CHAPTER ONE

Conceptualizing Islamist Movement Change

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Characterizing Islamist Movement Change

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Disaggregating Participation

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

The Causal Mechanisms of Islamist Movement Change

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

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

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

Beyond Strategic Adaptation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Political Engagement and Value-Change

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Scope and Limits of Islamist Self-Reform

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

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

The Value of Comparative Historical Analysis

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

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

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

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

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

The Organization of the Book

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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