ‘Muslim State’ that rules according to the Islamic *Sharia*.

The Muslim Brotherhood Party and the Islamic Action Front are the only two Islamic parties which have accepted to act in opposition through open, legitimate, political channels defined within the limits of the Jordanian constitution and legal system. And, despite the fact that the Middle Party sometimes adopts positions opposed to government policy, it cannot be categorized as an opposition party by any relevant criteria. Furthermore, the Middle Party does not have sufficient popularity to enable it to compete against the Brotherhood in elections or in different political activities taking place in the unions, universities and other numerous civil society institutions.

On the other hand, the *Jihadist Salafiya* represents the other face of political Islam, with a covert, radical and illegal guise. It has been involved in many violent operations and bombings. The cornerstone of their political ideology is a puritanical form of Islamic doctrine, with the strictest interpretations of the rule of Islamic *Sharia* and the right to denounce those who do not abide by their interpretation of *Sharia* as infidels. This movement thus considers current governments, laws, constitutions and armed forces as non-Muslim, and thereby refuses to participate in political life. They have denounced other Islamic movements that may differ in their political perspectives and interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence, and accused them of being infidel¹¹.

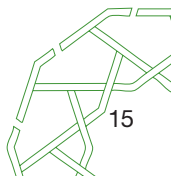
The 'traditional' *Salafiya* do not participate directly in political life. Its founder, Nasser Eddin Al-Albani, outwardly stated the following in Jordan, "It is a policy not to get involved in politics". Withdrawing from direct political life did not, however, prevent the leadership of this group from building a solid and good relationship with official state institutions, in particular security institutions, in order to settle scores with the Brotherhood and the more radical *Salafiya*.

Contrary to the Islamic groups that consider political work of great importance in their ideological perspectives and public practices, the traditional *Salafiya* approach toward change is based on two stages: 'purification' and 'education'. (Purification is aided by altering books, concepts and religious writings which the group considers contrary to 'true' Islam; the second, education is conducted by bringing up new generations based on this 'true' doctrine)¹².

The traditional *Salafiya* do not present a democratic discourse or a developed political vision with regard to civil rights, individual freedoms, women's rights and religious tolerance. Their vision is characterized by a dominance of ideas based on 'heritage', tradition and archaic sources, or from new sources that defend the claims and content of archaic sources. The founding axis of their political thought is based on the obligation of obedience to 'the guardian' (i.e. the ruler and other officials of the brotherhood), and considers political opposition and secular or religiously-impure parties as 'transgressors' or 'offenders'. This sort of political thought reflects concepts very similar to those which were prevalent in the European Middle Ages, when obedience to 'the ruler/guardian' was equivalent to obedience to God and disobedience as disobedience to God¹³.

In the case of the Islamic Liberation Party, the founding concept is the 'Orthodox Caliphate' and also constitutes its main strategic goal. This party does not acknowledge the present systems of government and consider them un-Islamic. It also rejects the concept of democracy and will not accept the presence of non-Islamic parties in its 'promised state'.

The Liberation Party's program for 'change' is based on spreading 'awareness' amongst the public with regard to its political vision and with regard to the importance of the return of the Islamic Caliphate. It calls for building a public synergy that will demand the return of the Caliphate. It also seeks to win over or recruit followers from the 'middle' ranks of the state military to their side (having assumed that the interests of the higher command or ranks of the state military overlap with those of the governing elite). According to party doctrine, these tactics are entitled the "winning strategy" based on the logic that these military allies would carry out a military coup and authority over the state would be delivered to the Leader of the Islamic Liberation Party, who could then declare the establishment of the Caliphate State¹⁴.



Although Jordan is the main arena for the activities of the Liberation Party, and all its leaders are Jordanians of Palestinian origin, paradoxically the party does not consider Jordan, geographically and strategically, a suitable place for the establishment of its promised state. Consequently, the party only carries out ideological awareness and communication activities in Jordan. It has denied that it plans to carry out any military activities, despite accusations that the party participated in an attempted assassination of the late King Hussein in 1993 by members of the Mu'ta Military Academy during a graduation ceremony.

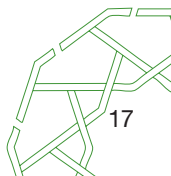
What the Islamic Middle Party and the Muslim Brotherhood Party have in common is their declared acceptance of democratic values, of the political 'game' in all its dimensions, and of working within the limits of the state's institutions, legislation and constitution. With regard to the two parties, the Islamic Middle Party exhibits more flexibility in its ideological positions – specifically in its commitment to the political and ideological centrist line. Two main differences lie between the Middle Party and the Muslim Brotherhood. The first is that the Brotherhood is classified as an 'opposition', and it overtly opposes the peace and normalization process, as well as many other external and internal government policies. The Middle Party, on the other hand, has declared its acceptance of the majority of government policy lines, including the Wadi Araba Peace Treaty with Israel because – according to its own leadership – it was approved and turned into law by the National Assembly. The second major differentiation between the parties is that most of the leaders and membership of the Middle Party are Jordanians, of Jordanian origin, whereas the Brotherhood's leadership, membership and grassroots support comes from a majority of Jordanians of Palestinian origin.

In review, the power mapping of the Islamic parties and groups, and their intellectual and political positions, reveals that only the Muslim Brotherhood Party and the Islamic Middle Party work within the state system's apparatus, institutions and legislation and participate directly and openly in public political life. The Muslim Brotherhood Party is distinguished from the Middle Party by its popularity, its wide, multi-dimensional political program and activities, its representation in parliament, and in its ability to present an independent, unified list during parliamentary and municipal elections. The latter achievements have not been met by the Middle Party to date.

It is very difficult to compare the power and influence of the other numerous trends and movements in Islamic parties or groups. Many of them do not have their own, officially recognized, independent organization. There is little information on the content of their programs, the size of their activities, their influence and the number of their membership. Again, the Muslim Brotherhood Party represents the only Islamic party which legitimately participates in public political life and plays a main role in the power and strength of the opposition. The *Jihadist Salafiya* movement has openly embarked on a program of underground operations and

subversive activities of violence that are apparent through the many cases brought against them before the Jordanian State Military Security Court.

In addition to all of the above-mentioned parties and groups, a group named the Advocacy and Notification Group has recently emerged on the margins of previous movements. Its rise and factors leading to its establishment date back to the partition of India with the group's headquarters based in Pakistan today. Despite the rapid expansion of its international and regional program, it believes in peaceful advocacy. One of its most prominent and founding principles is non-interference in political matters of any way. It relies mostly on methods such as evangelizing in mosques and using the discourse of preaching. Furthermore, it does not present any program of reform outside the context of advocating a return and commitment to the rules of Islam¹⁵.



2. The Brotherhood and the Regime: From Alliance to Crisis

The relationship of the Brotherhood with the institutions of the regime has passed through several stages and has been characterized by increased tension. It started as a peaceful coexistence, then as an alliance against common threats. The alliance reached its height when the state asked the help of the Brotherhood in replacing Palestinian forces and organizations and powers in 1970. In the early 1980s, Jordan welcomed members of the Brotherhood fleeing Syria. It was after this period, in the mid-1980s that the relationship began to deteriorate, with a final breach between the two parties in the 1990s. Indeed, the relationship has been in crisis since 1999.

A Warm and Peaceful Beginning

The Muslim Brotherhood Party was established in Jordan in 1946. It was welcomed warmly by King Abdullah I, who facilitated the way for the party to establish party offices and branches, known as Brotherhood centers, in several Jordanian cities. By the early 1950s, the Brotherhood began to expand and widened the scope of their political and social activities. They would participate in the parliamentary elections of 1956. Out of 40 parliamentary seats, Brotherhood members won four. At that time, a coalition government was formed of mainly nationalist and leftist blocks (under the leadership of Sulieman Nabulsi); the Brotherhood would give this government a vote of confidence. In subsequent parliaments, the Brotherhood's representation would go down to two members of parliament.

In 1967, parliamentary life in the country came to a halt as a result of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, a major part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. During that period, the relationship between the Brotherhood and the regime was characterized by a cautious if anxious co-existence. Despite the open nature of their activities, and the Brotherhood's support to the King against the leftists and the nationalists in 1957¹⁶, some of the Brotherhood's political postures and stands would lead to limited crises in the relationship between the party and the regime. In 1957, for example, the Brotherhood's opposition to the Baghdad Alliance would be met with the arrest of its General Director in 1958¹⁷.

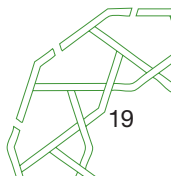
During this period, the Brotherhood did not have much influence or support amongst the people, meanwhile the popularity of the leftists and the nationalists supported by Syria, Iraq, and Nasserite Egypt, constituted a serious political danger and a fierce opponent to the regime. This common threat and fear for their existence would bring the Brotherhood and the regime into an alliance, despite the serious disagreements between the two. For the Brotherhood, the fight for their existence seemed very real with their members in other countries experiencing extremely difficult times under the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and the nationalist regimes of Iraq and Syria.

Ishaq al-Farhan, one of the most prominent leaders of the Brotherhood, reaffirms¹⁸ that that this particular period was quite difficult for the Brotherhood. They were surrounded by leftists and nationalist forces which, at that time, did not show any friendship or cordiality towards them. From the point of view of the Brotherhood, they were very unhappy to watch their brethren, Muslim brethren, in neighboring Arab countries, ruled by nationalist and leftist regimes. On the other hand, the Brotherhood did not have the support of the people, whose mass support went instead to the nationalists and leftists movements. Perhaps Farhan means to explain the peaceful and positive relations between the Brotherhood and the Jordanian regime as being driven by the historical conditions at that time.

From the beginning, the Brotherhood paid special attention to the importance of working directly in social and educational activities at the grassroots level. The leadership of the Brotherhood partook in the establishment of the Islamic Scientific College in 1947. It remains one of the best private secondary schools in the country. The Brotherhood also established the Islamic Center Society in 1963, which later became one of the more prominent institutions of the Brotherhood in terms of their socio-economic welfare program. It includes the Islamic Hospital and other medical centers, schools and colleges¹⁹.

Throughout the past decades, the Brotherhood Party has been able to develop a wide network for public welfare and social work, and has participated widely in volunteer activities. The party also invested in mosques, schools and charitable activities in order to introduce themselves and disseminate their 'calling'. In addition, many of the Brotherhood's centers and branches welcomed many non-affiliated groups and individuals and provided them a place to meet, to organize sports competitions and scouts activities. The state did not mind these activities, and indeed, at certain stages encouraged them to strengthen the Brotherhood in face of the strong nationalist-leftist movements of the 1950s and 1960s, and the rise of the Palestinian factions in the 1970s²⁰.

Therefore, the 1950s and 1960s reflected a period of the Brotherhood's introduction, establishment and gradual rise in society.



The 'Golden Era' Between Brotherhood and State

The 1970s and 1980s was an important period for the Brotherhood, who witnessed the rise of their popularity on the social and political level. During that period, the Brotherhood also participated and trained together with others in what were known at the beginning of the 1970s as the Commando Camps (military training sites for Palestinian resistance organizations). However, when the violent military confrontation between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian resistance groups broke out in September 1970, the Brotherhood remained on the sidelines, not backing the Palestinian groups – a position that was politically taken as supporting the regime in this intense struggle²¹.

This stance would reflect on the next stage of the Brotherhood's position relationship with the state. The state would subsequently give the Muslim Brotherhood the space and liberty to work more freely in Palestinian camps and residential areas to fill in the vacuum created after the expulsion of the Palestinian fighters and organizations to Lebanon and then Tunisia. The Brotherhood would successfully exploit this opportunity and period, which allowed them to make considerable and significant gains in solidifying and expanding their social base.

The Brotherhood's new strategy to increasing their social base in the early 1970s corresponded with a similar and significant rise of Islamic movements elsewhere in the region, especially after the War of 1967. The setbacks of the War of 1967 have been considered by Arab researchers and intellectuals as the declaration of the great retreat of the nationalistic and leftist movement in the Arab world.

The Brotherhood would develop the tools and instruments required to expand their work in public life. They began to participate actively in student and workers unions. They exploited money that began to flow from the Gulf region towards Islamic charity work during the leap in international oil prices. All of these factors helped to further enhance and firmly establish the Islamic movement amongst the Arab masses, in general and the Jordanian, in particular.

The oil prices boom of the 1970s and 1980s was a period of prosperity in the Gulf that witnessed the emigration of thousands from the Jordanian labor force to the conservative Gulf, a factor that also fostered a steady trend towards becoming 'more religious' – a condition that the Brotherhood would exploit later in its political work among the masses and on the grassroots level.

In the early 1980s, large numbers of the Syrian Brotherhood escaped to Jordan to escape the regime's bloody efforts to rid itself of the Brotherhood through various means, including deadly massacres. And, although the members of the Syrian Brotherhood did not get directly involved in political activity, they contributed to the spread of the 'word' with what was called the 'cassette' and the 'Book of Islam';

all factors that further motivated and supported the infiltration of political Islam in society.

Samih Al-Ma'ayta²², a political analyst and an 'observer' of the Brotherhood in Jordan, mentions that the 1980s was a fertile period for the Brotherhood. It was the period that witnessed the expansion, building and growth of their social and economic institutions that provided them with an effectual social network. It was the period that consolidated the balance of the Brotherhood's social 'credit'.

The Onset of Clashes and Rifts

Signs of the rift that had begun to appear in the relationship between the state and the Brotherhood would appear in a letter sent by the late King Hussein in 1985 to his prime minister, at that time, Zeid Al-Rifai. In that letter, King Hussein alluded to the fact that he felt he had been deceived by the Brotherhood and in their intentions. He said, "Suddenly, the truth is known; and what was unknown to us has become evident. It seems that some of those who had a link with the bloody episode in Syria now live among us."²³

This royal concern was confirmed by a senior official in the country, who pointed out that the crisis with the Brotherhood was not new, and referred to its birth in the mid-1980s. He claims that the Jordanian authorities were aware that the Brotherhood had become a strong and influential group; that they knew the Brotherhood was strong enough to pull the carpet from beneath the leftist and nationalist movements. The study will analyze and discuss this point further in a later section which presents the dynamics of the current crisis between the Brotherhood and the regime²⁴.

One of the first signs of the change in the relationship between the Brotherhood and the state became evident in 1985 at Yarmouk University in Irbid, the main city in northern Jordan. Security forces intervened forcibly to suppress students who were demonstrating against a rise in tuition fees. During this incident, the active participation and influence of the Brotherhood were clear and it has been cited as one of the major turning points in their relationship with the state.

Samih Al-Ma'ayta, who at that time was an active member of the Brotherhood close to the events at the Yarmouk University, states that the escalation was not a political decision taken by the Brotherhood's leadership, but rather a decision by the field command in the universities, which was headed then by the radical Brotherhood member, Dr. Mohammad Abu Fares.

Al-Ma'ayta points out that the Brotherhood at this stage were active in student unions and had a serious presence in Jordan's universities. This fact was a reflection of the political change that marked public opinion, which had begun to turn from



the leftist and nationalist movements towards the new, rising Islamic forces. In parallel to the rise of political Islam in the universities, in the 1980s, were signs of their mounting presence in professional and workers unions.

In 1989, parliamentary life would resume in the country after its prolonged interruption. These elections confirmed, without a doubt, the sweeping popularity of the Islamists in the country, in general and of the Brotherhood, in particular. The Brotherhood, whose united list of nominated members stood for elections under the motto “The Solution is Islam”, was able to gain 22 seats out of the 80 parliamentary seats at that time. In addition, a number of independent Islamists gained 4 seats. The results were considered a sweeping Islamic success against the poor showing of the nationalists and the leftists.

Prior to the 1989 elections, what was called ‘the Southern Uprising (Intifada)’ took place in response to an increase in the price of commodities and in reaction to issues of corruption. That uprising led to a political and security crisis between the regime and the eastern Jordanian tribes. It also led to a reverse and slowdown in the economic reform program which the regime had embarked upon. Some analysts point to these events as some of the major reasons that led to the resumption of parliamentary life as a means to reduce the pent-up social and political frustration that was becoming dangerously obvious to the country’s leadership.

Also at that time there were two more major factors which cannot be overlooked in the synergy that led to the resumption of parliamentary life. The first was external: With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the communist camp, a new wave in democratic transformation was affecting the international arena. The late King Hussein did not want to miss this international wave. The other and internal factor was the decision to officially ‘disengage’ with the West Bank, i.e. the full disengagement of the administrative link between the East Bank and the West Bank announced by King Hussein 1988. This decision freed Jordan from the dilemma of holding elections in one part of the country without the other, as the West Bank was still considered a legislative part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan until disengagement.

Rifts between the Brotherhood and the State

The Brotherhood participated in the 1991 government of Mudar Badran with five cabinet ministerial posts: Education, Health, Justice, Social Development and Islamic Religious Endowments. This participation in the government did not foretell the dimensions of the coming ‘tragedy’ in the transformation of the relationship between the state and the Brotherhood. It can be said that participation in the government would symbolize the hiatus in the relationship, with nowhere to go but downwards²⁵.

The Jordanian regime would find itself isolated in the region after the Gulf War of 1991. Subsequently, the peace negotiations at the Madrid Conference became a key to ending this isolation. This major turn in foreign policy was parallel to a similar change in internal policy, in particular between the regime and the Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood had become the only significant popular power, with no other real rival in the country, after it established the political party “The Islamic Action Front Party” in 1992.

