



zealous democrats

ISLAMISM AND DEMOCRACY IN
EGYPT, INDONESIA AND TURKEY

**Anthony Bubalo • Greg Fealy
Whit Mason**

LOWY INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY

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PO Box 102 Double Bay New South Wales 1360 Australia
www.longmedia.com.au
info@longmedia.com.au
Tel. (+ 61 2) 9362 8441

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Anthony Bubalo is program director for West Asia at the Lowy Institute for International Policy. Prior to joining the Institute he worked as an Australian diplomat for 13 years and was a senior Middle East analyst at the Office of National Assessments. Together with Greg Fealy he is the co-author of Lowy Institute Paper 05 *Joining the caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia*.

Dr Greg Fealy is senior lecturer and fellow in Indonesian politics at the College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University, Canberra. He has been a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, Washington DC, and was also an Indonesia analyst at the Office of National Assessments. He has published extensively on Indonesian Islamic issues, including co-editing *Expressing Islam: Religious life and politics in Indonesia* (ISEAS, 2008) and *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia* (ISEAS, 2005).

Whit Mason is currently the UN's justice coordinator for southern Afghanistan, a non-resident fellow in the West Asia Program at the Lowy Institute and the director of the program on justice, peace-building and development in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Law, Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales. He was previously based in Istanbul as a fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs and taught at Fatih University. He has lived and worked abroad since 1989 as a journalist, political analyst, UN official, NGO chief of party and diplomat. He is the author, with Iain King, of *Peace at any price: How the world failed Kosovo*.

Executive summary

The fear of Islamists coming to power through elections has long been an obstacle to democratisation in authoritarian states of the Muslim world. Islamists have been, and continue to be, the best organised and most credible opposition movements in many of these countries. They are also commonly, if not always correctly, assumed to be in the best position to capitalise on any democratic opening of their political systems. At the same time, the commitment of Islamists to democracy is often questioned. Indeed, when it comes to democracy, Islamism's intellectual heritage and historical record (in terms of the few examples of Islamist-led states, such as Sudan and Iran) have not been reassuring.

The apparent strength of Islamist movements, combined with suspicions about Islamism's democratic compatibility, has been used by authoritarian governments as an argument to deflect both domestic and international calls for political reform and democratisation. Domestically, secular liberals have preferred to settle for nominally secular dictatorships over potentially religious ones. Internationally, Western governments have preferred friendly autocrats to democratically elected, but potentially hostile, Islamist-led governments.

The goal of this paper is to re-examine some of the assumptions about the risks of democratisation in authoritarian countries of the Muslim world (and not just in the Middle East) where strong Islamist movements or parties exist. While the risks of democratisation in these

contexts should not be underestimated and the democratic commitment of Islamists should not be taken at face value, the costs and pitfalls of the status quo in many of these countries are also increasing.

The Faustian pact that secular liberals have made with authoritarian rulers in many of these states has not prevented the repression these regimes use against Islamists being used against others as well; nor, indeed, has it stopped these regimes from adopting the types of social and religious restrictions favoured by Islamists in an effort to co-opt popular religious sentiment. For the West, partnership with friendly despots in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has not prevented nationals from these countries carrying out terrorist attacks against Western targets; in fact, quite the reverse is often true.

This is not to say that democratisation holds all the solutions to these problems. Democracy will undoubtedly complicate efforts by the countries in question to deal with the often deep social, economic and political problems they face, even if it would undoubtedly strengthen the legitimacy of those having to make the difficult decisions necessary to confront these challenges. Likewise, terrorist movements like al-Qaeda and its partisans are unlikely to suddenly abandon bullets and bombs for ballot boxes. But democratisation in parts of the Muslim world would suck some of the oxygen out of the extremists' incendiary rhetoric — not least the charge that Western governments preach democracy and human rights but in practice ally themselves with governments committed to neither. Moreover, while Islamist militancy is not solely a product of authoritarian states, repression has played an unmistakable part in the process of radicalisation in many cases.

Our goal in this paper, however, is not to advocate or justify muscular interventions for the sake of 'exporting democracy'. We recognise that democratisation is most likely to succeed when it results from endogenous drivers and processes. Yet it is also true that the international community shapes and affects these processes in myriad ways, from the human rights representations made by individual countries, to the provision or withholding of aid and financial assistance, to the recognition afforded new governments. In short, even if it is not actually promoting it, the international community will continue to influence and respond to

democratisation and political change in the Muslim world.

Against this background, Islamism's relationship with democracy has received considerable attention from scholars, researchers and commentators. What this paper does, however, is to turn the traditional question about Islamism's relationship with democracy, on its head. Instead of asking 'What will Islamists do to democracy?' it asks, 'What does democracy do to Islamists?'

To that end this paper compares three cases of Islamist movements in three progressively more democratic contexts. The paper begins with a discussion of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, a movement that avows a commitment to democracy and democratic reform, but operates in a non-democratic political context. It then considers the *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (the Prosperous Justice Party or the PKS), that has adapted a Muslim Brotherhood model of activism to Indonesia's relatively new, but maturing, democracy. Finally, it examines the case of the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (the Justice and Development Party or the AKP) a 'post-Islamist' party operating in Turkey's older, if still incomplete, democratic political system.

Each case study provides a self-contained discussion of how one particular Islamist movement or party has adapted, or attempted to adapt, to democratic participation. But our goal is also to compare the three case studies in order to identify any consistent shifts in ideas and activism that seem to occur across these cases and indeed manifest more strongly in the more democratic contexts. In other words, our aim is to understand the ways in which political context shapes the Islamist response. The goal in this regard is not so much to establish whether democracy 'moderates' Islamists as it is to understand the ways and conditions under which participation in democratic politics may normalise them. By normalisation we refer to a process whereby Islamists become integrated members of the political system, operating by the rules and norms of democracy, developing more transparent leadership and party structures and expanding the bases of their membership.

A review of the three case studies suggests six fairly consistent shifts in Islamist ideology and activism that appear to become more manifest as one moves from non-democratic to democratic contexts:

From *shari'a* state to *shari'a* values: In the cases considered here democratic normalisation sees a shift from a pursuit of *shari'a* (the *sine qua non* of Islamist activism) that requires new institutions (an Islamic state or system), to a focus on *shari'a* as a set of values or principles that the movement seeks to enact through existing political processes. It is the logical conclusion of a tactical decision to pursue goals through political participation rather than revolution; but it can also have far-reaching consequences as it potentially changes Islamism's ideological and practical relationship with its historical goal of an Islamic state. Specifically, the Islamic state becomes less important to Islamists as a factor in the Islamisation of society.

From Islamic governance to 'good governance': All three case studies illustrate a gradual secularisation of Islamist policy agendas. This is not to say that Islamists abandon their religious agendas or adopt policies demonstrably incompatible with their Islamic principles. Consistency with their interpretation of Islam remains important. But Islamists in these contexts also become engaged in, and are forced to respond to, a much wider range of issues upon which 'Islam' says very little. And it is sometimes difficult to demonstrate to supporters what is specifically Islamic about the solutions proposed by these movements. This is reflected, for example, in the way approaches to economic policy have shifted from Islamism's historical focus on social equality to a more neo-liberal approach. This shift serves a substantive purpose in terms of an effort by Islamists to find rational policy responses to real problems but it serves a political purpose as well, in terms of attracting new supporters.

From moral message to the morality of the messengers: Accompanying the preceding shifts is a further shift in the way these movements or parties are perceived in electoral or more fully democratic contexts. Specifically, the point of differentiation becomes less their ideological and moral message, and more the perceived morality or appeal of the movement or party's representatives. This is consistent with the historical aims of Islamist activism insofar as Islamism has

sought to provide both an ideology for social, economic and political reform, but also exemplars of Islamically inspired probity, effectiveness and selflessness. Yet in the contexts considered here, the balance tips in favour of the latter. And because these movements or parties are now winning support more because of the attractiveness of their candidates, they gain greater flexibility with respect to reconsidering aspects of their ideology or policy agendas.

Greater membership diversity: Such shifts in the ideas and activism of Islamist movements both facilitate and reflect changes in the membership of these movements and parties. As socio-religious movements, Islamists usually restrict their membership to people fitting particular criteria — often, one must be male, a Muslim or indeed a 'special Muslim' in the sense of holding a particular interpretation of Islam and its role in public life. As political parties in democratic contexts the imperative is to broaden the base of membership, in particular to attract political talent from all quarters. The result, however, is a tension and even a change in the identity of the movement as its membership changes, although this is likely to be very gradual.

Regeneration: The democratic pretences of mainstream Islamist movements are often undermined by their lack of internal democracy. Against this, however, political activism has often provided a chance for new generations within these movements to come to the fore, in some respects bypassing the internal hierarchy. This has certainly been the case with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, although ultimately the imperatives of operating as a semi-secret movement under varying degrees of pressure from the state have reinforced the importance of internal discipline at the cost of debate and dynamism. The cases of the PKS and the AKP, by contrast, demonstrate how the availability of more democratic political space allows greater opportunity for the emergence of younger, more open-minded, worldly and technically adept activists.

Oscillation rather than moderation: Superficially, a review of our three case studies supports the idea that greater democracy moderates

Islamist movements. Yet it is probably more judicious to talk of oscillation rather than moderation. That is, in more open political contexts there seems a much greater chance of ideological dynamism or *oscillation* in two respects: first, a tension between more purist and more pragmatic wings over the overall ideological direction of the movement becomes stronger; and second, within the framework of this tension, each side of the movement will score ‘victories’ on particular issues or policy questions, such that on some issues the party will appear closer to its principles, and on others it will appear more pragmatic. In other words, Islamist parties, like most, if not all, parties in democratic contexts, would not so much moderate (or become more extreme, for that matter) as become susceptible to greater internal tensions over ideology and policy that are not readily resolved, but constantly *oscillate* as different factions of the party seek to influence positions and outcomes.

This paper does *not*, however, argue that the foregoing shifts are the inevitable consequence of democratic participation by any Islamist movement in any political context. The paper concludes by identifying some of the variables and factors that seem to have been critical in our case studies. In particular: the *a priori* adoption of participatory, non-violent and non-confrontational strategies by the Islamist movements in question (at least domestically), that distinguishes them from the extremists like al-Qaeda, but also militant organisations such as Hizballah and Hamas that practise both participatory politics and violence; the existence of strong competition from other parties or movements, Islamist and non-Islamist; the role of countervailing forces and institutions; the legitimacy of these forces and institutions; and finally the existence of real opportunities for Islamists to practise democratic politics and to give real significance to their internal debates, and hence to evolve in a democratic direction.

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Introduction

Those who seek to broaden political participation in the Middle East will, therefore, find us supportive, as we have been elsewhere in the world. At the same time, we are suspect of those who would use the democratic process to come to power, only to destroy that very process in order to retain power and political dominance. While we believe in the principle of ‘one person, one vote,’ we do not support ‘one person, one vote, one time’.

– Edward P. Djerejian, US Assistant Secretary of State for
Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs¹

We support the advance of freedom in the Middle East, because it is our founding principle, and because it is in our national interest. The hateful ideology of terrorism is shaped and nurtured and protected by oppressive regimes. Free nations, in contrast, encourage creativity and tolerance and enterprise. And in those free nations, the appeal of extremism withers away.

– George W. Bush, President of the United States²

In 1992, Edward P. Djerejian, then US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, signalled that American support for democratisation in the Middle East would be tempered by Washington's fear that it would empower a political trend whose commitment to democracy was seen to be cynical, namely Islamism. In most Middle Eastern countries Islamists were then — as often they are now — the best organised and most credible opposition movements and were expected to do very well in any elections held as a result of any democratic opening. Yet, among many Western political leaders, some commentators and academic specialists and within many Muslim countries (and not just among those that count themselves as secular) there has been suspicion that Islamism's commitment to the sovereignty of God, over and above the sovereignty of the people, meant that these movements would use democracy merely as a means of coming to power. A key concern was, as Djerejian evocatively put it, that if Islamists won elections the result would be 'one person, one vote, one time'.

Of course, an unspoken concern in Djerejian's speech was that Islamists would not just prove to be bad democrats, they would also prove bad allies. The United States and its Western allies have long feared that democracy in the Muslim world would bring to power regimes deeply hostile to Western interests and values. It therefore came as a surprise when, at the beginning of this decade, a new Republican Administration led by George W. Bush radically, if temporarily, changed the course of American foreign policy in the Middle East. Half a century of policy centred on partnerships with undemocratic allies and maintenance of the status quo in the Middle East was qualified by a robust advocacy of democratisation and political reform. The United States overthrew authoritarian regimes in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, and heralded the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005 as the start of a 'Beirut Spring'. It launched with impressive fanfare, but less impressive follow-up, a democratisation initiative for the 'Greater Middle East'. Its new policy approach even extended, for a time, to modest political pressure being applied to friendly regimes in countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia to liberalise politically.

Strikingly, all this occurred against the background of al-Qaeda's 11 September, 2001 terrorist strikes on the United States, when perceptions of the Islamist threat had grown rather than diminished. Key to this was the ascendancy within the Bush Administration of an argument that al-Qaeda was a by-product of democratic deficits in the Arab and Islamic worlds. As Olivier Roy has noted, the Administration embraced a structural explanation of terrorism which saw poor governance as the key culprit.³ Democratisation in the Muslim world suddenly became an American national interest. Implicit in this shift was the view that democracy would prove more dangerous to Islamists than Islamists to democracy. In effect, President Bush turned the question of Islamism's compatibility with democracy on its head. He asked not 'What would Islamists do to democracy?' but 'What would democracy do to Islamists?'

Despots, democracy and the national interest

The purpose of this paper is to explore this last question, not least because the Bush Administration all too soon gave up seeking an answer. When Hamas won a majority in the Palestinian elections in January 2006, the United States responded by cutting off aid to the Palestinian Authority and encouraging others to do likewise. In Egypt, the regime of President Hosni Mubarak exploited a softening of Washington's pro-democratisation approach to suppress yet again the Muslim Brotherhood — although it also moved against other political opponents, from judges and journalists to bloggers. It would seem that, for the United States, the salience of concrete, short term interests overcame the longer term, but more uncertain, promise of democratisation. Yet the question of what democracy might do to mainstream Islamist movements that eschew violence (at least domestically) remains apposite for three key reasons.

First, both Islamism, and attitudes towards Islamism, have become obstacles to democratisation in the Muslim world and certainly in the Middle East. It is not surprising that the democratic commitment of even non-violent Islamists should be questioned, given Islamism's undemocratic ideological heritage. Nevertheless, secular autocrats

in many majority Muslim states have consistently used the ‘Islamist threat’ to fend off external and internal calls for reform, and as a justification for repression — and not just of Islamists. Against this background, trying to develop a better understanding of what democratic participation might do to Islamist parties is critical to dealing with one key democratisation dilemma (although by no means the only one) in parts of the Muslim world.

Second, while al-Qaeda and its partisans will not abandon bullets and bombs for ballot boxes, democratisation in parts of the Muslim world would suck some of the oxygen out of their incendiary rhetoric — not least the charge that Western governments preach democracy and human rights but in practice ally themselves with governments in the Muslim world committed to neither. Islamist militancy is not solely a product of dysfunctional authoritarian societies, but the latter have made important contributions to the former. The militant views of the Egyptian Muslim Brother, Sayyid Qutb — ideas that have inspired generations of Islamist militants, including al-Qaeda’s deputy leader Ayyman al-Zawahiri — were in part a product of the Muslim Brotherhood’s confrontation with the Egyptian state in the 1950s and 1960s, a confrontation Qutb experienced personally in Egyptian prisons.

Third, whatever view one takes of the virtues, or otherwise, of pushing for democratic change in the authoritarian states of the Muslim world, the policy dilemmas raised by democratisation will not go away. The invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the ‘War on Terror’, the Palestinian elections, the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, and economic growth in Islamic Asia, have all unleashed forces that will be difficult to contain. Likewise, globalisation, the spread of new media, the natural and unnatural turnover of long-time leaders in many authoritarian societies, and youth bulges, among other factors, continue to erode the status quo. Whether the West advocates it or not, political change, and not always positive change, will be the result of these old and new forces. This is not just relevant to the Muslim Middle East. Over half the world’s Muslims live outside that region and Islamism’s relationship with democracy and with the West is no less contentious in parts of Islamic Southeast, South and Central Asia.

One can argue that it is not the place of Western policymakers to make decisions about the future internal political configuration of Muslim states. Indeed, if recent years have demonstrated anything it is that poor policy choices and inconsistency in efforts to ‘export democracy’ can be highly damaging to the very reforms that the West ostensibly claims to support. Democratisation in Muslim countries, as elsewhere, remains heavily dependent on endogenous forces and factors. In this regard, our analysis is not just relevant to Western policymakers pondering how to respond to Islamist movements operating in democratising contexts in the Muslim world; it is also relevant to the citizens of these states that are keen to ensure that they do not swap one flavour of authoritarianism for another.

However, the simple fact is that all governments do, by their actions and inactions, influence internal events in other countries, whether they run a pro-democracy agenda or not. To say that the West should not *drive* the democratisation in Muslim countries is not to say that the West has no role whatsoever. Interventions need not be as dramatic as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq or as grandiose as the Bush Administration’s ‘Greater Middle East’ initiative. The provision or withholding of aid, human rights representations and the recognition afforded or denied new regimes all reflect the myriad ways in which states purposefully or incidentally intervene in the affairs of others. Regardless of whether or not one considers it legitimate, such influence is a reality, and the policy conundrums posed by democratisation in contexts with strong Islamist oppositions will continue to confront Western policymakers.

‘To what do we summon mankind?’

‘Islamism’ is a Western, specifically a French, description of a form of activism that emerged in the first quarter of the 20th century — although the term ‘Islamist’ only came into vogue in the 1990s.⁴ Islamism has four defining features: it proposes the revival of Islam as the basis for societal reform; consistent with this, it conceives of Islam as an ideology; its goal is the establishment of an Islamic system

or state (*al-nizam al-Islami*); and the defining feature of that state or system is the implementation of *shari'a* — crudely put, Islamic law.

Historically, Islamism emerged as a response to a specifically Western form of modernity that many Muslim communities in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia experienced as a result of colonisation. Manifestations of that modernity included the emergence of new nation states (whose borders were largely defined by Western colonial powers), the advent of capitalist economics, scientific and technological advances, and the cultural and social shifts that came in the wake of these changes.⁵ This encounter with the West sparked a fundamental debate throughout much of the Muslim world. Some argued that, in order to compete with the growing power of the West, or to throw off the colonial yoke, the Muslim world should modernise itself along Western lines. Islamism by contrast argued that the key to reviving the power of the Muslim world was not the emulation of the West, but the revival of Islam.

In advocating Islam as the basis for societal reform, Islamism sought to revive the traditional idea that Islam was not merely a religion, but also a system for social, legal, economic and political organisation.⁶ For Hasan al-Banna, founder of the prototypical Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, Islam informed 'all things material and spiritual, societal and individual, political and personal' in a Muslim's life.⁷ Islam was both religion and state (*din wa dawla*). This was not, however, as is sometimes supposed, a harking back to a bygone Islamic era. Islamism was as much an expression of modernity as a reaction against what was seen as a specifically Western manifestation of it.⁸ Islamists view Islam as an ideology, akin to other modern ideologies. Moreover, Islamists have enthusiastically embraced modern science and technology and have tended, by and large, to be students and professionals rather than religious scholars.

Islamism also sought an answer to a modern question: what form should the nation states of the Muslim world take? The answer it provided — the Islamic system or state (*al-nizam al-Islami*) — is the third defining characteristic of Islamism. This reflected a view that the etatisation of Islam was not just important in reviving the fortunes of

the Islamic world, it was also critical to a Muslim's ability to lead a truly Islamic life. In theory, such a state would eventually unite the entire global Muslim community (the *umma*) into a single entity.

Different Islamist movements and thinkers have provided different visions, and varying degrees of detail, of what an Islamic state or system might actually consist. Yet on one matter they have been in agreement: the defining feature of any Islamic state — and the fourth key feature of Islamism — would be the implementation of *shari'a*. Typically defined as Islamic law, *shari'a* encompasses not just laws governing personal, social, political and economic conduct, but also religious procedures and regulations, moral guidelines and injunctions and extends to processes for both deriving law and adjudicating disputes.⁹ It has as its primary sources the Qur'an and the Sunna — the normative behaviour of the Prophet Muhammed as recorded in *hadith* — understood and implemented through processes of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). The results are reflected in the Sunni case, in four schools of Islamic jurisprudence, and in a fifth school for Shi'ite Islam. *Shari'a* is by no means a codified set of laws or regulations, however; for Islamism, therefore the task has been not just to implement *shari'a* but to interpret, and often re-interpret, it.

Beyond this general, historical definition, particular Islamist movements have chosen different means to pursue the ideology's goals, although in doing so, have also prioritised different aspects of the ideology. Broadly, we would distinguish between two types of activism — mainstream and militant — with a considerable grey area in between. By mainstream we refer to those Islamists who seek the goal of an Islamic state or system largely through the gradual, ground-up, reformation of society. Reflecting this, mainstream Islamists, historically, have organised not as narrowly focused political parties, but as social movements advocating broad based reform.

Militant Islamism reflects a violent, pessimistic and impatient attitude toward change. Historically, its most influential ideologue has been the Egyptian Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb (although his influence is by no means limited to militants). The Muslim Brotherhood's confrontation with the newly installed Nasserist state in Egypt in the

mid- to late-1950s convinced Qutb that the Islamisation of society could only occur after the total overthrow of the existing political, economic and social order — an order that he argued existed in a state of *jahiliya* (barbarism). In his most infamous and incendiary work, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* ('Signposts along the Way'), Qutb produced an Islamist 'What is to be Done', echoing Lenin's idea of the seizure of power by a revolutionary vanguard.

One area where mainstream activism has crossed over into militancy and terrorism has been with respect to what Islamists term the 'liberation of Muslim lands'. Even movements that have avoided violent activism at home have sent fighters abroad to participate in 'jihad' in Palestine, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere. Hamas in the Palestinian territories and Hizballah in Lebanon are examples of movements that combine the broad social, religious and political activism of mainstream movements with militancy focused largely on an external enemy (in both cases, Israel). Al-Qaeda reflects the most extreme evolution of the irredentist tendency in militant Islamism, prioritising armed struggle and terrorism against Islam's external enemies (the 'far enemy', the West) over domestic reformist or revolutionary struggles (against the 'near enemy', the secular rulers of Muslim states).¹⁰

Islamism and democracy

To understand the attitude of Islamism to democracy it is necessary to make an important distinction in definitions of the latter. Democracy can be crudely defined as popular rule (from *demos*, common people, and *kratos*, rule). Beyond this definitions vary, although they can be very broadly divided into two categories: procedural or minimalist definitions that see democracy as a set of processes by which a society ensures direct and indirect popular participation in its governance;¹¹ and definitions that tie certain values or ideological goals to the functioning of democratic processes, most commonly personal freedom, hence 'liberal democracy', but also, for example social justice, hence 'social democracy'.¹²

Most, if not all, Islamists would reject the notion of liberal democracy as its elevation of individual rights sits at odds with the emphasis in Islam on the rights of the community and the obligation to follow God's laws. The most militant Islamist would also, by definition, reject procedural democracy: for Qutb, elections and popular participation in decision-making were akin to acts of apostasy; while for Osama bin Laden, those 'who reject armed confrontation with the governments in order to restore their rights are engaging in a huge fraud'.¹³ Nevertheless, some militant and many mainstream Islamist movements have participated in electoral processes and avow a commitment, if often qualified, to procedural democracy. This has provoked scepticism for four broad reasons.

First, it is ideologically difficult to reconcile the primacy Islamism accords God and His laws — *shari'a* — in the conduct of human affairs with the cornerstone of democracy, popular sovereignty. For some Islamists sovereignty (*hakimiyya*) is God's alone (even if, in practice, others are exercising it for Him); for others it is, to varying degrees, shared with the community (via processes of consultation or *shura*). But even when sovereignty is shared, Islamists typically see restrictions. There are limitations with respect to those who are seen to be fit to lead the community. Most notably, Islamism's typically conservative reading of Islam limits the political rights of women and of non-Muslim minorities. There are also limits on human legislation: policies or laws which contravene *shari'a* (or are seen to) are proscribed (e.g., legalisation of homosexuality and alcohol, economic transactions that generate interest). Freedom of expression is also bound by a conservative reading of Islam and by a typically heavy emphasis on the injunction in Islam to promote good and prohibit evil (*al-amr bil-mar'uf wal-nahy 'an al-munkar*). Finally, the attitude of even mainstream Islamism toward pluralism and political parties has often been heavily qualified, consistent with an emphasis on the importance of unity in the community and a view that sees Islam as above politics — the final word on the conduct of human affairs. As Hasan al-Banna noted in his epistle to the fifth conference of the Muslim Brothers:

... in the eyes of al-Ikhwan: freedom of opinion, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of consultation and freedom of advice are all necessitated in Islam. But excessive insistence on one's opinion, rebellion against unity, seeking to widen differences and aiming to destabilise the government are all prevalent in today's party politics. Islam, though, makes the former obligatory and refers to the latter as *haram* because Islam in all its basic principles invites towards unity and co-operation and encourages love and brotherhood.¹⁴

Second, Islamism's emphasis on *shari'a* is also potentially problematic when it comes to the practical questions of implementation and institutions. There is little agreement between different schools of Islamist thought on the institutional arrangements necessary for the implementation of *shari'a*, while fears that an Islamic state is necessarily a theocratic one are often overstated. Nevertheless, most Islamists would propose some role for Islamic legists in ensuring that the laws and policies of an Islamic state reflected or at least did not contradict *shari'a*. Put more crudely, for Islamists, *shari'a* requires a *shari'a* enforcing state (or at least certain specific institutions). This raises two problematic questions for democracy: would, or indeed, could (given its need for special skills) such a body be elected? And what would the power of such a body be over any other elected organ?

Third, the difficulty of reconciling Islamist ideology with democracy is compounded by the hegemonic potential vested in even mainstream Islamist movements. There are a number of dimensions to this: the special status afforded Islamist movements as purveyors of the literal word of God in often conservative and pious societies; the breadth of activism that sees Islamist movements operate everything from mosques, charities and NGOs to business enterprises and political parties; the heavy emphasis on cadre formation among various segments and strata of society; strong internal cohesion and discipline, often forged by consensus, but also facilitated by limited internal democracy and hierarchical leadership structures; strict membership guidelines and

processes that typically involve structured processes of induction; and secretive or semi-secretive internal structures — even if this has often been partly the result of the repression these movements have faced throughout the Muslim world.

Finally, the democratic record of Islamist movements has by and large been poor. Iran is the best example today of an Islamist state (Sudan has arguably slowly shed its Islamist pretences after the arrest of regime ideologue Hasan al-Turabi in 2004 and become a common or garden variety autocracy). While Iran has elections that are, within certain regime approved limits, real contests, few would describe it as a functioning democracy (In its 2008 report, Freedom House placed it in the 'Not Free' category¹⁵). Hamas' 2007 'coup' in Gaza following its success in parliamentary elections and Hizballah's use of its paramilitary forces in an internal struggle against Lebanon's elected government in mid-2008 have likewise done little to burnish Islamism's democratic credentials, especially in emerging democracies.

