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Political Commitment under an Authoritarian Regime: Professional Associations and the Islamist Movement as Alternative Arenas in Jordan

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Vol. 6 (1) 2012

Editorial (p. 3)

Focus: Radicalization and Deradicalization

Guest Editorial: Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization Donatella Della Porta / Gary LaFree (pp. 4 – 10)

▶ **Political Commitment under an Authoritarian Regime: Professional Associations and the Islamist Movement as Alternative Arenas in Jordan** Pénélope Larzillière (pp. 11 – 25)

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Radical Islam in Post-Suharto Indonesia Felix Heiduk (pp. 26 – 40)

Electing Not to Fight: Elections as a Mechanism of Deradicalisation after the Irish Civil War 1922–1938 Bill Kissane (pp. 41 – 54)

State Violence and Oppositional Protest in High-Capacity Authoritarian Regimes Hank Johnston (pp. 55 – 74)

The States Must Be Crazy: Dissent and the Puzzle of Repressive Persistence Christian Davenport / Cyanne Loyle (pp. 75 – 95)

Intra-Party Dynamics and the Political Transformation of Non-State Armed Groups Véronique Dudouet (pp. 96 – 108)

Neo-liberal Governing of "Radicals": Danish Radicalization Prevention Policies and Potential Iatrogenic Effects Lasse Lindekilde (pp. 109 – 125)

Open Section

Internal and External Collective Memories of Conflicts: Israel and the 1948 Palestinian Exodus Rafi Nets-Zehngut (pp. 126 – 140)

Cool Minds in Heated Debates? Migration-related Attitudes in Germany Before and After a Natural Intervention Claudia Diehl / Jan-Philip Steinmann (pp. 141 – 162)

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Political Commitment under an Authoritarian Regime: Professional Associations and the Islamist Movement as Alternative Arenas in Jordan

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How does political commitment develop when actors are confronted with authoritarian processes? Under a liberal authoritarian regime, even the creation of democratic institutions may mean authoritarian stabilization (contradicting classical transition theories) rather than open an arena for political protest. However, alternative contentious arenas may appear, where resourceful organizations can be partially transformed into a basis for protest with challenging frames of reference. In the Jordanian case, the professional associations (in contravention of corporatism theory) and the Islamist social movement have thus gained oppositional capacity. However, apart from repression, their own economic and social roles, and their integration in the regime frame and limit the kind of political commitment they can lead. Ambivalence arises between challenging and integrated positions and when alternative arenas become so integrated in the regime that they lose their contentious role, radicalization processes appear. Both cases underline the versatility of political arenas and their relational characteristics. These political arenas are also the places where alternative ideologies are produced. At that level, the Islamist movement has a very specific position as a hegemonic ideological producer with no hegemonic power and position. The case thus supports an analytical separation between power position and ideology and confirms the need for less state-centred definition of ideology.

Authoritarian regimes attempt to control, repress, or even eradicate any political challenge. Repressive settings reduce the possibility for collective action and increase the risks of political commitment, but do not eliminate contentious politics. However stable the regime may appear, the dynamics of opposition are in play and lead to an ebb and flow of mobilization. So how does political commitment develop when actors are confronted with coercive processes? What arenas, dynamics, and repertoires of action are involved? Is it possible to identify processes of (de)radicalization in such contexts? A meso-level analysis of the Jordanian case addresses these questions and identifies arenas of mobilization and the different ways they interact with the state, from co-optation to anti-system positioning (Albrecht 2009, 7).

In Jordan, alternative political arenas have been found to exist outside the very well controlled democratic institutions. They have gained oppositional capacity by combining a widely recognized social utility (professional and charitable roles) with political activities. I will argue that in repressive settings (de)radicalization processes are linked to the emergence of such alternative political arenas. These arenas, in which political commitment is institutionalized, are framed by a constantly shifting relationship with the regime, in that sense they can be analyzed as relational action fields (Fligstein and McAdam 2011; Goldstone 2004). The notion of relational action field is useful in allowing a non-static view of political commitment in authoritarian regimes and a focus on its institutionalization in different arenas. However, rather than proposing a purely strategic analysis of these action fields, the study articulates it with an analysis of the frames of reference and ideologies used by incumbents and challengers and the legitimacy processes at work. I argue that forms of cultural hegemony

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may appear outside the state, confirming the need for less hegemonic and more differentiated analysis of the state, even in authoritarian contexts, as well as a less state-centered definition of ideology (Hall 1982).

I will first analyze the repressive and authoritarian processes at work in Jordan and assess their impact on political commitment. Democratic institutions have not truly opened up a protest political arena, but rather confirmed the shift toward a liberal authoritarian regime, contradicting classical transition theories. I will therefore focus on the alternative arenas of mobilization represented by professional associations and the Islamist social movement, and how they have had deradicalizing effects. While professional associations in Jordan do indeed open space for opposition (in contravention of corporatism theory), the Jordanian case also shows how integration may have radicalizing effects when the possibility to change the political agenda is denied. Lastly, I will analyze how political disaffection is channeled by the regime through use of tribal networks, and identify the link between this depoliticization and intertribal social violence, especially by youth.

