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Noah Feldman Greene   April 15, 2015

The Evolution of Hamas:
Testing the Validity of the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis

by

Noah Feldman Greene

Carrie Rosefsky Wickham
Adviser

Department of Political Science

Carrie Rosefsky Wickham

Adviser

Shawn Ramirez

Committee Member

Roxani Margariti

Committee Member

2015

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the extent to which the ideology and behavior of Hamas has shifted towards greater moderation as a result of Hamas' inclusion into the political process, as predicted by the inclusion-moderation thesis. The existing literature on the inclusion-moderation thesis will be reviewed to establish a proper method for defining and operationalizing the concepts of inclusion and moderation. A chronological analysis of Hamas' actions and goals since its founding in 1988 until now using officially released documents, internal discussions, and interviews, reveals that Hamas has moderated its ideology and behavior as a result of greater inclusion in a competitive political process.

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THE EVOLUTION OF HAMAS:

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Introduction:

Portrayals of Hamas by politicians, world leaders, and media personalities most often fall victim to the enticing trend of using dogmatic language and fail to grasp the true complexity of the organization, its structures, leaders, and goals. Legitimate criticism of Hamas' role in committing, inspiring, and condoning terrorist acts, inevitably morphs into a description of Hamas as a terrorist organization with unchangeable goals, guided by a fundamentalist ideology incompatible to pragmatism or moderation. Conservative radio personality and columnist, Dennis Prager, labels Hamas as "a terrorist organization dedicated to annihilating the Jewish state" that operates "a theocratic totalitarian state in Gaza" (National Review, 11/20/2012). This depiction of Hamas, repeated by numerous "experts" across the US and Israel, relies on Hamas' original charter from 1988 for evidence, rather than taking into account more recent statements by Hamas leaders, official political platforms released during and after the 2006 legislative elections, or the behavior of the organization since assuming total control of the Gaza strip following a power struggle between Fatah and Hamas. When such factors are taken into account a more complete and nuanced picture of Hamas emerges that includes a recognition of important complexities regarding the leadership structure and policy platforms of the organization.

Inaccurate or exaggerated portrayals of Hamas are not limited to political pundits and media personalities. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently has begun to equate Hamas with the infamous Islamic State that has taken control of vast territory in Iraq and Syria. Netanyahu, in a speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2014, described Hamas and

ISIS, as "branches of the same poisonous tree", and claimed that "when it comes to their ultimate goals, Hamas is ISIS, and ISIS is Hamas". To equate Hamas with ISIS is to ignore the facts about the respective organizations. While both Hamas and ISIS can be labeled as Islamic organizations that employ the use of violence, their end goals are vastly different. Hamas' goals are nationalistic (the establishment of a Palestinian state), while ISIS rejects nationalism and instead maintains that all Muslims should fight to support the restoration of the Islamic caliphate. Most importantly however, Hamas has a vastly different interpretation of Islam and its relationship to politics, to the point where ISIS would presumably criticize Hamas for participating in elections and running a government in a similar manner to secular political groups.

Inaccurate portrayals of Hamas that fail to grasp the complexity of the movement do not solely exist on the "right" of the political spectrum. Judith Butler, renowned feminist and gender theorist, stated in 2006 that "understanding Hamas, Hezbollah as social movements that are progressive, that are on the Left, that are part of a global Left, is extremely important" (Jerusalem Post 2012) . A depiction of Hamas as "progressive" and leftist is just as flawed as the depictions highlighted above by voices on the right. Hamas' domestic agenda is hardly progressive on issues of freedom and human rights. Furthermore, one would be hard pressed to characterize Hamas' religious ideology as a progressive reinterpretation of the sacred texts. The Palestinian political spectrum includes separate organizations and political parties that represent "leftist" beliefs such as socialism and secularism.

The purpose of this introduction was to highlight the rarity of and necessity for factual portrayals of Hamas that acknowledge and embrace the complexity of the movement. Through a thorough analysis of Hamas, it becomes extremely difficulty to state "Hamas is x" or "Hamas

supports x", due to the many different voices in the organization, and the shifting positions taken by the leadership since its founding. In the effort to offer the most accurate depiction of Hamas and its ideology and behavior, one inevitable sacrifices parsimony and simplicity. In this thesis that follows I will seek to contribute to the existing knowledge surrounding Hamas through an unbiased and fact-based analysis of my central question.

Main Question:

The bigger picture concept my research project will explore is the relationship between Islamism, or political Islam, and Democracy. There exists in the literature a widely established theory known as the inclusion-moderation thesis. The inclusion-moderation thesis argues that radical groups moderate their positions after being included in the political process. Thus political groups whose ideology seems incompatible with democratic values experience evolutionary change in their ideology and policy positions as a result of participation in democratic politics, prompting greater support for the civil and political rights which democracy is based on. Variation in the literature on this theory surrounds the operationalization of two key concepts: inclusion and moderation. In my thesis I would like to establish a way to measure moderation, and then apply this theory to the case of Hamas in the Palestinian Territories, and see in what ways the inclusion-moderation thesis is applicable or inapplicable to a political party that also operates as a violent resistance group. Thus my main question is as follows: Has inclusion in the political process had a moderating effect on Hamas' behavior and ideology?

I believe that this type of small-N analysis is useful because the selected case seemingly contradicts the inclusion-moderation thesis due to the fact that Hamas has not yet renounced the use of violence, and has engaged in multiple wars against Israel, targeting Israeli civilians

through the launching of rockets and cross border tunnel attacks. The results may significantly contribute to the literature in two distinct ways. The results may indicate that the inclusion-moderation thesis does not apply to the case of Hamas and similar political parties with armed wings that carry out violent acts. A case study analysis of this case can thus identify the various factors that limit the validity or applicability of the inclusion-moderation thesis to certain types of Islamist organizations (resistance groups that use violence). Alternatively, the results may confirm that the inclusion-moderation thesis does indeed apply to the case of Hamas, thus providing a new lens to explain the behavior of armed groups that participate in politics. In both potential outcomes the results of this research will help political leaders make policy decisions to bring about desired changes in these groups' goals and practices. For example, if my analysis reveals that after being included in the political process Hamas has seemed to moderate some of their more radical positions, policy makers that seek the moderation of Hamas as a goal might be more inclined to use inclusionary tactics as opposed to exclusionary tactics in interacting with Hamas. It is important to note that the absence of moderation is not sufficient to declare that the inclusion-moderation thesis does not apply to a group like Hamas. If the absence of moderation, stems from a lack of inclusion then the causal argument of the thesis still holds. This analysis on the applicability or inapplicability of the inclusion-moderation thesis to the cases of violent resistance groups such as Hamas can contribute to our knowledge about groups with origins in resistance movements that employ violence, such as the many different groups currently fighting over territory in Iraq and Syria.

In my analysis I will be focusing on Islamist political parties, rather than Islamic groups in general. Political parties interact and compete within the political process and thus are more likely to respond to political pressures for moderation. Focusing on Islamic groups in general

would encompass religious organizations that seek to increases observance of religious traditions and social norms, and jihadi organizations that operate outside of a political process. Hamas is an example of an Islamic group that formed a political party, and has participated in competitive politics similar to other Islamist parties across the Middle East and North Africa. This project will explore in what ways the unique characteristics of this group affect its capacity to moderate.

Main Arguments:

When making the case that Hamas has moderated over time as a result of inclusion in the political process, I will not be arguing that the political organization has become identical to widely considered moderate Islamist political parties such as Ennahda in Tunisia, or the AKP in Turkey, but rather that it has experienced a shift towards greater moderation Additionally, I will argue that moderation can occur on some issues and not others. I will identify the key issue areas that I will investigate (role of Sharia, use of violence, commitment to democratic norms, etc.). It is useful to the view the relationship as one of concomitant variation, in which an increase/decrease in the independent variable (inclusion) leads to an increase/decrease in the dependent variable (moderation). Thus a large part of my research will consist of identifying the factors that either limit the level of inclusion, or counteract the impacts of any inclusion. It is important to acknowledge that Hamas is a complex and multidimensional organization with political, military, and charitable wings. It is possible for moderation to occur in the political wing but fail to occur in the largely autonomous and secretive military wing. Moderation thus might not only be issue-specific, but also limited to a particular component of the organization as well. I will track the behavior and ideology of Hamas from the time of its inclusion

(operationally defined as participation in a political process), and look for any evidence of moderation in regards to different issue areas.

This chronological approach will separate the time since the founding of Hamas in to three stages. The first stage will be from the organization's founding in 1988 until 1996 (the year of the first elections for President of the Palestinian National Authority and the members of the Palestinian Legislative Council). The second stage will be from 1996 to 2006, exploring the ideology and behavior of Hamas and its leadership to explain the reversal in approach towards elections for the PNA government (In 1996 Hamas officially boycotted, and in 2006 Hamas participated under the banner of the Change and Reform Party). The last stage will be from 2006 to the present, exploring the ideology and behavior of Hamas since assuming power in Gaza. These three stages represent roughly three distinct levels of inclusion. During the first stage, inclusion of Hamas in the political process was at the lowest point. Prior to signing of the Oslo accords there was not yet an autonomous Palestinian political system to be included in. During the second stage Hamas became more included in the political process, through the fielding of independent candidates in the 1996 elections despite the official boycott, through the participation in municipal and professional/student elections along with the 2006 legislative elections, and finally through its role in Islamic Social Institutions. The last and current stage represents the highest form of political inclusion for Hamas: assuming the leading role in the governing of Gaza. Due to this linear progression in inclusion for Hamas, my argument will predict a similar linear progression in the moderation of Hamas' ideology and behavior, taking in to account that due to a number of factors the level of inclusion remains relatively low, given the lack of consistent free and fair elections.

Statement of Hypotheses:

1) If Hamas participates in democratic elections, they will exhibit a process of moderation consistent with the inclusion-moderation thesis.

   a. A minor increase in the level of inclusion of Hamas, will lead to a minor increase in moderation (concomitant variation)

2) Moderation can occur in some issue areas but not others.

3) Moderation can occur in the political wing of an organization but not in the military wing.

4) Factors that inhibit the ability of Islamist groups to moderate include: origins and identity as a resistance movement, economic/military support from "non-moderate" foreign powers, and the autonomy of the military wing from the political wing.

Literature Review:

Before beginning this research on Hamas specifically it is crucial to review the existing literature on the inclusion-moderation thesis. The inclusion-moderation thesis was originally used to describe the behavior of Christian and Socialist parties in Western Europe during the nineteenth century (Przeworksi 1980, Kalvyas 2000). More recently the thesis has been further developed and applied to Islamic political parties in Muslim majority states such as Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Indonesia, and Morocco. This review of the literature can provide valuable insights regarding the proper operationalization of my two variables: inclusion (independent variable) and moderation (dependent variable). Additionally, looking at the causal mechanisms that previous scholars have identified will help me develop my theoretical framework.

Dependent Variable- Moderation

The literature on the inclusion-moderation thesis is divided on the proper operationalization of the dependent variable, moderation. Some scholars use the concept of strategic (or behavioral) moderation (Huntington 1991 p. 165-172, Kalyvas 2000, Buehler 2012). In using the concept of strategic moderation these scholars are referring to moderation as a result of efforts to gain power, avoid repression, or to establish alliances. The key feature being that moderation occurs in the service of a particular interest. One example of strategic moderation would be a political party absolving itself of the more radical elements of its party platform in order to perform better in elections and win more seats. These scholars have operationalized strategic moderation as changes in official party documents and policy platforms, and coalition building patterns.

Other scholars have argued that the concept of strategic moderation in reality has a very limited significance due to its exclusive focus on behavior. A party might through its behavior pretend to moderate only to adopt illiberal policies once in power. These scholars thus advocate for a different concept of moderation, ideological moderation (Wickham 2004, 2012, Clark 2006, Schwedler 2006, 2007). Ideological moderation refers to changes in the core beliefs and values of a political group. One example of ideological moderation would be if a political group that previously favored the establishment of an Islamic State with Sharia as the principal source of all legislation begins to support the concept of a secular state with a separation between religion and the State. Evidence of an evolution in a party's position on the role of Sharia in the foundation of the State can indicate the existence of ideological moderation. Ways in which scholars have operationalized ideological moderation include shifts in thinking towards a substantive commitment to democratic principles (Wickham), or emerging support for previously "red-line

issues" such as progressive changes in marriage and divorce laws, or religious pluralism (Clark, Wickham, Schwedler).

A more nuanced approach acknowledges the fact that strategic and ideological moderation are difficult to distinguish and may occur at the same time (Wickham 2004, 2012, Tezcur 2010). Wickham (2004) puts forth the concept of political learning to argue that moderation that is initially strategically motivated, can lead to ideological moderation of core values and beliefs. This process is facilitated by Islamist actors' interaction with secular groups in pursuing common goals. In her latest work, Wickham makes a case for "complexity over parsimony" by arguing that changes in the behavior and rhetoric of Islamist groups is not the result of either strategic or ideological moderation, but rather both types of moderation occurring at the same time. Tezcur supports Wickham's view and argues that "ideological transformations are accompanied by behavioral change guided by strategic interests" (p.83). Both Tezcur and Wickham support the view that moderation cannot always be labeled as exclusively strategic or ideological. This type of analysis is crucial for my analysis of Hamas. A common response to potential findings highlighting a moderating trend within Hamas would be to point out that this evidence of moderation is purely strategic, oriented toward gaining power, and once these strategic goals are met, the "true" nature of Hamas will be revealed. However this analysis by Tezcur and Wickham suggests that even if moderation was originally purely strategic it can lead to an ideological shift towards moderation.

