

The Report committee for Matthew J. Buehler

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**The Making of Moderates: U.S. Relations with Islamist Movements
in Morocco and Egypt**

APPROVED BY

SUPERVISING COMMITTEE

Supervisor _____

Jason Brownlee

Clement Henry

**The Making of Moderates: U.S. Relations with Islamist Movements
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by

Matthew J. Buehler, B.A.

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Matthew J. Buehler, M.A.

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SUPERVISOR: Jason Brownlee

The academic literature on Islamist moderation offers several explanations for why some Islamist political movements are moderate and others radical. These theories focus on the movements' ideology, tactics, and internal democracy. Few accounts address, however, how an Islamist movement's relations with external powers influence this outcome. This paper finds that "moderation" reflects an Islamist movement's relationship of compliance or defiance with external powers rather than its essential organizational characteristics. In comparing the Moroccan Justice and Development Party (PJD) with the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, it explores why the United States has built good relations with the former but not with the latter. Employing approximately 20 interviews conducted with Islamists, U.S. diplomats, and Moroccan experts in 2009, I show that the PJD's compliance with U.S. foreign policy decisions and interests helps to shape perceptions that the movement is more moderate than its Egyptian counterpart, despite the two movements' similar ideology, tactics, and internal practices.

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Relations and Moderation: Islamist Movements and the United States

Two Islamist political movements, the Moroccan Justice and Development Party (PJD) and Egyptian Muslim Brothers, share many essential organizational characteristics.¹ These include similar ideological beliefs, nonviolent gradualist tactics, and democratic practices. Despite these commonalities, however, the United States perceives the PJD as far more moderate than its Egyptian counterpart. In official federal reports, congressional hearings, and politicians' speeches, the PJD and Muslim Brothers' have different and diverging levels of political "moderateness" within U.S. government discourse. In these forums, the PJD is regarded as moderate whereas the Muslim Brothers are treated as radical.²

Distinguishing the PJD from other "extreme Islamist" groups in Morocco, a 2003 U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee report stressed that the movement is "the only Islamist party that participates in elections" (2003: 2061). The Congressional Research Service characterized the PJD as "moderate," losing in the 2007 Moroccan parliamentary elections only due to electoral "irregularities" (2008: 4). The USAID-funded National Democratic Institute, in a review of the 2007 elections, described the PJD as "drawing on moderate Islamic values." Relaying information obtained in focus group testing prior to the elections, NDI stated that the PJD is the only Moroccan party not "accused of corruption and lying to voters during elections" (2007: 7, 51).

¹Commonly referred to as the "Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood" in the United States, a more accurate Arabic-English translation of the Islamist movement's name is the "Muslim Brothers" or the "Society of Muslim Brothers." Some writers also employ the movement's transliterated name, the "Ikhwan."

² By moderateness, I mean the quality of being described as 'moderate' within U.S. political discourse.

In contrast to the PJD's moderateness, U.S. government discourse emphasizes the Muslim Brothers' radicalism. In a May 2006 U.S. House subcommittee session reviewing foreign aid assistance to Egypt, New York Congressman Gary Ackerman implied that the Society of Muslim Brothers is a "terrorist organization" that "vies politically" in parliamentary elections in order to impose "undemocratic results if they attain power." The Egyptian Islamist movement's goals, he surmised, are "pretty much the antithesis of human rights" (2006: 10-11). Also reflecting on the Muslim Brothers' "huge strides" in the 2005 Egyptian parliamentary elections, Vice President Joseph Biden described their success as "leaving us less, not more, secure" (US Senate 2006: 24).

In a 2009 conversation between FBI Director Robert Mueller and Arizona Senator Jon Kyl during a U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee meeting, the Senator detailed the Muslim Brothers' alleged attempts to infiltrate the United States and launch "a kind of grand jihad" that will "eliminate and destroy Western civilization from within and sabotage its miserable house by their hands so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious" (2009: 22-23). Elizabeth Cheney, as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, also characterized the Muslim Brothers as an "extremist group" within the Egyptian political system despite acknowledging its repudiation of violent tactics (Carnegie: 2). A 2005 Congressional Research Service report on Egypt described the Muslim Brothers as "spawning militant Islamic groups" across the Arab world (2005: 3).

Given the two movements' similarities, what makes the PJD moderate and the Muslim Brothers radical in U.S. political discourse? Furthermore, what – more broadly –

helps the United States determine if an Islamist movement has “moderated”? This study examines the topic of Islamist moderation by investigating why the United States – through its embassies, USAID branches, and democratization agencies (the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute) – has established good relations with some Islamist movements and not with others in the Arab world. The United States has met with PJD leaders, debated foreign policy issues with them, and acknowledged their positive mutual relationship. The United States, in contrast, has not built good relations with the Muslim Brothers. In the few instances when U.S. officials met with Muslim Brothers leaders, both sides were subject to negative publicity and criticism from their domestic political adversaries.

In order to explore U.S. relations with Islamist movements, I conducted approximately 20 original Arabic interviews with PJD leaders and activists, other Moroccan Islamists, and local journalists and academics in Casablanca, Rabat, and other cities over four months in summer 2009. I complimented these discussions with English interviews of U.S. diplomatic officials stationed in Morocco. These interviews, I hope, underscore the value of connecting issues of theory and conceptualization in Comparative Politics to ground-level political processes in the countries we study. From primary interviews, I found that the United States has good relations with PJD while not with the Muslim Brothers because the former politically complies with U.S. foreign policy objectives more readily than the latter.

Ido Oren’s research concerning democratic peace theory helps us see the connection between political compliance, U.S foreign policy, and Islamist moderation.

In his 1995 *International Security* article, Oren challenges proponents of the democratic peace theory who employ datasets to show that regime type matters in predicting which states will go to war: democracies rarely attack other democracies, but they often fight non-democracies (and non-democracies fight among themselves). In distinguishing between democracies and non-democracies within their datasets, Oren shows that democratic peace advocates rely on a subjective coding process that reflects U.S. relations with these countries rather than the regimes' genuine empirical profiles. "The coding rules defining democracy," Oren writes, "are better understood as a time-bound product of America's historical international circumstances than as the timeless exogenous force they are presumed to be" (1995: 153).

Oren explains that some early U.S. political scientists, such as John Burgess and Woodrow Wilson, regarded Imperial Germany as a "shining model" of constitutional democracy in the pre-WWI period, respecting its bureaucratic efficiency, its rapid modernization, and its local democratic governments that were insulated from unstable mass activism (1995: 154). Once the United States identified Imperial Germany as a strategic rival and an opponent to U.S. foreign policy interests, however, these political scientists' perceptions of the country reversed. They no longer treated Germany as a constitutional democracy but rather they perceived it as an authoritarian state threatening peace and stability in Europe, despite the fact that the regime's empirical profile had hardly changed over time (Oren 2003: 23-27). "Democracy" in this way, Oren concludes, "is not a determinant as much as a *product* of America's foreign relations" (1995: 178). Thus, he emphasizes that political science has re-envisioned "America and

its enemies in ways that have greatly magnified the differences between them,” reflecting the context of rivalries between the United States and its opponents in international relations rather than meaningful differences in these opposing regimes’ essential characteristics (Oren 2003: 23-27, 172).

While Oren derived his theory from analyzing relations between the United States and other states, I apply it to sub-state actors. Like the subjectivity in coding a regime’s democracy, the process of determining an Islamist movement’s moderation reflects the context of its relations with the United States. The United States has downplayed the similarities and inflated the differences in the PJD and the Muslim Brothers’ characteristics in its discourse, reflecting each movement’s relative assertiveness toward U.S. foreign policy. The PJD’s compliance and the Muslim Brothers’ defiance toward U.S. foreign policy shapes whether the United States regards them as moderate or radical. This challenges the notion that Islamist moderation is a real, material political phenomenon based on a movement’s essential characteristics. Rather, it serves as an immaterial indicator of an Islamist movement’s proximity to U.S. strategic interests. When an Islamist group complies with U.S. foreign policy within its national political context, then the United States comes to perceive it as “moderate”. When one opposes U.S. foreign policy interests, then the superpower regards it as “radical”.

In other words, I find that the nature of relations between the United States and Islamist movements drives which ones are called moderate and which ones are labeled radical. I contribute to the Islamist moderation debate in finding that the Moroccan movement’s perceived moderateness reflects its compliance with U.S. foreign policy

more than other indicators specified in the existing literature. By revealing how an external actor helps to facilitate a perception of Islamist moderation, this analysis shows both the actor's depth of involvement in the authoritarian system as well as the moderate label's constructed nature.

I divide this paper into two chapters and they proceed as follows. First, in chapter one, I provide additional evidence for how the PJD is perceived as more moderate than the Muslim Brothers within U.S. political discourse, including government, media, and academic accounts. Second, I analyze the debate on Islamist moderation, identifying five hypotheses within the traditional literature. From these theories, I draw explanations for why the United States would regard the PJD as moderate and the Muslim Brothers as radical according to their varying essential characteristics. These characteristics are the traditional literature's independent variables for explaining Islamist moderation. Third, I test these explanations by comparing the two Islamist movements in a most-similar case research design, showing that they vary little in the specified essential characteristics (Ray 1998: 159-200). In chapter two, I draw on original field interviews to illustrate how the PJD complies with U.S. foreign policy in Morocco and how the Muslim Brothers defy similar policies in Egypt.

