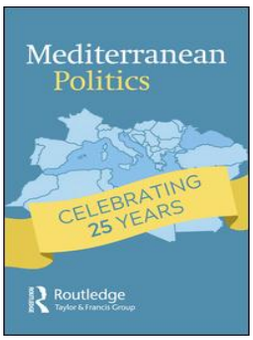

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Islamist parties, intraparty organizational dynamics, and moderation as strategic behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the intraparty institutional dynamics at play that influence Islamist party moderation and its manifest behaviour and ideology. We conceive of moderation as a strategically contingent act that is best explained by intraparty realities operating within particular political dynamics. This shifts the focus from the inclusion/moderation process debate and towards the discussion of party organizational capacity and social movement ties. We provide several propositions about party organizational strength, social movement linkages, and ideological legacy as determinants of Islamist party behaviour. Observations across a variety of cases support these propositions and the salience of a strategic behavioural approach to Islamist party moderation.

KEYWORDS Islamist parties; moderation; intraparty structures; social movement organizations

Introduction

The debate regarding the possibility of Islamist party moderation (Wickham, 2004; Clark, 2006; Schwedler, 2011; Tezcur, 2010a), which began with analogies drawn from Christian democratic and socialist parties in Europe (Bermeo, 1997; Huntington, 1991; Przeworski & Sprague, 1986) has expanded rapidly since the turn of this century. The bulk of this literature has attempted to either establish or challenge a conceptual framework in order to explain what a moderation *process* for Islamist parties may or may not look like. Disagreement about what constitutes the moderation of radical parties[1] abounds, and this debate is often centred on whether or not its manifestation should be primarily observed through expressed change of ideology and/or a behavioural change in the party members or its leadership. This paper contributes to the literature on Islamist party moderation by addressing the particular question of why we observe vacillations of moderation – in ideology (word) or behaviour (actions) – by Islamist parties in short periods of time, especially in terms of vote-seeking, office-seeking, or social support. To that

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end, it focuses on two contextual factors, intraparty organizational structure and party-movement linkages, to explain how these variables influence the short-term strategic acts of the elites within Islamist political parties.

To answer the above question, we turn to the primary reference of scholarship on Islamist party moderation, the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis (Mecham, 2004; Schwedler, 2006, 2011; Tezcür, 2010b; Wickham, 2004). At the most basic level, this thesis anticipates that participation in state-sanctioned political processes entices anti-system political groups to move away from their radical goals and moderate their positions. One of the key debates regarding inclusion/moderation (IM) is the causal mechanism that explains the nature of the moderation being observed. Hence, positions in the literature on inclusion/moderation (IM) range from conceptualizations of moderation in behaviour and ideology as pro-democratic to pro-system. In the former version, the radical Islamist actor through inclusion in the system is becoming more democratic; in the latter, the same actor is becoming a politician who is better able to take advantage of opportunities in the status quo political system as it is. Of course, some scholars envision a process in which the impetus behind the moderate behaviours is pro-system or status quo, but anticipate that this transitions to pro-democratic transformations over a long-term process.

Although the understanding and implications behind the alterations of ideology and behaviour by Islamist organizations participating in their national political systems hold great importance, the debate over the inclusion-moderation hypothesis has left the issue of moderation in a stalemate of sorts. This arises largely from the fact that persuasively measuring the reality of a long-term process of moderation – by any definition – for a very broad type of political organization (Islamist), across many cases and contexts while *in process* is extremely difficult, if not impossible. This would be true even if the literature agreed on the causal mechanism behind the moderation, the impetus behind it, and the nature of the relationship between behaviours and ideology. It is no coincidence that the strongest literature on the 'democratic moderation' process for social democratic and Christian democratic parties in Europe occurred decades after the completion of the process (Kalyvas, 2000; Przeworski & Sprague, 1986). Although the inclusion-moderation hypothesis literature has effectively illuminated key challenges and concerns in the study of the moderation of Islamist parties and organizations, it seems beneficial to disaggregate the moderate behaviours and pronouncements and understand them within their current environment as contingent and strategic actions.

Therefore, rather than entering the debate of whether or not observed instances of behavioural or ideological moderation by an Islamist party are clearly indicative of a long-term process of democratization we propose, instead, to understand these actions as instances of political calculations

that address challenges as they become relevant (Brocker & Künkler, 2013; Karakaya & Yildirim, 2013). In this way, we highlight the contextual variables that are influencing how these parties behave in the short term, and it is at this level – rather than that of a long-term process – that we can understand the dynamics that shape the observed variation in moderation behaviours by Islamist parties in their particular contexts in many Muslim-majority countries around the world.[2] In particular, this article illustrates that actors' capabilities to change their ideology and behaviour stem internally from party organizational structures, a party's social movement linkages, and externally from political system imperatives. While we discuss these the effect of external factors including the domestic institutional structure or international system (Brocker & Künkler, 2013), we especially prioritize the intraparty structures and dynamics often in play for Islamist parties in Muslim-majority countries.