A wide range of scholars argue that the variable moderation must be measured relative to the previous policy and ideology of the group being studied (Wegner and Pellicer 2009, Driessen 2012, Buehler 2012, Wickham 2012). In my research on the case of Hamas in the Palestinian Territories, I will assess whether "moderation" has occurred by comparing relative levels of

moderation in rhetoric and behavior over time. Thus this research necessitates a chronological approach. As stated previously, my contention that Hamas has moderated over time is not to suggest that Hamas is the ideological equivalent of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the AKP party in Turkey, or the Ennahda party in Tunisia. A political organization/political party could indeed moderate without becoming moderate. Thus moderation must be conceptualized as a continuous variable, that will allow one to track changes over time, rather than a dichotomous variable.

This analysis of the previous scholarship on the moderation thesis leads me to argue for a measure of moderation that includes both strategic and ideological aspects. I agree with the preference for identifying the existence of ideological moderation. Ideological moderation lends for better predictions about the behavior of Islamist political parties once in power. However, I would contend that it is difficult to distinguish between ideological moderation and strategic moderation empirically. Analytically speaking there is an important distinction between strategic and ideological moderation, yet it is very difficult to ascertain which type of moderation is taking place in a particular context. For example, is expressed support for increased participation of women in politics truly an example of ideological moderation due to its shift from the conservative Islamic gender paradigm? Or is it merely an example of strategic moderation, realizing that women make up half of the electorate?

Despite these challenges there exists a useful way to distinguish between strategic and ideological moderation. In instances where moderate behavior works against strategic interest, one can argue that any evidence of moderation can be categorized as ideological. For example, Hamas has a strategic goal of increasing its support among the Palestinian population in both the West Bank and Gaza. If the polls show that the Palestinian public is overwhelmingly against

negotiations with Israel, yet Hamas proclaims support for this process one can interpret this proclamation as a sign of ideological moderation, because it is not serving any clear strategic interest. In my view evidence that the PLO and its leadership has moderated is strong due to the willingness of the PLO to reject violence and continue to coordinate security and enter negotiations with Israel despite the resulting dips in popularity. Obviously competing interests play a major role such as the desire to continue receiving significant foreign aid from the US and other allies of Israel.

Independent Variable (Inclusion) and Causal Mechanisms

There is variation in the literature surrounding the inclusion-moderation thesis about the causal mechanism that explains the process in which inclusion in the political process leads to a group or party's moderation. Additionally variation exists in the operationalization of the independent variable of inclusion. In order to gain insights from my selected case, Hamas, it is important to turn to the literature to identify the ways in which previous scholars have defined inclusion, because one of the first steps of my case study analysis will be to describe the level of inclusion that has occurred.

There exists a wide variety of scholars that see moderation as a result of inclusion in the democratic process and participation in competitive elections (Hwang 2010, Kalvyas 2000, Przeworski 1980). For these scholars the independent variable of inclusion can be defined as inclusion in a democratic political process with competitive elections. In this case of inclusion the causal mechanism can be understood by the median-voter theorem. The median voter theorem states that in an electoral system based on majority rule, the outcome of elections will reflect the preferences of the median voter on a particular issue. The median voter theorem

explains that in a democratic political process with competitive elections, political parties are incentivized to move towards the middle of the political spectrum on a given issue. Thus radical political groups and parties are incentivized to moderate their positions in order to secure votes and maintain or expand political power.

This reliance on institutional explanations is challenged by Michael Buehler's analysis of the Prosperous and Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia. Buehler (2012) points out the fact that the moderation of the PKS, measured by the party's coalition-building patterns, also occurred at the local level where the institutional incentives for moderation were not as strong as they were at the national level. At the local level, joining coalitions did not guarantee power in the form of ministerial posts in the cabinet as it did at the national level. Buehler thus suggests an alternative mechanism to explain the moderation that occurred at the local level, which is the ability of the party's internal structures to transmit the "impulse to moderation to the local setting" (p. 225). In the case of the PKS, strong vertical structures gave the party leadership the ability to "moderate" all aspects of the party. Eva Wegner and Miquel Pellicer (2009) identify a different mechanism that helps explain the inclusion-moderation thesis that, in a similar manner to Buehler, focuses on the specific structural characteristics of the party. The main structural characteristic that they identify is the autonomy of a political party from its Islamist social movement organization. Through their case study analysis of the Justice and Development Party (PJD) in Morocco, they argue that the PJD's increasing autonomy, in terms of financial support and membership, from the Unity and Reform Movement (MUR), the Islamist social movement organization that the political party developed from, gave the party the flexibility to moderate. For Wegner and Pellicer the independent variable is defined as participation in the parliamentary elections, and the causal mechanism they identify is that inclusion in the political process in Morocco allowed

the PJD to secure greater autonomy from MUR which helped to facilitate moderation, as the

party was no longer dependent on MUR for support. If the PJD was still heavily reliant on MUR,

the leadership would have to weigh the strategic benefits of moderation against the consequences

of losing support from MUR. Both these works are beneficial to understanding the case of

Hamas in the context of the inclusion-moderation thesis. This literature suggests that the internal

structure of Hamas will play a major role in its capacity to moderate. Additionally, the sources of

support both financially, politically, and in the unique case of Hamas, militarily, will play a

major role in facilitating or inhibiting moderation as a result of inclusion in the political process.

One of the issues that arise when attempting to apply the insights from the inclusion-

moderation thesis to explain changes in the behaviors and beliefs of Islamist groups and parties,

is that the majority of these groups operate in the context of the Middle East and North Africa

(MENA) where democratic political processes are rare. Whereas socialist and catholic political

parties were incentivized to moderate to reap the benefits of inclusion in the democratic process,

in the MENA region many Islamist groups have shown signs of moderation even in the absence

of a democratic process. Carrie Wickham's (2004) case study analysis of the al-Wasat, or Center

Party in Egypt has shown that limited institutional openings in authoritarian states can be

sufficient for moderation. Thus Wickham defines the independent variable of inclusion as

limited institutional openings. The causal mechanism is political learning which she defines as

"experience-driven change in individual leaders' core values and beliefs" (p. 205). Wickham

argues that political learning is more likely to occur in authoritarian states in places that are

relatively free from state control. In Egypt Anwar Sadat's "controlled political liberalization"

(215) led to the participation of Muslim Brotherhood members in student and professional

associations in the 1970s and 1980s which facilitated political learning. Jillian Schwedler (2006,

2007) argues that similar types of openings lead to strong incentives for Islamist groups to cooperate with ideologically distinct groups such as secular political parties, because both face opposition and often repression from the State. More specifically, inclusionary institutional changes force Islamist groups to justify new strategies (the formation of a political party, interaction and cooperation with secular groups, etc.) based on its broader ideology (Sharia). For Schwedler these justifications, that involve the transformation of previous ideological stances, are proof of ideological moderation. Schwedler seems to define inclusion as institutional changes that permit the participation of Islamist groups in an electoral process, even in the absence of a full democracy (ex: Jordan's parliament has elected members though the King holds the majority of political power). This broader definition of inclusion, that recognizes that inclusion occurs in non-democratic settings, is crucial to my analysis, because I will argue that the inclusion of Hamas began before Hamas' participation in democratic elections in 2006. My chronological analysis of Hamas, through the different stages identified previously, will highlight the factors that led to inclusion prior to Hamas' participation in elections. The Center party in Egypt, a moderate offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, provides clear evidence of the fact that inclusion cannot be limited to participation in free and fair national parliamentary elections. The "limited institutional openings" that Wickham identifies as a result of Sadat's and later Mubarak's "political liberalization" include permitted participation in professional associations and student elections (p.216). Thus one can identify the beginning of Hamas' inclusion through its participation in similar non-governmental, member-elected organizations, because, similar to the case of Egypt and Jordan, they generated competition in domains deemed less politically important or less threatening to the dominant regime. Wickham argues that in these type of elections, political learning that leads to ideological moderation still occurs.

In my case study analysis of Hamas, I will first look for evidence of inclusion. Previous scholarship has defined inclusion as participation in the political process Wickham's case study has expanded the understanding of inclusion to include limited institutional openings in authoritarian states even in the absence of fully free and fair parliamentary elections. Additionally, I will look within these cases for the presence of the causal mechanisms described in the inclusion-moderation literature, such as attracting the median voter, shifts in internal party structures, opportunities for political learning, and efforts to justify strategic shifts in movement-valid terms.

Some scholars have rightfully highlighted the fact that there are vast differences between Islamist groups that publically endorse democracy, pluralism and human rights based on "looser" interpretations of Sharia, and groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Al Qaeda, and ISIS that espouse a fundamentalist view of Islam's role in all aspects of society (Wickham 2004 mentioned Esposito, Fuller and Kurzman as a few of these scholars). An in-depth case study of Hamas would contribute to the literature on Islamist groups in general, because while the group is identified as a terrorist organization by the European Union and the United States, they fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of Islamist groups mentioned above. While it would be quite difficult to argue that Hamas (and Hezbollah in Lebanon for that matter) are examples of groups advocating for a liberal or modern interpretation of Islam in the same manner as the Ennahda party in Tunisia, or the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, they certainly do not share the same characteristics as radical Islamist groups that reject democracy completely. The fact that Hamas and Hezbollah are somewhere in the middle of this spectrum of Islamist groups in relation to democracy, pluralism, and human rights makes them important cases to investigate in relation to the inclusion moderation thesis, and determining its scope.

Furthermore, the evolution of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) into the PA (Palestinian Authority), provides historical evidence for the transformation and "moderation" of a Palestinian resistance movement which historically was oriented toward armed conflict.

While my thesis will utilize a qualitative small-N research design, others have found evidence to support shifts in the behavior of groups like Hamas through quantitative, large-N analysis. Brathwaite (2013) conducted a large-N study of 89 terrorist groups in existence from 1968-2006, to support his argument that terrorist groups choose to participate in elections when they are involved in territorial disputes, and where there is increased group competition for political control. Brathwaite supplements his quantitative analysis with a case study of Hamas that explains a shift in Hamas's policy towards elections from its founding in 1988 to the 1996 elections. Bhasin and Hallward (2013) have found similar results in their case study explaining Hamas's decision to enter the political process. They argue that competition with other Palestinian groups provided the motivation for Hamas's leadership to seek legitimacy and signal their support within the Palestinian community to external funders. The best strategy to accomplish these goals was participation in elections. It is interesting that Brathwaite's case study and the work of Bhasin and Hallward identify a similar process by which Hamas decided to participate in elections. Brathwaite focuses on the 1996 elections, which Hamas officially boycotted though it fielded some independent candidates (p. 67). Bhasin and Hallward, on the other hand, seek to explain Hamas's decision to officially participate in the 2006 Palestinian elections and their formation of a political party, Reform and Change Party. These separate research designs attempted to explain the rationale for Hamas's decision to participate in the political process. It is import to note that there are two factors that conditioned Hamas's inclusion in the political process: the decision of Hamas leadership to participate, and permission

from the regime to participate. I will seek to identify whether this inclusion led to moderation, as seen in the cases of Islamist groups in Morocco, Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Indonesia and other parts of the Muslim world. Furthermore, I will argue that participation in itself can be seen as an instance of moderation, due to the case that Hamas previously was ideologically against participation in a political process that legitimized the Oslo Accords.

Many scholars have agreed that inclusion in the political process in Lebanon has had a moderating effect on Hezbollah (Gunning 2007, and others). Jeroen Gunning argues against categorizing Hezbollah as a "rigid, eternally hostile, unchangeable organization" (p. 183). Additionally Gunning argues that the case of Hezbollah provides proof of the potential for similar behavioral moderation of Hamas. For Gunning, Hamas's apparent lack of moderation, due to its violent confrontations with Israel and domestic opponents, is a result of only partial-inclusion. Gunning seems to argue that full inclusion of Hamas in the political process would lead to greater moderation, in terms of its positions vis a vis Israel and support for Palestinian reconciliation. Since the time of Gunning's book, the actions of Hezbollah, including its violent behavior before the Doha Agreement in 2008 and Hezbollah's decision to assist the Assad regime's attacks on rebel forces, has called its alleged moderation into question. Dara Conduit (2014) applies Schwedler's model of moderation to the case of Hezbollah to show signs that limitations in Hezbollah's ability and/or willingness to moderate existed prior to 2008. The limitations that Conduit identifies includes the political system in Lebanon (seats are allocated based on religious sect thus not by proportional representation), the non-democratic internal structures (original leaders remain largest influence on policy decisions), and external factors (the reliance on Iranian and Syrian support). These factors decrease the strategic benefit for Hezbollah to moderate. My analysis will take a different approach to Conduit's findings. If one

can find evidence of moderation (even low moderation), or no evidence of greater radicalization, as a result of inclusion in the political process, despite the presence of strong factors to encourage radicalization, the thesis still applies. For example, in response to Assad's crackdown in Syria, Hamas took the opposite approach of Hezbollah, and closed down its offices in Damascus, refusing to affiliate with the Syrian Regime, despite the fact that Syria and especially Iran (who supports Assad), was a major funder for Hamas. The "moderate" response to Assad's actions despite the radicalizing influence of Iran, can be interpreted as strong evidence of moderation. It would be interesting to know if Hamas would have conducted similar actions against a repressive funder prior to assuming political control in Gaza.