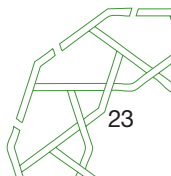
Severe differences came to a head between the regime and the Brotherhood at the start of the 1991 peace negotiations. The gap between the two had deepened when a new electoral law was passed, based on the principle of one vote per citizen. The Brotherhood considered the objectives and intentions of this law as a means of curtailing their representation in parliament, as well as a means to preventing them from obstructing approval of any forthcoming peace treaty (which was actually signed between Jordan and Israel in 1994). The treaty was approved by the 12th parliament, voted in 1993 and in which the Brotherhood gained 17 seats; having lost two seats from their share in the previous parliament.

New policies that affected the Brotherhood were not confined to the electoral law; they would extend to the universities and would obstruct the work of the Brotherhood in all public works and offices. Various pieces of legislation were passed that many analysts and observers considered as restrictions on civil and public freedoms and a retreat from the trend towards democratization in the country. In response, the Muslim Brotherhood would boycott the 1997 parliamentary elections, issuing a political statement entitled “Why Did We Boycott?” The statement included a protest against what the Brotherhood also considered as a retreat from the democratization process, as well as targeting its political role and status in the country and public life²⁶.

Parliamentary elections thus took place in 1997 without the participation of the Brotherhood. Several opposition parties would also boycott the elections.

These clashes and rifts between the state and the Brotherhood continued until the passing away of King Hussein in 1999 and the ascension to the throne by his son King Abdullah II. A new page would be opened in the relationship between the Jordanian regime and the Brotherhood.

Worth mentioning, during this stage, is that despite the growing conflict between the state and the Brotherhood, there was evidence of threads of continuing political dialogue between the two parties; and thus, the relationship did not reach a compromising or critical stage.



Furthermore, the Brotherhood refused to participate in several events that presented serious security and political crises to the regime. For example, in 1996, the Brotherhood did not participate when protests in the city of Maan (South Jordan) spread to several universities due to economic restructuring policies that led to a rise in prices of basic commodities. The Brotherhood confined itself to “a minimum degree of protest”, whereas leftist and nationalist parties and groups participated heavily in the protestations, leading to the arrest of some of the leftist and nationalist leaders and members.

Samih Al-Ma’ayta claims that, in this context, and despite the Brotherhood's opposition to the peace treaty with Israel, they did not seek to “thwart” it; in fact, their aim was to “record a historical stand”. Ma’ayta justifies this comment by pointing out that one of the options offered the Brotherhood's members of parliament - when the treaty was presented for debate before parliament – was to resign in protest against the treaty. This option, according to Al-Ma’ayta did not mean an escalation. In any case, the Brotherhood decided to remain in the session and vote against the treaty.

Structural Changes and Open-ended Crisis

Several factors played a major role in shaping the relationship between the new king, Abdullah II, and the Muslim Brotherhood. The fear of destabilization and risks associated with the period of transfer of authority motivated a concentrated security approach that would affect the running of internal affairs. This intensified security approach led to transferring the ‘Brotherhood file’ from a political matter handled by the king personally to a ‘security’ file to be handled by other state officials. Consequently, tension between the two parties was amplified; and any remaining communication channels, meetings and understandings were came to a halt, contrary to the approach of the previous regime.

Another major strategic change in policy made by the new king was the expulsion of the Hamas leadership from Jordan in 1999. This action was a strong indication that the new king did not intend to play a strategic role in the affairs of the Occupied West Bank. On the other hand, Hamas’ relationship with the late King Hussein had been a strong one. During King Hussein’s reign, the movement’s political office enjoyed an open and legitimized presence in Jordanian political arena, despite the military action that the movement carried out inside Occupied Palestine. In return, and despite the fact that Jordan signed the Wadi Araba treaty, the Hamas political office never issued any statements critical of the Jordanian regime.

Indeed, King Hussein was crucial to the release of the Hamas political leader, Musa Abu Marzook, from an American prison. The king, in fact, personally accompanied him back to Jordan. He also took a very strong stand against Israel's assassination

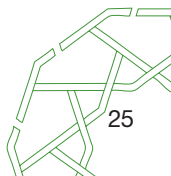
attempt of one of Hamas's leaders, Khalid Mashaal, in Amman in September 1997. The king further insisted that Israel send the antidote that saved Mashaal's life. He also pressured Israel into releasing the leader of Hamas, Ahmed Yassin, from Israeli prisons. Indeed, the late king considered the price of all these actions in terms of what he considered Israeli aggression against Jordan's own security and sovereignty.

Therefore, the expulsion of the leaders of Hamas from Jordan was a clear message from the new king that he was to give full priority to internal matters and to maintaining a good relationship with the Palestinian Authority. He made it clear that Jordan considered the establishment of an independent Palestinian state as not only vital, but also vital to its own interests.

This change reflected heavily on the relationship between the palace and the Brotherhood. Whereas King Hussein viewed the Brotherhood and Hamas as a winning card in the face of the Fateh Movement and late president Yaser Arafat, especially after the disengagement.

During the opening of the reign of the new king, parliamentary life would be suspended for two years, from 2001-2003. Elections were postponed after the end of the term of the 13th parliament. During that time, many crises took place between the Brotherhood and the regime due to several factors. The most important was what came to be known as the Unions Crisis of 2004, in which the Brotherhood was confronted strongly by the then Minister of Interior, Samir Al-Habashneh, who held an extreme rejectionist position towards the Brotherhood. Indications suggested a big political confrontation would happen between the Brotherhood and Ministry of Interior. However, Minister Al-Habashineh left the cabinet before the battle was complete. This was seen as a sign that the regime did not want to take the professional unions from the hold of the Brotherhood after having already removed them from the universities, mosques as well as other political, civil and religious institutions.

With the occupation of Iraq in 2003, the region would enter a new era initiated by the change in the American role in the region. The US stressed the enhancement of political and economic reforms based on the rationale that terrorism (which led to the events of 11 September) is the "legitimate son" of the absence of reforms, development and democracy in the Arab World. Furthermore, the most successful weapon to combat fanatical movements was providing incentives to integrated reforms. As result of this policy stance, the former US Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colin Powell, announced the Middle East-American Partnership Initiative. The draft of a new 'map' of the Greater Middle East also emerged (an initiative proposed by the G-8).



This new environment imposed itself on the relationship between the regime and the Brotherhood, with the Brotherhood resuming their participation in parliamentary life in 2003. They would win 17 seats. Rumors circulated, – but were not proven at that time –that a ‘deal was struck’ between the regime and the Brotherhood, with the palace allegedly wanting the Brotherhood to nominate young Palestinians for the elections. The deal showed that the state wanted to see more political integration of Jordanians from Palestinian origin into public life.

These dynamics in the relationship between the state and the Brotherhood indicated a desire for calm and a truce between the two parties. Both wanted the continuous deterioration in relations to stop, despite the wide gap in political stances, internally and regionally. However, the sweeping victory of Hamas in the Palestinian legislative elections at the beginning of 2006 raised fiery, blatant questions about the Brotherhood’s intentions. Immediately following, four Islamic parliamentarians were arrested for visiting the family of Abu Mosaab Al-Zarqawi, assassinated leader of an Iraqi-based Al-Qaeda cell, to offer condolences. Two of them were sentenced to one and a half years in prison before a special royal amnesty was granted.

These events further aggravated the relationship between the Brotherhood and the state and posed questions and scenarios that led to an unprecedented low in relations.

Making matters worse was the appointment of Zaki Bani Irshid as the General Secretary of the Islamic Action Front in March 2006. His appointment was vehemently rejected by the government and accompanied by threatening letters due to his close relations with Hamas, which by necessity, Bani Irshid has denied.

The crisis would escalate further when the government took over possession of the Islamic Center Society, an association belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood. The government’s actions were justified by charges that the Society was being accused of financial and administrative corruption.

The political repercussions of the take-over were obvious: The state was convinced that the Society represented a vital source of income for the Brotherhood, for its mobilization activities, as well as for maintaining their grassroots and popular support base. A prominent politician, and opponent of the Brotherhood, has claimed that the Society provides 30% of the financial resources required for the Brotherhood to maintain its strength during parliamentary election campaigns²⁷.

3. Dynamics and Dimensions of the Crisis

The municipal elections of September 2007 represented another critical moment between the state and the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood withdrew their candidates just hours after the start of voting in protest of what they called “election fraud beyond limits”, which reached its peak when members of the military forces were brought in on special buses and voted openly. The government, on the other hand, accused the Brotherhood of “contring” and planning the withdrawal previously; and, when they found that their results would be weak, they used this excuse to cover up their loss.

The crisis did not end with the Brotherhood’s withdrawal from the elections. The Brotherhood escalated their critical political discourse and official protest against the government using unprecedented language. This escalation was evident in an editorial published on the day of the elections (31 July 2007) on the official website of the Brotherhood, signed by the political editor and entitled, “Why We Boycotted the ‘Demo-Chaotic’ Wedding”. The editorial launched a very harsh attack on the Department of Public Security, which has always been lurking behind the crisis between the Islamic movements and the different governments, while remaining outside the official circle of criticism and debate. It was clear that the article wanted to deliver the message that the Brotherhood will also cross the ‘red’ lines if the government did so²⁸.

The government’s reply would come only a few days later, in an interview with the official news agency and the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister went beyond the accepted limits in the language he used and in the unprecedented accusations he hurled against the Brotherhood. He warned that an ad hoc group of radicals were trying to drag Jordan towards a fate similar to what was occurring (at that time) in Nahr Al-Bared in Lebanon. He continued that “the unprecedented verbal attack on Jordan’s public security and military institutions goes straight to the bone and transgresses all boundaries in terms of the pillars that uphold the country”²⁹.

There was a feeling in political and media circles that the government’s threat would not end with just words, and expected further action to be taken against the

Brotherhood. However, an interview by the official Jordanian television station with King Abdallah II, a few days later, defused the level of tension although the king did not refer in any way to the municipal elections. The King delivered a carefully constructed message that affirmed “impartial and fair parliamentary elections”. The Brotherhood understood this interview as a royal guarantee with regard to their party in the upcoming parliamentary elections³⁰.

A subsequent meeting between the Prime Minister and a delegation of more moderate elements of the Brotherhood's leadership led to a further containment of the crisis and a retreat in the polarization between the two parties. Leaks in the press revealed that the state's security and military institutions were not pleased with the meeting between the Prime Minister and the Brotherhood delegation³¹. Indeed, this latest crisis between the state and the Brotherhood; and the way it was contained was reminiscent of the 2004 Unions Crisis. Developments at that time also reached a very volatile stage, with the government taking steps to diffuse what could have developed into a tragic scenario.

Behind the Crisis

Various scenarios explain the continuing escalation of the crisis to the point of no return for both parties. The state claimed that the Brotherhood had changed; that it was no longer satisfied with its original ‘limited’ political role, and demanded to be a partner in the decision-making process. These perceptions worried and upset the state to the point that it feared the political ambitions of the Brotherhood. On the other hand, the Brotherhood believed that the state had changed its view of the Brotherhood and was no longer in need of the party.

Who changed? – the Brotherhood or the state? This subject became a major source of political debate and media confrontation between the two parties. But what actually changed were the political and historical circumstances which had previously governed the relationship between the two parties and had led to a state of coexistence and historical alliance, based on mutual interests in the face of common internal and external enemies.

The historical and political environment changed during the 1990s in many respects. Firstly, the political ‘opponents’, such as the nationalists, leftists and the secular Palestinian factions had weakened to the point of limited power and popularity in the Arab street; they no longer represented a threat to either the Brotherhood or the state, removing a major, mutual threat or common interest which led to the alliance between state and Brotherhood in previous times.

Secondly, the differences in opinions and political aims between the state and the Brotherhood became greater than the common denominators that had previously existed between them. The Brotherhood strongly opposed the peace treaty with

Israel and they openly disapproved of structural reform policies (the implementation of the International Monetary Fund program).

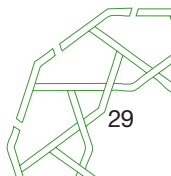
The regime, on the other hand, considered that entering into peace negotiations and the international economic program were the only means out of the political bottleneck Jordan faced after the First Gulf War in 1991, when financial support from the Gulf came to a halt due to Jordan's position on the war. The economic crisis became more severe when thousands of Jordanians fled Kuwait, or were driven out of Kuwait. This refugee crisis put more pressure on infrastructure, and on the state's purse at a time when Jordan had lost much of the support (at least financially) of its neighbors, Western and most Gulf countries.

Thirdly, the Brotherhood had indeed become the most powerful popular party with a very strong influence on Jordanian public opinion. This fact, in itself, made the state's security agencies wary of the tangible dangers of the Brotherhood's continually increasing strength and rising popularity.

The Crisis from the Perspective of the State

One of the state officials³² responsible for the Brotherhood file explains that the crisis with the Brotherhood actually began in the mid-1980s. The 'grey' areas in the positions of the Brotherhood were not the product of the past few years, but went back over the past twenty years, during which time the Brotherhood experienced great and dangerous transformations. Radical and extreme positions and ideas began to dominate the party's political approaches and behavior. In periods such as the Gulf War of 1991, when the state paid a high price for its position, a position close to that held by the Brotherhood, the Brotherhood's attitude, instead of being supportive of the state, was one of disdain and of inflaming public opinion against it.

This particular and prominent official regards the political activities of the Brotherhood during this last period as being characterized by a strong split from the position of the government, and as being unsympathetic to the difficult circumstances that govern the decision-making processes of the nation at such a critical time. In fact, he accuses the Brotherhood of seeking to increase its power and strength by accepting external support and by cooperating with other countries, even if the sources of support or these countries' relationship with Jordan are on very bad terms. For example, when the Brotherhood participated in the Arab Parties Conference in Damascus in 2006, their representative, Dr. Is'haq Al-Farhan, one of the most prominent leaders of the Brotherhood, applauded the Syrian President, Bashar Al-Asad, when he launched accusations against Jordan. Al-Farhan's irresponsible behavior took place at a time when his own party, the Brotherhood, was banned in Syria.



The state began to believe that the Brotherhood was ungrateful and did not 'appreciate' what the state had done for them. They took for granted the special status the Brotherhood enjoyed in Jordan, including the fact that the government permitted them to work actively – openly and legally –, and allowed them to participate in public political life, as well as freely build an extensive social network. But instead of the Brotherhood showing loyalty to the state, and defending the interests of the state, the Brotherhood consistently stood, and stands in opposition and in the face of the government.

This official adds:

“The Brotherhood has become a real threat to political stability; and constitutes a threat similar to that of the ‘Khomeini phenomenon’”. He continues to suggest that the Brotherhood has ‘pulled the carpet’ from beneath the state by implementing projects in parallel and in competition with the state – on the social, economic, political and cultural levels. In every field, the Brotherhood has institutions and controls associations that perform and carry out widespread activities to a degree that they have come to represent a ‘state within a state’. A former head of the Public Security Department goes to the extent of describing the strong influence of the Brotherhood as a ‘white revolution against the nation’s institutions’.

“The problem with the Brotherhood is that it uses its influence, its activities and its institutions against the state. Branches of the Brotherhood and their ‘families’ have converted social and educational institutions and their activities into arenas for political activities and discussions. Their purpose is far from the original function allegedly established by the Brotherhood. Furthermore, in these meetings of the ‘brethren’, the state and its institution are thrashed; and they fling accusations that the state works as an agent to the United States of America.”

“There are two faces to the Brotherhood. With the first, they interact and speak with the regime in a peaceful manner. With the second, they interact and speak with their members to affirm and confirm the priority of loyalty to the Brotherhood and the interests of the Brotherhood. They preach opposition to the policies of the state as if the state was the opponent of the Brotherhood.”

The official adds that the dangerous formula today between the Brotherhood and the regime is that “the Brotherhood stands with the Iran-Syria axis and with the Hezbollah and Hamas movements. These are countries and organizations that are not on friendly terms with Jordan and the Jordanian regime. They propagate political positions far from the interests and positions of the state. And, in the case that the situation in Lebanon and Palestine deteriorate further, and taking into account the civil war in Iraq and Iran’s nuclear program crisis, an eruption of the security situation in the region would create the opportunity for certain members of the Brotherhood to become players in the political stability of the country and in mobilizing public opinion against the state.”

The official goes further when he compares the case of ‘moderate’ Islam, as represented by the Brotherhood, with that of ‘radical’ Islam, such as represented by Al-Qaeda. The state has a clear strategy to deal with the case of radical Islam and the groups that brand and deal with the other as an ‘infidel’. The problem with the Brotherhood, however, is that they are not clear or transparent in their positions and in their discourse towards the state and its institutions. Again, he asserts that they have more than one face – with this fact self-evident in the basic principle or ‘motto’ to which the Brotherhood holds itself and its members: “Spread the word openly, Organize secretly”. The dilemma for the state is that it does not accept secret organizations or organizations that conduct clandestine activities. The Brotherhood is an official society, registered according to Jordanian law, and therefore, all its activities must be transparent and open to the monitoring of the state.