Such an intraparty framework can shed light on Islamist parties that seemingly demonstrate both moderate and radical behaviour and pronouncements within short spaces of time (such as the Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt) and those that swing back and forth under different political conditions (such as the Justice and Development Party in Turkey). This approach is useful to the extent that it explains the actions of parties as tactics that allow Islamist actors to survive in the face of short-term challenges and opportunities (Karakaya & Yildirim, 2013), generated by the regime and electoral dynamics. Attending to the pattern of moderation in the moment and its contingent dynamics can also illuminate the various contextual building blocks that may contribute to or inhibit a longer run moderation process.

We first briefly discuss the existing conceptualizations and measurement of moderation as a process to present the main contours of the subject within the existing scholarship, and then introduce our framework based on intraparty institutional dynamics. We highlight these factors through the discussion of various cases of Islamist parties across Muslim-majority polities. These well-known cases confirm the utility of this approach and underscore the significance of intraparty institutional dynamics as predictors of Islamist party moderation. Thus, this article contributes to the literature on the subject by proposing that intraparty structures in tandem with an Islamist party's social movement organizational linkages can explain the short term and strategic actions of Islamist parties towards both ideological and behavioural moderation in different contexts.

Revisiting the moderation literature

The discussion of the moderation of radical political parties is not at all new. The breadth of this literature conceptualizing 'moderation' can be divided into two major approaches: one, stemming from a classical understanding of moderation that prioritizes a *relational* (i.e., pro-system or status quo)

understanding of the concept, and other more recent approaches that infuse moderation with *substantive* (pro-democratic) meaning. The former is best illustrated by the concept of organizational conservatism as envisioned by Michels (1962). In this classic work, Michels (1962, p. 339) establishes moderation – i.e., the process of becoming 'conservative' – as acquiescence to the regime's existing status quo in order to preserve one's organizational gains. It is an attitude measured by the party's 'timidity' and 'prudence' in policy-making and behaviour, and the atrophying of its 'revolutionary talons'. It describes the mechanism behind a radical party's willingness to play the political game as it is. This is due both to the investment and incentives gained by being 'absorbed' by the system and the fear of punishment and loss (El-Ghobashy, 2005). This relational logic in regard to moderate behaviours is also captured by Tezcür's (2010a) use of the word 'domestication' or Brown's (2012, p. 5) concept of 'politicization', 'the extent to which [parties] focus their energy on participation in an existing system, within the rules and boundaries set by that system'.

Some recent studies of Islamist parties and moderation have proposed more substantive, normative democracy-oriented definitions of the term. One of the most notable is proposed by Wickham (2004, p. 206): 'Ideological moderation refers to the abandonment, postponement, or revision of radical goals that enables an opposition movement to accommodate itself to the give and take of "normal" competitive politics. It entails a shift toward a substantive commitment to democratic principles, including the peaceful alternation of power, ideological and political pluralism, and citizenship rights'. The first sentence in the definition addresses a relational disposition to the regime while the second part of the definition importantly prioritizes 'moderation' along a continuum whose end is the internalization of liberal democratic principles.

Within the category of substantive definitions, two other trends deserve note. The first is minimizing or simplifying the substance of the concept. Driessen (2012, p. 173) argues that, because the radicalism of Islamism is based an insistence on the absolute sovereignty of God and the imposition of the divine order on all citizens, concept of moderation for Islamists should simply be 'the reduction of religious exclusivity' by these parties. The second trend has been to de-link behavioural and ideological moderation from an implicit causal chain. In this vein, Tezcür (2010b, pp. 10–11) defines moderation into separate, but substantive, ideological, and behavioural conceptualizations.

The debate over how moderation is defined is important for a number of reasons. Relational understandings of the term weakens the certainty that moderation and democratization are indelibly linked. While relational considerations may factor into a substantive democracy-oriented moderation process for Islamists participating in the system, the causal mechanism

behind this notion of moderation does not guarantee it. What it does presume is that radical actors participating in the system will adjust to the status quo, which in many cases is not liberal democracy but often somewhere between authoritarianism, competitive authoritarianism, and quasi-democracies. Tezcür (2010b) notably points out the link between moderation and 'domestication' that seems, at least in the short term, to bolster the regime's illiberal status quo. While the relational assumptions behind moderation anticipate the rational position that Islamist parties will adjust to accommodate the rules of the system and become less disruptive participatory actors as they moderate, it speaks only partially, at best, to a process of internalization of democracy.