Research Design:

The existing literature on Islamist groups and political parties and the inclusion-moderation thesis for the most part adopts single case research designs that are comparative in that they interact with the other cases in the literature and trace shifts in the ideology and/or behavior of a specific Islamist group or party over time. There are many different methods for selecting specific cases in case study designs. One way to understand the significance of choosing Hamas as my case in this research design is by reviewing the crucial-case method. The founder of the crucial-case method, Harry Eckstein (1975), described a crucial case as one in which the facts of the case are crucial for the confirmation or disconfirmation of a theory. John Gerring (2007) has expanded Eckstein's definition and has defined two new types of crucial case designs, a least-likely case, and a most-likely case. A least-likely case is used to confirm a theory by locating a case where all other factors indicate that a theory is unlikely to apply, but where the

theory still applies. A most-likely design disconfirms a theory by locating a case where all other factors indicate that the theory should apply, but the theory does not apply (p. 232).

In my case study design, I am will identify Hamas as a least-likely case. The fact that Hamas is categorized by many states as a terrorist organization, has participated in recent armed conflicts with Israel and other domestic rivals, and includes a powerful armed wing, would suggest that it is very unlikely for the inclusion-moderation thesis to apply. If it is proven that Hamas has indeed achieved some level of moderation consistent with the inclusion-moderation thesis despite these other factors, the validity of the theory can be strongly confirmed and there would be preliminary evidence that the theory can be applied to the study of terrorist groups that embrace the political process as well. Through my case study analysis of Hamas I will seek evidence to support or refute my argument that Hamas has indeed moderated over time as a result of increased inclusion in the political process. An important part of this analysis is developing a chronological sequence, which will allow for causal process tracing, one of the true benefits of conducting a qualitative research design.

The unit of analysis for this research is a political party. This group level of analysis is appropriate due to the fact that the inclusion-moderation thesis explains shifts in group behavior and ideology. Despite the selection of this unit of analysis, it is still appropriate to study the evolving ideological stances of members of the Hamas and Hezbollah leadership. Given the hierarchical leadership structure of these political groups and respective political parties, shifts in the ideology and behavior of individual leaders can be understood as evidence of group level change.

My theoretical framework makes significant arguments about the concept of moderation based on the existing literature. Moderation is issue specific, and moderation on one issue is

analytically distinct from moderation on another issues. When conducting my research I will be

looking for evidence of moderation on these specific issues when analyzing Hamas.

Table 1: Issue Specific Moderation

Issue	Evidence of Moderation
Conflict with Israel	participating in negotiations (direct or indirect), support for principles of the two state solution, decrease use of violence and vocal support for others use of violence, etc.
Role of Sharia	evolution in how Sharia's role is defined in the context of the State, Voicing support for a state based on secular/liberal values (Human Rights, natural rights) rather than the application of Islamic law
"Judicial" Policy	positive changes in treatment of political prisoners and suspected "spies", lessening of punishments for social/religious transgressions (drinking alcohol, premarital sex and adultery, homosexuality)
Role of Women	increasing female party membership, increase in the visibility of women in decision making roles, support for gender equality in marriage and divorce law, employment, and education
Religious Pluralism	better relations with Christian minorities, support for freedom of religious practice for Shia Muslims, Christians, Jews, etc. in future autonomous Palestinian state

In order to test for the existence of concomitant variation I will need to identify a scale to

measure my independent variable of inclusion. I will separate inclusion into 3 categories: high,

medium, and low based on the assumption that certain factors are associated with different levels

of inclusion. Additionally, other factors may not necessarily affect the level of the independent

variable but disrupt the causal mechanism that links ordinal increases in the independent variable

to the ordinal increases in the dependent variable The theoretical assumption would be that a

high level of inclusion for Hamas would lead to a higher degree of moderation and vice versa.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis: Levels of Inclusion

Level of Inclusion	Description
High	Inclusion in a fully democratic political process (Examples AKP in Turkey, PKS in Indonesia)
Medium	Inclusion in a quasi-democratic political process in an authoritarian setting. (Examples:

	PJD in Morocco, Freedom and Justice party in Egypt pre Arab Spring)
Low	Inclusion in a competitive political process, in which electoral results are often not accepted by authorities (Israel and the PA), and elections are not frequent or consistent (Examples: Hamas,)

As it will be demonstrated later on in this thesis, the political context that Hamas has operated within since its founding does not represent a high level of inclusion.

Sources of Data:

The existence of a concomitant relationship between these two variables will be tested based on a combination of different sources of data. Data collection is a major challenge in conducting this thesis due to the lack of reliable data on the true ideological positions of these organizations. Ideally, elite interviews with the leadership of these political parties would allow me to uncover information about any possible shifts in the party's stance on a variety of issues, while also evaluating whether the causal mechanisms discussed in the previous literature on the relationship between inclusion and moderation played a role in this unique subset of Islamic political parties. Security concerns, financial limitations, and my lack of "status" made conducting these types of interviews impossible.

The first type of data that I will utilize in my analysis are secondary source materials. Books and articles written by scholars who have spent time in Gaza and the West Bank and have conducted interviews with members of the Hamas leadership will provide the bulk of the evidence for my analysis. The data presented in the literature from respected scholars on Hamas, will be used to answer my unique question and support my main arguments.

A second type of evidence is a close analysis of key documents produced by Hamas. These documents include the original Hamas Charter, and the official documents released by Hamas' Change and Reform party during the 2006 elections and after the formation of the Hamas government. In addition to these officially released documents, many of the secondary sources I utilize have uncovered internal documents that provide evidence of internal discussions and debates within the organization at various times. In addition, analysis of reports released by human rights NGOs, both domestic and international, and global think tanks, will provide information on Hamas' actions and policies in Gaza.

Despite my inability to conduct elite interviews with members and leaders of Hamas, I have managed to assemble two types of interview data. First, I will utilize interviews conducted by Hamas leaders with respected and nonpartisan media outlets, taking into account the intentions of the interviewee and his/her intended audience. Additionally, I will conduct my own interviews with world renowned experts on Hamas and the political situation in the Palestinian territories. These experts are the individuals who have conducted interviews with Hamas leaders and rank and file members, and/or have spent time in Gaza. These interviews will be used to fill in the gaps in the secondary sources of data.

Stage 1- Origins of the Movement and Early Years (1988-1996):

Origins of Hamas

Hamas (*Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-ʾIslāmiyyah*, Islamic Resistance Movement) arose out of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood during the first Intifada, a Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation that began in 1987. A confrontational wing of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood founded Hamas as a separate entity from the Brotherhood. The

formation of Hamas as a violent resistance movement was a response to a variety of internal and external factors. By examining the origins of the movement and the decision-making process that led to its formation, it is clear that from the onset Hamas was a group that took practical, cautious steps to serve its goals, in contrast to its common description in the western world as a purely ideological, fundamentalist organization. However it is important to note that pragmatism does not necessarily lead to moderation. An organization can use pragmatic steps to help fulfill radical goals. Additionally, the political and social environment can make increased radicalization the pragmatic course of action for a group seeking to maintain and increase their relative power and influence in society.

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and most importantly the holy sites in East Jerusalem, began after the Six Day War in 1967, but the leaders of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood or *Ikhwan* did not form the resistance movement untill 20 years later. Many scholars (Hroub 2010, Tamimi 2009, and others) have highlighted shifts in the strategy of the *Ikhwan's* leadership during these 20 years. Khaled Hroub explains that before the formation of Hamas the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine and other countries of the Arab world believed that the failures of the Muslim world (such as the Israeli occupation and eventual annexation of East Jerusalem) were the result of a "deviation from the true path of Islam" (Hroub 2010, p.13). Thus the main objective was to educate Muslims about Islam, rather than fight the Israeli Army. The Ikhwan believed that only a strong Islamic state could liberate Palestine, and a strong Islamic state necessitated a strong Islamic community (Tamimi 2009).

Jeroen Gunning argues that the true effect of the Six Day War was changing the political opportunity structure facing the Ikhwan. By analyzing the evolution of the Ikhwan through the lens of changing political opportunity structures, Gunning highlights the important fact that

Hamas' actions can be explained in part by environmental factors, and that Hamas, in a similar manner to other political groups, responds to environmental changes (Gunning 2007, p.52). Thus in contrast to the argument by Hroub and Tamimi, Gunning shows that the activities of the Ikhwan prior to joining the resistance and forming Hamas were made through strategic political calculations. One of the consequences of the Six Day War, highlighted by Gunning and other scholars, was the defeat of Arab Nationalism led by former Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser. In the aftermath of this defeat a combination of Palestinian nationalism and Islamism reemerged. One of the ironic consequences of the Arab defeat in 1967 was the "reunification" of the West Bank and Gaza, both now under the control of Israeli occupying forces. The occupation, paradoxically, triggered an upswing in Palestinian economic growth, as workers from the territories were allowed to enter Israel for work, and Israeli consumers would come to Gaza to shop to take advantage of low prices and the lack of taxation. Gunning argues that this period of economic growth weakened the traditional class of prominent Palestinian families, and facilitated the emergence of a "counter elite", comprised of business owners that strengthened Palestinian civil society and political contestation (Gunning 2007 p.29). It was this shift in the political makeup of the Palestinian territories, specifically the weakening of the traditional class, that eventually provided the space for the Islamist movement to rise in popularity and eventually gain political power through political (and sometimes violent) means.

In the 1970s and the early 1980s, the Ikhwan took a backseat in the political contestations between the traditional elite, the new nationalists, and the communist forces, due to the Ikhwan's relative weakness. Islamism did not begin to have the resources and popularity to challenge these groups politically until the full reemergence of the Egyptian Brotherhood following Nasser's death, the rise in Saudi political and economic power as a result of rising oil prices, and the

Iranian Revolution (Gunning 2007). Thus, in a manner similar to the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood in other countries such as Egypt, the Palestinian Brotherhood focused its attention on institution building. The Ikhwan built a large number of mosques and founded important social centers. Under the leadership of school teacher and eventual Hamas founder, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the Ikhwan founded the Islamic Center in 1973 and the Islamic Association in 1976 in Gaza. These institutions focused on educational, social, and welfare activities in the poorest sections of the Palestinian Territories including refugee camps. Azzam Tamimi highlights the irony that Israeli policy helped facilitate the growth of the Ikhwan, that later became Hamas, the organization that Israel has fought 3 large-scale wars against in the last 7 years. Israeli policy post 1967 allowed for the formation of non-political institutions that did not explicitly threaten Israeli rule. This policy disproportionally benefitted religious organizations such as the Ikhwan (Tamimi 2009). Sarah Roy has highlighted two ways in which the Israeli government, specifically after the rise of the right wing Likud Party in 1977 benefitted the Islamist movement in Palestine. First Likud's "messianic" message painted the conflict in religious rather than nationalistic terms, thus supporting Islamists' framing of the conflict. Additionally, Israel began to enact policies that supported and strengthened the Ikhwan as a counterweight against the secular nationalists and leftists such as the Fatah and the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), allowing the Ikhwan to organize politically and socially. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that the Israeli military provided financial assistance to religious organizations, chief among them the Ikhwan, to further weaken the political power and social popularity of the leftist and secular organizations which were at the time the main combatants against the Israeli public and military. (Roy 2011 p.24).

Throughout this time the Ikhwan continuously faced criticism for its reluctance to join the resistance movement against the Israeli occupation. A proper analysis of the events and factors that led to the transformation of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood into the Islamic Resistance movement (Hamas), finds that this transformation was the result of both changes in the ideology of the movement's membership, and a desire by the Ikhwan leaders to stay relevant in Palestinian society. The desire to stay relevant represents a strategic or pragmatic motive for a political organization such as the Ikhwan. The literature on the evolution of the Ikhwan and the formation of Hamas focuses on both external and internal factors. Externally, the increased settlement expansion under right wing Israeli governments impeded continued Palestinian economic growth and led to the creation of a large number of educated, yet unemployed youth, a common source of recruitment for violent conflict (Gunning 2007 p.34). Internally, the Ikhwan's success in the student elections in 1980 and 1981 heightened its rivalry with the PLO and other factions. The Ikhwan's membership also came to be dominated by younger activists more sympathetic to nationalist views such as participating in a national uprising against the occupation. Additionally, the Islamic Jihad founded by Fathi al-Shiqaqi, a former Ikhwan member, began to criticize the Ikhwan's lack of an armed strategy and challenged the Ikhwan for support of Islamists who sympathized with the resistance. The combination of these factors explains why in 1987 after the outbreak of the first Intifada, the leadership of the Ikhwan, including Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi (both later assassinated) carried out the plans that were begun in secret in the early 1980s to form a violent Islamic resistance movement, Hamas.