Essentialists, instrumentalists and post-Islamists

If the theory and, frequently, the practice of Islamism vis-à-vis democracy has been discouraging, the question remains, need it be this way? Often those who answer in the affirmative reflect essentialist — and in some cases exceptionalist — attitudes toward Islamism's relationship with democracy. Here the essential nature of Islamism is seen as anti-democratic, indeed totalitarian, and this essence is viewed as unchanging regardless of the context or environment in which particular Islamist movements operate or the tactical decisions they make.¹⁶ This essentialist view is also often closely linked with an exceptionalist view of Islamist movements as being the only threats to democracy in Muslim societies — an attitude that is not borne out by the historical record in many Muslim countries given the frequent, anti-democratic role played by non-Islamist forces (especially the military). Of course, what often really counts here is not Islamism's democratic compatibility, but the threat it is seen to represent. In the case of local secular elites in Muslim countries what they fear is not autocracy *per se*,

but religious autocracy (illustrated, for example, by the willingness of the secular elite in Turkey to tolerate, even encourage, non-democratic interventions into politics to prevent Islamist gains). In terms of Western attitudes to Islamists, the latter's hostility toward Israel and toward Western interests undoubtedly plays a critical role.

The exceptionalist view of Islamism's democratic compatibility also reflects an assumption that good democracies require good democrats: that is, for a democratic system to work, its participants must hold a thoroughgoing commitment to democratic principles and processes. In fact, the risk faced by any democracy is that one or more actors will behave undemocratically.¹⁷ Moreover, the checks and balances, or normative concepts of 'responsible government' built into most democracies suggest that many founding fathers were not entirely prepared to rely solely on the democratic values of their fellow citizens. The problems of factions trying to seize power or, in Alexis de Tocqueville's words, the 'tyranny of the majority', are hardly new, and much less uniquely associated with Islamism. As James Madison was moved to write in the tenth of the Federalist Papers:

It is vain to say, that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests, and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm. Nor, in many cases, can such an adjustment be made at all, without taking into view indirect and remote considerations, which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the rights of another, or the good of the whole. The inference to which we are brought, is, that the causes of faction cannot be removed; and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects.¹⁸

Against this background, critics of Islamism's democratic compatibility have characterised the participation by Islamist movements in elections (in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and Turkey)

as merely tactical or instrumental. In fact, historically, Islamism has tended to be either hostile or merely ambivalent toward democracy and, therefore, the attitude of individual movements toward electoral participation has, in the first instance, usually been instrumentalist. In large part, this is a function of the authoritarian contexts in which these movements have operated. As James Piscatori notes, opposition to the existing regime usually takes the form of 'appealing to what the state is *not* — i.e. participatory'.¹⁹

While critics see instrumentalism as the end-point of Islamism's democratic potential, others like Piscatori emphasise the impact of electoral participation and pro-democratic activism on the movements themselves. Some have used the term 'post-Islamist' to describe shifts in Islamist activism and attitudes toward democracy, or, indeed, to describe a shift away from Islamist ideology and activism altogether (not every specialist, of course, uses the term in the same way).²⁰ Asef Bayat, for example, describes post-Islamism as both a condition and a project. As he explains:

Post-Islamism denotes a departure, albeit in diverse degrees, from an Islamist ideological package which is characterised by universalism, monopoly of religious truth, exclusivism and obligation towards acknowledging ambiguity, multiplicity, inclusion and compromise in principles and practice.²¹

Bayat notes, however, that what he is outlining is not the end of Islamism. Not all Islamist movements make this transition; some, he argues, will cling 'eclectically and simultaneously' to both Islamism and post-Islamism.²² Other commentators and scholars have referred to the 'democratic learning' of some mainstream Islamist movements, or Islamist 'auto-reform', or indeed to the emergence of tensions and 'grey areas' as Islamists try to reconcile their ideology with democratic participation.²³

More focused on the practical political compromises that Islamists make in democratic contexts, Vali Nasr has argued for 'Muslim

Democracy': the rise of political parties in Muslim countries, from both Islamist and non-Islamist origins, that echo the emergence of Christian Democrat parties in Europe. Muslim democrats reject or discount the historical Islamist goal of an Islamic state, settling instead for 'crafting viable electoral platforms and stable governing coalitions' in pursuit of Islamic and other interests, and respecting the rules of the democratic political game.²⁴ But for Nasr these shifts come about not because of revision to 'theory and ideology', but from 'pragmatism and politics'.²⁵

Not all specialists see democratic participation as a panacea with respect to the evolution of Islamist movements in more pragmatic directions. Jillian Schwedler, in a nuanced examination of whether democratic participation 'moderates' Islamist movements, has argued that even limited democratic openings can result in significant evolution in Islamist politics.²⁶ She notes, however, that 'moderation' (which she defines as the shift from a relatively closed and rigid worldview to a more open and tolerant one²⁷) is not a function of democratic participation alone. In her comparative analysis of Jordanian and Yemeni Islamist parties she demonstrates how limited democratic participation produced moderation in the former case but not in the latter, indentifying important additional factors including the role played by respective regimes in politics, the level of internal democracy within each Islamist movement and the role of internal deliberation and debate in redrawing the ideological boundaries for permissible action.²⁸

Case studies in democratic normalisation

Islamism's instrumentalist encounter with democracy is the starting point for this study. Our thesis is that Islamism is unlikely to remain untouched by the experience of even limited electoral politics, although like Schwedler we do not assume that it will lead to moderation in every case. We ask the question: even if Islamists commence as tactical democrats to achieve political power, what does their participation in democratic politics do to their ideas and activism — consciously or otherwise? In other words, what does democracy do to Islamism?

In answering this question our focus is the practical compromises that Islamist movements and parties make in democratising or democratic political contexts, rather than the intellectual or theoretical exertions made by some Islamist writers and thinkers to reconcile Islamism and democracy. (We are thinking here, among others, of Iran's Abdel Karim Soroush, Tunisia's Rachid el-Ghannouchi, Egyptian 'Wasatiyya' thinkers such as Muhammed Selim al-Awa, Kamal Abou Magd and Tarek al-Bishry, Sudan's Abdullahi Ahmed an-Naim and Turkey's Mehmet Aydin.) Toward this end, this paper examines the experience of one Islamist movement, one Islamist party, and one party that could be described as post-Islamist (even if it does not describe itself as such): namely, *Gama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimeen* (the Society of Muslim Brothers, henceforth the Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt, *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (Prosperous Justice Party, henceforth the PKS) in Indonesia and *Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party, henceforth the AKP) in Turkey.

Accordingly, Chapter 1 discusses the Muslim Brotherhood, a broadly based politico-religious movement operating in an environment that contains a highly circumscribed pluralist space. Nevertheless, the Brotherhood has made advocacy of democratisation a key component of its political rhetoric. Chapter 2 explores the experience of the PKS, a party that has adapted a specifically Muslim Brotherhood model of Islamist activism to Indonesia's recently democratised politics. Chapter 3 finally examines the case of the AKP, a party that has evolved from Islamist beginnings to a point where many of its members now bristle at being labelled Islamist, operating in a political context whose democratisation has a longer history than Indonesia's, but has also been more fitful and incomplete.

Each case study provides a self-contained discussion of how one particular Islamist movement or party has adapted, or attempted to adapt, to democratic participation. Yet the overarching purpose of this paper is to compare the three cases in order to identify any consistent shifts in an Islamist movement's ideas and activism that occur in progressively more democratic contexts. In other words, the paper examines how some of the issues, debates and tensions raised by the Muslim Brotherhood's

participation in Egypt's limited electoral politics are played out, or resolved, in the more democratic contexts of Indonesia and Turkey. The case studies also make for a useful comparison, representing as they do different degrees of political success. The Muslim Brotherhood remains legally banned, although tolerated, the PKS has formed part of President Yudhoyono's ruling coalition since 2004, while the AKP has ruled Turkey since 2002.

Finally, we have chosen Egypt because it perhaps best encapsulates fears about what might happen were there to be a dramatic democratic opening in a country with a strong Islamist opposition. It would, however, be just as possible to substitute a number of other Middle Eastern states such as Jordan, Algeria or Syria where similar fears of Islamist empowerment are used as an argument against democratic reform. Our choice of Indonesia and Turkey is more deliberate; currently, they provide the only examples of truly democratic systems in which Islamist (or post-Islamist) parties participate.²⁹ This does not mean that we necessarily view the PKS, or in particular, the AKP, as the natural or necessary path of evolution of all Islamist movements in different democratic contexts. In fact, even the PKS and the AKP have their critics who see their democratic participation as simply different means to pursue the same ends as more militant Islamists.³⁰ Obviously, there will also be local factors at play limiting their utility as a model of democratic, Islamist politics elsewhere. Thus, in addition to highlighting any changes that take place in Islamist ideas and activism in progressively more democratic contexts, our paper concludes with an examination of some of the factors and conditions that have shaped these shifts in the Indonesian and Turkish contexts that may be applicable when looking at democratisation in other parts of the Muslim world.

It should be emphasised that in examining the evolution of Islamist ideas and activism as a function of democratic participation, our goal is not to establish whether democracy 'moderates' Islamists. The notion of moderation is problematic on a number of grounds. All the Islamist movements and parties considered in this paper would consider themselves moderate, although they have also been labelled extreme by others. But even assuming that one could agree on a definition of

moderation, it seems self-evident that different cases and contexts will produce different outcomes; even the same party or movement can variously become more moderate and then more militant or extreme over time. Democracy, as Schwedler demonstrates, is not on its own likely to lead to moderation. Moreover, parties can over time moderate, but they can also become more extreme.

In this respect what we are seeking to chart in this paper is, broadly, a process of democratic normalisation. Islamists might object to being described as abnormal, but in many respects they are (and not just against a democratic criteria), or at least start out that way. Most Islamist movements do, in fact, start life as something other than normal political actors and take great pride in the fact. That is, typically, they begin as broad social, political, economic as well as religious movements (rather than explicitly political parties), working outside the formal political system, with specific membership requirements and closed internal structures, often undertaking semi-secret or secret activism (even when it is non-violent). Normalisation, by contrast, sees Islamists become integrated members of the political system, operating by the rules and norms of democracy, developing more transparent leadership and party structures and expanding the bases of their membership.

Such a transformation would not be unique to Islamism. Normalisation refers to a process common among movements that make a transition to formal politics; it is the process, for example, that some socialist and communist movements went through as they became social democratic parties in a number of European states in the 1960s and 1970s. The question we ask in this paper, in effect, is what such a process might look like when it comes to Islamist movements.

Chapter 1

Egypt: preachers or politicians?

We believe that Islam is an all-embracing concept which regulates every aspect of life, adjudicating on every one of its concerns and prescribing for it a solid and rigorous order. It does not stand helpless before life's problems, nor the steps one must take to improve mankind. Some people mistakenly understand by Islam something restricted to certain types of religious observances or spiritual exercise, and confine themselves and their understanding to these narrow areas determined by their limited grasp.

– Hasan al-Banna, founder and General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood³¹

The success of the Muslim Brotherhood should not frighten anybody: we respect the rights of all religious and political groups. So much damage has been inflicted on the country over the past century because of despotism and corruption that it would be impossible to embark on wider political reform and economic development without first repairing the damage to our basic institutions. Free and fair democratic elections are the first step along the path of reform toward a better future for Egypt and the entire region. We simply have no choice today but to reform.

– Khairat el-Shater, Second Deputy General Guide, Muslim Brotherhood³²

In March 1928 in Isma'liyya, Egypt, Hasan al-Banna established the Society of Muslim Brothers.³³ The movement's formation was unremarkable enough, being one of a number of Islamic associations and welfare societies established in the period. Yet, in little over a decade, the charisma of its leader, and the strength and breadth of its organisation, would see the Muslim Brotherhood become a leading political actor in Egypt, which it remains to this day. More significantly, however, the movement would become the prototype for Islamist movements around the world, providing a model of faith-based activism for off-shoots and imitators alike. The Muslim Brotherhood can be thought of today in two senses: as a specific movement in Egypt and as the seminal ideological and activist tendency within Islamism.³⁴

In an interview with a prominent Muslim Brother, Gamal Heshmat, we asked what lessons the movement drew from the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.³⁵ He responded that al-Qaeda's attacks had been a vindication of the Muslim Brothers' gradualist, non-violent approach. Implicit in this were messages both for governments in the Middle East and the West, and for militant Islamist movements. To the former, the tacit message was that there is a difference between the avowedly reformist and non-violent approach of the Muslim Brotherhood and the terrorism of the militants; and to militant Islamists, some of whom (such as al-Qaeda's deputy leader Ayyman al-Zawahiri) had been vocal critics of the Brotherhood's non-violent approach, it was that violence on an international scale would repeat the failures of the national Islamist violence of the 1990s in countries such as Egypt and Algeria.

Since the late 1970s the Muslim Brotherhood has sought to position itself domestically between militancy and political passivity. This chapter examines the ways in which the movement's ideology and model of activism has interacted with, and been influenced by, the opportunities and constraints of Egypt's non-democratic politics. In particular, it explores three issues that illustrate this interaction and the movement's consequential, if limited, evolution: its efforts to balance an avowal of democracy with its commitment to *shari'a*; its internal debate over whether to form a political party; and the impact of internal generational differences.

In the land of Pharaoh

The essential feature of modern Egyptian politics, from the Free Officers' revolution of 1952 to the present day, has been a paternalistic, authoritarian rule. Yet, the nature of that rule has changed in line with the personal styles of the three presidents who have controlled modern, independent Egypt — Gamal abd al-Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. The first phase, during the Nasser years, was marked by what could be called charismatic authoritarianism.³⁶ The autocratic state built by Nasser relied heavily on repression, but also on the President's charisma and popularity, around which was built a national consensus.³⁷ That consensus was embodied in the state ideology, Nasserism, combining, in particular, the principles of anti-imperialism, pan-Arabism and social democracy.

By the time Nasser died suddenly in 1970 the charismatic foundations of the regime had begun to crumble. Politically, Nasser survived the comprehensive defeat of Arab nationalist forces by Israel in 1967, but Nasserism as an ideology received a mortal blow. Not only had it been defeated by Egypt's chief external enemy, internally its failure to meet the country's economic and social needs was becoming increasingly apparent. The result was the reawakening of popular dissent and political activism and fissures within the regime itself.

Responding to these pressures, Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, built a system of rule that Daniel Brumberg has termed 'liberal autocracy'.³⁸ Political parties were legalised, repression of the Muslim Brotherhood was eased, while state control of the economy was weakened, reflected in the policy of *Infitah* (literally 'opening'). Political and economic liberalisation had its limits, however. The only political party that was allowed to develop any real strength was Sadat's own National Democratic Party (NDP) and only a small group of oligarchs around the president benefited from the economic opening. Most importantly, Sadat institutionalised the authoritarian basis of the state by formalising the president's already considerable power to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and cabinet, to issue decrees with the force of law and bypass parliament.

Sadat's approach may have consolidated the regime's hold on power, but it also contained contradictions. In the early years of his rule, the new president cultivated mainstream Islamists, hoping they would serve as a conservative pillar of his regime, a bulwark against both the remainder of the Nasserist left and more radical Islamists. But the social dislocation caused by economic liberalisation, the decision to break Arab ranks to sign a separate peace with Israel and the return to more repressive policies in the final year of his rule combined to put the regime on a collision course with Islamists, culminating in Sadat's assassination by militant Islamists on 6 October 1981.

The poverty of Egyptian politics

For Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, there would be no dramatic break with Sadat's liberal-autocratic approach, although it perhaps became more managerial than 'liberal'. His rule has oscillated between the toleration of some degree of popular political participation and use of the formidable coercive capabilities at the president's disposal, not least the powers associated with the State of Emergency which has existed in Egypt since Sadat's assassination. The result has been a political system with an emasculated formal politics, a relatively lively informal politics, and related to both, a system that, unintentionally or otherwise, privileges Islamist over non-Islamist opposition.

The weakness of the formal political system is a key feature of contemporary Egyptian politics. The parliament is no more than a rubber stamp. It is dominated by the regime party, the NDP, which is primarily a mechanism for dispensing patronage. Electoral fraud and voter intimidation have been features, to varying degrees, of every parliamentary election. Legal opposition parties have either been created by the state or owe their existence to it. Led by mostly lacklustre, insipid and uninspiring leaders, and lacking the NDP's financial and organisational advantages, they lack the capacity to build popular constituencies.

More vitality is evident in the informal political sector, where the regime either tolerates or cannot fully control political activity. This

sector includes the activities of myriad non-government organisations (or more accurately, private voluntary organisations, PVOs), from human rights groups, social and welfare organisations to more politically focused movements such as the Egyptian Movement for Change (known by its slogan *Kifaya*, literally, 'enough'). It also incorporates the political activism of journalists, judges and, more recently, bloggers, who have become an important outlet for venting criticism of the government and discussion of social, economic and political issues. There are, nevertheless, limits and constraints in the informal sector. All PVOs are licensed by the state, while the security authorities zealously police the not always well-defined red lines for political activity.

The weakness of the formal political system, combined with the opportunities available in the informal system for explicit and implicit political activism, has privileged Islamist activism over non-Islamist opposition. The most obvious example of this is the manner in which Islamists have been able to use the mosque as a tool for constituency and network building as well as for mobilisation. This has been reinforced by the lack of serious ideological competition, with the decline of Arab nationalism as an ideology since 1967 and the relative weakness of liberal and secular currents in Egypt. Nevertheless, Islamism has never been able to capitalise on this strength, at least not politically, given the constraints placed by the regime on the political system; hence, mainstream Islamism's interest in political reform.

The limits of political reform

In considering the characteristics of Egyptian politics, and the potential for reform, it is impossible to ignore the country's relationship with the United States. Regardless of whether the regime could survive without the roughly US\$2 billion it receives annually from the United States in military and financial aid, that assistance undoubtedly provides Washington with a certain degree of leverage. This was demonstrated in the period from 2003 to 2005, when the Bush Administration took its more assertive stance, urging political reform and democratisation in the region, including in Egypt.

The extremity of Washington's push for political reform came in a speech by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Cairo in mid-2005. Rice noted that for 60 years the US 'pursued stability at the expense of democracy' in the Middle East and had 'achieved neither' and that this approach had to change.³⁹ In the months leading up to the speech, Cairo and Washington had been locked in a tense dialogue over political reform and the arrest of a prominent secular opposition figure, Ayyman Nour. These differences had culminated in a decision by Rice to cancel a visit to Egypt earlier that year. A day after the State Department announced the postponement of Rice's visit, President Mubarak, catching many observers by surprise, announced his intention to hold the first ever multi-candidate presidential elections in Egyptian history; Nour was later released on bail.

Such political ferment was not solely inspired by American suasion. The period saw the emergence of new civic movements for protest. Kifaya in particular brought together a cross-section of the political opposition, including some Islamists, holding small but vocal public demonstrations calling on Mubarak to step down. Elements in the judiciary also pushed for greater autonomy and media critiques of the regime became more robust. But even given these internal forces for reform, the US dimension remained important. As one prominent Egyptian pro-reform activist said to us in 2005, US pressure on the regime was like having 'air cover' for those inside the country calling for change.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, there were clear limits to the reforms the regime was willing to countenance, especially once US pressure on the regime subsided, as eventually it did. The constitutional amendment providing for multi-candidate presidential elections (Article 76) set an impossibly high bar for potential candidates in future polls.⁴¹ The price for the Muslim Brotherhood's electoral gains in 2005 was another round of repression in which hundreds of members were arrested. Ultimately, what this period highlighted was not just the limits of regime-led reform, but also where the regime's real priorities lay — preparing the ground for a smooth succession from President Mubarak (now 80 years old) to either his son Gamal or some other incarnation of the regime.

Likewise, the period underlined the limits which the United States would travel in support of democratisation. By and large the Bush Administration stood by silently as these developments took place. Undoubtedly, it was concerned by Islamist electoral advances, a fear reinforced by the January 2006 victory of Hamas in Palestinian legislative elections. Yet the Mubarak regime's battery of the Muslim Brotherhood impacted on liberal and secular oppositionists as well. Provisions of the Emergency Law, which had been used in the past against Islamist and non-Islamist opponents alike, were incorporated into the constitution. A number of non-Islamist judges, journalists and bloggers were also detained, often without trial.

A constituency for God

Before addressing the ways in which the Muslim Brotherhood has sought to navigate the opportunities and constraints of Egyptian politics, it is worth considering who supports the movement. Reliable information on the Muslim Brotherhood's membership and supporters is scant. Nevertheless, at its initial peak, in the mid-1940s, the movement is estimated to have had anything from 1500-2000 branches and anywhere from 100,000 to two million members in Egypt, and another 500,000 sympathisers.⁴² Current estimates of membership range from 100,000 to 500,000 members, with the higher figure probably including full members, partial members (who attend meetings but are not eligible to run in internal election), and supporters.⁴³

Historically, the movement has drawn support from various segments of Egyptian society, rural and urban, although its most important base was among the so-called *effendi* class of urban, petty bourgeoisie who felt themselves economically disadvantaged by British colonial rule.⁴⁴ To this were added two groups that were direct products of Nasser's modernisation of Egypt: the newly urbanised; and what Carrie Wickham has colourfully called the 'lumpen intelligentsia' — the massive wave of students who entered university as a result of Nasser's expansion of tertiary education but, upon graduation, were unable to find jobs to fulfil their newly acquired professional qualifications.⁴⁵

Today, the middle class are better represented, at least among the movement's parliamentary activists. Of the movement's 88 members elected to parliament in 2005, the highest proportion was described by the Muslim Brotherhood as 'general managers and chief of sectors (14)' followed by accountants (10).⁴⁶

The rise of Egypt's so-called pious middle class is well covered by commentators and scholars explaining the rise of Islamism and other forms of Islamic activism in Egypt in the 1980s and 1990s.⁴⁷ The term refers to those Egyptians who went to work in the booming economies of the oil-rich Gulf states in the 1970s and 1980s and returned relatively wealthy and conspicuously religious under the influence of the more fundamentalist forms of Islam found in countries of that region, most notably in Saudi Arabia. This new class provided both an important constituency for burgeoning Islamic and Islamist activism, and a source of funding through *zakat* (the obligation on Muslims to provide a certain percentage of their income to charity).

Facing both a violent challenge by militant Islamists in the 1980s and 1990s and a political challenge from the Muslim Brotherhood (for example, as it rapidly expanded its presence in professional syndicates, teaching institutions and the media), the Egyptian Government tried to co-opt this new piety. It provided everything from tax breaks for mosque construction, to additional hours of religious programming on state-owned media. Keen to cloak itself in Islamic legitimacy, it protested the Islamic nature of the Egyptian state and granted greater latitude to the religious establishment, represented in particular by the Islamic scholars of al-Azhar University. When the scholar of Islamic studies, Nasr Abu Zayed, was charged with apostasy in the early to mid-1990s, his initial accuser had been not an Islamist militant but a regime advisor on Islam and the chairman of the NDP's religious affairs committee.⁴⁸

Asef Bayat has described this process as Egypt's 'passive revolution'.⁴⁹ Politically, the government successfully held both militant and the Islamist mainstream at bay, but socially, legally, culturally and economically, the Islamising goals of these movements were being achieved. As Bayat notes, the state adopted religious language and symbolism to 'regain moral mastery over society and secure political legitimacy, but in this

process they were conditioned to think and act religiously'.⁵⁰ Moreover, the Islamists exploited this opportunity to expand their influence in the educational, legal and media sectors, reinforcing a new piety in society, as reflected in myriad ways: from the growth of Islamic discussion groups and home gatherings; rising mosque attendance; internet chat rooms, cassettes, CDs and popular television programs all focused on Islam; charitable activity; and the widespread adoption of the veil, including by young, educated women.⁵¹

Plainly, the Muslim Brotherhood has never been able to turn this constituency for Islam into political power, the most obvious reason being the state's refusal to allow an open electoral contest between itself and the movement. And yet the movement cannot be quite sure of this constituency either. When the movement does participate in parliamentary polls, for example, it is not clear whether people are voting for the Muslim Brotherhood's program, or against the regime. As the prominent Egyptian sociologist and activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim noted of the 2005 poll, the election was not one 'in which competing political programs were being debated but rather a choice between a regime perceived as despotic and corrupt on the one hand and any other decent or half-decent alternative on the other'.⁵²

Political participation

The Muslim Brotherhood that emerged from the regime's prison camps in the 1970s had experienced a number of traumas. It had lost what came close to outright armed struggle between it and the newly formed Nasserist state, almost disappearing as an organised movement. Intellectually the movement was unsettled by the militant ideas of Sayyid Quthb, themselves a product of the confrontation with Nasser. Having then been thrown a lifeline by Sadat, the movement sought to cautiously exploit the opportunities of its new, if uncertain, status as a legally banned, but *de facto* tolerated organisation. At least formally, the Brotherhood closed its militant chapter in 1969, when Hassan al-Hudaibi, al-Banna's successor as General Guide of the movement, published *Du'ah, la Qudah* ('Preachers not Judges'), an attempt to distance the

Muslim Brothers from Qutb's more militant ideas. Nevertheless, to this day the movement largely seeks to explain away Qutb's more militant writings by arguing that they have been 'taken out of context' and Qutb remains a critical part of the movement's intellectual heritage.⁵³

In effect, the Muslim Brotherhood that re-emerged in the 1970s re-connected with al-Banna's founding ideas. Its cautiousness at that time sat well with the didactic, missionary and social sides of the movement's activism that would allow the movement to pursue al-Banna's more gradualist model for Islamising society. Nevertheless, the Brotherhood was probably never going to be just a movement of preachers, teachers and social workers (even if the future activism of the movement was the subject of a great deal of internal debate at the time). Even the movement's cautious, 'prison generation' leadership saw advantages in electoral activism that enabled the movement to advertise its presence in society and to articulate a message of reform without, at the same time, directly confronting the regime.⁵⁴

Beginning in the 1980s, the movement identified two particular opportunities for political activism: elections for Egypt's professional syndicates and associations; and parliamentary ('People's Assembly') elections. From the mid-1980s to the early-1990s the 'Islamic Trend', affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood, won victories in nearly all the major professional syndicates and associations, including those of doctors, chemists, engineers, journalists and lawyers. The movement was able to capitalise on the fact that most syndicates included not just employed professionals, but unemployed graduates, who provided the Muslim Brotherhood with a ready constituency for its integrated message of Islamically inspired social, economic and political reform.⁵⁵

In terms of parliamentary activism, the movement has contested every election since 1984, with the exception of 1990, which it boycotted with other opposition groups in protest at government changes to the electoral system. Initially it ran in coalitions with legal parties (the Wafd in 1984 and then Labour in 1987); since 1995, however, its candidates have run as independents. As with the rest of the opposition, the Muslim Brotherhood's fortunes in parliamentary elections have been highly dependent on the regime. Not only has it never been allowed

to come close to overturning the NDP's overwhelming majority, its degree of success has been directly tied to the level of vote rigging and intimidation. In 1995, generally considered to be the most violent and corrupt election on record, the movement won only one seat. By contrast it won 17 seats in the 2000 election, seen as surprisingly fair by most observers, in large part because of the role played by the judiciary in supervising the poll.⁵⁶

Hitherto, the apogee of the movement's electoral activism was in the 2005 parliamentary elections. A combination of international and internal pressure ensured that the early rounds of the election were relatively free and fair. The Brotherhood won a startling 88 seats, just short of 20% of the 454 seats that comprise the lower house of the Egyptian parliament. While this did not come close to challenging the NDP predominance, it highlighted both the movement's electoral potential (consistent with a long-standing gradualist strategy, the movement only ran candidates in 160 seats⁵⁷), but also the distance between it and other opposition parties which in total won only nine seats. The NDP's dominance was also somewhat overstated by the fact that its official candidates won only 145 seats, while 166 individuals nominally elected as 'independents' rejoined the NDP, underling once again the power of patronage.⁵⁸

The Brotherhood's success prompted it to expand its electoral strategy to encompass elections for municipal councils, the upper house of the parliament (the Shura Council), labour unions and even the boards of Cairo's social clubs.⁵⁹ Yet success also prompted a response from the regime. Following the 2005 elections, hundreds of Muslim Brothers were arrested. Twenty-five of the movement's leading members were sentenced to unexpectedly harsh jail terms of between three and ten years. Second Deputy Guide, Khairat el-Shater, was given a seven-year sentence, which is noteworthy for two reasons. First, his control of a number of commercial enterprises made him, reputedly, a significant source of the movement's financial strength (his sentence has also seen his financial assets frozen). Second, el-Shater has often mediated between the regime and the movement and his arrest therefore suggested the ascendancy of a more confrontational rather than conciliatory approach on the part of the former.⁶⁰

During this period the regime also raised claims that the movement was undertaking paramilitary preparations and President Mubarak described the Brotherhood as a threat to national security.⁶¹ Occasionally, the movement helped fuel these allegations: for example, when General Guide Muhammed Akef declared the movement's willingness to send 10,000 trained *mujahideen* to Lebanon during the month-long confrontation between Israel and Hizballah in 2006; or an infamous 'martial arts demonstration' by young Muslim Brothers on the campus of al-Azhar University in late 2006. Also, while the Muslim Brotherhood has repeatedly condemned al-Qaeda, it has also openly supported Hamas suicide attacks against Israeli citizens, and was equivocal in its condemnation of Islamist terrorism in Egypt in the 1990s. Nevertheless, there has been little evidence to suggest that, since its official disavowal of Qutb's more militant ideas, the Muslim Brotherhood has either orchestrated or participated in acts of violence aimed at overthrowing the Egyptian regime. This cautiousness has extended even to not holding major demonstrations, although the movement could place large numbers on the street, should it so choose. It sat out opposition calls for a general strike in April 2008, despite (or more likely because of) its ongoing difficulties with the state.⁶²

New democrats?

