Chapter III

Islamic Action Front in Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was established by Great Britain in 1921 as the semi-autonomous Emirate of Transjordan, with Abdullah ibn Hussein (1852-1931), the son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca, as the Emir. In 1946, Transjordan gained independence from Britain and the emir became King Abdallah I. The country assumed the name of Jordan in 1950. It is bounded on the north by Syria, on the north-east by Iraq, on the east and south by Saudi Arabia, and on the west by Israel and the Palestinian Autonomous Areas.

Presently, Jordan is a Constitutional Monarchy (See Appendix IV). 1 The Constitution divides the powers and functions of the government into executive, legislative and judicial categories. It assigns the legislative power to both the bicameral National Assembly (Majlis al-Umma) and the king who is also vested with executive power. The king exercises his executive authority with the aid of his cabinet ministers collectively known as the Council of Ministers. Judicial power is vested in independent courts. The authority and services of the central government are extended to all corners of the kingdom through the eight governorates or provinces.

Till late 1989, King Hussein ibn Talal ibn Abdullah ibn Hussein Al Hashimi remained in firm control of Jordan’s political system as the central policymaker and legislative and executive authority. He maintained tight control over key government functions such as national defence, internal security, justice and foreign affairs. But there were various challenges like the Arab- Israeli conflict, Palestinian factor and so on which ultimately led him to begin the process of political liberalization since 1989.

In 1989 with the Palestinian intifada (uprising) raging just across the Jordan River in the West Bank, domestic discontent spilling into his own streets and his country’s finances in tatters, Jordan’s King Hussein began taking a series of extraordinary steps towards political opening. He ended repression, called new elections to replace the National Assembly that he had dissolved in 1988 and forged a national pact that put Jordan at the forefront of liberalization in the Arab World. The Jordanian monarchy has managed to

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1 For a background on the monarchies in WANA see Kostiner (2000).
hang on through the tumults of the past decade and by wielding the twin survival strategies of liberalization and deliberalization.

Jordan’s political liberalization in the 1990s was not a deliberate process of democratization. It was rather a survival strategy chosen by a monarchy anxious to shore up its legitimacy in the face of domestic discontent over peace with Israel and the pain caused by structural adjustment in this small, resource-poor country. However, “even with political liberties at their lowest ebb in years, as they are today, Jordanians feel that they enjoy far more pluralism and openness than do their neighbours in Saudi Arabia, Syria or Iraq” (Lucas, 2003:100).

Jordan’s relative openness has much to do with a legacy of regime-led state-building dating back to the creation of the Jordanian state. Hussein’s grandfather, Emir (later King) Abdallah I founded what was then called Transjordan in the 1920s under British auspices after the collapsed Turkish Ottoman Empire. Over the ensuing eight decades, a modern state has been built with the Hashemite monarchy at its core. That monarchy has survived the capture and annexation of the West Bank as a result of the 1948 war with Israel, assassination of King Abdallah I, his son Talal’s deposition in 1952, the turbulence surrounding the Arab nationalism in the 1950s, the loss of the West Bank to Israel during the June War 1967 and bloody domestic clashes between royal troops and Palestinian nationalists during the ‘Black September’ of 1970.

The oil boom of the late 1970s invigorated the economy of Jordan which itself has no oil but occupies an advantageous position near the oil-rich Gulf region. When the oil boom went bust in the 1980s, however, the country’s financial strength began to erode. In 1988, in response to forceful calls for Palestinian self-determination vis-à-vis Israel, King Hussein decided to sever ties with the West Bank. The decision prompted capital flight by nervous Jordanian Palestinian businessmen, the main financiers of Jordan’s private sector. The resulting currency devaluation intensified the fiscal crisis, sending Jordan into the arms of Western donors for a bailout (Brynen, 1992: 69-97).

The monarchy then introduced a number of unpopular economic reforms in order to satisfy the IMF, leading many average Jordanians to protest against the resultant cuts in daily subsidies. Riots broke out in a number of traditional bastions of support for the regime. Instead of using coercion King Hussein opted for tactical political opening. He
shook up his cabinet and in November 1989 held the first parliamentary elections in more than 20 years. Soon thereafter, he called for a National Charter adopted in June 1991 where a broad cross-section of Jordan’s elites agreed on plans for institutional reform. The new National Assembly subsequently re-legalized political parties (which had been banned since 1957) and eased press censorship. Martial law formally ended in 1991 and Jordan appeared to be stepping off on a march towards democracy.

The Islamic movement in Jordan came to international attention in the wake of the April 1989 disturbances and the subsequent November 1989 parliamentary elections. These developments highlighted the movement’s political clout and raised the spectre in the West of an Iranian style Islamic revolution in Jordan, fuelled by radical Islamic movements such as those of Egypt and North Africa. While various political trends competed for influence during the months prior to the elections, the Muslim Brotherhood had a clear advantage. The advantage was as a result of “its infrastructure in the mosques, the Quaranic schools and the universities gave it a ready-made political base” (Bar, 1998:5).

The Islamic movements in WANA frequently mobilize the masses against regimes making the relationship between them and the state in terms of political conflict. But the relationship between Islamic movements and the state is not based always upon conflict. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan represents a typical example of it. The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood has long been integrated into the political mainstream due to its acceptance of the legitimacy of Hashemite monarchy, although relations between the Brotherhood and the Palace have fluctuated over the years.

The Brotherhood presence in Jordan dates back to the 1930s, as it has been tacitly recognised first as a charitable organization and later as a quasi-political organization which had openly fielded candidates in parliamentary elections albeit under a different name, Islamic Action Front. The relationship between the Brotherhood and the Palace has been mutually beneficial over the years. “Successive Jordanian monarchs have found that the Brotherhood has been more useful politically as an ally than as an opponent as it secured Islamist support in countering Arab nationalist interference during the 1950s and 1960s and secular Palestinian nationalism in the 1970s” (Prados and Sharp, 2006:4).

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2 For the National Charter refer to Al-Hussein (2010a).
Therefore, using the Islamic Action Front (IAF) as a case study, this chapter would look into the aspects of democratic process in Jordan. The study will begin by tracing the origin and evolution of the Islamic Action Front. In doing so, it discusses the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. Then it looks into the participation of the IAF in the political process. What are the factors which had made the Monarch and the IAF to have a cordial relationship? From where does its support for the election come from? Does it use violence/intimidation in the domestic context?

**Birth of the Islamic Action Front Party**

The Islamic Action Front known as Jabha al-Amal al-Islami is the political party of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. It came into being when the government approved the Political Parties Law in 1992. Therefore, a brief discussion of the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan is required to know its history.

The Muslim Brotherhood (Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, popularly abbreviated as al-Ikhwan) was founded in 1929 in Egypt by the Imam Shaykh Hasan al-Banna. The organization quickly established branches throughout the Arab world calling for reassertion of Islam in public life in both government and society. In Transjordan the movement took roots under the leadership of Shaykh 'Abd al-Latif Abu Quran. He was a native of Salt from a prominent family of Syrian origin, who had moved to Egypt. There he received his religious education and became acquainted with the teachings of the Hasan al-Banna.

Abu Qura returned to the Transjordan in the mid-1930s as the manager of the Transjordanian branch of a large trading company and began spreading the ideas of the Ikhwan in the country. However, in Jordan it had its origin in the merging of two separate groups which represent the two components of the Jordanian public: the Transjordanian and the West Bank Palestinian. The movement evolved more or less during the same period of time both in mandate Palestine and the Emirate of Transjordan. Only after the West Bank was united with Transjordan, did the Islamic movements from both sides of the Jordan River merge completely.

The original group of the Brotherhood in Transjordan banded together under Abu Qura in 1934. It included eight members of an Administrative Council (Majlis Idari), namely, Abu Qura, Muhammad Abd al-Rahman Khalifa, Ahmad al-Khatib, Yusuf al-Barqawi,
Shaykh Jamil Barqawi, Mamduh al-Sarayira, Muflih al Sa’d and Muslim al-Nabulsi.\(^3\) The group registered as a charitable association in 1935. However, the official founding of the Association of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan came later. In 1945, Hasan al-Banna’s son-in-law, Sa’id Ramadan visited Transjordan as part of the tour which had brought him to Palestine. After prolonged lobbying, on 9 November 1945 the Association of the Muslim Brotherhood \((Jamiyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin)\) was officially registered and Abu Qura became its first General Supervisor. On 19 November, the new movement inaugurated its General Centre \((Maqar ‘Amm)\) in Jabal Amman under the auspices of Emir Abdallah.

A short time after the official founding of the organization in 1947, it held elections for its Administrative Committee \((Haya Idariya)\) or General Bureau \((Maktab ‘Amm)\) and Abu Qura was officially designated the \(Muraqib ‘Amm\) (General Supervisor) of the movement (to differentiate the post from the \(Murshid ‘Amm\), the General Guide of the Egyptian Brethren). As in mandate Palestine, the movement soon became popular. As noted by Shmuel Bar, “the Brotherhood was the only real contender for the loyalties of the youth in Salt region in the second half of the 1940s” \((Bar, 1998:10-11)\). According to Muhammad Abd al-Rahman Khalifa, the Palestinian and Tranjordanian chapters of the movement merged \(de facto\) as early as 1946. However, for Shmuel Bar “it seems that the actual process of merging of the East Bank and West Bank movements began only after the 1948 War had ended and after it had become clear that Jordan had no intention of relinquishing the West Bank” \((Bar, 1998:12)\). It culminated with the nomination of Khalifa as \(Muraqib Amm\) in 1953.

This process was basically reminiscent of the dynamics of merger of the Palestinian National Liberation League and the Transjordanian Marxist to create the Jordanian Communist Party. However, unlike the pronounced Palestinian predominance in the leadership and ideology of the communists and despite the numerical majority of the Palestinian component in the Jordanian Brotherhood, the Palestinian \(Ikhwan\) seem to have joined the Transjordanian movement and not \textit{vice versa}. The apparent reason behind this was the leadership void in the Palestinian Islamist camp \((Cohen, 1982:148)\).

\(^3\) Muhammad Abd al-Rahman Khalifa was a lawyer from Salt who later became Abu Qura’s successor as General Supervisor \((Muraqib Amm)\) of the Brotherhood in Jordan.
The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, the largest opposition grouping in the country has traditionally enjoyed a working relationship with the Hashemite monarchy. In exchange for supporting King Hussein against the predominantly leftist opposition in the 1950s and 60s, the Brotherhood was among the few organizations that were granted legal status and were allowed to operate freely during an otherwise repressive period of martial law. Prominent Brotherhood leader Ishaq Farhan became the first Islamist cabinet member in the Arab world, when he was appointed Education Minister in 1970.

In the 1989 parliamentary elections, the Brotherhood won a plurality of the vote, taking 22 out of 80 seats. In 1991, in another first for the region, the group joined the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran with five ministers (Education, Health, Justice, Social Development, and Religious Affairs) (Hamid, 2008a:1). However, since the re-emergence of parliamentary life in 1989, secular parties have failed to gain much attraction. Though several, including the Communist Party and the center-right National Constitutional Party, have held seats in parliament in the past, their influence has waned.