The first Intifada was an uprising by Palestinians in the occupied territories that began on December 9, 1987 in response to the killing of four Palestinian civilians by an Israeli military

truck in the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza. The uprisings were not led or ignited by a specific leader or organization, and consisted of an economic boycott, and acts of resistance towards Israeli military institutions through the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails. The intifada was not ignited by the founding of Hamas, but rather the intifada solidified the political necessity for the Ikhwan leaders to form a resistance movement, rather than disappear in relevance in Palestinian society. Thus the intifada, and the changing political landscape in the late 1980s, led the leaders of the Ikhwan to take the pragmatic step of radicalizing through the formation of an Islamist resistance movement.

An overview of the origins of Hamas reveals that Hamas is an offshoot of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood (=Ikhwan) founded in 1928 in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna, has inspired movements and political parties in countries around the Muslim and Arab world. The movement and these country specific offshoots have evolved over time in their stances on religious minorities, democracy, and the use of violence. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood originally used violence only to renounce violence in recent decades. Scholars have found that the inclusion-moderation thesis can explain shifts in the behavior and ideology of political parties affiliated with the Brotherhood, such as the Justice and Development Party in Morocco, the Ennahda party in Tunisia, and the Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt. The causal mechanisms that facilitated these transformations of ideology and behavior were limited institutional openings and interactions with groups on other ends of the political spectrum such as secularists and human rights activists. Hamas represents an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood that on the surface does not seem to have evolved in the similar manner. External and internal pressures have actually pressured the group and its leaders to take more extreme positions in regards to the conflict with Israel. However, the origin of Hamas also paints the

picture of a political group that continuously took the most practical steps to maintain power and relevance in the Palestinian political environment.

In the context of the intifada, which lasted from late 1987 to 1991 or 1993 (depending on whether the 1991 Madrid agreement or the 1993 Oslo Accords are seen as its conclusion), it can be seen how pragmatic considerations incentivized radicalization rather than moderation, in regards to the use of violence in confronting the Israeli occupation. During this time period there were a number of factors that promoted the radicalization of the Ikhwan that led to the formation of Hamas, and the use of violence by Hamas against military and civilian targets. One of the main factors that supported the radicalization of Hamas during this time period was the public support for resistance against the occupation, as a result of increased military incursions into the occupied territories, and a large number of Palestinian deaths as result of the response by the Israeli military to resistance activities. As mentioned before, the founders of Hamas were reacting to increased pressure against them for not participating in resistance activities against the occupation. The literature I reviewed highlighted the fact that the median voter theorem stated that political parties are incentivized to reflect the policy positions of the median voter, which can lead radical political parties to take more moderate positions. For Hamas during this period, there was no democratic political system of elections to facilitate the shift towards the median, and even if there were, the median voter or popular sentiment during the time period was in favor of resistance against the occupation. Additionally, the incentives to radicalize can be seen in the context of competing Palestinian domestic political forces. The PLO, prior to the signing of the Oslo Accords between Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, was a major part of the resistance, and arguably more importantly, the Islamic Jihad, founded by

former members of the Ikhwan, was likely to steal a large base of support from the Ikhwan if not

for the formation of Hamas, and participation in violent acts of resistance against the occupation.

Actions of Hamas during Stage 1

The radicalization of Hamas during this time period was gradual. Even though the

organization was officially formed in early 1988, and released its radical charter in the same

year, the Israeli forces still had contacts with the leadership of the Islamist organization, due to

the fact that Hamas by its actions gave off the appearance of a group focused on social reform

rather than political violence (Roy 2011 p. 29). It wasn't until the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers

by Hamas in 1989, and the ensuing Israeli crackdown on the group's leaders and activities, that

Hamas began to engage in political violence. In October 1990, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam

Brigades, the military wing of Hamas formed, and began a series of attacks against Israeli

soldiers and settlers in the occupied territories. Hamas established itself as a political force in

opposition to Fatah and the PLO's recognition of Israel in 1988 and participation in the Madrid

Peace Conference in 1991. The more Hamas participated in the Intifada, the more militant the

organization became, executing increasingly frequent and deadly attacks. Interestingly, the

crackdown by the Israeli military on Hamas membership and leadership had the effect of

facilitating the radicalization of the organization in two ways. First the expulsion of hundreds of

Hamas fighters to south Lebanon in 1992, increased the popularity of the organization among the

Palestinian public as it was seen as an act of severe repression towards the Palestinian public,

reinforcing its radical positions of violent attacks and opposition to the peace process and

compromise (Roy 2011 p.32). Additionally, the expulsion of the leadership shifted the epicenter

of power within the organization towards the exiled leadership, operating out of Jordan at the

time. The exiled leadership was much more radical than the domestic leadership of Hamas, and had control of the military wing through its control over its financing (Gunning 2007 p. 40).

An overview of Hamas' origins and its activities from the time of its founding to the mid-1990s suggests that in regard to the issue of the conflict with Israel, Hamas' positions became more radical in comparisons to the actions of the Palestinian Muslim brotherhood prior to the formation of Hamas, and in the years since Hamas' founding. In this pre-Oslo time period the political institutions of Palestinian self-rule were not yet put in place to facilitate the inclusion of Hamas in the political process, thus the measure of the independent variable (inclusion) during this stage was extremely low, supporting the lack of moderation. This paper views moderation as an issue specific process, and that the use of violence in the conflict with Israel, and attitudes toward negotiations between Palestinian and Israeli leaders, are just a few of the specific issue areas where Hamas' ideology and behavior can be found to moderate or radicalize. However at this time in Hamas' history one would be hard-pressed to find evidence of any shifts in Hamas' positions on the other issue-specific areas of moderation mentioned in the research design section of this thesis.

Hamas Leadership and Structure

Before tracing shifts in Hamas' behavior in the next chronological stage it is important to provide an overview of the leadership and structure of Hamas. The leadership and structure of the organization play a major role in facilitating or impeding the moderation of Hamas in regards to specific issues. Additionally, the literature review highlighted specific instances where the internal structure of a political party or organization helped to facilitate moderation.

Hamas's leadership is divided between the "inside" leadership that operates in Gaza and the West Bank, and the "outside", exiled leadership that operates from other Arab states (Jordan until the late 1990s, Syria before Assad's brutal crackdown on oppositional forces in 2011, now largely in Qatar). The "inside" and "outside" camps often have conflicting ideologies and strategies when it comes to the conflict with Israel and Hamas's relations with other Palestinian groups. For example, following the Oslo Accords that strengthened the PLO, many Hamas leaders outside Palestine rejected any form of accommodation with the PLO-dominated regime, or cease-fires with Israel. However, Hamas leaders within Palestine sought to compete politically rather than militantly for power with the PLO, fearful that the PLO would seek to weaken Hamas's Islamic social sector. Thus the internal Hamas leadership took cautious steps to mediate disputes with other factions, and proposed cease fires with Israel, in an effort to avoid confrontation with the much more powerful Palestinian National Authority in direct confrontation with the preferences of the "outside" leadership based in Syria and other Arab states (Roy 2011 p. 37). Israeli assassinations of Hamas leaders in Gaza in retaliation for the planning of attacks during the second intifada in the early 2000s had the result of strengthening the relative position of the "outside" leadership, such as Khaled Meshaal. Large scale arrests and expulsion of Hamas' domestic leadership in Gaza to south Lebanon during the first intifada in the late eighties and early nineties led to a similar shift in power in favor of the exiled leadership which was not reversed since the expulsion of the Hamas leadership from Jordan in 1999. This discussion of inside vs. outside leadership is important in terms of implications for the inclusion-moderation thesis. The outside leadership, not competing in elections, or interacting and cooperating with other factions lacks the same incentives and causal mechanisms to moderate as a result of Hamas's inclusion. Therefore, the inclusion-moderation thesis can only be theorized

to explain shifts in the ideology and behavior of the domestic leadership. In this chronological analysis of Hamas, the relative power of the "inside" and "outside" factions must be noted.

Hamas has a system of internal elections that appoints political leaders. Hamas members elect local representatives to the Majlis ash-Shoura or Consultative Council, which decides on the strategy of the movement. The council then appoints the "Political Bureau" a smaller council with executive authority in managing daily activities. Hroub writes that the movement exhibits significant cohesiveness and adheres to its stated goal of "collective leadership" as opposed to other groups in which "authoritarian personalities…impose their individual vision on the entire movement", such as Yasser Arafat's dominant role in Fatah (Hroub 2010 p. 115-117). In terms of the inclusion-moderation thesis it is unclear which kind of leadership and decision making structure is more conducive to ideological or strategic moderation. Internal elections suggest a respect for democratic principles and can help transmit the moderating views of a group's membership into moderating policies. On the other hand an authoritarian party leader can play a major role in moderating a political group or party even in situations when the rank and file members maintain extremist views.

In interviews conducted by political scholars, Hamas leaders consistently tout the internal structure of decision making within the organization which is based on democratic principles. They argue that democracy is not merely a borrowed western concept, but rather rooted in the writings of the Quran. An interview with one Hamas leader in a Lebanese refugee camp, Mashhour Abdel Halim, highlighted the Islamic concept of *shura* or consultation that maintains that decision makers must respect the views of the majority. Additionally, Abdel Halim highlighted the Islamic concept of ijtihad, or independent reasoning with respect to religious law, that allows the movement to be politically flexible and make pragmatic decisions that do not

always follow a strict ideological stance (Interview conducted by Hovdenak 2009). Intraparty democratic and consultative structures can be important features that facilitate moderation within a political party especially when the leadership is resistant to change, because shifts towards moderation within the rank and file are more likely to lead to moderate policies by the organization as a whole. A political party with authoritarian intraparty structures will be less likely to moderate in response to ideological shifts in the positions of the rank and file, because decision making power is controlled by a few leaders not responsive to the political will of the rank and file.

One issue that complicates any analysis of the ideology and behavior of Hamas is the relationship between the political and military wings of the organization. Hroub explains that the political wing (Shura Council and Political Bureau) holds ultimate authority surrounding the use of force and that the political leadership decides on the initiation, length, and type of military action. However in recent years, as a result of pressure from competing groups that have carried out attacks seeking to embarrass Hamas for maintaining "calm", the military wing is becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the political leadership (Hroub 2010 p. 119-120). Other scholars who have conducted field research on Hamas view the political and military aspects of the organization as two "separate though interlocked wings" that operate under different logics and face sometimes contradictory pressures such as the military wing's reliance on financial/military support from the outside, largely world powers hostile to Israel such as Syria and Iran, that are not in favor of any form of moderation of the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Gunning 2004). In the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict there were times when Egyptian brokered ceasefires were agreed upon by the Israeli government and Hamas' political leadership yet the military wing of Hamas continued attacks. These instances may be a result of communication failures due to the

strategically secretive nature of Hamas's military organization, or one can argue that they exemplify the conflicting relationship between Hamas' dual functions of institution building (community and social welfare), and armed resistance, but crucial to this analysis, these instances demonstrate that the armed wing is not always under the political leadership's effective control. Recent acts of violence despite evidence of moderation among Hamas' political leadership could be the result of the military wing operating without the permission of the political wing. The secret nature of the organizations, especially the military wing, makes concrete knowledge about the standard operating procedures and chain of command very hard to come by.

Stage 2 – Hamas in its Evolutionary Phase (1996-2006):

In this next stage in the history of Hamas, the level of the independent variable in this analysis markedly increases. The Oslo Accords, which Hamas opposed at the time and continues to this day to label as a historic failure, opened new structures for Hamas to participate in, interact with different factions in Palestinian society, and work to broaden its base of support. This next section will explore the ways in which, consistent with the inclusion-moderation thesis, this new level of inclusion facilitated the moderation of the political movement's positions on specific issues, including participation in elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council, and the adoption of more moderate policy positions on issues of Sharia and women's rights that Hamas's political party advocated for during these elections, that directly contradict key tenets of Hamas' original charter.

Internal Discussions and Opposition within Hamas

Mishal and Sela (2000) have identified the tension between Hamas' "dogmatic ideology" and "pragmatic approach to political and institutional survival" (p. 13) that existed since its founding. If one focuses only on Hamas's ideology, one ignores the many times through its existence where Hamas sacrificed some of its ideological views for the sake of political calculations or to maintain its social and religious institutions. This tension that Mishal and Sela identify stems from the origins of the movement, and was most prevalent during this middle stage of Hamas' development, due to the changed political landscape as a result of the Oslo Accords. One can witness the result of this tension in a variety of Hamas' actions. For example when Hamas leaders discuss the potential for ending violence against Israel in exchange for the end of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, they use the phrase "cease-fire" as opposed to "peace treaty". The dogmatic ideology prevents Hamas leaders from making peace and recognizing Israel's right to exist, yet practical political considerations may lead Hamas leaders to agree to a "de-facto" or unofficial peace. A comprehensive analysis of internal discussions and debates between members of the Hamas leadership during this time period (mid-1990s to the mid-2000s), reveals the practical considerations advocated by some in the leadership that often contradicted Hamas' radical founding ideology with respect to both the conflict with Israel and domestic issues such as the proper role of Sharia in Palestinian governance.