Scholars have studied both the Muslim Brothers and the PJD within their relative political contexts. Few, however, have placed them in direct comparison or examined their diverging relations with external powers. In doing this, I show how relations with the United States shape whether an Islamist movement is considered moderate or radical.

Islamists in Discourse: Moroccan Moderates, Egyptian Extremists

The PJD's moderation and the Muslim Brothers' radicalism appear on several different levels of U.S. political discourse, including U.S government, media, and academic sources.

U.S. government discourse portrays the Muslim Brothers as radical by connecting the Islamist movement to al-Qaeda, terrorism, and political violence. Former National Security Council Counterterrorism Coordinator Richard Clarke identified the "extremist" Muslim Brothers as the "common link" between Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and al-Qaeda (U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee 2003: 88). In a 2008 meeting of the Congressional Select Committee on Intelligence, California Congressman Darrell Issa pressed Journalist Peter Bergen to equate the Muslim Brothers to al-Qaeda. Bergen, who became the first U.S. television journalist to interview Osama bin Laden in 1997, disaggregated the two Islamist movements calling them "apples and oranges." Issa, however, insisted on the need to control the Muslim Brothers' "growth, exports, and terrorist activities" given the "stellar attacks" they have perpetrated in recent years (Select Committee on Intelligence 2008: 114). In an interview with Fox News, former Vice President Dick Cheney also drew a connection between al-Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Conflating the three Islamist groups into one, he said, "a lot of – for example, Egyptians – have been involved in the al-Qaeda network. Part of that goes back to 1981 when Anwar Sadat was assassinated by the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Jihad" (Angle 2001). Kansas Senator Sam Brownback associated the Muslim Brothers with terrorism and political violence, implying during a Senate subcommittee session that they had had a hand in "gunning down" Coptic Christians

worshiping at their church. Brownback also submitted an April 1997 A.M. Rosenthal editorial into the subcommittee's transcribed record that declared the Muslim Brothers "a fountain of Mideast terrorism for 50 years" (1997: 2-3).

An April 2009 article by Stephen Glain that appeared in *The Nation* disclosed illustrative conversations regarding the Muslim Brothers' radicalism and their connection to terrorism during meetings between an Egyptian dissident and U.S. congressmen, Obama administration officials, and policymakers in New York and Washington:

[the Egyptian dissident] spent a week in New York and Washington, and he was struck by the American obsession with, and ignorance of, the Ikhwan. "It was all they wanted to talk about, said the dissident, who asked that I not quote him. "Many of them were sure that this was a terrorist organization that would start a war with Israel were it not for Hosni Mubarak. They would not accept that the Ikhwan is a moderate organization and that we should work with them" (Glain 2009: 3).

In addition to these U.S. government accounts, U.S. media discourse makes the Moroccan Islamist movement seem far more moderate than the Egyptian movement. Take, for example, the *New York Times*. In the relatively few published articles, briefs, and summaries (16 total) that reference the PJD between 1997 and 2009, journalists employed the word "moderate" to describe the Moroccan Islamists seven times. In the large number of articles that mention the Muslim Brothers within the same time period (258 total articles), the word "moderate" was used five times.³ Moreover, in two of the five instances occurring in 2003 and 1997, *New York Times* journalists diluted the

³The *NYT* has a bureau in Cairo but not in Morocco, which may explain the large discrepancy in coverage between the two Islamist movements. Even in the small number of articles covering the PJD during this time period, however, the common use of the adjective "moderate" to describe the PJD nonetheless suggests a general discursive trend.

Muslim Brothers' moderation by using the qualified term "relatively moderate" rather than the adjective "moderate" itself to describe the group.⁴

In examining selections from U.S. media accounts on the two Islamist movements, one can see how journalists regard the PJD as moderate and the Muslim Brothers as radical. Detailing the approaching 2007 Moroccan parliamentary elections, *The Washington Post* reports that the PJD's former secretaire-general, Saadeddine Othmani, as mentioning "economic development seven times in the course of a 20-minute conversation" and referencing "Islam only once, in passing." Not only does Othmani's desire to "give moderate Islam a political voice" in Moroccan politics mark him as a political moderate to *The Post*, but also his willingness to shake a woman's hand makes him a "moderate Muslim man" (Knickmeyer 9/2007: 14). *National Public Radio*'s Peter Kenyon also covering the 2007 elections describes the PJD as the "new face of moderate political Islam," advocating "a middle ground that respects religion without forcing it down everyone's throat" (2006). *The Christian Science Monitor* adds that the PJD pursues a "carefully measured path to power" by walking a "tightrope between participating in the political system while not being contaminated by the system's image for corruption and inability to bring about changes Moroccans want" (Carroll 2007). Earlier *New York Times* accounts portray the PJD as "benign but scary" and seeking "to fill a void left by a stunted democratic system" (*NYT Briefs* 2002: 8; Simons 1998: A6; Smith 2004: N20).

⁴Complete set of *New York Times* articles from January 1997 to December 2009 obtained through lexus-nexus. Available from author upon request.

In contrast to these accounts that treat the PJD as moderate, U.S. media discourse portrays the Muslim Brothers as radical. Although recognizing that the Egyptian Islamists “reject violence” and “patiently pursue [their] dream of an Islamic state,” the *New York Times* notes that that the Muslim Brothers’ “one-size-fits-all slogan, ‘Islam is the Solution’, masks a link to the dark side of Islamic politics” (Hedges 1994: 3; Neil MacFarquhar, 2002: 3; Slackman: 2005, A3). The Muslim Brothers have launched an “aggressive campaign to take control of civil and charitable institutions,” organized lawyer demonstrations that have “turned violent,” and “called for the establishment of an Islamic state” (Hedges 1994: 3). Although admitting that the Muslim Brothers represent Egypt’s “last surviving major political movement,” *The Washington Post* also notes that they “remain the most dangerous force in Egypt” (Knickmeyer 10/2007: A14). Following the 2005 Egyptian parliamentary elections, the *New York Times* stressed that the Muslim Brothers have “long promoted extreme ideas” (Slackman 2005: A9). *New York Times* accounts from the 1990’s characterize the Muslim Brothers as pushing “to establish Islamic theocracies across the Arab world” (Smith and Myre 2007).

U.S. academics make the PJD seem more moderate than the Muslim Brothers within their discourse as well, albeit less starkly than the above government and media accounts. Many of these scholarly accounts emphasize how the PJD’s moderation contributes to Morocco’s good prospects for democratization. Michael McFaul and Tamara Cofman Wittes note that Morocco “stands as a unique experiment” in Arab democratization and yields “results notably different” from elsewhere in the region. These results come from the PJD’s competition in multi-party elections, they argue,

which “raises the prospect that Islamist participation in politics need not cause a clash between democracy and stability, and may even promote their congruence” (2008: 19-21). In comparing Morocco with Egypt and other Arab countries, Daniel Brumberg recommends that the country alone represents a case where a “full blown democratization strategy” might succeed and “be worth taking” for the United States, because the Moroccan political parties have “managed to sink some roots in society” and can “contain the challenge of Islamist parties” that they compete against in elections (2005: 2, 5). The PJD, Mona Yacoubian concludes, “offers perhaps the most dynamic case of Islamist integration in the political arena and could be a model for other Arab countries” (2007: 2).

In contrast to this academic discourse that makes the PJD seem like a moderate contributor to democratization, other scholars view the Muslim Brothers as a radical threat to future democracy. “Islamists today,” according to Sheri Berman in her article on the Muslim Brothers and civil society in Egypt, “appear no different from the Russian or Chinese communists or the Nazis on the eves of their ascendancy to power” (2003: 272). In U.S. government, media, and academic discourse concerning Islamist movements, the above selections demonstrate that the Moroccan PJD is perceived as moderate, whereas, within the same discursive levels, the Muslim Brothers are regarded as radical. What leads U.S policymakers, journalists, and scholars to view the Muslim Brothers as nascent Nazis and the PJD as moderate, burgeoning democrats? What made Thomas Carothers declare the Muslim Brothers “dangerous to U.S. interests” in a Senate

testimony; while, less than a year before, characterize the PJD as having a “legitimate role to play in Morocco’s electoral politics”? (2006: 57; Rachidi 2005)

Using Essential Characteristics to Explain Islamist Moderation

Scholars and U.S. policymakers propose five hypotheses for explaining Islamist moderation. These traditional explanations rely on identifying and comparing Islamist movements’ different essential characteristics. From these theories, I extrapolate explanations for why the United States regards the Moroccan Islamists as moderates and the Egyptians as radicals within its political discourse. (1) The “violent/nonviolent” hypothesis posits that the PJD uses non-violent tactics while the Muslim Brothers employ violent tactics to secure their political objectives, suggesting that an Islamist movement’s tactics determine whether the United States perceives it as moderate or radical. (2) The “open values” hypothesis suggests that the United States perceives the PJD as moderate because it has a more open worldview than the Muslim Brothers, embracing values such as gradualism, transparency, and anti-corruption. (3) The “internal democracy” hypothesis argues that the PJD practices internal democracy more than the Muslim Brothers, causing the United States to regard the Moroccan Islamists as more moderate than the Egyptians. (4) The “legal status” hypothesis cites the two movements’ differing *de jure* legal statuses. Since the PJD is a legal political party while the Society of Muslim Brothers is a *de jure* illegal political movement, the United States views the former as more moderate than the latter. (5) The “glass ceiling hypothesis” says that the United States treats the PJD as more moderate than the Muslim Brothers because the Moroccan movement is more constrained by a monarchial political system than the Egyptian one,

which has a presidency as well as an elected parliament. These theories constitute the stock of knowledge concerning Islamist moderation and each merits individual attention.