1. Stability and Change in Authoritarian Control of Political Commitment

The Jordanian regime's apparent stability is based on complex, changing authoritarian processes operating in different arenas. This is the background to the many complexities of the political situation, where coercive measures coexist with legitimacy. In this context, democratic institutions may be created in a context of authoritarian stabilization, and will consequently not be the place where political commitment and opposition occur.

Jordan has been a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament since 1952, but politically it is a system of exclusion where "participation is not a legal right but accorded top-down" (translated from Droz-Vincent 2004, 208). The constitution itself gives almost absolute power to the king, who appoints the government and can dissolve parliament to rule by decree. Many coercive processes have been implemented, and the security apparatus is omnipresent. The political scene is highly constrained, and defined by strict limits and "red lines" that the monarchy imposes. Two phases can be distinguished: before and after the limited opening of 1989. Before 1989, all parties were forbidden and activists operated under semi-underground conditions, except for the Islamists, whose movement was the only authorized one.

In 1989, King Hussein announced a democratic opening with the intention of calming unrest and social demands, and in 1992 political parties were authorized. However, substantial limitations on the functioning of parties and democratic life have remained in force, reducing the real difference between the two periods. Scholars have many terms to describe this ambivalent change: "defensive democratization" (Robinson 1998; Bennani-Chraïbi and Fillieule 2003, 44) or "paradoxical liberalization" (Droz-Vincent 2004, 197). This is an authoritarian power where democratic institutions and political opposition exist but there are severe limitations on the issues that can be raised. Although this was the time when democratic institutions came into existence, the process was in no way a democratic transition. The shaping of the political space stayed completely under the monarchy's control. At that level, the Jordanian regime is another example of how democratic institutions are not incompatible with authoritarian processes. Indeed, most authoritarian regimes possess such institutions. Contrary to the claims of classic democratic transition theories, such a "democratic opening" may in fact mean authoritarian stabilization (Camau 2005) rather than democratization. Albrecht points out the democracy bias of theories "based on the assumption that authoritarian regimes would experience systemic change along certain waves of democratization processes" (2009, 2). On the contrary, democratic institutions are integrated into the system. Rather than being the basis for contentious politics, authoritarian elections become a way of permitting co-opted figures to appear.

1.1. Building Authoritarian State Legitimacy

In parallel to coercive processes, the Hashemite monarchy has historically constructed a legitimacy based on a specific Jordanian identity with ties between social elites and political power, and weakened challengers by integrating them into a national identity framed by the monarchy while dividing them along social lines. Jordan is a relatively new state (created in 1921) and was not based on any specific

national movement, although Arab nationalist anti-colonialist movements were present. Locally it is often considered to be purely a creation of the British. However, ninety years later, even its most extreme opponents, still arguing about its artificiality, nonetheless position themselves within the state framework. Even actors who deny the legitimacy of the monarchy and consider it subordinate to American foreign policy, permanently refer to its institutions as their frame of experience. That they do so on a daily basis is not only because Jordan is a repressive state and that they fear its security apparatus; the State's institutions, especially the army and the legal system (Massad 2001), have indeed played an integrative role. The creation – out of nowhere – of a specific Jordanian identity is one of the greatest successes of the Hashemite monarchy.

One element of the strategy deployed by the monarchy since the 1950s to build a specific Jordanian identity was to gradually transform the post-1948 Palestinian-Jordanians and the Palestinian national movement into a foreign figure, an "Other" (Massad 2001, 274). In the same paradoxical mode, King Hussein called for unity yet fostered divisions between the two groups by specifically recruiting Transjordanians to the public sector, which led Palestinians to remain mainly in the private sector. Tribes have been promoted as the core of the Transjordanian identity. The monarchy's differential treatment of the two populations, clearly designated as Palestinian or Transjordanian, has created two different communities with different backgrounds – which was not necessarily the case at the beginning. While these differences are often denied by opposition leaders, they are clearly segmented along these lines.

1.2. Tribalization and Depoliticization

The creation of links between the monarchy and the tribal networks and the tribalization of political life represented another way for the monarchy to find social support in King Hussein's time. This does not mean that tribal networks automatically supported the monarchy; in fact they had to be won over. In 1992, the king introduced the "one-person one-vote" electoral law (a one-round uninominal system), whose purpose is to favor a vote along tribal rather than partisan lines. The move was part of Hussein's strategy of tribalization of society, and has been successful. Tribalization was seen as a method of depoliticizing society and weakening the opposition. Indeed, whatever their political role, tribal networks are not an ideological power. The new role they have been given, notably through electoral laws that under-represent urban areas, has further increased the importance of these networks (Chatelard 2004, 333). Depoliticization has been reinforced by a political and economic strategy of "brain export,"[1] encouraging intellectuals to emigrate. This is seen as having a double advantage: exporting skilled manpower provides economic benefits, but is also a way to export protest (Cantini 2008; De Bel-Air 2003, 21).