The literature on the inclusion-moderation thesis suggests a variety of causal mechanisms to explain the ways in which inclusion in the political process leads a radical/religious political group to moderate their ideology and behavior. In my review of relevant literature on the evolution of Islamist parties in the Middle East and North Africa, I highlighted some of these mechanisms previously. One causal mechanism that has been discussed is the role of internal party debates and discussions. This suggests that support for internal discussions, and the

existence of varied viewpoints on certain issues, can help facilitate the moderating process. An overview of the history of Hamas since its founding in 1987, suggests that the organization is not as dogmatic as it is often portrayed, and at different times voices of opposition to Hamas' radical strategy and behavior have arisen from within the organization.

One of the clearest forms of evidence to support the evolving nature of Hamas is the organization's shifting policies towards elections and participating in the process of Palestinian governance. In 1992 following the Madrid Conference of 1991, Hamas decided to not participate in proposed elections. In 1996, Hamas officially boycotted the elections yet fielded some independent candidates. Finally in 2006, Hamas fully participated in the elections after forming a political harm, the Change and Reform Party. Analysis of internal party documents from 1993-2007 reveals that members of the leadership took different stances on participation, as well as on the continued use of armed resistance.

Imad Al-Faluji released a document internally advocating for Hamas' participation in Palestinian elections through the formation of a political party back in 1993. Faluji's proposal was in fact supported by Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, but was rejected by the overwhelmingly majority of the movement's leadership (Klein 2009). Mahmoud al-Zahar, one of the founders of the movement and current foreign minister in Gaza, published a proposal for a new Hamas Charter in 1996, labeling the original charter as insignificant and irrelevant. In rejecting fundamentalism and the old charter's sole focus on the collective rather than individual well-being, al-Zahar introduced the concepts of "realistic options" and "appropriate timing"; hence, al-Zahar's proposal can be interpreted through the lens of strategic moderation as a response to a changing political landscape. Al-Zahar is by no means widely considered a moderate in Hamas, as he was closely connected to the more radical exiled leadership, and a

major proponent and orchestrator of suicide attacks against Israeli civilians. Yet this document revealed a changing approach to political pluralism and support for the will of the people to guide Hamas' behavior (Klein 2009). Jamil Hamami released a document internally in 1997 that harshly criticized the hawkish leadership in exile, and lauded the achievements in educational and social projects of the "inside Gaza" leadership. Hamami advocated giving social and educational projects greater precedence than continuing the armed struggle against Israel (Klein 2009).

The internal documents released by al-Faluji, al-Zahar, and Hamimi reveal the presence of a diversity of opinions within the organization over strategy and ideology. Hamas' ability to moderate relies on the presence of oppositional voices. A chronological overview of Hamas' stance towards participation in national elections reveals that policies that were once not very popular in the movement eventually become widely accepted. Al-Faluji and Yassin were advocating for the kind of full participation in national elections in 1992 and 1993 that Hamas eventually pursued in 2006. The uncovering of this selection of internal documents suggests that within Hamas, there exists the space for internal discussions surrounding core ideological and strategic issues. These discussions were a crucial mechanism for the moderation of Hamas.

Participation in Politics

It is important to note here that Hamas' decision to participate in the 2006 democratic elections, must be understood as evidence of the dependent variable of moderation, rather than solely the independent variable inclusion. As mentioned above, Hamas officially boycotted proposed elections in 1992, and the 1996 elections for President of the Palestinian National Authority, and membership in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Hamas boycotted these

elections due to their strong opposition to the negotiations the PLO conducted with Israel that led to formation of Palestinian self-rule in the autonomous territories of the West Bank and Gaza. Thus Hamas' decision to participate fully in the 2006 elections, must be seen as a shift towards moderation in its stance on the role of political and diplomatic solutions as opposed to violent resistance. Hamas' participation in a political system set up by the Oslo Accords that the organization took a strong ideological stance against a decade prior provides strong evidence for the moderation of the position of the movement. Yet, the analysis of internal documents circulated within Hamas in the previous section reveals that this shift did not occur overnight.

The Oslo Accords of 1993, in which the PLO led by Yasser Arafat recognized Israel's right to exist triggered an "existential crisis" for Hamas according to Sarah Roy. Hamas rejected to the accords, but were forced to face the reality that the agreement was popular among Palestinians. Hamas leaders engaged in intense debates weighing the pros and cons of entering the 1996 Palestinian elections under a political party, a move favored by movement founder Sheikh Yassin. Rejecting both complete participation and outright rejection, Hamas decided to "passively" boycott the elections while encouraging some members to run as independents. This led to the group working with the Palestinian government, while at the same time challenging the government's claim to represent the Palestinian people (Roy 2011 p. 37). Regardless of this confusing stance, 1996 can be seen as the beginning of Hamas's participation in the politics at the legislative level. Additionally, it is important to recognize that in defense of their "boycott" of the 1996 elections, Hamas leaders maintained that the decision was strategic rather than an ideologically stance against a democratic system of elections. This is consistent with the position of the Ikhwan, that democracy is consistent with Islam (Tamimi 2009 p. 210-211).

One way to analyze the shift in electoral strategy from 1996 to 2006 is using party change theory. Party change theory suggests that the rise of a new dominant faction within a party due to environmental factors and shocks can cause a party to change its behavior towards a specific issue. This form of analysis was conducted by Frode Lovlie (2013) to explain Hamas' decision to participate in the 2006 elections after boycotting a similar electoral process in 1996. One of the factors that makes Hamas especially conducive for party change is its intraparty democratic structure discussed previously. Following the Islamic tradition of *Shura*, or consultation, most major decisions are decided through a democratic process of discussion of the various viewpoints, and in an unstable environment such as the West Bank and Gaza strip, it is likely for conflicting political strategies to emerge within the movement (Lovlie 2013 p.577).

In 1996, the decision to boycott the elections suggests that the leadership was not yet ready to contradict its ideology, laid out clearly in the 1988 charter. The 1996 elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council, the legislative arm of the Palestinian National Authority, was the direct result of the Oslo negotiations which were vehemently opposed by Hamas. As discussed earlier, the decision to boycott was not unanimously supported by the leadership and the rank and file. Identifying the dominant factions within Hamas at the time helps to explain the decision to boycott. Due to large scale arrests and deportations of leaders and activists of Hamas within Gaza in the early 1990s including the core of the "inside" leadership, the outside leadership aligned with the military wing (Al-Qassam Brigades), was the dominant faction in the organization, and was opposed to electoral participation (Lovlie 2013 p. 580).

In the years following the 1996 boycott, several factors caused a shift in the dominant faction within Hamas. The outside leadership was weakened by King Abdullah II of Jordan's decision to expel Hamas from Jordan in 1999, as the forced relocation to Damascus impeded its

operations. Additionally, the Al-Qassam Brigades were specifically targeted by both the Israeli military and the Palestinian security forces. Thus the outside leadership and the military wing saw their power within Hamas diminish (p. 582-583). The domestic political leadership of Hamas took a new approach towards social welfare institutions that will be further discussed later on in this paper. The domestic leadership through this new approach attracted a new base of support that increased its strength in internal Hamas politics. By 2006, when the leadership shifted its electoral policy from boycott to participation in PNA elections, the domestic leadership was the dominant political faction.

The decision to participate in legislative elections in 2006 after previous boycotts suggests an ideological shift in position of the organization towards participation in the political structures set up as part of the Oslo process towards the establishment of the two-state solution. This point in Hamas' history represents a clear step towards moderation. Two of the main mechanisms for this shift in policy that have been identified, are internal discussions and debates, and the rise of a new dominant faction. Both of these mechanisms set the stage for voluntary inclusion. This form of voluntary inclusion reaffirms the idea that inclusion is both an early manifestation of moderation, and further catalyst for moderation. Inclusion in the political structures set up as a result of Oslo (Hamas-affiliated independent legislatures in the 1996 elections, and Hamas participation in civil society organizations within the Palestinian territories), played a role in inspiring the discussions and debate surrounding full participation in the political process, and strengthening the domestic leadership.

Hamas' Shift towards the Social Sector during the Oslo Period

The existing literature on the inclusion-moderation thesis largely focuses on the ways in which participation in politics leads radical groups to take more moderate positions and experience an ideological and strategic evolution. An investigation into the transformation of Hamas that occurred during the Oslo years (1993-2000) reveals a different causal mechanism that emphasizes the role of Islamist social institutions. Many scholars of Hamas note a shift in the behavior of the organization and its leadership from its founding during the first intifada, and its behavior after the Oslo Accords and the emergence of a new political reality with the founding of the Palestinian National Authority.

Hamas was firmly against Oslo and constantly criticized the agreement that Yasser Arafat and Fatah made with the Israeli government. This position put Hamas in a tough spot politically, because the Palestinian public was overwhelmingly supportive of the agreements, and optimistic and excited about the prospects for peace and the formation of a Palestinian state. According to Sarah Roy, Hamas underwent a strategic shift away from the political and military activities and towards the social sector. Hamas shifted its focus and resources towards community development and strengthened and founded Islamic Social Institutions (ISIs). The ISIs were not focused on the formation of a purely Islamic civil society and the imposition of religious doctrines, rather they were focused on providing quality services. Roy argues that focus on the social structure pushed the movement as a whole towards moderation, community development, and innovation. This reorientation was not a return to the activities of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood before the founding of Hamas, but rather a new way of thinking about civil society. The ISIs adhered to the PNA's regulations and prioritized professionalism over ideology. This had the effect of "legitimizing Islam", showing how an Islamist party to fulfill the responsibilities of governance (Roy 2011, p.92-95).

The rationale behind this shift for Hamas was surviving the political environment that was becoming increasingly stacked against the organization. Hamas was weakened militarily and politically by both the PNA and the Israeli military through a series of arrests and assassinations. The weakened status of Hamas forced its leadership to rethink its strategy (Roy 2011 p.85). For Hamas, inclusion in the social sector proved to be a catalyst for ideological and behavioral moderation. Hamas, according to Roy, was through its pragmatic and innovative approach toward the social sphere, positioning itself as a centrist option between the corruption of the PNA and extremist militants. Hamas' shift toward the social sector, and the effects this shift had on the ideology and behavior of the movement, suggests that the definition of inclusion must be expanded to include participation in civil society organizations. Inclusion in these mainstream institutions, such as medical facilities (Hospital in Hebron founded by Islamic leadership), banks (Islamic banking networks), and education (Islamic schools that taught the standard secular curriculum), played a major role in widening Hamas' base of support and "legitimizing" Islam through the provision of quality services (Roy 2011 p.88-89). This widening support allowed Hamas to gain power through elections in 2004-2006, as will be discussed later on.

This reorientation toward the social sector cannot only be seen as a pragmatic or strategic shift in response to its weakened political and military status, but also as evidence of a moderating trend that accelerated through Hamas' continued actions in the social sector. Dr. Roy, who conducted interviews and visited many of these Islamic Social Institutions, claims that the decision to shift its actions toward the social sector and community development and away from violent resistance activities was both an example of strategic and ideological moderation. Hamas leaders were initially motivated by strategic calculations such as the need to survive in an environment where the Palestinian Authority led by Fatah was markedly stronger both politically

and militarily. However through continued interactions in the social sector, members of Hamas including the leadership increasingly began to recognize the value of community development over violent actions (interview with Dr. Sara Roy). Further evidence for this moderating trend is the shift from rejecting the notion of Palestinian self-rule under occupation to seeking out and participating in social sectors regulated by the Palestinian National Authority. Documentary evidence of this shift can be seen in an internal document from 1992 that discussed Hamas' main goals after the end of the first intifada and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority.

- Preserving the movement's popular base so that it can strongly support the continuation of jihad in the next campaigns…
- Adhering to jihad as the way to liberate Palestine from its occupation, which will remain during the implementation of interim self-rule
- Resisting normalization and further negligence and surrender of Palestinians' rights. This might be the most important factor in determining our choice…[sic]. It must be bound to our goals and interests in every historical phase…[sic]. (Mishal and Sela 2000, p. 126).

By comparing the text of this document (reproduced above) with the actual actions of Hamas during this chronological stage we can see evidence for moderation. Roy highlights the fact that during this time period Hamas did not resist normalization, but instead sought out normalization through its widespread activity in the social sector. Additionally, Hamas aimed to preserve its popular base, not to enlist combatants for future actions of violent jihad, but rather to increase its political and social strength. A comparison of the original intentions of the organization from 1992, and the reality of its activities in the years that followed suggest a shift towards moderation with respect to participating in the framework of autonomous Palestinian rule while the occupation was still ongoing. Shifts towards greater moderation by Hamas are most often not emphasized or acknowledged for strategic reasons. Hamas routinely engages in "moderation by

stealth", utilizing secrecy and ambiguity to move towards greater moderation, while not isolating the more radical factions in the movement or igniting their opposition.