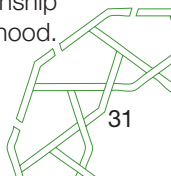
The above represents a summary of the official or government vision of the relationship between the state and the Brotherhood. From this, several, major observations represent the state’s point of view:

- The Brotherhood has become an organized group that constitutes a source of threat to the regime in light of the change in the Brotherhood’s political point of view. It has become more radical and inflexible in its opposition to the state and its policies, without understanding the risks to and pressures facing the state³³.
- Members of the Brotherhood support ‘unfriendly’ regional powers. This condition is reminiscent of periods past, except in reverse: when the Brotherhood stood by the state against other Arab countries and regional ‘unfriendly’ powers.
- The state looks with concern at the institutions and the associations run by the Brotherhood; and it considers them as paralleling (and competing) with the state’s institutions.

The Brotherhood, Hamas and the State

The previous official reading affected the relationship between the Brotherhood and the state. The severity of the crisis increased when officials affirmed that there had been penetration by the Hamas movement into the Brotherhood. This penetration became evident in the persistence of Hamas on appointing Zaki Bin Rashid (whom the state considers as having a strong relationship with the political office of Hamas), as the Secretary General of the Islamic Action Front. This event took place after Hamas had taken power, and when, as a result, the relationship between the Hamas Movement and the Jordanian regime had greatly deteriorated.

It is difficult to separate the tension in the Jordanian government’s relationship with Hamas from the relationship of the government with the Muslim Brotherhood.



On the one hand, Hamas actually represents the Brotherhood in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It should also be noted that Hamas was officially part of the Brotherhood in Jordan until a few months ago. On a lesser level, there is also an emotional and ideological connection between the two parties. A great number of the members of the Brotherhood, its leaders and supporters in Jordan are Jordanians of Palestinian origin. Therefore, they interact directly and in an empathetic manner with the crises and problems that occur between the Jordanian government and the Hamas Movement.

One of the more obvious manifestations of the crisis between the government and the Hamas movement became apparent when the Jordanian government, a few weeks after the victory of Hamas in the legislative elections in 2006, announced that it discovered a cell that had a relationship with “members of the Hamas movement” and who were planning to conduct subversive military operations in Jordan. The Brotherhood immediately cast doubts at the government’s accusation. The event led to a political and media debate and tensions between the government and the Brotherhood intensified. The government considered the position of the Brotherhood as blatantly biased towards Hamas, especially as the Brotherhood was not in a position to cast doubts or confirm the Jordanian government’s story³⁴.

Apart from the debate on the accuracy or ‘official story’s credibility’, the political implications of the event indicate that there was further, deepening deterioration in the relationship between the Jordanian government and the Hamas movement. This complex situation has put the Brotherhood in an awkward and embarrassing situation that is not without consequence. It has led to an escalation in the internal debates and an internal crisis within the Brotherhood, which will be dealt with later in this study.

4. The Brotherhood's Internal Debate

Officials and others close to the government claim that the Brotherhood has taken a more fanatic and radical line in their political discourse and practice in this past period. Others are of the opinion that, on the contrary, the Brotherhood has taken a more serious attitude and commitment to democracy, its prerequisites and its preconditions. And, contrary to the propaganda of Arab regimes, the Brotherhood is actually paying a high price for their moderation.

Is the Brotherhood moving towards moderation and democratic, legitimate political participation or towards radicalization of their ideology and extremism in their political practices?

The answer to this question requires a quick review of the evolution of the ideological and political debate within the Brotherhood. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the main debate within the Brotherhood revolved around issues such as defining the Arab regimes, their relationship with these regimes, their position with regard to democracy and the preconditions of democracy, and what should be the level and extent of their political participation.

The debate later evolved into discussing priorities and identifying political positions, as well as determining where their influence should be: Should they focus on Jordan only, or the region, as well. Meanwhile, a decision was taken to continue focusing on the Palestinian issue or 'cause'. It is this issue, in particular, which made the relationship with Hamas an important component within the Brotherhood's internal debate – especially after the Hamas leadership was expelled from Jordan.

All these issues would affect their organization and organizational policy of recruitment, and pushed the Brotherhood to yet another level in the internal debate concerning their political aspirations.

Between Ideology and Pragmatism

During the initial stages in the development of the Brotherhood, the 1950s and 1960s, the Brotherhood's political discourse focused on a limited set of political issues. At the forefront was supporting the Palestinian cause (the Brotherhood

participated in the War of 1948), denouncing the Soviet Union and the communist camp, and confronting the expansion of the communists, leftists and nationalists. The latter groups strongly disapproved of the Brotherhood and mixing of religion with matter of state and society; they also accused the Islamic movements of being reactionary forces that worked with the West against these nationalist and secular movements³⁵.

In the second half of the 1960s, a new ideological school of thought began to appear within the Brotherhood in Jordan with the spread of the ideas of Sayyed Qotob, an Egyptian Islamic intellectual from Egypt's Brotherhood. His ideas represented a reflection of the mood which arose from the catastrophic outcome of the bloody confrontations between the Egyptian Brotherhood and the Nasserite regime in Egypt.

Subsequently, a debate – based on two conflicting positions – ensued within the Brotherhood: The first advocated clandestine organization and action in the face of the possibility of further bloody confrontations with the Arab regimes. This option, in Jordan, came out of (fear of what happened in Egypt) the lack of safeguards in the relationship between the Brotherhood and the state. The second position insisted on continuing as a legitimate, recognized organization whose activities are transparent and overt, and not making the same mistake as the Brotherhood in Egypt, which had established an underground organization with covert activities³⁶.

In the early 1970s, criticism of the more 'radical' ideas of Sayyed Qotob emerged among members of the Egyptian Brotherhood. This critical trend was reinforced by the publication of a book entitled "Preachers not Judges" by an Islamic advisor, Hassan Al-Hudiabi, who was also a former Brotherhood General Counselor (Director). This book was followed and supported by other publications written by Salem Al-Bahinsawi: "Highlighting the Path", and "Sayyed Qotob: Between Emotions and Objectivity", and "The Ideas of Sayyed Qotob in the Scales of Islamic Law (Sharia)".

In Jordan, the adoption of Sayyed Qotob's school of thought of by some of the leadership of the Brotherhood was manifest. This led to two intellectual schools of thoughts competing to define the Brotherhood's political discourse in Jordan. The first school was closer in ideology and influenced by the writings of Sayyed Qotob; the second was closer to the more pragmatic 'realists' in the movement. These two schools influenced the recruitment structure within the Brotherhood. The pragmatic school represented the 'doves' in the movement and the school of ideologues represented the 'hawks'.

The ideological school of 'hawks' considered the Arab regimes as equivalent to the *Jahiliya* (pre-Islamic) states; and considered them contrary to the Islamic requirements for the 'state'. This school did not accept modern democracy in any

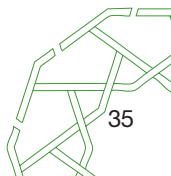
of its forms, because it represents a Western system that gives power and rule of law to the people and not to God. Following this rationale, the hawks worked diligently to deconstruct the concept of democracy into a philosophy and into a set of instruments. The followers of the hawk ideology put forth the following logic: "We accept the instruments but refuse the philosophy of democracy." Therefore, in the choice between democracy and dictatorship, the hawks would choose democracy. However, between democracy and Islam, they would choose Islam. This equation meant that the hawks viewed democracy (or rather its instruments) as an intermediate political form of the state and Islam as the final.

On the other hand, the rationalist trend or pragmatists were influenced by the writings of Rashed Al-Ghanooshi and Dr. Hasna Al-Turabi. The Egyptian Sheikh, Yousef Al-Kurdawi, in the 1990s, also played a large role in constructing the rationale of the pragmatist's trend.

The pragmatic position was based on a veiled criticism of Sayyed Qotob's ideas. They endorsed that the Brotherhood should acknowledge and accept prevailing democratic values and nation-state political structures; and they avoided using the nomenclature of *Jahiliya* when referring to the current Arab regimes. Furthermore, they would adopt a position in Islamic jurisprudence that was more tolerant with regard to social and political matters³⁷.

The pragmatists openly upheld the banner of 'political participation'. They also tried to convince the Brotherhood, as a movement, to proclaim, or publicly declare that politically they accept the prevailing system of democracy, with the justification that the disparities between prevailing democratic concepts and the Islamic system of state were 'limited' and could be accommodated or otherwise dealt with. Based on this position, the pragmatists waged a battle within the Brotherhood against the hawks and the radical school through several historical periods in the Brotherhood's evolution. This ideological struggle was particularly evident in the 1970s when a follower of the pragmatic school, Dr. Ishaq Al-Farhan, had his membership frozen for many years after accepting a cabinet post. The pragmatic line would later push the Brotherhood to participate in the 1991 parliamentary elections, and subsequently in the cabinet of Muder Badran.

The research of Ibrahim Gharaybeh monitors the period where the radicals, or hawks, displaced the moderates and gained control over the leadership of the Brotherhood in the mid-1980s. At that point, Gharaybeh states, "the Brotherhood's executive office, its divisions and committees, the administration of the Center Society, even its guidance and educational policies came under the radicals' control." However, with the return to parliamentary life, the pragmatists would re-impose their presence in the leadership of the Brotherhood and its various institutions. Six months after the 1990 parliamentary elections, the Brotherhood's executive office was made up mainly of moderate members from the pragmatic trend.



Further reinforcing the moderating trend in the Brotherhood, in 1992, further conflicts within the organization led to the resignation of the executive office two years before its term; and, a new office was formed that was even more committed to the pragmatic trend³⁸.

The Dispute over Participating in Government

Before the participation in Muder Badran's 1991 government, a hot dispute took place between the hawks and the pragmatists in the movement. The Brotherhood's participation in the government of Muder Badran became subject to a number of conditions, most prominent of which was the Islamization of certain social matters and the re-employment of all who had previously been fired from employment in the public service. The conflict was epitomized in a book published by one of the most prominent members of the hawks, Dr. Mohammad Abu Fares, entitled "Participation in the *Jahiliya* System's Government" in which he refuted the arguments and justifications the Brotherhood relied on in making their decision to participate in the government³⁹.

The pragmatists subsequently called on Dr. Omar Al-Ashkar, a well-known Islamic jurisprudence expert in the Brotherhood, to respond to Abu Fares' claims in a book entitled "The Ruling to Participate in the Cabinet and in Municipal Councils". The paradox was that Al-Ashkar, who refused Abu Fares's *fatwa* (an Islamic legal opinion or ruling) and accepted participation in the cabinet, considered that the rule should be 'to not allow participation (in such a state)' with the exception of 'allowing participation' based on the long-term strategic interests and aims of the Brotherhood. (One should keep in mind that the debate was about the *Fatwa* which ruled the current Arab state as *Jahiliya* – and that the term *Jahiliya* represents one of the main pillars of Sayyed Qotob's political vision)⁴⁰. Later, Dr. Ali Al-Sawwa, another Brotherhood jurisprudence specialist, would respond to both Abu Fares and Al-Ashkar by refusing to consider the (fatwa) ruling of "not allowing political participation" entirely⁴¹.

In the early 1990s, the Brotherhood actively participated in drafting the National Charter, which was tantamount to a political document prepared by a core group of representatives from different Jordanian political parties or perspectives. The charter announced the commencement of a new era in public politics in Jordan. It introduced many new political notions, which implied the Brotherhood's acceptance, to a large extent, political and ideological plurality and other major aspects of human rights, public freedoms and other conditions of political modernity⁴².

Some of the most important leaders of the hawks in the Brotherhood, during that period until today, are: Dr. Mohammad Abu Fares, Dr. Hammam Saed, Dr. Ahmad Al-Kufahi, Dr. Ali Al-Utoom, Ibrahim Khueisat and formerly, Abdallah Azzam (in the 1970s) and Abdul Munaim Abu Zanat.

The pragmatists or doves' leaders include Dr. Ishaq Al-Farhan, Dr. Abdul Latif Uraibat, Abdul Hamid Zunaybat, Abdul Rahim Al-Ukooor, and formerly, Dr. Abdallah Al-Akaili and Dr. Bassam Al-Umoosh, as well as Ahmed Qutaish Al-Azaydeh who passed away in 1992.

Of the distinguishing features of persons representing either trend, we find that persons who became hawks were students of Islamic *Sharia*, whereas members of the pragmatic trend were students of the humanities and the social sciences, and mostly studied in the West. In terms of origin, hawk leaders represent a mix of Jordanians and Palestinians, while the pragmatists or doves were mainly Jordanians.

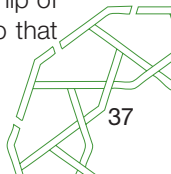
Between the Brotherhood and the Party

In 1992, the Islamic Action Front Party was established by the Brotherhood as a response to the new political climate, especially after the enactment of the Political Parties Law. Some major questions dominated the Brotherhood's internal discussions, at that time. The most prominent was related to the legal precedents which were being set by the Brotherhood's work after the Parties Law enactment. The Brotherhood was registered in the Ministry of Social Development as a charitable society. If the Brotherhood wanted to become an official political party, it could not work inside the mosques and unions, nor practice charity and advocacy work. If it wanted to remain a charitable society, then it would not have the right to practice political work as a party.

Four Brotherhood scenarios were presented to deal with the Parties Law. The first was based on continuing in their previous work formula: That is the Brotherhood would continue their different political activities and give up on the idea of establishing a political party. The second was for the Brotherhood to become a licensed political party. The third was to avoid political party activity all together. The fourth was to establish a separate party in parallel to the Brotherhood 'movement' with a clear modus operandi governing the relationship between the two⁴³.

The aim of the Action Front Party was to bring together the Brotherhood with others who would adopt Islam as their reference; and who agreed with the Brotherhood with regard to its general political objectives. Indeed many independents were involved in establishing the Front, but most withdrew after the first internal party elections because the Brotherhood took all the leadership positions in the party by default⁴⁴.

The Action Front Party was never able to gain independence from the Brotherhood. Instead it transformed into what might be considered the "political arm" of the Brotherhood. And, despite the presence of some independents, the leadership of the Brotherhood remained the party's reference. A norm would also develop that



reconfirmed the hegemony of the Brotherhood over the party: the party's Secretary General was and is always selected by the Brotherhood's *Shoura (Islamic Advisory) Council*.

Samih Al-Ma'ayta points out that, in reality, the party failed to maintain a distance from the Brotherhood that could protect its independence. Invariably, it remained weak relative to the Brotherhood. This weakness was particularly evident in the weak organizational structure of the party. Its members, mostly from the Brotherhood, do not receive any special political education and do not consider or study any sources which are outside the Brotherhood's framework. Consequently, the party was deprived of the ability to develop an independent political party education. Finally, contrary to the conditions of the Brotherhood, the party continued to suffer from meager financing and poor attendance during its activities⁴⁵.

The Rise of the Centrist Bloc: Competition over the Decision-making Process

In the early 1990s, several events affected internal and external Jordanian policy. Of these, the peace settlement with Israel was to have the most negative impact on the relationship between the state and the Brotherhood.

These policy shifts and their impact affected the internal debate within the Brotherhood. They also enhanced the growth and rise of a third trend within the movement which was later entitled the Center Bloc. This third line would hold a middle position between the doves and the hawks with regard to issues of political participation and to the state.

The Center Bloc is characterized by the fact that most of its members are third and fourth generation Brotherhood, while the members of the doves or hawks are first and second generation.

Samih al-Ma'ayta points out that the emergence of the Center Bloc was historically linked with a change in the Brotherhood's leadership, when Abdul Majid Zunaybat was selected instead of Abdul Rahman Khalifa as the leader of the Brotherhood. According to Ma'ayta, Khalifa had been a dominating personality who had the ability to control all aspects of the Brotherhood, on all levels. He was practically the creator of the pragmatic and dovish discourse and the person who communicated directly with the head of state. His absence or replacement left a power vacuum, which would be filled by the Center Bloc. Since then, the once powerful and dominating role of the Brotherhood Secretary General has become weaker.

The Center Bloc's doctrine is based on the following fundamental pillars:

- Agreement with the doves' political discourse in that: They accept democracy. They do not brand the government as 'infidel'; and they believe in political

participation, contrary to the hawks. On the other hand, the Center refuses to identify with the state to the extent that the doves do. Centrist members consider the doves' used this participation for individual interests of some of its members, who have since become prominent figures in the political arena and in the media, without having any real organizational weight. Members of the Centrist Bloc also believe that the pragmatism of the doves led to the export of the decision-making process outside the Brotherhood to the state.

- Focusing on Jordanian affairs and giving these affairs priority over Arab and Islamic issues, including the Palestinian issue. One of the founders of the Centrist trend, Dr. Hayel Abdul Hafeez, states that their founding motto was, "A strong Jordan is better than a weak Jordan." Criticism against the Centrists within the Brotherhood would later develop after propaganda of opposition members claimed the Centrists were seeking to "Jordanize Islamic work."

The rise of the Centrist Bloc within the Brotherhood came at the expense of the hawks and doves during the 1970s. The Centrists' approach was opposed by the hawks, who believed that the popularity of the Brotherhood in Jordan was maintained by its interest in the Palestinian cause. In addition, Jordanians of Palestinian origin constitute a large percentage of the local population as well the largest percentage of the membership within the Brotherhood.

Although their rise began in the 70s, the presence of the Centrists Bloc would peak during the organizational elections in 1994, when Imad Abu Diyya, Salem Al-Falahat (the current Secretary General) and Jamil Abu Baker were elected into the executive office. Since then, the Centrists have controlled the decision-making apparatus and process in the Brotherhood to a larger extent⁴⁶.