In parallel with its move into electoral politics, the Muslim Brotherhood has gradually come to adopt a declaratory position on democracy at odds with the ambivalence of its founder Hasan al-Banna and the hostility of Sayyid Qutb. Since the mid-1990s the Brotherhood has declared its support for political parties (something that al-Banna explicitly rejected), as well as for elections and the rotation of power. In 2004, in response to the US-led 'Greater Middle East' democratisation initiative, the movement published its own 'Reform Initiative' which declared its commitment to a 'democratic, constitutional, parliamentary, presidential' political system, 'in the framework of Islamic principles'.⁶³

Whether genuine or tactical, this avowal of democracy, together with the Muslim Brotherhood's foray into participatory politics, had

consequences. First, the Brotherhood's electoral activism was led by and gave greater prominence to a generation of party activists who have played a critical role in the movement's political evolution. This so-called 'middle generation' are activists, now in their 50s and 60s, who joined the movement in the 1970s, typically from the university campuses. The formative experience of Brothers such as Essam el-Erian, Abd al-Mun'im Abul Futuh, Mukhtar Nuh and former member, Abu al-Ela Madi was of a more overt and explicitly political activism. They put that experience to work — and developed it further — in the professional syndicates and parliament where they were at the forefront of the movement's activism. It was as a result of the imperatives of syndicate and parliamentary activism that the middle generation formed alliances with other political actors, sought to appeal to non-Islamist constituencies and most directly felt the absence of democratic political space in Egypt's heavily constrained political system.⁶⁴ Indeed, it is largely the imperatives of this form of political activism that has seen members of this generation emerge as key proponents of ideological pragmatism, if not moderation, within the movement.

Second, if the Muslim Brotherhood saw political activism as a way of engaging with society at large, it has also worked the other way. As journalists, opposition activists and voters came into contact with the Muslim Brotherhood, they sought clarification of the movement's stances. Nevertheless, this public interrogation of the movement's positions also cast a spotlight on the Brotherhood's often vague formulations on issues such as freedom of expression, *shari'a*, and the rights of women and minorities. In turn, efforts to clarify the movement's stances have not always been welcomed by more traditionalist elements in the movement. As we see below, on occasion this has sparked debates within the movement on the very issue being clarified.

One notable aspect of this dynamic has been the way it has pushed the movement's rhetoric from the sacred into the realms of the profane. Thus, prominent among issues raised by the movement in parliamentary sessions in 2006 were the government's poor response to outbreaks of bird flu, its mishandling of the 'al-Salam 98' ferry disaster, the situation in Iraq, and corruption and waste on the Toshka Canal project (one of

the regime's headline infrastructure projects). When the movement did return to what might be seen as its traditional terrain, that of religion, it focused not on *shari'a* but on similarly populist concerns. For example, it raised in parliament the so-called Danish cartoon scandal (in which a Danish newspaper published cartoons derogatory of Islam), as well as Pope Benedict's allegedly insulting comments on Islam in a speech in September 2006.

A comparison of the movement's pre-election programs in 1987, 2005 and 2006 is also instructive. Prior to the 1987 election the movement published a 10-point election plan of which only two points dealt with socio-economic issues.⁶⁵ By comparison, the text of the 2005 program dealt with a range of socio-economic issues, such as industrial and agricultural development, education and scientific research, political and economic reform.⁶⁶ The 2007 draft party program — which we discuss in a moment — was the most detailed iteration of the movement's policies. Running to 128 pages it dealt with everything from political reform and foreign relations to economic and trade policy and education.⁶⁷ Indeed, the barrage of criticism that the program ultimately attracted on political and religious grounds (see below) obscured what was, in many respects, a more telling critique: as more than one observer noted, on economic matters the program espoused policies that, with a few significant exceptions, were virtually indistinguishable from those of the regime.⁶⁸

Of course, there were also important differences. The Brotherhood's draft party program emphasised strong state intervention in the economy to ensure that social welfare goals would be met.⁶⁹ Thus, consistent with what the movement called the Islamic economic reference (*marja'iyya al-nizam al-iqtisadi al-Islami*), the government would have special powers to combat 'exploitation and monopoly'.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, what is also noteworthy is how key elements of the Muslim Brotherhood's economic outlook have evolved over time. In al-Banna's day, for example, reflecting its anti-colonial preoccupations, the movement was steadfastly against foreign investment. By contrast the draft party program listed foreign direct investment as a key measure for combating Egypt's economic ills, and noted the country's poor ranking in a World Bank report on global investment conditions.⁷¹

The Brotherhood would deny that such a secularisation of its political and economic program reflects anything other than Islam's concern for life's practical matters. Yet it is not always easy for its broader supporters to discern what is uniquely Islamic about the movement's attitude to international trade, or to the bird flu outbreak in Egypt. This is not to say the movement is giving up on its more religiously specific agenda, just that it recognises that to reach a broader constituency this is not enough. This was precisely the experience of the movement when it entered into the professional syndicates. The movement's activists had to learn some new skills, in particular, the ability to appeal to a broader constituency that was not, in the first instance, sympathetic to Islamist ideas.⁷²

To suggest that the movement's agenda has become increasingly secularised is not, of course, to suggest that the movement itself is becoming so. The perceived piety and uprightness of its members are also clearly factors in the movement's support, especially when contrasted with the attitude of Egyptians toward other politicians who are often seen as self-serving and corrupt. Al-Banna had always intended that the movement's members not just preach a message but attract followers by the example they set. Yet this has also meant that supporters of the movement would prefer the messenger to the message — or at least to the full implications of the message — and this has been another major consequence of the Brotherhood's political activism. As one Egyptian observer noted, where the Brotherhood has really excelled in parliamentary contests is in choosing good local candidates whom local people know and trust.⁷³

There has also been an international dimension to the Brotherhood's efforts to clarify its policy stances. After the 2005 elections the movement launched something of a charm offensive designed to reassure the West of its democratic commitment and moderate outlook. Khairat el-Shater's article in *The Guardian* newspaper ('No need to be afraid of us') was just one example.⁷⁴ Yet even if the Muslim Brotherhood might one day reassure the West about its commitment to democracy, any reconciliation of views on key international policy questions have proven much more difficult. The Muslim Brotherhood condemned the terror attacks on 9/11

and has shown little sympathy for al-Qaedaism (and vice versa). But on the issue used by the United States, in particular, as a benchmark for judging friends or foes in the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there has been little or no change in the movement's stances. Hamas is formally a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, although in practice operates independently. The Brotherhood has defined acts of terrorism against Israel, including suicide bombing, as legitimate acts of resistance and it has opposed negotiations with Israel. Its official position today on Egypt's existing peace treaty with Israel is that it should be 'reviewed' as a 'step toward its cancellation'.⁷⁵

One could, of course, note that it is one thing to publicly question the treaty (in part because of popular anti-Israeli sentiment); it would be another thing altogether to deal with the negative strategic and economic consequences of actually cancelling it. Indeed, occasionally, some representatives of the movement have sought to soften this position somewhat, only to be forced firmly back into line by the movement's leadership. In late 2007 prominent Muslim Brother Essam el-Erian was quoted as saying that should the movement reach office it would recognise Israel and respect the existing treaty (with some amendment). The report drew a sharp response from General Guide, Muhammed Akef, however, who declared there was nothing in the movement's dictionary called Israel.⁷⁶

Between hegemony and democracy

Any ideological shift toward democratic participation among sections of the Muslim Brotherhood must be weighed against Egypt's political realities, not least the expectation that rapid democratisation would leave the Brotherhood in a pre-eminent, even a hegemonic, position politically. A key factor in this, as has been noted, is the absence of serious political competition. The Muslim Brotherhood is conscious of the fears of the political class and secular elites in this respect; it has made a point, for example, of not running candidates for every seat in professional syndicate or parliamentary elections. But it has also, on occasion, reinforced these fears.

While its cooperation with other opposition forces has undoubtedly increased it has remained fitful. Individual Muslim Brothers, for example, joined with other oppositionists in Kifaya; yet as the International Crisis Group has noted, the Muslim Brothers' subsequent organisation of separate, although relatively small-scale, demonstrations was probably prompted by a desire to prevent the opposition Kifaya movement from having a monopoly both on the street and with respect to the opposition reform agenda.⁷⁷ Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood's negotiations with the regime over aspects of its political activism (for example, over the size of its demonstrations), reinforce the impression of a movement that understands there are only two important political actors in Egypt.

Ideologically, too, the movement as a whole is yet to reconcile its traditional emphasis on the implementation of *shari'a* as the *sine qua non* of the movement's aims with its democratic pretensions. In recent years, the movement has argued that its goal with respect to political reform is a civil state with an Islamic frame of reference (*marja'iyya*). Ostensibly, this represents a move from a position where *shari'a* is the law, to a position where *shari'a* informs the law and the legislative process, as well as morality and ethics.

One interpretation of this would suggest that the Muslim Brotherhood's growing commitment to democracy has forced it to seek out arrangements that allow its religious principles to cohabit more happily with the idea of pluralism and a civil state. The idea of an Islamic frame of reference as the basis of a more inclusive political project is not new, having long been advocated by a number of liberal Islamic thinkers often labelled the 'Wasatiyya' (the centrists).⁷⁸ Alternately, the movement's emphasis on an Islamic *marja'iyya* may reflect more practical concerns; namely an effort to bypass Egyptian law which prohibits the formation of political parties based on religion. (Certainly this is the way the Egyptian state has viewed it, having now extended the prohibition to even those parties with a religious reference.)

That the movement's commitment to a civil state is not well established internally was demonstrated by the controversy over its draft program for a political party in late 2007. Needless to say, the

decision to formulate a program was not made in any anticipation that the movement was about to be allowed to form a party. More likely, it was driven by a desire to underline a moderate image to broader Egyptian society (and perhaps the international community), at a time when the movement was facing serious repression from the state and was being accused of harbouring militant ambitions.⁷⁹ Given this, it is ironic that the Muslim Brotherhood's circulation of the final draft of the program to a limited number of political figures and intellectuals outside the movement had precisely the opposite effect, alarming rather reassuring those who read it.

According to one well-placed observer, earlier drafts elaborated in further detail on the movement's previously stated commitment to a civil, democratic state.⁸⁰ While the final draft reaffirmed many of these points, endorsing, among other things, the separation of powers, political pluralism, and free and fair elections, on two points it tasted distinctly undemocratic: the program argued that women and non-Muslims were ineligible to hold Egypt's highest political offices, which contradicted previous statements acknowledging equal political rights; and it called for the creation of a council of religious scholars which could seemingly pass binding judgements on legislation and government policy, prompting claims the movement was advocating an Iranian-style theocratic state.

The details of the party program controversy have been discussed elsewhere.⁸¹ What is significant for our purposes is that the draft program sparked an unprecedented public debate among Muslim Brothers, including what some observers described as a 'fatwa war' as the various sides sought religious backing for their respective positions.⁸² Several prominent middle generation members such as Abd al-Mun'im abu al-Futuh, Gamal Heshmat and Essam el-Erian criticised both the draft itself and the drafting process, implying that there had been limited consultation within the movement. Indeed the regime's imprisonment of several of the more pragmatic Brothers, notably Khairat el-Shater, at a critical moment, arguably tipped the balance in favour of more conservative forces in the movement.⁸³ Criticism also came from younger generation members of the movement, often articulated through their blogs.

What the debate highlighted were two positions within the movement: a traditionalist one that saw the movement and its aims as, in effect, *above* politics; and a more pragmatic position that effectively saw the movement as an actor *within* politics. The former was reflected in the draft platform's advocacy of a council of scholars and the conservative attitude towards the leadership of the Muslim community consistent with the historical Islamist aim of building a state with specific institutions to enforce a particular interpretation of *shari'a*. The role of the movement, according to this attitude, was to stand firm on its principles as holders of God's indivisible truth. As Guidance Bureau member Dr Mahmoud Ghuzlan argued in an interview with the movement's Arabic language website:

Our adversaries are seeking to keep us at a point between Islam and secularism, and this is a great danger. They want us to gradually concede some of our principles so we could become closer to them. Thank God our Brothers have upheld the constants and said here we are and these are our principles. We will not be the same as you are. Otherwise, why should you be present in the political arena?⁸⁴

By contrast, the compromise advocated by more politically-minded members argued that existing constitutional arrangements were sufficient, in particular Article 2 of the Egyptian constitution that declares *shari'a* as the source of Egyptian laws, and the Egyptian Constitutional Court as the existing institution for the ultimate review of law. These critics also argued that it was unnecessary for the movement to argue against a female or non-Muslim president given that neither a woman nor a non-Muslim was ever likely to be elected by Egypt's overwhelmingly traditional, Muslim voters.⁸⁵ Such compromise positions were probably informed by a desire to paper over internal fissures and to recover from the damage done to the movement's external image caused by the controversy. Nevertheless, such pragmatism is still significant because it reflects some recognition

that the movement's goals can be pursued by political means, rather than requiring special religious ones (i.e., a council of ulema).

It is likely that there will be a further revision of the draft party program, although it is not clear when a new program might emerge. Some commentators initially suggested that the emerging consensus compromise within the movement seemed to be to drop the controversial proposal for the ulema council, while maintaining the movement's doctrinaire position on the unacceptability of a woman or a non-Muslim for a position of political leadership.⁸⁶ More recently, other observers have pointed to a closing of the ranks and a confirmation of existing traditionalist positions on these controversial matters.⁸⁷

Movement or party?

Running through this episode has been a tension that many mainstream Islamist movements face between preaching (*da'wa*) and politics. In theory, of course, and often in practice, such a tension should not exist. The goal of the Muslim Brotherhood's *da'wa* is to Islamise society, and in line with the movement's view of Islam as a comprehensive system, this includes the Islamisation of politics. From a practical perspective this is important, because as society is Islamised, it results in new cadre and supporters for the movement. As a recent International Crisis Group report on the Muslim Brotherhood noted, the movement's electoral success is interpreted within the movement as a direct result of its *da'wa* and part of a broader strategy of empowerment (*tamkin*) — a notion that Hasan al-Banna promoted as critical to the gradual, bottom up establishment of an Islamic system.⁸⁸

Yet, as has been demonstrated in other countries such as Morocco, Jordan and Turkey, as Islamist movements engage in politics (even quasi-democratic politics) conflicting imperatives emerge. A 2006 Carnegie/Herbert Quandt-Stiftung study on Islamist movements and democracy noted, as members of a religious organisation Islamists will use 'the dogmatic, absolutist language of the preacher and focus on moral issues of good and evil'.⁸⁹ But, as political organisations, Islamist movements 'face an imperative to be flexible and pragmatic' to win the support

of people outside their immediate Islamist constituency.⁹⁰ Moreover, political participation often takes on a life of its own, typically causing friction between those involved in politics and those committed to the movement's religious goals.

The result has often been a decision by mainstream Islamist movements to split political and *da'wa* activities. Even though this option is not available to the Muslim Brotherhood, given the legal prohibitions against forming a political party, there are strong and varied opinions on the subject within the movement. For example, one Muslim Brother, Ali Abdel Fattah, noted to us that in politics it wasn't wise to forget *da'wa*. Part of *da'wa* was participation in politics; but *da'wa* must also inform politics because 'if you take principle away from politics the movement will lose popularity'. He worried that, were the Muslim Brotherhood to become a political party, it would soon be afflicted by the 'diseases' that afflict other Egyptian political parties. Party politicians sought authority, he argued, while the Muslim Brotherhood, by contrast, sought change. As he argued:

Voting is not the only reflection of how strong you are.
When I see more women wearing *hijab* and more men
walking around holding the Qur'an I know I am popular
and that I am having an effect.⁹¹

By contrast, others argued for a split. As prominent Muslim Brother, Gamal Heshmat, noted to us in an interview, *da'wa* and politics would have to be separated, because while politics should be based on Islamic principles, it had to be based on other principles too. He added, to succeed in politics, the movement needed good representatives, so there would be a need to focus on a member's political, as well as their religious, upbringing.⁹² Such an attitude within the movement is not new. In the mid-1990s, a number of Muslim Brothers led by Abu al-Ela Madi and Essam Sultan broke from the Muslim Brotherhood to seek registration for a new political party, Hizb al-Wasat (literally the Centre Party). Al-Wasat represented many of the middle generation's ideas for a more overt, explicitly political activism, but also for a more inclusive

project, illustrated by al-Wasat's self-description as a civil party with an Islamic reference and its initial inclusion of a token number of non-Muslim members.

Ultimately, the al-Wasat split was not serious. Today it is referred to within the Muslim Brotherhood almost dismissively, as an 'administrative problem'.⁹³ The regime refused to license al-Wasat and arrested its leaders, while the Muslim Brotherhood leadership officially condemned the new party; eventually many of those who had left returned. Madi has continued, unsuccessfully, to seek a licence for a party that today remains important intellectually, but irrelevant politically. Yet it is noteworthy that the Muslim Brotherhood has also adopted now the notion of an 'Islamic reference'. As one observer commented to us, this is probably a case of al-Wasat's being the first to publicly articulate an idea that already existed among members of the middle generation in the Brotherhood.⁹⁴ It has been Madi's middle generation contemporaries inside the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Abd al-Mun'im Abul Futuh, who have pushed most strongly the idea of a civil party with an Islamic reference.

At stake in the debate over movement versus party (and *da'wa* versus politics) are not just matters of ideology. The debate touches on three issues of direct relevance to our discussion here: membership; internal democracy; and the management of internal debates and divisions. As al-Wasat, head Madi, noted to us, as an Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood restricts its membership to 'special Muslims' (and male ones at that); as a political party, it would face an imperative to open up membership to all Egyptian citizens.⁹⁵ In 2007 General Guide Muhammed Akef claimed that membership in any eventual Muslim Brotherhood party would be open to anyone, including non-Muslims, who agreed with its conservative values.⁹⁶ Likewise, Gamal Heshmat noted to us that a party could not refuse the desire of any Egyptian to join it, whatever their religion.⁹⁷

The formation of a political party would also bring into sharper focus questions about the level of internal democracy within the Muslim Brotherhood. The movement has a reputation for being highly centralised and disciplined — although representatives often bristle at

such descriptions and point to the consensual nature of decision-making. As a recent International Crisis Group report noted, the movement does maintain a formal consultative council (*majlis ash-shura*) elected by members; in practice, however, control lies in the hands of a few senior members of the movement.⁹⁸ Or as Joshua Stacher, a close observer of the movement argued to us, many of the positions in the movement are elected; the question is who gets to vote and for whom?⁹⁹ The movement has argued — somewhat conveniently — that, if its internal democratic processes do not always work, a key reason is the regime's refusal to allow the movement to convene large meetings.¹⁰⁰ Certainly, repeated confrontations with the state and the movement's illegal but tolerated status have, at the very least, strengthened the imperative toward unity and reinforced the lack of transparency with respect to decision-making.

Closely related to the question of internal democracy is the issue of how the movement manages internal debates and the regeneration of its leadership and ideas. Characterising the Muslim Brotherhood's internal divisions is not easy; differences cut across ideological, generational and organisational lines. For example, Dr Ibrahim al-Za'afarani, a member of the Brotherhood's Shura Council, referred in a recent interview to the movement being divided between two schools of thought: one that followed the ideas of the movement's third General Guide, Omar Tilmisani, emphasising openness and engagement with society; and another more closed school that followed the idea of the movement's fifth guide, Mustafa Mashour, focused more on disciplined organisation and unity.¹⁰¹ Amr el-Choubaki meanwhile has pointed to a division between reformist and conservative elements in the movement, with the conservatives dominant. Of this latter group, however, which he argues comprises some 80 % of members, he points to a further division between more worldly and politically active conservatives and those more focused on religion, with little experience of the movement's political activism.¹⁰²

Ultimately, change, if it comes, comes slowly to the Brotherhood. Here one key factor continues to be the leading role still played in the organisation by individuals whose formative experience was of the confrontation with Nasser in the 1960s (the so-called 'prison generation')

which has produced a cautiousness and overriding concern for survival at the expense of greater dynamism.¹⁰³ For example, one element in the al-Wasat split was the frustration of some middle generation members with what they saw as the movement's stagnation in the 1990s.¹⁰⁴ As noted previously, the movement's ultimate conservatism was also demonstrated in the 2007 draft of the party program. This is not to suggest that more reform minded or pragmatic currents within the Brotherhood are unimportant. At the very least, they enable the movement to present itself more favourably both domestically and internationally. This provides members like el-Erian and Abul Futtoh with influence within the movement as well. Nevertheless, while these figures play prominent public roles, they seem to have less impact internally, illustrated by the way the movement was able to silence their public criticism of the 2007 party program.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, a second and arguably more important factor in the movement's conservatism is the political situation in Egypt. As we have already noted, in its recent campaign of arrests the regime seems to have targeted precisely the movement's more reformist or pragmatic figures. The result has been a strengthening of traditionalists reflected, for example, in the election of five largely conservative members to the Guidance Bureau to replace those arrested by the regime.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, a number of commentators have suggested that the regime's latest assault on the Brotherhood has prompted a serious questioning of the benefits of political activism and participation within the movement.¹⁰⁷ While this might lead to more politically pragmatic members of the movement leaving, the lack of political opportunities creates an obstacle to this. Any new breakaway party would face little prospect of being licensed by the regime (as the al-Wasat example illustrated); but staying within the Muslim Brotherhood basically means toeing the movement's line to preserve unity in difficult times.

New generations

Today a new, potential source of dynamism is evident among some segments of the movement's youngest generation. Their formative

experience has been of a period when the Muslim Brotherhood has both made advances (most notably the 2005 parliamentary success) but also suffered reverses (the repression the movement has faced since, repression some of these younger activists have experienced firsthand). More at home with modern media, one manifestation of this generation's activism has been blogging.¹⁰⁸ Regime repression was a major spur. Two prominent Muslim Brother bloggers, Abdel-Moneim Mahmoud (anaikhwan.blogspot.com) and Magdy Saad (yallameshmohem.blogspot.com) began blogging after they were arrested by security forces. They initially sought to use the internet to focus media attention on their own experiences and on the behaviour of regime security forces more generally.¹⁰⁹ A number of blogs were also started to highlight the military trials of prominent Muslim Brothers in 2007, some written by their children.

Yet blogging has not just been a reaction to a paternalistic state; it has also been a response to paternalism within the movement as well, providing a vehicle for internal criticism, including over the draft party program.¹¹⁰ In some respects these bloggers have used the internet in the same way that middle generation members once used electoral politics as an outlet for their ideas and activism. Like the middle generation they represent both an opportunity and a threat for the movement: an opportunity because they are articulate, technically proficient and able to present a favourable image of the movement to the outside world; but also a threat because the price for giving these elements of the younger generation a voice will be accepting at least some of their demands for change.

The effectiveness of these bloggers is higher than the relatively low levels of internet penetration in Egypt would suggest, given that posts and debates from some of their blogs have found their way into the mainstream media. This may well have played a role in what appears to have been an effort by the Muslim Brotherhood leadership to rein in young dissenters when blogging criticism of the party program and other aspects of the movement came to an abrupt close at the end of 2007.¹¹¹ Once again, the willingness of the movement's young internal critics to desist from the criticism of the Brotherhood related in part to the ongoing assault on the movement by the regime.

Muslim Brother bloggers are by no means a homogeneous group. Not all have been uniformly critical of the movement, nor can we characterise here the various intellectual perspectives they represent. Nevertheless, the views of one of the more prominent bloggers, Ibrahim al-Hudaibi, provide some interesting insights.¹¹² Al-Hudaibi, who is a graduate of the American University in Cairo and a grandson and great grandson of two former General Guides of the Muslim Brotherhood, is neither the most critical of the Muslim Brother bloggers nor an apologist for the senior leadership of the movement. In his interview with us he noted that his aspirations lay on the intellectual side of the movement rather than the activist side, although he has also served as an English language translator for the General Guide and has managed the movement's English language website.