Electoral Successes of Hamas 2004-2006

Hamas performed extremely well in the municipal and legislative elections of 2004-2006 due to its superior electoral strategy to Fatah and its affiliates, and its responsiveness to public opinion (Gunning 2007). Hamas, in contrast to Fatah, strategically limited the number of candidates it put up in district elections. For example in Nablus, Hamas secured 5 of the available 6 seats with 38% of the vote, while Fatah only secured one seat despite gaining 37% of the vote. The Fatah vote was spread out across too many candidates (p.154). Fatah's flaw in delegating too many candidates to run in the same district, led to the vote for Fatah being thinned out amongst many different candidates. By contrast, Hamas concentrated its electoral support among a much smaller number of candidates allowing its individual candidates to win enough votes to earn seats representing the district. It would make sense that Hamas's experience in professional and student union elections contributed to a sound electoral strategy. Additionally Hamas leaders made sure to take public opinion into account when formulating the group's platform. They capitalized on public sentiment by highlighting their anti-corruption stances, while deemphasizing their rejectionist policy toward Israel and the peace process. One anecdote that Gunning shares to highlight Hamas's willingness to respond to public opinion, is following municipal elections in 2005 when a newly elected, Hamas-affiliated mayor from a West Bank town sought to require women to wear the hijab in his office. Secular women who voted for Hamas in the municipal elections, let the mayor know that this was not what they voted for, and the mayor retracted this requirement (p. 156). It is important to note that Hamas did not

consistently heed to public opinion when making decisions, such as in the 1990s when it continued armed attacks against Israeli civilians despite their unpopularity among Palestinians. Gunning makes the optimistic argument that with the current (circa 2007) political opportunity structure in place for Hamas, there is a much clearer incentive to follow public opinion, even when public opinion goes against the ideological values of an Islamist political party (p. 157). The electoral platform put forth by Hamas in the legislative elections in 2006, aimed at generating consensus in the Palestinian community, rather than promoting the classic ideological stances associated with the movement, including promoting Sharia rule, and strengthening the resistance against the occupation.

Hamas ("Change and Reform") Election Manifesto for the Palestinian Legislative Elections

A close reading of the comprehensive platform put forth by Hamas's political party during the 2006 elections reveals Hamas's strategic use of ambiguity in order to gain the widespread political support that gave its political party an electoral victory.

One of the most obvious uses of ambiguity by the text's writers is in discussion of the conflict with Israel. The document calls for the formation of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and access to holy places and water. This is in fact no different from the position put forth by "moderate" Palestinians who support a two state solution. While in this document Hamas did not offer supported for a two state solution, there was no mention of the destruction of Israel. Additionally, while the platform called for efforts to maintain a Palestinian presence in Jerusalem, there was no mention of complete Palestinian control of Jerusalem. The section on external affairs called for gaining international support for ending the occupation and opposing any moves towards normalization with Israel. Yet the goal of ending the occupation is not

inconsistent with acceptance of a two state solution and the creation of Palestinian State based on pre-1967 borders.

An important distinction must be made between the terms "not inconsistent" and "consistent", due to uncertainty in this document over Hamas' definition of "occupation". Does this document consider the occupation to have begun in 1948 when the state of Israel was founded, or does it follow the internationally recognized definition of occupation referring to the territories acquired by Israel during the Six Day War in 1967? This question highlights the intentional use of ambiguous language in this document. While the document makes no mention of recognizing the State of Israel once the occupation is ended, it also does not explicitly reject the right of Israel to exist. This ambiguity can be seen as an attempt by Hamas to cater to Palestinian supporters of a two state solution who could be persuaded to vote for Hamas for domestic reasons such as its emphasis on fighting corruption and its strong track record in providing social services. However, a strong argument can be made that in this document Hamas is referring to ending the occupation of the territories acquired by Israel in 1967 rather than destroying the state of Israel altogether. A letter sent by Hamas' elected Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh to President Bush in June 2006, just months after the group's election victory, affirmed that Hamas "[does not] mind having a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders" (Haaretz Nov.2008). In an interview with the BBC shortly after the 2006 elections, Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal stated Hamas's position more directly:

> *If Israel withdrew to the 1967 borders and recognized the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of those in the diaspora to return to their land and to East Jerusalem and to dismantle the settlements - Hamas can then state its position and possibly give a long-term truce with Israel, as Sheikh Yassin (Hamas founder) said.*
> (Khaled Meshaal Interview with BBC, 2/8/2006)

In reality, ending the occupation was merely a minor part of the manifesto. In justifying its decision to participate in the elections, Hamas claimed that it was in the best position to "protect [the Palestinian people] from the ills of corruption" and "reinforce national unity". The majority of the text reflects Hamas's continued identity as a social organization with domestic goals that range from reducing class sizes at Palestinian schools, and raising the quality and availability of health care services. Additionally, the Islamic character of its agenda was markedly weakened as will be explored later in this thesis.

Documentary Evidence of Evolution in Hamas' Ideology and Behavior

Further evidence of the evolving nature of Hamas as a result of years of taking part in elections and the political process can be clearly seen through a comparison of two documents released by Hamas: the infamous, highly cited "Hamas Charter" of 1988, and the electoral platform put forth by Hamas' Change and Reform party in 2006. The original charter calls for the "reinstitution of the Muslim state" (Article 9), dismisses peace initiatives by the international community as "a waste of time" (Article 13), and asserts that "there is no solution except for jihad" (Article 13). The 2006 electoral platform contains both subtle and obvious distinctions that suggest a shift in ideology and behavior for Hamas during the preceding 18 years. The 2006 platform makes no mention of the desire to establish an Islamic state, and instead states that Islam is a way of life "politically, economically, socially, and legally" (Section 1: Principles). This description of the role of Islam is actually quite similar to the reformed constitution from 2011 in Morocco (largely considered a moderate Muslim state), which gives the religion of Islam "preeminence…in the national reference" (Preamble). In addition to the differing descriptions surrounding the role of Islam, the 2006 platform offers a new viewpoint toward the role of

international actors in resolving the conflict. In its section on foreign relations, the 2006

document calls for the organization of world powers to establish a "just universal peace"

(Section 3: Foreign Relations). The 1988 charter vehemently ridiculed these types of actions by

outside forces to work towards non-violent solutions to the conflict, and favored the use of

violence against Israel the only means to end the occupation.

The view of women and their expected role in society is also starkly different in the two

texts. In the 1988 Charter, women's chief role is to "manufacture men" (Article 17).

Additionally, the charter is concerned with the protection of Palestinian women from efforts by

"Zionists" to distance them from Islam. The charter clearly defines the appropriate space for

Palestinian women as educating and caring for children inside the home, and preparing sons "for

the duty of Jihad awaiting them" (Article 18). The 2006 electoral platform represents a major

shift towards a more progressive understanding of the role of women in an Islamic society. The

platform calls for expanding the rights of women, and more specifically, "enabling her

contribution to social, economic, and political development" (Selection 11: Women, Child, and

Family Issues). Additionally the platform calls for specific legislation to support working

women, such as through the establishment of public childcare facilities (11.8).

In an interview in 2009 with the New York Times, Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal

addresses the discrepancies between the 1988 Charter and Hamas's modern "vision":

> *The most important thing is what Hamas is doing and the policies it is adopting today. The world must deal with what Hamas is practicing today. Hamas has accepted the national reconciliation document. It has accepted a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders including East Jerusalem, dismantling settlements, and the right of return based on a long term truce. Hamas has represented a clear political program through a unity government. This is Hamas's program regardless of the historic documents. Hamas has offered a vision. Therefore, it's not logical for the international community to get stuck on sentences written 20 years ago.* (Khaled Meshaal Interview with New York Times 5/9/2009)

A common and thoughtful counter to Meshaal's argument is to point out the fact that Hamas has

yet to denounce the original charter, thus one cannot make the argument that Hamas has

abandoned the extremist viewpoints found in the document. While this point has definite merit, it

is important to note the complex leadership and internal political structure within Hamas that was

highlighted earlier in this thesis (domestic vs. military wing, domestic vs exiled leaders, etc.) that

prevents such a denunciation from being viable. The moderate voices in the political leadership

would not want to alienate more extreme factions in the organization. Furthermore, the explicit

departures from the 1988 charter contained in the 2006 party platform, with regard to the

relationship between Islam and the State, the role of women, and political/diplomatic solutions to

end the occupation, in a way serve as a de-facto denunciation of the previous positions outlined

in the 1988 charter. Denouncing the charter would be a very public denunciation of the

movement's radical base that would run counter to Hamas' "moderation by stealth" strategy.

Change and Reform's Governmental Platform- March 2006

Equal in importance to the electoral platform put forth by Hamas' political party before

the January 2006 legislative elections is the government platform delivered in a speech by newly

elected Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniya in March of that year. This platform is notable for

its careful language seeking to appease a variety of international actors including both European

and American governments and other Islamist movements in the Arab world. Hroub argues that

the platform represented a "turning point" in Hamas' political thinking (Hroub 2010). The

speech made no call for the "destruction of Israel" and was not inconsistent with the concept of

the two state solution. Additionally, the speech avoided any calls to establish an Islamic State in

Palestine. One of the most significant elements of the speech was Haniya's reference to "the

Basic Law of 2003". The Basic Law refers to the temporary constitution established for the Palestinian authority until the creation of a Palestinian state. Hroub states that Haniya's assertion that the newly formed government would operate according to the Basic Law, is significant due to the fact that the "Basic Law" was developed as part of the Oslo Accords, which Hamas had previously condemned as illegitimate (p. 153).

One shift that can be observed since Hamas' electoral victory in Gaza is a change in the way the organization justifies its "hardline" positions. Whereas in the past the positions of the movement were justified in religious terms, increasingly Hamas has begun to use political justifications instead. A clear example of this shift is in justifying the policy of refusing to recognize the state of Israel, as the PLO, Jordan, and Egypt have done. Instead of calling historical Palestine a waqf or endowment for Muslims, Hamas began to make the political argument that the PLO's recognition of Israel over 20 years prior failed to advance the Palestinian cause, in terms of achieving independence and ending the occupation (Hroub 2010).

Stage 3- Hamas in Power (2006-present):

The chronological stage that encompasses Hamas' rise to power in Gaza provides crucial evidence to investigate the existence of moderation or the lack of moderation in the different areas of moderation identified in the introduction to this thesis. Through domestic Palestinian conflict, the more progressive and more moderate ideals put forth in the Change and Reform Party's electoral and government platforms were pushed aside in favor of an authoritarian system of rule in Gaza since Hamas's takeover in 2007. The question that arises is whether this dramatic acceptance of authoritarian tendencies represents a step backwards in terms of moderation.

Hamas' Rise to Power in Gaza and the Fatah-Hamas fitna

Many commentators view Hamas' seizure of power in Gaz in the midst of armed conflict (*fitna*- "internal strife"*)* between armed supporters of Hamas and Fatah, as clear evidence of Hamas' authoritarian tendencies and the incompatibility of the positions of the movement and the ideals of democracy and political pluralism. However, at this point in the analysis it is important to include a brief overview of the armed conflict between Hamas and Fatah that broke out after the formation of a Hamas led government. In the weeks that followed Hamas' electoral victory in the legislative elections of 2006, Palestinian President and leader of Fatah, Mahmoud Abbas, issued various presidential decrees aiming to undermine Hamas' victory. Ministries in the government were stripped of their powers, and most significant to the strategic calculus of Hamas, security forces were placed under the sole control of the presidency. Hroub notes the contradiction in the actions of Abbas, who, as Prime Minister when Yasser Arafat was the Palestinian President in 2003, struggled to secure the same powers away from the presidency (Hroub 2010 p. 163). The first round of fighting between armed supporters of Hamas and Fatah, following months of tension between the weakened Hamas government and Abbas' presidency, erupted in December of 2006. A power sharing deal was agreed upon through a Saudi initiative in March of 2007, however fighting broke out again in May/June of that year. Hroub explains that in addition to the external pressures placed on Hamas by the Presidency in Ramallah and the economic blockade by Israel, internal pressures, specifically the frustrations of Hamas' military wing, contributed to the political wing's support for a military seizure of the Gaza strip (p. 164). It is interesting to note that the document released by Hamas to justify its military takeover of Gaza ("Al Kitab al Adyab"), includes the subtitle "out of coercion, not by choice". This brief overview of Hamas's rise to power in Gaza and armed conflict with Fatah reveals that the action of taking complete political and military control of the Gaza was, in the eyes of the leadership,

forced upon them by the actions of Fatah and the Palestinian Authority President, with the backing of the United States and Europe.

Hamas's Governing Structure

Hamas' rule in Gaza does not reflect an acceptance of democratic ideals, and respect for political pluralism. Dr. Tareq Baconi, a visiting professor at Columbia currently writing a book on Hamas' rule in Gaza, argues that Hamas has increasingly become more authoritarian, although he also notes that a large degree of the responsibility for this reality lies on the efforts of the international community to isolate Hamas, and the continued Israeli blockade of Gaza. An overview of the governing structure and the nature of Hamas rule in Gaza, reveals that in the case of Hamas rule in Gaza, authoritarianism does not mean the imposition of Islamic rule. Nathan Brown reports that the government in Gaza is not similar to an "Islamic emirate or [a] guerilla encampment", but rather resembles closely the characteristics of the Fatah government in the mid-1990s: "unaccountable and authoritarian" (Brown 2012 p. 4). The Hamas government is functional in the sense that the party-state maintains control of its territory, and establishes the rule of law.

