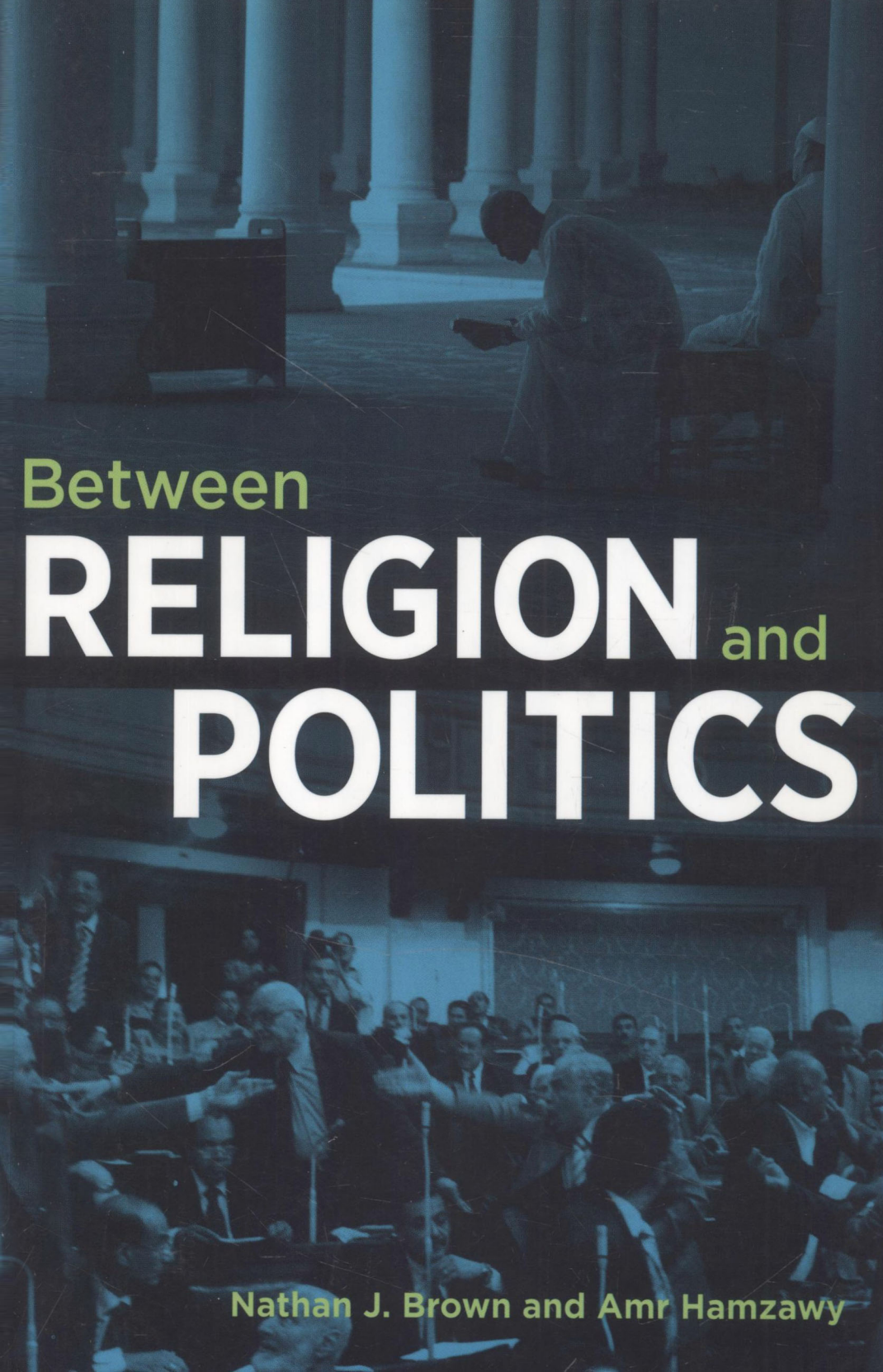
Between
RELIGION and
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Foreword

Over the past decade, Islamists have been thrust by events and by their own efforts into the center of the political stage in a number of Arab countries. The parties and movements that Nathan J. Brown and Amr Hamzawy consider in this volume are not ones that form small cells for violent actions. Rather, they are large, diverse organizations that seek (among other things) to participate in the established political process.