In Jordan secular opposition parties whether socialist or Arab nationalist was a powerful force in the early year of independence. Their influence grew incrementally in the 1950s, eventually leading King Hussein to appoint a Socialist prime minister, Sulayman al-Nabulsi in 1956. Threatened by Nabulsi’s growing popularity, Hussein forced his resignation a year later. He banned all political parties and instituted martial law (Hamid, 2008a:2). In course of time, due to various challenges that had emerged, he started the process of political liberalization.

In the late 1980s cuts in subsidies and price rises in connection with IMF-led restructuring of the economy. It ignited public unrest and riots. To dampen the political effect of these measures, King Hussein introduced a limited political liberalization. It included the re-instating of the parliament and the legalization of political parties which was banned since 1957. The approval of the Political Parties Law in 1992 by the Jordanian government gave birth to the Islamic Action Front in the same year.

The Political Parties Law 1992 legalized political parties for the first time since 1957. A plethora of political parties began to organize. Among them the Muslim Brotherhood and independent Islamists came under the name of the Islamic Action Front (IAF)-Jabhat al-'Amal al-Islami. According to the new Political Parties Law, a political party could not
have administrative or financial links with any foreign power or political group. Accordingly, the IAF defined itself as an indigenous party and took care to obscure its links with the Muslim Brotherhood abroad. Since the new party IAF incorporated both members of the Brotherhood and independent Islamist, its political programme reflected political flexibility. In contrast to the Brotherhood's traditional positions like its religious agenda (especially in limiting women's rights and moral issues like use of alcohol, blasphemy and segregation of sexes), the IAF supported the access of women to all posts (except for head of government) and other political liberties but within the framework of Islamic Sharia.

Along with the formation of the IAF, a number of other Islamist parties were formed including al-Harka al- Arabiya al-Islamiyya al-Dimuqratiiyya (The Democratic Arab Islamic Movement); al-Hizb al-Urdumi al-Islami (The Islamic Jordanian Party); Hizb al-Tajdid al- Arabi al-Islami (The Arab-Islamic Reform Party); Harakat al-Inqadh (The Salvation Movement); Hizb al-Tajammu lil-Adala (The Justice Group Party); and Dar al-Qur'an (The Quran House, headed by the maverick politician Layth Shubaylat). The Palestinian al-Jihad al-Islami-Ktaib al-Aqsa (Islamic Jihad-al-Aqsa Batallions) and al-Jihad al-Islami-Bayt al-Maqdis also registered as parties (Bar, 1998:44-45). The regime permitting party pluralism was intended to provide a counterweight to the Brotherhood. Success was limited as the Brotherhood and its party, the IAF, remained by far the most organized and widely supported of all political parties. Therefore, in the run up to the November 1993 elections, the regime took measures to curtail the strength of the Brotherhood which had brought them landslide victory in 1989. In an effort to reduce Islamist electoral gains, King Abdullah instituted the “one-vote” electoral law in 1993 which has had the effect of producing largely tribal and pro-government parliaments (DeBartolo, 2007).

**Organisational Structure of the Islamic Action Front**

Unlike many political parties, the parties linked to the Muslim Brotherhood are often well organized. Each parallel organisation has a broadly similar three-tiered structure. The three-tiered structure remains a durable model but is subject to country specific variations. The Brotherhoods operate in parallel rather than collectively and there is virtually no coordination between them. As Barry Rubin observes “If asked, Brotherhood
leaders in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria would of course say that they support each other, but in practice it is surprising how little practical backing is offered. For one thing, they are all internally oriented rather than internationalist, except on the Palestinian” (Rubin, 2007:109). Even when the Brotherhoods influence the movement in other places, these contacts are bilateral. For example, “Hamas in the Gaza Strip is related to the Egyptian Brotherhood while Hamas in the West Bank has its links to the Jordanian Brotherhood. Furthermore, to make matters even more complex, the Hamas external leadership is located in Damascus, where the Syrian Brotherhood is outlawed and its patron is the regime that persecutes the Brotherhood” (Rubin, 2007:110). The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood is a revolutionary underground group. It has been outlawed by the Syrian government. Law Number 49 of 1981 declares mere membership in the group to be punishable by death. As for the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood is concerned, it is a legal group that uses peaceful methods and participates in elections through its political wing, the Islamic Action Front. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is somewhere in between its two counterparts. It is not technically legal but is allowed to function normally most of the time.

In Jordan, members are represented by their own general associations which are elected every two years and vary in number and size according to region. This body in turn elects a five-member Administrative Associations and also the 50-member council (majlis al-Shura) once every four years. It is then the duty of the Council to elect a secretary general, a deputy secretary general, and a seven member executive committee. Nathan J. Brown notes that “[the group] has built an impressive set of democratic structures internally. Party leaders are elected by the membership and there is a regular turn over in top position” (Brown, 2006).

Base of the Islamic Action Front Party
The Brotherhood’s greatest expansion has been through Islamic Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Islamic NGOs are non-profit organizations that provide basic goods and services to communities in a manner the Islamists claim are consistent with the Quran and Sunna. Examples of Islamic NGO activities include schools, health care, religious lessons and youth programmes and they are designed to promote Islamic values and behaviour. As points of contact between the Muslim Brotherhood and communities,
these NGOs create vehicles for developing a clientele and support for the Brotherhood cause.

The highs and lows experienced in their relations with the government have not prevented the Muslim Brothers from organising in many fields and putting in place an extensive nationwide network. Nursery schools, hospitals, cultural centres, youth centres and charity associations together form an institutional network used by the Brotherhood to consolidate its hold on the Jordanian society. Special primary and secondary schools such as Dar Al Aqsa (which has more than 20 schools nationwide), Zarqa University, the Islamic Hospital in Amman (which employs over 1,100 people), the Islamic Centre Charity Society (with its 32 committees), the Association for Islamic Studies and Research and the Society for the Preservation of the Koran (more than 100 centres nationwide) provide employment for Brotherhood members. It also creates a social fabric that attracts new followers and rewards existing members (Clark, 2004b:82-102).

Most of the Brotherhood's grassroots activities operate through the Islamic Centre Charity Society (ICCS). This society was established under leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1963 (Wiktorowicz, 2000:101). It is the charitable wing of the Muslim Brotherhood and one of Jordan’s largest organizations (Petersen, 2008:4). The Centre runs a variety of organizations. One of its best known enterprises is its system of schools. Other organizational activities through the Centre include health clinics, sewing centres, Quranic reading courses, orphanages, scholarships for students and financial and in-kind distribution for the poor. But the Centers most successful charitable project is the Islamic Hospital in Amman (Wiktorowicz, 1999: 7-8).

The Islamic Hospital in Amman is the jewel in the Islamic Centre Charity Society’s "crown" (Clark, 2004a:51). It is an important symbol of the viability of the Islamist model for the Muslim Brotherhood that established it. In keeping with its stated philanthropic aims, the prices listed at the hospital are significantly lower than at other hospitals. The cost of a natural childbirth delivery is only 15 Jordanian Dinars (JD) compared to 18 JD at the al-Bashir Hospital, a public hospital for the poor, and over 200 JD at the Farah Hospital, considered the finest private hospital in Jordan. Furthermore, the hospital’s Fund for the Sick and Poor provides subsidies for medical treatments. In 2002 alone it distributed a remarkable 4.5 million JD. The treatment in the Islamic
Hospital is better than many private hospitals and the cost less because all profits are reinvested. According to Quintan Wiktorowicz, Raif Nijim observed: 4

The vast majority of employees at the hospital are members of the Brotherhood; a fact which he believes brings down the quality of service. Now the hospital here, the Islamic Hospital, all the employees there, all doctors, is members of the Muslim Brotherhood, regardless of their knowledge or the ability for work. I go and visit the hospital always and I can see with my own eyes. There are many workers and many employees [who] do not deserve to be employed in that hospital because this is a big, standard hospital in the country and should employ better staff. They do not employ anyone who is not a member of the Muslim Brotherhood (Wiktorowicz, 1999: 9).

In reality, there are non-Muslim Brotherhood employees as well, but Nijim estimates that 90 percent of the staff is from the movement. This provides employment incentive for Brotherhood loyalists. Thus, the Islamic Hospital also serves as a source of movement patronage. Further, Quintan Wiktorowicz noted Ra’if Nijim as saying:

All of these projects--cultural, political and social projects--prove this movement is helping the people, than these projects are for the people. So when you do such projects, it is better than being only an association talking to people, calling them to Islam, calling them to pray, calling them to go for pilgrimage. This is how they succeed and because of this they have succeeded. Not because they are only Muslim movement but because they have done a lot of projects for the country (Wiktorowicz, 1999:8-9).

The tacit state support of the Centre Society provides the Brotherhood with greater opportunities for gathering support. Because of its relationship with the regime, it has enjoyed special treatment in organizing through the Islamic Centre Charity Society. Not only was it permitted to organize when all other political organizations in the country were banned during the martial law period (1956-1990), it had been allowed to expand the scope of its activities, broadening the reach of its appeal. For example, the law requires that NGOs first obtain permission to open branches. Though the Centre has opened only four official branches, it has side-stepped regulations by opening 32

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4 Ra’if Nijim is the engineer responsible for the construction of the Islamic Hospital and former director of its fund for the poor. Although he is not a member, Nijim works extensively with the Muslim Brotherhood on various projects, particularly those require engineering skills. He was the founding member of the IAF, though like other independents he resigned because of differences about the distribution of leadership positions and the balance between members of the Brotherhood and independent Islamists. He has also served as the minister of Awqaf (Wiktorowicz, 1999:16).
committees. These committees are not a secret, they are well-known to the state apparatus and their existence is due to state tolerance and tacit approval. It is an acceptance that is not forthcoming for many other social movements. In addition, while the Ministry of Social Development strictly monitors the financial records of NGOs through annual audits, the Islamic Center Charity Society has frequently been exempted (Brand, 1995: 164).

Though the Islamic Center Charity Society does not directly engage in politics, there is a political effect. Beneficiaries provide political support to the Brotherhood because of its social services. Zaid Abu Ghamineh, an administrator at the Islamic hospital, argued with Quintan Wiktorowicz saying:

Our success is in building a practical model for how Islam can serve. It has raised the confidence of the community that Islam can solve people's problems. That is why people now support the Islamic movement and this is reflected. Poor people, especially those served by the hospital, they pay us back in elections and meetings. They interact with us. The hospital has influenced them...This influence is not direct. We do not require that people either support the movement or we will not help....It is not a requirement that they become members of the Muslim Brotherhood. They voluntarily find themselves morally indebted to the movement and that is why they do not pay us [immediately for charitable work]. When the movement is in elections or needs support, they repay the debt (Wiktorowicz, 1999:9).