1.3. Authoritarian Liberalism

While the opposition remains segmented, the transition from King Hussein to King Abdullah II has led to changes in the basis of the monarchy's legitimacy and social support. Here, authoritarian stability does not exclude real evolution in implementation processes. Abdullah II is not the expert in tribal networks that Hussein was and has not enjoyed the same legitimacy in that field. When he came to power in 1999, he was portrayed in numerous political jokes and talks as a foreigner speaking better English than Arabic. Political criticism was expressed in a more public way at that time. Now, some years later, the atmosphere has changed, with Abdullah II, like his father, dissolving parliament and ruling by decree (Bank and Valbjørn 2010, 311). He has steered the monarchy towards a kind of authoritarian liberalism with strong priority given to economic reforms, in a concomitant process of economic liberalization and authoritarian consolidation that is not specific to Jordan (Kienle 2008). This also means that the monarchy now relies more on businesspeople and experts than on tribal networks (even if the two are not mutually exclusive: a businessman can be chosen from the same tribe where previously a traditional notable would have been favored).

1 Rather than "brain drain" in this case, because it is a deliberate economic and political strategy (Larzillière 2010).

One of the results of the 2007 elections was that the "old guard" lost its seats to an economic – and very wealthy – new guard with no political background, which was backed by the monarchy. Many electors sold their votes to it, and promises were made on the basis of the wealth of the candidates. Indeed, the role of parliamentarians is increasingly perceived as one of patronage and dispensing services (Clark 2010; Lust-Okar 2001), and political position is not really at stake. While this capitalist new guard has formed a bloc in parliament, "the national brotherhood," it does not appear to have a real ideologically coherent liberal platform (Rantawi 2009). Votes for them do not mean that liberal economic reforms are well accepted. There have been reactions against privatization policies and the price increases implied by the proposed and partially implemented ending of state subsidies.

The case of the "new guard" shows how elections in an authoritarian system can be mere democratic "window dressing" for the regime, where parliament has no real political role and the electoral process is massively biased. At the same time, the electoral process is used to permit new co-opted elites to emerge, as in Morocco (Barwig 2009) or Egypt (Koehler 2009), and "elections are more frequently contests over access to state resources" (Lust-Okar 2006, 468). The success of such an operation is only short term, since the favored figures that emerge in this way fail to acquire the legitimacy that the Islamists obtain by other means.

In the absence of a real partisan system, the focus of politicization and mobilization has been much more on the creation and development of alternative arenas than on participation in these "democratic" institutions. This has taken two main forms in Jordan. On one hand, professional associations have taken advantage of their expertise, which is needed by the monarchy, to express some limited opposition. On the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood has created a grassroots social network based on charitable associations. The definition of these different arenas is also linked to the theoretical evolution in the analysis of authoritarian regimes, which "insists on juxtaposing different political arenas with different logics, rather than analyzing them as a homogeneous entity" (translated from Dabène, Geisser, and Massadier 2008, 21). If a limited political pluralism characterizes authoritarian regimes, and does not exclude extensive social pluralism in the same regimes (Linz 1975), it is a "pluralism by default" which emerges from the limitation of authoritarian processes and not from a political project (translated from Camau 2005, 21). Alternative arenas are part of this pluralism; however, the analysis also shows the limits of their political role and, in that sense, their status is ambivalent.

2. Ambivalent Alternative Arena of Mobilization 1: Professional Associations

When political parties are forbidden or tightly controlled, professional organizations are one of the rare places, along with universities, where collective action and mobilization are possible. Their professional role guarantees them institutional existence, even in authoritarian regimes. That is why their possible politicization is an issue, and why such associations face important state pressures, in particular during their internal elections. In the Arab world, their positioning vis-à-vis the political power takes two forms. One is "corporatism," where the state instrumentalizes professional associations for power implementation (Ayubi 1995; Bianchi 1989; Schmitter 1974). In the second case, associations use their professional activity and economic utility to gain leeway and become a place of opposition, an alternative to political parties.

In Jordan both cases exist. The former concern workers' unions *(niqâbât al 'ummâl)*, in which membership is not compulsory; the latter corporative "professional unions" *(niqâbât mihaniyya)*, here referred to as associations (where membership is compulsory in order to work in the field concerned).[2] The latter have three functions: providing services for their members, defining the profession, and political activity. They emerged from groups of professionals who wanted to organize themselves, often arising

2 Although currently members who do not pay their subscriptions are rarely excluded from the profession.

through the legal transformation of informal associations into official professional associations.

The situation of the workers' unions is totally different. In 1953, workers obtained the right to form trade unions, but these were created top-down by government order, which could easily be revoked (Hamayil 2000, 74). The regime was highly suspicious of this working class trade-unionism, which was strongly influenced by left-wing political currents, in contrast to the professional associations that were perceived as a potentially supportive elite. The trade unions were involved in political mobilization and protest for a time, but since the 1990s their leaders have been co-opted by and financially dependent on the regime. Following a common model in the Arab world, they contribute more than the professional associations to a "state-centered corporatism" (translated from Gobe 2008, 269). Longuenesse explains this difference by the absence in the trade unions of a strong socio-professional identity, while there has been on the contrary a drive for mobilization and unification in the professional associations (2007, 109).