A decisive moment in the Center Bloc's hegemony over the leadership was apparent in the Brotherhood's decision to boycott the Jordanian parliamentary elections of 1997 – a decision which came following a strong internal dispute. Dr. Hayel Abdul Hafiz points out that in the disagreement first began between the hawks and doves, with the hawks calling for a boycott in protest of state policies that targeted the Brotherhood as well as the restrictions on public freedoms that undermined the efficacy of political participation. The doves, on the other hand, wanted to participate in the elections for fear that the Brotherhood would risk losing its popular support base and influence, and lead to the party's political isolation.

Dr. Abdul Hafiz mentions that, at first, the Centrists took a 'middle' position between the two sides and called for a "symbolic" participation, i.e. to participate in the elections with a limited number of candidates. However, they would later reconsider this position and stood with the hawks in the decision to boycott. The Centrists subsequently worked within the party to 'market' this decision internally. Abdul Hafiz explains the Centrists' decision to boycott was due to organizational

calculations within the Brotherhood. The Centrists saw this as an opportunity to firstly, “prove that the decision-making process in the Brotherhood was internal and independent of the state. And secondly, they also wanted to weaken the influence and ‘stardom’ of certain dove members, who had benefited in public life from earlier parliamentary elections.” Thus, the Central Bloc gave up the idea of ‘symbolic participation’ because they felt the primary beneficiaries of such participation were the doves. Abdul Hafiz goes on to say that the decision adopted by the Central Bloc, at that time was calculated to weaken the doves and to make space for new leadership, which they banked on getting. Finally, this is what actually happened. In the 2007 elections, members and leaders from the Central Bloc dominated the Brotherhood’s nominations to parliament.

By 1997, the Brotherhood’s executive office was almost entirely transformed by complete control by the Central Bloc with the exception of the Secretary General, Abdul Majid Zunaybat. Imad Abu Diyya, one of the most prominent leaders of the Central Bloc, was elected Deputy General Secretary.

The decision to boycott led to a storm within the Brotherhood. Certain leaders of the doves refused to abide by the decision, and were expelled (Abdul Rahim Al-Ukoor and Dr. Abdullah Al-Akayki). Another dove member, Dr. Bassam Al-Umoosh, who wrote an article in the daily Al-Rai newspaper in which he refuted the Brotherhood’s declaration to boycott, was also expelled from the Brotherhood⁴⁷.

Other members would also leave the Brotherhood, either by choice or by expulsion, after the boycott decision. Some of these members were close to the Central Bloc in previous periods. A group of these members would subsequently form the Islamic Middle Party in 2001.

The Return of Organizational Polarization

Signs of the disintegration of the Centrist Bloc and the emergence of a fourth trend within the Brotherhood began to appear in 1999, due to latent complications resulting from the relationship between the Brotherhood and Hamas. The issue of a “parallel or double organization” or conflict ‘of interest’ began to appear. Some members of the Brotherhood were also working with the Hamas movement, in an obvious manner. This led to questioning the relationship between the two movements, especially with the complicating presence of the Hamas political office within the headquarters of the Brotherhood and on site in the Islamic Action Front Party. In addition, Hamas leaders were seen by many Brotherhood members as part of, or an ‘integral’ part of Jordanian society, as a large number of the Brotherhood are Jordanians of Palestinian origin. The Palestinian cause was being forced back to the top of the Brotherhood’s agenda.

The expulsion of the Hamas leadership from Jordan led to a further escalation of the internal struggle within the Brotherhood, especially as the Hamas leadership

accused members of the Brotherhood's executive office of colluding with the government against them, and of not taking a decisive position against the expulsion. Conflicts began to appear within the Brotherhood: Leading members of the Brotherhood and others close to Hamas accused certain members in the executive office, in particular the Deputy Secretary General, Imad Abu Diyya, of "undue relations with the state security apparatus" and of "lying in wait" to strike at the Hamas movement⁴⁸.

The storm resulting from the expulsion of the Hamas leadership from Jordan ended in a great structural crisis in the Centrist Bloc and led to the formation of a new movement within the movement, which included groups close to the political office of Hamas. The conflict regarding the priority of focusing on internal Jordanian interests or the Palestinian cause deepened. This conflict mushroomed to include debating the relationship with Hamas for the first time in the history of the Brotherhood; although, the Brotherhood was careful to deny this state of polarization in its communications and public political discourse.

Since this historical juncture in the internal battles of the Brotherhood, the question of defining the relationship with Hamas and in defining the relationship with the state became much larger in the context of the polarization of the organization. The eruption of the second Palestinian *Intifada* in 2000, the failure of the Second Camp David talks, the eruption of the armed struggle between Hamas and Israel, and the Israeli assault on the Jenin Camp in 2002 led to tipping the scale in favor of those close to Hamas in the Brotherhood's internal organizational elections. This result was also a witness to the blatant rise of popularity of the Hamas Movement in Arab society, in general and Jordanian society, in particular.

In the internal party elections of 2002, the trends within the movement close to Hamas, in alliance with the hawks, were able to gain control of the Brotherhood's executive office, with Humam Sa'id replacing the Centrist Imad Abu Diyya. This period also witnessed the return of the Brotherhood to parliamentary life. Seventeen Brotherhood nominees, most of which were close to Hamas, would win seats in the parliamentary elections.

The pressing issue was the return of the Hamas leadership to Jordan. This call would become one of the main demands of the Brotherhood's parliamentarian bloc, as well as the main slogan of Brotherhood supporters during demonstrations and protests. In fact, this fourth trend talked about raising the political ceiling of the Brotherhood's discourse concerning the state.

After the overwhelming electoral success of Hamas in the Palestinian legislature, new internal elections took place within the Brotherhood. The Central Bloc was able to re-gain leadership of the movement, with a comfortable presence in the *Shoura* Council of both the Brotherhood and the Action Front Party and a majority



in the executive offices of both organizations.

The power of the Central Bloc in the Brotherhood was confirmed (more than was the case in 1997). Salem Al-Falahat became the General Observer of the Brotherhood and Gharayba was displaced as Deputy Secretary General in the Islamic Action Front Party. But the real surprise that disturbed the new hegemony (of the Centrists) was the recommendation of the previous Brotherhood's *Shoura* Council (which was allied to Hamas), in its last session to nominate and select Zaki Bani Arshid, (close to Hamas), as the Secretary General of the Action Front Party (the norm being that the Brotherhood's *Shoura* Council recommends the nomination of the new General Secretary of the Front in its last session of its term).

Bani Arshid's nomination incited both the state and the Brotherhood's Central Bloc. It also led to a two-front struggle, an internal one and one with the regime. As a result, the Centrist Bloc would face successive crises from the moment it resumed its leadership. In the following period, tensions would progress in the relationship between the Brotherhood and the state until preparations for the parliamentary elections, at which time the Brotherhood's internal crisis became explosive.

Defining the Brotherhood's Political Scope

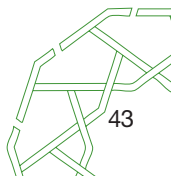
The major issue stirring much of the debate was the political agenda of the Brotherhood and the question of the Brotherhood's 'political ambitions'. This question would become even more intense after the success of Hamas in the Palestinian legislative elections. Political forces in Jordan began to fear the consequences of that success on "the appetite of the Brotherhood for authority". The controversy peaked when Azzam Al-Hunaidi (the leader of the Brotherhood's parliamentarian bloc in the previous government), declared that the Brotherhood "is able to take over executive power in Jordan". This declaration would be effectively used against the Brotherhood by their critics in the state⁴⁹.

In previous periods, Dr. Abdullah Al-Akayli, a former leader in the Brotherhood, wrote a paper, published in 1994 as a book entitled, "The Participation of the Islamists in the State". In this book, he presents the limitations of the role that the Brotherhood can play in Jordan based on some major limiting factors, such as the Brotherhood's awareness of the state's difficult situation, its weaknesses and its dependence on external economic support. Therefore, the Brotherhood 'understood' that the state was unable to do more in the current, precarious situation; furthermore, it did not have the main components required of an Islamic state. This position reassured the regime that the movement's strategy did not include seeking to replace the regime with an Islamic state system. In fact, the government considered the Movement as a kind of security blanket against coup attempts. Furthermore, the Brotherhood also considered the prevailing regime as better for Jordan than the leftist regimes and other nationalist parties which ruled in the region. The Movement had also

openly renounced the use of violence and terrorism and declared that it believed in gradual, progressive and peaceful change, as well as flexibility in times of crises. Finally, the Movement's demands of the regime were those for reform, not threats constituting a demand to replace it⁵⁰.

There are no official indications or documents that prove there was a radical change in these previous convictions of the Brotherhood, or that they adopted what could be termed as "a strategy of defying the state", according to certain officials of state. These persons also did not consider Al-Hunaidi's declaration as an "ideological coup", but rather a sign of the Movement's ambition to increase the scope of its political role in the country, and consequently, the refusal of that ambition by the regime.

Zaki Bani Arshid presents the crisis between the trend he is heading and its opponents in the Movement was based on a disagreement over the limits or scope of the Brotherhood's political role. The current led by Bani Arshid in the Brotherhood was seeking to break the current status quo and formula, which had, in their opinion, greatly limited the role of the Brotherhood and its ability to consider itself as a 'real partner' in the decision-making process, based on the Brotherhood's formidable size, popular support and influence. Bani Arshid explains that the other current wanted, at this stage, to maintain the status quo and the limited role of the Brotherhood; it did not want to risk political gains thus far attained, nor did it want to venture towards the ambitions of their counterparts in the Movement⁵¹.



5. Evolution of the Brotherhood's Political Discourse

Before analyzing the 2007 parliamentary elections and how they were influenced by the crisis in the Brotherhood, it is essential to examine recent developments in the political discourse of the Islamic Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front, as well as the general characteristics of the Brotherhood's political vision after a long period of internal political and ideological debate.

A New Ideological Era?

The Brotherhood's ideological evolution is relayed in its declared reform vision, published in 2005 in a booklet and on the Islamic Action Front's official website under the title "The Islamic Movement's Vision of Reform in Jordan". This stated vision was concurrent with the declaration of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria and Egypt with regard to their visions of political reform in 2004. The conformity between the various Brotherhoods' initiatives raises two questions: The first question which needs to be raised is the historic conditions which led to these political messages; and the second questions the content of the recent evolution in the Brotherhoods' discourse.

The historic conditions:

There is a "historic concurrence" of Brotherhood initiatives in the three countries, indicating a wide collusion to end the situation of ideological 'hesitation' and openly declaring their acceptance of the values of democracy, the civil state, etc.

This historic collusion or declared platform was particularly intended as a message to the West, answering the question often raised, "Do the Islamists accept democracy?" It was a response to the many Western scholars and Arab regimes who claim Islamic movements do not actually believe in the values of democracy as the ultimate values governing political life. They accuse such movements of intending to use democracy as a tool to achieve their political goal of establishing a radical state, after which they will dispense with democracy and elections, i.e. they are actually proponents of "one-time elections."

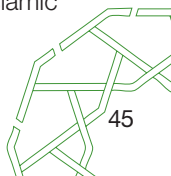
Reviewing the years 2004 and 2005, one can sense, in the evolution of the three Muslim Brotherhoods, a period of general optimism and of possibilities for new horizons and positive change. Indeed, a number of Western articles spoke of this period as the coming of the “spring of democracy” in the Arab world. Indeed, elections and political transformations predicted that the Islamic movements were the emerging alternative to the ‘status quo’ – associated with the dismantling of the state or weakening of political control (the situation in Palestine and Iraq), or the trends in municipal and parliamentary elections (in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, etc.). Indeed, the Brotherhood wanted to take advantage of this prevailing atmosphere to insure and safeguard the values and factors could govern their political future.

The Brotherhoods’ reform platform, which confirmed their adoption and recognition of democratic values, pluralism and the peaceful transfers of authority, definitely represented a new ideological development in the movements’ political discourses. In previous decades, they were unsure whether or not to accept the modern tenets of democracy relative to the principles of the *Shoura*.

These declarations, however, did not mean an end to the debate. Believing in democracy and the tenets of modern democracy was not a political decision, but rather the result of a historical process which led to the birth of a stable internal culture after a series of crises, conflicts, and ideological and political labor pains. The question remains whether the Brotherhood has actually gone through this ideological and historical process in order to reach these convictions, or whether these declarations recognizing democracy are merely a part of a pragmatic strategy to benefit from the historic conditions and prevailing political environment in the region.

Based on this context, one may question the ‘credibility’ of the practical implementation of the theoretical discourse, against which one cannot judge the Brotherhoods’ true intentions. Here, again, there is a need to define indicators in order to better understand the Brotherhoods’ reform platforms.

Experiences of Islamic movements in power have led to skepticism with regard to their declared reform platform and recognition of modern ‘democracy’. Even if one were to disregard the historical experiences of Islamists in authority, or in power, recent developments do not serve or support the Islamists’ claims. The most recent example is the experience of Islamic movements in ‘power’ in Iraq, who had also previously declared a commitment to democracy and a ‘civil’ state. Their ‘practices’ conform to only the most basic, rudimentary standards and show little to no respect of other doctrines, or religious and political pluralism. In fact, their behavior, once in power, has provided massive, substantiated evidence to support the claims of the opponents and critics of Islamists and political Islamic movements.



The same case applies to Hamas. The conduct of Hamas when dealing with the 'other' and with political opponents and the media, after their take-over of the Gaza Strip, has raised definite skepticism with regard to their 'recognition and acceptance' of the tenets of modern democracy. A Human Rights Watch report corroborates the excesses of Hamas in power.

On the other hand, Islamists counter these criticisms with the fact that they hold elections within their movements, in general and within the Islamic Brotherhood Movement in Jordan, in particular; and claim this is evidence proving the sincerity of their call for democracy. The Islamists' argument is partially correct, since they do carry out and acknowledge the electoral process and peaceful transitions or rotations of power within their parties or organizations. However, this acknowledgement only applies to those with whom they share political, ideological and cultural affiliation. It has not necessarily proven to be the case when the Brotherhood or Islamists have to deal with others whose ideological or political ideas are considered 'doubtful' or in the 'grey area', by their standards. Would Islamists approve or accept leftist or liberal behavior or political 'partners', especially in terms of individual and public freedoms, that do not conform to their religious standards and ideological norms? How can one be sure that, once in power, they will not attempt to enforce Islamic Sharia, even if that contradicts the tenets of modern democracy and individual freedoms and pluralistic practices?

Some analysts believe that current alliances of the Islamists with secular forces, of opposing ideological backgrounds, prove that they accept 'others'. In Jordan, the Islamic Action Party has formed an alliance with secular and ideologically different parties for years. Also, in the past, Hamas has aligned with secular Palestinian political forces in its opposition to the Oslo Agreement. But are these alliances signs of a political evolution in the Islamists' practice, or are they just short or medium term "political tactics" to help them gain their long term goals? Finally, these alliances can hardly be seen as providing guarantees that political consensus between the Islamists and the 'others' as surviving within a political system or once power-sharing is required. Actually, the relationship between Hamas and the secular forces it had aligned with previously deteriorated after Hamas took over full authority and power in Gaza.

Despite the above, one should not prematurely disprove or negatively judge the Brotherhood's claim to 'democratic values' without a deeper discussion and examination of that claim.

The Reform Vision of the Brotherhood

In light of what has been discussed, it is still possible to further analyze the Brotherhood's Reform Vision, as issued in 2005. This declaration consists of 17 chapters that address national (Jordanian) issues such as political-structural reform, education, economic, social and administrative policy, as well as the issue of national unity. The last three chapters address external or regional political issues such as the Palestinian Cause, the situation in Iraq and the issue of Islamic and Arab unity.

The most prominent feature in the Brotherhood's 'Vision' is that it consistently repeats the call for structural-political reform based on peaceful rotations/transitions of power and authority, recognition of the constitutional court, separation of powers and recognition of the constitutional provision stating that the Jordanian state structure is based on a hereditary monarchy with a parliamentary system – or a constitutional monarchy.

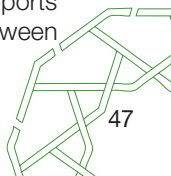
The item of the highest interest in terms of the nation-state comes from the following provision: "Adopting the *Shoura* and the principles and tools of democracy, including accepting the electoral process according to a just law and transparent elections, and a peaceful rotation of executive power, as a constant approach in political life and practice."

In terms of public freedoms and human rights, the 'Vision' reiterates the ideal of protecting freedoms, such as the right to assembly, to expression and to peaceful demonstration. It also guarantees the freedom of belief and religious practices for all citizens, as well as safeguards the individual freedoms of citizens, for example, it rejects spying or the monitoring of personal communications and respects the individual and personal privacy of citizens.

With regard to women's issues, the document states its support the right of women to vote, to run in elections, to assume political offices and to join political parties.

As far as foreign affairs are concerned, the document re-asserts the well-known position of the Brotherhood that "Palestine, extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, is the historical, political and inalienable right of the Palestinian people; and its territories are the sole, legal property of the Palestinian people"; and "any political or military measures that deny this inalienable right is considered void and illegal". Worthy to note is that this provision means that the Brotherhood Movement rejects both the Oslo Agreement and the Wadi Araba Treaty, and does not recognize the state of Israel, not even on 1948 territories.

With regard to Iraq, the document condemns the US occupation and supports Iraqi resistance to this occupation; however, it makes a clear distinction between



'random and arbitrary action' against certain segments of the Iraqi population and what the Brotherhood deems as 'legitimate resistance'.