The various parties and movements considered here—in Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, and Kuwait—are hardly new. Most go back decades. But in recent years, all have taken a much stronger interest in electoral competition and parliamentary politics. It is the initial success of these efforts that has earned them so much attention in the Arab world and abroad. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood won one-fifth of the seats in the 2005 parliamentary elections. In Morocco, the Party for Justice and Development earned more votes than any other party in the 2007 parliamentary elections (though because of the electoral system it finished second). The Palestinian Hamas movement won the first parliamentary elections it entered in 2006. In Yemen, Jordan, and Kuwait, Islamist parties and movements have been slower but steadier players; in each country they have also experimented with sitting in the government and trying to form opposition coalitions.

In *Between Religion and Politics,* Brown and Hamzawy delve into the parliamentary experience of Islamists: What made them decide to step up their involvement in parliamentary politics? What did they do with

the seats they won? How has the Islamists' embrace of parliamentary elections affected their relations with the regime? Have they managed to build coalitions with other political actors, especially liberal and leftist parties? And how are they likely to react to the ebbing tide of democratization in the region?

The essays in this book explore a kind of "in between" politics—regimes playing with democratic procedures without being fully committed to them and Islamists investing in political participation without sacrificing their broad focus on religious and social activism. And although the long-term impacts of this political "gray zone" remain to be seen, it has already injected elements of dynamism and competition into what was otherwise a persistently stagnant polity in the Arab world.

Jessica T. Mathews
President, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Preface

This book represents a collaboration in two senses.

First, it is a collaboration between the two authors—one in which each of us has contributed our own interests and expertise individually but also enriched each other's understanding of the role of Islamists in Arab politics. The resulting work is therefore more than the sum of each of our individual parts. While we both share responsibility for the final product, we should note that Amr Hamzawy contributed the chapters on Morocco and Yemen; Nathan J. Brown wrote those on Kuwait, Jordan, and Palestine. The introduction, conclusion, and Egypt chapter are joint efforts.

Second, the book signifies a different kind of collaboration—that between its authors and a collection of institutions and individuals who contributed their own efforts and support to the project.

In that regard, we wish to acknowledge two institutions: the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where we both serve as senior associates; and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), which contributed vital funding to the project. Carnegie has provided both material support and a very genial research environment. USIP grant support made possible a good portion of the research and writing of the country studies. Of course, the conclusions in this book are only our own and do not represent the institutional positions of Carnegie or USIP.

On an individual basis, three officials at Carnegie deserve special mention: Tom Carothers (for reading drafts and editorial suggestions), Marina Ottaway (for research cooperation and endless discussions on

the topic), and Ilonka Oszvald for gracefully combining patience with speed in dealing with all the editorial and publishing issues. At USIP, Steve Riskin has been extremely supportive, especially on matters requiring cooperation between USIP and Carnegie.

Conversations with many colleagues have helped sharpen our thinking on the subject of this book. At the risk of omitting many names of those whose own insights shaped our understanding, we make special mention of Janine Clark, Michele Dunne, Shadi Hamid, Marc Lynch, Michael McFaul, Samer Shehata, Amr al-Shubaki, Josh Stacher, Hussam Tamam, and Carrie Rosefsky Wickham.

And we have incurred more debts as well. We have received invaluable assistance in our research from Dina Bishara, Russ Burns, Andrew Clark, Sarah Grebowski, Jessica Guiney, Mohammed Herzallah, Bassam Moussa, Khaled Waleed, and Diane Zoghivian.

We would be remiss not to mention activists in the movements themselves, who gave very generously of their time in order to provide us with their views on their own political experience.

Finally, we dedicate this book to Luay, Nuh, Ariel, and Eran in the wish that the world in which they live as adults can make greater strides than the one they now inhabit in discovering ways that faith and politics in all their myriad forms may enrich each other.

Contents

CHAPTER 1

Islamists in Arab Parliaments

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, Islamist political movements in many Arab countries made a strategic investment in a political process that was stacked against them. They did so in a series of ways, but the most prominent by far was their participation in parliamentary elections. By the first decade of the twenty-first century, their investments appeared to pay off. A series of impressive electoral gains—in Jordan, they have formed the largest opposition bloc; in Kuwait, they have participated both in the cabinet and in opposition coalitions that forced a major electoral reform and sought to bring down the prime minister; in Egypt, in 2005 they won a majority of races they decided to contest; in Morocco, before the 2007 elections they polled the support of almost half the electorate (and ultimately finished a close second to the largest party); in Yemen, they have been a member of a governing coalition and the leading opposition party; and in Palestine, they won a landslide victory and found themselves forced to form the cabinet.