2.1. Politics and Expertise

The twelve professional associations which exist today in Jordan had about 130,000 members in 2011.[3] The professional and political aspects have both been present since their creation, mainly from the 1950s to the 1970s. Their initial purpose was to regulate the profession by limiting access to those who had certain qualifications. In addition, professional schemes (training for example) and social services (pension fund, social security, and so on) were soon provided. These professional associations are financed by membership fees, returns on investments, donations and, in some cases, subsidies from the Jordanian state. The associations' professional role has given them financial capabilities and a specific legitimacy based on knowledge. Composed of lawyers, doctors, engineers, and other professionals, they already represented elite groups whose opinions could not easily be ignored and who are indispensable for the implementation of modernization policies in the country. Politically, the six professional associations housed in the historical main headquarters building are the most important: doctors, engineers, pharmacists, agronomists, lawyers, and dentists. With 70,000 members[4], the engineers have the largest professional association, which is fully financially independent with substantial resources (Longuenesse 2007, 137). Ali H., engineer, explains the power relation:

> The organization of work is a role where the state cannot replace us, that is what gives us our power, and if we withdraw, the country would be totally disorganized. For example, as engineers, we control the plans for each building project … The government does not have the capacity to do that.[5]

Beyond their professional expertise, the professional associations enjoy another source of public legitimacy: they are the only institutions with truly democratic electoral procedures. The role of the professional associations was not diminished by the establishment of political parties in 1992, which are legally restricted and remain weak. Indeed, the leaders of the professional associations are better known than most parliamentarians, with the exception of those from the Islamist movement. Their political evolution echoes that of the political movements: mainly controlled by leftists and the PLO in the 1970s and 1980s (Al-Khazendar 1997, 112), the Islamists now have the majority, especially in the governing councils of the professional associations. Indeed, the Islamists have held the presidency of the engineering association since 1988, and later acquired the majority on its council.

Islamist political predominance is clear, but should not be overestimated. The direct election of presidents favors well-known figures regardless of their political affiliation, which can differ from the majority of the association's council.

3 Common council of the professional associations, January 2011. The newly formed teachers' association will add 105,000 members: Jordan Times, March 30, 2012.

4 Source: Engineering Association, October 2009.

5 Translated interviews, Amman, November 2007 and November 2009. This independent leftist activist is a civil engineering consultant and speaker for the professional associations. Aude Signoles describes a similar process (2003), showing how Palestinian engineers have become central political actors by obtaining responsibility for the technical verification of all building permits.

There are well-known leftist and nationalist figures, and the Islamists lost the presidency of the medical association to an Arab nationalist in 2009. Moreover, the Islamist campaigns focus on reprofessionalizing the professional associations, which limits their political relevance. A decrease in election participation and payment of dues can be observed, in parallel to increasing unemployment. This decrease also means that the base on which Islamists are elected is not as broad as it seems (Clark 2010).

2.2. A Limited Space

Whatever their main political affiliation, their great legitimacy and social utility has allowed professional associations to institutionalize a power relationship with the monarchy and they have never been banned, even if leaders have sometimes been imprisoned. That is why they can be described as an "oasis of opposition in a desert of authoritarianism" (Harmsen 2008, 121). The main theme of political mobilization is support of the Palestinian cause, which is the objective of several committees that cut across professionals associations: the Palestine committee, the prisoners committee and antinormalization (of the relationship with Israel) committee. However, professional associations have also taken a stand on internal issues including democratization, martial law, and freedom of expression. There is a broad consensus on political positions that strongly support for the Palestinian cause and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza (but not for Palestinians in Jordan). This cause is less problematic for the Jordanian regime than internal freedoms, as long as Jordan's foreign policy towards Israel is not targeted. Consequently, it is the particularly active and well-known antinormalization committee that has faced particular repression and been declared illegal several times, with its members experiencing imprisonment or intimidation.

Professional associations in Jordan constitute an alternative mobilization space that is used by many activists as the only available political arena. This is particularly true for long-term activists, whatever their generation.[6] After universities, the professional associations are the institutions that are most strategically important for pursing mobilization. Many political struggles in Jordan take the form of a fight for the creation of new professional associations.[7] Even in the trade unions there is now a reform current seeking to give workers' unions some degree of independence.

Nevertheless, the scope of independence is still very limited, both in action and mobilization capacity. The monarchy has often modified or threatened to modify laws defining the professional associations' status – especially their election arrangements – in order to control them more effectively. Each time the reactions of the professional associations, which also used their links with the elite of the regime, allowed them to maintain their status. In such periods, the professional associations sustain their capacity for action by insisting on their professional role. This restrictive situation is created by a combination of direct injunctions issued by the monarchy and self-censorship by the professional associations, which do not want to involve themselves in direct confrontation. It is comparable with the Moroccan case, where institutionalization of the opposition has also led to the emergence of limits and forms of closure (Vairel 2008, 231). As in Morocco, these forms of closure are spatially visible, as the professional associations' main form of action is meetings in or near their headquarters rather than demonstrations circulating in the city. Therefore, although the exact terms of the power relationship change a little according to the political situation, it remains constrained within a very narrow space.