Mohammed Hafez and Mona El-Ghobashy propose defining an Islamist movement's moderation based on its tactics: radical groups use violence, while moderates use non-violent strategies (2003: xv; 2005: 390-391). Non-violent tactics include running for parliament, pressuring regime officials, and using civil disobedience. Extrapolating from this "violent/nonviolent" hypothesis for Islamist moderation, the United States would regard Islamist movements as moderate when they use nonviolent, gradualist methods to advocate for political change. In contrast, the United States would perceive movements that use violent tactics as radical.

The problem with this explanation, however, is that structural political context often forces groups to use violent tactics. If all political organizations possess armed militias within a given political environment, then an Islamist movement would have incentives to develop an armed wing as well in order to defend itself from attack. Richard Mitchell found this in his analysis of the Muslim Brothers in pre-Nasser Egypt in the 1930's and 1940's: "violence with the Brothers, then, to sum up, was in many respects a response to the situation in Egypt and had much in common with the violence of other Egyptians" (1969: xxv, 320). Like many political movements in the developing world, members of both the Muslim Brothers and PJD used violent tactics in the 1930's, 1940's, and early 1950's to resist colonial occupation. Both Islamist movements have forsaken such tactics since the 1950's. While an Islamist movement's use of violent tactics to achieve its ends appears to serve as a convenient evidence for its radicalism, it

is insufficient to explain why the United States regards the PJD as moderate and the Muslim Brothers as radical.

The second explanation – the “open values” hypothesis - argues that once an Islamist movement develops beliefs consistent with an open worldview, such as gradualism, transparency, and anti-corruption, then it is moderate. When an Islamist movement, like the Jordanian Islamic Action Front in Jillian Schwedler’s *Faith in Moderation*, has shifted from “a closed worldview to one more open and tolerant of alternative perspectives,” then it becomes moderate (2006: 3). Extrapolating from this theory, the United States would perceive the PJD as more moderate than the Muslim Brothers because the Moroccan movement has adopted an open worldview while the Egyptian one has not.

U.S. policymakers in Morocco support the “open values” hypothesis, confirming this explanation for why the United States regards the PJD as moderate and the Muslim Brothers as radical. “Our willingness to work closely with the PJD is about their openness rather our specific interest,” a U.S. diplomat in Morocco suggested to me. “In terms of ideology,” he continued, “the PJD has a much more moderate and global perspective than the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and its affiliated political parties in other Muslim countries.”⁵ The fact that “it is much easier for U.S. democracy promotions agencies to work in Morocco” than in Egypt, the International Republican

⁵Author interview, U.S. diplomat (1), Ibid.

Institute's Jamie Troness conveyed, "has a lot more to do with the open-mindedness of the political parties and their leadership, as well as Moroccans in general."⁶

Some PJD leaders, such as Mustapha Khalfi editor of the Islamist newspaper *al-tajdid*, also confirm the "open values" hypothesis:

"The fiber of moderation in the PJD's thinking (*al-wasatia*)," Khalfi explained, "is not something to be written; it's something that we have to practice. We are not an alternative to other actors. We are an actor working with other actors...we should find common ground with other actors, and manage the differences between them."

Comparing the PJD to the Muslim Brothers and other Islamist movements across the Arab world, Khalfi stressed that PJD leadership uniquely values political openness and a willingness to work with other political actors to fight corruption and protect Morocco's democratic system.⁷ In a certain sense, these diplomats and movement leaders' thoughts on U.S. relations with the PJD reflect Marc Lynch, Robert Leiken, and Steven Brooke's research on Islamist moderation (2007: 107; 2008: 1-2; 2007: 73). They argue that one can determine an Islamist movement's moderation based on its precise policy positions, such as recognizing Israel or practicing democracy. One could surmise from this argument that once an Islamist movement endorses these policy positions (which reflect its open values and worldview), then the United States would regard it as moderate.

A third hypothesis – the "internal democracy" hypothesis – argues that an Islamist movement is moderate when it practices internal democracy. Extrapolating from this theory, the United States would treat the PJD as more moderate than the Muslim Brothers

⁶Author email correspondence, Jamie Troness, IRI Morocco Country Director, (08/10/2009).

⁷Author interview, Mustafa Khalfi, *al-tajdid* editor, Rabat, 07/14/2009.

because the former practices internal democracy and the latter does not. “One of U.S. democracy promotion’s objectives is to make parties really democratic and function better,” Ted Lawrence of USAID-Morocco relayed, in that aspect, “the PJD is held out as one of the most effective.” In having a large constituency they communicate with and politically represent, or “being what a modern political party should be” according to Lawrence, “the PJD is the closest of any of the existing parties.”⁸ Hypothesis three and Lawrence’s comments draw on Larry Diamond, Frank Mora, and Mehran Kamrava’s research, suggesting that an organization’s degree of internal democracy helps to predict how strongly it will advocate for a representative governmental system during democratic transitions (1994: 11-12; 1998: 894-895). The PJD’s commitment to internal democracy makes it a moderate Islamist movement to the United States (Yacoubian 2007: 5).

A fourth explanation – the “legal status” hypothesis - posits that an Islamist movement’s legal classification determines its political moderation. Legal movements are moderate, whereas illegal ones are radical. While the PJD is a fully legal party in Morocco, the Society of Muslim Brothers is a banned but tolerated political entity in Egypt that the Mubarak regime permits to participate in elections, open outreach offices, and stage public protests. Periodic regime crackdowns, such as the wave of arrests on the movement’s leaders in February 2010, temper this semi-legal political activism. Building off the “legal status” hypothesis, one would expect that the two Islamist movements’ differing legal classifications influence why the United State regards the Moroccan Islamists as moderate and the Egyptians as radical.

⁸Author interview, Ted Lawrence, USAID Democracy and Governance Program Director, Rabat, 7/17/2009.

The National Democratic Institute's Jeff England explained:

“The Muslim Brotherhood is an illegal organization...The Brotherhood has independent representatives active in parliament, but it's not a legal political party. We [The National Democratic Institute] only work with illegal organizations when the relations between the two countries [the United States and the host country] are so bad that we see illegal civil society groups as being more representative of the people than the regime itself.”

Expressing fear that NDI's democratization programs in Egypt could cause tension between the United States and the host regime, England continued, “if we were to work with the Muslim Brotherhood, there may be suspicions that NDI is trying to influence the Brotherhood and this would create problems for us, for them, and for the regime.”⁹ While building relations with the Muslim Brothers in Egypt could cause controversy given the group's *de jure* illegal status, the “legal status” hypothesis expects that the United States regards the PJD as moderate because of its designation as a fully legal political party.

A fifth explanation – the “glass ceiling” hypothesis - argues that Islamist movements are moderate when their electoral participation has been structurally constrained as to not threaten their host regime's viability. The PJD is more moderate than the Muslim Brothers because the Moroccan monarchy has limited its electoral success more effectively than Mubarak's attempts to contain the Muslim Brothers (Korany 1998: 161-65; Brumberg 2005: 6-7, 14). Extending this hypothesis, one expects that the United States would regard an Islamist movement as moderate when its host regime has politically contained it.¹⁰ “Morocco is a monarchy,” Jeff England stated, “so

⁹Author interview, Jeff England, NDI Morocco Country Director, Rabat, 6/24/2009.

¹⁰Some authors describe this containing process as ‘taming’ Islamist movements (see al-Anani 2010: 5-6).

there's a certain limit to the success of political parties unlike in presidential systems. There's a fear that in Egypt Islamist success may spiral out of control, and the Muslim Brotherhood could take over the entire government. That could never happen in Morocco because the rules of the game are clearer. It's monarchy; everyone knows success can only go so far."¹¹

McFaul and Wittes endorse the "glass ceiling" hypothesis, describing how the Moroccan monarchy has manipulated the "rules of the game" to "effectively 'wall off' the executive branch in such a way that no act of the legislature can transform the system. The palace also has devised an electoral system (based on proportional representation [PR]) which virtually ensures that no party, including the Islamist PJD, can win a majority of seats" (2007: 20). The Moroccan monarchy consolidated this process prior to the May 2009 communal elections. It introduced a two-tiered electoral system that created a party list system in cities over 35,000 while maintaining a candidate-centric system in rural electoral districts. This reform gerrymandered electoral districts thereby preventing the PJD from winning outside large cities and strengthening pro-monarchy parties in the countryside. Clement Henry conveys this theory, stating that Morocco's well-structured competitive authoritarian electoral system has contained the PJD and made the "Monarch better able to divide and dominate his Islamists than Hosni Mubarak, Ben Ali, or the faceless Algerian 'deciders'" (2009). Because the PJD is more contained than the Muslim Brothers, the United States regards the former as moderate and the latter as radical.

¹¹Author interview, England, Ibid.

There are two other intuitive hypotheses explaining why some Islamist movements are moderate and others radical. From these theories, we can devise two more explanations for why the United States regards the PJD as more moderate than the Muslim Brothers. Drawing on Samuel Huntington's "participation-moderation tradeoff," one theory argues that Islamist movements that compete in electoral politics are more moderate than those that do not (1991: 165). The United States, thus, would treat Islamist movements that participate in elections as moderate. In selecting the Muslim Brothers and the PJD as comparative cases, this paper bypasses this hypothesis. Since the PJD and the Muslim Brothers participate in elections, yet the United States regards one as moderate and the other as radical, this explanation seems unpersuasive.