Al-Hudaibi saw urgency in the need for democratic reform in Egypt, the absence of which was 'killing us slowly'. Yet he was also thoughtful about what democracy meant in an Egyptian context and vis-à-vis the movement's ideals. He conceded that some Islamists saw democracy as being 'against God' because it vested sovereignty in the people. For him, however, the real issue was how you could have democracy in a way that makes society work together, rather than inducing conflict. He argued that the critical issue in Western societies was not their democratic political process but the values that underpinned them. Secularism, liberalism and capitalism characterised Western society, hence the criteria for success were primarily material. By contrast Islam could 'fill in the spaces between a democratic structure and process', to provide different criteria for success where people did not do what was best for them but what was best for society; that is, Islam would provide ethical, moral and legal principles within a democratic political framework.

In this context, al-Hudaibi noted the importance of people being free to choose. He said that initially his contemplation of democracy had raised for him the question of 'What if people chose something other than Islam?' But, he had then realised this was the wrong question. If people were not freely choosing Islam as the basis for their moral, ethical and legal principles, then he and the movement were not doing their task. In this respect, politics was 'just one field of activity' for the

movement. In relating this to the oft-stated concern of the movement with the influx of Western ideas and values, he noted that 'we take a lot from the West — technology etc'. But he had no difficulty dealing with the West because he was 'confident of [his] identity'; he was able to learn and take what he needed and reject what he didn't. By contrast, he argued, if you lacked a strong sense of your identity you took one of two equally wrong postures: like some youth in Egypt, you adopted everything Western good or bad; or, like some radical Muslims, you rejected everything.

It should be remarked that the bloggers, collectively, are by no means representative of the younger generations of the movement. One observer of the phenomenon notes, that by the bloggers' own estimates, they represent no more than 15% of Muslim Brotherhood youth, with much of the remainder, particularly in provincial parts of Egypt, associated with more fundamentalist, salafist thought.¹¹³ Others have also pointed to the rising interest in salafism as a reflection of growing disillusionment among youth with the limited opportunities available in politics.¹¹⁴

The energies of the movement's youth are not always directed toward reflective ends. In late 2006, a group of Muslim Brother students held a martial arts demonstration in militia-like formations at al-Azhar University. Against a background of months of political confrontation between the students and the university administration over student union elections, the demonstration was seen as a blatant attempt by the youth to intimidate both the university and other students. The timing of the demonstration was also provocative, given the highly charged atmosphere created in mid-2006 by the war between Israel and Lebanon. The demonstration became a political gift for the regime. Once again, it alleged that the movement was making secret military preparations and stepped up its campaign of arrests of key movement leaders.

A sympathetic explanation of the al-Azhar militias episode is that it was an ill judged effort by inexperienced young activists against the background of repeated efforts by the university to limit their options for legitimate, peaceful expression. There is little evidence to suggest that the display was coordinated with the central leadership;

in fact, quite the contrary given the public relations disaster it became. Nevertheless, the incident *did* demonstrate a consciousness on the part of the students of the latent power of a movement that could put more people on the Egyptian streets than any other organisation, save the military. It may have also reflected their frustration that this power was not being used, in this case to protect student members from the university administration. In fact, this was precisely one of the criticisms levelled by one Muslim Brother blogger in the aftermath of the al-Azhar episode.¹¹⁵

Since the al-Azhar episode young Islamists have watched, and in some cases experienced, the regime's efforts to beat the Brotherhood into submission. They have also watched their own movement responding cautiously to this bout of repression. While this might indeed be the wise course for the movement (born of long and at times bitter experience), the danger is that it will generate further dissatisfaction among youth already frustrated by their inability to be heard. It is not yet clear where this frustration might lead: one possible direction that commentators have already pointed to is a withdrawal from politics and political activism. While this need not necessarily lead to more violent forms of activism, there is a real risk that if they cut themselves off from society, some of these young activists could set off on a path well trodden by previous generations of militant Islamists in Egypt.

Conclusion

Since the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood has consistently adhered to a non-violent strategy aimed at the gradual, but total Islamisation of Egyptian society. Participation in Egypt's heavily constrained political system has been an important element in this strategy. By and large the movement has abided by the limitations imposed on it by the regime, although it has also sought to challenge them by advocating the democratisation of Egyptian politics. This has raised questions for the movement, as critics, political counterparts and prospective constituents have sought clarification of the movement's stances. This has not been an easy process for the movement to manage or control:

intellectually, it still struggles to reconcile key articles of ideological faith, not least its commitment to *shari'a*, with democratic principles. This echoes the political challenge the movement faces in retaining the support of its core supporters, while reassuring and reaching out to a broader constituency, much less inspired by, and often fearful of, its religious agenda.

But if critics and contemporaries are asking democratic questions of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian political system also provides the movement with few incentives to answer them. Debates within the Brotherhood over how to transform the movement into a political party, or to separate preaching from political activism, or to reconcile its goal of a *shari'a* led state with a civil one, will remain moot while the regime blocks the opportunity to put these questions to a real test. This is not an easy proposition, given the lack of serious competition or countervailing force, beyond the regime. Nevertheless, there are forces for pragmatism within the movement, including among its newer generations. By directly targeting these pragmatic elements in recent arrests, the regime will only strengthen the Brotherhood's already strong conservative and fundamentalist inclinations. It also strengthens suspicions that what President Mubarak fears more than militant Islamists are pragmatic ones.

Chapter 2

Indonesia: pietism and compromising for power

This is all politics. There is nothing different about PKS. Christian parties, secular parties, other Islamic parties all compromise to be successful in politics. We [PKS] don't forget that we are Islamic, we don't forget our origins. But we also accept that if we want to be able to make Indonesia a better place, we need to be able to work with others. In Islam, cooperation and compromise can be good things.

– Anis Matta, Secretary-General of the PKS ¹¹⁶

In the past four years, the PKS has moved from being a fringe player to a medium sized party in Indonesia's political system. Prior to 2004, the party had less than 2 % of the national vote and just seven seats in parliament. With the exception of one junior minister in the Abdurrahman Wahid cabinet (1999-2001), it held no senior positions in the government or the bureaucracy, nor were any provincial governors or district heads from the party. But from 2004, the party's fortunes changed dramatically. At the general election of that year, the PKS's vote jumped to more than 7 %, giving it 45 seats in parliament, and it became part of the ruling coalition, with three of its nominees appointed to cabinet by incoming president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. At regional elections since 2004, its nominees have been elected as governors,

mayors and regents, or their deputies, in 53 locations (although in most cases the PKS has been part of a coalition of parties). These electoral successes have delivered a share of power to the party more quickly than many of its leaders had anticipated and made the PKS a serious player in Indonesia's crowded political system.

And yet, the PKS has found this recently gained proximity to power problematic. The party's 'clean' and reformist image has been tarnished by several of its prominent figures being implicated in corruption scandals. Controversy surrounds some of its non-cadre nominees for governorships and regencies, particularly those of doubtful probity who are known to have paid vast sums to secure the party's backing. Questions have also been asked about the competence of PKS district heads after several have struggled to implement promised reform programs in their regions. Within the party, there have also been disputes between the branches and central leadership on such issues as whether or not to remain in the ruling coalition, supporting the government's sometimes controversial economic policies. These factors appear to have contributed to a slide in the PKS's popularity. All major public opinion surveys since late 2005 have shown its support to have fallen from 7% to around 3-5%.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the party fell well short of its target for the 2005-6 regional elections, further suggesting that its support base may be soft.¹¹⁸

To some extent, these problems indicate a party in transition from a small, relatively homogeneous Islamist group to a mainstream party with aspirations to become one of Indonesia's dominant political forces. The process of expanding the party and broadening its appeal has led to difficult decisions about balancing ideology with political expediency. Whereas most other Islamic parties in Indonesia have shallow ideological roots and pragmatic, interest based dispositions, the PKS is notable for its emphasis on personal pietism and serious discussion of doctrinal issues and their application to politics. Deciding what aspects of ideology to downplay or abandon in search of a wider voter base has been a continuing source of tension within the party. Another problem for the party is maintaining its system of discipline over its parliamentarians and senior officials, particularly as they are

drawn more deeply into Indonesia's often corrupt, elite political and business cultures. Previously, the PKS had boasted that not only were its cadre of higher moral rectitude than members of other parties, but also that it had internal investigation and disciplinary systems to ensure strict standards were upheld. This is now in question.

In this chapter, we examine the origins and development of the PKS's religio-political behaviour, in particular the changing sources of influence over the party's thinking. This process began with the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood-inspired Tarbiyah movement on campuses from the 1980s, followed by a more open involvement in politics from the late 1990s, and accompanied by a more eclectic approach to ideological and strategic thinking. Most recently, this has led PKS to study closely successful parties of a wide-ranging orientation, including Turkey's AKP and Malaysia's UMNO. In the process, the PKS has moved from being an avowed Islamist party to having post-Islamist traits.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Indonesia

Unlike the AKP, the PKS has a direct intellectual lineage to the Muslim Brotherhood, providing an example of how a specifically Brotherhood model has been applied, adapted or even disregarded in a democratising context. While Brotherhood ideas in Indonesia can be traced back to the 1930s, it was not until the late 1970s that the organisation's thinking and mode of activism began to take root in Indonesia as a model of Islamic struggle. This process can be divided into three phases: dissemination through publications, preaching and intellectual seminars; socio-religious organisational activity, from the early 1980s, particularly through the so-called Tarbiyah movement on campuses; and finally, direct political activism from 1998, initially with the KAMMI student movement (which featured in the protests that brought down Soeharto), then with the Justice Party (Partai Keadilan or PK) (1998-2003) and finally with the PKS (2003 to the present).

The first of these phases began in the early 1970s with serious attempts to spread knowledge of the Brotherhood as a new approach to Islamic outreach and politics. The Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia

(DDII; the Indonesian Islamic Preaching Council) and its founding chairman, Mohammad Natsir, played a seminal role in this process. Natsir, a former prime minister (1950-1) and chairman of Masyumi, the largest Islamic party of the late 1940s and 1950s, was Indonesia's best known Islamic leader in the broader Muslim world, travelling frequently to the Middle East and South Asia (especially Pakistan) and also serving as vice-chairman of the World Islamic League. Masyumi was banned in 1960 and shortly afterwards Natsir was jailed. Released from jail in 1966 and prohibited by the newly installed Soeharto regime from returning to politics, Natsir turned his attention to preaching and education, and established the DDII in 1967.

Two of his initiatives, in particular, proved important for the implanting of Brotherhood thinking in Indonesia. First, he drew on his contacts in the Arab world to gain funding for scholarships for Indonesians to study in the Middle East. A number of these scholarship recipients became deep admirers of the Brotherhood model and returned to Indonesia committed to promoting their doctrine. They translated key Brotherhood texts including those of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. Second, Natsir directed DDII to focus on preaching within campuses as a way of cultivating future Muslim leaders with a more overtly Islamic approach to public life. Many of the DDII-sponsored students from the Middle East were later able to use DDII campus preaching networks and publications to promote Brotherhood ideas.¹¹⁹

A young DDII intellectual, Imaduddin Abdurrahim, was also to play an important role in facilitating the spread of Brotherhood ideas. Imaduddin had spent much of the 1970s in Malaysia, where he came into contact with Brotherhood teachings and preachers, particularly through the ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia — Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia) which had adopted the Muslim Brotherhood's family (*usrah*) system as a means of inculcating new values in Muslim students. He returned to Indonesia in 1974 and, under Natsir's mentorship, began an innovative training program for tertiary students at the Salman mosque, in Bandung's Institute of Technology. Although the doctrinal content of his courses was not primarily Brotherhood-derived, Imaduddin's program nonetheless drew on elements of

al-Banna's thinking, such as the importance of disciplined cadreisation, and prepared students for a new type of preaching and activism.

Great emphasis was placed upon personal piety and on forming small groups within which could be fostered a deeper Islamic awareness and pattern of behaviour. Brotherhood-derived notions of 'comprehensive Islam' (*Islam kafaah*), indicating the belief in Islam as a complete system of values and ideology, became the catch cry of these Salman graduates. Both Imaduddin and his trainees largely avoided explicit mention of political agendas such as an Islamic state or the desirability of comprehensive implementation of *shari'a*. This was due not only to an awareness that the Soeharto regime would swiftly crack down on any activity which challenged its own Pancasila-based secular doctrine, but also a sense that Islamising society took precedence over Islamising politics. Nonetheless, private study and discussion of Egyptian and South Asian texts on these matters was common.

The second phase of the spread of Brotherhood ideas, that of organisational activity, began in the early 1980s. Many details of the chronology and means by which these ideas began to take on an institutional form remain unclear, but the process was undoubtedly initiated on campuses of the larger state universities, particularly the University of Indonesia, the Institute of Technology Bandung and Gadjah Mada University, and spread from there to other tertiary institutions. The leading propagators were Hilmi Aminuddin, Rakhmat Abdullah and Abdi Sumaithi (Abu Ridho), who set about organising study groups and cells on campuses and in mosques.¹²⁰ Around them gathered other activists who had graduated from Middle Eastern universities, had trained in Imaduddin's Salman courses, or had been recruited through existing Islamic groups. This was an informal movement which soon became known as Jemaah Tarbiyah (the Education Movement).

The Tarbiyah movement grew quickly through the 1980s and 1990s. Its primary organisational structure was the *usrah*. Members studied Islamic texts together, usually prayed and fasted together, and frequently shared social and commercial activities as well. Key activities were *halaqah* (literally 'circle'; discussion group) and *liqo* ('meetings') at which members regularly came together to study particular texts, discuss issues

of shared interest and assist each other in addressing common problems. The works of al-Banna, Qutb, and two other key Brotherhood thinkers, Said Hawwa and Yusuf al-Qardhawi, formed the cornerstones of Tarbiyah teachings. Great emphasis was placed upon personal development and discipline as the starting-point for bringing about broader change. Tarbiyah groups spread rapidly on campuses from the 1980s, and, by the end of the 1990s, it was estimated that 10-15 % of students at major state universities were active in campus *da'wa*, a large majority of whom were Tarbiyah members.¹²¹ Although Brotherhood influences were strong, other thinkers were also read. Books by the Iranian intellectual Ali Shariati, the Pakistani Islamist Abul Ala Maududi, the Sudanese Islamist Hasan al-Turabi, and the Egyptian Islamic scholar Muhammed al-Ghazali were also frequently studied.

Almost from the beginning of the movement, however, this eclectic mix of ideas and models of activism was adapted to local conditions. Tarbiyah carefully chose the texts they discussed and was selective about which parts of those texts were recommended to members. Notably, the more militant sections of Sayyid Qutb's writings were often not taught.

The third phase in this process was the move into practical politics. This began in early 1998 when the Soeharto regime was beginning to teeter. Key sections of Tarbiyah decided to form a students' organisation, KAMMI (Komite Aksi Mahasiswa Muslimin Indonesia; Action Committee of Indonesian Muslim Tertiary Students). KAMMI soon became the most important group in mobilising students to protest against the regime and demanding Soeharto's resignation.¹²² Shortly after Soeharto's downfall on 21 May, Tarbiyah leaders moved quickly to establish a new party. Some 6,000 Tarbiyah activists across Indonesia were surveyed on their attitudes to entering politics: 68 % agreed with the proposal, although 27 % preferred that Tarbiyah become a formal socio-religious organisation.¹²³

The Justice Party (PK), formed on 20 August 1998, was one of the first parties of the post-Soeharto era to be ideologically based on Islam. Although the PK was small and under-resourced compared to many other parties, it attracted attention for its youthful and enthusiastic

membership, its effective mobilisation of supporters, and its use of new technologies such as the internet and mobile phones to disseminate its electoral messages. The party campaigned strongly on reform issues, particularly anti-corruption, social justice and more equitable economic policies. At the 1999 general election, PK gained 1.4 % of the national vote and seven parliamentary seats. In 2003, forced by regulations stipulating that only those parties exceeding 2 % of the vote in 1999 were eligible to contest the 2004 election, the PK became the PKS.

Indonesia's democratic transition

Before turning to the development of the PKS, some discussion of Indonesia's democratisation process is necessary. The transformation from a military dominated authoritarian state to a genuinely democratic system has been remarkably swift and successful. Ten years ago, Indonesia was among the least democratic states in Southeast Asia. Now it is arguably the most democratic having: had two largely free and fair elections (in 1999 and 2004); instituted a system of direct presidential elections (in 2004); introduced direct election of provincial governors and district heads (from 2004); strengthened constitutional checks and balances to ensure the separation of power between the executive, judiciary and legislature; and implemented a wide range of laws and regulations to uphold human rights and protect democratic freedoms such as the right to free speech and association. Not all of these measures have been properly implemented according to both the letter and spirit of the law, and the New Order legacy of corrupt, elite driven politics remains much in evidence. Nonetheless, most observers regard the changes since the end of the Soeharto era to be substantive and continuing.

Also significant is the broad public support for democracy as the basis of the political system. This can be measured in both electoral participation and public opinion surveys. Voter participation in the 1999 and 2004 general elections was 91 % and 84 % respectively, and 77 % for the 2004 presidential election. Participation levels have fallen in local elections held across Indonesia since 2005, on average

exceeding 60 %, which is higher than many Western democracies.¹²⁴ Opinion surveys have consistently shown strong majority support for democracy. For example, an LSI survey of Muslim attitudes in 2008 found that 82 % of respondents believed that democracy was the best system for Indonesia.¹²⁵ Indonesia's democracy is now freer and more entrenched than those of neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The success of Indonesia's democratic transition is striking given the country's long history of politically repressive regimes. Although Indonesia had a Western style parliamentary democracy from 1950 to 1957, this was gradually dismantled by President Sukarno with support from the army between 1957 and 1960, and replaced with a semi-authoritarian regime known as Guided Democracy. After a bloody coup attempt in 1965, Major-General Soeharto came to power the following year and introduced a more harshly authoritarian system. Although based primarily on military power, Soeharto's New Order regime appeared to enjoy considerable civilian support for much of its 32 years in power, derived in particular from developmentalist policies which brought rapid economic growth and modernisation. Elections during this time were anything but free and fair. The number of political parties was limited to three from 1973 onwards and election rules heavily favoured the regime party, Golkar, ensuring that its vote never dropped below 62 % in any of the New Order's six general elections. Political Islam was a particular target of regime repression, with all four Muslims parties forced to merge into an unstable new entity called the United Development Party (PPP). The PPP was progressively stripped of its Islamic identity and subject to constant regime manipulation. Moreover, it was prevented from having branches outside large cities and from organising among grassroots communities outside of brief five yearly election campaigns. The PPP's vote ranged between 15 % and 29 % during Soeharto's presidency, making it the main 'opposition' party (although the use of such a term was discouraged by the regime), but it posed no genuine challenge to Golkar.¹²⁶

The removal of political restrictions after the New Order's collapse in 1998 led to a rapid proliferation of political parties; more than 100 parties

were formed in the first year of 'reformasi', some 40 of which had 'Islamic' characteristics of various types. Eventually 48 parties contested the 1999 election. Of these, 21 were manifestly Islamic, either in formal ideology or in constituency and leadership, and they gained a total of 38 % of the vote. Five years later, 24 parties competed in general elections, of which seven were Islamic. The overall 'Islamic vote' remained stable at 37 %.¹²⁷

The rise of the PKS

As already noted, the PKS had its origins in the Tarbiyah movement which was, at least in part, a reaction to the New Order's secular developmentalism. The Tarbiyah activists who later became the core cadre group within the PKS were mainly from the well-to-do urban middle class or from comfortable rural families. In many ways, they were products of the New Order's economic and educational success: scions of increasingly affluent families who enjoyed the benefits of improved schooling and access to professional careers. But they also rejected much of what the regime stood for, regarding it as materialistic, corrupt, unjust, compromised by Western interests and immoral. They yearned for a new kind of Indonesia which was more egalitarian, democratic, economically and culturally assertive, and, most importantly of all, imbued with Islamic values.

Ironically, the New Order's policies towards Islam and political dissent benefited the Tarbiyah movement. The regime sought to suppress Islamism and other forms of political activity that might challenge its authority, while allowing, and often generously sponsoring, religious education. Its aim was to encourage Muslims to be religiously, rather than politically, active (unless, of course, they chose to support the regime's political juggernaut, Golkar). It shut down student associations and political organisations on campus while obliging students to undertake 'spiritual training' (*Rohis*) as part of their studies. Many Tarbiyah activists became 'trainers' and 'mentors' in these spiritual courses and were able to channel students into *usrah* groups.

Despite their outwardly apolitical nature, Tarbiyah members proved adept at quietly mobilising their members to secure strategic positions

within campus student structures. Although a minority on campuses, their superior organisation and absence of rival movements enabled them to win majorities on many student councils. By the mid-1990s, Tarbiyah members controlled not only student councils at many big state universities but also the national Campus Dakwah Institute (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus, LDK), which the New Order sponsored as a means of facilitating and monitoring Muslim student proselytisation. Tarbiyah leaders carefully avoided criticising the regime or organising openly against it, fearing that the security services would crush the movement if they detected oppositional intent. But within the confines of *usrah* activities, political discussion became much more frequent during the mid-1990s. Not only did Tarbiyah members study Islamic political theory, they also sharpened their critique of the New Order regime and of established Islamic organisations in Indonesia. Members believed that existing Muslim groups had failed to create a genuinely Islamic society and that a new model of leadership and activity was required to foster a more successful and thoroughgoing Islamisation process. The Soeharto government was increasingly seen as politically illegitimate and in terminal decline.

Dramatic changes in Indonesia's economic and political conditions in late 1997 prompted Tarbiyah leaders to reconsider their apolitical approach. The Asian financial crisis hit Indonesia in September 1997, causing the value of the rupiah to plummet and pushing many large corporations into insolvency. Unemployment and the cost of living rose sharply, accompanied by worsening social unrest. Public confidence in Soeharto's ability to manage the crisis was shaken after he suffered a mild stroke in December and then installed a cabinet in March 1998 which included numerous cronies and his own daughter. In early 1998, as the regime looked increasingly vulnerable, Tarbiyah leaders discussed the possibility of direct political action. A majority of leaders believed that conditions not only favoured, but demanded, a more confrontational stance towards the New Order. They argued that if Tarbiyah members did not take the initiative, other groups would do so and the opportunity for Islamically inspired reform in the short term might be lost. Some were less certain and worried that the Tarbiyah could face regime retaliation.

At the LDK conference in April 1998, Tarbiyah leaders won agreement for the establishment of a students' organisation, KAMMI, to mobilise against the regime. Tarbiyah student activists were free to choose whether or not they joined KAMMI, but most did become involved and KAMMI leaders were later to form the core leadership group of the PK and the PKS. KAMMI soon became an important group in mobilising students to protest against the regime and demanding Soeharto's resignation. Its demonstrations were usually organised in cooperation with other student groups, including those from the left and non-Muslim groups.

Soeharto's resignation on 21 May was greeted with elation by KAMMI and Tarbiyah leaders. KAMMI leaders, in particular, regarded the removal of the regime as a vindication of their decision to form the organisation and take to the streets. It convinced them that Tarbiyah members should not be politically passive and restrict themselves to religious activity when the nation was on the verge of major reform. Thus, in August, PK was formed by a group of 50 'declarators', all of whom had Tarbiyah backgrounds. The new party was based ideologically on Islam, but also claimed to be pluralist in orientation.

From its inception, the PK attracted attention as a party different from most others. To begin with, its membership was much younger and better educated. Most of the PK leaders who took a prominent role in the election campaign were in their late 20s or 30s, and nearly all held higher degrees. For example, the party's founding president and highest profile figure in the campaign, Dr Nur Machmudi Ismail, had a PhD from the US, worked as a food scientist in the Ministry of Research and Technology, was in his mid-30s, and epitomised the PK's fresh-faced, clean-cut, reformist image. The PK's technically savvy members were also at the cutting edge of using the Internet and mobile phone messages for electioneering purposes. The party's cadre also proved disciplined and energetic in campaigning among local communities.

The PK's key issues were anti-corruption, political and economic reform and justice, rather than specifically religious agendas. Indeed, party leaders largely avoided mention of the Islamic state or of *shari'a*

implementation during the campaign, even though these topics featured prominently in internal party discourses. The PK's 1.7% and seven parliamentary seats at the June 1999 election were widely seen as a commendable result for a party lacking money, political experience or well-known figures. In parliament, the PK's seven representatives joined with MPs from Amien Rais's predominantly Muslim, but non-Islamist National Mandate Party (PAN), to form a faction, which PK leaders pointed to as evidence of their inclusiveness. Nur Machmudi joined the cabinet of newly elected president Abdurrahman Wahid in Oct 1999, as Forestry Minister.

The formation of the PKS in 2003 led officials of the new party to claim it was more open and diverse than its predecessor. Nonetheless, control of the party rested firmly with a core of senior Tarbiyah activists, led by Hilmi Aminuddin, Rakhmat Abdullah, Anis Matta, Hidayat Nur Wahid and Fachri Hamzah. PKS's election campaign in 2004 had the slogan 'clean and caring', and emphasis was again given to 'secular' issues of fighting corruption, equitable distribution of wealth, social welfare and reform of the political system. The party lacked the budget to match other parties in expensive electronic and print media advertisements, but it won widespread goodwill for its commitment to emergency aid for communities hit by natural disasters, flooding and poverty, as well as for its steadfast anti-graft efforts. Alone of the top ten parties, the PKS was, at that time, without taint of a major corruption or malfeasance scandal. The PKS's 7.3% result in the 2004 surprised most political observers as well as the party itself. None of the major opinion polls had indicated a vote above 4%. Subsequent research suggests that about 60-70% of the PKS's 'new votes' had come from electors dissatisfied with other Islamic parties, such as PAN and PPP, and about 20-30% were from previous supporters of secular nationalist parties who were attracted to the PKS's welfare activities and clean, reformist image — the remainder of PKS votes were from first-time voters.¹²⁸

Entry into government

Euphoric PKS leaders emerged from the election convinced that the party was now poised to be a dominant political player and turned their attention to the presidential elections to be held later that year. This was to lead to divisions in the central board over which candidate to support. The majority of members favoured Dr Amien Rais, one of the key figures in the anti-Soeharto protests and also a former chairman of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's second largest Islamic organisation. They believed he had both strong reform credentials in the general community and high standing as an Islamic leader. (The fact that Dr Rais's PhD thesis at Chicago University was on Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood was also frequently referred to favourably by PKS members). A smaller group, led by Anis Matta, championed the cause of retired General Wiranto, arguing that he was sympathetic to the PKS (his son-in-law was reputedly a party member) and had also led reforms within the military and helped pave the way for Soeharto's removal.¹²⁹ Eventually the board opted for Amien Rais, but only after heated debate and some adverse press coverage. Many cadre were critical of Anis for proposing a military figure and accused him of undermining the party's reform credentials. Amien was soundly defeated in the first round of the presidential election; Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Megawati Sukarnoputri contested the second and final round in September 2004. In the second round, the PKS backed Yudhoyono, who eventually won 61% to 39%.