Although this document is considered a step forward in the Brotherhood's conformity with the tenets of modern democracy, it does not specifically answer or explicitly explain certain questions or subjects. This ambiguity and 'grey areas' in their declaration have not helped lower the levels of debate or controversy concerning the Muslim Brotherhood's political discourse⁵². Included among these grey areas are the rights of minorities – as this document does not make it clear whether the term 'religious freedom' recognizes the right of any citizen, regardless of religious affiliation, to attain a high-level position in the political-decision making process. The case is the same with regard to women; the document does not address the issue of a woman assuming a high-level position, such as head of state or prime minister, for example (although this is not a very controversial issue in the case of Jordan, since the regime is a monarchy and the leading decision-making position does not change, with the exception of the post of prime minister and below).

On the other hand, the draft declaration or platform of the Egyptian Brotherhood openly declares its rejection of women or religious minorities – Copts, in particular – assuming the post of president (or head of state). This position has caused heated ideological and political debates within the Brotherhood, as well as between the Brotherhood and intellectuals and other political personas⁵³.

All of these issues, in addition to the fact that the Brotherhood has proposed establishing a committee of *Sharia* scholars to assess "the compatibility between civil, state laws and the legal provisions of the *Sharia*", have led to controversy whenever the Brotherhood is discussed locally, regionally and internationally. For example, and in terms of the internal debate, a former General Monitor of the Brotherhood, Abdel Majeed Zuneibat, wrote an article in the *Ghad* daily newspaper voicing his acceptance of the idea of women and non-Muslims assuming high office or head of state. He also declares that establishing a *Sharia* committee of scholars is not required, as the reality today is the modern civil state system, and not an Islamic State of the Caliphate⁵⁴.

The Priorities and Interests of the Islamic Action Front

As for the political positions of the Brotherhood, a number of major issues concern the relationship between the Islamic Action Front as a party and the Muslim Brotherhood, as a movement.

In a quantitative analysis of the Action Front party's website over the past three years (up to 10 November, 2007)⁵⁵, of 38 declarations published by the Front in the year 2007:

- 8 concern the Palestinian issue,
- 2 concern Arab affairs,
- 3 deal with the issues of normalization,
- 6 concern political reform,
- 2 concern organizational affairs within the party,
- 1 is concerned with economics,
- 3 deal with social topics,
- 13 address issues pertaining to the relationship between the state and the Islamic movement.

It is worth noting that over time the percentage of declarations related to the relationship with the state has risen – bringing this issue to the forefront of the party's priorities (a direct result of the growing series of crises and clashes which have taken place between the state and the movement during the last period). Meanwhile, the Palestinian has come second in priority, followed by political reform. On the other hand, one notices a reversal in interest in the issue of normalization compared with previous years. Finally, social and economic issues have listed last in the movement's priorities.

In 2006, of 62 statements:

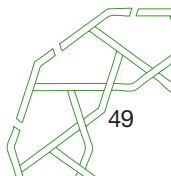
- 13 were concerned with the Palestinian cause,
- 18 were related to Arab affairs, in particular, the situations in Iraq and Lebanon
- 10 concerned the issue of normalization
- 8 concerned the relationship with the state,
- 2 dealt with the economic situation,
- 1 with social issues and 1 concerning political reform.

In 2005, of 108 statements:

- 40 concerned Arab Affairs,
- 10 the Palestinian cause,
- 16 normalization,
- 5 the relationship with the state,
- 6 the economic situation,
- 3 the social situation, and
- 28 were concerned with political reform.

Overall, the total number of statements over the years 2005-2007 comes to 208 declarations:

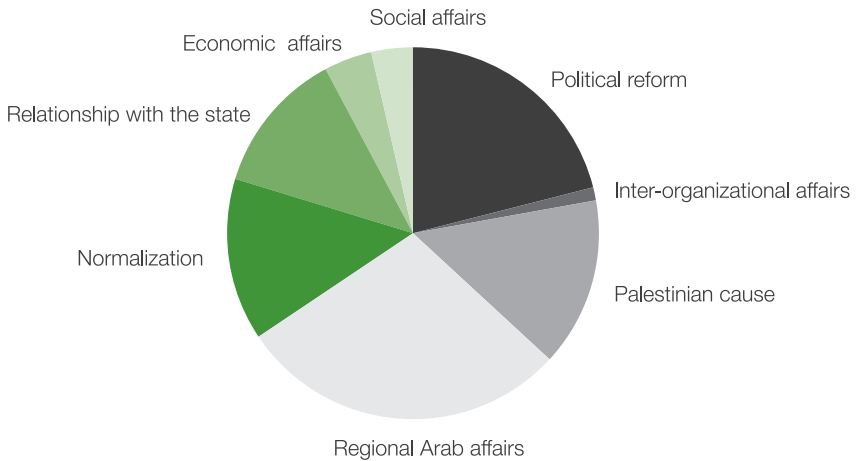
- 60 of which are concerned with regional Arab affairs,
- 31 the Palestinian cause,



- 29 concern issues of normalization
- 26 deal with the relationship with the state,
- 9 deal with the economic situation,
- 7 social issues,
- 2 internal organizational issues, and
- 44 political reform issues.

The following graph represents a graphic presentation of the different priorities, as declared by the Islamic Action Front during the afore-mentioned period:

Graph 1: Breakdown of Issues in Brotherhood Online Declarations (2005-2007)



From the declared figures one can deduce the following:

1. Significantly, little attention has been given to economics; the percentage of statements concerning the economic situation is 4.3%. Yet, all recent opinion polls in Jordan reveal that the economic situation is a major priority and concern for its citizens. Economics is also of the most important priorities and concerns of the state as made evident in royal letters of 'entrustment' to recent governments. This disparity interestingly clarifies how distant the party's discourse and priorities are from both that of the state and of society. It also highlights the 'reality gap' between the Brotherhood's discourse and practice.

2. The least amount of attention is given to social issues within the party's discourse; only 3.36% of the party's total statements address this issue. This very low percentage reflects the predominance of political affairs in the activities of the party. It also implies that social issues are the most vaguely defined in

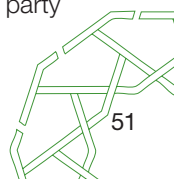
the party's formal discourse, although Fatwas and Islamic jurisprudence is an important and distinctly defining aspect of such a socially conservative type of organization.

3. The major concerns which have preoccupied the party, as reflected in its statements analysis, are regional or Arab issues, such as Iraqi, Lebanese and Syrian affairs, and the Palestinian cause. Statements concerning regional issues are 28.84% of the total statements. Those related to the Palestinian cause are 14.9%; or, in total, regional concerns make up 44% of the total statements. This substantiates the fact that external political affairs are among the top priorities of the party. One could add the issue of normalization, which, although related to an internal Jordanian policy, is directly related to the Brotherhood's position with regard to the 'external' issue of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the Palestinian Cause. The percentage of statements concerning issues of normalization is approximately 14%.

4. The party's focus on normalization and the percentage of statements on this issue affirm that this subject – also directly associated with the 'Wadi Araba' Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty – can be used as one of the yardsticks in factoring the level of disagreements between the Brotherhood and the state, especially as the anti-normalization committee continues to insist on publishing blacklists (an activity which has caused many problems in the past, particularly in 2004).

5. The issue of political reform comes second to regional or Arab affairs (but not including the Palestinian cause). The Brotherhood's interest in the various aspects of political reform goes as far as 21.18%. However, the multiplicity of the political reform issues, public freedoms, human rights, civil society issues and democratization probably create a higher rate of interest relative to the party's interest in external affairs.

6. Internal affairs have not been of high interest to the party. Between 2005 and 2006, no statements were made about inter-organizational issues. In 2007, two statements were issued, which denied the existence of internal conflicts and were directly associated with the media's coverage of the conflict regarding the party's nomination list for upcoming parliamentary elections. On the other hand, the scarcity of statements concerning the internal affairs of the party and the movement reflect a major sensitivity when dealing with inter-organizational issues. The movement and party constantly deny any internal conflicts or polarization, yet many leading members talk about these conflicts during personal meetings or interviews. This dilemma may also be the result of an internal and ideological prevalence of the principles of obedience, homage to the group and full allegiance to leadership. In addition, public disclosure of any dissidence is considered an infringement of the most basic principle of the party and movement, "confidentiality of organization, publicity of mission."



The Political Positions of the Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front Party

Moving on from the quantitative analysis, the substance of the Front's political positions on developments and current political issues can be further deduced from the party's official statements and declarations:

1. As far as internal political reform is concerned, the party's position is most closely related to protecting civil freedoms and rights, condemning administrative detention and political arrests, and objecting to bans on the right to protest or public demonstrations.

2. With regard to the Palestinian cause, full support for the Hamas movement's armed and political resistance against Israel is clear. Yet, the Hamas take-over of Gaza created 'awkwardness' in the Party's discourse. Pro-Hamas members in the movement justified Hamas' action against the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and defended the movement. Meanwhile moderates in the party avoided getting into the details of the Gaza crisis and was satisfied to call for 'Palestinian unity'. The events in Gaza also greatly affected relations between the Brotherhood and their counterparts in other Jordanian parties who issued a joint statement condemning Hamas for its actions in Gaza. Officially, the Islamic Action Front expressed its objection to this statement⁵⁶.

3. As for the situation in Iraq, there is a clear conflict between the Brotherhood in Jordan and the 'Brotherhood' in Iraq (represented by the Islamic Party, which is an active participant in the Iraqi government and 'state' political process). The conflict has come to crisis proportions between the two sides, with harsh exchanges of criticism. The Jordanian Brotherhood adamantly opposes 'the American occupation in all its forms' and disapprove of the involvement of the Islamic party in the American-backed political process. Instead, they have openly supported the Muslim Scholars Commission, headed by Hareth Al Dari, which opposes the political process and supports armed resistance against the 'occupation', although the Jordanian Brotherhood had previously declared its support of only peaceful, civil means of resistance.

And, although the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood has criticized violence causing the death of innocent civilians and the destruction of churches, etc, it has not issued any clear, explicit condemnation of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Instead, Islamic members of parliament paid condolences to the family of the 'Al-Qaeda in Iraq' leader, Abu Msaab Al Zarqawi, in Zarqa, Jordan; an action that led to another major crisis with the Jordanian government⁵⁷.

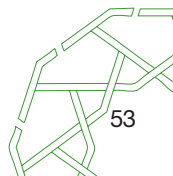
4. Regarding Iran, the Secretary General of the Islamic Action Front party

circulated an official announcement to all party members clarifying the party's position towards Iran. In it, he stated that the party opposes Iranian policy in Iraq and Afghanistan, while it embraces Iranian policy in Lebanon and Palestine (the Iranian policy of supporting Islamic movements and their armed resistance against Israel). The implication of such a statement is that the Brotherhood's position towards Iran depends on a selective acceptance of Iranian policy based on its compatibility with the Brotherhood's official postures and principles. The statement clarifies that the Brotherhood views Iranian policy on a case-by-case basis, disregarding the factors from which such policies stem, i.e. Iranian national interests. These interests – once they meet with U.S. policy and interests in Iraq and Afghanistan – may actually lead to a deal with the United States in Lebanon and Palestine.

The statement also expresses party support for Iran and the rejection of any acts of aggression against it. However, the Iranian role in Iraq (and the accusations of its support for armed Shiite militias causing instability) is regarded quite differently – by the Brotherhood – from the 'so-called' Iranian support for Hamas and Hezbollah. Again, this stance affirms that the Palestinian cause is among the most important considerations determining the Brotherhood and Islamic Action Front's political stances⁵⁸.

5. The party has expressed its open support of Syria, which, according to the Brotherhood, is facing external pressures and "an American campaign against it". This support has been made clear through a number of statements and declarations. The Jordanian Brotherhood's position on this point is quite different from that adopted by the banned Syrian Brotherhood, which has engaged in armed resistance against the regime since the early 1980s and which today, is allying with the dissident and former Syrian Vice President, Abed Al-Haleem Khaddam in the Salvation Front. While this schism in positions between the Jordanian and Syrian Brotherhood has created 'a crisis' between the two Brotherhoods, it has also caused tension between the Syrian authorities and Hamas, who are now headquartered in Syria and who have allied with Syria for different reasons altogether⁵⁹.

6. In its position with regard to the Lebanese situation, the party expressed its support for Hezbollah during the 2006 July war with Israel through various activities and means of popular support. However, the party's stand regarding the internal Lebanese conflict – between the March 14 camp and the March 8 camp including Hezbollah and its allies – is more ambiguous and grey. The Lebanese Brotherhood is allied to the March 14 camp. In fact, one of the Lebanese Brotherhood's leading historical theorists and leaders, Fathi Yakan, openly disagreed with the Jordanian Brotherhood's establishment of the Islamic Action Party and also accused them of supporting Hezbollah in their internal struggle with the March 14 camp.



As explained previously, the immense gap between the Islamic Action Front and the Brotherhood's 'foreign policy' and the official foreign policy of Jordan is quite clear. Viewing this conflict of interests at the macro level, one finds that the Brotherhood's interests are aligned with those of the Hamas movement. Their interests lie also in alliance with Iran, Syria and Hezbollah in confronting what the Brotherhood considers the 'American Plan for the Middle East'. These stances go directly counter to the policies of what are known as the "States of Arab Moderation" and the prevailing relationship of these states with Iran and the United States.

This gap between the interests at stake for the Brotherhood and for the Jordanian regime in terms of foreign policy is larger than what can be defined as a 'disagreement' in respective, vital political interests. Rather, it is related to defining interests related to the survival of each entity – whether it is the controversy over relations with the United States or in identifying the source of threats to either entity. This 'conflict' of interests explains the great tension between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jordanian regime recently and the continuously deepening state of crisis between them⁶⁰.

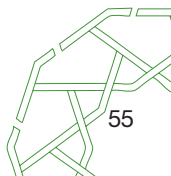
Between the United States and Europe

While the Brotherhood and Islamic Action Front party's position towards the United States, its 'American Plan' for the region and its unbridled support for Israel is explicitly stated, their position towards Europe is not clear. Indeed, their position towards Europe is defined on a case-by-case basis. For example, the Brotherhood issued a critical statement during the visit to Jordan of Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, in which they denounced his and the European Union's position regarding the 'Danish Cartoons affair'. At that time the European Union had 'threatened' Arab states if they took punitive action against Denmark. They have also been very critical of the European position concerning recognizing the results of the Palestinian legislative elections, in which Hamas achieved an overwhelming victory⁶¹.

In the meantime, the Secretary of the Jordanian Brotherhood, Khaled Hassanein⁶², confirmed that a letter issued by the Egyptian Brotherhood and sent to their Jordanian counterparts, asked the Jordanian Brotherhood to make a clear distinction between the United States and the Europeans. Hassanein states that, indeed, the Brotherhood has never 'vetoed' the idea of communication and dialogue with officials from European states and the Union, contrary to their position with regard to the Americans. He points out that in the past few years, they have conducted dialogue with certain representatives of the European Union, and the relationship has been good with them. In fact, this situation even applied to Hamas and the Europeans prior to the legislative elections of 2006 – the results of which did have a negative impact on that overall relationship.

Hassanein claims that the Brotherhood does differentiate between American and European foreign policy, although he expressed concern regarding the conduct of the new French President, Nicola Sarkozy – who, in the opinion of the Brotherhood, is pursuing a new policy line that will bridge the gap between American and European policies against the interests of the peoples of the Arab region. He explains that the Danish Cartoon affair and other issues that have recently risen between the ‘Muslims’ and the Europeans are due to the rise of the right wing in Europe. He said that, for example, a group of Islamic movements sent a delegation to Denmark to try to solve the ‘cartoon’ crisis, by trying to clarify the implications of those cartoons for Muslims. However, the delegation did not succeed because of the hard-line attitude with which they were faced. Hassanein explained that they could not bridge the wide gap in the differences of perspectives between the Islamic movement representatives and the Europeans on the cartoons: While the latter believe that the cartoons are an expression of democracy and the sacred right to freedom of opinion, the former see it as an offense to what is sacred and holy in their religion.

On the other hand, a prominent leader of the Islamic Action Front party and the head of the political department in the Muslim Brotherhood, Dr. Ruhayyel Al Gharybeh, published an (Islamic) legal opinion which calls for interpreting and dealing with events and issues with a deeper political understanding than that offered by the classical view of some Islamist, which is based on the theory that divides the world into “those we are at war with”, “those we ally with” and “those we are safe/secure with”. Al-Gharybeh describes international relations as being governed solely by political interests; and it is these interests which are the standards by which the Brotherhood should determine its position towards foreign countries and players. In his opinion, the Brotherhood’s political stances towards others should be governed purely by intelligent, pertinent and perceptive political considerations far from the ideological dogma adopted by other Islamists and Islamic movements⁶³.



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6. The Storm Within

The Brotherhood began preparing for the 2007 parliamentary elections in the aftermath of the municipal elections crisis and the ongoing deterioration of the relationship with the state. The events up to this point caused a part of the Brotherhood, mainly led by the hawks, to continue the call for a boycott of the parliamentary elections based on “violations” in the municipal elections process, on the one hand, and in protest of the new one-person-one-vote electoral law, on the other hand – as well as in protest of the continuing presence of Ma’ruf Al Bakheet’s government, which was responsible for carrying out the municipal elections. The process and results of the municipal elections raised questions in the Brotherhood regarding the credibility and impartiality of the elections, and confirmed to elements in the Brotherhood that participating would be pointless if there was no real chance to be a real partner in the state decision-making process⁶⁴.