In addition to coercive processes, a second kind of limitation of the themes and form of mobilizations stems from the class heterogeneity of the professional associations. For example, the head of a professional association may be respected as a political opposition figure but at the same time

6 Sixty-two careers of long-term activists from the different political currents in Jordan were documented through qualitative interviews held between 2006 and 2010 (Larzillière 2012a). Leftist and nationalist leaders were mainly born between 1946 and 1955 while Islamist leaders were mainly born between 1956 and 1965 Here the prosopography just confirms the other data about the evolution of these movements.

7 One good example is the long struggle for the creation of a teachers' association. First requested by activists in 1975, it was repeatedly refused and the demand was put forward again by teachers who organised demonstrations and sit-ins. In the context of the Arab mobilization of 2011, the creation of this association has been authorised but with specifications forbidding any political activities.

have a negative reputation as a manager because of the pay and working conditions at his firm. This will limit his capacity for political mobilization while his position at the head of the association impedes social conflicts over working conditions. Heterogeneity also plays a role in relations with the state, where professionals have different interests depending on their position in the rent economy and the "neopatrimonial redistribution circles" (translated from Dieterich 1999, 316) and are therefore more or less inclined to criticize the economic system. Moreover, if these professional associations become not just *one* place of political opposition but *the* place of political opposition, the social basis for political commitment is restricted. Members must have a degree, even if there has been some social evolution from the nationalist and leftist period, when leaders were drawn mainly from the traditional elite and notables,[8] to the Islamist time, where leaders come more from the middle class.

Inside the professional organizations there are debates about the objectives of political commitment. This relates not only to their positioning in a repressive national context, but also concerns a general evolution of political activism towards greater use of political expertise. In the professional associations, this trend results from a set of three ongoing forces. First, the direct influence of international donors and the theme of "good governance," which emphasizes normative administrative practices and downplays ideological discourse on values. Second, the Jordanian regime itself has tended to apply the economic norms of international organizations, since Abdullah II subscribed to a liberal economic agenda. And finally, oppositional activism orients itself increasingly towards advising or reforming the state's actions. A whole NGO sector has emerged and professional associations are also well positioned as their status places a premium on knowledge and competence. Here they find economic niches by ensuring a high level of competence for their members and contribute to Jordan's national economic plan. This relatively new general trend in political practice is not limited to "peripheral" and non-hegemonic countries,[9] although it is more visible there. One of the consequences is a reduction of the radical contestation posture, which does not satisfy all opponents and leaves important issues to one side. Consequently, revolts may appear in other places, beyond the control of the acknowledged and tolerated opposition (Dabène, Geisser, and Massadier 2008, 24).

Another kind of space has also emerged as an alternative arena of politicization: the grassroots social movement of the Muslim Brotherhood. The same ambivalent tension between contestation and integration can be observed here, with the same ambivalent consequences for activism. As mentioned above, the mainstream Islamists have lately been very present in professional associations and some Islamists are leaders in both arenas. But the distinction between the two arenas highlights the specific legitimacy and repertory of action of the social movement and charity network, which differs from the professional association scene.

3. Ambivalent Alternative Arena of Mobilization 2: The Islamist Social Movement

The Islamist movement of the Muslim Brotherhood has become an alternative arena of mobilization not through its economic role, but by becoming the main social force – mainly through a charitable network that represents a real alternative to failing state institutions. It was long considered an ally by the monarchy and therefore less vigorously repressed than leftists and nationalists (Budeiri 1997, 199). The Muslim Brotherhood has never really been anti-monarchy, which has allowed them to occupy the social field as they were not really seeking political power. In spite of its opposition role, the Muslim Brotherhood has frequently had the same enemies as the monarchy, which has created a bond between them. Thus, this mainstream Islamist movement has slowly gained a kind of social hegemony (in the sense that they have no real challengers) while other movements (leftist and nationalist) have lost ideological significance along with their political place.

8 Although in the 1980s, the possibility of scholarship in the USSR somewhat changed the leftist social profile.

9 Non-hegemonic or "peripheral" countries occupy a subordinate position in international power relations and lack the means to influence international agendas. They may, however, have some autonomy to format their national agenda and choose their cooperation partners. See Losego and Arvanitis (2009).

3.1. Social Hegemony?

Although the Muslim Brotherhood has been present in Jordan since independence in 1946, the movement only started to gather real support in society during the first *intifada* (1987–1993), when it organized a campaign under the slogan "Islam is the solution" (to which it still adheres). So its leaders positioned it as a very important social provider and the champion of the Palestinian cause (which it redefined with a religious vocabulary). These have been the two main pillars of the Muslim Brotherhood's development in Jordan, two justifications that have had the advantage of not setting up the movement as a challenger to the monarchy, unlike the leftists and nationalists. Indeed, Islamist support for the Palestinian cause has largely taken the form of humanitarian aid for the West Bank and Gaza, and relates more to an incantatory nationalism as it never truly opposes the king's peace policy with Israel. In this sense, the Islamists have been a deradicalizing factor, offering a vehicle for support of the Palestinian cause and a repertory of actions based mainly on collecting aid and organizing memorial meetings. In this way, the Muslim Brotherhood has consolidated its position without challenging the monarchy. Nonetheless, once legitimized, it went a step further, adding domestic demands concerning political freedom, social justice, and anti-corruption. These issues have also won them considerable public support.