The election of President Yudhoyono opened up a new debate within the PKS over involvement in the ruling coalition and cabinet positions. Pragmatists argued strongly that the PKS should join the governing alliance because (1) the party badly needed experience in government if it was to take the next step towards being a major force, and (2) the party had to demonstrate to the Indonesian electorate and international community that it was not rigidly Islamist and was capable of working productively with parties from across the political spectrum. The more ideologically minded cadre were uneasy about participating in government, believing that it would involve too many compromises that

would tarnish the PKS's reformist image. In the end, the pragmatists won. The issue of cabinet posts proved more problematic. On the one hand, parts of the party preferred to nominate PKS leaders such as the economist Zulkieflimansyah or Soeripto for portfolios. On the other hand, pragmatists contended that the PKS's own leaders lacked the necessary experience for such high office and that poor performance would harm the party's standing. They argued that it was better to wait until 2009 before seeking ministerial office. In the end, the party put forward three names for the ministry, none of whom was a genuine Tarbiyah activist.¹³⁰

The PKS's buoyancy and optimism following the 2004 election proved short-lived. Public opinion polls from late 2005 began showing flagging support for the party. The most respected of these surveys, that from Saiful Mujani's Lembaga Survei Indonesia,¹³¹ had PKS support ranging between 3.8% to 5% since October 2005. More recently, the polling organisation IndoBarometer placed the PKS at 5.2%.¹³² These results are publicly disputed by PKS leaders, and some leaders claim the party's own surveys indicate about 14% level of support. In the more than 300 direct regional elections (*pilkada*) held across Indonesia between 2005 and 2008, the PKS has had mixed results. The party has 'won' in 53 *pilkada* to date, but this figure is misleading. In only four of these *pilkada* did the PKS win solely with a ticket of its own candidates; the other 49 'victories' were as part of coalitions. In many of these coalition wins, the successful candidates were not from the PKS, although in such cases, the party could be expected to gain a share of positions in the local parliament and administration, roughly commensurate with its level of electoral support. More important to the party are those areas where its own members hold key positions. For example, in April 2008, the PKS's cadre and nominee, Ahmad Heryawan was elected governor of West Java, the nation's most populous province. Overall, the party would seem to have about 25 regional headships or deputy headships.¹³³ There have been, however, some embarrassing setbacks. The governor of Bengkulu, who was elected on a PKS-led coalition ticket, shocked the party by defecting to the president's Democrat Party shortly after being sworn in, and the PKS's newly elected regent in Cianjur also shifted

to another party. In both cases, the candidates were nominees from outside the PKS, who had pledged loyalty to the party, if successful.

The reasons for this slip in support are discussed later, but clearly what many PKS leaders assumed would be an inexorable rise in popularity has proven elusive. This has led to intensive debate and self-scrutiny by party leaders and cadre alike in order to identify the factors and come up with possible remedies. Much of the discussion focuses on matters of strategy, and particularly the trade-off between overt Islamism and electoral success.

Normalisation and compromise

Two interlocking elements have dominated Tarbiyah-PKS thinking since the 1980s: first, a determination to Islamise thoroughly not just the lives of individual Muslims but also society and politics; and second, an acceptance that change needed to be gradual and long-term in nature. The broader social and political agenda was apparent in the early Tarbiyah literature, where *usrah* groups were characterised as the building blocks of a new, more Islamically observant society.

Usrah were designed to function according to a self-expanding, pyramidal principle of organisation. A newly inducted member joins an *usrah* and, under the guidance of his or her *murabbi* and with the support of fellow members, progresses towards becoming a 'complete Muslim', devout in one's personal life, knowledgeable about the faith, and highly committed to furthering the cause. Once a sufficient level of demonstrated piety and learning is attained, the member can in turn become a *murabbi* and form his or her own *usrah*. In theory, this built-in multiplier effect ensures that there is an ever-broadening community of members and the social influence of the movement increases steadily. Underlying this process was a sense that Islamisation of politics, and ultimately the state, could only be achieved once society had a receptive religious outlook and behaviour. Thus, preaching and education preceded politics.

There seems to have been no detailed blueprints in the 1980s or early 1990s of how this process would take place, but there was a clear

acceptance that the Islamisation strategy would be contingent upon broader societal and political conditions. It was also understood that patience and circumspection were essential.¹³⁴ Therefore, in the early years of the Tarbiyah movement, when the Soeharto regime vigorously repressed any sign of Islamist activism, members concentrated on low-profile, religiously-based activities which, where possible, made use of, rather than opposed, the New Order's corporatist structures. Its exploitation of LDK and Rohis programs were good examples of this. In this way, Tarbiyah was able to grow rapidly and became the most successful of the new Islamic movements of the 1980s and 1990s. When the regime's authority began to disintegrate in early 1998, Tarbiyah leaders responded quickly with the formation of the KAMMI, which was able to feed off the mood for change within campuses and the broader community in mobilising against Soeharto. And finally, the democratic reforms of the post-Soeharto period allowed the Tarbiyah movement to transform itself into a political party.

It is this current 'political' phase in the development of Tarbiyah-PKS which has presented the greatest challenge for the movement. A primary issue of dispute is that between ideological purity and political expediency. In broad terms, the ideologues argue that the PKS must uphold the central elements of its Brotherhood-derived teachings because these provide the guidelines for its struggle to create a new type of society in Indonesia. Compromising on these teachings imperils the very mission that Tarbiyah and the PKS were established to undertake. For the pragmatists, the PKS exists to bring change to Indonesia and this can only happen if it has power. To have real power, the PKS needs to be one of the two or three largest parties, and this cannot be achieved without gaining support from the political mainstream. Ideological inflexibility hinders the party's prospects of reaching out to these voters. Sometimes, these countervailing tendencies manifest themselves in comments such as the following, from a senior PKS official who advocates a pragmatic line:

When I was a student abroad in 1999, I was so proud to look at how PK behaved and what it achieved. No one doubted

that it was clean and high-minded. When I was a student (Tarbiyah) activist, this is just what we dreamed of. But now I am sad when I look at PKS. So many compromises. So much that we do because of political strategy rather than simple idealism. But I'm one of those pushing for us to be logical. It's strange, isn't it. We don't have a choice if we want to be successful.¹³⁵

To date, the pragmatists have held sway, but consternation among cadre at a number of recent policies has been widespread. Several recent controversies illustrate the nature of the tensions facing the party.

The first of these concerns the soliciting of funds from non-cadre gubernatorial and regency candidates in return for party support. Since 2005, the PKS, like many other parties, has pursued a policy of selectively auctioning its nominations for regional elections. Although claiming that money is only one consideration in its choice of candidates, party leaders have been pleased to secure large sums from nominees. The plan is to use much of this nomination money for the 2009 general election campaign, rather than for the regional elections themselves. The most highly publicised of these nomination payments was that of Adang Daradjatun, the then deputy national police chief, who, according to press speculation may have contributed between 14 billion and 150 billion rupiah (AU\$1.75m and \$18.7m) to secure the PKS's support as gubernatorial candidate for Jakarta.¹³⁶ Wealth statements by Adang revealed assets far in excess of that of other senior police officers, a fact he attributed to the success of his entrepreneur wife. Although Adang eventually attracted a very creditable 42 % of the vote, many in the PKS were uneasy with the choice of candidate and feared that his nomination had tarnished the party's image of political cleanliness.¹³⁷

A second issue is the PKS's continuing support for the Yudhoyono government. From late 2005, opinion surveys showed that the PKS's involvement in and defence of the government's economic policies, particularly the decision to dramatically reduce fuel subsidies, was costing it support among poorer sections of the community. The pragmatists argued that, although the party's stance contributed to its unpopularity,

it was essential for the PKS to continue in the ruling coalition in order to gain experience in government and also demonstrate to mainstream voters that it was not fanatically Islamist and could work effectively with other parties. Critics of the policy said that the PKS was contradicting its electoral pledge to strive for a more egalitarian and just society by locking itself into government decisions which harmed the poor. In mid-2006, a majority of PKS branches called for withdrawal from the Yudhoyono government but this was rejected by the central leadership.

A third contentious issue relates to the opening up of the party to non-Muslims as well as to Muslims from a non-Tarbiyah background. In the first years of PK, the party was comprised almost entirely of Tarbiyah members, people who had spent years within the *usrah* system and were thoroughly imbued with its ideological values. But since the creation of the PKS, the central board has pursued a strategy of broadening the party's membership and representational appeal. It actively recruits from a range of Muslim organisations, including Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, and also has carefully targeted campaigns to bring into the party one thousand mid- to high-ranking professionals from the bureaucracy and the private sector.

Additionally, in areas with large non-Muslim populations, the PKS has nominated Christian candidates for legislative positions. In eastern Indonesia, for example, nine of the party's candidates at the 2004 elections were non-Muslim, one of whom was elected. These strategies have produced a dramatic growth in membership over the past decade: PK had 33,000 in 1999; and the PKS, 400,000 in 2004. The longer term target is two million members but current membership is slightly over 500,000.¹³⁸ Ideologues within the party express concern about the consequences of a rapidly growing and more diverse membership. A core element in the PK and the PKS designs is that they were, in essence, cadre parties, in which the emphasis would be on the quality rather than the quantity of membership. The more the party opens up to non-Tarbiyah members, the more the conservative cadre worry about loss of internal coherence and purpose.

Gender is another problematic issue. A majority of PKS members (53%) are female, and women voters account for about 47% of the

party's electoral support.¹³⁹ But, it has been criticised for limiting the opportunities for the advancement of women in the party. For example, in the run up to the 2004 election, the PKS was initially lauded as the party which came closest to meeting the 30% quota for female legislative candidates recommended in the Election Law — the party met the quota in 65 of the 69 districts contested.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, only 13% of the PKS's parliamentarians elected that year were female (the eighth lowest party), indicating that most of the candidates were in low ranking, 'unwinnable' positions on the electoral list. Furthermore, a recent University of Indonesia study placed the PKS as the second worst party for preparing female candidates for winning legislative positions.¹⁴¹ Despite having a large number of well qualified and politically talented female senior cadre, no PKS woman has a high public profile, suggesting that the party's internal culture hinders women from attaining prominence.

The final issue concerns the internal probity of the PKS, and particularly its senior figures. One aspect which helped to boost the party's vote in 2004 was the perception that it was the cleanest of Indonesia's parties. In the run up to the election, PKS parliamentarians had drawn praise from the media and NGOs for their refusal to accept payments in return for political favours. In some cases, its MPs called press conferences to reveal attempts to bribe them and pointedly asked whether other legislators had accepted inducements. But from 2006, a succession of allegations of malfeasance were made against the PKS's leaders. The most widely reported of these related to the PKS parliamentarian Tamsil Linrung, who was accused of taking money to act as a broker in the disbursement of emergency aid to disaster victims. Although eventually found to have no case to answer by both the PKS's parliamentary faction and the Parliament's Ethics Council (Badan Kehormatan), adverse publicity about the case remained in the media for several months.¹⁴² In early 2007, another PKS politician and founding KAMMI chairman, Fachri Hamzah, was found by the Ethics Council to have improperly received funds from the outgoing Fisheries minister, although no sanctions were imposed upon him.¹⁴³ Whereas other parties are no less troubled by frequent allegations of

corruption, such cases have a greater impact on the PKS because of its self-declared commitment to clean politics and raise questions as to whether the PKS is becoming like other parties in Indonesia's graft ridden political system.

All these cases are indicative of the dilemma faced by a movement with serious revivalist intent which is forced to adapt to the realities of electoral politics. What is to be the trade-off for popularity and political success? A decade ago, Tarbiyah groups would only have accepted into their ranks someone who upheld its teachings in a thoroughgoing way. Now the PKS accepts as inductee members (*anggota pemula*) and legislative candidates people who may only have a superficial commitment to the party's religious values and doctrine. To date, it is the pragmatists, led by Hilmi Aminuddin, Anis Matta and Fachri Hamzah, who have pushed the party towards a more flexible and open stance. Interestingly, most of the pragmatists have strong ideological backgrounds and have built their careers within the movement partly on the basis of their command of Brotherhood thinking.

Ideological revisions

Both the PK and the PKS have maintained a discursive dualism on matters of ideology. As noted above, in the 1999 and 2004 election campaigns, the PK/PKS downplayed the more overtly Islamist elements of party policy. There were few public statements advocating Islamisation of the state or legal system and campaign slogans emphasised universalist themes such as social welfare, clean government and the elimination of poverty and disadvantage. But within party websites and publications, discussion of the Islamic state and implementation of *shari'a* law could be readily found.

Formally, the PKS declares its support for the current format of the Indonesian state: that is, a unitary republic based upon the religiously neutral ideology of Pancasila.¹⁴⁴ But the party's doctrinal documents make clear that it regards comprehensive Islamisation of the state and implementation of *shari'a* law as a longer term goal. For example, its recently published *Basic philosophy of struggle* declares that:

For Muslims, having a state which freely applies God's values and His *shari'a* is an obligation ... In Islam no separation between religion and politics is recognised. This unity of religion and state is a principal doctrine in Islam for the length of its history ... In Islam, the state can be called Islamic when *shari'a*, as the direct stipulation of God, occupies the highest position in organising all matters ...¹⁴⁵

It mentions briefly that the state should be pluralistic, just and democratic, but the greatest emphasis is overwhelmingly upon the implementation of Islamic law. No time-frame is given for achieving such a state but the detailed discussion of this issue indicates the importance of the ideal of an Islamised state. The PKS also supports the concept of the caliphate, although it does not spell out the exact form which this should take. One prominent PKS intellectual has written that the caliphate can be interpreted broadly to take the form of a Muslim United Nations or commonwealth within which matters of common concern to the global Islamic community could be discussed and acted on.¹⁴⁶

The party's tactical ambivalence on *shari'a* has been increasingly apparent in recent years. While many cadre support further introduction of *shari'a* provisions into Indonesian statutes, the party's leadership discourages open discussion of this, believing that it will alienate middle ground voters in future elections. As one party leader put it: 'We would be mad to talk about Islamic law when what the public wants is good government. Let's concentrate on showing them that we can run things better. Fix up pot-holes in the roads and provide good sanitation before worrying about making women wear headscarves'.¹⁴⁷ But the Anti-Pornography Bill (commonly known as RUU APP) debate in 2006 showed how difficult it was for the PKS's leaders to keep pro-*shari'a* sentiment from entering into the public debate. The APP bill not only sought to proscribe a wide range of pornographic acts and literature but also set out an extensive array of restrictions on 'non-pornographic' dress and social activities. For example, kissing in public was to be banned, as also were local cultural practices such as topless Balinese

dancing or the Papuan practice of wearing penis gourds. Although the PKS had not been involved in drafting the bill, various party leaders spoke out strongly in defence of it, leading to an impression that the PKS favoured such *shari'a* inspired legislative initiatives. Widespread protests from community groups led to the withdrawal of the bill and its extensive redrafting. The APP controversy probably harmed the PKS's ability to win votes from non-devout Muslims and was a setback for the pragmatists' attempts to package the party as 'non-Islamist'.

Relations with the Muslim Brotherhood and the AKP

The PKS's growing pragmatism has led to changes in attitudes towards the Muslim Brotherhood and a rethinking of the types of political models that the party should be following. While the Brotherhood, and particularly the thinking of Hasan al-Banna, remains the single most important influence on the PKS, there are signs that the party finds the example of the contemporary Brotherhood of declining relevance. The exact nature of the PKS and the Brotherhood's relations has always been hazy. Yusuf al-Qardhawi was once quoted as saying that the PK was the 'extension of the hand of the Brotherhood in Indonesia', implying a subordinate relationship. This appears an overstatement, as there is little evidence that the Egyptian Brothers seek to control the PKS or that the party would accept external direction from Cairo. There are indications, however, that the PKS participates in the regular international meetings between senior Egyptian Brothers and representatives of movements and parties inspired by the Brotherhood. The exact nature and title of these meetings is kept confidential by participants, but some sources say the forum is called Tanzim al-Alami (World Body) or Majelis Ikhwan (Brothers' Council). The meetings are most likely chaired by the General Guide, Muhammad Akef, and discuss such things as global developments in the Brotherhood community, comparative political strategies and international fund-raising. From the snippets of information available, it appears that the meetings have a consultative and advisory function, but are not directorial.¹⁴⁸ It appears that Hilmi Aminuddin is the PKS's representative at these meetings

and reports back to the party leadership on their decisions. More importantly, pragmatists bluntly say that there is little that the PKS can now learn from the Egyptian Brotherhood as the circumstances of the two movements contrast so sharply. One PKS leader put it this way:

The Brotherhood in Egypt is a secret organisation working within an authoritarian political system. We (PKS) are an open party competing within a free democratic system. Of course we read Brotherhood writings because they are much more relevant to us than classical texts. But we don't study the Brotherhood as an organisation because we are in a quite different situation.¹⁴⁹

Anis Matta added that the experience of Egypt's Hizb al-Wasat (see Chapter 1) was also not instructive to the PKS. Although he and other leaders admired the fortitude of these Brothers to found a pluralist party in the face of certain regime repression, 'PKS can take few lessons' from its example.¹⁵⁰

The party which now most interests the PKS is Turkey's AKP, as it is seen as one of the few parties to have successfully evolved from its Islamist roots to being a broad based ruling party with high popular legitimacy. Anis Matta explained:

What we want to study is how medium sized parties can become big parties which are able to win government. We have looked across the Islamic world and the only party which has done this is AKP. The key to AKP's success is performance. It has high economic growth, improving public services and good relations with Europe ... Erdogan has brought about a remarkable change. He learned from the failures of the past [i.e. Erbakan's Refah Party] and he helped create something new: an Islamic party that can actually deliver prosperity and democracy. AKP combines religion with competence and PKS admires this.¹⁵¹

In a similar vein, another PKS leader told us:

The current situation in PKS now is just like the stage where the Refah Party in Turkey was led by Erdogan. It was then modernised by Erdogan and a new generation transformed the movement into AKP. A similar pattern will happen in Indonesia. The kind of transition that had happened from Refah to AKP needs to be understood so that that kind of transition process can also take place smoothly in Indonesia.¹⁵²

Documents from within PKS-affiliated institutions reveal in greater detail the party's perceptions of the AKP. One example is a seminar presentation by the director of the Nurul Fikri, an educational foundation closely linked to the PKS community, to graduate participants in its programs. In a section entitled 'The process of Islamisation in Turkey', it argues that with the correct approach, Islamic movements can achieve power. It charts a decades long process by which Islamic organisations set about Islamising key institutions in society and the state, and ends with the AKP's election victory in 2000. The Islamic organisations listed include the Naqsyahbandiah (Naqshbandiya) order, the An-Nur Movement, the Refah Party and the AKP, which are praised for having a 'basis of struggle' which is: non-confrontational; which eschews 'the logic of frontal revolution'; has 'a long-term pattern of struggle' and does 'not make the take-over of power a program priority in the short term; and is guided by the fact that the 'Qur'an recommends gradual change'. From the 1970s these Islamic movements 'recruited and trained clever students for placement in their homes and then placed them into civil institutions, the police and military'. The last point states: 'In 2000, the Turkish Islamic Party [AKP] won the parliamentary election and gained the prime-ministership'. The lesson to be drawn from this is that patient and strategically targeted cadreisation and non-militant Islamisation can lead to sweeping political victory.¹⁵³

Somewhat to the PKS's irritation, the AKP has proved a reluctant interlocutor and collaborator. It has rebuffed the PKS's attempts to

foster cooperation between the parties, saying that the PKS is an Islamist party and the AKP is forbidden from having formal relations with non-secular parties. For a similar reason, the AKP also refused to attend the inaugural International Forum of Islamist Parliamentarians which the PKS played a major role in hosting in Jakarta in early 2007.¹⁵⁴ Despite this, the PKS sent a 'study team' to Turkey in early 2008 to investigate further the AKP's strategies and reasons for its success.

The PKS's pragmatism and focus on power is also evident in its other international liaisons. In Malaysia, it has spurned the Islamist opposition party, PAS (All-Malaysia Islamic Party), in favour of the ruling UMNO (United Malay National Organisation), even though the PAS and the PKS had previously enjoyed close relations. The logic for this is that, according to PKS leaders, the PAS has no chance of being a governing party in the short- to medium-term and thus relations with it offer little benefit. By contrast, UMNO, also ideologically Islamist, has been the pivotal party in the ruling coalition since independence and will continue to play this role in the foreseeable future. If the PKS does take a greater role in future governments, good relations with UMNO will be an asset.¹⁵⁵ UMNO is just one of five foreign parties with which the PKS is seeking formal cooperation, the others being the Australian Labor Party, the British Labour Party, the Democratic Party in the US and, most surprisingly of all, the Communist Party of China.¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

The policies and behaviour of the PKS in recent years suggest that it is becoming more integrated into Indonesia's mainstream political culture, and to some extent is being 'normalised' through the process of pursuing political success. Some elements of this process have undoubtedly harmed the party. It is more susceptible to graft than was its predecessor, PK, and some of its leaders show signs of being seduced by the high consumption, freewheeling lifestyle of Jakarta's political elite — the very behaviour so frowned upon by Tarbiyah activists in the 1980s and 1990s. Ideologically, the party appears less attentive than in the past and its willingness to sell its support to raise badly needed

election funds runs counter to thinking which drove PK to eschew such lucrative deals.

When viewed from this standpoint, it might seem possible to conclude that Indonesian politics is changing the PKS more than the reverse. However, it remains true that the PKS is much cleaner than any other major party, that its cadre system remains the most rigorous in the political system, that its commitment to community service is greater than that of its rivals and that it is more serious about policy than any of the other Islamic parties. Key pragmatists such as Anis Matta argue that the PKS's current compromises and controversies are a necessary part of the transition to being a major political player, and that the party will be able to enact more substantive change in the longer term having made difficult short-term decisions. The degree to which the pragmatists can continue to bring the party with them may well depend on the PKS's electoral fortunes in 2009: a declining vote could lead to their being discredited and a concomitant rise in the power of more conservative and ideologically uncompromising elements.

Chapter 3

Turkey: post-Islamism in power

A significant part of the Turkish society desires to adopt a concept of modernity that does not reject tradition, a belief in universalism that accepts localism, an understanding of rationalism that does not disregard the spiritual meaning of life, and a choice for change that is not fundamentalist. The concept of conservative democracy is [this], in fact, and answers to this desire of the Turkish people.

– Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey and leader of the AKP¹⁵⁷

In 2002 the AKP emerged from the ashes of a succession of banned parties to win 70 % of seats in parliament and form Turkey's first majority government in a generation. In power, its behavior has displayed nationalist instincts shared by all other Turkish parties and the party has distinguished itself not through Islamist gestures but by its ambition, energy and relative probity. Suspected of chafing under secularism, which constitutes one pillar of the republic's official ideology, the AKP embraced the opportunity to champion another — Turkey's European vocation. The AKP has pushed reforms necessary to qualify for EU accession more energetically than previous governments unassociated with Islamism ever had, confounding critics

who accused it of wanting to thwart Turkey's westward looking path of development.

On 28 August 2007, Abdullah Gül, a former stalwart of two parties banned for anti-secular activities, became President of the fiercely secular Turkish Republic. His win by a comfortable margin in the third round of voting followed months of acrimonious opposition by Turkey's militantly secularist elite, led by the army. Both Turkey's presidency and the government are now held by founders of the AKP — whose founders and current leaders, including Gül and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, began their political careers with the avowedly Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*).

This chapter explores the influences that led a reformist faction of Turkey's Islamist political movement to break with its confrontational ideology and adopt a pragmatic 'post-Islamist' identity, thereby setting the stage for the reformists' creation of Turkey's current government. In particular, it examines how the combination of limitations asserted by the republic's secular establishment and liberties preserved by it created a window of opportunity; and how social and economic developments created a large constituency that rewarded the reformists for accepting the limitations, while seizing the opportunities left open to them.

We have referred to the AKP as a post-Islamist party in large part because it does not fit the general, historical definition of Islamism as outlined in the introduction (whereas its predecessors, perhaps arguably, did). As a concept 'post-Islamism' has been variously defined and used by scholars of Islam and Islamism. For Olivier Roy, post-Islamism reflects the conceptual and practical failure of Islamism's effort to Islamise the state and to unify religion and politics. In a post-Islamist society, politics and religion remain autonomous in the sense that politics takes precedence over religion (i.e., political motivations or interests trump religious ones), while Islamisation is 'privatised' in the sense that the state is no longer seen as important in the Islamisation of society. Roy gives as examples the way individuals go directly to state courts in the name of *shari'a* or the emergence of 'Islamismo-business', such as Islamic banking, schooling and fashion.¹⁵⁸ For the purposes of this chapter, our use of post-Islamism is perhaps closer to that defined

by Asef Bayat as a more pragmatic, inclusive and democratic departure from, or evolution of, Islamism.¹⁵⁹ Yet as this chapter underlines, the AKP as an example of post-Islamist politics also reflects elements of Roy's definition, in the sense that the party gives precedence to politics over religion and in the declining importance of 'the Islamic state' in the AKP's narrative and goals.

Islam, democracy and the Turkish Republic

In 1924, Turkey's Grand National Assembly voted to abolish the caliphate, the institution which in various guises had claimed leadership of the Islamic world since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The republic banned religious schools, *şeriat* (*shari'a*) courts and *tarikats*, the Islamic brotherhoods that exercised a strong hold over their members and whose recondite structure would make them impossible for the state to effectively control. Mosques would be supported by the state and their imams would be civil servants employed by the new Directorate of Religious Affairs. In 1928, Islam ceased to be the official religion of the state and Arabic was discarded in favour of a new Latin based script. Violent reactions persuaded the republicans to drop a plan to ban the veil, but Atatürk himself toured the countryside delivering his famous 'This is a hat' lecture, in which he explained to Turkish men why they should trade in the traditional fez for a European style bowler hat.

Laicism, the new secular state ideology, was not just reliant on Atatürk's charisma, however. Turks revered Atatürk for expelling the Greeks and foiling the Allies' plans to parcel out Anatolia among themselves and they were convinced that their new republic had to emulate aspects of Europe; but Islam remained the core of their identity. In the 1920s and 1930s there were several religiously inspired rebellions in the east and one in the Aegean city of Menemen that were put down by force. The dominance of the army — based both on physical power and popularity — was such that most political activity took place within limits imposed by the military and other republican bastions. For the next two decades, those who chafed under the republic's secularism kept a low profile.

Nevertheless, much of Turkey's history has been framed by a restrained rivalry between a powerful minority of militant laicists and a less powerful but much larger segment of the population for whom Islam remained their pre-eminent orientation. The denizens of Anatolia's small towns and cities, known as 'black Turks', repeatedly pushed the limits of laicism while the apostles of Atatürk, originally the reformist elite hailing mostly from Salonika and known as 'white Turks', manned the bulwark between religion and politics.

Atatürk died in 1938 and his successor, İsmet İnönü, continued the system of one party rule through World War II. It was not long before rivals of Atatürk and İnönü's Republican People's Party (CHP) began appealing to religious values with Turkey's first fair multiparty elections in 1950. The newly created Democrat Party trounced the CHP and created the first Turkish government not led by Atatürk or İnönü. The Democrats were overtly religious and promised to relax many restrictions on religion. On winning government, new Prime Minister Adnan Menderes lifted the ban on the *ezan* (call to prayer) in Arabic, reopened the *imam hatip* schools (for educating prayer leaders), and reopened a tomb on the Golden Horn in Istanbul that was an important pilgrimage site.