Those who supported participation argued that a boycott would serve neither the overall movement nor the course of its political life. They also argued that boycotting failed in 1997, and led to the political isolation of the Brotherhood, which made them lose ground with their popular base and other influential platforms to influence the media, politics and public opinion. While those who believed in participating were also convinced that they would not be able to truly influence the decision-making process, they still believed that the Brotherhood’s presence in the parliament would still provide them with some sort of political platform and influence. Thus, their voices and positions could not be silenced; and their mere presence would mitigate the series of formal and informal measures being used by the state to curtail the power of the Brotherhood⁶⁵.

Advocates of participation believed that the Brotherhood had two strategic options in the context of the escalating crisis with the government. The first was to boycott the elections; and hence, escalating the crisis with the government to a point where the Brotherhood would be unable to lower the ceiling of their political discourse, risking unprecedented scenarios with the state. The second option would be to be as pragmatic and politically realistic as possible and participate with a limited list of ‘moderates’ in order to refute the government’s claim that the Brotherhood was adopting a hard-line strategy with the regard to the state; and that the party’s real goal was a take-over of authority. According to this line of thinking,

participation would prove to local and international authorities and public opinion that the Brotherhood movement was a peaceful, civil movement that believes in political participation; and that it does not endorse violence in any way, regardless of internal political conditions⁶⁶.

In the context of this internal disagreement, the Brotherhood’s *Shoura* Council decided to transfer the decision to participate or boycott to the movement’s executive office – which made the decision to participate. It issued a statement in which it linked this decision to the ‘national interest’ despite the extenuating circumstances⁶⁷.

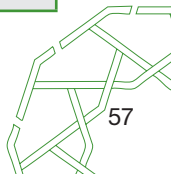
The Islamic Action Front party thus presented a list of its candidates for parliamentary election, after previously postponing several times. The list included 22 candidates, which was by far the smallest number of nominees since elections in 1989. The number of candidates nominated for parliamentary elections was 30 in the 2003 elections, 36 in 1993 and 29 in 1989.

Analysts and journalists considered that the alliance between the moderates (Centrists) and the doves allowed them to impose their agenda on the candidacies; in fact, the list excluded controversial figures close to the hawks, such as Dr. Humam Saeed (from the Amman Sweileh district) and Dr. Ali Al Otoum (from Irbid).

The following table describes the number of Brotherhood candidates who have won parliamentary seats, relative to the total number of seats available in the parliament, in the last five elections (from 1989 until 2007).

Table 1: Results of the Last 5 Parliamentary Elections for Candidates from the Brotherhood

Number of parliament seats available	Number of Brotherhood seats gained in parliament	Number of Brotherhood candidates	Year
80	22	29	1989
80	16	36	1993
80	Boycotted		1997
110	17	30	2003
110	6	22	2007



The list of Brotherhood candidates, as reviewed by analysts and relevant journalists – whether in terms of number or ‘political’ orientation –, has been perceived as a reassuring message, from the Brotherhood to the state, to appease the latter about the movement’s political intentions. Paradoxically, the list was attacked aggressively by people inside the movement. Those close to Hamas and members excluded from the candidacy accused the ‘moderates’ of overstepping their boundaries, both in terms of ignoring the traditional, grassroots pool of candidates and in monopolizing the decision-making process. They accused the leaders of the moderate trend of using the authority given to them by the Brotherhoods’ *Shoura* Council to nominate themselves and to single-handedly restrict the candidacy list⁶⁸.

The accusations coming from within the Brotherhood, leaked through the media, claimed that the moderates manipulated the candidacy list as part of a deal and in collusion with the government against other trends in the movement. Evidence of this major internal crisis became clear when the Secretary General of the Islamic Action Front, Zaki Bani Arsheed, took a firm stand and publicly protested the list by boycotting all the meetings preparing for the elections and by absenting himself from the movement’s press conference announcing this list⁶⁹.

A high-ranking source in the Brotherhood points out that another sign of the internal crisis was the decision taken by Hamas to cut off all official organizational and formal ties with the Brotherhood in Jordan. Yet another sign was the rejection of this decision by the Brotherhood’s *Shoura* Council and the simultaneous and contradictory approval of it by the Brotherhood’s official Communications and Press Office. The outcome of this Hamas’ decision was that, from now on, the Palestinian ‘Brotherhood’ would separate itself entirely from its Jordanian counterpart – with a separate organization and an independent General Monitor – whereas in the past they were linked, albeit formally.

A major implication of this development was that the ‘Palestinian’ Brotherhood (Hamas) would incorporate all Muslim Brotherhood followers in the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria and Lebanon, as well as Palestinian expatriates in the West and in the Arab and Gulf countries. On the other hand, the Brotherhood in Jordan (of both Jordanian and Palestinian origin) would become totally independent in their organization and in their activities in Jordan. However, the make-up of the Jordanian organization raised the question of who would lead the party in Jordan: the ‘moderates’ or the trends which were closer or allied to Hamas? In the case of the latter, the Brotherhood in Jordan, which is active in the Palestinian camps, would implement an agenda close to that of Hamas. According to the Brotherhood source, this power struggle between the two trends within the Jordanian party would relate to all other major questions – of leadership, of political orientation and of priorities and interests⁷⁰.

The Selection and Nomination Process

In response to the accusations made against the 'moderates', Dr. Ruhayyel Al Gharaybeh, the Deputy Secretary General of the Islamic Action Front, defended and clarified the selection criteria in nominating their candidates, as follows⁷¹:

- Balloting operations and voting were carried out in the official offices and branches of the Islamic Action Front party and the Brotherhood. Based on this voting process, the names of the candidates with the highest number of votes were sent to the executive offices of both organizations.
- Based on this list, the *Shoura* Council presented 16 member candidates and delegated the final selection to a committee from the executive offices of both the Brotherhood and the Front.

The committee adopted the following set of criteria in their final selection:

1. Firstly, the committee considers candidates voted in by the branches because they represent the movement's grassroots base; and this base represents the best 'judge' in selecting nominees. Based on this grassroots' selection, the committee finally approves or accepts candidates, as long as a candidate's standing does not contravene with other criteria and standards set by the Brotherhood, in general. According to Gharaybeh, 75-80% of the grassroots candidates are accepted.
2. Another criteria considered in the selection process is the committee's evaluation of the candidates' odds at winning in their respective electoral districts. 'Tribal sensitivities' are also taken into consideration in judging a candidate's potential success in a particular district. It is due to these considerations – i.e. reducing the number of potential losers - that Gharaybeh thinks that all or most of the movement's candidates won.
3. As for a candidate's qualifications, Ruhayyel stressed that the committee also verified a candidate's capacity to perform the role and task at hand, as well as the candidate's compatibility and ability to advance and promote the Movement's ideological discourse, principles and reform platform. This criterion could exclude nominees, even if they were nominated by a grassroots base; and it also sparked an extensive internal debate. Despite the debate, Ruhayyel claims that the 2007 list of candidates was the best candidacy list presented in the history of the movement in terms of presence, representation, competencies, and compatibilities of vision and in the strict embracing of the Brotherhood's political platform. However, the formula presented in the 2007 list was relatively new, compared to previous lists where hawks and doves were more equally represented and the combination of candidates more honestly conveyed the

reality of the actual mix within the party.

4. Finally, a decision that members of the executive office in the Islamic Action Front were to be excluded from candidacy was reversed in 2007. The ban on members of the Brotherhood's executive office, however, was to be maintained. This was a new precedent following the 2003 parliamentary elections, where members of both executive offices were banned from standing for elections; and as a result, the Brotherhood presented a dynamic roster of up-and-coming young candidates.

The set of criteria determining the selection of candidates in 2007, as elicited from Gharaybeh's defense were: the grassroots criteria (the popularity of a candidate at the grassroots level), the pragmatic criteria (the odds of a candidate's success), competency (a candidate's capacity and qualification), and finally, the level of a candidate's commitment or agreement with the movement's vision and political platform.

In terms of the education levels of the Front's 2007 candidates: five have doctorates (PhDs), six have master's degrees, eight have bachelor's degrees, one has a higher college diploma, one has a college diploma, and one has a secondary school (or high school) diploma.

As for academic specializations: seven have specialized in Islamic *Sharia*, five in engineering, four in pharmacy, three in education, one in human sciences, two have scientific specializations, two studied economics and one law.

Ages of candidates range from 35 to 68 years, with the average being 53 years of age. Regarding the breakdown of candidates of Palestinian or Jordanian origins, the list was exactly in half. The employment background of the candidates varied from work experience in municipal councils, voluntary and paid public service to private commerce. Nine members of the current list were ex-parliamentarians, seven of whom served as part of the Brotherhood's (17) members in the 2003 (to 2007) parliament.

7. The 2007 Electoral Campaign

The Islamic Action Front's 2007 electoral platform was similar, if not identical, to the Brotherhood's reform vision declared in 2005, especially with regard to structural political reform, public and civil freedoms, human rights, social affairs, economic reform, education, culture and foreign policy. Nevertheless, the 2007 platform presented significant weaknesses regarding some vital and essential issues:

1. The 'reality gap': It is evident that a serious problem exists between the Brotherhood's discourse and the realistic or practical implementation of their 'platform' or program. Their platform is based on a language of altruistic demands, principles and values which govern the Brotherhood, without a practical reading for the serious problems and direct challenges facing the state, as well as the concrete issues the upcoming parliament will have to deal with.

The Brotherhood's take on foreign policy is by far the most unrealistic. The Brotherhood's platform denounces the occupation of Iraq and considers the presence of American forces there as a 'military colonization'. With regard to this stance, the Brotherhood's resolution is to "mobilize the Arab nation with all its forces to resist this 'colonization' culturally, politically and by means of *Jihad*", and countering American hegemony from all corners of the Arab and Islamic countries!", "to provide all possible support to the Iraqi resistance to liberate Iraq", and "supporting all efforts, official and popular, rejecting the 'occupation' and resisting the colonialist spread of American-Zionist hegemony in the region."

On the subject of Arab and Islamic unity, the platform demands that all forms of sanctions imposed on certain Arab (Islamic) states are alleviated, in particular, Sudan and Libya (although the sanctions on Libya have largely been lifted) and demands "resisting all ethnic, regional and sectarian attempts at instilling hatred and in dividing the 'nation' (Arab and Islamic nation)". It is obvious that these declarations, and others, are unrealistic and do not concur on any level with the official and prevailing political positions of the parliament, the powers-that-be or the state. They are not in line with Jordan's geo-political strategic constraints and conditions; Jordan's economy relies on foreign aid and the remittances of Jordanian expatriates working abroad. The Brotherhood's platform is more of a

statement of general principles or 'ideals of the political movement' rather than 'realistic political options'.

2. The 'black hole': The Jordanian Brotherhood's policy towards economics is more like a 'black hole' in the movement's platform. Throughout its history, it has not been able to deliver a viable economic development policy based on practical analysis and alternatives. The policy adopts broad statements demanding "the close monitoring of foreign investment and limiting its control over the national economy", as well as "controlling the foreign debt, combating poverty, developing a national plan to battle unemployment, controlling the trade deficit, reducing the budget deficit, welfare for those with limited income, liberating Jordan from the grips of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, seeking alternative energy sources, etc. However, the program does not provide a clear economic strategy to achieving these goals; it does not even provide a practical reading of the structural problems in the Jordanian economy. In comparison, the economic platform of the Justice and Development Party in Morocco (under the banner of "Building a Just Morocco Together"), provides a clear and critical analysis of the economic problems in Morocco and adopts explicit and rational options to address these issues. The Jordanian Brotherhood's program also rates as shallow and poor in comparison to the electoral platform of the Turkish Justice and Development Party (which stood for elections in 2003), which provided a complete economic program defining the problems, solutions and measures to be taken to end economic grievances within a given time and framework.

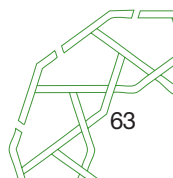
3. The party's insistence on the slogan, "Yes, Islam is the Solution": This same slogan has led to a lengthy debates about both the Egyptian Brotherhood and the Jordanian Brotherhood. The slogan implies that Islam is absent from the state and the current political framework, which other Jordanian parties and movements reject. It also implies that there are (in Islam) 'instant' solutions for pressing, complex and modern issues. It also ignores the vast room for subjectivity in understanding and interpreting Islamic 'teachings' (or the rules of conduct for both the Muslim individual and 'state'). Interestingly enough, the movement's website published two articles on the topic: The first, "Why Islam is the Solution" and the second, "Islam is the Solution... and Freedom and Happiness". Both articles claim the ability of Islam to liberate man from despotic authoritarianism, and that adopting the philosophy of Islam in life bestows happiness upon 'man'. How one reaches this 'end', however, is unclear, nor is it clear how one is to use Islam related to the functions of a modern parliament or today's complex political and economic situation. Indeed, the articles are even more ambiguous than the slogan itself⁷².

4. Insisting on the rejection of the peace settlement (with Israel) in its current form, the Brotherhood's platform states, "No one or entity, whatsoever, is

entitled to waive the rights to any part of the land of Palestine” and “Our struggle with the occupier (of Palestine) is a war of (faith) civilizations that cannot be terminated by a peace treaty. It is a conflict of existence, not borders.”, “All agreements reneging the right of the ‘nation’ to full sovereignty over all the lands of historic Palestine are null and void, and do not oblige the ‘nation’ in any way, whatsoever.”

The question which should be raised at this point is whether the Centrists (the moderates in the Brotherhood) were in charge of developing this electoral campaign platform, with all its corollaries. And, if yes, how can one explain the extreme inflexibility in their foreign policy platform and the shallowness of their policy towards internal affairs, despite the fact that the Centrists, or moderates, declared their intention to focus, from now on, mainly on Jordan and its internal affairs. The answer lies in the ongoing power struggle between the moderates and the radicals of the Brotherhood – or the Centrists (who want to focus mainly on Jordanian affairs) and those allied more closely to Hamas (who want to focus on regional affairs). Indeed, it is this crisis that has impeded any chance for a progressive evolution in the Brotherhood’s political discourse and has burdened the movement with weak compromises, used to balance the tug of war between the two sides. Furthermore, the aggressive campaign launched by the more radical members against the moderates in the movement has led to defensive posturing – with the moderates feeling cornered and hanging on even more rigidly to their political stands, in an attempt to free themselves from the trap of accusations set by their ‘brothers’.

In the end, there is a vast difference between the desire of the moderates to focus on a specific political direction and the maturity of their competencies and their discourse to pursue that direction. Finally, time has played against them. Their internal struggle and successive crises with the state have been obstacles to developing an electoral program, or platform that meets with even the minimum level of political realism required to meet the storm of recent crises facing the nation.



8. The Brotherhood's Setback: The 2007 Elections Earthquake

The Brotherhood would only win six out of 100 parliamentary seats in the 2007 elections. They won two seats in Amman, one seat in the Balqaa governorate (Al Baqaa Camp) and three seats respectively in Ajloun, Jerash and Aqaba. Of 1,935,411 votes, Brotherhood candidates got a total of 96,152; altogether, their candidates received an average of 4,370.5 votes⁷³.

This result was not only a shock to the leadership, membership and supporters of the Brotherhood, but also to a great majority of observers and analysts. Even the government expected the Brotherhood to get, at the least, 10 to 12 seats.

A quick comparison with previous elections proves the 2007 results to be the worst results they have ever gotten in the history of their parliamentary participation (or since 1956). Even in 1956, the Brotherhood won four seats out of 40, and that was during the hiatus of the leftist and nationalistic movements in the country. Thus, the 2007 results of the Brotherhood cannot be considered as anything less than a political defeat.

The Story of the Brotherhood's Great Setback

The story of the Brotherhood's great setback was provided at a press conference held by the Deputy General Observer of the Brotherhood, Jamil Abu Baker, on the day following the elections. He attributed these results to the role of the 'government' and its lack of impartiality in the elections – citing examples such as the transportation of hundreds and thousands of voters en masse to assist certain candidates and 'vote buying'.

The Brotherhood accused the government of turning a blind eye to these great violations, although these violations were done in clear view, and very difficult to ignore in many districts. It also accused the government of allowing a large number of those who were not eligible to vote (i.e. holders of identity cards without a district name on them) or forbidding thousands who had the right to vote from practicing this right based on false pretexts and unconvincing justifications.

In addition, the Brotherhood noted a structural fault in the electronic operations during the voting process: Computers were down in some districts for over an hour, which provided an opportunity for manipulation of the results. They also believed that there were violations in the actual preparation of the ballot boxes, as well as the final count.

Dr. Ruhayyel Gharaybeh, Deputy General Secretary of the Islamic Action Front party, saw the elections as an ‘ambush’ set out by the government against the Brotherhood. He claims that they were able to overcome the trap set by the government in the municipal elections but walked straight into it during the parliamentary elections. Gharaybeh adds that the Brotherhood was deceived by the government’s promise to hold free and fair elections, with impartiality and transparency. But, he refused to attribute the crushing defeat to the Brotherhood’s own internal conflicts and problems. He believed that “their internal problems may have been responsible for the defeat of some of their candidates but not for the overall and final result.”