This upsurge sparked different reactions inside and outside the region. Externally, interest in the rise of Islamist movements is inextricably linked to concerns either about terrorism or violence. But the rise of parliamentary Islamism also came at a time when Western interest in promoting democracy and political reform in the Arab world increased, leading to curiosity as well as concern about this apparently potent political force.

Internally, there was also an ambivalent reaction. In some countries, Islamist movements have evolved into cautiously accepted actors in the

political arena. While they certainly provoke deep concerns, they are seen as valid players in the limited democratic space that exists in parliament and the press. But in other countries the rise of parliamentary Islamism was regarded by regimes less as a political challenge than as a security threat. Indeed, it is not merely regimes that are unsure of what to make of Islamist participation. The movements themselves are often of two minds. Islamist participation in the political process is not a new phenomenon, but its significance for the movements has recently risen dramatically. When they first entered into politics, the major coordinates of parliamentary Islamism were generally religious purity and moral politics. Islamist platforms generally prescribed a simple solution to the persistent crises of contemporary Arab societies: a return to the fundamentals of Islam or the true spirit of Islam. Slogans such as "Islam is the Solution" and "The Qur'an is our Constitution" have traditionally proved effective in mobilizing enough voters to gain a smattering of seats.

As Islamist movements have gradually integrated liberal and pragmatic notions about politics in rhetoric and practice, this general ideological frame of reference has never vanished. Yet deeper participation in the political process faces Islamist movements today with the challenge of how to manage ideological claims with the pragmatic tussles of politics. On the one hand, Islamists might move toward broader agendas, orienting themselves toward more pragmatic and consensual positions.

But while subordinating ideological claims to the pragmatic concerns of daily political participation may often promote liberal trends within Islamist movements, there are also countervailing trends. Excessive ideological fluidity risks alienating core constituencies, especially in the case of those movements that have not institutionally separated their religious, often missionary, activities from the political role. Further, Islamist movements might find that they could generate broader support not through becoming more liberal but by highlighting issues (such as religious dissidence or controversial cultural expression) where they can mobilize public opinion against other, more liberal opposition forces. The problematic (and sometimes clearly manipulated) nature of Arab elections, coupled with the limited authority of the parliaments that are filled in those elections, discourage Islamist movements from attempting to assemble broad majority coalitions.

In short, as they entered the electoral fray with increasing enthusiasm, Islamist movements were exposed to powerful, but sometimes

contradictory, political pressures and attractive, but potentially costly, opportunities.

Islamists' experiences in parliaments have, of course, varied widely. They have adopted different modes of political participation based on the nature of the political environment in which they operate—and accordingly, they have in recent years also devised various strategies to manage the tensions of ideology and pragmatism.

The most stable mode of Islamist participation in formal politics is exemplified by the Moroccan Justice and Development Party (PJD), the Algerian Society for Peace Movement, the Islamic Constitutional Movement in Kuwait, and the Islamic Wifaq (concord) Society, a Shi'i party in Bahrain. These parties and movements have adopted peaceful parliamentary participation as their one and only strategic option. Here there is no alternative to the preservation of the available spheres and mechanisms of political plurality and to gradually solidifying and expanding the pluralistic system through the formulation of a consensus with ruling elites and liberal and leftist opposition groups over the future of the democratization process.

Above all, the PJD and like-minded Islamist movements honor the legitimacy of the nation-state to which they belong, and they respect that state's governing institutions, the principle of equality among all citizens, and the pluralistic, competitive nature of political life. Significantly, some of these movements—notably the PJD and the Islamic Constitutional Movement—have succeeded in separating Islamist *da'wa* (proselytizing) activities and politics, transforming themselves into pure political organizations, guided by an Islamist frame of reference and run by professional politicians, leaving *da'wa* to the broad social movements that gave birth to them.