It has been argued that the Democrat Party embodied the only political philosophy ever to command a majority in the Grand National Assembly, a formula which won another strong mandate with the AKP's triumph in 2002. As David Shankland has argued, 'It consists of a combination of right-wing economics, combined with overt sympathy toward Islam expressed *within* the framework of the secular republic'.¹⁶⁰ While identifying with Islam, the Democrats and their ideological successors were not Islamists. Nevertheless, high inflation and shifts in the Democrats' policies toward the end of their ten years in power prompted a military coup in 1960; Menderes was hanged, while President Bayar's death sentence was commuted.

After the army allowed a return to civilian rule in 1963, elections brought to power the Justice Party headed by Süleyman Demirel. Like the Democrats, the Justice Party embraced liberal economics and personal piety but not Islamism. The army deposed Demirel twice, in 1971

and 1980, then allowed him to become president in tandem with the staunchly laicist and economically state-centric Bülent Ecevit as prime minister. After the 1983 election, leadership of the moderate right and of the country passed to Turgut Özal, a bureaucrat who had managed the privatisation process under Demirel. Özal remained prime minister until 1990, when he became president. Under his leadership, Turkey's economy vaulted ahead, private enterprise burgeoned and an unprecedented young middle class emerged in Turkey's cities. The Özal years also created the conditions that facilitated the emergence of successful capitalists in the cities of the interior that would become known as 'Anatolian tigers'. The drivers and beneficiaries of this economic flourishing in Anatolia were to become a bastion of Islamist parties led by Necmettin Erbakan and ultimately of the post-Islamist AKP.

Islamism in Turkey

As in other parts of the Muslim world, Islamism in Turkey drew its inspiration from perceptions of an external physical, intellectual and moral threat from the West; and like Islamism historically, it promoted national and social regeneration along Islamic lines as the most appropriate response to this threat. In Turkey's case this was amplified by the fact that some of the very ideas against which Islamism was reacting were elevated to the level of the state ideology, vigorously upheld by a military, political and legal elite. But it was not until the late 1960s that a mainstream Islamist movement was born in the shape of the Milli Görüş (the National Outlook). Formed by Necmettin Erbakan, a religiously observant engineer, its activism covered a broad range of fields — social, educational, religious and political. It spawned a succession of overtly Islamist political parties and it was at the head of one of these, the *Refah* (Welfare) Party, that Erbakan would eventually become prime minister in 1996. Some 18 months later he was removed from power by Turkey's military and political elites, but it was out of Refah, and its successor Fazilet, that the AKP would be born.

The National Outlook shared many of the characteristics of mainstream Islamism as we have described it, even if its ideological

lineage to Islamism's founding fathers was less apparent and its choice of language and terminology necessarily different. The works of al-Banna and Qutb were translated into Turkish during the Islamic publishing boom of the 1970s and they seem to have had an impact on student generations that became supporters and members of the National Outlook and its various political manifestations.¹⁶¹ The Outlook's core constituency was similar to that which supported the emergence of Islamist movements elsewhere — students, small scale merchants (*bazaaris*) and pious lower middle classes that felt unrepresented by the centre right parties allied with big business and the newly urbanised. It also seemed to echo the closed membership and hierarchical and autocratic structures of prototypical Islamist movements, built as it was around principles of 'community, organisation and obedience'.¹⁶² As Erbakan would later claim 'other parties have voters whereas the Refah Party has believers'.¹⁶³

As with Islamism generally, National Outlook attributed the decline of the Muslim world to the lack of commitment to strict Islamic precepts. It saw the primary illness afflicting Turkish society as the denial of tradition — a tradition which it defined in terms of Islamic values, attitudes and institutions.¹⁶⁴ In this regard it too viewed Islam as an ideology and a basis for the comprehensive reform of society. Western values were to be rejected; Western science and technology were fine. Initially, it lacked a well defined political program, although in 1990, Refah, perhaps the apogee of the National Outlook's Islamist evolution, adopted as its party motto calls for a 'Just Order'. This extended from a critique of the existing socio-economic order to calls for 'social solidarity, the prevention of wasteful expenditures, justice in taxation, equal treatment of all in the allocation of state credits, (and) the abolition of interest' all based on its interpretation of Islamic norms and regulations.¹⁶⁵

At first blush, this might seem something less than the historical Islamist call for a *shari'a* enforcing Islamic state or system. Throughout its history the National Outlook and its various political manifestations were forced to avoid explicit reference to Islamic terminology, constrained by a powerful state dominated by a militantly secularist elite based in the military officer corps, the bureaucracy and the Istanbul based business

community. Erbakan and his lieutenants knew that to survive they had to avoid transgressing the legal and ideological limits on mixing religion and politics. The result was an Islamist agenda without an Islamist vocabulary. Thus Refah, for example, campaigned to outlaw *riba* (the payment or charging of interest), but on the grounds that it exploited the poor rather than because it is proscribed by *shari'a*.

One of Refah's strategies for striking chords among its constituents without falling foul of the sentinels of secularism was to employ rhetoric that was formally unobjectionable but contained cues readily recognised by believers.¹⁶⁶ The term '*milli görüş*', for instance, itself took advantage of '*milli*' meaning both 'nation' and 'community' (of believers). Despite the National Outlook's efforts to be discreet, many of its secularist critics in Turkey regularly accused it of practising *takiyye*, dissimulation permitted in Islam if it advances the faith. There is no question that the face Erbakan's movement presented varied dramatically depending on its audience. To his followers Erbakan was known as '*hoja*' (teacher) and he strongly implied that Muslims who supported other parties were betraying their faith. Yet when the Welfare Party was being tried for anti-secular activities, it argued, the 'Welfare Party is a service party, a political organization, not a religious or philosophical school'.¹⁶⁷

Yet, the evolution of Turkish Islamism was not just reflected in careful rhetoric. As Hakan Yavuz has noted, laicism in Turkey did not so much separate religion *from* politics as subordinate religion *to* politics.¹⁶⁸ As a result it contributed to the politicisation of Islam by making it important, from a religious perspective, to gain control of the state. Symptomatic of this was the emblematic struggle Turkish Islamists have fought over the state ban on women wearing veils in public institutions. Yet state control of religion meant that Turkish Islamism also championed the right of communities and individuals to operate according to their own beliefs rather than the centralising and autocratic strictures of the state, which for many Islamists created a certain appreciation of pluralism.¹⁶⁹

Second, as in Indonesia, mainstream Islamism in Turkey was able to manifest itself relatively early in its history in the form of explicitly political parties. Those drawn to these parties had, therefore, already

chosen to participate in political life. For others focused on religious and social activism there were other outlets such as the traditional Sufi lodges and the Nurcu movement inspired by the Turkish Islamic thinker Said Nursi (1876-1960), and associated with a broad range of activities comparable to the social activism of the Muslim Brotherhood but without the latter's overtly political agenda.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, the followers of Fetullah Gülen, a Nurcu-related group, provide a large social network that emphasised education, media (including the popular *Zaman* newspaper), discussion groups and business enterprises. In effect, there was not one movement in Turkey attempting to undertake Islamist political, social and religious activism under one roof. While there were certainly individuals active in both the *Gülen cemaatı* (Gülen community) and in Erbakan's parties, they were distinct groups and most adherents would favour one over the other. In theory, therefore, the tension between preachers and politicians was perhaps less strong than it has been for other Islamist movements — although this did not mean that it did not exist.

Refah in power

Erbakan successfully campaigned for parliament after being refused admission to Demirel's Justice Party. In parliament, he formed the *Milli Nizam Partisi* (National Order Party). The MNP was widely known to have close contacts with the Nakshibendi (Naqshbandiya) tarikat¹⁷¹ and the constitutional court closed the party just after the 1971 coup. The next year Erbakan assumed leadership of a successor party, the *Milli Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation Party), and served as deputy prime minister under Ecevit. After another stint in government as deputy prime minister under Demirel, Erbakan assumed the leadership of the Refah (Welfare) Party soon after its founding in 1983.

The combination of Erbakan's being banned from office for anti-secular activities, and a new threshold of 10% that parties were required to clear in order to enter parliament, prevented Refah from winning any seats in the Grand National Assembly until 1991. Welfare captured the city governments of both Istanbul and Ankara in 1994

and the next year Erbakan's party won 22% of the vote. Following a short-lived coalition between the second and third place finishers — Tansu Çiller's True Path Party and Mesut Yılmaz's Motherland Party, respectively — Erbakan became prime minister in an improbable coalition with Çiller's party.

Lurid expectations that Erbakan would move quickly to turn Turkey into an Islamic state did not materialise. In power Erbakan downplayed reference to a 'Just Order' that would have reoriented both Turkey's traditional pro-Western foreign policy stance and placed economic policy on a more Islamic (for example, the banning of interest payments) and social welfare footing. Indeed, as we see in a moment, the abandonment of a just economic order reflected in part the changing socio-political base of the movement's supporters.

Nevertheless, the Turkish secular establishment was not going to take any chances with an Erbakan-led government. In February 1997, Turkey's generals — the perennial power behind the throne — ordered the government to crack down on Islamists. Among the most controversial measures were those restricting religious education and enforcing the prohibition against women wearing headscarves in state buildings, including universities. The Erbakan Government obeyed with almost unseemly alacrity. It did him little good. On June 1997, after only 18 months in power, Erbakan was forced to resign. In January 1998 state prosecutors closed the Welfare Party for involvement in 'anti-secular activities' and banned Erbakan from political life for five years.

Importantly, Erbakan was not entirely blameless in terms of giving his political opponents a pretext for removing him from power — something which would not have been lost on the younger generation members of his own party. Although at the end he appeared ready to make any concession to save his political skin, Erbakan nevertheless said and did things before and during his 18 months in power that appeared deliberately provocative. The best known example was his trip to Libya at the behest of the Turkish Contractors' Association, which hoped the prime minister might help recover \$250 million that Libya owed Turkish firms. Not only did Erbakan return from Libya empty-

handed but he did so humiliated by Qadhafi who publicly denounced him for not being sufficiently zealous in his Islamism.¹⁷²

Erbakan talked about forcing university professors to 'bow down' to girls in headscarves and he threatened to build a huge mosque in the middle of Taksim, Istanbul's equivalent of Times Square. During Ramadan, he held an *iftar*, the celebratory meal held immediately after sunset during the month of daytime fasting, in the prime minister's residence. Guests at the meal included both officials of the State Directorate of Religious Affairs and leaders of the *tarikats* that Kemalists have always regarded as a major threat to the secular republic.¹⁷³ Ankara mayor Melih Gokcek, another Welfare Party stalwart, had a nude statue removed from public view, saying, 'If this is art, I spit on it'. Couples walking hand-in-hand in Ankara's subway stations were ordered over the public address system not to offend public morals by touching one another.¹⁷⁴ The mayor of the Welfare stronghold of Konya wanted to introduce separate buses for boys and girls and to open a hospital that only females would be allowed to enter.¹⁷⁵

Roots of the AKP

The emergence of the post-Islamist AKP resulted from the confluence of four important factors. First, Refah included a number of younger members who learned different lessons from the experience of the party being shut down and its successor faring poorly. The pragmatic orientation of the lessons drawn by the movement's youth wing was reinforced by a parallel movement among Muslim intellectuals. Second, the guardians of the secular order, the army and judiciary, which enjoyed both physical power and deeply grounded legitimacy within Turkish society, exerted continuous pressure on the party to stay within certain red lines but also resisted crushing it pre-emptively. This pressure channeled the reformists in a direction that allowed them to faithfully represent their constituents' interests without incurring a mortal blow from the secular establishment. Third, demographic changes created new constituencies calling for the AKP's mix of cultural conservatism and political and economic pragmatism. And finally, the prospect of

EU candidacy, and then full membership gave the government a ready-made reform agenda, which, if achieved, would yield material benefits for poor supporters while also deflecting any accusations that the party was anti-Western.

Parties headed by Erbakan had been closed before and always came back under a new name and nominally a new leadership, so no one was surprised when Welfare re-emerged as the Virtue Party (*Fazilet*), headed by one of Erbakan's septuagenarian cronies, Recai Kutan. In 1999 the Virtue Party contested parliamentary elections on an unprovocative but also uninspiring agenda of 'democracy, human rights, civil liberties and the rule of law'. Campaigning in the towns of Anatolia, Virtue candidates did not promote Muslim values, but they did pledge to respect the traditional values already prevalent throughout the countryside and in provincial cities. The Democratic Left Party (DSP) led by Bulent Ecevit topped the polls, followed closely by the far right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). Virtue finished a distant third, dropping 6% from the 1995 elections.

Immediately after the 1999 elections, Abdullah Gül, then a popular MP from Kayseri and about to step forward, along with Erdoğan, as a leader of the breakaway faction, said Virtue had deserved to do poorly. According to Gül, 'Erbakan had ruined the party's image by prevaricating over the document the Turkish National Security Council had forced him to sign in February 1997, committing him to fight Islamic fundamentalism, by his alarming rhetoric, and by his trips to Libya and Iran. The straw that broke the camel's back so far as the general public was concerned was a failed gambit, engineered behind the scenes by Erbakan, to delay the elections'.¹⁷⁶

Such outspoken criticism of the godfather of the Islamist political tradition galvanised an energetic and worldly reformist faction within the party that became known as the 'young wing' (*genç kanaat*). Its natural leader was Erdoğan; but he had been convicted of 'inciting religious hatred' for reading a verse from a poem by one of Turkey's most revered nationalist poets, leading to a ten month prison sentence (of which he served four) and a lifetime ban from politics. Erdoğan's offence had been to read a verse from a poem, including the phrase

‘minarets will be our bayonets’, in a speech in Southeastern Turkey’s unofficial capital, Diyarbakir. The line was clearly intended to transcend the local voters’ Kurdish ethnicity and appeal to them as Muslims. What made the official reaction dismaying was that the poem was written by Ziya Gokalp, a nationalist who agitated for the creation of the republic and has a street named after him in Ankara which forms the capital’s most important intersection where it crosses with Ataturk Boulevard.¹⁷⁷ Pending a lifting of this ban, Gül led the youth wing’s efforts to break away from Erbakan and establish a new party untainted by his provocative views.

What was at stake was not just the future of Turkey’s mainstream Islamist movement. If dynamic young leaders who respected both religious conservatism and Turkey’s democratic and secular values could emerge from Erbakan’s long shadow, they might be able to close the gap between Turkey’s traditional masses and its westernised elite and thus finish the revolution that Ataturk began. If not, the old elite, led by the officer corps, would have continued its disdainful treatment of Turkey’s traditional majority, deepening the country’s debilitating polarisation between Turks who fear Islam and those who largely define themselves by it.¹⁷⁸

Many of Virtue’s critics argued that the difference between the younger generation, led by Gül, then 50, and the old guard led by Erbakan was merely cosmetic. But others who know the men involved said there was an important generational difference between the two camps. ‘They have a different world view,’ one senior diplomat said of the reformists in Ankara in 2000, ‘more business experience, more travel and exposure to the debates in other Muslim countries’.¹⁷⁹ Murat Mercan, who has an American MBA and was then a top adviser to Gül and now an MP from Eskişehir, agreed:

The older generation was raised in such a closed society, they had no idea what was going on in the outside world, even in Muslim countries. When Erbakan talks about making jihad, for example, he doesn’t really know what it means but naturally it scares people. It would scare

me. The older people in the party may share the same ambitions as the young to make Turkey a modern Western country, [only one] with moral and religious values, but the old people don’t have the intellectual infrastructure to achieve their goals.¹⁸⁰

Erdoğan and Gül also shared a pragmatic and laissez-faire orientation that differentiated them from Erbakan’s faction. Erdoğan had risen to prominence as mayor of Istanbul, then a city of some 12 million. While his mainly poor supporters recently arrived from the provinces were overwhelmingly religious, they were nevertheless much more concerned with jobs, infrastructure and public services than with the relationship between their faith and the state. To the negative lessons of Refah’s closure and the Virtue Party’s poor performance were added the contrast between Erdoğan’s success as mayor and Erbakan’s failure as PM. From the standpoint of the poor, traditional voters they purported to represent, pragmatism manifestly delivered results and was duly rewarded at the polls while Erbakan’s fulminating delivered neither. Gül, for his part, represented the city of Kayseri, a hotbed of socially conservative but commercially energetic and innovative entrepreneurs later dubbed ‘Islamic Calvinists’ (see below).¹⁸¹ Prominent figures among this emergent group included Esad Cosan, former leader of the largest wing of the Nakshibendi religious order, who called on his disciples to study foreign languages, use computers and travel abroad to expand their knowledge.¹⁸²

Revolt of the pragmatists

Both Gül and Erdoğan had witnessed Refah’s expulsion from government in 1997 and Erbakan’s disastrous interference in the Virtue Party. They were convinced that continuing to maintain an Islamist profile, while trying to convince the ultra-secularist establishment that it posed no threat, would be political suicide, whether through closure of the party and their own exclusion from political life, or through poor results at the polls.

The first open challenge to Erbakan's leadership of the Islamist movement in Turkey came at the Virtue Party's first and only national convention in May 2000. Leading up to this meeting, Erbakan's men pulled out the stops to try to smother the insurrection in its cradle. One Erbakan stalwart warned regional party leaders that if they betrayed the man known as '*hoja*' (teacher), they would never enter paradise. Gül, meanwhile, hovered delicately between reaffirming his loyalty to the leader while urging the party cadre to face the fact that the party had no future under Erbakan's leadership. *Miliyet* newspaper quoted Gül as saying that the Virtue Party had lost support because it appeared 'inconsistent, unprincipled, undecided and slippery'.¹⁸³

Gül campaigned for the party chairmanship on a platform of pragmatism: avoiding conflict with the army; a Western orientation in foreign policy, meaning a continuation of Turkey's loyalty to NATO and a re-energised pursuit of EU membership; and support and respect for cultural pluralism, including women's rights to wear headscarves in universities. Gül distinguished himself from Erbakan by his instinct for avoiding provocative gestures and his ability to reassure both Turkish secularists and Western diplomats. He explained his vision for the party as being a Muslim version of a European Christian Democratic party, like that of former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Later, the AKP rejected even the 'Muslim' qualifier.

The reformers were committed to separating religion from the state. This meant that the Ministry of Religious Affairs would be dismantled and mosques would be responsible for their own upkeep — and their own sermons. Many secularists feared this would lead mosques to become platforms for Islamist politics. But Mercan insisted that separation of religion and politics, as in the US, would mean no obligatory prayers in school or any other infiltration of Islamic values or practices into state institutions, especially with respect to pressuring female students to wear headscarves.

In his speech to the Virtue Party convention, Gül came as close as he dared to inviting delegates to throw off Erbakan's authoritarian control of the party. 'If we want Turkey to move closer to democracy, we must be more democratic. If we are to criticize Turkey, we must

be able to criticize ourselves'. In the end, Erbakan's man won 633 to Gül's 521. But although he'd lost the vote, no one was in any doubt that the insurgents had achieved a landmark moral victory. As one of Gül's most effective allies, the articulate lawyer and MP Bulent Arinc, noted at the time, 'today is a good beginning, not an end. Both for us and for Turkish political life this is a revolution. Nothing is or will be as it was before'.¹⁸⁴

The Constitutional Court closed the Virtue Party in 2001 on the grounds that it was a centre of anti-secular activities. Closing it on this basis, rather than because it was merely a continuation of the previously banned Welfare Party, enabled individual members not convicted of anti-secular activities to avoid being banned from politics. This far sighted move allowed the reformists to continue their campaign to separate from Erbakan; banning the reformists from politics would have left Turkey bereft of a popular party and turned the leaders of today's progressive government into an underground opposition.

The reformists seized the opportunity to form a new party free of Erbakan and his Islamist cosmology and agenda. They gave their new party a good start with a clever name — the Justice and Development Party — whose initials in Turkish mean the 'clean' or 'untainted' party. In the run up to elections, Erdoğan, Gül and other reformists also reached out to established members of other centre right parties, including the Motherland Party and the True Path Party. In November 2002, the AKP won 34 % of the vote. Because parties must win 10 % of the vote to have any seats in parliament, this result translated into 363 seats, a landslide victory that allowed the AKP to form a single party government for the first time in a generation. The AKP's nearest rival, the Republican People's Party, won just 19 % of the vote. Perhaps most tellingly of all, Erbakan's latest party, Felicity (*Saadet*) polled just 2 %. This, probably more than any other statistic, reflected the actual scale of support for Islamism in Turkey.¹⁸⁵

Some Muslim intellectuals who had formerly been supportive of Refah began airing calls for change. Just before the 2002 elections Ali Bulac led a group of intellectuals who founded a magazine called *Science and Thought*, which supported the AKP and sketched elements

of what it called a 'new Islamism'. The magazine's writers argued that confrontational approaches had proven useless and a number of national and international developments — the February 28 movement, the 11 September attacks, the prospect of EU membership and the unique credibility of liberal democracy and free market capitalism all called for the new party to adopt an accommodationist approach.

Ahmet Davetoglu, an academic who has written widely on the relations between Western and Islamic political theory and on Turkish foreign policy, became a close advisor to Gül and Erdoğan and eventually, as ambassador without portfolio, became a key architect of the government's foreign policy. In 1999 he said that Kemalists had adopted the view that modernisation required a self-imposed cultural colonialism, which created a 'divided self. Davetoglu said the Virtue Party — by which he really meant its reformist wing — had 'been a spokesman for the traditional Anatolian vision of space and history, accepting modernization as a natural and universal process, as opposed to a wholesale conversion to another culture'.¹⁸⁶

While the reformists' own learning process and demographic shifts have been vital to the emergence of the post-Islamist AKP, it is also the constrained authoritarianism of the state that defined the niche the party now occupies. Given the radicalism of Erbakan's ideas, it's a wonder that Turkey's Kemalist establishment ever allowed him to come to power in the first place. That it did attests to the army's well-founded sense of security as Turkey's most powerful and respected institution. At the same time, state officials and military officers knew that they too had to avoid overstepping their perceived boundaries of legitimate action or risk estranging the public. The army was especially anxious to avoid being blamed, by the public or allies, for sabotaging Turkey's EU hopes, even while it continued a rearguard action to preserve privileges not allowed EU militaries.

The prospect of EU candidacy, and the incentive this would create to pursue wide-ranging reforms, encouraged the evolution of the AKP's post-Islamist orientation. What to some sceptics seemed improbable, given the party's Islamist political background, made good political sense. The AKP needed domestic political legitimacy, and the EU

project was by far the most popular policy project available, offering a basis for consensus with important segments of society that were otherwise suspicious of the 'Anatolian periphery' represented by the AKP. At the same time, the EU looked like a much needed ally in the AKP's struggle to enlarge civil liberties, particularly in matters dear to their electorate, such as overturning the headscarf ban in universities, over the objections of the hostile Kemalist elite. And finally, public expectations focused on rapid economic improvements after a decade of rampant corruption and the devastating financial crisis of 2001; the combination of continuing the IMF program plus achieving a realistic prospect of EU accession was the best bet for quick macro-economic stabilisation and attracting desperately needed foreign investments. On 17 December 2004, the EU's member states vindicated the campaign by voting to open membership negotiations with Turkey.

Who supports the AKP?

Turkey's urban population more than doubled in size between 1985 and 2000, an increase of 24.4 million people. New and rapidly growing suburbs sprouted on the outskirts of Istanbul, Ankara and other large cities. The residents of these new suburbs and shanty towns known as *gecekondu* (built in the night), brought with them conservative attitudes grounded in folk Islam. While they had few vocational skills, they nevertheless aspired to improve their lot and had greater opportunities to do so than those left behind in the villages. These 'aspirational' conservatives formed the political base of the Refah Party and later of its pragmatic reformers. Women played a key role in mobilising this base through grassroots activism.

The AKP's voters also included conservative peasants in the depths of Anatolia, as well as demanding provincial entrepreneurs. Among this group, surveys found overwhelming support for cultural pluralism rather than hegemony based on Islam or any other single ethos. Surveys also found that the great majority believe in the secular tenets of the Turkish Republic, especially the articles of the Civil Code based on gender equality, and that an overwhelming majority of 91 % believe that the protection of differences of belief in an atmosphere of

tolerance is important for social harmony. These results contradict the characterisation of the Turkish people as polarised into two camps, based on opposing attitudes towards Islam and secularism, who are intolerant of each other's lifestyles.¹⁸⁷

Surveys also show that AKP voters place themselves in the centre right, along with Motherland and the True Path Party and to the left of the ultra-nationalist National Movement Party. Turkish opinion has moved toward the left since 2002, but the AKP's place within the spectrum remains unchanged.¹⁸⁸ The AKP reflects the demands of voters who have felt oppressed by Turkey's authoritarian state tradition but who are traditionally pragmatic and interested in private sector driven development. In any case, according to a 2005 survey, only 2.84 % of those who voted for the AKP in 2002 did so on the basis of the party's ideological program.¹⁸⁹

The composition of the AKP's supporters reflects three changes in Turkish society and politics over the past 15 years or so. First, the political base of the National Outlook Movement became more affluent and politically assertive. Second, the attitudes of this political base evolved; most grew disillusioned with Erbakan's confrontational, ineffectual style of politics. And third, the AKP demonstrated its appeal to broadly shared centre right values by winning the votes of many outside the NOM's traditional base.¹⁹⁰

The election of 2002, which brought the AKP to power, was framed by two landmark developments. One was the army's intervention against the Welfare Party five years earlier, which spelt the demise of the National Outlook Movement. The second was the severe economic crisis triggered by the public spat between President Suleyman Demirel and PM Bulent Ecevit over the government's implementation of structural reforms demanded by the IMF. Voters were deeply disillusioned by the corruption and sheer incompetence of the established parties, and 21 % of eligible voters chose not to cast a ballot — an extraordinary measure of apathy by Turkish standards. Combined with the 10 % threshold the vote tally resulted in 17 parties having no seats in parliament and 40 % of all Turkish voters having no representation.¹⁹¹ The newly established AKP capitalised on this disaffection to stake out a dominant position

on the centre right of the political spectrum, where most Turks identify their own position.

More significantly, though, the AKP was building on deeper trends. The biggest fault-line in Turkish society has traditionally been seen to run between the secular, state-centric elite known as 'white Turks' and the more traditional masses of Anatolia, known as 'black Turks'. Migration from provincial towns into the big cities as well as the transformation of Anatolia over the past two decades has blurred this distinction. The AKP reflects the outlook of a population in Anatolia, which, beginning with the economic liberalisation under Turgut Özal in the 1980s, has become more prosperous, self-assured and progressive than ever before in Turkish history. The provinces the AKP won in the 2002 elections were those the Motherland Party under Turgut Özal won in the 1980s.¹⁹² In recent years members of this demographic segment have tended to be more open to laissez-faire economics while opposing the state's more severe secularist strictures.