Following political liberalization, the Muslim Brotherhood expanded its NGOs presence into the cultural arena through the Society for the Preservation of the Quran.5 As is the case with the Islamic Centre Charity Society, this society enjoys an amicable relationship with the state. Other Brotherhood-run NGOs through which it garners support are the Yamruk Sports, Social and Cultural Club, the Islamic Studies and Research Association, the International Institute for Islamic Thought, the Green Crescent Society and the Al-Afah Society. These societies have also received favourable support from the regime. As a result of its moderate and pragmatic approach, it's participation in the democratic process helps the Muslim brotherhood to access institutions of governance, including Parliament,

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5 The Society for the Preservation of the Quran was founded in 1990, the society engages in a variety of activities intended to promote the application of the Quran because of a belief that there is no way man can be happy unless they take their knowledge from the Quran, read and understand.
cabinets, national consultative bodies and various ministries. This allows the Brotherhood to augment its grassroots campaign with influence through the state.

There were political gains made as Ishaq Farhan was appointed as a Senator in the Upper House of Parliament from 1989-1993. Abdul Latif, another prominent leader in the Brotherhood, was the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament from 1989-1993 and a member of the Senate from 1993-1997. Leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood have also been appointed to various national consultative bodies by the regime. Abdul Latif Arabiyyat and other members of the Brotherhood served on the National Charter Committee formed to draft the National Charter in 1991 that served as a blueprint for political liberalization. Aside from high level leaders such as Arabiyyat and Farhan, other members of the Brotherhood are also employed at state institutions. According to a study of the IAF membership made by Hani Hourani, “21 percent of the founding members, most of them from the Brotherhood, work at the Ministry of Education. Still other members are employed at state-controlled institutions such as universities and public schools. In 1993, 40 percent of the members of the IAF Shura Council were government employees”, (Hourani, et al, 1993:36-7, 45).

The Brotherhood’s experience in state institutions and its grassroots presence through NGOs placed the movement in a strong position to benefit from political liberalization which began in 1989. Because all other political movements were repressed during the martial law period, the Brotherhood emerged as the most organized and well-known movement in the kingdom. As a result, it fared well during the parliamentary elections. In 1989 elections, it won 22 of the 80 seats. In 1993, Islamic Action Front, the political wing of the Brotherhood captured 16 seats to act as a formidable parliamentary actor though it lost six of it earlier seats.

**Parliamentary Democracy in Jordan**

Before looking into the political participation of the IAF in the Jordanian democratic process, a brief discussion about the evolution of Parliamentary life, the Jordanian Parliament and the Electoral Law is required in order to understand the Jordanian parliamentary democracy. Doing this would enhance a better understanding about the various aspects of political participation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
Emir Abdullah, second son of Sharif Hussein who ruled Mecca and Hijaz until 1925, established regional control of the newly created Transjordan on 11 April 1921. Abdullah’s adherence to his father’s passion for a united Arab front was immediately obvious as Abdullah fought hard for political and military independence from colonial Great Britain. On 15 May 1923, Abdullah’s efforts began to prove successful. The Anglo-Transjordan Treaty replaced the British Mandate and established Jordan as a semi-autonomous nation. Immediately, Emir Abdullah was recognized as Head of State and the national armed forces were created.

In 1928, the original constitution and a parliamentary system were created. It introduced the Jordanian people to a system of democracy that is still in place today. Jordan’s first parliamentary elections were held in April of 1929. The last election of 2007 is the 15th Parliament. During World War II, Transjordan sided with the Allies and aided in expelling Axis forces from Syria. As a result, on 22 March 1946 under King Abdullah, Jordan achieved full independence. Great Britain responded by recognizing the status of the newly renamed Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Jordan’s democratic institutions were established before the country’s independence. A semi-constitutional Organic Law was in place in 1928 and indirect elections were held for Legislative Council with limited powers as early as in 1929. Most of the demands by the legislature and political parties focused on independence and development concerns. The Kingdom’s constitution of 1946 allowed for direct elections to a Lower House of Parliament and a Senate nominated by King Abdullah I. However, the 1946 constitution did not rise to nationalist expectations since it did not establish government responsibility to the legislature. It gave the King complete power to conclude treaties with foreign powers. An example is the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty of March 1948.

In 1952, a more liberal constitution was promulgated. It increased political freedoms and participation levels. Article 24 of 1952 constitution declared the nation as the source of all powers with executive power vested with the King (Art.25) and legislative power vested with the elected legislature (Art.26), which was empowered to force the resignation of the cabinet through a vote of no-confidence (Art.53). The King was empowered to appoint and dismiss cabinets and members of the senate, dissolve
parliament and call for new elections, declare martial law and rule by decree in times of emergency.

The radicalization of leftist-leaning parties in the Arab world in general during the 1950s highlighted the blurred concept of nation as opposed to state in domestic politics. In this respect, political parties did not necessarily believe in the legitimacy of the state, but advocated instead a pan-Arab national project that threatened the structure of the state.

The vulnerability of political parties to external influence and anti-monarchical ideologies including Nasserism, Baathism and Communism constituted a major blow to the participatory institutions. This situation resulted in a temporary imposition of emergency laws and a ban on all political parties in Jordan after a coup attempt in 1957. Although Parliament was reconvened after 19 months of martial law, the ban on political parties remained in effect for more than three decades. The state of emergency was declared at the outset of the 1967 Arab-Israel War and the martial law continued until 1989.

Parliamentary life remained in limbo in between 1967-1989 as elections could not be held on the West Bank in view of the Israeli occupation and the political role acquired by the PLO over Palestinians in the occupied territories after the Rabat Arab Summit in 1974. Jordan faced a dual dilemma in this regard. Holding elections while the West Bank was under the Israeli occupation was not possible and holding elections only for the East Bank would be tantamount to relinquishing claims of sovereignty over the occupied territory. By-elections were held in the East Bank in 1984 and 1986 for vacant seats in Parliament, after Article 73 of the Constitution was amended to allow for elections to be held in half of the Kingdom’s constituencies despite continued Israeli occupation. Parties however, continued to be banned and stringent restrictions remained on press freedom and political opposition.

From November 1974 to January 1984, the Jordanian Parliament was suspended and legislative powers reverted to the executive branch. An appointed National Consultative Council (NCC) was created to advise and support the executive. The NCC served in this capacity from 1978 to 1984. In 1984, the government announced a return to Parliamentary governance and reconvened the 9th House of Representatives, which had been suspended in 1978. This body remained until the 1989 elections chose a new Parliament.
King Hussein wanted to avoid the pitfalls of the 1950s and the vulnerability of political parties to external intrusion when the decision to resume political liberalization was taken in 1989. An organizing consensus was established for Jordan’s political liberalization through a National Charter drawn by a Royal Commission comprised of 60 members from all walks of Jordan’s socio-political life in 1990. The National Charter concerned the re-introduction of political parties into Jordan’s domestic politics. It also touched upon aspects that ensure party insulation from foreign subservience and manipulation, as well as the army’s insulation from party politics. Following a long period in which political parties were illegal, the Political Parties Law of 1992 signaled Jordan’s return to multi-party democracy. In the 1989 elections, candidates ran without official party affiliation, although in many cases their party identification was popularly known. Since then elections to the House of Representatives of the Jordanian Parliament were held in 1993, 1997, 2003 and 2007.

**National Assembly (Majlis al-Ayan)**

The National Assembly (Majlis al-Ayan) is the Jordanian Parliament. It is a bicameral legislature which compose of the House of Notables or Senate (Majlis al-Ayan), and the House of Representatives or Deputies (Majlis al-Nuwaab). The King appoints the 55 members of the House of Notables for four-year terms. Members must be former public officials or otherwise notable and at least 40 years of age. The House of Representatives until 2001 had 80 members elected for four-year terms under a plurality system from 21 multi-member constituencies. Each constituency elected between two and nine seats. Candidates must be at least 30 years of age. Voting is not mandatory and the right was extended to all Jordanian citizens over the age of 19.

The new Elections Law No.34 issued by Royal Decree on 22 July 2001, raised the number of Lower House seats from 80 to 104. This increased the number of constituencies from 21 to 44, redistributed parliamentary seats and lowered the voting age from 19 to 18. It adopted an election system whereby a voter is allowed to vote for one candidate only in his/her district. In 2003 another royal decree allocated an additional six seats to women making the number of seats 110. Nine of the seats are reserved for Christians, three for Circassions and nine for Bedouins (UNDP-POGAR, 2009c).
members of the House of Representatives must be at least twice the number of members of the House of Notables.

Elections to the House of Representatives are governed by the Law of Election to the House of Deputies No. 22 of 1986. Elections are overseen by the Ministry of Interior, which appoints representatives to organize and monitor election proceedings at the local level. A 1993 act of legislature altered the electoral system from an at-large to a limited vote arrangement. Under this system, voters cast only one ballot rather than being allowed to cast as many ballots as there are seats in the constituency as in the old system. It thereby curbed the Islamist for winning more seats as was evident from the 1993 elections to the House of Representatives as it lost six seats from 22 it had won in 1989. The 2001 Law keeps the controversial one-person, one-vote formula of 1993 but provides for special committees which include members of the judiciary, to supervise the electoral process in each district.

The Political Parties Law No. 32 of 1992 governs political parties. The law pertains to the manner in which political parties are to conduct themselves and includes stipulations for party formation and party activities. In order to receive a license from the Ministry of Interior, parties must comply with certain regulations, such as having a minimum of 50 members, respect for the Constitution and the ideals of political pluralism. Since the promulgation of the 1992 law, there has been an explosion of party formation. In some cases, smaller parties have since banded together in working coalitions to contest elections.

**Islamic Action Front in the Democratic Process**

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy with a representative government. The Jordanian Parliament was suspended and legislative powers reverted to the executive branch during the latter 1970s and early 1980s. An appointed National Consultative Council was created to advise and support the executive (1978-1984). The 9th House of Representatives restarted it works in 1984 and remained in force until 1989 elections. Political parties were still illegal and candidates run without official party affiliation though in many cases this was popularly known.

Timothy J. Piro observes that “the first signs of a growing Islamic movement in Jordan appeared formally in March 1984 with the reestablishment of parliamentary life” (Piro,
King Hussein called an election to fill eight vacant seats in the lower house of parliament. The constitution reserved two of those seats for Christians. Islamic activists contested the remaining six and won three of them. However, it was since 1989 the Jordanian political spectrum has demonstrated commitment to increased democracy, liberalization and consensus building. These reforms which have been guided by the King Hussein have placed Jordan on an irreversible path toward democratization. The result has been greater empowerment and involvement of everyday citizens in Jordan’s civic life, contributing to increased stability and institutionalization, which benefit the country far into the future.

Jordan’s programme of political liberalization began in 1989 as a direct response to widespread political unrest in the kingdom. The decision to return to political liberalization can be attributed to two different reasons. First is the weakening of the economic foundations and the failure of donor states to rescue Jordan’s critical financial position in 1988. This situation resulted in landmark domestic riots after the devaluation of the Jordanian Dinar and the consequent price hikes of basic commodities in 1989. Secondly, Jordan’s July 1988 decision to disengage from the West Bank removed a major obstacle to political reform in the East Bank. These factors enhanced the introduction of a democratization programme through the re-introduction of parties and the return to parliamentary life.