One of the results of the domestic conflict between Hamas and Fatah was the necessity to enact an improvised legal system to settle disputes. When Hamas took power in Gaza, the existing judges, prosecutors, and other essential legal staff were on the payroll of the Fatah controlled government in Ramallah, which directed these legal professionals to not show up for work and to ignore the directives of the Hamas government. To meet the immediate need for judicial authority, the Hamas government established an improvised legal structure, and appointed new judges to fill these posts. Although these new judges had clear ties to Hamas, they

made rulings based on secular law rather than Islamic law. In the years following its creation, the

legal and judicial system in Gaza has strengthened to the point where it occasionally issues

decisions that go against the interest of the Hamas government (Brown 2012 p. 10-11).

In addition to the judicial system, Hamas was tasked with establishing an ad-hoc

legislative system as well. The cabinet sends legislative proposals to the Gazan parliament that

meets once every two weeks. The parliament is boycotted by non-Hamas members, and the

parliament has proxy seats for legislators jailed in Israeli prison, and Hamas members in the

West Bank. Until 2009, the parliament would send legislation to President Abbas, which was

unanimously ignored. A constitutional provision from the days of Arafat states that if the

President fails to respond to legislation the law goes into effect. This is the process by which

laws are made in Gaza. One main feature of this process is the lack of opposition involvement. In

this respect the distinction between Hamas, the movement, and Hamas, the government, is

increasingly blurred.

On a theoretical level the relationship between Hamas as a movement, and Hamas as part

of the government is critical, and complicates the ability of Hamas to govern in a way that

respects democratic ideals. In a conversation about the issue of Hamas rule in Gaza, Tareq

Baconi made an interesting comparison between Hamas and Hezbollah, two groups with origins

as resistance movements that have participated in politics and governance. Hezbollah was

founded with the goal of ending Israel's occupation of South Lebanon, while Hamas was

founded with the goal of ending the occupation. Hezbollah, in contrast to Hamas, achieved its

original goal with the withdrawal of Israeli forces from South Lebanon in 2000, enabling its

leadership to focus solely on Lebanon's domestic politics (obviously this has been complicated

in recent years by the Hezbollah paramilitary wing's participation in the Syrian Civil War).

Hamas is tasked with an often contradictory set of goals, establishing a quality system of governance to enhance the credibility and popularity of an Islamist system of governance in autonomous Palestinian territories, and conducting actions that continue the resistance towards Israeli occupation. This tension is most pronounced in the large amount of resources Hamas delegates for the armed wing and its operations that could be invested in domestic institutions to promote social services and economic growth.

Changing Political Role for Women

One of the keys to Hamas's success in the legislative elections, was its support from two surprising demographics: women and religious minorities (Christian Palestinians). Women activists in Hamas were essential to Hamas's electoral success in 2006. Women in Hamas are especially active in university organizations and were able to mobilize and secure the votes of other Palestinian women for Hamas. While women represent an indispensable tool for Hamas in achieving political success, women are largely absent from the movement's leadership. This largely has to do with the fact that women are most politically active in their university years, but are then preoccupied with marriage and the responsibilities of the family (Hroub 2010). Hamas' Change and Reform party included 13 women on its list of 66 candidates for the parliamentary elections in 2006, and seven women won seats. However only one women, Myriam Saleh, was included in the cabinet, and was assigned the ministry of women. Hroub writes that this move was disappointing to Hamas supporters seeking greater visibility for women in the movement, as it affirmed the traditionalist view that "women's affairs" represent a separate sphere that should be administered by women (p. 75). Hamas's position on women is similar to other Islamist movements and political parties inspired by the Muslim brotherhood in which women play a

major role. Hamas's conservative stance on the role of women in society is much less

fundamentalist or extremist than the Taliban in Afghanistan or the Salafists in Saudi Arabia.

Politically active women insist in interviews that they insist to continue to pressure the

Hamas government in Gaza to respond to issues affecting women in Gaza. Jamila al-Shanti, the

widow of assassinated Hamas founder Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, describes a political situation in

Gaza in which women have considerable influence on government policy:

> *I can confirm that we are not walking behind men. We are walking parallel…I am proud
> to say that women in Hamas play an influential role. We can delay the passage of a law,
> for example. We are represented at the highest levels of leadership; we have an
> important quota in the Shura council, and in academic and educational circles as well.*
> (Interview with Jamila al-Shanti from Caridi 2012).

It is important to note that women such as al-Shanti do not necessarily derive their agency from

support for progressive understandings of gender roles. Al-Shanti makes the case that women

derived their power in Palestinian society from assisting the resistance against the occupation,

capitalizing on their relative freedom of movement, compared with that of male activists. In

contrast Myriam Saleh, the first minister of Women's affairs, is a representative of the Islamic

feminist movement, advocating for equal rights for women based on a true reading of the Quran

and other holy texts.

Despite the strong role of women in helping Hamas to achieve its victory and the

presence of strong female figures in the organization's leadership, Hamas' policiies toward

women in the Gaza strip have not been consistently positive. Since the beginning of Hamas' rule

of Gaza, there have been instances of further restrictions on women. Women on the street have

been warned against "displays of immorality", women lawyers are often required to be veiled in

court, schoolgirls are being forced to wear the veil in schools, and women's rights organizations

have been targeted by authorities (Freedom House 2010 "Women's Rights in the Middle East

and North Africa"). Hamas officials claim that these actions go against the policies of the government and blame them on individual government officials taking the initiative to implement these restrictions. Whether or not this response from the leadership is truthful, one can witness the power of the support of women for Hamas through the organization's denial of these accusations. In the current political dynamic in Gaza, Hamas embraces support for women's rights and equality under the law and recognizes the importance of maintaining its support from women and other supporters of gender equality.

A BBC article in 2010 interviewed five middle class women in Gaza about the situation for women under Hamas rule, 3 years after Hamas seized control of the Strip. A common theme from the accounts of these women is that they do not feel any added pressure about wearing the hijab or conservative forms of dress since Hamas took over. According to the women, Hamas has announced restrictions, such as requiring women to wear the hijab in the courts, but then dropped the requirement when people complained. This is consistent with the view of Hamas as a pragmatic political movement that responds to the public rather than a radical, fundamentalist, ideologically driven group. One of the more interesting comments came from, Mona Ahmad Al-Shawa, the head of the women's unit at the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. She remarked that the "we (the PCHR) have many problems with the Hamas authority, but we are not in a big fight with them about women" (BBC online, March 2010). While it is not wise to draw complete conclusions from the accounts of these five women, they provide important insights about the reality of the situation for women in Gaza, highlighting the fact that Gaza has been a very socially conservative environment, especially in comparison to the West Bank, since before Hamas seized control of Gaza.

Restrictions on the Free Exchange of Ideas and other Human Rights Violations

During the municipal elections of 2005 and the legislative elections of 2006, Hamas' Change and Reform Party ran on a platform of reinstating order in a society reeling from the ills of crime and corruption. Yet the methods by which Hamas has maintained order have come under criticism by human rights advocates in the Palestinian territories.

The Hamas government in Gaza places large restrictions on the use of public space. Large-scale demonstrations by oppositional parties and organizations are prohibited, though oppositional forces are generally allowed to meet and organize privately, with Fatah being the exception. Fatah members receive far harsher punishment and scrutiny, which lessens during periods when Fatah-Hamas reconciliation talks are taking place (Mukhimer 2013 p. 6). Hamas has continuously restricted freedom of expression and freedom of the press in Gaza. In the first few months after seizing power in Gaza, Hamas shut down all pro-Fatah or pro-Palestinian Authority TV and radio stations, and replaced these with Al-Aqsa TV and Sawt Aqsa (Radio), which served as ideological mouthpieces for the Hamas regime. Additionally, the Interior Ministry threatened journalists with prosecution unless they upheld the principles of "objectivity, impartiality, professionalism, and national responsibility" (Palestinian Center for Human Rights). This pretext was used to justify numerous arrests of journalists that covered stories that the Hamas-dominated government deemed detrimental to its rule (Mukhimer 2013 p. 70).

The use of excessive force and the use of violence towards non-combatants or *hors de combat* has been quite common in Hamas' actions against political opponents (operations against the Hillis clan, Jund Ansur Allah, and Fatah supporters during Operation Cast Lead). Hamas also revived the use of the death penalty (which it applied 37 times from 2007-2011). Capital punishment was largely the result of convictions by military courts that failed to uphold

international legal standards and often infringed on the authority of Palestinian civil courts.

Additionally, it is reported that the use of torture by members of the Hamas security forces is

widespread. Hamas leaders have denied the use of torture against detainees and maintain that all

their detention centers are wide open and receive routine inspections by human rights NGOs.

Often the leadership will admit to the occurrence of torture but blame it on the independence of

low level members of the security forces rather than state policy (Mukhimer 2013 p.63-69). A

Human Rights Watch report from 2012 documents abuses which have occurred in the criminal

justice system in Gaza under Hamas rule. The report highlights one specific case where a man

suspected of collaboration with Israel was detained, interrogated using torture, and executed

based on information the interrogators obtained through torture (HRW report: "Failures of

Criminal Justice in Gaza" Sept 2012).

Such actions taken by the Hamas led government following its rise to power in Gaza do

not provide evidence of moderation or respect for democratic values and human rights. However,

it is important to understand the context of these actions. After attempting to undermine Hamas's

victory in the January 2006 legislative elections, Fatah and the Palestinian Authority were at the

same time attempting to stoke up resentment towards Hamas in Gaza, while placing severe

restrictions on Hamas activities in the West Bank. The PA in the West Bank banned the

distribution of Hamas affiliated newspapers Al-Risala and Falesteen, to which Hamas responded

by banning the distribution of three Fatah-affiliated newspapers in Gaza.

"Islamization" of the Gaza Strip post 2007

An important indicator of the extent that Hamas has moderated its ideology/behavior as a

result of being included in the political process is the extent to which the Hamas government has

sought to make the social, political, and legal system in Gaza more Islamic. A thorough analysis of the actions of the Hamas government since its takeover of the Gaza strip, reveals a cautious process of "Islamization". One example to highlight the hesitant approach taken by Hamas when it comes to establishing Islamic rule in the Gaza strip is the efforts to establish a Sharia-based criminal code. In 2008, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in Gaza appointed a committee of religious scholars to work towards the Islamization of the legal system in Gaza, including updating the dated criminal code established back in the time of the British Mandate. The committee examined Sharia-based criminal codes in the Middle East and North Africa (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Libya), and produced a draft that included the reintroduction of corporal punishment, the payment of blood money, and a specific number of lashes for various transgressions including gambling and consuming alcohol. The Hamas-led PLC suspended discussion of this draft in June 2009, in favor of the continued use of the secular criminal code, a relic from British colonial rule (Pelham 2010).

After taking control in Gaza, the leadership of Hamas made strong efforts to downplay any aspirations to establish an Islamic State. This was done by insisting that the liberation of Palestinians from the occupation was more pertinent than the question of establishing an Islamic political system, and by emphasizing that Hamas' position is merely to encourage proper behavior as stated in the Quran (women wearing the hijab, refraining from alcohol, etc…) rather than impose requirements on the people (Berti 2015 p.27). A selection of quotes from a media interview with Hamas member and former speaker of Parliament, Aziz Duwaik in April 2006, presents a moderate or restrained vision of Sharia law:

> *We began by implementing Sharia law in our own way, and we will continue… We are not going to cut off the hands of thieves, even though they deserve it. We are not going to force any woman to cover her hair; women are doing this by their own choice… We will*

implement Islamic law by democratic means; if the majority of people will accept we will go ahead, if they will say "no", we say no (Al-Ahram Weekly 13-19 April 2006)

Despite this official rhetoric, there still exists some examples of efforts by Hamas to push the people of Gaza towards a more Islamic and conservative path. In regards to education, despite not making significant changes to the school curriculum, there is evidence of increased encouragement of schoolgirls to wear the hijab, designating specific times for prayer, and commemorations in schools for Hamas "martyrs" (Berti 2015 p. 25).

It is important to note that decisions by Hamas leaders to take actions to make Gaza more Islamic were complicated by contradictory political or strategic calculations. Major efforts to make society more Islamic could lead to public resentment towards Hamas from the secular elements of society that are a significant portion of Hamas' support base. On the other hand, a Hamas decision to avoid any efforts to strengthen the role of Islam in society would lead to strong criticism from more conservative Hamas members, and inspire opposition from the many Salafist organizations operating in Gaza (Berti 2015 p. 28). This complicated reality highlights the fact that once a political group like Hamas gains power, there exists just as strong incentives to become more radical as there are to moderate.