A second intuitive hypothesis relates to the Islamist movement's geographic location relative to Israel, extrapolating from John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt's *The Israel Lobby* (2007: 8-9). One could expect that an Islamist movement's host country's geographic proximity to Israel would shape whether the United States perceives it as moderate or radical. In 'front-line' Arab states bordering Israel, for example, one could surmise that the repercussions of an Islamist take over of the government are higher because these movements could use the country's military to attack Israel. Since the Egyptian Muslim Brothers operate in a front-line state and the Moroccan PJD does not, this hypothesis predicts that the United States would regard the former as radical and the latter as moderate. "The Brotherhood's quest for an Islamic state," as Daniel Brumberg notes, "is viewed simply as too threatening to be accommodated by any power-sharing formula" (2003: 10). When one looks into cases of Islamist movements operating in

Arab front-line states, however, this hypothesis seems unconvincing. While the United States considers the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, Palestinian Hamas, and Lebanese Hezbollah radical, it treats the Jordanian Islamic Action Front and the Syrian Muslim Brothers as moderate. As all of these countries border Israel, one can see that an Islamist movement's home country's proximity to the state does not shape whether the United States regards it as moderate or radical.

The below table lists the seven hypotheses explaining why the United States regards the PJD as moderate and the Muslim Brothers as radical. They include the above theories and also the present argument about compliance with U.S. foreign policy. When seeking correlates among these seven hypotheses and cases of Islamist movements from the Arab world, several theories become less plausible. On a case-by-case basis, the rival hypotheses overdetermine some instances of Islamist moderateness in discourse, yet, in other cases, they have trouble explaining this dependent variable. For example, in applying the 'violent-nonviolent' hypothesis to nine Islamist movements across the Arab world (See table 1, row 1), the movements' tactics do not appear to be associated with its radical or moderate portrayal within U.S. political discourse. The fact that these rival hypotheses do not appear to explain this variation in the study's dependent variable implies that an Islamist movement's essential characteristics – its ideology, tactics, or democratic practices - do not alone seem to explain why the United States regards some Islamist movements as moderate and others as radical. Next, I compare the PJD and Muslim Brothers' histories to evaluate the importance of these characteristics.

Table 1: Hypotheses for Islamist Moderation¹²

	Egyptian Muslim Brothers	Egyptian Islamic Group	Hezbollah	Hamas	Yemeni Islah Party	Moroccan Justice and Development Party (PJD)	Moroccan Justice & Charity	Syrian Muslim Brothers	Jordanian Islamic Action Front
Uses violent tactics? (Hafez 2003; el-Ghobashy 2005)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Has open values? (Schwedler 2006; Lynch 2008; Leiken & Brooke 2007)	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Internal democratic processes? (Diamond 1994)	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
<i>De jure</i> legal political party?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Constrained in elections? (McFaul & Witte 2007; Brumberg 2005)	Yes	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	Yes
Competes in elections? (Huntington 1991)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Host country borders Israel? (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Complies with U.S. foreign policy?	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outcome: moderate or radical in U.S. political discourse?	Radical					Moderate			

¹²Sources: Muslim Brothers and PJD (see above citations, pages: 2-3, 7-12); Islamic Group, Hezbollah, Hamas (2010 U.S. Foreign Terrorist Organization list); Yemeni Islah Party and Jordanian Islamic Action Front (Schwedler 2006); Justice and Charity (Sharp 2006); Syrian Muslim Brothers (Stockman 2006).

Motivations for Case Selection: Why the PJD and Muslim Brothers?

The Muslim Brothers and PJD share many attributes scholars use to define moderate Islamism. Yet, the United States describes them as having opposite levels of moderateness within its discourse. In selecting these two cases for comparative study, I maximize variance in my dependent variable - an Islamist movement's perceived moderation - while controlling for other complicating independent variables, such as a movement's propensity to use violent tactics, its participation in elections, and its internal democratic processes. The two Islamist movements' similar traits justify their selection as case studies and their appropriateness for comparative analysis (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994: 109). The Muslim Brothers and PJD have similar ideological beliefs, organizational origins, non-violent tactics, democratic practices, and constrained political environments. For each of the above essential characteristics, the paper describes the PJD's traits and then subsequently compares them to the Muslim Brothers' attributes.¹³

Testing Hypotheses: the Islamist Movements' Similar Essential Traits

Both the PJD and the Egyptian Muslim Brothers share ideological beliefs and origins. Abdelkrim Mouti, a school official, founded the PJD's organizational precursor *al-Shabiba al-Islamiyya* in the early 1970's. The country's "secular drift" as well as the monarchy's corruption and ineffectiveness had disillusioned Mouti, motivating him to begin organizing Islamic educational and social service activities in Marrakech and other Moroccan cities (Willis 2007: 151). Also a teacher, Hasan al-Banna, founded the Muslim

¹³This approach, in effect, holds the traditional literature's independent variables constant for both Islamist movements.

Brothers in the Suez Canal Zone city of Isma'iliyya in 1928, and sought to, as Richard Mitchell writes, prevent “the defection of educated youth from the Islamic way of life” (1969: 4-8). Both Islamist movements combated this secular trend by providing Islamic education seminars, social services, and cultural activities for their countries’ youth and adult population. After Banna’s death, his successor - Sayyid Qutub - codified the Muslim Brothers’ ideology in a series of writings he completed while imprisoned from 1954 to 1964. These writings, and especially *Ma’alim fi al-tariq (Signposts)*, have become a staple of modern Islamist political thought (Kepel 1982: 36-37). Qutub’s *Signposts* also shaped the development of Abdelkarim Mouti’s ideology, providing the Islamic frame of reference (*al-marji’iyya al-islamiyya*) that both the PJD and the Muslim Brothers built their movements upon (Bahaji 2008: 2).

Both Islamist movements also have similar origins in that they have had close relationships with past rulers. John Entelis, for example, argues that Moroccan monarch co-opted the PJD in order to use it to undermine other Moroccan Islamist movements, such as Justice and Charity. While it may be true that the Moroccan monarch gave his approval for the PJD to enter formal electoral politics in 1997, there is little doubt that the organization emerged from Islamic religious movements with genuine grassroots support, such as Reform and Renewal (*Islah wa Tajdid*) and the Islamic Youth (*shabiba islamiyya*) (Ottaway and Riley 2006: 6). Today, as evidenced by the PJD’s success in the 2007 parliamentary elections, the Moroccan Islamist movement has developed an independent base of supporters and administrative infrastructure. Even if there had been a close relationship between the PJD and the Moroccan monarchy in the past, moreover, this

would not necessarily distinguish it from the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. Few recall, as Richard Mitchell describes, that King Faruq established ties with the Muslim Brothers to undermine the Wafd and communist parties' power in the late 1940's (1969: 41-42). King Faruq even appointed a Muslim Brothers affiliate as Minister of Education. Thus, as both the PJD and the Muslim Brothers have similar origins and have had past ties with their domestic regimes, this does not seem to explain why the United States would consider one movement moderate and the other radical.

In addition to similar organizational origins, both the PJD and the Muslim Brothers use tactical gradualism to secure their ends rather than political violence. The PJD's founders entered a small, secular political party (the Mouvement Populaire Democratique et Constitutionnel or MPDC) in 1997, changing its name to the Justice and Development Party in 1998. Under this new banner, it competed in elections. The PJD won 9 of 325 seats in parliament in 1997, 14 in 1999, 42 in 2002, and 46 in 2007 (Slymovics 2005: 167; Hamzawy 2008). "The PJD wants step by step progress, gradual progress," Abdelkader Amara explained, "we don't what happened in Algeria or Tunisia – those were quick changes."¹⁴ The Muslim Brothers' gradual electoral success parallels the PJD's trend. The Muslim Brothers have increased their parliamentary representation, winning 8 seats out of 425 parliamentary seats in 1984, 36 in 1987, 17 in 2000, and 88 in 2005 (Wickham 2005: 194-202; el-Ghobashy 2005: 378-379, 387). Both Islamist movements, as Jason Brownlee puts it, show a "dogged fidelity to electoral politics" (2010: 22). The fact that neither the PJD nor the Muslim Brothers use violent tactics to

¹⁴Author interview, Abdelkader Amara, PJD Parliamentary Whip and legislator, Rabat, 7/17/2009.

secure their objectives suggests that the “violent/non-violent” hypothesis does not fully describe why the United States regards one movement as moderate and the other as radical.

Through their parliamentary activities, both Islamist movements demonstrate their commitment to political openness, democratic practices, and gradualism. PJD parliament members focus on increasing the institutional effectiveness of parliament, criticizing member absenteeism and corruption, and ensuring sessions follow correct procedure. They also submit “the greatest number of written and oral questions” during legislative debates (Hamzawy 2008: 10). Like the PJD’s parliament members, the Muslim Brothers call for investigations into regime policies and corruption cases. They criticize absenteeism by forcing parliament to maintain legislative quorums of 50 percent attendance. During the 1984-1987 parliamentary term, the Muslim Brothers comprised only 1.8 percent of Egypt’s parliament but delivered 18.5 percent of legislative interpellations (el-Ghobashy 2005: 378). In a recent example, the Muslim Brothers’ work constituted 80 percent of overall parliamentary activity during the 2005-2006 parliamentary session (Antar 2006). The PJD and Muslim Brothers have also developed “parliamentary support units” and a “parliamentary kitchen,” respectively. These institutions gather policy experts from Rabat and Cairo to provide expertise to parliament members during legislative session on proposed bills (Shehata and Stacher 2006: 8; Hamzawy 2008: 10). Not only are PJD and Muslim Brothers’ legislators the most active members of parliament, but they also are the most informed on legislation under debate.