Beyond their important role as a provider of services and aid, the Muslim Brotherhood is especially visible as an ideological power, in the sense that it has had a major impact on the paradigms through which the society understands itself and projects itself into the future. Many of the references they use have their source in other political trends; however, the Muslim Brothers have been able to recompose religious, nationalist, and even leftist references in a kind of syncretism in which they are now unchallenged. Their reformulation of Palestinian nationalism has already been mentioned; the same can be said about Arab nationalism. They have also integrated the social justice of the leftists. Above all, in a field where the religious reference has become the main source of legitimacy, their struggle to secure the monopoly on interpretation of Islam has been especially effective. This does not mean that they have no challengers at that level, but even their challengers tend to argue within a religious paradigm heavily influenced by the Islamist movement.

This is facilitated by the lack of real conflict about the liberal economic perspective, which is now essential to the monarchy and its foreign donors. Although the Muslim Brothers conflate liberal economic policy with the question of social justice and poverty, they fundamentally agree with the liberal perspective on the economy. The only real point of opposition is dependency on foreign donors, which they want to reduce while the regime often sees foreign aid as a solution. Their syncretic capacity became visible again in the 2011 mobilization where the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan (as in Egypt: Ben Néfissa 2011) quickly integrated some of the main demands raised by other actors.

However, their quite hegemonic position, especially in the most populous, predominantly Palestinian urban areas, reflects more lack of rivals than any massive support. With regard to both charity work and ideological impact, they have no real challenger. While leftists have massively converted themselves into NGOs and human rights associations (Larzillière 2012b), these rather elitist structures have never given them the legitimacy of the Islamic charity network. To acquire funding, they have to advance the priorities of international organizations, often creating a rift with the expectations of the population, which prefers the more "ad hoc" and personalized Islamic aid. These difficulties were highlighted when a coalition including the left was set up in Jordan in 2002 under the banner of anti-imperialism, but the dominant position of the Islamists allowed them to impose their themes. It therefore seems to many left wing activists that the step of forming a coalition was a strategic error, because they have been unable to oppose the Islamist argumentation. As one observed:

> It is very difficult to convince people with our left discourse because you always have to face the fact that it comes from Western countries and then explain that not everything that comes from the West is bad. The Islamist argumentation is very simple:

> When we were good Muslims we created empires, since we have abandoned Islam we have been divided.[10]

The recently created leftist social forums allow new kinds of mobilization for short-term projects, where activists seek agreement on a mode of action and demand rather than on general ideology.[11] Their flexible membership offers an alternative to the tight controls of the associations by the regime. However it has not been sufficient to give them a broad social base.

The specific social and ideological capacity of the Islamists in Jordan must be clearly distinguished from their access to political power. Here we can distinguish a social hegemony, in the sense of social leadership, ideas, and ideologies which do not flow down from the regime. The monarchy has never been the source of the predominant ideology. Gramsci's categories allow us to distinguish the apparatus for direct domination, which belongs to the monarchy, from social and cultural hegemony (1978, 314). However, hegemony is generally understood as a creation of those in power, albeit an indirect one. Theories of ideology are mainly theories of distortion, whose purpose is to legitimize the power system (Ricoeur 1997, 17). Therefore, on a more theoretical level, this case leads us to reconceptualize categories such as hegemony and ideology in a manner that is less centered on the state. As Hall's media analysis shows, ideologies do not mechanically produce consent for the state and there is competition and struggle at that level (1982). The Jordanian case seems to lead us one step further in that direction, showing how cultural hegemony can appear outside the state.

3.2. Integrated Opposition

The articulation between the social and cultural importance of the Muslim Brotherhood and the political apparatus is indeed highly problematic. The Muslim Brotherhood could be considered a social movement under Touraine's definition, which combines social force and the defining of the historicity of the society,[12] were it not for the real difficulty of transforming it into an efficient political opposition. This also specifically illustrates the ambivalence of such alternative arenas of mobilization under authoritarian regimes. The Muslim Brotherhood does not confront the monarchy but has managed to create real spaces of influence, which in a way "short-circuits" political power, while channeling and deradicalizing opposition. The Muslim Brotherhood never reacted in a militant manner to repression. On the contrary, it even had a calming influence during riots provoked by the rising cost of living (1989), or during student revolts at Yarmouk University in 1984 and 1986.[13] This policy did, however, lead to a rift between local Muslim Brotherhood leadership at the university, who co-organized the demonstration with leftist elements, and the head of the movement, who wanted to avoid confrontation with the State.[14] The Muslim Brotherhood participated in the parliamentary elections of 1993, while officially boycotting those of 1997, which were characterized by massive abstentions.[15]

Here the Muslim Brotherhood maintains its delicate position of conflicting participation, as much through self-censorship as direct repression (Öngün 2008). They receive the greater part of their legitimacy through an aura of purity and integrity that is contingent on their distance from political power. They want to maintain this critical position while at the same time entering the political game enough to influence it. A position that is all the more delicate because: "since the critical decline of the left, the Islamist movement has become the main target of the government strategies of co-optation and exclusion" (translated from Krämer 1994, 278). The Muslim Brotherhood is held up as proof that there is indeed a real democratic process, since there is opposition. They have lost part of their radicalism and can be defined as an integrated opposition (Albrecht 2006; Bozarslan 2011), which rather consolidates the position of the monarchy.