One way to measure the extent to which Hamas as an organization has adjusted its stance on the Islamization of society or the complete application of Sharia is by analyzing the text of a recent Hamas document: the Change and Reform Party's Electoral platform. An analysis of this document released before the elections in early 2006 reveals that religion plays a much smaller role in comparison to earlier documents such as the Hamas Charter. Despite the diminished role of Islam and religious ideology in the document, Hroub (2006- "New Hamas") identifies the most controversial articles of the document for secular Palestinians. In regards to education the document states:

> "[we call] for the implementation of the foundations that underpin the philosophy of education in Palestine. The first of these is that Islam is a comprehensive system that embraces the good of the individual and maintains his rights in parallel with the rights of society."

In addition to these controversial statements on the necessity of an Islamic component to education, there is strong evidence of a changed position towards the implementation of Sharia law in the laws of Palestine. In a section on legislative and judicial policy the document states that "Islamic shari'a law should be the principal source of legislation in Palestine". Yet while this statement seems to indicate the desire to establish laws based on Islamic law, the rest of the section focuses on the separation of powers and the need for a constitutional court that will decide the validity of legislation based on legal precedent (the Basic Law of 2003) rather than religious tenets. Sharia law serving as the source of legislation is pretty standard for Islamist political parties including those labeled as moderate by the West. The stance on Sharia in the 2006 platform is much more moderate than the 1988 charter, which stated that the "Quran is [the] constitution".

The statements of Hamas leaders and the actions of Hamas since taking power in Gaza reflect a moderate approach to the Islamization of Palestinian society that one could not anticipate during the organization's founding. Dr. Benedetta Berti sums it up best when she writes: "[since Hamas took over] Gaza became more authoritarian and conservative, but its system of government remained secular". (2015, p. 29). Hamas' lack of respect for democracy and human rights since assuming control of the Gaza strip stems less from its commitment to the application of a rigid form of Sharia law and more to its efforts to marginalize opponents and maintain its grip on power. To further this point, Hamas' authoritarian tendencies are strikingly similar to other Islamist parties in the Middle East and North Africa that have come to power.

The AKP party in Turkey, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt have both been criticized for taking steps to solidify their hold on power.

The Rise of Salafism in the Gaza Strip and Hamas' Response

The premise of the inclusion-moderation thesis states that once radical political groups are included in the political process they moderate their ideology and behavior incentivized by the desire first to secure and then maintain power. However, in the case of Hamas there is a lot of evidence that the incentives are often greater to become more extreme than to moderate. After coming to power in the Gaza strip, Hamas's main domestic political rivals have been from the groups that seek greater use of violence and a more extreme form of an Islamic society, such as the Salafist groups. Facing this challenge, the Hamas led government is often incentivized to assert its Islamic credentials (Sayigh 2010 p.4-5). The hesitant approach to the institution of Islamic based laws in Gaza by the Hamas government, despite this pressure, provides evidence of an evolution of Hamas' ideology when it comes to the establishment of an Islamic state.

One of the often overlooked results of the "Arab Spring", which saw the removal of authoritarian rulers, and the rise of political Islam, was the politicization of the Salafi movement. The Salafi movement takes a traditionalist or puritanical approach to Islamic interpretation and religious observance, and is most formidable in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring the Salafi movements in various countries such as Egypt formed political parties. In Gaza, the Salafists have undertaken a more active role in social and political affairs since the beginning of Hamas rule in Gaza in 2007, although they have yet to form political parties like their counterparts in other Arab states. Analyzing the rise of Salafism in Gaza is essential to this project, because in explaining shifts in the behavior and ideology of a

political organization like Hamas, it is important to recognize the main source of opposition the organization faces, and the ideological direction (left vs right, secular vs religious) it is coming from.

In the violent conflict between supporters of Hamas and Fatah following Hamas' victory in the 2006 legislative elections, the Salafists largely aligned with Fatah for strategic reasons. The Salafis seek to spread their ideology through mosques and thus are in competition with Hamas and the Brotherhood. Fatah and the Salafis serve each other's mutual interests as Fatah, which is secular and nationalist, gains religious support from the Salafis (Milton Edwards 2014). Salafis have criticized Hamas rule in Gaza from two angles. Salafis view Hamas' formation of a government as a failure to implement a system of rules based on Sharia. Additionally, the "jihadi-salafist" groups criticized Hamas's failure to continue its armed resistance. The many small, and loosely organized "jihad-salafist" groups collectively make up the Jaljalat ("rolling thunder"), and are responsible for numerous attacks against Israel, and western or secular targets within the Gaza strip. These groups challenge the legitimacy of Hamas's leadership, and are closely related to al-Qaeda, which has criticized Hamas' political focus, and a perceived abandonment of the resistance and acts of jihad.

Salafist leaders in Gaza have yet to undertake the transition to political parties like their counterparts in Egypt, yet their vocal opposition to the regime and increasing number of supporters in Gaza affect the strategic calculations of Hamas' leadership. Gaza's continued blockade and perpetual violence, unemployment, and poverty serves as an ideal locale for the spawning of religious radicalism and violent extremism. The extent to which Hamas moderates its views will without a doubt be affected by the environment in which it finds itself in power. In contrast to other Arab capitals such as Cairo, Tunis, and Rabat where its Brotherhood

counterparts have come to power, the Gaza strip is often described as an "open air prison", where economic conditions that foster support for violent extremism are more prevalent, and access to the westernized world through the migration of relatives to Europe is much more limited and rare.

One of the notable characteristics of the membership of these Salafi-jihadist organizations is that most of their members are former members of Hamas. One religious scholar associated with Hamas, who conducted conversations with Salafi-jihadists imprisoned by the Hamas government, estimated that about 60% of the members once belonged to the Hamas movement. The reasons they cited for their defection from Hamas were: the shift toward more moderate policies by the organization, including participating in elections; failing to implement a system of Islamic law in Gaza; and agreeing to cease-fires with Israel (International Crisis Group report, 3/29/2011). One can make the argument supporting this thesis that the large-scale defections from Hamas towards more extremist organizations is evidence that the positions put forth by the leadership of Hamas have shifted toward greater moderation since its founding. However, even more fascinating and salient to the discussion of Hamas' evolutionary shift is its response to the challenge of membership defections toward its domestic rivals on the far extreme end of the spectrum. In a process of internal review, Hamas undertook the task of identifying and monitoring members, especially those in the military wing, who were beginning to show signs of religious extremism, such as wearing suspicious clothes, labeling others a *kafir* or infidel, and insisting that women wear the *niqab*, the face covering veil. Similarly, Hamas transformed its training program of new recruits to stress the importance of tolerance within Islam, and discourage literalist interpretations of the Quran (ICG 2011, p. 23-24).

Overall, the last chronological stage that this thesis identifies, beginning with Hamas' establishment of a democratically elected government in 2006, shows strong evidence of continuing trend of moderation in some areas such as the role of Sharia law in the governance of the state, but a devastatingly weak commitment to the principles of democracy, political pluralism, freedom of assembly and expression. But an important truth is that despite its complete political and military control of the Gaza strip for the last seven years, there has been minimal if not zero effort towards the establishment of an Islamic state in Gaza, despite the assertions present in the founding charter of the organization. In fact, the movement has restricted efforts from domestic rivals to push its policies towards the extreme, and has reasserted its commitment to a more moderate strand of Islam in its recruitment of new members and reexamination of current members. Additionally, the party has agreed to Egyptian mediated ceasefire agreements with Israel, and carried out efforts to enforce these ceasefires by cracking down on other groups in Gaza preparing terrorist attacks. The shift towards moderation that originated in the previous chronological stage, through internal discussions of the organization's goals and strategies in the post-Oslo reality, is largely still evident. But the actions of the Hamas dominated government in Gaza are not consistent with the respect for democratic ideals previous articulated by Hamas leaders. The electoral and governmental platforms of Hamas provided evidence of increased moderation as a result of a higher level of inclusion in the political process, but when the results were undermined by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and ignored by powerful players in the international community the strength of the independent variable of inclusion was markedly weakened. The conflict between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority led to a situation in which Hamas had complete effective control over Gaza, while the Palestinian Authority controlled the West Bank. The concept of inclusion, for the sake of the

inclusion-moderation thesis, assumes that the political party is operating in a contested political environment. Thus it can be seen that the limits of Hamas' moderation are a function of limits on its inclusion. The main argument of this thesis would suggest that lower levels of inclusion would correspond with lower levels of moderation. In a fractured Palestinian political structure, the level of inclusion is weakened by a lack of competitive participation. A successful attempt at Palestinian reconciliation could change this dynamic and increase the level of inclusion.

Conclusion:

In conclusion a chronological case study analysis of Hamas's ideology and behavior from its origins as part of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood to its position today as the government running the Gaza strip, reveals that Hamas operates pragmatically in order to sustain and increase its base of support. This pragmatism has led the organization to shift towards greater moderation, in response to greater participation and inclusion in the political process in the Palestinian territories. Thus, to a large extent the inclusion-moderation thesis does in fact apply in the case of Hamas, a political movement that operates as both a political party and a resistance movement. The new opportunities for inclusion presented to Hamas have facilitated internal discussions about core ideological issues, which in turn has led to shifts in the policy of the movement among a variety of ideological issues including participating in elections, women's rights, the conflict with Israel, and role of Sharia in a future Palestinian state.

While the evidence presented in this thesis supports the overall applicability of the inclusion-moderation thesis to the case of Hamas, it is also important to review once again the main factors that inhibit either the level of inclusion for Hamas, or the activations of the mechanisms by which inclusion leads to moderation. First, the continued occupation of the

Palestinian territories and the blockade of Gaza complicates Hamas' strategic calculus causing

the organization to operate as both a resistance movement and political party. Additionally, the

leadership structure of Hamas, in which power is shared amongst the "inside" and "outside"

leadership, and the military wing operates secretively for strategic reasons, limits the

transmission of the moderation that occurs among members of the domestic or "inside" political

leadership to other sectors of the organization.

There are a number of limitations to my research design that should be identified for the

sake of transparency, and to identify further areas of research on the topic of Hamas. These

limitations can be grouped into two categories: the theoretical/semantic, and the practical. One of

the issues in conducting this case study testing the inclusion-moderation thesis was my reliance

on the problematic and vague concept of "moderation". In the end, the advantages of describing

shifts in the behavior of the organization using the term "moderation" outweighed its semantic

problems, because it was helpful in making sense of a large variety of shifts that have taken place

in the ideology and behavior of Hamas since its founding. Additionally, the fact that this term

has been used in previous scholarly work on this topic legitimizes its usage despite valid

concerns. To address these concerns, I attempted to make clear the way I was defining

moderation, and address the factors that complicated the parsimonious narrative of moderation. I

highlighted the ways in which strategically motivated moderation led to ideological change

through the justification of new strategies, a phenomenon identified by Schwedler and Wickham.

Despite the challenges of differentiating between strategic and ideological forms of moderation, I

took into account the times Hamas' moderation can be seen as going against its strategic

influence, thus strengthening the evidence for true ideological change. On a more practical level,

this research was limited in its selection of data. The data presented in secondary sources was

adequate in addressing the main question of my thesis, but ideally I would have been able to conduct interviews with leaders of Hamas, or gained access to more internal documents. The secretive nature of the organization made both of these actions extremely challenging if not impossible.

Despite these significant limitations, it is important to highlight the main analytic contributions of this thesis. In terms of the existing literature of Hamas, this thesis makes the important point that authoritarian tendencies such as the crackdown on domestic opponents, does not nullify any argument that Hamas has experienced an ideological shift towards greater moderation since its founding. The key finding that greater authoritarianism was not a function of greater "Islamization" of the Gaza strip, shows that moderation occurred in Hamas' stance on the role of Sharia in governance of a future Palestinian state. Additionally, in terms of the literature on the inclusion-moderation thesis in general, this thesis made the argument that moderation is issue specific, and that radical organizations such as Hamas can moderate their stances on some issues (role of Sharia, conflict with Israel, women's rights, etc.) but not others (use of violence and continued maintenance of paramilitary forces, use of torture, etc.). Furthermore, this thesis transformed the consensus understanding of the chronological sequence of the inclusion-moderation thesis. This case study of Hamas highlighted the fact that inclusion can be both a manifestation of greater moderation, and the accelerant for further moderation of a political group's ideology and behavior. This point is especially crucial, because it supports a theoretical framework that conceptualizes Hamas' decision to participate in the 2006 elections as both a sign of greater moderation, and an increase in Hamas' inclusion in the political process.

One of the main policy implications of this research is to highlight the utility of supporting inclusionary approaches towards Hamas that allow them to be part of the Palestinian

political process and continue the process of ideological moderation. This might allow Hamas to operate as an Islamist political party in a future Palestinian State, in a similar manner to the Islamist parties in Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, and Egypt. By providing evidence of the pragmatic nature of Hamas' decision making, and the ability to shift its position on core ideological issues, this research can encourage efforts to allow Hamas to be part of the negotiating process on a final status solution, through either direct or indirect negotiations. Including Hamas in the negotiating process is not just a possibility, but rather a necessity given the organization's broad support and legitimacy in the Palestinian community.

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