The embrace of peaceful political participation, which these Islamist groups have generally adopted as much in spirit as in form, has led to a decline in exclusionary rhetoric, whether directed toward the ruling elite or to the liberal and leftist opposition. It has also led to a gradual shift away from ideological diatribes and categorical judgments and toward the formulation of practical political platforms and constructive attempts to influence public policy, whether as minor partners in government or as members of the opposition. For example, in reconciling their religious frame of reference with the imperative of political pragmatism, movements such as the PJD and the Egyptian Wasat Party (a splinter group from the much larger Muslim Brotherhood) have put

forward alternative ideological formulas that retain the overall religious character while granting these movements more room for maneuver. In the PJD's platform the application of the Islamic *shari'a* is replaced by a loose reference to general Islamic guidelines (*al-maqasid al-'amma*). The Wasat Party, struggling for public and legal recognition, crafted a call for establishing a democratic political system in Egypt within the framework of the Islamic *marja'iyya* (source or reference). Other Islamist movements have adopted some of this more flexible vocabulary.

A different—though not necessarily contradictory—approach was taken by movements such as the Jordanian Islamic Action Front, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and Yemen's al-Islah. Representing the second mode of Islamist participation, these Islamists have persisted in the face of a volatile political space and the fragility of their relationship with the ruling elites. If, in Egypt and Jordan, the Muslim Brothers have been given some room to participate in pluralistic mechanisms, in legislative elections, in professional syndicates, and in other areas of civil society, the sword of the security forces is constantly hanging over their heads. On the other hand, Islah in Yemen (as well as the Islamist movement in Sudan) throw into relief the danger of nondemocratic accommodations Islamists have struck with ruling elites and the impact of such paramilitary-technocratic alliances on political life and on the internal dynamics of the Islamists themselves.

The group of movements taking this second approach has worked primarily to establish functional differentiation between two spheres—a general ideological/religious one and a pragmatic political one—rather than recast their identity wholly within the state's political framework. As a result, the conversion to less exclusionary rhetoric and the willingness to adopt more flexible arguments and language occurs far more in some fields than in others. Social and cultural issues, including women's status and intellectual freedoms, can thus sometimes remain embedded in the less flexible ideological framework. But the functional separation allows some within the movement to develop a collection of more flexible political views and practices on other matters ranging from economics to political reform, where positions and language are increasingly driven by pragmatic considerations. In this vein, some movements have deliberately cultivated a group of leaders within the broader movement who focus on the political sphere and develop the skills of appealing to broader audiences, crafting media strategies, running election campaigns, and filing parliamentary inquiries.

Perhaps we might call this category "Islamists who take part until they notify us otherwise." They may have adopted a strategy of peaceful participation within the system, but it is less an irreversible commitment than a strategy that shifts according to the perpetual fluctuation of their role in political life (as in Egypt and Jordan) or the swings in their positions from partners in authoritarian governments to antagonists (as in the case of Yemen). In such movements, leaders and followers continue to hover in the abstract realms of ideology, social narratives, and mega policy (the role of religion, Islamic law, the individual, the group, and the Muslim nation), while ignoring the need to develop a culture that values consensus-making and constructive mechanisms for influencing public policy.

Lastly, the third mode of Islamist participation in politics is exemplified by the Iraqi, Lebanese, and Palestinian cases. Islamist parties and movements operate with relative organizational freedom in the context of political party plurality, but also within a climate of relative chaos. Extraordinary political contexts are shaped by foreign occupation, which has wrought the collapse of the institutions of government and public security, or ongoing, intractable crises of internal discord that so hamper the efficacy of government as to constantly threaten the stability of the political system and encourage the prevalence of monopolistic/exclusivist tendencies, which conflict with the spirit and substance of peaceful participation. Shi'i-Sunni and pro- and antiresistance dichotomies aside, the Islamist movements in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine are characterized by regimented internal structures, possession of the means to exercise violence and a tendency to resort to, or to threaten to resort to, violence to resolve their political conflicts. In short, they have dual identities: both political actors and militarized resistance movements.

Contrary to hopes that assimilation would gradually inspire the Islamists of collapsed and failed states to demilitarize their movements and revise their means and methods in a manner that gives priority to peaceful politics, these Islamist groups have failed to develop a full commitment to peaceful participation. It remains that the institution of the state must be revived through a thoroughly civil polity—reinvigorating its neutrality toward the diverse elements of the population and introducing structures and mechanisms to impede religious or nonreligious exclusivist forces from monopolizing public affairs—before political participation can be a truly moderating force upon these Islamists.