10 Interview, Amman, December 2005.

11 Interviews with members of the social forum, Amman, November 2009.

12 Touraine defines "historicity" as the cultural field where conflicts on normative orientations operate. According to his theory, this field and the struggle over symbolic representations is essential to social movement (Touraine 1978, 87–88).

13 Following Sami Al-Khazendar (1997, 142–45).

14 Interview with one of the leaders of the student revolt, Amman, March 2007.

15 It is not certain, however, that the abstentions were a consequence of the boycott. It is also possible that the Islamists anticipated the development and boycotted the election for that reason (Augé 1998, 246).

The events of the parliamentary elections of 2007 and 2010 were particularly indicative of the limits of this "conflicting participation" policy on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood. Since 2005, the Islamists have been confronted with an intensification of government intervention, which has introduced new laws forbidding speeches in mosques, tightening control on the media and charities, and limiting the activities of professional associations (ICG 2005, 15). Confronted with this situation, two competing trends arose inside the Islamic Action Front.[16] The "doves" supported a cooperative attitude under the motto "participating not overpowering"; "the hawks" favored more confrontational methods, with some calling for a boycott of the elections. During the selection process, activists favored candidates from the hawks. The party leadership, however, decided not to take this path and instead appointed dove candidates. The Islamists candidates were accused of cooperation with the government while being repressed by it nonetheless, and became the real losers of the elections. The results have strongly destabilised the doves inside the party and their strategy was partly delegitimized. This was confirmed two years later when new parliamentary elections took place in November 2010. This time the Islamists boycotted the elections, challenging the electoral law that favors tribal votes and rural areas. The changes in their position toward official democratic institutions, sometimes boycotting and sometimes participating, illustrates the dilemma for the opposition when a system is well controlled but not totally blocked. The opposition considered participating in well-controlled institutions a "no-win" situation which would have negative consequences on their own legitimacy and social support. The risk in that context is becoming too integrated to be considered as opposition, and thus losing legitimacy in the eyes of some activists.

3.3. Delegitimization and Radicalization

These political developments have consequences in terms of the public perception of the Muslim Brotherhood and its popular support, especially by youth (ICG 2005). Their legitimacy has gradually decreased because they seem increasingly associated with the Jordanian regime and its policies. This marginalization stems not from the success of other political trends but rather from dissatisfaction with the Muslim Brotherhood, and thus creates a real political vacuum (Hroub 2007, 3). Finally, indiscriminate repression against Muslim Brothers during certain periods, regardless whether they preach cooperation or radical opposition, has also contributed to the delegitimization of the cooperation option and to the radicalization of Islamist groups.

Thus, the policy of destabilization of the mainstream Islamists undermines the moderates and leads to a radicalization of the movement or support for other more radical Islamist movements. Some of their sympathizers have turned towards what they consider a more radical and less integrated opposition, the Salafist movement. Salafists are divided mainly between reformist and jihadist Salafists over the question of political violence. Heated arguments occurred between strategically opposed reformists and jihadists and only the latter can be considered a real opposition (Caillet 2011). The jihadists are distinguished by their refusal to cooperate in any way with the regime and by their informal network structure, maintained to avoid repression. They do not hesitate to launch fierce verbal attacks against the Muslim Brotherhood (Caillet 2011). They appear to have recruited among the poorer classes most affected by the economic crisis. The number of activists is said to be very limited, but they claim nearly as many sympathizers as the Muslim Brotherhood (Wiktorowicz 2000, 223–24). In the context of the 2011 mobilization, Salafists organized meetings and demonstrations, some of which ended in violent confrontations with the police and led to mass arrests.

Another sign of the weakening of the mainstream Islamists and the way this can lead to specific forms of radicalization is seen in the recent proliferation of tribal clashes, especially involving youth (Masri 2009). This non-political violence is clearly linked to depoliticization and tribalization as elements of repressive politics. Up to now, the

16 The Islamic Action Front is the political party created by the Muslim Brotherhood when political parties were authorized in 1992.

state's tolerance for tribal violence and crime has been much higher than for political violence. Lucrative tribal-based trafficking (in stolen cars for example) continues.[17] Clashes between tribal groups have been allowed to occur in universities whereas the smallest political demonstration was harshly repressed (Cantini 2008). As a consequence, the effect of depoliticization seems particularly strong among youth and is particularly visible in the universities, which were previously an important place of political activity. Even the leaders of the student movement *thabahtoona*, whose political activities could have been seen as a counter-example, mention their difficulty in mobilizing and how tribal identities now seem more important to the students.[18]