The depth and breadth of the political upheaval had clearly shaken the regime itself which responded with, in the words of Glenn Robinson “defensive democratization” (Robinson, 1998:387-410). The political process that followed on the domestic scene saw Jordan proceed along the path of political liberalization faster than any other country in the Arab world. By 1992, martial law and the anti-communism law were abolished. Instead, a law for a Higher Court of Justice as well as a law on political parties was promulgated. As a result of the legalization of political parties, Islamic Action Front started to participate in the democratic process since the 1993 election (12th Parliament, 6 King Hussein outlawed political parties in the late 1950s. As a result he turned toward the Muslim Brotherhood as a counterweight to the country’s radical Arab nationalist and leftist. As he had done with so many players in Jordan’s political system, Hussein co-opted the group. In exchange for its support, Hussein allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to exist as the country’s only legal political organization. Other political groupings were forced to go underground.
Therefore, the study would look into the political participation of the IAF in great details in the democratic process since 1993 till 2007.

In the run up to the 1993 parliamentary elections, the election law was changed to a ‘one-person one-vote system’ which is a single non-transferable vote system in multiple member districts. It allowed voters to choose only one candidate on the ballot (JCSR, 2007:1). King Hussein decreed the new electoral rules to shrink the opposition’s seat share. It was done because the Islamists were against the peace treaty with Israel. The regime was alarmed because in the 1989 parliamentary elections the Muslim Brotherhood surprised many in the Hashemite regime. The Muslim Brotherhood secured 22 parliamentary seats (out of a total of 80) while independent Islamist won an additional 12 seats.

The Jordanian Islamist with a bloc of 34 seats in the parliament joined the government of Mudar Badran, securing five ministries (education, health, justice, social development and Islamic affairs) and elected Abd al-Latif Arabiyyat to be the speaker of the house. As such Juan Jose Escobar Stemmann observes that it was the “Golden age of relations between the regime and Jordanian Islamist” (Stemmann, 2008:8). The regime clearly remained alarmed at the level of Islamist influence and electoral success as reflected in the 1989 election to the House of Representatives. Therefore, the regime responded to the Islamist victories with a sweeping change of the electoral system. It was changed to a ‘one-person-one-vote system’ with modified electoral districts. While the earlier system allowed Jordanians to vote for multiple MPs (depending on how many would represent the given district) had perhaps exaggerated Islamist strength the new system was designed to do precisely the reverse (Ryan, 2008:4).

“The elections of 1989 were the freest that Jordan had ever seen after decades of martial law” notes Russell E Lucas, although the King still appointed the upper House of Notables (Lucas, 2003:101). The 80-member House of Representatives was elected by universal suffrage. This new parliament used its constitutional powers to test successive prime ministers and cabinets in confidence votes and grill them in budget debates (Brand, 1991:1-46). The participation of the Muslim Brotherhood in the cabinet only lasted six months but the domestic portfolios provided the movement with a high profile and
offered a glimpse at the kinds of changes they seek through governmental institutions. In one ruling, the Minister of Education prohibited fathers from watching their daughters in sporting events because they would see other girls immodestly dressed. In another ruling, alcohol was banned from being served on Royal Jordanian flights and at government functions (Wiktorowicz, 1999:12). None of the changes initiated by the Muslim Brotherhood during this period of cabinet participation challenged the structure of the system or the legitimacy of the regime.

1993 Parliamentary Election

In the 1993 parliamentary elections, which followed the legalization of political parties in the kingdom, the Muslim Brotherhood did not directly participate. It rather returned to its traditional role as political, social and charitable movement. Many Ikhwan members and Islamist outside the Brotherhood formed and joined the IAF. The IAF over time became in effect the political party wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. As such, the IAF participated in the 1993 parliamentary election. Abdelsalam al-Majali replaced Zaid ibn Shaker on 29 May 1993 as the Prime Minister in the run up to the 1993 elections. On 4 August 1993, King Hussein issued a royal decree dissolving the House of Deputies and announced that Jordan’s first multiparty elections since 1956 would take place in November. It will be recalled that political parties were formally legalized in July 1992. Elections were held for all the seats of the House of Deputies on 8 November 1993. Altogether 534 candidates (including three women) and some 15 parties contested the House’s 80 seats. Most of the candidates ran as independents with tribal affiliations.

The Arab-Israeli peace process and the related ongoing negotiations were central themes in the campaign debate, but the country’s ailing economy (marked especially by a high foreign debt and unemployment rate) was also touched upon. In the 1993 elections to the lower house of the Jordanian parliament Abla M. Amawi observed:

(1) Some 821,000 of 1,203,329 registered voters (68 percent) cast ballots in a generally free election,
(2) a 4.7 percent increase over the number of persons voting in the previous elections of November 1989,

The Muslim Brotherhood was given the most influential domestic portfolios, including the Ministries of Education (Abdullah Akaileh), Health (Adnan Jaljuli), Justice (Majid Khalifeh), Social Development (Yusuf al-Athm) and Awqaf (Ibrahim Zayd al-Kilani) (see Brand, 1997). These Ministries were viewed as effective mechanisms for implementing the movement’s social objectives.
(3) a total of 536 candidates representing numerous parties, tendencies and tribes competed for the 80 seats (Amawi, 1994:15).

The polling outcome was generally regarded as a success for the King and his strategy for peace with neighbouring Israel as moderate candidates captured 59 seats; 18 seats went the Islamist and three to left-wing contenders. Among the parties, the Islamic Action Front which opposed the peace talks and had fielded the most number of candidates (36) topped eight other parties with 16 seats. Fifty of the 80 seats went to independents who were mostly centrists (See Table 3.1). Analysts attributed the Islamist poor showing, inter alia, to the August 1993 change in the Electoral law which introduced a one-person, one-vote system to replace multiple balloting. For the first time, a woman was elected to the House (IPU, 1993).

The decline in seats won by Islamists can be attributed to several factors. The first was the change in the electoral law to the one-person, one-vote formula. Despite the fact that the IAF was still the largest single politically-organized bloc in the 1989-93 parliaments, it was only able to gain 16 seats in 1993 compared to 22 seats in the 1989 elections. In 1989 the Muslim Brotherhood was able to strike alliances for votes not only between its members and independent Islamists but also between itself and leftist or Christian candidates. This tactic of alliance-building and joint-voting lists enabled the Muslim Brotherhood to win 22 seats in 1989 parliament. In the 1993 round of election each of their candidates had to compete alone for as many votes as he could. By the single non-transferable vote (SNTV), King Hussein rewarded rural and tribal allies while further rigging electoral outcomes against city-based opposition candidates, particularly those from the MB. The new electoral law substituted the “bloc voting” procedure (which had been so advantageous to the well-organized Brotherhood), by a “one person, one vote” system.8

Secondly, the impact of the electoral change in focusing on tribal identification and source of origin rather than ideologies and issues also negatively affected the IAF. An example is of IAF’s Abd al-Latif Arabiyat. He was a three-time speaker of the house in

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8 The 1989 elections were held according to a multiple voting system in which voters were allowed to cast a number of votes matching the number of representatives for their respective (multi-member) parliamentary district. Under this system, for example, the citizens of a district which had nine seats in parliament were allowed to cast votes for nine representatives.
the previous parliament and a strong candidate of Jordanian origin, he failed to be reelected from the Balqa' district in 1993. It was because residents of the Baqa'a refugee camp voted for a Palestinian candidate instead. This proved that the IAF could no longer depend on the support of others outside its own ranks. It also proved that Jordan Valley voters choose one of their own rather than supporting an IAF.

**Table 3.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Seats won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Action Front</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan National Alliance Party</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ahd Party</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Yakatha Party</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mustakbal Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Arab National Democratic Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Communist Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Democratic People's Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents and others</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total seats</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The loss was also because of government banning public rallies, preventing preachers from delivering sermons at mosques and transferring influential Brotherhood civil servants from their electoral districts. In June 1993, the Brotherhood’s official organ *al-Ribat* was also shut down and its (more moderate) replacement, *al-Sabil*, was only authorized to appear after the elections. Shamuel Bar observes that “there were even rumours that the regime had reached a tacit agreement with Arafat that he would support pro-regime candidates in order to weaken the pro-Hamas Brotherhood among Palestinian voters” (Bar, 1998:45).

After Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Oslo Accords in September 1993, Jordan moved to make peace with Israel. In October 1994, the two countries signed a full peace treaty that the weakened opposition after its defeat in the
November 1993 election was unable to block. Instead, the new legislature speedily ratified the treaty which was not signed until the monarchy had taken the precaution of imposing a ban on public demonstrations (Brand, 1999:52-67). According to Russell E. Lucas, “the regime tried to sell the virtues of peace with Israel to a skeptical but apathetic public by promising that the United States would shower Jordan with the kind of aid that Egypt got after the 1978 Camp David Accords” (Lucas, 2003:102-103). Western assistance was a trickle rather than a flood and Jordan’s economy continued to struggle. When the peace process began to stall after Israel’s Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist in 1995, King Hussein responded by deepening Jordan’s implementation of IMF structural-adjustment reforms. By 1996, Jordan had raised taxes, cut government spending (especially on public-sector salaries), and began, albeit hesitantly, a programme of privatization. However, it had not tackled a consumer subsidy which was one of the major requirements of the IMF package. In August of the same year, the cabinet ignored the widespread objections that were being heard even in parliament and raised the price of bread. Riots against subsidy cuts broke out in many of the same cities that had revolted in 1989 (Ryan, 1998: 54-66). Whereas the 1989 riots had prompted political opening, in 1996 the regime responded with force.

1997 Parliamentary Election

In the late 1990s, the regime continued to roll back its earlier political liberalization. The opposition threatened to mobilize a public anger at the pain caused by economic reform. In contrast to Egypt’s stable but distant relationship with Israel, King Hussein saw the peace process as leading toward a new regional order in which Jordan would act as Israel’s intermediary in the Arab World. As the peace process slowed following the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister of Israel in 1996, Jordanian supporters of peace began to see their vision of ‘a new Middle East’ fading. The opposition capitalized on this by calling on Jordanians to reject the normalization of political and economic relations with Israel.

Although the opposition could not block the legislation by which such normalization of political and economic relations would be carried out, it did succeed in uniting its disparate ranks around opposition to normalization. For example, Jordan’s professional associations (syndicates of middle-class professionals) nearly all controlled by the
opposition began to expel members who visited Israel. In January 1997, the opposition also managed to close a trade fair put on by Israeli Government institutions and organized by a Jordanian businessman in Amman through peaceful protests that drew nearly 4,000 demonstrators (Scham and Lucas, 2003:155).