Both Islamist movements also demonstrate their openness by making internal debates transparent to the public. PJD annual conventions provide a public forum for debates surrounding emerging policy positions in the movement's campaign platform. While all PJD leaders recognize King Mohammed VI's divine right to rule through his status as *Amir al-Mouminin* ("Commander of the Faithful"), Mustapha Ramid has diverged from Othmani, Daoudi, and others in emphasizing the need to reform the Moroccan constitution to restrict the King's powers and create more balance between the parliament and the monarchy (Waterbury 1970). PJD leaders have debated whether to include this topic in the campaign platform, resulting in standoffs between Ramid and his Casablanca-based allies and the other PJD leaders in Rabat headquarters.

Although the Muslim Brothers' have resisted "airing what it feels is its dirty laundry in public," its leaders also make debates within the movement transparent to the public (Brown and Hamzawy 2008: 8). Prior to the release of the Muslim Brothers' September 2007 draft campaign platform, Supreme Guide Muhammad Habib and Guidance Council representative 'Abd al-Mum'im Abu al-Futuh had a vigorous public debate surrounding the platform's support for the disqualification of women and Christians from Egypt's most important positions, the presidency and the premiership. This public debate suggests that the Islamist movement has few qualms making these internal differences open for public review (Brown and Hamzawy 2008: 8). Given that both the PJD and the Muslim Brothers criticize corruption, use gradualist methods, practice democracy in parliament, and make their internal debates transparent, the "open

values” hypothesis does not seem to explain why the United States would regard one movement as more moderate than the other.

Both the PJD and Muslim Brothers use internal democracy to alternate their leadership. The PJD elects its secretaire general and determines its platform through a competitive and transparent institutional process. Abdelliah Benkirane replaced Saadeddine Othmani in July 2008 as the PJD’s secretaire general, facing a three-way election between the two men and former vice secretarie general Abdullah Baha during the movement’s sixth national convention (Hamrouch 2008). The Muslim Brothers used a democratic process to replace their former Supreme Guide, Mohammed Medhi Akef, after he resigned in March 2009. Members select 80 members of the movement’s governing council through direct election to serve as their representatives, and 20 members of the council maintain permanent *ex-officio* status, comprising the council’s 100-person voting body (Lynch 2009). The Muslim Brothers used internal democratic elections in order to alternate leadership from former supreme guides Mustafa Mashhur to Mamun Hudaybi in 2002 and Hudaybi to Akef in 2004 (Traub 2006). Since both the PJD and the Muslim Brothers alternate their leaders through internal election, the “internal democracy” hypothesis does not seem to predict why the United States treats the Moroccan movement as moderate and its Egyptian counterpart as radical.

Both Islamist movements operate within a constrained system where their regimes contain their potential electoral success. The Moroccan monarchy may have developed a more mature, gerrymandered political system to prevent the PJD from taking power than Mubarak’s competitive authoritarian electoral system in Egypt. Mubarak,

however, also structures his regime's electoral rules in order to constrain the Muslim Brothers' political success. Following the Muslim Brothers' 1990 success in Egypt's syndicates, the Egyptian regime altered their internal electoral rules to prevent an Islamist victory from reoccurring (Wickham 2002: 180-183, 200-201). These rules included mandatory voter turnout of 50 and 33 percent in the syndicate election's first and second rounds, respectively, posing difficulties for voter mobilization when an association's membership can exceed two million individuals and resides across a wide geographic area (Wickham 2002: 200-201). As both the Egyptian and Moroccan regimes manipulate electoral rules to constrain their Islamist movements, the "glass ceiling" hypothesis does not appear to describe why the United States would regard the PJD as moderate and the Muslim Brothers as radical.

Legal Complications?: U.S. Relations with Illegal Moroccan Islamist Movements

Some scholars hypothesize that the PJD is more moderate than the Muslim Brothers because of the Egyptian movement's banned but politically tolerated status. Like the Muslim Brothers, the Moroccan Justice and Charity movement has a *de jure* illegal status but is tolerated (Kristianasen 2007). The fact that the United States treats Abdulsalaam Yassine's Justice and Charity movement as a moderate political partner despite its illegal status suggests that this factor does explain which Islamist movements are perceived as moderate or radical.

Unlike the PJD, which has an official relationship with the U.S. embassy and democracy promotion agencies governed by the secretariat general's internal administrative decisions, the Justice and Charity movement maintains relations with the

United States “indirectly and on a personal level” between U.S. officials and movement leaders according to Hasan Benaajah a member of the movement’s political committee.¹⁵ These personal ties are substantial, however. All three Justice and Charity leaders interviewed for this analysis had been invited to travel to the United States on one of the State Department’s international visitors programs. Abdellatif Hatimi, one of Justice and Charity’s top lawyers, explained how he had traveled to the United States in the 1960’s for an official summit through the State Department’s Young African Leaders program. More recently, junior Justice and Charity lawyers Said Naoui traveled with NDI in 1996 to Washington, DC and participated in political training there for approximately one month, speaking with Henry Kissinger on a panel sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.¹⁶ Hasan Benaajah was similarly extended an invitation to participate in a similar program through the U.S. consulate in Casablanca, but was denied a passport by the Moroccan interior ministry on two occasions.

Hatimi described the Justice and Charity movement’s relations with the United States as “of course – very, very good” and “better than that of the Justice and Development Party.”¹⁷ He explained how he had developed a close relationship with former Casablanca U.S. Consul General, Nabil Khoury. The two men held frequent meetings, exchanged telephone calls, and attended political seminars at the Consulate during the 1980’s and 1990’s. The good relationship between Justice and Charity and the United States demonstrates that the superpower has few qualms dealing with legally

¹⁵ Author interview, Hasan Benaaja, Justice and Charity Political Section member and youth leader, Rabat, 8/12/2009.

¹⁶ Author interview, Said Naoui, Justice and Charity junior lawyer, Casablanca, 8/8/2009.

¹⁷ Author interview, Abdellatif Hatimi, Justice and Charity Senior Lawyer, Casablanca, 07/27/2009.

banned Islamist movements. Thus, in assessing the persuasiveness of the “legal status” hypothesis, it appears that an Islamist group’s legality has no determinative effect on whether the United States regards it as moderate or radical.

Scholars of Middle East politics might take issue with the Islamist movements selected for comparative analysis, arguing that the Justice and Charity movement would serve as a more equivalent case to contrast with the Egyptian Muslim Brothers than the PJD. Several factors would weaken such a comparison between the Justice and Charity movement and the Muslim Brothers.

Unlike the PJD and the Muslim Brothers, Justice and Charity (JC) does not participate in the Moroccan political system and, as I found in interviews with its leaders, has no intention of doing so in the future. Though it is legally banned but tolerated (like the Muslim Brothers), it does not participate in parliament, elections, or governance whatsoever. Both the PJD and the Muslim Brothers, in contrast, participate in elections, parliament, and local governance. The JC, moreover, neither behaves nor considers itself a political organization. It focuses only on the Islamic Da'wa, preferring to Islamize society from the ground up and believes that a better political order will naturally emerge from that activity. In interviews with JC leaders, they became perturbed when I accidentally referred to them as a *hizb* (party) rather than *harakat* (movement). Thus, one should liken the JC movement to a more popular version isolationist Islamist orders that Giles Kepel discusses in his work, such as the Egyptian Excommunication and Exodus, rather than the PJD. Like the Egyptian Excommunication and Exodus movement, which rejected the regime’s “instruments of legitimation” and “organized a counter society,” the

JC movement rejects the Moroccan monarchy's underlying religious legitimacy and isolates itself from mainstream society (Kepel 1982: 83 & 102; Henry 2009). While both the PJD and the Muslim Brothers act as opposition movements within their relative political environments, neither one questions the fundamental legitimacy of the authoritarian regimes they live under.

As the previous section has demonstrated, the United States does not appear to regard the PJD as moderate and the Muslim Brothers as radical due to dissimilarities within the two Islamist movements' ideologies, tactics, or internal practices. Rather, the United States perceives the PJD as moderate and the Muslim Brothers as radical because of their different relations with the superpower. Next, in the second chapter, I show how an Islamist movement's level of compliance with U.S. foreign policy drives perceptions that it is moderate or radical.