There is a rich body of scholarly work on Islamic political thought and Islamic movements. Until quite recently, however, the vast major-

ity of this work has focused on Islamism primarily in intellectual terms; studies of the structure, organization, strategy, and tactics of Islamist movements were rare.[1] When actual movements drew attention, most writers generally focused on fairly abstract attempts to understand the compatibility of prevailing ideologies with liberalism and democracy.[2] This work helped pave the way for a new generation of extremely rich empirical studies that focused on particular Islamic movements, often viewing them as social movements or as proto-political parties.[3] While hardly blind to the political implications of the rise of Islamist movements, however, this scholarship tended to turn attention away from formal political participation in the form of political parties and elections. Only in the very recent past has a body of scholarship begun to emerge that focuses on Islamic movements in the electoral process.[4] This most recent work is generally country specific, though some cross-national studies are beginning to emerge.

This volume seeks to contribute to this emerging body of literature with a broad, cross-national study of Islamist parties in parliamentary elections in the Arab world, focusing on those movements that have opted to cast themselves, at least in part, as electorally oriented political parties.

We have selected six political systems in which Islamist movements have participated in parliamentary elections: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Kuwait, Yemen, and Palestine. Each of these countries has an Islamist movement that operates openly, though not always legally. Indeed, each country has a variety of Islamist movements, only some of which seek to participate in the political process.

We will pay particular attention to a series of questions. First, what is the political environment in which the movement operates? None of the political systems examined here are democracies, but all have parliaments and some basis for competitive politics. We will examine the environment to understand how and why the movement has entered parliamentary politics. Second, what relations does the movement have with the regime? Third, what has been the platform of the movement? And what has been its parliamentary agenda? Fourth, has the Islamist movement democratized internally in the course of participation in formal politics? Fifth, what are the relations between the Islamist movement and other political forces—what combination of rivalry and partnerships has been built? Finally, what are the implications for the integration of the Islamist movement as a normal political actor?

In answering this last question, we will pay particular attention to debates within the movement itself; Islamist movements are true political organizations rather than projections of a leading charismatic personality; they are thus often both quarrelsome and reflective regarding their political experience. Moreover, over the last decade, their internal debates have become increasingly accessible to outsiders, as the movements carry out some of their discussions in public and their increased political role has led to greater public interest in their positions.

Each of the country studies contained in this volume addresses these questions, but the diversity in the political systems suggests that we avoid any rigid form. In Egypt, for instance, a large parliamentary bloc of 88 deputies has been able to develop a complex and detailed parliamentary agenda over several years (and one that builds on previous parliamentary experience); in Palestine, the Islamist Hamas movement entered only one parliamentary election, and, while it won a majority of seats, it was able to operate only for a matter of months before the Israelis arrested so many deputies that the movement could no longer obtain a quorum. Some movements (in Yemen, Jordan, and Kuwait) have some experience holding cabinet positions; other movements (most notably Egypt) do not even have a legal status. We will therefore adjust the list of questions and the emphasis given to each according to the circumstances of the case.

But we will return at the end of this book to a more general consideration of the movements' own evaluations of their political experience. After a decade or more of investment in parliamentary politics, what do they think they have achieved? And what are the lessons that the movements themselves draw for the future?

CHAPTER 2

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood

Islamist Participation in a Closing Political Environment

In January 2010, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood selected Muhammad Badi' as its eighth general guide. While Egypt's leading Islamist movement has sometimes hotly debated the selection of leaders in the past, this time the choice took place under an unprecedented domestic and international spotlight. Muhammad Badi' was virtually unknown outside the group. And that itself was a signal about the Brotherhood's future course: there would likely be far more focus on internal organization and less on political work; the movement was positioning itself to focus more on quiet social and educational projects than noisy political struggles. The new direction was not simply a product of internal preferences; the political environment in Egypt had become far less inviting in general. And the Brotherhood was a particular target of growing restrictions on political activity. With these developments, the prospect of a more competitive and pluralistic political system in Egypt was rapidly fading.

Badi' himself tried to emphasize continuity with the Brotherhood's political vision and participation in Egyptian politics. He also sent soothing signals in almost all directions: his initial statements upon his selection contained references to the Brotherhood's commitment to peaceful change and its continued dedication to political activity in line with the movement's slogan that it sought "participation, not domination." But if Badi''s initial words suggested little change, his actions bespoke