The regime came to perceive the growing institutionalization of anti-normalization forces with Israel as a potentially serious threat not merely to the monarchy’s policies but to its very survival. King Hussein feared that the growing consensus against normalization of relations with Israel could emerge as a viable opposition platform that might be enough to support a full-scale anti-regime mobilization. With parliamentary elections due in November 1997, King Hussein ordered further limits on political liberties, hoping that the crackdown would prevent opposition electoral gains that could upset his plans to push further economic reforms through parliament (Ryan, 1998:54-56). Russell E. Lucas observed:

To silence critics of its economic and foreign policies, the regime decreed restrictive amendments to the press law in May 1997. This sparked an outcry from the opposition. When the newly amended law was invoked in order to shut down most of Jordan’s weekly newspapers, the grieved asked the courts to overturn the decree. The courts did so, but did not hand down their decision until long after the November elections were over (Lucas, 2003:103).

Zaid ibn Shaker replaced Abdelsalam al Majali on 7 January 1995 and continued in office till 4 February 1996. He was replaced by Abdelkarim al-Kabariti and continued until 9 March 1997 when Abdelsalam al-Majali again became the Prime Minister. He remained as Prime Minister of Jordan in the run upto the 1997 election. On 1 September 1997, the House of Deputies was dissolved by Royal Decree and the election date was set. Elections were held for all the seats of the House of Deputies on 4 November 1997. Altogether, 524 candidates (including 17 women) contested the 80 seats. Most of these were tribal leaders with no party allegiance. Contending groups were led by the National Constitutional Party that was formed earlier in the year through the merger of small pro-Government parties.

The opposition headed by IAF boycotted the poll to protest against a series of interim laws issued during the parliamentary recess, especially one concerning the press. In foreign affairs, these groups also opposed Jordan’s 1994 peace treaty with Israel. In the
absence of the opposition boycott, the three-week campaign focused primarily on local economic issues rather than national policies. On polling day, the tribal candidates who supported King Hussein and were mostly centrist secured a total of 68 seats while the remaining 12 went to independents who were Islamist and their leftist’s allies (See Table 3.2). In this context, Prime Minister Abdul-Salam Majali continued in office at the head of the unchanged Cabinet (IPU, 1997).

### Table 3.2 
1997 Election results to the House of Representative in Jordan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Group</th>
<th>Seats won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Action Front</td>
<td>Did not participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Constitutional Party</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordanian Leftist Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Central Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Committee Movement Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Labour Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Land Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordanian Arabic (Baath) Socialist Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic National Movement</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents and others</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total seats</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The changing of the election and press laws, as well as the signing of the peace treaty with Israel led the Muslim Brothers to call for a boycott of the 1997 Parliamentary elections. “When the regime refused to repeal the electoral and press decrees and a reversal of the normalization process with Israel, the IAF led the opposition in an 11-party boycott of the 1997 elections. Islamists then shifted their efforts toward the professional associations, where they won the leadership posts of almost every association in the kingdom” (Ryan 2006:1). Since IAF figures had been successful

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within Jordan’s professional associations by winning key leadership posts, these associations took the lead in the absence of the IAF from the parliament in maintaining IAF activism on such issues as the anti-normalization campaign.

Andrew Shryock observed that “the Islamist had boycotted the elections which insured that their largely Palestinian constituency would not show up at the polls. Voter turnout was a low 44 percent and it was lowest in predominantly Palestinian districts” (Shryock, 2000:70). The Islamists refused to participate in the elections because the government was moving closer towards Israel and it was clamping down on all forms of dissent. The election signalled a transformation in the Jordanian body politic. Hussein who was known as a defender of the Arab Nation against Zionism was a new persona: friend of Israel and supporter of the peace process. The boycott of the 1997 election by the Islamists was based on an understanding that an entire range of agendas and identities rooted in Palestinian nationalism, opposition to Zionism, and a refusal to normalize relations with Israel cannot be accommodated in the Jordanian political system dominated by the new persona of King Hussein.

In the 1997 elections, the overall voter turn out was lower than was in 1989 or 1993. However, it was not so low that it had embarrassed the monarchy which benefited from record levels of rural turnout. When the new parliament was debating the 1998 press law, King Hussein gave regency powers to his younger brother, Crown Prince Hassan and left the country for cancer treatment in the United States. King Hussein’s almost half century long reign came to an end with his death in February 1999. It led to the emergence of Hussein’s son, Abdallah as heir to the throne. In less than two weeks before he succumbed, the dying king had decided to remove his younger brother and named Abdallah as successor. In contrast with his father’s focus on regional politics, Abdallah II placed greatest stress on Jordan’s economic reform and its integration into the world economy. He requested that parliament remove some of the provisions of the restrictive press law and even ventured out into public in disguise in order to uncover administrative inefficiencies and earned public accolades.

King Abdallah’s taste for liberalization proved short-lived. In 1999, as negotiations got underway on a final status agreement between the PLO and Israel, Abdallah pledged Jordanian support for the peace process while further limiting the scope for public
opposition to it. A September crackdown on the Jordanian offices of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) demonstrated that the regime’s tolerance of dissident had reached a limit. When the second intifada erupted in September 2000 and the Palestinian-Israeli status negotiations broke down, the renewed conflict in the West Bank echoed in Jordanian domestic politics just as it had during the first intifada which began in 1987.

The King and his cabinet perceived the new uprising as a threat not only to Jordan’s peace agreement with Israel but also to the survival of the regime itself. Meanwhile, the regime showed little tolerance for public manifestations of support for the uprising. A ban on demonstrations was imposed after rallies in early October 2000 led to property damage and one shooting death. When the opposition staged a march in the Jordan Valley that drew almost 20,000 people, security forces broke it up with violence. In May 2001 and April 2002, masses of demonstrators returned to the streets of the capital city of Amman. Once again there was forceful suppression although those few demonstrations which official’s had permitted was generally been peaceful.

The term of the parliament elected in 1997 ended in June 2001. It result King Abdallah dissolving the assembly and he began to rule by decree, announcing that parliament would return after new elections. One of the first decrees simplified voting registration and added 24 seats to the House of Representatives but did little else to change the controversial electoral system. “The cabinet claimed that the elections slated for November 2001 could be delayed for atleast 10 months in order to allow voters to register into the new electoral system. In August 2002, elections were again postponed at least until the spring of 2003. The regime postponed it because of the fear of the Intifada raging next door and the imminence of the US led military action against Iraq” (Lucas, 2003:105).

2003 Parliamentary Election

Fayez al-Tarawneh replaced Abdelsalam al-Majali on 20 August 1998 and continued till Abdelraouf al-Rawabdeh took over on 4 March 1999. Ali Abu al-Ragheb took over from him and remained as Prime Minister during the June 2003 election. The 17 June 2003 Jordanian parliamentary election was the first national elections in Jordan in six years since 1997. The king dismissed the last parliament in 2001, leaving the country without
elected representatives for two years. They were also the first elections in a country neighbouring Iraq since the U.S invasion of 2003. As such, Russell E Lucas notes the *Al Dustour* columnist Urayb Al Rantawi saying “The 17 June 2003 Jordanian elections for the House of Deputies/Representatives were so out of touch with regional events that they might well have been held on a different planet” (Lucas, 2003a:1). Yet, as Urayb Al Rantawi lamented, the heat of the summer did not raise the temperature of the elections. Only 58 percent of registered voters cast their ballots in this lack lustre contest.

On 26 February 2003, King Abdullah II issued a royal decree to organize parliamentary elections that were finally held on 17 June, the first since he ascended the throne upon the death of his father in 1999. King Abdullah had dissolved the Parliament in June 2001 at the end of its four-year term. The general elections should have followed in November of that year. The 2003 elections were finally held under still another elections law which had been announced in July 2001. The new law lowered the age of voting eligibility from 19 to 18 and increased the number of seats from 80 to 104. The government announced that redistricting would address some of the earlier inequalities but in fact the distribution of the additional seats maintained the advantage of the largely pro-regime Transjordanian south at the expense of the more oppositional and Palestinian populated regions in and around Amman.

In February 2003, King Abdullah revised the system once more with a new decree that added six additional seats intended to ensure at least minimal representation for women. In the previous three elections combined (1989, 1993 and 1997), Tujan al-Faysal was the only successful female candidate. However, she won as a Circassian running in one of the dedicated minority seats, succeeding with a few thousand votes while others lost non-quota seats with many more votes. The new women’s quota was intended to guarantee that at least six women would enter the new parliament (Ryan and Schwedler, 2004). In the 2003 elections to the House of Representatives, 765 candidates including 54 women registered to take part in the elections.

The elections were marked by the participation of opposition forces, especially the IAF, which had boycotted the 1997 elections to protest the one-person-one-vote election formula. This formula was still applied for the 2003 elections. Declaring a public holiday to encourage a high turnout effectively paid off. Almost 59 per cent of all registered
voters cast their ballots. The turnout was relatively good when compared to the 1997 elections in which 44.27 percent of all registered voters had participated.

The independents, who are representatives of the major tribes and families traditionally loyal to the Hashemite royal family, carried a large majority of the House of Deputies 110 seats and more than half the country’s 45 constituencies. The Islamist opposition which won about half of the 30 seats it had contested declared that the election was marred by fraud. No woman was elected. Therefore, a special commission was tasked with choosing six women to fill the quota of seats reserved for them from among the 54 women candidates who had stood for the elections. On 27 October 2003, the members of the new government chaired by Faisal al-Fayez took their constitutional oath before King Abdullah II (IPU, 2003).

The Islamic Action Front originally opposed the women’s quota but it eventually included for the first time a woman, Hayat al-Musayni, among its slate of 30 candidates. Aside from the quota seats, no women won in a head-to-head race for a parliamentary seat (JCSR, 2007). Musayni won a larger percentage of votes in her district than did any other female candidate nationwide. Thus “the first woman seated in the new 2003-2007 parliament was neither secular nor feminist, as the IAF feared, but rather a conservative Islamist activist” note Curtis R. Ryan and Jillian Schwedler (2004). Five additional female candidates were also awarded seats on the basis of percentage of votes received in their districts.

Overall, the Islamic Action Front succeeded in getting 17 of its party members elected (including Musayni). Aside from the IAF, five independent Islamists were also elected, including such highprofile conservative Islamists as the IAF’s Muhammad Abu Faris and former IAF member Abd al-Munim Abu Zant, whom the party had expelled from its ranks just before the election. As expected, most of the parliamentary seats went to traditional tribal leaders or former government officials, putting at least 62 of the 110 seats in the hands of loyalist pro-regime figures. “The leftist Democratic Party won two seats but Arab nationalists and Baath’s failed to win any” (Lucas, 2003a:1) (See Table 3.3).