The provincial cities that built up competitive businesses became known as 'Anatolian tigers'. A much discussed report by a European think tank dubbed these new Anatolian entrepreneurs 'Islamic Calvinists'.¹⁹³ Without hazarding which came first, it attributes their new found prosperity to the virtues that Max Weber associated with Protestants, a characterisation embraced by many of the Muslim businessmen themselves who would 'stress the virtues of hard work and self-sufficiency, of saving and investing, of private charity and community service, of conservative social habits and trust within the community, of strong family bonds and investing in the education of the next generation'.¹⁹⁴ As the reports notes:

Celal Hasnalçaci, owner of a textile company and branch manager of the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD), explained: 'The rise of Anatolian capitalists is due to their Protestant work ethic. No personal waste, no speculation, reinvest your profits ...'
... Saffet Arslan, founder of Ipek Furniture, says, 'I see no black and white opposition between being modern and

traditional. By modernity, I understand that I live in my time, in my century, and I am open to innovation'.¹⁹⁵

The AKP has not only attracted voters from a wide spectrum but new MPs and standard-bearers as well. Ertuğrul Günay was formerly secretary general of the Republican People's Party, the major party most critical of the AKP. He joined the AKP just before the election in July. He notes:

Our left is our right. People with low incomes are voting for AKP. Whereas they should be voting for a social democrat party. But the social democrat party has reduced its role to protecting a social lifestyle. From their perspective our only problem is where we are going to be getting alcohol, what we are going to wear, and how might we prevent those Anatolian migrants from walking around Beyoglu dressed the way they are.¹⁹⁶

Mehmet Şimşek left a high-level job at Merrill Lynch in London to join AKP ranks as Gaziantep MP. He was born to a family of nine children in the Arica village of Batman in 1967 — to a house with no electricity or water and illiterate parents; he won a state scholarship to the University of Exeter in England and embarked on his career in finance. Şimşek describes himself as culturally a conservative democrat, economically a radical liberal and politically at the centre. His wife is an American. He is likely to take a leading economic portfolio in the next government. Şimşek told reporters that he had been impressed by the campaign of the AKP government in Europe soon after the 2002 election, including the effort that went into numerous presentations given to investors in London. He noted a difference between this team and the style and rhetoric of previous visiting ministers. At a meeting with Prime Minister Erdoğan, he stated his view that structural reform needed to be deeper and wider in order to sustain the effort to close the gap with the developed world. The prime minister invited him to join the AKP. He was placed on the candidate list from Gaziantep, which

he describes as not having reached its potential despite being a regional economic centre for Southeast Anatolia.¹⁹⁷ He is now a minister of state responsible for several aspects of the economy.

The AKP in power

The AKP's campaign to reform Turkey's ossified structures had no parallel in its 40-year history of association with Europe. By most measures, the AKP's embrace of the EU has been more successful than almost anyone had hoped. Turkey's acceptance as an official candidate for EU membership in 1999 triggered one of the most intense periods of legal reform in Turkey's history. A report by the International Crisis Group notes that whole floors of the interior ministry are now devoted to aspects of EU integration.¹⁹⁸ These reforms required the government to prise soldiers from controlling positions in the state's most influential cultural institutions, including the Supervision Board of Cinema, Video and Music and the Board of Higher Education (YÖK).¹⁹⁹ The AKP, in other words, has been dogged in its efforts to push the 'pro-Western' military out of politics, as required for EU membership.

Two rafts of amendments, in 2001 and 2004, achieved sweeping changes of authoritarian elements of the constitution drafted under military rule in 1982. The preamble removed the ban on 'thoughts and opinions' contrary to Turkey's national interest and now proscribes only 'actions'. The reforms removed the article effectively banning the use of minority languages, most importantly Kurdish, outside the home. Other amendments gave new rights to prisoners, abolished the death penalty, broadened press freedom, aligned the judiciary with European standards and improved the country's fundamental law regarding privacy, freedom of movement and trials. A series of legal reform packages dealt with torture, freedom of expression, prison conditions and the rights of cultural and religious minorities.²⁰⁰ Parliament passed a new Penal Code in 2004: 'the input of an emboldened civil society, mainly women's groups, eliminated the patriarchal, traditionalist mentality of the first draft'.²⁰¹

After its electoral triumph in July 2007, the AKP began focusing on a new constitution to replace the one promulgated in 1982 under the military regime. Erdoğan promised a wide-ranging debate on a text drafted by a group of constitutional scholars. As he noted:

We want a constitution that is going to provide and protect a state that is a democratic, secular, and social state of law. This constitution is going to point Turkey in a new direction and it is our duty to debate it and consult with people in the widest possible sense.²⁰²

Leading the small team of scholars working on the text is Ergun Özbudun, a political science professor at Ankara's private Bilkent University. The team's striking suggestions include: decreasing the power of the president concerning the nomination of civil servants and diplomats; dissolving the Board of Higher Education (YÖK), by which the Kemalist establishment has maintained ideological control over university rectors; increasing the number of judges in the Supreme Court and changing the system so they are partly elected by parliament, instead of by the president alone; abolishing references to the National Security Council; making religious classes in schools, introduced in the wake of the 1980 coup, non-compulsory.

Image versus action

While the AKP government has achieved many impressive successes, some may judge its effort to fashion a new political identity as less successful. It's true that the party's self-description as 'conservative democrat' sheds more light on what the party is not ('radical', 'authoritarian') than what it is. As one commentator has noted, 'in Turkey, conservatism is generally posited as a 'political attitude' that insists on gradual change and the perpetuation of moral and family values'.²⁰³ Critics have derided 'conservative democracy' as a neologism devoid of either 'conceptual or political legitimacy'.²⁰⁴ Some observers claim that the party calls itself 'conservative

democrat' only because it cannot term itself 'Muslim democrat'. But party officials retort that the label 'Muslim' would not be conducive to its inclusive goals, because although it has a Muslim majority Turkey is home to many religious minorities with deep roots and political stature.

There is little doubt that the AKP has, nevertheless, benefited from its Islamic identity, even if it has had to be very careful about how it expresses it. Jenny White has argued that what this reflects is the AKP's shift from Islamism to 'Muslimhood'.²⁰⁵ That is, in terms of attracting popular support, the movement has come to rely less on a particular Islamist or even Islamic program and more on the religious identity of its representatives. The values of party leaders and representatives are important because they distinguish them from other politicians (for example, because AKP members are good Muslims they are more likely to be less corrupt or more socially conservative etc). But these religious values do not define the movement's political agenda, or at least do not define it exclusively. This can, in the first instance, be characterised as a tactical change in the sense that the AKP wants to distinguish itself from its more overtly Islamist and confrontational predecessors — but not just to avoid the attention of Turkey's secular establishment. It also reflects a reading of the popular mood; a correct reading when one considers the way in which the vestiges of the Islamist movement from which it broke, Erbakan's Virtue Party, polled just 2% of the vote in the 2002 national elections compared to the AKP's 34%.

There has, however, been a substantive change. One aspect where this is most evident is with respect to foreign policy, one area where Islamist movements are viewed most suspiciously by Western countries. For a number of years Turkey has developed a reasonably close strategic relationship with Israel, covering everything from defence exports to military training. Under the Erbakan Prime Ministership, notwithstanding his ideas about forming an 'Islamic NATO', that relationship was never really challenged, in large part because it was seen to be the purview of Turkey's military. Nevertheless, under Erdoğan suspicions as to the AKP's foreign policy orientation, particularly on

this question, remained. For example, Ahmet Davetoglu, Gül's trusted advisor when he was foreign minister, was reputedly dubbed 'Dr Strangelove' by Israeli officials for his role in inviting Hamas leadership to Ankara for consultations after the latter had won Palestinian parliamentary elections.

Most observers agree that the AKP government has succeeded in improving relations with all of Turkey's neighbours. President Gül's historic trip to Armenia — unthinkable by governments in the past, even one that claimed to be more liberal — was only the most recent example of the AKP's efforts to mend fences in the region. Indeed, the AKP has also been able to put its good relations in the Middle East to useful effect. This was perhaps best illustrated in May 2008 when it emerged that the AKP government had been playing a critical role in back channel talks between Israel and Syria aimed at restarting peace negotiations between the two countries.²⁰⁶

Another clear example of a substantive ideological shift relates to perhaps the most contentious issue surrounding Islamist parties in democratic politics — the rights of women. The central role played by women in the AKP, and its revolutionary legal reforms in the arena of women's rights, attests to the radicalism of the party's break with its Islamist forebears.

When the AKP came to power in 2002, Turkish women's unequal status was codified under both civil and criminal law, with husbands formally recognised as heads of household. The legal situation reflected social reality: at a meeting of the World Economic Forum in Istanbul in November 2006, a table measuring the 'gender gap' (inequality between men and women) put Turkey 105th of 115 countries, behind Tunisia, Ethiopia and Algeria.

When the Virtue Party was closed and its young reformers broke ranks with Erbakan and the old guard, the gulf between them was embodied by their respective attitudes toward women. Erbakan's Virtue Party's program had campaigned on the position that:

Our families have been destroyed at unprecedented speed in recent years ... Precautions need to be taken to protect our nation and social structure from the illness of the

nuclear family which foreign forces try to inject into us via the media and movies.²⁰⁷

The AKP offered a strikingly different platform: it encouraged women to participate in public life and be active in politics; it repealed discriminatory provisions in laws and it focused on 'improving social welfare and work conditions in light of the needs of working women'.²⁰⁸ Of the AKP's 71 founding members in 2001, 12 were women — half with headscarves, and half without. Since then, however, female members and MPs have been marginalised, with only one appointed as a minister (for women's affairs). Ayse Bohurler, the only female founding member of the AKP who is occasionally vocal about the dissent, has been disparaged in the strongest terms.

Since winning government in 2002, the AKP has carried out what the European Stability Initiative calls 'the most radical reforms since the abolition of polygamy in the 1920s'.²⁰⁹ Some 35 articles of the Penal Code concerning women and their rights to sexual autonomy have been changed under the AKP government. All references to vague patriarchal constructs such as chastity, morality, shame, public customs or decency have been eliminated. The new Penal Code treats sexual crimes as violations of individual women's rights and not as crimes against society, the family or public morality. It criminalises rape in marriage, eliminates sentence reductions for honour killings, ends legal discrimination against non-virgin and unmarried women, criminalises sexual harassment in the workplace and treats sexual assault by members of the security forces as aggravated offences.²¹⁰ The entire process was conducted in an unusually transparent fashion, with intense debate and input from across society, including unprecedented public consultation.

The AKP sponsored an amendment of the constitution, which now states that 'women and men have equal rights' and 'the state is responsible for taking all necessary measures to realize equality between women and men'.²¹¹ The AKP also undertook the first effort to update the civil code imported from Switzerland in 1926. The updated code gives new rights to women married after 2003 including an equal share of assets and easier divorces. (But MPs protected their own assets by

making sure the provisions only applied to future marriages, not the millions of existing ones). Article 41 provides for ‘equality of spouses’, which dethroned the husband as the head of family whose approval previously was required for his wife to work. Article 66 allows Turkish citizenship to be passed equally from fathers or mothers.

In addition to legal reforms, the AKP has targeted girls’ education. Roughly one million girls of primary school age are not in school. In collaboration with UNICEF and volunteers, the government launched the ‘Girls, let’s go to school!’ campaign to increase school attendance by girls. Between 2003 and 2006 the campaign identified over 273,000 non-enrolled primary school age girls in the provinces with the lowest enrolment rates. The campaign included TV spots starring celebrity entertainers as well as Erdoğan and the ministers of education and religious affairs. Working with the village *muhtar* (headman) and *imam*, teachers managed to convince the parents of 223,000 of these girls to send them to school.²¹² The government has also supported vocational education for women, an initiative Erdoğan began in 1995.²¹³

Nevertheless, set against the AKP government’s record of reforms, other trends and policies reflect a continuing ambivalence about the role of women in society. Indeed, some observers argue that the party’s reforms with regard to women’s issues were motivated by its desire to impress the EU than a genuine passion for the rights of women. Female labour force participation is still falling and many women have apparently been removed from the civil service. The draft constitution submitted by the AKP had women’s groups up in arms because, instead of strengthening the article on equality, it suggested women, along with the elderly, children and handicapped, were among groups in need of ‘special protection’. Finally, Erdoğan made what even many supporters regard as a ham-fisted gesture to the party’s more conservative supporters by mooted the idea of including in the new code a reversion to the pre-1998 (1996 for men) criminalisation of adultery. The move ‘failed due to the outcry not just in Europe but in Turkey itself.’²¹⁴ The incident tarnished the progressive image the party had earned with its sweeping reforms.²¹⁵

There was, however, one women’s issue of great importance to many AKP supporters that the party long resisted touching: the ban, dating from 1982, on women wearing headscarves in public buildings, including universities and health care facilities. It’s difficult for anyone outside Turkey to conceive of the heat generated by this issue. When US educated computer engineer, Merve Kavakci, entered the Grand National Assembly wearing a scarf after being elected in 1999 on the ticket of the AKP’s predecessor, the Virtue Party, she was furiously berated by MPs from other parties. One commentator in (the staunchly secularist newspaper) *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) wrote: ‘A political party is trying to bring a religion, a *shari’a*, which does not belong to us, by throwing a live bomb into our Grand National Assembly. This is a crime against the state.’²¹⁶ When Gül was nominated for the presidency, the prospect of his scarf-wearing wife (whom the President married when she was just 15) appearing at state functions mortified many secularist critics and became a focus of agitation against his nomination. Yet the very symbolism that so distressed many liberal Turks allowed millions of their more traditional countrymen and women to identify with the couple in the presidential palace for the first time in their lives. As the AKP has tried (albeit unsuccessfully in the eyes of the chief prosecutor) to cleanse its agenda of Islamist elements, the pious profile of the party’s top leaders continues to appeal to millions of socially conservative Turks.

The leaders of the AKP have always maintained the position that wearing a headscarf, like any other inoffensive aspect of personal attire, should be a matter of personal choice. ‘We don’t want to force people to wear headscarves; we want to make it free.’²¹⁷ Even while still with the Virtue Party, Gül’s campaign speeches focused on health, education and welfare issues.²¹⁸ The headscarf is actually relevant to all these issues in rural areas since local women who would ordinarily fill many positions in these sectors are reluctant to work in places where they must be uncovered. The ban on headscarves also discourages many girls from poor families from pursuing university education. Religious Turkish women who are sufficiently affluent pursue their educations abroad. Gül’s daughter finished university, but wore a wig over her scarf.

Party leaders have told supporters not to expect progress on the headscarf issue soon. ‘There’s no assurance from the party that the headscarf will become free even after an AKP leader is elected president,’ said Sibel Eraslan, who led women supporting Erdoğan in his campaign to become Istanbul’s mayor in the mid-1990s and herself wears a headscarf. ‘The AKP is telling supporters that they need to wait for a broad social consensus to emerge in favour of allowing women to wear the headscarf’ in public buildings.²¹⁹ Significantly, within the AKP the debate on the headscarf was conducted exclusively among men, with comments from male party leaders demonstrating their ignorance of the nuances of the issue for the women affected by it.

With an iron-clad mandate from the voters and an ally as president, Erdoğan finally publicly called for the ban on headscarves in public buildings to be repealed in the course of adopting a new constitution to replace the one drafted in 1980 under the military regime. Significantly, the issue was couched not in terms of religion but education. As Erdoğan argued:

The right to higher education cannot be restricted because of what a girl wears. There is no such problem in western societies, but there is a problem in Turkey and I believe it is the first duty of those in politics to solve this problem.²²⁰

To the brink of dissolution and back

In March 2008, Turkey’s top prosecutor filed charges against the AKP for allegedly ‘being a focal point of anti-secular activities’. A favourable ruling by the court could have resulted in the ban of 71 party members, including Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Gül. In early July, the prosecution made its case to the Constitutional Court and the party’s chairman offered its defence, the written version of which ran to 400 pages. Exhibit one for the prosecution was the government’s bill to lift the ban on headscarves in universities. In June the Court ruled nine to two to annul the lifting of the ban. The AKP insists that its bill was motivated by a desire to expand personal freedoms, not to promote the

wearing of headscarves. In the past the European Court of Human Rights has upheld the state’s right to ban headscarves, but EU representatives engaged with Turkey’s bid for membership have expressed dismay that the top court could ban a party that won 47 % of the vote in the last elections. A poll by *The Turkish Daily News* found that 53 % of Turks opposed the AKP’s closure.²²¹

On July 30, the Constitutional Court delivered its split decision. All but one of the court’s 11 judges accepted the prosecution’s charge that the party had engaged in anti-secular activities. Six voted to shut down the party, which was just one short of the number required to impose the ban. One voted against any punishment whatsoever while four others voted for the compromise, on which the court eventually settled, to chastise the party by cutting its state subsidy by half. The court’s president, Hasim Kilic, said: ‘We believe the political party concerned will get the message it should from the verdict.’²²²

Most observers expect the AKP to react to the verdict by avoiding hot button issues, including the ban on headscarves in universities. Erdoğan himself said he would take the Court’s written decision into account when charting a fresh course. There is speculation that he might make a gesture toward secularists by reshuffling his cabinet, including the removal of Education Minister Huseyin Celik, who controversially injected Islam into school textbooks. A reshuffle could open space for liberal new party members, who had not previously been included in the cabinet. Erdoğan has been seen to rule the party with an iron fist; his brush with closure may embolden those within the party who would criticise divisive moves. Many are calling for the AKP to take advantage of its new lease on life by reaching out to the opposition to draft a constitution to replace the one fashioned by the military regime in the early 1980s.

Other observers have suggested that the Court’s reprieve might embolden Erdoğan himself, encouraging him to push the most provocative reforms close to the hearts of the party’s religiously observant base. But these two scenarios — that the party has been either chastened or emboldened — present a false dichotomy. The survival of the party’s domestic popularity, and the support it received

from the EU and Washington, can only leave it stronger. The judicial system will now turn to the Ergenekon conspiracy of ultra-nationalists that stands accused of plotting to overthrow the government. At the same time, the Court reminded the party that its survival depends on operating within red lines that have now been fine-tuned even further. Perhaps most consequentially, the significance of the party's brush with dissolution is clear to the party's base, which should now give Erdoğan dispensation to eschew controversial policies altogether. As Turkey's biggest newspaper, representing the viewpoint of the modernising Muslim followers of Fetullah Gülen, editorialised:

Tomorrow, when the domestic and international conditions are right, the very same court may decide to close the party based on the very same indictment. Erdoğan and the AK Party should know this, and they should also know that people also know this. So, the renewed Erdoğan and AK Party should stop mentioning God, religion, Islam, religious freedoms, the headscarf ban and so on even in the most polite and humane manner. No one will blame them.

This does not mean that they should be sheepishly docile in the face of pressure by the undemocratic and EU-hostile oligarchy. The renewed Erdoğan and the AK Party should be less and less Necmettin Erbakan and more and more Turgut Özal. People do not expect good statements or even religious freedoms from them. They only want freedoms for everyone. They urgently want more EU reforms, including the implementation of these reforms. They want to see the Copenhagen criteria obeyed by all the parties in the country. They want more democracy, utmost transparency, a democracy friendly military, a minimal state and a more just society. If Erdoğan and his friends' new discourse is only full of these but nothing religious, they must rest assured that God will still be pleased with them.²²³

Conclusion: Turkish polyarchy

Demographic and economic changes since the 1980s, along with more explicitly political developments, have led to a diffusion of power which requires an unprecedented degree of mutual accommodation between the secular elite and the more religiously oriented, traditional majority. At the same time, the secular elite continues to enjoy popular legitimacy in its enforcement of certain bedrock precepts of the secular order. The rise of the AKP as a post-Islamist political force reflects and institutionalises the new political balance resulting from these opportunities and limits. This balance corresponds to what the political theorist Robert Dahl calls 'polyarchy', the diffusion of power across several loci of power, which he argues is the essential precondition for meaningful democracy.

Guardians of Turkey's secular order understand that they can no longer impose all their values on the rest of the country; the AKP, for its part, understands that political survival prohibits it from imposing its own religious values. The collapse of the provocatively Islamist parties of Necmettin Erbakan and the great successes achieved through pragmatic accommodation have fully vindicated the AKP's post-Islamist, conservative democratic approach. Party stalwarts who remain devout Muslims may reconcile their religious and political commitments with the thought that Allah helps those who help themselves. Or perhaps, as one diplomat noted, 'Tayyip (Erdoğan) believes in Allah, but he doesn't necessarily trust him'.

Conclusion

From undemocratic zealots to democratic normalisation?

Khaled Hamza Salem and I are on opposite ends of the political spectrum. He is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's largest opposition movement, which wants to turn Egypt into an Islamic state. I am a secular, liberal Egyptian woman for whom nothing would be worse than a Muslim Brotherhood takeover of Egypt ...

... Hamza and I will likely never agree on our visions for Egypt's future. But I know that if he were a free man today he would publish everything I just wrote.

– Mona Eltahawy, New York based Egyptian Journalist²²⁴

Mona Eltahawy's views on the arrest of Khaled Hamza, a younger generation Muslim Brother and editor of the movement's English language website reflects something of a cautious shift among segments of Egyptian liberal opinion. It is not so much that Egyptian liberals are re-evaluating the Muslim Brotherhood, notwithstanding Eltahawy's heralding of Hamza's commitment to freedom of expression. What they are re-assessing is the Faustian pact many have made with the Egyptian regime to, in effect, support an actual secular dictatorship in preference to a possible religious one.

The risks associated with an Islamist ascendancy in democratising contexts remain, nevertheless, barely diminished. Hamas's victory in Palestinian legislative elections in 2006 might have been a good test of the thesis that democracy and governance moderate or normalise Islamist movements. But the experiment was never allowed to run its course — not least by Hamas itself. By seizing power in Gaza in mid-2007, Hamas demonstrated the will to power of a movement whose rhetorical commitment to democracy failed at the first significant test.

Eltahawy's conflicted attitude toward a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's young guard, and Hamas's post-election seizure of power, illustrate the conundrum facing those wishing to see the democratic reform of authoritarian states in the Muslim world. There is a desire to see the end of existing autocratic regimes, but there is also a fear of what might follow them. The goal of this paper has been to understand some of the potentialities and risks associated with a gamble on political reform, by addressing a key question raised by democratisation in majority Muslim states: under what conditions is Islamism more likely to prove compatible with democracy?

Specifically, this paper has sought to address the debate about whether Islamists can become democrats by turning the usual question asked about Islamism and democracy, ('What will Islamists do to democracy?') on its head. We have not sought to prove or disprove whether Islamists can be 'zealous democrats' — and in this regard the title of this paper was intended somewhat ironically. Rather, our aim has been to understand the ways in which political contexts shape the Islamist response; in particular, to understand what impact a greater degree of democratic political space has on the evolution of Islamist ideas and activism. In other words, we have sought to answer the question, 'What does democracy do to Islamists?'

Democratic normalisation

The preceding chapters have explored how three Islamist movements and parties have adapted to progressively more democratic political frameworks. First, we examined the case of a broad based Islamist

movement (the Muslim Brotherhood) that undertakes various forms of activism (social, economic, religious, educational and political), in a 'liberal authoritarian' political system, where the movement advocates democratisation. Then, we looked at a legal Islamist political party (the PKS) that has sought to apply and adapt the Muslim Brotherhood model to the rapidly maturing democratic context of Indonesia where it has grown from a small peripheral political player to an influential medium sized party. Finally, we discussed a 'post-Islamist' political party (the AKP), in the older and more gradually democratising context of Turkey, which has evolved beyond its Islamist antecedents and has succeeded in coming to power.

Each chapter provides a self-contained discussion of the challenges and opportunities of democratic participation by Islamist parties. However, our goal is also to compare the three cases, to identify any consistent threads or changes in ideology or activism that occur as a result of democratic advocacy, in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, or democratic participation, in the cases of the PKS and the AKP. As we noted in the introduction, we have also chosen our cases with a view to comparing mainstream Islamist activism in a non-democratic context with similar activism in two more democratic contexts in order to examine how changes in the political context shape Islamist ideas and activism. In this regard, our review of the three case studies suggests six fairly consistent shifts which appear to become more manifest as one moves from non-democratic to democratic contexts:

Shari'a state to shari'a values: *Prima facie*, Islamism's goal of a *shari'a* enforcing state poses two sets of problems for democracy. The first set relates to the laws associated with Islamism's typically conservative reading of *shari'a*, which would impose restrictions on the political rights of women and non-Muslims and on freedom of expression. The second set of problems relates to how Islamist movements have, historically, envisaged *shari'a* being implemented, whereby enactment of laws would be the prerogative of religious jurists as a reflection of their unique status to interpret God's law (even if there is often some allowance in the mainstream Islamist model for broader consultation

or *shura*). In a democracy, by contrast, legislation is the prerogative of elected parliaments that reflect popular sovereignty and can in theory promulgate laws that contradict *shari'a*.²²⁵

As Chapter 1 underlined, the Muslim Brotherhood still struggles to reconcile its strong commitment to the classical Islamist project and its more recent avowal of democracy. Typically, it has relied on ambiguity to keep faith with core members and supporters, for whom *shari'a* is the *sine qua non* of the movement's goals, while appealing to, and reassuring, a broader potential constituency attracted by the movement's reformist image and agenda, but not necessarily by its more far-reaching religious aims. When, with the 2007 draft party program, the movement decided to articulate its positions in more detail, it confirmed its continuing closeness to the historical Islamist project by its conservative reading of *shari'a* (proscribing women and non-Muslims from high office) and by its call for specifically religious institutional arrangements (a council of Islamic scholars to review legislation and policy).

Nevertheless, the manner in which at least part of the movement reacted to the ensuing controversy was noteworthy. Internal critics argued that the movement's commitment to *shari'a* did not require new bodies or processes and could be reconciled with extant civil, constitutional and institutional arrangements (especially Article 2 of the Egyptian constitution enforced by the Egyptian constitutional court). On the issue of the political rights of women and non-Muslims, critics argued that the movement simply accept the political reality that a woman or a non-Muslim was very unlikely to be elected president. Regardless of whether these more pragmatic positions would be accepted by the movement — and at the time of writing it would appear not — the important point here is that they were proposed at all.

What this reflects is a position, among at least some within the movement, consistent with prioritising political expediency over doctrinal purity. But it also involves a shift from *shari'a* as a goal that requires particular processes and institutions (a council of Islamic jurists) to a focus on *shari'a* as a set of values or principles that the movement would seek to enact, explicitly or implicitly, and gradually promulgate through existing institutions and political

processes (in Egypt's case, once those institutions and processes were democratised). It is a tactical shift because it is driven by a calculation of what might be gained by playing by the rules of democratic politics and is the logical conclusion of a decision to pursue goals through participatory rather than revolutionary avenues. But this shift also has consequences because, potentially, it changes Islamism's relationship with its historical goal of an Islamic state.