Both Jamil Abu Baker and Gharaybeh both went further to state that the Brotherhood had received information that the government had a strategic plan, for both the municipal and parliamentary elections, to weaken the Brotherhood inside the larger cities (considered traditional Brotherhood strongholds)⁷⁴.

The government outwardly rejected the Brotherhood’s version of the story. Indeed, writers, political commentators and analysts close to the government attributed the reasons for the defeat to the Brotherhood’s internal problems, to the decrease in the Brotherhood’s popularity and finally, to the dire consequences of the crisis between Hamas and Fateh in Palestine on the Brotherhood’s popularity in Jordan.

The Controversy around the Defeat and the Brotherhood’s Levels of Popularity

Moving away from the ‘official’ versions, there are several examples (or hypotheses) that both contradict or complement the official positions in explaining the Brotherhood’s defeat.

The most important of these include:

- The Brotherhood’s poor results were an outcome of the government’s role in supporting certain candidates, on the one hand and the spread of the ‘vote selling and vote transfer’ phenomena that was clearly evident in the last elections, on the other.
- The 2007 electoral setback is a reflection of the severity of the Brotherhood’s internal crisis and of the power struggle between the ‘moderates’ and the



‘radicals’, including acts of negligence and direct collusion by the radicals against the moderates.

- The Brotherhood’s setback and defeat is directly linked to the retreat of its popularity politically, whether such a reversal in popularity is because of the government’s deliberate curtailment of their social and political influence in previous years, or regional circumstances related to Hamas and the crisis of political Islam in the region, or because of the Brotherhood’s inherent inability to adapt to rapid social and economic changes.

- The electoral results are linked to errors in the Brotherhood’s reading of the 2007 electoral ‘formula’ and its bad choice of candidates in several districts.

An initial reading or political analysis, and indeed, the most likely one is that all the previous hypotheses or factors interacted with each other, and each played a role in the Brotherhood’s poor performance in the 2007 elections. However, the question is the importance of each hypothesis, or factor, and its weight in determining the ‘defeat’. This kind of analysis is made more difficult because accurate data and information related to the vote do not provide categorical answers; nevertheless, they can provide some insight when trying to develop a deeper and more objective analysis of each hypothesis or factor.

I. The Government’s Interference and ‘Negative’ Bias

An experienced politician, who asked to remain anonymous, points out that the 2007 elections, in part, and in process and result, were closer to ‘appointments’ than elections. According to him, the government did facilitate and contribute to the election of certain candidates to parliament. A report issued by the National Center for Human Rights on the elections, as well as the refusal of the government to allow civil society organizations to monitor the electoral process (and the final count, in particular) support this argument. Some candidates got ‘astronomical’ numbers of votes in some polling districts – numbers which represent a much higher percentage than the average received every year. This numerical anomalies occurred in the third polling district in Amman and the fifth (Sweileh area), as well as other districts in other governorates.

In other districts, despite the lack of any direct interference, the government’s negative ‘bias’ indirectly encouraged the phenomenon of ‘vote buying and vote transfers’ en masse. This occurrence (confirmed by official and unofficial media reports) was a factor and had a direct, negative influence on the Brotherhood’s electoral outcome, especially in the Amman districts. This irregularity was linked to the rise of (what have been popularly termed as) the “new capitalist” parliamentarians, who succeeded in districts where they had neither any tribal weight nor any kind of previous political base that could provide them with such popular, public support.

Furthermore, several reports indicated a decrease in the number of voter turnout in many districts, whereas results would indicate that they actually rose. In the Baqaa refugee camp, for example, the outcome of the elections confirmed the categorical 'collective transfer' of voters: Mohammad Akel, the Brotherhood candidate in Bekaa, won the 2003 parliamentary seat with 10,224 votes. In 2007, he would win with 4,657 votes, despite the fact that he had no real competition, as was the case in the previous election. This total means that the votes he lost, despite his success, numbered 5,000 – meaning either eligible voters did not vote, or their votes went to other centers (i.e. or were 'transferred'), which is the more probable case. Another example was the case of two candidates winning in the third electoral district of Amman, with 10,666 votes and 11,604 votes respectively, despite the fact that Amman's third district does not have this huge number of voters. The same strange 'numerical' occurrences happened in several other districts in Amman and Zarka.

Collective vote-buying and transfer worked to the benefit of several candidates and damaged the chances of success of Brotherhood candidates in the different districts in Amman. This fact partially, and logically explains the excessive number of votes received by candidates who competed with the Brotherhood in Amman's districts (particularly in the first, second, third, fourth and fifth districts) relative to the number of votes received by the Brotherhood, who did not rely on the vote-buying and transfer 'method'.

II. The Dynamics of the Brotherhood's Internal Problems and the Elections

Several indicators reveal that the struggle within the Muslim Brotherhood affected both Hamas' and the Brotherhood's popularity, especially when the internal struggle publicly exploded a few days before the elections. The conflict went beyond mere political differences; in fact, the radicals aggressively and publicly accused the moderates of colluding with the government and of having made a deal with the state. This sentiment was confirmed by many of the Brotherhood's supporters in several areas, especially in areas where the radicals have a strong following. This opinion among grassroots supporters was intensified by the fact that the Brotherhood's leadership violated the will of the Brotherhood's popular support base by rejecting candidates chosen by this base and replacing them with other candidates.

Speaking in the language of numbers:

Amman's fifth district (Sweileh) – which has historically constituted a hawk stronghold – the Brotherhood's 2007 candidate, Nimir Al-Assaf, lost: He would only receive 5,451 votes in comparison with the 11,666 votes received by Dr. Mohammad Abu Faris, the Brotherhood's candidate in 2003. Furthermore, Abu



Faris did not attend any of Al-Assaf's election campaign activities, which was a clear political message to the Brotherhood's popular base and supporters.

In the Irbid governorate's first district, the Brotherhood's candidate, Nabil Al-Kufahi, also lost; he received 4,996 votes. The same candidate lost in the 2003 elections, receiving only 4,200 votes. The other candidate to lose in this district, in 2007, was Mohammad Al-Buzoor, who received only 2,588 votes, which is even less than what he received in the previous elections, or 6,509 votes.

It is worth noting that the Brotherhood's election committee did not approve the candidacy of Dr. Ali Al-Utoom (a Brotherhood candidate who won in 2003 with 8,461 votes), although the Brotherhood's branch (grassroots base) in Irbid had nominated him. The justification given by the committee for rejecting Al-Utoom was that his performance in the previous parliament was 'not convincing'; and that he did not conform to the new political discourse of the Brotherhood. And although it was expected that Al-Utoom's votes would go to the other two candidates, Nabil Al-Kufahi or Al-Buzoor, Nabil Al-Kufahi only received a slight increase over his previous record, while Al-Buzoor lost almost 4,000 votes. The 2007 result means that the Brotherhood lost a total of 12,000 votes in Irbid's first district, compared to the last election.

The above examples present the extent to which the internal struggle impacted certain results, especially in districts and centers where the Brotherhood's leadership rejected the nominations of their popular base and instead ran candidates who represented the moderates in hawk strongholds.

III. the Brotherhood, Hamas and Public Opinion

Some observers and analysts believe that the movement's popularity, especially among mainstream Jordanians of Palestinian origin, has been negatively affected by the reversal of Hamas' popularity in the ranks of popular opinion. This case is especially true in light of Hamas' bloody struggle with Fateh and in light of Hamas' behavior after its military take-over of the Gaza Strip. Theoretically, this argument is completely plausible.

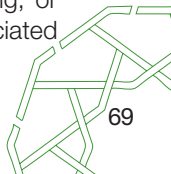
In the recent past, Hamas was perceived by the public as a symbol of the resistance against the Israeli occupation. Its members received great credit to this avail, and gained the sympathies of Arabs and Muslims. In fact, the Jordanian Brotherhood would use and ride on the popularity of the Qassam Fighters (the military wing of Hamas) in their election campaigns of 1989, 1993 and 2003. Many of their election campaign activities were laden with slogans and songs supporting and promoting their Hamas 'brothers' and their struggle against the Israeli occupation.

But in the case of the 2007 elections, Hamas was – in the eyes of friend and foe – involved in the ‘political’ administration of the Gaza Strip; their behavior in this regard and in other incidents has raised serious questions and doubts about Hamas, its political ambitions and future ‘project’. These doubts came at the same time that the efficacy of Hamas’ ‘military’ or armed struggle against Israel has been greatly reduced, and almost dormant. These circumstances may not have directly affected the popularity of the Brotherhood, although Brotherhood supporters are perceived as linked to Hamas politically, ideologically and emotionally. Nevertheless, the influence of Hamas as a support or positive factor for the Brotherhood in the 2007 elections was largely non-existent in the last elections.

Two other major factors would also affect the performance of the Brotherhood: The first was that they would go into the 2007 elections without the Islamic Center Society – an institution that has been instrumental in implementing their grassroots social and political work, and which was ‘shut down’ by the government. Prior to the shutdown of the Islamic Center Society, the Brotherhood’s activities in universities were also greatly reduced and its members were banned from working in mosques by the government. The center and these kinds of activities have been essential for enabling the Brotherhood to communicate and interact with the Jordanian public and for maintaining a wide social network. They have also allowed the Brotherhood to maintain a concrete presence in volunteer-based charitable societies, paralleling the state’s social welfare system and offering much needed aid and assistance to the needy. In the 2007 elections, the direct impact of the diminished capacity of the Brotherhood’s social work and network began to take effect, creating a “missing link” in their communication and connection with the masses.

The other factor is connected with competition on the religious scene: There has been a tangible change in the country’s social temperament to becoming more ‘religious’; and several religious groups have started to compete with the Brotherhood as ‘the legitimate religious representatives’ among the masses. Indeed, the state has inadvertently given some of these groups the space to grow in the vacuum left by the Brotherhood’s loss of power and support, due to state laws and policies targeting them. Some of the most important of these groups are followers of the Salafi trend – with some taking a more traditional, pro-government line and others a more radical and anti-government line. What is in common with all these groups is that they all are opponents of the Brotherhood and they all have an increased presence among the masses.

At the margins and outside these groups, a new religious phenomenon has also emerged, which separates politics from the social setting and from the individual. What is now being called the “neo-preachers” among young people has become a tangible trend in several Arab societies, especially since these ‘preachers’ have found access to wide communication and media platforms. Their preaching, or discourse, has disassociated itself from political affairs and the high costs associated



with such practices. This further “competition” in the market of ‘Islam’ has also had its toll on the popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood and their attempt to link together ‘voting for them in elections’ and ‘accepting Islam’ among the masses.

After this political, social and cultural reading of the context in which the Brotherhood was operating in 2007, one can return to an analysis of the election results – where the Brotherhood lost some of their basic, traditional strongholds in Amman, Irbid and Zarka (areas that also have a large Palestinian presence).

In Amman’s first district, the Brotherhood candidate, Azzam Al-Hunaidi, won in the 2003 elections with 15,833 votes. In 2007, he would only get 4,779 votes.

In the same district, Musa Hantash got 4,744 votes. The votes received by Al-Hunaidi in the 2003 elections were 5,000 more than what both he and Hantash (who lost) received altogether in 2007.

In Amman’s second district, the two Brotherhood candidates, in 2003, Musa Al-Wahish and Tayseer Al-Fityani, together received 19,571 votes; and both won.

In 2007, Musa Al-Wahish (lost) and Hamza Mansour (won) together received 15,340 votes, with a total loss of almost 4,000 votes from 2003.

In Amman’s fourth district, the Brotherhood candidate, Adnan Hassonah, received 11,484 votes in 2003. The Brotherhood candidate in 2007, Sa’ada Al-Sa’adat, received only 6,676, with a loss of almost 5,000 votes for the Brotherhood.

These are just some examples, with similar cases existing in other districts. In other cases, Brotherhood candidates of Jordanian origin, such as Suleiman Al-Sa’ed, Mohammad Tomeh Al-Kodat and Abdul Hamid Zunaybat, won in their districts, but did so with the help of their social ‘status’ or tribal weight and individual efforts.

IV. Errors in the Reading of the Brotherhood’s Election ‘Formulas’

The ‘errors in the reading of election formulas’ is tied to the previous discussion. It appears that the Brotherhood built its election ballot formulas and its choice of their 22 candidates on a reading of their results in previous elections, and on the number of votes they used to get. According to their previous data, indicators pointed to all or most of their 2007 candidates winning the elections.

The main problem in the Brotherhood’s ‘reading’ was that the party assumed the votes and the results its members got in the past were due to their popularity and traditional supporter-base, and not the intensity of their social-welfare activities or the weight of the direct communication and connection between their candidates and their grassroots bases. The Brotherhood’s reading also overlooked the issue of

demographic divisions – Jordanians of Palestinian origin voted for the Brotherhood, in the past, because their candidates represented their ‘special’ interests in the political system.

Indeed, these factors led to errors and miscalculations in the nominations and choices made by the Brotherhood’s executive and electoral committee in 2007.

For example:

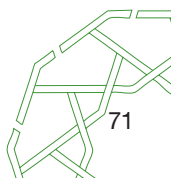
The Brotherhood selected Nimir Al-Assaf to run in the fifth district of Amman (Sweileh), which has always been a base of Brotherhood hawks of Palestinian origin. Meanwhile, for the voters of this conservative district with many Jordanians of Palestinian origin, the candidate was associated with the Centrist Bloc or moderates (of Jordanian origin). The great difference in the number of votes between this candidate and previous Brotherhood candidates was clearly very wide.

The same ‘miscalculation’ applied to the selection of Mamdouh Al-Muhaysen (a moderate, of Jordanian origin) to run in the first district of Zarqa, which has always historically represented a district and stronghold of Brotherhood members of Palestinian origin.

Dr. Ruhayyal Al-Gharaybah (A member of Jordanian origin, and a symbol of the Centrist Bloc and moderates in the movement) stood for elections in Amman’s third district, in which he carried little, if any ‘social’ weight, unlike his predecessor, Zuhair Abu Al-Ragheb, (of Syrian origin), who had overwhelming support from the district’s popular, social base. It was clear in 2007 that Al-Gharaybah was banking, to a large extent, on votes from ‘Palestinian brothers’ from the Hussein Camp and other adjacent areas.

In the Rusaifeh area, another district in the Zarqa governorate, Jaafar Al-Hourani lost to another Islamic candidate, Mohammad Al-Hajj, (a former member of the Brotherhood) who stood for elections as an independent and kept his distance from any association with government interference.

Another of the major errors committed by the Brotherhood was not taking into consideration the brief time lapse between municipal and parliamentary elections. For a long period, in its speeches and in its official communication with the mass media, the Brotherhood heavily denounced the lack of transparency and of impartiality in the municipal elections. This discourse backfired by creating an atmosphere of frustration and de-motivation among members and supporters, which – according to a leader in the Brotherhood – became difficult to reverse. It would be very difficult to quickly re-motivate members and supporters, and suddenly convince them of the feasibility and purpose of participating in the parliamentary elections.



VI. The Weak Legacy of the Brotherhood's Former Members of Parliament

This last point is also a factor which helps explain the 2007 results. A quick look at the vote count received by Brotherhood candidates, who were former members of parliament, gives some clear indications that the Brotherhood's legacy as parliamentarians was not strong.

Azzam Al- Hunaidi got 15,833 votes in 2003 in comparison to 4,779 votes in 2007. Musa Al-Wahish got 10,672 votes in 2003 and 6,030 in 2007. Mohammad Al-Buzoor got 6,509 votes in 2003 and 2,588 votes in 2007. Ibrahim Al-Mashookhi got 8,095 votes in 2003 and 2,018 in 2007. Hayat Al-Msimi got 7,133 votes in 2003 and 3,756 votes in 2007. Jaafar Al-Hourani got 9,095 votes in 2003 and 3,747 votes in 2007. And finally, Mohammad Akel got 10,224 votes in 2003 and 4,657 votes in 2007.

Although the Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front party did not issue any official report or evaluation on the performance of candidates from the previous parliamentary bloc, a state of general dissatisfaction with these former members of parliament was apparent in certain declarations, statements and insinuations by prominent Islamic figures. This state was certainly reflected in the clear drop in total votes of former Brotherhood parliamentarians who stood for elections again in 2007.

A major conclusion can be made based on the numbers. And, although it is reasonable to blame clear violations in the electoral process for negatively affecting the chance of success of Brotherhood candidates and directly benefiting their competitors, this fact does not negate the interdependency of the factors previously discussed in the Brotherhood's 2007 electoral performance (or defeat):

- a) That support for the Brotherhood among the masses has ebbed;
- b) Errors and miscalculations were committed by the Brotherhood in deciding their electoral candidacy list and platform;
- c) And finally, there are questions about the ability of the Brotherhood to adapt their discourse and practices to the current, dynamic political, economic and social changes affecting the country.

If voters or citizens had felt that the Brotherhood could better represent their interests and demands in parliament, the results of the elections would likely have been different, regardless of the government's 'interference' or alleged campaign against the Brotherhood, as well as the standing or behavior of other candidates.

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9. The Future Horizons

What are the implications of the last elections on the future of the Brotherhood in terms of their popular base and grassroots supporters, on its internal unity and on its relationship with the regime/state?

The answer is quite complex and dependent on internal and regional factors, including all the possible transformations in internal and regional circumstances. Despite this complexity and uncertainties plaguing the nation and the region, several tangible factors represent challenges, as well as vital options for the Brotherhood in the future.