For a detailed discussion of IAF and Muslim Brotherhood positions toward female candidates, see Clark and Schwedler (2003).
Table 3.3
2003 Election results to the House of Representative in Jordan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Group</th>
<th>Seats won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Action Front</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Constitutional Party</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordanian Leftist Party</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Central Party</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Committee Movement Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Labor Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Land Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordanian Arabic (Baath) Socialist Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic National Movement</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent and others</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of seats</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The 2003 elections were the first under king Abdullah II since he ascended to the throne in 1999 and marked the return of the opposition to electoral politics (Ryan, 2006:1). The IAF has had its share of electoral success and has now positioned itself to demand more of a role in governance. While the IAF remained focussed on its own Islamist political agenda, most legislation continued to emerge from the government itself. The parliament served as a debating forum that usually provided a legislative stamp of approval for government initiatives. Curtis R Ryan observed:

The IAF had no success in achieving its broadest policy goals. This unfulfilled goals included implementing *Sharia* (Islamic law) and abrogating the Jordanian-Israel peace treaty. Still, the IAF did align itself with more secular conservative forces to bloc repeated government attempts to change Jordan’s laws regarding honour crimes. Honour crimes are purportedly linked to family honour in which men kill female relatives who are believed to have in some way shamed the family. Jordan’s monarchy itself has endorsed attempts to change the kingdom’s otherwise lenient pattern of sentencing for these crimes. Yet the Islamist movement, in temporary alliances with other social conservatives in parliament
has consistently opposed attempts to change the legal system regarding crimes of honour (Ryan, 2006:1).

The terrorist bombings on 9 November 2005 in a luxury hotel in Amman left the IAF worried about the new security-preoccupied government. The IAF and Muslim Brotherhood feared that the regime in security mode might be used against them because the government had called for preemptive war on militant forms of Islamism. In January 2006, the government charged IAF leader Jamil Abu Bakr with “harming the dignity of the state” (Ryan, 2006:1). The charges stemmed from articles posted on the IAF website that criticized the government tendency to appoint officials due mainly to connections rather than expertise or parliamentary consultations. The charges were dropped the following month, but the sense of harassment remained. The security factors have made life more difficult for the IAF but the sweeping victory of Hamas in Palestinian legislative elections in January 2006 has re-invigorated Jordan’s already well-organized Islamist movement.

With its campaign emphasis on anti-corruption and social welfare activities, Hamas was in many ways adopting the tactics of Jordan’s IAF and Muslim Brotherhood, with which it had even shared office space at one time. But unlike Hamas, the IAF and Muslim Brotherhood do not have a militant wing. Hamas representatives were expelled from Jordan in 1999. The IAF now wants the Jordanian government to recognize Hamas’s achievement by restoring ties. For IAF, the Hamas victory was inspiring but also a reminder of their comparative limitations. While Hamas’s electoral win translated immediately into a new Hamas-led government, 17 years of Islamist electoral success in Jordan has produced no chance whatsoever to form an IAF government. Consequently, IAF leaders have become bolder in articulating their policy priorities as well as in demanding that the government stop harming the Islamist movement through electoral laws designed to minimize their representation. The IAF deputies argue that the cabinet should be drawn from parliament rather than appointed by the palace. Curtis R Ryan notes:

The issue of linking elections to actual governance, and new law on parties and elections remained a key point of struggle between the government and IAF as they bargain over the ground rules for the 2007 parliamentary elections and the nature of the Jordanian state itself (Ryan, 2006:1).
Faisal al-Fayez replaced Ali Abu al-Ragheb on 25 October after the 2003 elections and remained as Prime Minister till 6 April 2005. He was replaced by Adnan Badran till Marouf al-Bakhit took over the office on 27 November 2005 and remained as Prime Minister in the run up to 2007 parliamentary election.

2007 Parliamentary Election

In the 2007 Parliamentary elections, Jordan’s controversial electoral law was once more under scrutiny. Influential public figures and organizations, including IAF Secretary-General Zaki Bani Irsheid and leading English daily The Jordanian Times have called on the government to change the “one vote” law used in parliamentary elections since 1993. That system allows each voter, one vote regardless of how many parliamentary seats represent the voter’s district. The system puts political parties at a disadvantage, as they effectively are unable to run slates or lists of candidates in each district because voters only get one choice. The law therefore benefits independent candidates with strong personal or tribal connections to a significant number (but not necessarily a majority) of the district’s voters.

The IAF, Jordan’s strongest and best-organized political party has suggested replacing the one vote system with a mixed system. Under this proposal, half of the parliamentary seats would be allocated to national party lists through proportional representation and the other half to single-member geographic districts. Each voter could cast two votes, one for a national list and the other for a district candidate. The proposal resembles the Palestinian electoral system used in 2006 where Hamas fared disproportionately well in the multi-member geographic districts. Polls also show that IAF would perform far better than other parties competing for proportional representation seats (DeBartolo, 2007:1-2).

On 28 March 2007, King Abdullah II issued a royal decree dissolving parliament ahead of legislative elections to the House of Representatives. The Government subsequently set the date of elections as 20 November 2007. Before the November 2007 election, the Municipal elections were held throughout the kingdom in July. Amidst widespread charges of vote rigging, the IAF announced its withdrawal from the process, but only on Election Day itself. The government argued that the Islamist were merely attempting to
save face in the midst of a resounding electoral defeat while the Islamist movement in contrast insisted that the regime was engaged in an elaborate process of vote rigging.

It was therefore in an atmosphere of increasing wariness and even mutual hostility between the state and the Islamist movement that the national election campaign began. This tense context only exacerbated divisions within the Islamist movement itself, particularly between hawks and doves. The dovish and moderate wing of the movement which had for so long maintained a level of understanding with the Hashemite state, even negotiated with the government in an attempt to ally the regime’s fears of the hawks. Indeed, Jordan’s intelligence services seemed to view the hawkish wing, led by Secretary General Zaki Bani-Irshayd, as increasingly a de facto Jordanian Hamas style movement operating within the broader Islamist framework (Susser, 2008:4-5).

In subsequent contacts with leaders of the IAF’s centrist faction, Prime Minister Marouf al-Bakhit reportedly gave assurances that elections would be free and transparent, in return for a promise to remove extremists from the IAF electoral lists. However, the Prime Minister publicly rejected the IAF’s demand to invite international observers, arguing that this would suggest that Jordanian electoral law was flawed. In all 880 candidates, including a record number of 199 women (up from 54 in the 2003 elections) contested the November elections. The moderate wing of the IAF agreed to field a mere 22 candidates, down from over 30, and even ensured that most of these would be from the dovish wings of the IAF and Muslim Brotherhood. The Islamist movement expected to retain its earlier strength at minimum, having secured 17 seats in the previous parliament, (Ryan, 2008:10).

There were various issues raised in the electoral campaign. Most female candidates ran as independents, promising to strive for women’s basic rights including the freedom to work. The outgoing legislature had six women, who all were elected under reserved seats. Most supporters of the King ran as independents. Many of them promised to improve economic conditions by fighting poverty and unemployment.

The media focused on the chances of the IAF winning more seats than in 2003. The party was seen to be losing ground. The IAF ran under the slogan, “Islam is the solution.” It pledged to support people in Iraq and to amend the Constitution and the electoral law, without elaborating on the changes to be made. Its proposals on unemployment and
poverty were reportedly similar to those of pro-monarchy candidates. Support for Iraqi and Palestinian peoples was also a common theme among other opposition forces. A total of 54 per cent of the 2.4 million registered voters turned out at the polls (IPU, 2007). Final election results as announced by the Interior Minister Eid al-Fayez showed that the Islamic Action Front, the country’s largest opposition group which fielded 22 candidates, won only six seats, down from 17 in the outgoing parliament (See Table 3.4). Supporters of the king, mainly tribal Bedouin and centrist politicians, secured a majority of the seats in the 110 member Chamber of Deputies. A handful of known sympathizers of the Islamist bloc, who ran as independents, were also defeated in the election.

Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Group</th>
<th>Seats won</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Action Front</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent and others</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total seats</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The popular IAF female candidate Hayet al-Musaymeh, who held a seat in the previous Parliament, also lost her bid. Instead, seven other women, both liberals and conservatives who ran as independents, won seats. Most prominent among them is dentist Falak al-Jamaani, an incumbent lawmaker who won a quota seat in the 2003 polls. Still, a record of 199 women contested the 2007 Parliamentary elections. It was nearly four times in comparison to the 54 who did in the previous pools which no woman won outside the quota (Associated Press, 2007). Muhammad Ibn Hussein notes, “More surprisingly, no Islamist candidate was elected in key political bases such as Irbid and Zarqa” (Hussein, 2007). Jamil Abu-Bakr alleged election fraud, including vote-buying, which the government denied (IPU, 2007).

On 22 November, King Abdullah II named Nader Dahabi as the new Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. He subsequently formed a 28-member cabinet including four women, which was approved by a royal decree on 25 November. On 2 December, the
newly-elected House of Representatives held a preliminary session that re-elected Abdulhadi Al-Majali as its Speaker. In the meantime, on 29 November, King Abdullah II had appointed 55 senators, including seven women. Zaid Al-Rifai was re-appointed as Senate President by Royal Decree. King Abdullah II officially inaugurated the parliament on 3 December (IPU, 2007).

This government of Nader al Dahabi did not last long as the King dissolved the house in mid-way of the four year term in 24 November 2009. As such, Samir Rifai was appointed as Prime Minister on 14 December 2009. According to Al Jazeera, “the decision to send home the country’s 110 parliamentarians followed reports in the media accusing politicians of incompletely handling legislation and in some cases corruption” (Al Jazeera, 2009a). For BBC “the opposition MPs said the government had dissolved parliament so it could pass legislation under emergency laws” (BBC, 2009a).

The victory of the supporters of the king in the 2007 parliamentary election was widely expected. It was attributed to the strong influence of family and tribal links on voting in Jordan and the inability of the Islamist to deliver on long-standing promises to improve the economic lot of country’s poor. But IAF leader Jamil Abu-Bakir blamed his group’s defeat on government ‘fraud’ in the election, including what he described as state ‘collusion’ with some candidates who allegedly bought votes for the poor. These charges were strongly denied by the government (Associated Press, 2007). However, IAF’s setback is believed to stem from its inability to improve economic conditions in Jordan, a cash-strapped and heavily indebted nation where poverty and unemployment are rampant.

The IAF, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood has been part of the democratic process in Jordan since the 1993 election. In 1989, before political parties were not legalized, the Muslim Brotherhood nearly won a majority of parliamentary seats on promises to tackle poverty that affects nearly 25 percent of the population. But four years later, the group lost much of its clout because it failed to provide jobs and ease the burdens of poverty. In recent years, the group has also been criticized for its loud rebuke of state policies without being able to provide alternatives.

The government also contributes for IAF’s waning popularity. Frightened by the rising power of militant groups like Palestinian Hamas in the Gaza Strip and also Islamist in
Iraq and Lebanon, Jordan cracked down on IAF and other critics. In early 2007 the government had also accused IAF of financial irregularities at the group’s vast charity network that includes schools, hospitals and banks across the country. Authorities took control of the charity’s financial records, depriving IAF of the ability to spend money freely on the poor who are its main source of support. In June, police arrested nine IAF members on charges of planning to set up armed militias. The group categorically denied the charge. In July, IAF locked horns with the government during local elections before accusing officials of fraud and withdrawing from the contest (Associated Press, 2007). However, political violence as form of political participation has remained alien to the IAF.