Divergent Relations with the United States and its Democratization Agencies

On May 27, 2007, U.S. congressman David Price met Dr. Saadedine al-Katatny, parliamentary bloc leader of the Muslim Brothers, in their official capacities as members of their respective national legislatures (Skibba 2007). Speaking in separate press conferences later that week in regard to their meeting, the men defended themselves against a fusillade of questions from U.S. and Egyptian media as well as Mubarak regime politicians. Katatny waved off the unprecedented meeting with a U.S. official as business as usual, justifying it as “routine dialogue between members of parliaments across the world” (Ikhwanweb 2007). As U.S. House Democracy Assistance Commission Chairman, Price likewise clarified that it was “commission practice” to “meet with majority and opposition parties to strengthen the institutional capabilities of emerging legislatures” (2007). The meeting in Egypt was no different from those that had occurred in Lebanon and Israel, the North Carolina congressman implied. Reacting to criticisms from Egyptian Presidential Spokesman Suleiman Awwad, who dismissed the meeting as a “contradictory affair,” the Muslim Brothers continued their defense online: “David Price’s Congressional delegation should be applauded, not vilified, for attempting to start a dialogue with the Brotherhood” (al-arabiya 2007; Ikhwanweb 2007). The State Department distanced itself from the Price-Katatny controversy, stating that “such contacts do not imply American endorsement of the views of individual parliamentarians” (Azarva and Tadros 2007).

In contrast to the lack of relations between the United States and the Muslim Brothers, the PJD enjoys a close relationship with U.S. officials. The movement’s former

secretaire-general and acting administrative director, Saadeddine Othmani, not only held meetings with U.S. congressmen in Washington in May 2006 but also delivered speeches at the Carnegie Institute for International Peace and the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy through programs organized under the auspices of USAID-funded U.S. democratization agencies, such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) (Othmani 2006). Interactions between the PJD and the United States go beyond meetings between congressmen and movement leaders, however. They include deeper forms of political cooperation with officials in these U.S. democratization agencies.

Officials in these U.S. democratization agencies describe their relations with the PJD positively. Jeff England said that his organization – the NDI - has a “good relationship” with the PJD and “works with them frequently.”¹⁸ Jamie Troness described the IRI’s relationship with the Islamist political movement as “totally normal.”¹⁹ Although PJD leaders are “very sensitive” to the fact that working with the United States carries publicity “baggage,” USAID’s Ted Lawrence agreed that United States has positive relations with the PJD and that its members “frequently participate in NDI and IRI activities.”²⁰ Other U.S. diplomatic sources concurred, noting that the U.S. embassy seeks to build fruitful relations with all Moroccan political parties and that it holds meetings directly with the PJD. “The PJD has no problem with us, and we have no problem with them,” one diplomat emphasized.²¹

¹⁸ Author interview, Jeff England, Ibid. 6/24/2009.

¹⁹ Author communication, Jamie Troness, IRI Morocco Country Director, 7/1/2009.

²⁰ Author interview, Ted Lawrence, Ibid. 7/17/2009.

²¹ Author interview, U.S. diplomat (1), Ibid., June 2009.

PJD leaders share these sentiments despite grievances with the United States over its foreign policy in the Middle East. “I think the U.S. embassy doesn’t have a problem with the PJD,” PJD Vice Secretary General Lehcen Daoudi relayed, “we have good relations; even during Bush’s presidency, we had good relations.”²² Jamaa el-Moatassim, PJD Secretariat General member and Vice President of the City of Sale, described the relationship between his movement and U.S. democracy promotion agencies as a “positive matter.”²³ Commenting on his movement’s relationship with the U.S. embassy, PJD parliamentary bloc whip Abdelkader Amara stated that, “the important thing is for us to express our opinions to the Americans.”²⁴ “The PJD sees its relationship with the United States as an opportunity to express its opinion,” Mustafa Khalfi agreed, “the movement’s leadership knows that you can’t succeed in Moroccan politics without knowing, understanding, and dialoguing with the involved powerful domestic and international actors.”²⁵

Playing Nice with the United States: Compliance as Moderation in Morocco

These good relations between the PJD and the United States help to cultivate its image as a moderate Islamist movement. The PJD’s good relations with the United States come from its willingness to comply with U.S. foreign policy interests, projects, and strategic partners within its domestic political environment. The PJD complies with United States by accepting U.S.-sponsored political party training, attending U.S.-financed international conferences and seminars, and meeting with U.S. diplomatic officials. It

²² Author interview, Lehcen Daoudi, PJD Vice Secretary General, Rabat, 7/20/2009.

²³ Author interview, Jamaa el-Moatassim, PJD Secretariat General member and Vice President of Sale, Sale, 8/06/2009.

²⁴ Author interview, Abdelkader Amara, Ibid. 07/17/2009.

²⁵ Author interview, Mustafa Khalfi, *al-tajdid* editor, Rabat, 07/14/2009.

also issues false boycotts against the United States following controversial policy decisions. In contrast, the Muslim Brothers do not receive U.S. political party aid, meet rarely with U.S. officials, and enforce their boycotts and protests against the United States. When the PJD accepts U.S. political party support and organizes boycotts that it does not enforce, it advances U.S. foreign policy objectives both in Morocco and the broader Middle East. The PJD benefits from this relationship by gaining an external power's political protection from its host regime's potential oppressive action. In return, the United States benefits by getting a compliant Islamist movement. These good relations between the United States and the PJD present a puzzling and unexpected case of cooperation, especially given the country's acrimonious relations with the Muslim Brothers, Palestinian Hamas, and other Islamist movements in the post-9/11 context.

Relations between the United States and the PJD began shortly after the 16 May 2003 bombings in Casablanca. These attacks, orchestrated by the small, violent terrorist group Salafia Jihadia, claimed approximately 40 lives including many Moroccan civilians and six European tourists. Responding to public outrage following the terrorism, the Moroccan monarchy endorsed a socialist party-designed plan to ban the PJD, Justice and Charity, and other Moroccan Islamist organizations. While no evidence tied the PJD to the bombings, the movement's similar ideology with the terrorists made its denials of involvement less credible. Rumors did circulate, however, that a PJD local activist in the Casablanca bidonville of Sidi Moumen had admitted knowing the attack's logistical planning beforehand but had not informed the police. On a broad level, moreover, the "PJD created a political environment for the bombers, where people in Sidi Moumen and

other poor areas of Casablanca, thought that a bombing was justified,” U.S. Consulate Press Attache Boubker Mazoz said, “even though the party didn’t have a role in the bombing, they seemed to politically justify it.”²⁶ The PJD became a convenient scapegoat, providing an opportunity for the monarch to restore his image before his subjects.

The socialist-led government began the legal effort to ban the PJD. In the weekly French-language magazine, *Tel Quel*, Moroccan journalist Abdellatif el-Aziz revealed the conflict between the PJD and the socialists in an article entitled *Stratégie: Bush drague nos islamistes* or, in English, *Strategy: Bush Flirts with our Islamists* (el-Aziz 2005). Drawing on Aziz’s article, French academic Samir Amghar describes how the U.S. embassy intervened in the conflict to further its “policy of deepening engagement” with Moroccan Islamist movements (Amghar 2006: 9):

When a part of the Moroccan political class, strongly supported by the government’s left wing, called for the PJD to be dissolved in the aftermath of the 16 May 2003 attacks in Casablanca, American Ambassador Margaret Tutwiler intervened with the support of her administration to prevent this from happening. Moroccan Islamists complained of European silence on this issue. American diplomats have come regularly to consult the Islamists on Morocco’s political situation (el-Aziz 2005).

Aziz’s *Tel Quel* article relays a quote from former Ambassador Margaret Tutwiler showing how she justified the intervention to prevent the PJD’s dissolution. “By attacking the PJD, you force the party underground and push its supporters toward violence,” she said. Tutwiler’s quote continues, implying that the PJD with its politically integrated activists is preferable to extremist groups, such as the Casablanca bombers,

²⁶Author interview, Boubker Mazoz, Dar America-U.S. Consulate Press Attache, Casablanca, 07/01/2009.

which can attract new supporters in an environment of clandestinity. Neither U.S. embassy sources nor PJD leaders would confirm or deny the former ambassador's intervention, but five separate U.S. diplomatic officials agreed that the political logic captured in Tutwiler's quote is both plausible and probable.²⁷

Training Compliance: U.S. Political Party Support and the PJD

Relations deepened between the United States and the PJD after the May 2003 terrorist attacks. IRI director Sarah Johnson began regularly meeting with PJD's "top leadership" in order to discuss the terrorist attack as well as other ongoing pertinent issues in Moroccan domestic politics (IRI 2005: 3). From these exploratory meetings, the PJD moved to receiving both IRI and NDI political party aid and training in 2003 and 2004. PJD members began attending IRI training programs, which according to a 2005 quarterly grant report to the USAID, sought "to strengthen party structures at the regional and local levels" in the PJD and other Moroccan political organizations (IRI 2005: 1). From NDI, PJD leaders and activists attended NDI's Political Party Training Academies at al Akhawayn University in Ifrane in April, 2005 as well as in Rabat in July, 2005. They received education from NDI staff on "strategic planning, group facilitation, and conflict resolution" (NDI *La Passerelle* 12/2005: 1, 3).

PJD leaders also accepted public opinion support from NDI and IRI in campaigning prior to the 2007 parliamentary elections. They received qualitative, focus-group data from NDI's People's Mirror Strategic Research Center in Rabat (NDI 2005: 2;

²⁷Author interviews, Jeffery England, Ted Lawrence, *ibid*; Anonymous U.S. diplomats (1), (2), (3), *Ibid*. While both PJD leaders and U.S. diplomatic officials may have had incentives to dissemble during interviews, Mohamed Darif, a Moroccan political scientist, agreed that the U.S. embassy had intervened to protect the PJD following the Casablanca bombings.