These challenges should be seen as general features of a 'road map' which delineates and identifies the future course for the Brotherhood and its role in the country's political power map. The most important of these challenges are: The course of the internal struggle and its effect on the Brotherhood's unity and direction; the Brotherhood and its relationship with Jordanian society (with all its complexity); the Brotherhood's popular support strategy and the state's policy to isolate the Brotherhood from its popular base; and changes in the relationship between the Brotherhood and the regime/state.

I. The Internal Struggle and the Brotherhood's Future

The parliamentary elections represent a setback not only for the political standing of the Brotherhood, but also that of the Centrist Bloc (the moderate trend), which controls the Brotherhood's leadership at present. This is the leadership that drafted the 2007 electoral candidacy list. It is also this leadership that came under internal (and public) attack by the hawks and members close to Hamas prior to the elections and their terrible results. It should be expected that, in the near future, those close to Hamas in the movement will work on utilizing the anger and frustration of the grassroots support-base at the results of the elections to bring down the 'moderate' or centrist leadership and to vie for control of the party for the second time.

Those in the movement, who maintained their position on boycotting the elections and who argued for a political escalation against the government and its tactics with regard to the Brotherhood, consider the election results as a great 'witness'

to the unrealistic and unfeasible 'messages of reassurance' that the Brotherhood's current leadership keeps sending the regime/state. One of the members of the Brotherhood adds that these messages "will not affect the government's policies and its continuing attempts at blockading and curtailing the movement." Some members are even claiming that the election results are symbolic of the real loss of the Centrists or moderates, who "tried to Jordanize (that is, focus mainly on internal affairs) the Brotherhood and its political project." These same internal critics add that the Brotherhood's strength and its presence among the masses are critically linked to its popular base of Jordanians of Palestinian origin and their concern with Palestinian affairs.

It also has become clear that, after Hamas disengaged from the Brotherhood, the Brotherhood is now faced with the dilemma of two opposing projects, or agendas. The first is to focus on Jordanian internal and national affairs and to affirm organizational and political independence from Hamas and its Palestinian/regional agenda. The second is to re-engage with Palestinian affairs and to re-align with the political line taken by Hamas, as well as to work harder to appear as the movement which represents the Palestinian street in Jordan (or Jordanians of Palestinian origin).

This dilemma was a major factor which emerged in recent crises with the state, which tried through the municipal and parliamentary elections to communicate a mass political message that the Brotherhood was 'weak', and limited to Palestinian gatherings and camps in the big cities. This 'position' was clearly proven in the 2007 parliamentary elections in which the big cities (with dense Palestinian populations), such as Amman, Zarqa and Irbid, proved obvious 'traditional' Brotherhood strongholds. And respectively, the obvious weakness of the Brotherhood's following in Jordanian cities and communities were also proven by the results.

Therefore, the elections enhanced those in the Brotherhood close to Hamas and directly served their political vision. The reality of the Palestinian majority in the Brotherhood and in its popular base should be considered a serious factor in facilitating the pro-Hamas line's assumption of the movement's leadership and in re-drafting of its future direction and agenda.

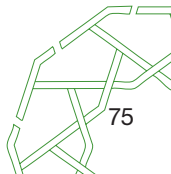
The dilemma facing the Centrist Bloc or moderates is fundamental in several aspects. Firstly, the state did not respond positively with it. This fact paradoxically strengthened its popular standing among the Brotherhood's grassroots base. Secondly, although this trend expressed its desire to focus on internal affairs, it was unable to crystallize a realistic, integrated strategy concerning a vision for an internal program or platform, as well as the instruments required to implement such a vision. This major flaw was clearly uncovered in the weakness of the Brotherhood's electoral platform and its inability to convince 'voters'.

On the other hand, the dilemma facing those aligned to Hamas is their insistence on continuing and maintaining the Jordanian Brotherhood's relationship with Hamas, to the point of intersecting or joint political interests and aims, because this line will definitely strengthen a major source of the struggle and confrontation between the Brotherhood and the regime. This position will also threaten other gains made by the Jordanian Brotherhood with regard to its legitimacy and political position in the Jordanian power map, and will likely expose the relationship with the state to tragic scenarios.

Previous crises (the crisis of the four parliamentarians who were imprisoned after offering condolences to Al-Zarqawi's family, the crisis of the Islamic Center Society, and the municipal elections crisis) have all proven that the Brotherhood does not have strong means and instruments with which to exert pressure and make gains in its confrontation with the regime; they have not been able to even move the masses in any perceivable way (that could influence the regime or state policy). The only 'stick' that the Brotherhood has been able to wave at the state is that its loss of status in society and the state's campaign against it has only served to strengthen more radical trends in society (the Jihadists/Salafis). However, this is an argument or issue that the state/regime has not taken seriously.

In conclusion, the internal struggle could lead to the following scenarios:

1. The ability of the Centrist Bloc to remain cohesive and insist on its political agenda. This scenario would be helpful in absorbing the impact of the state's policies towards the movement, reducing their effects and buying time in the hopes of a change in the state's current strategy of targeting them. The possibility of this 'change' could happen if the state and the government were given the space to take on a more open-minded political line with regard to the movement and its 'moderate' leadership and 'aims/intentions'.
2. The ability of the trend close to Hamas to bring down the moderates and assume leadership. This option will strengthen the present crisis with the state, unless other changes take place in the relationship between the Jordanian regime and the Hamas movement on the regional level. Another possibility is that this trend leading the Brotherhood is able to make a deal or come to an understanding with the state, similar to what happened in 2003.
3. A continuation of the internal power struggle and turnovers of the movement's leadership between the two trends. This scenario would place the movement in a continuous tug of war which would transfer to its relationship with the state and which would postpone any chance for adapting to elements currently affecting the country and for resolving serious ideological and political issues.



II. The Brotherhood and Society: Isolating the Brotherhood

One of the theories explaining the Brotherhood's setback in the 2007 elections is the accumulative negative effect of the state's policy towards the movement during the past decade. A major component of this policy sought to weaken the Brotherhood's wide social-welfare network. In the past, this network provided the Brotherhood with the ability to maintain strong political and social ties, direct contact and communication with members of society; it allowed the movement to build a serious place of influence within popular bases in Jordanian society. The regime/state worked on weakening and curtailing this aspect of the Brotherhood's strength and popular power base, to a large extent, by banning its activities in:

(a) Mosques: Recently the state issued the Preaching and Counseling Law and an Anti-Terrorism Law, which hold persons legally accountable if 'religious or any other form of religious preaching' is done without prior permission from the Ministry of Religious Endowment.

(b) Public universities/Student councils: The state instituted laws affecting student elections in universities (which strengthened 'appointments' to student councils) which made the Brotherhood boycott such elections. The state began to provide 'support' to trends opposing the Brotherhood, as well as investigating the appointment of university professors close to the Brotherhood and blocking such appointments.

(c) Charity-Social-Welfare work: The state imposed a ban on the work of the Islamic Center Society. It put forth legislation restructuring Zakat (Islamic tax) committees and drove the Brotherhood outside these committees. It put pressure on the 'Protecting the Quran' society and the 'Dar Al-Salheen' (The House of the Straight Path) society, and 'nationalized' these societies or began to directly control them.

(d) Private universities: Even in the domain of privately-run universities, the government ensured that the Brotherhood lost administration of Al-Zarqa Private University to an opponent and competitor, who did not renew the contracts of a large number of professors close to the Brotherhood.

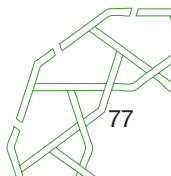
To be precise, government policies aimed at "eradicating the Brotherhood's social welfare and civil society network". Meanwhile, the Brotherhood was unable to overcome the effects of this policy, nor to adapt their previous policies and strategies and build creative or tangible alternatives to serve their popular base. According to interviews conducted with several Brotherhood members, the effect of these policies and the inability of the Brotherhood to overcome or adapt to these obstacles was evident in the last elections.

The Brotherhood's popularity in previous eras was built on major leverages, such as their social-welfare network and the Brotherhood's popularity in Palestinian communities; the weakening of the Brotherhood's standing in these areas has already been discussed. And, despite a social tendency towards increased piety or becoming 'more religious', competition from other groups and the state's support to these groups in weakening the Brotherhood has also already been discussed. It was these leverages that shook the support pillars and foundation of the Brotherhood. The wager remains on whether or not the Brotherhood will find the ability to review and renew its social, political and religious (and 'preaching') discourse, as well as its strategy to revive its social communication and connection, by moving away from its current 'hierarchical' structure and back towards direct grassroots networking with its popular base.

III. The Relationship between the Brotherhood and the State

The 2007 elections clearly showed that the state was and is not concerned with wagering on the moderate trend in the Brotherhood; it did not and has not sent any encouraging messages in this regard. It seems evident that the state's new strategy is to adopt "an indirect strategy of confrontation", that is, avoiding the direct, legal dissolution of the Brotherhood (such as the strategy adopted by the regime in Egypt), and avoiding the full-on security solution by banning any presence or practice of the Brotherhood (as in Tunisia). Instead, the Jordanian state/regime has adopted the tactics of working on restructuring the social and political presence of the Brotherhood, to a great extent; firstly, by depriving it of its tools and the support pillars that it built in the past; secondly, by strengthening other Islamic groups and trends, such as the Islamic Middle Trend, the Middle Forum and the Salafi groups; and third, by supporting secular political trends that may fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the Brotherhood from the Jordanian political power map.

The policy-makers in the state (right wing, security school), who have adopted and are implementing this current strategy, see the Brotherhood from a complex perspective: They have a phobia to this Islamic or Muslim 'alternative'; and, they are concerned by the Brotherhood's relationship with Hamas and their representation of Jordanians from Palestinian origin. These policy-makers also believe that the regime should not put itself at the mercy of the Brotherhood 'moderates', especially in the absence of any safeguards about the ultimate aim and strategic direction of the Brotherhood (which would guarantee the continuation of the moderate and peaceful line). Finally, this policy trend (in the state apparatus) believes that the only means to guarantee security is to weaken the Brotherhood and reduce them back to their natural 'size' – i.e. these policy-makers believe that the Brotherhood's power and position in society was unnaturally enlarged during gains made in the 'exceptional circumstances' of previous events and periods.



To what extent will this strategy be implemented; and where will it lead to? The answer to this question is directly related to imminent national and regional political changes and circumstances, and to the elite circle of policy-makers within the state, who draw the policy vision and strategy with regard to the Brotherhood.

With regard to the above, the most probable scenarios for the future course of the relationship between Brotherhood and the state include:

1. Eradication through indirect confrontation

Proponents of this 'method' consider the 2007 parliamentary elections as proof of the strength of the indirect confrontation policy and its ability to succeed. In their opinion, this policy in Jordan has led to a reduction of the Brotherhood's strength and of its public presence. However, opponents of this theory point to the scenario of the Egyptian Brotherhood. The regime went after the Brotherhood in Egypt with a total ban; and the Brotherhood suffered marginalization and exclusion for many years. Yet, the policy backfired; and the Brotherhood increased in power, presence and took even greater root among the masses. It was able to utilize its suffering, and the injustice and persecution it faced, to build an image of being the state's 'victim' among the masses – whose sympathy for the Brotherhood rose accordingly. Indeed, the Egyptian Brotherhood was able to achieve great results in the 2005 legislative elections, despite many violations and a lack of impartiality in the electoral process. In addition, opponents of this type of direct confrontation present the example of the Iraqi regime (under Saddam), where the ad hoc 'security' solution used against the Iraqi Brotherhood, in the past, did not prevent the Brotherhood from emerging and re-gaining great popularity when the state and security apparatuses of the previous regime collapsed. Policies of complete control and marginalization may seem comfortable and easy in the short term, but they do guarantee success in the long term and may indeed backfire and lead to adverse results.

2. Prohibition and head-on confrontation

This is considered the worst case scenario or method. It is based on the assumption that the Brotherhood and its membership will lose control and fall apart. Furthermore the use of successive direct confrontation, in parallel with political and economic developments in internally and regionally, may lead to even more tension and tragic scenarios: including mass arrests or to adopting unpopular, strict measures such as banning the Brotherhood or the party, or both of them.

3. Containment through engagement

This type of policy would be based on several requirements: First, the emergence of a high-level policy-making group inside the state that will reconsider the policy of exclusion and/or marginalization. Second, the rise of national and regional

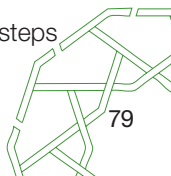
conditions that compels the state to return to a policy of 'containment through engagement and co-existence'. The Moroccan case is proof of the success and effectiveness of this kind of policy line.

Indeed, the strategic solution most likely to succeed is that the state to deal with the Brotherhood movement and/or other political-Islam movements by containing them through engagement, in a healthy political environment. This type of policy will allow the Brotherhood and similar movements the leeway to willingly adopt the political process and move away from 'empty' slogans to more realistic political practices. In this type of policy engagement, Islamic groups will find themselves facing two options: Either to exhibiting more sensibility and pragmatism, or react in a way that proves they are unable to present viable, alternative policies and programs in the eyes of the citizens of the state. Allowing them the space to prove, or disprove themselves, will reduce their antagonistic role and 'force' them to come out of their ivory tower, where they have been able to sit back, criticize and present a 'free-riding' discourse for which they were not accountable.

The way the state has dealt with the Justice and Development Party in Morocco was using this type of engagement policy; and subsequently the party has been able to make a leap to the next level of political participation. Now, their actual performance will either increase or decrease the party's popularity. Today, because they have entered totally into the political process, the party has to deal with reality. This kind of scenario of healthy political engagement will allow such parties to rise and fall, as do parties in Western-democratic countries. It will also guarantee the presence and participation of wider public representation in the state's constitutional and political institutions, reducing and preventing, in the long run, social 'ulcers', angry pockets in society and rising public frustration.

However, the 'containment through engagement' policy scenario is heavily opposed by the current high-level group of policy-makers in the state, for the following reasons:

1. The exceptional political circumstances the region is experiencing, and which forces Jordan to maintain a precarious balance between politics and security.
2. The state is very wary of these movements, their ultimate motivation and political project: They lack trust and credibility in the eyes of the state. This skepticism was confirmed by the behavior of Hamas, after their success in Palestinian legislative elections and the subsequent events which unfolded in Gaza. (However, those promoting the 'direct-confrontation' policy and 'security-solution' forget that regional powers and the international community's behavior and blockade of the Hamas-led government played a large role in driving Hamas to take 'radical' options and action.)
3. Demographics in Jordan have not allowed the state to take serious steps



towards either political reform or containment of the Brotherhood (because of its overwhelming representation of the 'Palestinian majority' in Jordan). Instead, the state is following a balancing act in order to 'buy time' until other more mature political options and alternative national movements are able to compete with the Brotherhood, and until a peaceful solution in Palestine becomes a reality.

Those who endorse the 'containment through engagement' policy scenario respond to their opponents with the following rationale:

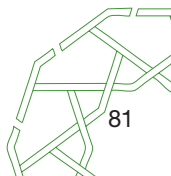
1. The only true and real safeguard for security is not to neutralize political participation, but rather to activate it. The strategic formula with the highest chance for success "security under the wing of a healthy political environment" and not the reverse. A solution to security is required but in the context of a strategic political vision which puts it under a politically viable framework. Relying on security measures alone will lead to pushing opposition elsewhere (underground), take root where the state cannot reach them, as well as turn the nation into a 'police' state.

2. Jordan has strong political, military and security institutions; and the Brotherhood is a peaceful group that carries out peaceful political and civil society activity. It has also affirmed and confirmed its commitment to democracy. This, by itself, is a guarantee that Islamists will not violate the rules of the political game. One can benefit from the Turkish example where a 'military democracy', which imposes a clear political framework and conditions on the political participation of the Islamic parties, guarantees their political containment as well as the continuation of the secular regime, with its rules of 'engagement'.

3. Considering the Brotherhood as a 'political front' for Jordanians of Palestinian origin is not negative in the sense that it helps to integrate this big sector in Jordanian society, and guarantees their just political representation within controlled internal political conditions. There is no contradiction between this type of representation and a final solution to the Palestinian cause. There could be a proportional political representation of the Muslim Brotherhood in the regime that would not violate either the identity of the parliament or the current, political demographic formula in Jordan. This methodology could be implemented by an improved election law that would better balance between geographic and demographic considerations in Jordan's socio-political and socio-economic formation.

4. Point '3' does not negate the fact that the Brotherhood also has a presence among the community of Jordanians of Jordanian origin, even at the higher economic and societal levels. The results of the legislative, municipal and internal organizational elections indicate that an elite group of Jordanians (of Jordanian origin) in the movement not only exists, but is a strong and effective part of the movement. However, it is the state and its policies which actually weaken it.

5. There are reasons to believe that some opponents of the 'participation and engagement' policy play on the fear of the 'Islamists' and their alleged aim to obstruct political reform because it is actually they who have no real intention to move forward with required political reform.





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1. Separating foreign affairs between the Palestinian and the Arab and international situation because of the special importance of the Palestinian situation. As for Arab and international changes, they include the situation in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, and the relationship with the United States and the West and other regional issues
2. Regarding the relationship with the government, statements related to the crisis between the two parties have been included and what the movement regards as government restrictions on it and on its different activities including banning festivals, mass arrests and mutual campaigns in the media
3. As for the subject of political reform, issues related to the vision of the movement towards reforms, public freedoms and human rights are included
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