**Violence and Terror: Alien to IAF**

Political violence is also a form of participation. LaPalombara defines it to consist of “those physically injurious acts directed at persons or property which are intended to further or oppose governmental decisions and public policies” (LaPalombara, 1974:379). Political terror, a subcategory of political violence occurs when such acts are aimed at striking fear into a wider population. Both violence and terror can be committed by as well as against the state (Hague and Harrop, 2004:134). C. Moser and F. Clark define political violence, as “the commission of violent acts motivated by a desire, conscious or unconscious, to obtain or maintain political power” (Moser and Clark, 2001:36). Political violence is about the acquisition of power through violent acts.

The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood founded in 1945 is not seeking to destroy the current political system. It proposes reform from within. Statements by leaders and working members of the movement reflect this outlook. According to Quintan Wiktorowicz, Abdul Majid Thunaybat describes the movement’s approach to change as:

> Our approach to education is to begin with the individual and then move on to the family and then ultimately the Islamic government that rules as provided for in God’s Sharia. Our mission does not envisage an overthrow of the regime in the sense of holding the reign of power regardless of people’s temperament or whether they approve of this regime or not. We seek the creation of faithful grassroots that receive these instructions and this order, and government by Islam comes later. We renounce violence and say that the alternative is political reform and respect for Islamic sharia, which constitutes the base of powers as approved by al Arab and Islamic constitutions (Wiktorowicz, 1999:3).
Thunaybat’s views are echoed by other members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Outlining the Islamic position on political involvement, Quintan Wiktorowicz also noted Ishaq Farhan, a leader in the brotherhood, reemphasizing the movement’s support for the stability of Jordan as saying:

No matter how much the political stands differ between the Islamic movement and the official stand, things must never end up with using violence and the opposite (counter-violence) (Wiktorowicz, 1999:3).

Of paramount importance is that the movement supports the state of law and institutions while adopting the gradual reform means in order to shift towards the application of the Islamic sharia in society. Quintan Wiktorowicz also notes Farhan stating that the brotherhood would not spill one drop of blood or vandalize any public or private property. This derives from belief that sometimes words speak louder than swords. The Muslim Brothers articulate a gradualist agenda for change that begins with the Muslim individual, up to the Muslim family, the Muslim community and then to the Muslim state.

The Brotherhood’s method of change is not the erection of a new system of politics. It is a reformist strategy of working through the current system to imbue it with more Islamic tones. Leaders in the movement characterize themselves as reformist not revolutionaries and argue that the strategy of change is evolution not revolution. It is an attempt to renew the system, not to radically change or alter it. Members of the brotherhood view themselves as partners with the government in providing social and moral guidance. Bassam Umush echoes these sentiments as observed by Quintan Wiktorowicz when he argues that any change should be pursued by “making an effort toward reforming government rather than through an attempt to overthrow the regime” (Wiktorowicz, 1999:3). For Abdullah Akaileh various members of the movement have labelled their relationship with the regime as one of peaceful coexistence (Akaileh, 1993).

In a rare public statement rationalizing IAF’s strategy, as quoted by Gudrun Kramer, one of the spokesmen of IAF Abdallah al-Akayla declared at an international conference held in London in 1992:

The Islamic Movement in Jordan deplores violence and denounces terrorism. It does not believe in change by confrontation or revolution but adopts a peaceful methodology based on gradual persuasion through dialogue...The demands of the
Islamic movement at the most are reformatory in nature and encompass all aspects of life. However, they do not in any way threaten the regime or propose an alternative to it. Hence, the regime does not see such demands constitute any real threat to its existence and stability (Kramer, 2000: 274).

In November 2005 Al Qaeda suicide bombers struck three luxury hotels in central Amman, killing 60 people mostly Jordanians and injuring more than hundred. The IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood were among the first to respond by organizing anti-al-Qaeda demonstrations. The government meanwhile called for pre-emptive war on militant forms of Islamism which the IAF and Muslim Brotherhood feared might be used against them. Unlike Hamas, the IAF and Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan do not have a militant wing (Ryan, 2006:1). The demonstrations underscored the difference between moderate mainstream pro-democratic forms of Islamism such as Jordan’s Muslim Brotherhood and militant global jihadi organizations such as Al-Qaeda.

In Jordan, because of the preponderance of the Palestinians in the country, the Brotherhood has played heavily to the agenda of struggle for Palestinian rights. Although the Brotherhood as an organization does not engage in political violence, it draws a clear distinction, as does most of the Arab World, between the apocalyptic terrorism of the Al Qaeda type, which it condemns, and the armed struggle for the Palestinian National Liberation, which it condones. The Brotherhood in Jordan seeks to push the regime into greater confrontation with Israel, partly as a tactic to embarrass the regime. Graham E Fuller observes that within the Palestinian Autonomous Areas “the Brotherhood has sponsored the guerrilla-terrorist movement Hamas to engage in the armed struggle along with secular Palestinian guerrilla organizations” (Fuller, 2004:12). Muslim Brotherhood “hawks” refuses to break relationship with Hamas. The Islamic movement opposed “disengagement decision” from the West Bank in 1988 as “unconstitutional.” This is the rationale why the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood “hawks” does not want to break its relationship with Hamas. However, the Brotherhood doves support “disengagement” with Hamas tend to give priority to the “Jordanian agenda” over the Muslim Brotherhood platform (Al-Rantawi, 2009).

11Muslim Brothers of Palestinian origins are in general closer to the hawks. They are less enthusiastic regarding “disengagement” with Hamas and between the two banks. Brothers of Jordanian origia tend to give priority to the Jordanian agenda.
Although there is a growing ideologically oriented faction within the Muslim Brotherhood known as “Hawks”, the Brotherhood leadership remains predominantly loyal to the political system. Rather than staunchly opposing structures of power, the Brotherhood works from within the system to produce changes. It acts within the rules of the game even when these rules are monopolized by the regime. Most importantly, it has never challenged the legitimacy of the state or the Hashemite. While the movement has opposed specific government policies, it has never opposed the right of the regime to govern or threatened the capabilities of the state. Regardless of differences, the IAF has remained loyal to the political system and the monarch. The monarch also promotes the Muslim Brotherhood to curb militant Islamists.

Monarch and the IAF: Allies for Existence

The Islamist movement in Jordan has a history and heritage as old as that of the Hashemite regime itself. While Jordan’s main Islamist political party, the IAF was not legalized until the early 1990s, Jordan’s Muslim Brotherhood maintained a functional relationship with the Hashemite monarchy. It did especially throughout the reign of King Hussein (1953-1999) who tolerated the Ikhwan as a loyal opposition (Ryan, 2008:1). The Jordanian body politic consists of numerous conflicting constituencies: Palestinians, tribal Jordanians, Circassians, Chechens, Christians, Islamists and progressive and conservative factions within each of these groups.

King Hussein crafted a delicate relationship to each of his constituencies. He was 'protector of the Palestinian people', the great majority of whom he allowed to become Jordanian citizens. They now predominate in the kingdoms business, professional, media and educational sectors. Hussein’s military, public security and intelligence apparatus were dominated by members of the indigenous tribes. According to Andrew Shryock:

As a descendant of the Prophet, Hussein could speak the language of Islam fluently. In the past, he had extended to the Muslim Brotherhood legal protections not available to other political groups, even as he supported the secularizing agendas of Jordan’s modernist elite (Shryock, 2000: 62).

Under King Hussein, special seats were also set aside in parliament for Christian, Circassian and Bedouin minorities. In 1999, King Hussein of Jordan died after a long battle with cancer. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Abdallah, who became King
Abdallah II. Under him, the House of Representatives has 110 seats of which six seats are reserved for women, nine for Christians, three for Circassians and nine for Bedouin (CSC, 2007).

Therefore, the Jordanian experience shows that the dynamics of Islamic movement-state relations can be characterized more by cooperation than conflict when there is a conjecture of interest. In Jordan, the regime benefits from Muslim Brotherhood success because as a moderate reform movement it checks other more confrontational social movements and channels Islamic activities into a non-violent agenda. The Brotherhoods moderate stance has also served to counter radical Islamic groups.

From the perspectives of regime survival, the Muslim Brotherhood's most important function is that it marginalizes more militant Islamic groups which propose revolutionary changes in the political and social system. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Muslim Brothers acted to counter the more radical *Hizb al-Tahrir* (The Liberation Party).\(^\text{12}\) As a moderate, supportive and legal Islamic movement, the Brotherhood was viewed as a means of absorbing the increased religiosity that began in the 1970s to divert it way from more radical groups such as *Hizb al-Tahrir* (Wiktorowicz, 1999:5).

The Muslim Brotherhood on its part, benefits from organizational opportunities produced by the regime. State support allows the movement to extend its reach in society and enables the Brotherhood to more effectively deliver its religious message. Though the movement disagree with policies or articulate opposition, it continues to act through the institutions of the political system without challenging the *raison d'être* of state or Hashemite power. In effect, the Brotherhood acts as a "loyal opposition."\(^\text{13}\)

This creates what Thomas C. Schelling refers to as a coordination game (see Schelling, 1963). In this game, each actor cooperates with the other to achieve different ends. The regime seeks to hold its power and control by supporting moderate Islam, while the Muslim Brotherhood hopes to promote a more Muslim society with state support. The Jordanian case study indicates that not all Islamic groups are enemies of the state and that mutual interest can lead to cooperation.

\(^{12}\)It was founded by Taqi al-Din Ibrahim Yusuf al-Nabahani and was radically anti-regime. He led the party until his death in 1977. For more on *Hizb Al-Tahir*, see Cohen (1982) and Taji-Farouki (1995).

\(^{13}\)For the concept of loyal opposition see Linz (1978).
While the Egyptian Brotherhood experienced violent clashes with President Abd al-Nasser and has been repressed by Presidents Anwar Sadat and Hoshni Mubarak, the Jordanian movement has enjoyed a relatively cordial and cooperative relationship with the Hashemite monarchy. Throughout its history, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood has consistently supported the regime during periods of crisis. During the height of the regimes confrontation with the Arab nationalists and the coup attempt in the 1950s, the Brotherhood openly declared its loyalty to King Hussein. It supported martial law to combat destabilizing movements such as Nasserite, communists and the leftists. The Brotherhood’s support for the King was reaffirmed during the 1970-71 civil wars when the movement reinforced its allegiance and commitment to stability by staying out of the conflict.