NDI 2006: 3). From IRI, PJD candidates took statistical polling data for the 2007 elections complimented by a half-day training workshop in survey research design and data interpretation (IRI 2005: 8). The PJD also accepted political party training from NDI concerning election observation tactics prior to the 2007 legislative elections as well as female candidate training prior to the 12 June 2009 communal elections. In January 2009, following on the heels of President Barak Obama's electoral victory, NDI organized a post-election teleconference discussion with Obama's campaign chief, David Plouffe. According to director Jeff England of NDI-Morocco, this was a "sort of exclusive event for NDI partners," which focused on campaign tactics as well as mobilizing technology for electoral victory. The PJD was included within this group of partners.²⁸

PJD leaders in elected positions have accepted political training from U.S. democracy promotion agencies. The PJD mayors and city councilors have received training from USAID and IRI in designing codes of conduct in local governance and public acquisition, which, according to USAID, ask them "to lay out the values and commitment that underpin their public actions" (USAID-Morocco 2009). USAID Morocco has worked closely with the PJD mayor of the beach city of Tamara, assisting him in developing code of conducts for local government employees and elected officials. Ted Lawrence described him as "very engaged" and a "strong partner."²⁹ In 2004-2005, elected PJD officials in Meknes, Essouira, and Casablanca's municipal governments accepted support and training from IRI (IRI 2005: 3). As for the Moroccan

²⁸Author interview, Jeffery England, Ibid.

²⁹Author interview, Ted Lawrence, Ibid.

parliament, Lawrence added that the PJD chairman of the Health and Social Service committee is also “very engaged, very serious” about working with the United States. In accepting political party training and organizational assistance from NDI, IRI, and USAID, PJD elected representatives, leaders, and activists have supported the success of U.S. democratization initiatives in Morocco thereby complying with U.S. foreign policy objectives in the Middle East.

High Octane Democratization: U.S.-Sponsored International Travel and Summits

PJD leaders have participated in international conferences meant to promote and implement U.S. democratization initiatives. In 2005 and 2006, PJD Vice President Lehcen Daoudi traveled with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to Istanbul and Jakarta for conferences organized and funded by the U.S. State Department’s National Endowment for Democracy. At the “World Movement for Democracy” conference in Istanbul, he and Bahraini Sheik Ali Salman were the only representatives from Islamist movements in the Arab world out of 64 total participants from the region (Word Movement for Democracy 2006: 77-78). Despite the fact that Islamist movements are the strongest political opposition within most Arab countries, they were underrepresented at the 2005 Istanbul summit. Only Islamist movements with pre-existing ties to the United States through its democratization agencies – the PJD and Salman’s al-Wifaq movement – had a presence.³⁰

³⁰NDI played an important role in convincing al-Wifaq to participate in the November 2006 Bahraini parliamentary elections. Bahrain subsequently revoked the NDI director’s residency visa (Katzman 2009: 2-3; Bishara 2006).

Prior to both Othmani and Daoudi's international travel, the PJD met with party leaders from the pro-U.S. Islamist party, the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AK), through a 2005 international exchange program organized and financed by IRI through USAID grant monies (IRI 2005: 6). IRI facilitated meetings between AK and PJD party officials discussed "the challenges of operating a party with Islamic influences in a secular system," "Turkey's democratic development in parallel to Morocco," and "the techniques used by the AK to achieve its rise as the majority party in Turkey." Building off of these topics, the AK party officials educated PJD cadres on the "role of opposition parties in government and their transition into government." "These initial meetings," IRI adds, "then facilitated a return visit by PJD youth leadership to Turkey" (IRI 2005: 3; IRI 2005: 8).

Although PJD members throughout the movement's hierarchy have participated in international programs sponsored by U.S. democratization agencies, the PJD's emerging youth leadership, or as the *Jeune Afrique* terms them, Morocco's "Young Turks," have especially become involved (Airault 2009). Mustapha Khalfi held a prestigious Fulbright-American Political Science Association Congressional Fellowship in 2004-2005, working as a researcher at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and serving as a legislative assistant for Democratic Congressman Jim McDermitt from Washington State.³¹ While even the briefest meeting between Muslim Brothers and

³¹While serving on Capitol Hill, a posse of internet bloggers attacked Khalfi alleging that he had personal ties to Hamas because *tajdid* had posted a link on its website to a nonprofit Palestinian organization that raises money for social service in the Gaza strip.

U.S. congressmen in Cairo aroused considerable controversy, a PJD leader meanwhile was working for one on Capitol Hill.

In participating in U.S.-sponsored international travel and summits, the PJD leaders do not only win free trips to Istanbul, Jakarta, or Washington. These meetings represent a strategic effort on behalf of the United States to socialize PJD leaders among other pro-U.S. elites, especially pro-U.S. Islamists. The PJD, in participating in these programs, complies with this specific strategic effort as well as broader U.S. foreign policy and democratization initiatives.

Ulterior Motives

PJD leaders seem to understand that the United States has ulterior motives in sponsoring their political party training and international conference travel. “There were some good topics, and others seemed unnecessary to me,” Lehcen Daoudi said, reflecting on his attendance at National Endowment of Democracy conferences in Istanbul and Jakarta, because it’s clear that “NDI and IRI prepare debates and colloquia depending on their own needs.”³²

Describing the party training programs, Jamaa al-Moatassim noted that PJD members “participate in NDI and IRI programs in a positive way and benefit from them,” but he stressed their value for networking with other Moroccan political actors and de-emphasized their training benefits.³³ Since the PJD has a comparative advantage over other Moroccan political parties, possessing better organizers, internal discipline, and in-

³²Author interview, Lehcen Daoudi, Ibid.

³³Author interview, Jamaa el-Moatassim, Ibid.

house campaign training, U.S. training programs seems unnecessary to some PJD leaders. Recalling an NDI training seminar she attended in the past, Bassima Hakkoui said the PJD does not need additional training provided by the United States and dismissed NDI and IRI's training programs.³⁴ She stated that the PJD provides better internal training for its candidates and activists than programs offered by these U.S. democratization agencies. She also questioned whether these democratization agencies seek to promote democracy on behalf of the United States or perform an alternative (and more nefarious) function. "You know how the Americans conquered Iraq so quickly," she informed me, "these U.S. organizations act to collect information about the domestic politics of these countries... America knows more about Morocco than the leaders of its domestic intelligence services."³⁵

Given that the PJD recognizes that both U.S. training and international travel programs may have ulterior motives, it seems strange that they would continue to participate in them. Moreover, the fact that the Islamist movement does not benefit much from them also raises questions. In participating in these programs with the United States, the PJD maintains its good relations with the superpower and signals its political compliance.

PJD False Boycotts as Compliance

In addition to accepting training and travel from U.S. democratization agencies, the PJD has attended a series of meetings with the U.S. ambassadors to Morocco since 2003,

³⁴ Author interview, Bassima Hakkoui, PJD Secretariat General member and city councilor, Casablanca, 7/27/09.

³⁵ Author interview, Bassima Hakkoui, Ibid.

including Bush administration ambassadors Margaret Tutwiler (2001-2003) and Thomas Riley (2003-2008). These meetings provided the PJD an opportunity to express its dissatisfaction with U.S. foreign policy decisions. U.S. embassy diplomats conveyed in interviews that they had feared that these meetings would become controversial, pitting the ambassador against an angry roomful of Islamist activists. The meetings passed with few complications, however. After discussing domestic politics with the ambassador, PJD leaders civilly expressed their grievances with U.S. foreign policy positions on Palestine, Iraq, and the Western Sahara autonomy negotiations, subsequently dissolving the meeting between the two sides with handshakes and smiles.³⁶ The PJD envisions itself as lobbying the United States during these ambassadorial meetings, pressuring the superpower to change its foreign policies. “Sometimes the harshest criticism towards U.S. foreign policy, in reality, came from some congressmen inside the U.S. political system,” Mustapha Khalfi relayed, citing the late John Murtha’s opposition to the Iraq war and reminiscing on his time as a legislative assistant, “I was so surprised by this...”.³⁷ Like John Murtha, the PJD sees itself as working inside the system through traditional diplomatic channels to gradually persuade the United States to alter its foreign policy positions.

When the United States makes a foreign policy decision that the “the PJD cannot accept,” as Abdelkader Amara explained, then the movement “freezes” its relations with the United States and announces boycotts against working with U.S. organizations in

³⁶Author interview, U.S. diplomats (2) and (3), August 2009.

³⁷Author interview, Khalfi, Ibid.

Morocco.³⁸ U.S. support for Israeli military actions in Gaza in October 2009 and Lebanon in July 2006 might provoke such a response from the PJD. Interviews demonstrate, however, that PJD members throughout the movement's hierarchy expressed confusion about when boycotts on working with United States began and ended, what foreign policy decisions merited boycotts, and which U.S. organizations in Morocco – the embassy, USAID, NDI, or IRI – could, in fact, be boycotted.

Interviews revealed confusion and irregular enforcement of boycotts among PJD leaders. Abdelkader Amara noted that the PJD had stopped its relations with the Embassy and all U.S. organizations during the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Israeli attacks in Gaza against Hamas in December 2008, but he said nothing regarding the boycott during 2006-2007 that the other PJD members mentioned.³⁹ Bassima Hakkoui said that the PJD did not boycott the U.S. embassy, NDI, or IRI when Israel invaded Lebanon and Gaza. “We know that Israel is the son of America, but we also know that America is not Israel. They are different countries and we treat them differently,” she explained. Daoudi maintained that the PJD never freezes relations with the U.S. embassy: “The embassy represents the people; not the president. How can we boycott the American people?” As for relations with the U.S. democracy promotion agencies, Daoudi noted that “the PJD doesn’t say *yes* 100 percent, and doesn’t say *no* 100 percent [to working with them]. We study all parties’ perspectives before us before we say tentatively *okay* or tentatively *no*. As for now, we say *okay*. There is no *no*! If there are many negative incidents, however, then we reject working with the American democratization

³⁸ Author interview, Amara, Ibid.