Violence resulting from active tribalization processes to marginalize ideological opposition is not specific to Jordan. The regime's policy designed to weaken political opposition has in fact engendered violent effects that were initially considered to be unimportant for a well-controlled state with extensive security services, but have gone further than expected. The proliferation of tribal clashes worries tribal leaders and fosters criticism about political use of tribes and interference in choice of tribal leaders.[19] There is here a dual process at work: first an increase in intertribal violence and then an increase in the tribes' confrontational stance vis-à-vis the monarchy. As long as tribes could be used as a largely unified network and identity, this strategy was indeed effective in strengthening the monarchy and weakening the political opposition. However, this policy has also intensified identity segmentation inside tribal networks. Paradoxically, the process has generated non-political violence with very political consequences, jeopardizing the monarchy's security order and tribal support. In the arenas of the professional associations and the Muslim Brotherhood, the process underlines the shifting frontiers of politicization and mobilization and the changing status of actors, even under conditions of authoritarian stability.

Reaction in Jordan to the events in Tunisia since January 2011 also shows how regional mobilization can impact political commitment, even in the absence of direct changes in the national political configuration. This has reinforced the opposition capacity of both the professional associations and the social movement of the Muslim Brotherhood. They were not the initiators of the first demonstrations in support of the revolt in Tunisia (unlike the important demonstrations in 2009 against the Israeli attack in Gaza where Islamists and professional associations were involved at the very beginning). It was the leftists, marginalized but taking a more confrontational stance, who started this new movement, together with some long rarely seen actors: youth and Palestinians from the camps. However, Islamists and professional associations soon caught up with the movement, bringing in a much greater capacity of mobilization than the first actors. They have supported social demands like price controls and pay rises (there is no minimum wage in Jordan and one-third of the population is categorized as poor by international agencies).

At first, political demands concentrated on the usual and authorized criticisms against the parliament and the government: inefficiency and corruption. The monarchy made concessions. King Abdullah II changed the cabinet and officially asked the government to implement a more active social policy. Immediate salary and pension increases were announced. However, on the initiative of the Islamists, the movement has gone one step further, demanding that the prime minister be elected and no longer chosen by the king. In taking this step, the Islamist movement is going beyond its previous position of integrated opposition because this policy is a real challenge to the monarchy. It represents a radicalization of the opposition's demands but not of its repertory of action. The Muslim Brotherhood had more and more trouble with its position of "integrated opposition," which makes generational renewal difficult and leads some activists to radicalize or leave. Thus, they have slowly changed their strategy and are now using the

17 Interview with Geraldine Chatelard, Amman, October 2009.

18 Launched in April 2007, this is a movement for the defense of student rights and the creation of a students' union. Interview with one of the movement's leaders, Amman, November 2009. See also Adely 2010.

19 Interview with a professor and political columnist, independent Islamist, Amman, November 2009.

new impetus given by a regional mobilization to adopt a more confrontational stance.

Above all, the reaction of the Jordanian opposition shows the impact of international and regional processes on national political commitment and the complex articulation of these three levels (international, regional, national) should be further explored (Bank and Valbjørn 2010). Globalization has an impact on political commitment, and some trends in Jordan are clearly related to more global trends like the evolution of activists towards expertise (Larzillière 2012b; Signoles 2006; Wagner 2004). Their ideological references are mainly regional. Even when they refer to global theories, their understanding of them is clearly embedded in the regional history. As the 2011–2012 mobilization has shown, even if the national power relationship does not seem to change, regional events appear to impact activism more through identification than direct relationships. While the power relationship has not been directly impacted, the regional mobilization has, however, generated a "shared sense of uncertainty" among challengers and incumbents. The process confirms how such changes in perception are crucial to the occurrence of contentious episodes (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, 9).

4. Conclusion

Politicization is a specific and sensitive issue in authoritarian regimes, as it concerns the very possibility of a political arena appearing in front of a regime that seeks to erase any challenge. This approach is more classical than the recent focus in more democratic contexts on politicization as the inclusion in institutional policies of new issues (Arnaud 2005, 15; Lagroye 2004, 360; Ion 2005). The Jordanian case shows the possibility of dissociation between democratic institutions and political arenas. This does not mean that democratic institutions have no role at all, but rather that they serve as an intermediary for the regime in the process of forging integrated elites and patronage structures. Other contentious arenas appear too, where well positioned and resourceful organizations can be partially transformed into a basis for protest with challenging frames of reference. Apart from repression, their own resources, economic and social roles, and their integration in the regime frame and limit the kind of political commitment they can lead. Ambivalence arises between challenging and integrated positions. Professional associations hesitate to jeopardize their elite role while the Muslim Brotherhood may be content with its social hegemony. Both cases underline the versatility of political arenas, their connections and relational characteristics. When one arena is too controlled, political forces invent new ones, while there is a perpetual back and forth between contentious arena and regime. Under authoritarian regimes, radicalization processes, both in repertory of action and ideology, appear at the turn, when alternative arenas become so integrated in the regime that they lose their contentious role. These political arenas are the places where alternative worldviews and ideologies are produced and shared. At that level, the Muslim Brotherhood has a very specific position as a hegemonic ideological producer with no hegemonic power and position. The case thus undermines the analysis of ideologies as mere reflection of positions in power relationship and supports an analytical separation between political power and ideology.

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