During the 1989 and 1996 riots which erupted over subsidy reductions, the Muslim Brotherhood was careful not to criticize King Hussein. It focussed its attacks on the cabinet and not the system of power or legitimacy of the Hashemite. The Brotherhood actively worked to ease tensions and looked to the King as an unbiased arbiter during the crisis, publicly praising his wisdom and political acumen. In 1996 during a public speech, the King publicly recognized the Brotherhood’s restraint during the riots. In another instance, according to Abdul Latif Arabiyyat as noted by Quintan Wiktorowicz:

The regime directly requested the assistance of Muslim Brotherhood to promote political stability after unrest exploded in the Palestinian refugee camp following an incident in 1990 when Israelis killed twelve Palestinians near a Tel Aviv train station. Because of the Brotherhood’s political influence in the Palestinian refugee camps, the regime approached the leaders and asked them to use their influence to regain order. The Muslim Brotherhood complied with the request and order was subsequently restored (Wiktorowicz, 1999:4-5).

Despite this cooperation, the relationship has experienced downturns as well. In 1956, the Muslim Brotherhood organized protest against the policies that permitted a substantial British presence in the country. Later, divisions between the movement and the Crown emerged over the regime’s policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. Before the 1979 Iranian revolution, King Hussein used his prestige to bolster the faltering Shah by visiting Iran three times in 1978. Since the majority of the Jordanians supported the Iranian

14The Jordanian Brotherhoods antipathy toward Nasserism was derived from the brutal experience of the Egyptian branch of the Brotherhood under Nasser.
revolution, the King’s action in support of the Shah was used by the Brotherhood as an opportunity to attack the government’s policies as un-Islamic. King Hussein’s later support of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war further emphasized these differences.

In the second half of the 1970s the Brotherhood underwent a process of radicalization due to the Egyptian-Israeli peace process. The possibility of Jordanian involvement in the peace process after the October 1973 war brought the Brotherhood into conflict with the regime. Due to its protests against the visit of U.S President Nixon to Jordan, Khalifa and other key members of the movement were arrested and only freed after a meeting with the authorities presumably to redraw the red lines of permissible dissent. The movement persisted in its protest against the peace process as it evolved. However, since the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations over interim agreements in Sinai in 1975 were criticized by the regime itself, the Brotherhood’s protests were tolerated. On the other hand, the regime condemned the Brotherhood for acts of violence and intolerance toward Christians in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Bar, 1998:34).

Another break down in relations occurred when political circumstances between Syria and Jordan improved. Syria has intervened militarily in neighboring Arab states to secure political ends. In September 1970, Syrian armed forces crossed the border into Jordan to support the Palestinians during the Jordanian civil war. The Syrians were driven back by troops loyal to Jordan’s King Hussein and by the threat of Israeli intervention. Thus, prior to the mid-1980s, the King allowed the Brotherhood to organize and launch attacks against the Assad regime in Syria from Jordanian territory. After relations between Jordan and Syria improved the regime cracked down on the Brotherhood to prevent further military attacks. This included an assortment of measures designed to repress the movement’s foreign operations as well as domestic activities (Satloff, 1986).

Regardless of any differences, the Muslim Brotherhood has remained loyal to the political system and the Hashemite regime. According to Quintan Wiktorowicz, Hilmi Asmar, member of the Muslim Brotherhood and former editor of the Islamist weekly *al-Sabil*, argues:

> There is an accumulation of trust-building because we had been dealing with decision makers for a long time. There is a gentleman’s agreement between the royal court and the Muslim Brotherhood. The first headquarters of the Muslim brotherhood in Jordan was opened by king Abdullah so trust started from the
beginning. There was no real conflict between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime... We have disagreements, different views, but we do not go boxing (Wiktorowicz, 1999:6).

In part, this legitimacy rested on the ancestry of the Hashemite, the projection of their rule as defenders of Islamic holy places and as the leaders of the Great Arab Revolt against the Turks. More important, for Asher Susser “is the fact that the monarchy for the most part has consistently been able to provide its subjects with relative prosperity, economic and social development in an atmosphere of stability and individual security” (Susser, 2000: 101-102).

**Jordanian Brotherhood-State Relationship: Other Islamist view**

The cooperation and participation by the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan has been criticized by radical *salafī* ideology and specifically *tafkīrī* ideology (see Wiktorowicz, 2000a). They are the main source from which Islamist terror and radical political movement’s spring. These groups argue that the Muslim Brotherhood has compromised its ideological and religious message for political and social power. From this perspective, the pragmatism of the Muslim Brotherhood has superseded its original intent. Layth Shubaylat’s objections to the movement as interviewed by Quintan Wiktorowicz reflect the view of many Islamists outside the Muslim Brotherhood:

I do not think they are serious. I think they are part of the regime. I think they are not serious and they are tame. And their duty is to tame the new followers. They give them a lot of rhetoric and tell them to obey, and they say this is why and that it is the wisdom.

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15 The *Salafīs* are Muslims who want to establish and govern Islamic states solely based through Quran and the example of the prophet as understood by the first generations of Muslims close to Muhammad. The most influential *Salafīs* are Saudi clerics (McCants, 2006:6). The *salafī* movement is to institute religious behaviour and practices that capture the purity of Islam as understood by the *Salaf* (early companions of the prophet). *Salafīs* believe that because of the *Salaf* learned directly about Islam from the prophet or those who knew him, they command a pure understanding of religion. All decision in life must therefore be based upon evidence from the Quran and sunna as recorded in authentic saying (*Ḥadiths*) by the *Salaf*. In instances where particular actions or behaviour were not sanctioned by the original sources of Islam, they are repeated as “not Muslim.” Those who strictly adhere to this religious understanding are considered *Salafīs* (Wiktorowicz, 2000b: 219).

A *Takfīrist* is a Muslim who practices *Takfīr*. The term *Takfīr* is derived from the word *kafir* (impiety) and is described as when “...one who is, or claims to be, a Muslim is declared impure” (Kepel, 2002:31). The practices of *Takfīrīs* separate them from the *Salafīst* movement. An example is the labelling of fellow Muslims as *kafir* and the practice of declaring *tafkīr/condemnation* upon them. It is a legacy derived from the medieval Islamic writer, Ibn Taymiyyah the *Takfīrist*. This belief allows *Takfīrist* to justify the use of violence against fellow Muslims.
Quintan Wiktorowicz also notes:

An Islamist from the Mutazileh movement lamented that the Muslim Brotherhood is concerned with small, trivial things, like preventing alcohol from being served on planes or stopping pornographic movies; but these are very trivial matters and are not effective in social movement (Wiktorowicz, 1999:13).

Further, another Islamist complained that “their nature, their very thought, is pragmatic” and argued that the Muslim Brotherhood would never affect real Islamic change in Jordan as it has been “captured by the system.” Even radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood articulate this perspective, charging that the leadership was more concerned with political power than with producing an Islamic society.

Despite such internal disagreements, radical members of the Brotherhood do not propose a violent or confrontational approach that would threaten the power of the King or the political system. Their approach is more one of non-participation, which includes boycotts and statements opposed to government policies. They believe that the Brotherhood should remain outside Parliament and the cabinet. The movement should pursue change through other venues such as grassroots projects. This wing of the Brotherhood, which is not a majority, fears that cooperation could lead to co-optation and the “domestication of the opposition” (Wiktorowicz, 1999:13).

Such critiques highlight internal movement disagreements about whether Islamists should coordinate with incumbent regimes. While the majority of the Brotherhood believes that they can coordinate their tactics and goals with the regime to produce results more effectively, other independent Islamists question the efficacy of cooperation. Regardless of these differences, the Brotherhood’s experience in Jordan demonstrates that movement-state interactions are not always characterized by political conflict.

Aspects of Political participation in Jordan

Despite official claims to the contrary, the political openings of the early 1990s were never designed to produce full-fledged democracy in Jordan. As one of King Hussein’s key advisors during this period, and the former chief of the Royal Hashemite Court Adnan Abu Odeh remarked when Russell E. Lucas interviewed him:

Liberalization was intended to invite more guests into the living room for ‘coffee talk’ with a few welcome to stay for dinner. None were to be invited into the
kitchen, though, and certainly none were welcome in the rest of the house (Lucas, 2003:101).

Parliament could debate some internal issues; in other words, but its involvement in foreign and economic policies was not welcomed. Yet foreign and economic policies were matters of acute concern to most Jordanians. When the threat of the opposition mobilizing those concerns became apparent, the regime began to have second thoughts about the usefulness of political liberalization (Robinson, 1998:387-410).

The slowness in political reform in Jordan is not due to the faults of individual prime ministers or ministers. It is a problem caused by the current method of government formation. Governments serve at the king’s pleasure. Therefore the king is indirectly liable for his governments’ failings because the people cannot hold the government accountable through periodic elections (Braizat, 2006:1). Now politicians in the Islamic Action Front are boldly breaking with gentlemen’s rules of Jordanian politics. Under the gentlemen’s rule, opposition parties never directly criticize the monarchy, nor point out government corruption, or call for major democratic reforms (Cambanis, 2006:2). For example, in January 2006, the government charged IAF leader Jamil Abu Bakr with “harming the dignity of the state.”

The charges stemmed from articles on the IAF website that criticized the government tendency to appoint officials due mainly to connections rather than expertise or parliamentary consultations. Jamil Abu-Bakr was charged for allegedly allowing two lawmakers to use the Islamic Action Front web site to criticize the government of former Prime Minister Faisal al-Fayez for “appointing employees in high rank positions without logical basis” (Associated Press, 2006). The charges were dropped the following month but the sense of harassment remained.

The IAF deputies have charged that in freer and fairer elections they might win 40 to 50 percent of the vote for the Islamic Action Front Party. They further argue that the cabinet should be drawn from parliament rather than appointed by the palace. In the current wrangling over a new law on parties and elections, this issue of linking elections to actual governance remains a key point of struggle between the government and IAF (Ryan, 2006:1).
The study, however, indicates that Islamic movement-state relations cannot be unequivocally characterized in terms of confrontation or struggle. Just as the Islamic movements are not a monolithic entity, state and movement interactions cannot be singularly characterized in terms of political conflict. Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood’s success is due to being a part of the Jordanian Political system. To a large extent, it is the result of its relatively congenial relationship with the regime.

Throughout its history, it has supported the Hashemite regime and political stability during various crises. Its rhetoric of moderation is thus matched by a history of loyal opposition and participation in the political system. As a consequence, the regime has provided ample room for Brotherhood organization. This includes both grassroots organization through Islamic NGOs as well as access to the state apparatus and government employment. Despite any such changes, the cooperative relationship has institutionalized itself over a long period of history and is unlikely to devolve into antagonism. The Brotherhood may vocalize opposition to government policies and the regime may be less willing to give into Brotherhood demands. But both sides recognize the value of negotiation and coordination over conflict.

The Jordanian experience in parliamentary democracy is an example which shows how Islamic movement can be a part in democratic process. In most monarchies in WANA, Islamic movements are not part of the political system. They are excluded or banned. In the republican political systems in WANA, the Lebanese republic is an example where Islamic movements participate in the democratic process. Hezbollah has been consistently participating in the Lebanese confessional system since 1992. As such the next chapter looks into the participation of Hezbollah in another form of political system in WANA.