In the case of the PKS, this shift away from the *shari'a* state is the only strategy open to the party given that officially it accepts the religiously neutral ideology of Pancasila as the final form of the Indonesian state; but, politically, too it understands that the advocacy of a *shari'a* enforcing state would marginalise it politically. Thus it has not sought to introduce explicit *shari'a* provisions into Indonesian law and has postponed advocating a *shari'a* state because there is insufficient public support for it to be central to its agenda now; although, in this regard, its *da'wa* and patient cadre building might be viewed as serving both a religious and political purpose. PKS has nevertheless pursued *shari'a* values although its decisions are often weighed against tactical considerations. Thus the PKS did support, although did not initiate, the so-called 'anti-pornography law' and its branches usually back those local administrations which introduce *shari'a* inspired by-laws governing such things as 'modest' dress, immoral activities and Qur'anic literacy.

If the PKS's downplaying of *shari'a* facilitates its electoral consolidation from a minor to a major party, what happens in the case of a much stronger party? Turkish Islamism had its own conception of the *shari'a* enforcing state, even if the constraints of Turkish laicism meant that this had to be expressed less explicitly; Erbakan's 'Just Order' was an Islamic state by another name. Yet, even under Refah, the drift from *shari'a* state to *shari'a* values was evident with the 'Just Order' being dropped for a more diffuse Islamic agenda, although this did not ultimately save Refah from a military coup and legal dissolution.

Against this background, the AKP's re-election in 2007 supports the view that Islamists, or even post-Islamists, may return to their religious agendas when they have the means to do so. Assured of a

strong popular mandate, having fended off the secular establishment with a new electoral victory and with Gül as President, the party moved to lift the ban on the headscarf (although it was again foiled by the constitutional court). Yet this also needs to be read against the history of how Turkish Islamism has had to evolve to reach this point. Thus the ‘Just Order’ has been replaced by an effort to find Turkey a prosperous place in the global economic order. And the virulent anti-Westernism and anti-Semitism of the Erbakan era have been replaced by a strong relationship with Israel and an effort to broker peace between the latter and Syria.

Even more significant, the view of the state as a vehicle for Islamisation also changes. The PKS and the AKP illustrate this evolution. In the Turkish case the goal, in fact, is to get the state out of religion; it is, thus, to *remove* the state ban on the headscarf, not enforce a requirement that it be worn. Indeed, this is not unique to Indonesia or Turkey. Olivier Roy has referred for example, to the ‘privatisation’ of re-Islamisation, where independent actors pursue their religious goals in society without regard to the state (establishing private business ventures that are consistent with Islamic principles, for example).²²⁶ Likewise, Malika Zeghal notes how for some Islamists engaged in participatory politics, the task has become less to challenge the extant (non-Islamic) state, but to work through it, and sometimes even around it.²²⁷

From Islamic governance to ‘good governance’: As the foregoing implies, the shift from *shari’a* state to *shari’a* values is accompanied by other changes in ideas and activism. In all three case studies we witness a gradual secularisation of policy agendas.

In the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, one consequence of its electoral activism over the last decade has been the publication of increasingly lengthy and detailed (if often banal) political programs in response to demands that it provide more detail on its policy positions. These all typically start from a restatement of defining principles (*shari’a* as the goal and ‘Islam as the solution’) but also deal with more material concerns. In fact the Muslim Brotherhood has always emphasised the practical side of Islam and how it relates to the everyday problems of

ordinary Muslims; in this respect, the movement would no doubt argue that its concepts of good governance are firmly rooted in Islam. Yet it is also difficult, on every occasion, to explain what is specifically Islamic about the solutions being proposed; or indeed for voters to distinguish Islamist rhetoric on these issues from those of other non-Islamist movements. Indeed on matters of economic policy it is interesting to note how the movement has gradually drifted towards more neo-liberal economic positions from its historical focus on social welfare. As Chapter 1 noted, one criticism of the 2007 draft party program was that on economic issues it was virtually indistinguishable from the policy ideas of the ruling NDP.

‘Islam is the solution’ remains the Muslim Brotherhood’s defining slogan; but in the cases of the PKS and the AKP the political imperative has pushed them toward the more secular rhetoric of ‘clean’ or ‘good governance’. The PKS has made a conscious decision to downplay *shari’a* and the Islamic state focusing instead on anti-corruption and social equality: patently, the party understands that to succeed politically it needs to move beyond the ‘Islamic vote’. The AKP and its predecessors have always faced the need to portray their agenda as secular; but there is also a more genuine process of secularisation, as the AKP has embraced, even if for its own religiously inspired reasons, a reform agenda driven by EU accession. As Chapter 3 noted, even one of the AKP’s ideological touchstones — its opposition to the ban on veiling — has become as much an issue about the rights of (veiled) women to an education, as a matter of Islam.

This is not to say, however, that these movements or parties are themselves becoming secular. They are not totally abandoning religious or religiously inspired agendas, nor are they adopting policies demonstrably incompatible with their Islamic principles. Consistency with their interpretation of Islam remains important. But because they have become engaged in a much wider range of issues upon which, in many cases, ‘Islam’ says very little (or says little that is clear), they seek out not only rational policy responses to real problems, but also political responses that best serve their interests in terms of attracting new supporters.

Moral message to the morality of the messengers: For Islamists the secularisation of policy agendas is a double-edged sword. It clearly enables the movement, or party, to broaden its appeal beyond a core constituency. The risk is, however, that it becomes more difficult for Islamists to distinguish themselves from other politicians — a danger even greater in autocracies, where there is often a yearning for a clearly defined protest candidate. A further shift is thus facilitated, where the point of differentiation for an Islamist movement or party becomes the morality or appeal of its individual members and candidates rather than its ideology.

Historically, Islamism has not just sought to spread a message of Islamic revival and comprehensive Islam, but through its activists and activism has provided examples of Islamically inspired piety, probity, effectiveness and selflessness. Yet it is not always possible to keep message and messenger combined in the minds of potential constituents. Because they are viewed as pious, effective and incorruptible, Islamists attract support from the broader community. As already noted, it is not always the case, however, that that same constituency is interested in the full ideological agenda being preached by the messenger's movement.

As Chapter 1 noted, the Muslim Brotherhood's success in syndicate and parliamentary elections was partly a function of its ability to choose appealing candidates. This has also been the case with the PKS in Indonesia. As Chapter 2 noted, the PKS's recent surprise success in provincial elections in West Java was attributed to its choice of a candidate with good local standing (as well as the fact that his running mate was a popular television soap star). By contrast, Golkar expected to do better, but failed despite the fact that it ran on an overtly Islamic agenda. The shift from message to messenger is even more explicit in Turkey. As Chapter 3 noted, Islamism has in effect been replaced by what Jenny White has called 'Muslimhood'.

In practice this also reinforces some of the shifts already highlighted. Because the movement or party is gaining greater support based on the appeal of its candidates rather than the particulars of its ideology, it gains greater flexibility with respect to the latter. As the Zaman editorial quoted at the end of Chapter 3, and published soon after the AKP

was nearly dissolved by the Constitutional Court, neatly summarised, what the AKP's constituency wants now is not the ideological purity of early generations of Turkish Islamism, but the pragmatism, probity and commitment to democratic change with which the AKP's leading representatives have come to be identified.

Greater membership diversity: Such shifts in the ideas and activism of Islamist movements both facilitate and reflect changes in the membership of these movements and parties. A key historical strength of the Muslim Brotherhood has been its ability to attract a large and diverse following. Nevertheless, as a socio-religious movement, membership is restricted by certain criteria — one must be male, a Muslim and indeed a 'special Muslim' in the sense of holding a particular interpretation of Islam and its role in public life.

By contrast, as a political party in a democratic context, the PKS in Indonesia has a political imperative to loosen membership requirements and induction processes so as to expand the party and attract new supporters. As Chapter 2 illustrates, this process has caused some angst among longer established members. In the case of the AKP, membership is more diverse, including defectors from other non-Islamist political parties, one measure of the AKP's political success. The implications are potentially far-reaching. The AKP claim that it is neither an Islamist nor an Islamic party both facilitates, and is a function of, this change in membership. The abandonment of overt Islamist reference points relaxes the ideological basis for membership; but it also gradually makes the party genuinely non-Islamist because a significant part of its membership no longer comes from this background.

However, as Chapter 3 noted, this transformation remains a work in progress. The AKP have tried to forge the elements of their success — a 'secular agenda', neo-liberal economics, EU accession and the conspicuous piety of the movement's leaders — into a new ideological identity. Yet the party's self-described 'conservative democracy' is still defined more by what it is not than by what it is. Indeed, in general, what our case studies illustrate is that the impact of growing membership diversity is likely to be gradual. This is certainly illustrated by the issue of women's rights. The

Muslim Brotherhood still bars women from becoming full members of the movement, although a small number of women have run as Brotherhood-aligned candidates in parliamentary elections. In this regard its conservative attitude with respect to women's issues is hardly surprising. But in the case of the PKS, *despite* high levels of female membership, the movement has also remained conservative on the issue of women's rights, and, as noted in Chapter 3, supported anti-pornography legislation that would have placed restrictions on the freedom of movement of women. And even the AKP, where the party has enacted genuinely progressive legislation in a Turkish context, this appears more driven by external factors (such as EU accession) rather than the role played by women in the movement.

Regeneration: The democratic pretences of mainstream Islamist movements are often undermined by their lack of internal democracy. The image of the Muslim Brotherhood has typically been that of a movement whose members 'listen and obey', even if this, perhaps, underestimates the degree to which the movement seeks to operate by consensus. Against this, political activism has provided a chance for new generations with different outlooks and experiences to come to the fore, in some respects bypassing the internal hierarchy. As Chapter 1 noted, it was the opportunity of syndicate and parliamentary activism that advanced the interests of a new group of 'middle generation' Muslim Brothers; the internet and other forms of new media may do likewise for current 'fourth generation' Brothers.

Nevertheless, the imperatives of operating as a semi-secret movement under varying degrees of pressure from the state have reinforced the importance of internal discipline at the cost of debate and dynamism. This was evident in how the movement silenced dissent among Muslim Brother bloggers during the crisis over the 2007 draft party program, a move echoed by the state in its own campaign against bloggers, both Islamist and non-Islamist. As the al-Azhar militias episode (when student Muslim Brothers held a provocative martial arts demonstration on the campus of Cairo's al-Azhar University) suggests, frustration with the deadening patriarchy of both the state and the movement could drive younger members in more militant directions.

The cases of the PKS and the AKP, by contrast, demonstrate how the availability of political space allows greater opportunity for the emergence of a younger, more-open minded, worldly and technically adept generation of activists. The AKP, in particular, was a break not just with the ideas of the Erbakan, but with those of his generation, and reflected the emergence of the 'youth wing' in the Refah and Virtue parties.

Oscillation rather than moderation: An argument sometimes used by proponents of democratic inclusion is that democracy will 'moderate' Islamists. Superficially, our three case studies would appear to support such notions. In the democratising contexts of Indonesia and Turkey, the effort to build as broad a base as possible has seen pragmatists, by and large, hold sway in both the PKS and the AKP. By contrast, in the non-democratic context of Egypt it is the movement's traditionalist currents that remain dominant.

There are, however, reasons to be cautious about such an analysis. The ability of the pragmatists in both the PKS and the AKP to dominate their respective parties is perhaps less the natural result of democracy *per se* than the existence of constituencies that favour more pragmatic over more ideological approaches. In the case of the AKP, for example, its evolution out of the Refah and Virtue parties reflected the fact that supporters had grown weary of Erbakan's confrontational approach. Conversely, it is highly likely that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt could build a viable political platform based, in part, on extreme hostility toward Israel (even if a range of strategic, political and economic factors would constrain what actions the Brotherhood could take to manifest that hostility were it elected to office).

We think it seems more judicious, therefore, to talk of 'oscillation' rather than of 'moderation'. What we mean here is that in more open political contexts there seems a much greater chance of ideological dynamism or *oscillation* in two respects: first, a tension between more purist and more pragmatic wings over the overall ideological direction of the movement; second, within the framework of this tension, each side of the movement will score 'victories' on particular issues or policy

questions, such that on some issues the party will appear closer to its principles, on others it will appear more pragmatic. In other words, Islamist parties, like most if not all parties in democratic contexts, would not so much moderate (or become more extreme, for that matter) as become susceptible to greater internal tensions over ideology and policy (which in and of itself might have a moderating effect). Policy positions become less fixed to historical ideological positions; instead they *oscillate* as different factions of the party seek to influence positions and outcomes, bargain and manoeuvre, and the movement or party reacts to both internal and external stimuli.

So, for example, in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, there are certainly internal factions and debates, but ultimately there is a practical need for unity that tends to discipline dissent (as occurred in the debate over the draft party program) or in extreme cases, expel it (as occurred in the al-Wasat case). By contrast, in the cases of the PKS and the AKP the imperative is to weigh, on a regular basis, matters of ideology and political necessity. Individual decisions reflect the victories or the ascendancy of different wings of the movement. The critical element here is the need to make decisions. For the Brotherhood internal debates can be divisive, but not decisive; until they can enact their policies, their positions on various issues remain ultimately academic. By contrast the PKS had to resolve, for example, real questions over participation in President Yudhoyono's government and the rapid expansion of the party's membership; likewise in the case of the AKP it had to make consequential decisions about whether and how to pursue legislation lifting the ban on the headscarf, pursue the criminalisation of adultery and make foreign policy choices.

Factors in democratic normalisation

In examining the ways in which the political context shapes the Islamist response we are *not* arguing that the shifts witnessed in our three case studies will be the inevitable consequence of democratic participation by any Islamist movement in any political context. Notwithstanding their strong similarities, there are also clearly important differences

between our case studies, let alone between the very many cases where Islamists participate in electoral politics. In this regard it is important to consider the variables and factors that have been critical in the cases we have examined.

All three case studies underline a banal point, but one usefully made given the tendency of some commentators and public officials to view Islamism monolithically: the choice made by the Muslim Brotherhood, the PKS and the AKP to adopt participatory, non-violent and non-confrontational strategies is a critical prerequisite to their democratic normalisation. This defining decision distinguishes these movements from militants (like al-Qaeda and its partisans) that see democracy as akin to apostasy and view violence as a legitimate means in domestic contexts. And, importantly, it also distinguishes these movements, from the likes of Hizballah and Hamas, or the movement of Muqtadr al-Sadr in Iraq, which accept the legitimacy of democracy and have chosen to run in elections while maintaining armed wings. Such militias are justified in terms of 'resistance to foreign occupation', but the Lebanese, Palestinian and Iraqi cases also demonstrate very clearly that these same para-military forces can be, and have been, used against internal political opponents as well.

As a number of commentators have noted — and we have sought to flesh out in this paper — the democratic commitment or otherwise of Islamists cannot be considered in isolation from structural, institutional and cultural factors, however.²²⁸ In the Egyptian case there is a well-founded fear that were there to be rapid democratisation the absence of constraints or competition from other parties or movements would place the Muslim Brotherhood in a pre-eminent, even a hegemonic, position, were there to be a rapid democratisation — a fear the regime has played upon by arguing that the only two alternatives are itself or the Brotherhood. The importance of such formal or informal constraints in democratic normalisation has been emphasised by other observers. Both Daniel Brumberg and Vali Nasr have pointed to the existence of strong competition from non-Islamist political actors and the role of countervailing forces such as the military in making it more likely that Islamist movements will play by the democratic rules of the game.²²⁹

This is further underlined by the Indonesian and Turkish cases. In the case of the PKS it has had to fight for its share of the vote, precisely because there is no plurality for an overtly Islamist agenda in Indonesian politics, even if there is support for a more Islamicised politics. In the case of the AKP the obvious constraint has been the Turkish secular establishment, which enjoys a high degree of legitimacy among the Turkish polity. Turkey's aggressive laicism has pushed Turkish Islamism to evolve into something less threatening to Turkish secularists, but also highly successful politically.

In the case of Egypt, the constraint exists, in the shape of the regime, but not, so far, in the form of serious political competition. This has much to do with the shortcomings of Egypt's non-Islamist political class, but also reflects structural factors, including the regime's determination to prevent a viable secular alternative to itself from emerging. A gradual relaxation of political controls, for example, ensuring parliamentary contests were fairer, and the revival of parliament as a working institution and not just a rubber stamp for the regime, might encourage the emergence of healthy competition for the Muslim Brotherhood.

Third, if the constraints, countervailing forces and competition are important to the democratic normalisation of Islamists, so is the legitimacy of these checks and balances. In both Indonesia and Turkey, popular support for democracy, as reflected in voter participation and public opinion polls, remain high. Moreover, even while more people are seeking a role for Islam in public life, the legitimacy of secular founding ideologies (Pancasila and laicism), and the institutions that protect these (the military in both cases, and in addition the judiciary in Turkey), are also high.

By contrast, the legitimacy of the Egyptian regime has gradually but steadily eroded. The regime provides neither a national ideology, nor can it garner loyalty by meeting people's material needs. Indeed, as Chapter 1 noted, in an effort to rebuild this legitimacy, the regime has been party to a 'passive revolution' facilitating the conservative re-Islamisation of Egyptian society. The result is that its repression of the Brotherhood only increases sympathy for the movement, while the Brotherhood itself benefits from a protest vote, as, so far at least, the

hitherto only viable opposition. Restoring the regime's lost legitimacy will be difficult. Materially, there are limits to what the state can provide even in booming economic times. A gradual, cautious opening of the political system would, therefore, serve the dual purpose of restoring some degree of legitimacy to the regime (and the state), while, as already noted, creating necessary space for new political forces to emerge.

There is, of course, good reason to be sceptical about the prospects of significant political competition to the Muslim Brotherhood emerging beyond the ruling NDP. Yet the Brotherhood's true strength has not been assessed in absence of a real opening of the political system. There is also the possibility of the Muslim Brotherhood itself splitting into different parties. As Chapter 1 noted, it has happened before (Hizb al-Wasat), and there is probably enough divisive material (ideology, politics, pragmatism, the slow pace of internal change) in the movement for it to happen on a bigger scale, given the right conditions. What this illustrates is a fourth factor — the importance of opportunity.

In the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, the movement's banned but tolerated status has allowed opportunities for the movement's activism, in religious, social, economic but also political fields, but also imposed a ceiling. The movement's participation in even the constrained electoral politics of the professional syndicates and the Egyptian parliament has been critical to the creation of a generation of activists within the movement who advocate democratisation (even if the movement's ultimate commitment to democracy remains in question) and pragmatism. But these normalising inclinations within the movement have also not been allowed to develop further. The prime example is the manner in which the regime repeatedly refused to provide a license to Hizb al-Wasat, which represented an earlier, more explicitly political and potentially democratic elaboration of the Muslim Brotherhood (and had also been a direct result of the movement's syndicate and parliamentary activism). Indeed, the Brotherhood's public debate over the draft party program seems all the more remarkable when one considers that the Egyptian political system gives the movement little reason to actually resolve its internal debates one way or the other.

By contrast, opportunity balanced by constraint has been a key factor in the normalisation of both the PKS and the AKP. In the case of the PKS, rather by default than by design, the political energies that saw the young activists of the Tarbiyah movement take to the streets in the form of the KAMMI was given an early opportunity to take an explicitly political form in the shape of the PK party. This occurred despite the fact that at the time Indonesia's law stated that all political parties had to accept the religiously neutral ideology of Pancasila. In the case of Turkey, the secular establishment has closely defined the boundaries of religion in politics, but did not choose to preempt the AKP or its predecessors in joining the political fray. Again, whether it was by default or design, this played a significant role in the AKP's own emergence. Notably, the manner in which the Turkish constitutional court closed the Virtue Party ensured that the party reformists were able to go on to form the AKP. In Egypt, by contrast, the Mubarak regime seems to specifically target more reformist elements in the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Egyptian case also suggests the dangers arising from a lack of opportunity. The al-Azhar militias episode was one sign of palpable frustration among the movement's youth. More broadly, the harsh repression that followed the Brotherhood's parliamentary success in 2005 seems to have raised questions within the movement about the wisdom of participatory politics — especially among some of the more cautious leaders of the movement. Why pay such a harsh price, including in other fields of the movement's works, for 88 seats in a parliament in which the movement still cannot pass any legislation?

Of course, Egypt is not the only country where the virtues of continued political participation by Islamists have been brought into question. It is ironic that Turkey's secular constitutional court, in moving to ban the AKP, a party elected to government by a popular majority, behaved precisely in the same anti-democratic way critics feared the Muslim Brotherhood's mooted council of Islamic scholars would function. As Chapter 3 suggested, the AKP's narrow escape from closure by Turkey's constitutional court could ultimately strengthen the party. It is less clear, however, what conclusion will be drawn by mainstream

Islamist parties outside Turkey that look to the AKP as a model for what pragmatic, political participation might achieve. For those who see great danger in allowing Islamists into the political system, any decision by such movements or parties to abandon participatory politics would no doubt be welcome. But one might also consider the risks associated with the alternative; namely that new generations of Islamists, caught between the hammer of state repression and the anvil of cautious, ageing Islamist leaders and movements, will find new avenues for expressing their social, political and economic frustrations — and not always peaceful ones.

Notes

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- ³⁷ Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: religion activism and political change in Egypt*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2002, p 23.
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- one led by Saiful Mujani, which is cited here, and the other led by Saiful's former colleague, Denny J. A. Saiful Mujani's LSI is the better regarded of the two institutions.
- ¹³² Results presented by Mohammad Qodari, the Indobarometer director, to the PKS National Conference in Bali, 2 February 2008.
- ¹³³ I am grateful to researchers at JPPR Secretariat in Jakarta for sharing with me their data and analysis of *pilkada* results since 2005. The figures presented here are based on these data.
- ¹³⁴ In Tarbiyah and PKS literature, there is frequently mention of three phases: (1) *mihwar tanzimi* or structural phase, in which the focus is on developing cadre and the structural basis for a formal organisation; (2) *mihwar sya'bi* or phase of building a mass base; and (3) *mihwar mu'assasi* or institutional phase. *Mihwar tanzami* is usually described as from the 1980s until 1992; *mihwar sya'bi* was from 1992-1998; and since the founding of PK/PKS in 1998, the movement has been in the *mihwar mu'assasi* phase. See for example, Anis Matta, *Integrasi Politik dan Dakwah*. Jakarta, Arah Press, 2008, pp 16-17.
- ¹³⁵ Interview with PKS board member, 11 December 2006.
- ¹³⁶ Mahar dipancang, abang dipinang. *Majalah Tempo*, 10 September 2006 p 36 and Marcus Mietzner, Party financing in post-Soeharto Indonesia: between state subsidies and political corruption. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 29 (2) 2007 p 252.
- ¹³⁷ Only two candidates contested the Jakarta election: Adang and the outgoing deputy governor, Fauzi Bowo, who enjoyed the backing of a 17-party coalition. PKS was the only major party supporting Adang.
- ¹³⁸ Tifatul Sembiring, *Dakwah adalah perubahan ke arah yang lebih baik* Arah Press, 2007 p. 18. and Matta, *Integrasi Politik dan Dakwah* p 6.
- ¹³⁹ PKS incar pemilih perempuan. *Jawa Pos*, 30 January 2008.
- ¹⁴⁰ We are grateful to Alan Wall of IFES for providing these figures.
- ¹⁴¹ Demokrat Paling Miskin Kader Perempuan. *Jawa Pos*, 4 March 2008.
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- ¹⁴⁴ PK-Sejahtera Online. *Ketua MS PKS: Induk Strategi Itu Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Mungkar*. 2007: <http://pk-sejahtera.org/v2/index.php>.
- ¹⁴⁵ Majelis Pertimbangan Pusat Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, *Falsafah dasar perjuangan: jalan keadilan menuju kesejahteraan*, 2007, pp 92 & 95.
- ¹⁴⁶ Sapto Waluyo, *Kebangkitan politik dakwah: konsep dan praktik politik Partai Keadilan Sejahtera di masa transisi*. Bandung, Harakutna, 2005.
- ¹⁴⁷ Interview with a PKS parliamentarian, Jakarta, 28 November 2007.
- ¹⁴⁸ We are grateful to Dr Peter Mandaville for information regarding international Brotherhood meetings and also to a number of senior PKS officials who agreed to confidential interviews on this topic. Most PKS leaders formally deny knowledge of any such forum and refute suggestions that the party sends representatives.
- ¹⁴⁹ Interview with Luthfi Isyaaq, chairman of PKS's international division and member of parliament, Jakarta, 7 February 2008.
- ¹⁵⁰ Interview, Bali, 2 February 2008.
- ¹⁵¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁵² Confidential correspondence with a senior PKS leader, 29 January 2008.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁴ Interview with Luthfi Isyaaq, Jakarta, 7 February 2008. This forum formally organised under the auspices of the Parliamentary Union of Islamic Countries, a sub-division of the Organisation for Islamic Conference. IFIP Perkuat Demokrasi: jauhi sikap ekstrem. *Republika* 23 January 2007, and Islamist Parliamentarians call for Peaceful Solutions to Mid-East. *The Jakarta Post*, 22 January 2007.
- ¹⁵⁵ While officially, PKS prioritises relations with UMNO, the party quietly maintains its links with PAS. PKS and PAS officials still meet regularly and attend each others' closed door events. The personal ties between some of the younger PAS leaders, such as Nashiruddin bin Mat and Kamaluddin Jafar, and their PKS counterparts remain tight.
- ¹⁵⁶ Interview with Ali Seri Mardani, Melbourne, 1 May 2007, and Zulkieflimansyah, Jakarta, 25 January 2008.
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- ¹⁵⁸ Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*, p 3 & p 97.

- ¹⁵⁹ Bayat, *Making Islam democratic: social movements and the post-Islamist turn*, pp 10-11.
- ¹⁶⁰ David Shankland, *Islam in Turkey* Eothen Press, 2000, p 39.
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- ¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p 190.
- ¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p 194.
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- ¹⁶⁹ Haldun Gulalp, Political Islam in Turkey: The rise and fall of the Refah Party. *The Muslim World* 89 (1) 1999 p 28; see also Kristianasen, New faces of Islam, p 5.
- ¹⁷⁰ Peter Mandaville, *Global political Islam*. London, Routledge, 2007, p 122.
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- ¹⁷⁴ Mason, Political Islam in Turkey, p 62.
- ¹⁷⁵ Shankland, *Islam in Turkey*, p 115.
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- ¹⁷⁸ Whit Mason, *The meaning of virtue: a fresh start for political Islam in Turkey?* ICWA Letters, Institute of Current World Affairs, July 1999.

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- ¹⁸¹ European Stability Initiative, *Islamic Calvinists: change and conservatism in central Anatolia*. Berlin-Brussels-Istanbul, 19 September 2005, p 24.
- ¹⁸² Ibid., p 24.
- ¹⁸³ Mason, Political Islam in Turkey, p 64.
- ¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p 67.
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- ¹⁹² Dagı, The Justice and Development Party: identity, politics and discourse of human rights in the search for security and legitimacy, p 93.
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- ²¹⁵ Veteran AKP women's activist Sibel Eraslan insists Erdoğan was merely raising an 'academic discussion' about whether adultery was already illegal and claims he never pushed for it to be made so.
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- ²¹⁷ Mason, *The meaning of virtue: a fresh start for political Islam in Turkey?* p 7.
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