³⁹ Author interview with Abdelkader Amara, 07/17/2009.

agencies.” These quotations suggest that PJD members neither fully understand why their movement chooses to boycott U.S. organizations in Morocco nor which organizations are eligible for boycott.

From the American side, a different story about the PJD boycotts surfaced. When corroborated with information provided by U.S. diplomats, the PJD boycotts revealed themselves as words without action: PJD members continued to visit U.S. embassy officials, participate in democratization training programs, and meet with the ambassadors throughout ostensible boycott periods. Throughout the PJD’s boycotts, NDI and IRI’s country directors England and Troness said, respectively, that relations continued as normal.

Given that democratization serves as an integral component of broader U.S. foreign policy in the Arab world, the PJD’s participation in U.S. political training programs not only means that it accepts material and logistical support from the United States. It also demonstrates that the movement complies with the broader U.S. foreign policy agenda. In other words, participation in these activities comes with political costs: U.S. democratization programs seek to influence how the movement’s leadership thinks, its internal organizational practices, and its political posturing towards the United States. Thus, through participating in U.S. democratization initiatives, the PJD complies with U.S. foreign policy and advances its aims.

The PJD’s faux boycotts against the United States, moreover, shows how the movement does not want to assert itself against U.S. foreign policy decisions and desires to conceal this political compliance from potential Moroccan voters. Thus, in

announcing faux boycotts against U.S. foreign policy decisions, the PJD both maintains good relations with the United States while also limiting its political vulnerability.

Islamist Non-Compliance as Radicalism in Egypt

Unlike the compliant behavior the PJD shows the United States by accepting ambassadorial meetings, political party training, and international travel, the Muslim Brothers do not participate in similar programs. In this way, the Muslim Brothers do not advance U.S. foreign policy in their domestic political environment

Although both the Clinton and the second Bush administrations had considered opening relations with the Muslim Brothers, as Fawaz Gerges describes, the U.S. government adopted an “unconditionally hostile position toward Islamists,” ceasing any initial communication with them and “siding fully with Mubarak.” Echoing the ‘glass ceiling’ hypothesis and Jeff England’s explanation for why the United States does not cooperate with the Muslim Brothers, Gerges contends that U.S. officials decided that Mubarak’s regime had “shown its resolve” to oppress violent Islamists groups in order to maintain stability, which, in the end, “clearly overrides other considerations” (1999: 182, 187-8). Although Gerges’s account may explain why the United States would favor Mubarak’s regime to contain violent Islamist groups, it cannot explain why the United State chose not seek to build good relations with the nonviolent Muslim Brothers especially during the same period of bridge building with the PJD in Morocco.

A more persuasive explanation for why the United States does not have good relations with the Muslim Brothers focuses on the movement’s assertiveness towards U.S. foreign policy. In comparison to the PJD’s faux boycotts against the United States

in Morocco that reveal its underlying political compliance, the Muslim Brothers have defied U.S. foreign policy in Egypt and the Middle East. When Secretary of State Colin Powell visited Egypt in 2002, for example, 7,000 student Muslim Brothers delivered a written complaint to the American Cultural Center in Cairo (Golden 2002). The Muslim Brothers also staged a “thousands-strong antiwar rally” in March 2003, opposing the U.S. invasion of Iraq while emphasizing “national unity in the face of foreign occupation” (el-Gobashy 2005: 389). In response to Israeli blockade on Gaza, supported by the United States in order to oust Hamas from the Palestinian government, Stacher records that the Egyptian Islamist movement organized 90 demonstrations across the country featuring 200,000 Muslim Brothers. This effort culminated in a “day of rage” against U.S. foreign policy in Alexandria where nearly 100,000 Egyptians peacefully marched in opposition to the embargo (Stacher 2009). The Muslim Brothers assert themselves more against U.S. foreign policy decisions and objectives than the compliant PJD within their domestic political environment. “There is no chance of communicating with any U.S. administration,” the Muslim Brothers’ political chief Dr. Issam al-Iryan explained, “so long as the United States maintains its long-standing view of Islam as a real danger, a view that puts the United States in the same boat as the Zionist enemy” (al-Anani 2007: 7).

The Muslim Brothers’ defiance toward U.S. foreign policy has discouraged the United States from establishing good relations with the group through its democratization programs as well. In one instance, local U.S. democratization staff in Egypt affiliated with the American University of Cairo had considered extending an invitation to the

Muslim Brothers' third-ranking leader, Abd al-Mum'im Abu al-Futuh, to deliver the keynote address to their May 2008 conference, "Beyond Borders: An Egyptian-American Dialogue," sponsored by the State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI 2008). Upon hearing of Futuh's planned keynote address, however, USAID officials in Washington headquarters threatened to retract \$90,000 of grant funding for the Cairo conference as well as future MEPI youth events in the region unless the local staff rescinded the invitation.⁴⁰ The Muslim Brothers' opposition to U.S. foreign policy discouraged the United States from building good relations with the movement through its democratization training and conferences. Yet, during a similar MEPI conference in Rabat, Morocco in May 2007 (entitled "An American-Moroccan Youth Dialogue on Democracy and Security"), USAID officials permitted PJD parliamentary member Almorki Alidrissi Abu Ziad to attend and speak publicly at the conference (MEPI 2007). These examples suggest that unfavorable representations of the Muslim Brothers in U.S. political discourse reflect the country's adversarial relations with the Islamist movement.

"Moderate" Friends, "Radical" Enemies

This analysis has shown that perceptions of moderation in U.S. discourse accompany the good relations between the United States and the PJD. Although similar in their ideology, origins, and tactical gradualism, U.S. political discourse regards the PJD as moderate and its Egyptian equivalent, the Muslim Brothers, as radical. The PJD's acts of compliance

⁴⁰Author interview with Emma Deputy, MEPI conference planner & USAID temporary employee, April 21, 2010. For more information on Deputy's role in the conference: Middle East Partnership Initiative "Beyond Borders: An Egyptian-American Dialogue," May 2-3, 2008: 2, 15.

toward the United States and its foreign policy undergird the good relations between the two sides. The Muslim Brothers, in contrast, have not complied with U.S. foreign policy in Egypt, standing resolute in their opposition.

The Islamist moderation debate seeks to answer the question: what makes some Islamist political movements moderate while others radical? This paper submits that those Islamists actively opposing U.S. interests in the Arab world are deemed radical, while those willing to go along with the United States and its foreign policy agenda are labeled as moderate. Moderate Islamism, thus, is not a product of an Islamist movement's non-violent tactics as Hafez or el-Ghobashy contend. Nor, as Schwedler emphasizes, does moderate Islamism emerge from a group's changing ideological commitments and its adoption of an open worldview. An Islamist movement's policy positions on recognizing Israel or practicing democracy do not necessarily determine its moderation as Marc Lynch, Robert Leiken, and Steven Brooke imply.

The fact, moreover, that former Vice President Dick Cheney and National Security Council staff invited the Syrian Muslim Brothers – despite its genuine history of using political violence and opposition to Israel's existence – to a White House dinner in 2006 and expressed a willingness to “hear what the group has to say” has more to do with the movement's desire to oust Bashar al-Assad (a U.S. foreign policy goal) than its ideology, tactics, or values (Stockman 2006). One, in other words, could take Syria's Muslim Brothers as a counterfactual example: a violent Islamist group, which has few open values, is treated by the United States as moderate because its aims comply with U.S. foreign policy priorities.

An Islamist movement's perceived moderation flows from its willingness to comply with U.S. foreign policies, interests, and projects within its domestic political environment rather than characteristics innate to its ideology, organizational practices, or the tactics it uses to achieve its objectives. Internal characteristics, in short, have little relevance in explaining an Islamist movement's political moderateness. The debate around Islamist moderation has more to do with the leaders, researchers, and institutions that employ the term "moderate" than the political movements described by it. Persuasive definitions have stood in for solid conceptualization. Taking up calls for more thoughtfulness regarding both concept formation and its implications, "moderation" in academic debates concerning political Islam has become a term accepted without sufficient, reflexive consideration. This study, then, hopes to contribute to a more complex understanding of the moderate-radical Islamist distinction, contending that the United States rewards the PJD with the constructed epithet "moderate" for its good behavior: compliance with its foreign policy agenda. In calling the United States' Islamist friends "moderate" and its enemies "radical," scholars can see how these concepts have come to describe the country's rivalries with sub-state political movements that choose either to support or obstruct the realization of its foreign policy goals.

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VITA

Matt Buehler was born in Portland, Oregon in June, 1983. After graduating from Lakeridge High School in Lake Oswego, Oregon, he began undergraduate studies in Politics and History at Willamette University. In May, 2006, he received his undergraduate degree and left Oregon for three months of Arabic language study at the American University of Dubai, United Arab Emirates and subsequently 14 months of Arabic training at the University of Damascus, Syria. In August, 2008, he entered the doctoral program in Government in the Graduate School at the University of Texas at Austin.

Permanent Address: 3902 Rivers Edge Drive
 Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034

The author typed this report.