This is where parallels between Communist and Christian Democratic Parties in Europe break down. The difference in comparison is not in the comparison of radical parties, but the political context. The relational moderation in the democratic systems of Europe has a different endpoint outcome – at least as can be deduced from the comparison. Christian Democratic and Communist parties were accommodating themselves to nascent democratic systems while Islamist parties are entering into a fickle, limited, and less transparent political opening in their national political context. To be sure, this is no discredit to the parties themselves: they cannot be held accountable for the political system in which they find themselves, but this understanding of the causal mechanism behind the moderation process leaves the implications for party democratization less conclusive.

During the uprisings that spread across much of the Middle East and North Africa in 2010 and 2011, the very fact that the existing Islamist and opposition party organizations were, in every case, the latecomers to the streets and squares (Khatib & Lust, 2014) exemplify the prevalence of moderation that is ultimately *Michelsian* organizational conservatism at work. In other words, while individual members might have independently joined the protest in the initial days, basic organizational survival instincts caused almost all of these 'old guard' opposition political organizations (Islamist or not) to hesitate to formally engage in collective mobilization. While the hesitation to incur risk was far more rational than hypocritical, it nonetheless points to the fact that inclusion in the existing system gave them something to lose, forcing a calculated delay in official support for protests that most of these parties would have supported in principle.

Berman (2008) offers two additional causal mechanisms for inclusion-moderation of radical parties that nonetheless have trouble transferring to most contexts in which Islamist parties operate. The first relates closely with a relational notion of moderation: successfully playing the game to maximize gains to the extent these are provided. She points out that the increased spending of time on the everyday concerns of governance, like waste management and pothole repair, can lead to a redirection of focus away from the

original radical aims. While we have seen this occur in Turkey, or in local governance, in countries like Malaysia and Morocco, the pothole-focusing reflex comes, nonetheless, from a desire to strengthen the party's legitimacy in the existing system, and to prove to their supporters that they can provide effective governance. Islamist parties have also been widely observed to put a high focus on the formal and informal provision of social services, even as a social movement organization (Masoud, 2014; Tessler, 1997), and, of course, this is very different than the dynamics of provision through governance, but the intention to garner social support and approval operates similarly. Radical parties who engage in good 'everyday' governance when they have opportunity also tend to exhibit moderate behaviours, but the extent to which they are doing so to gain in the existing system or because they are democratizing is less clear. Certainly, non-democratic leaders also have incentives to prove they can govern effectively prior to consolidating power in the system, and, in any case, Islamist parties are only afforded such opportunities for local governance in a handful of contexts.

Berman (2008) also argues that the encouragement to moderate arises from a need to attract the median – more moderate – voter. However, the 'rules' as determined by non-democratic regimes ensure that too successfully attracting the median voter would actually jeopardize an opposition party. The game is constructed for the opposition to lose, and Islamist parties have often been observed running a limited field of candidates in elections in many cases (Brown, 2012; Hamid, 2014). In non-democratic contexts opposition parties are not accountable simply to voters but also the 'winning coalition', the essential cohort of regime-backing elites (De Mesquita et al., 2005).[3] It is to these elites and not the median voter that they must ultimately cater to survive and continue playing the game in their political environment. Thus, the logic of median voter is primarily applicable to particular cases where electoral institutions are decisive for the distribution of governing power (e.g., Indonesia, Tunisia, and probably still Turkey).

Finally, Wickham (2004, p. 224) provides another possibility: inclusion in the game results in increased contact with actors representing other interests and opportunities for alliance and policy-convergence, along with exposure to diverse social interests, which leads to 'democratic learning'. The evidence, however, for the effectiveness of 'learning' has been the hardest to determine empirically. Considering the capricious nature of the various quasi-democratic and non-democratic contexts in which Islamist political elites find themselves, they have no strong incentives, and often disincentives, to trust other opposition actors (Buehler, 2018; Lust, 2011). Therefore, if scholarship is focusing on the inclusion-moderation thesis in order to determine whether or not radical Islamists will become democratic, then we are circling around a colossal conceptual and theoretical *Gordian Knot*.

Thus, while we do not discount the possibility that a process of inclusion-moderation over time might lead to democratization or 'democratic learning', what can be more readily seen, in the relatively short period of time that Islamists have been included in the system, is that they are, at least, learning to 'play the game' and operating as a system-supporting party. As the research that further problematizes the process of moderation notes (Buehler, 2013; Schwedler, 2011; Wickham, 2013), Islamist parties have frequently shown inconsistencies in their level of moderation within short periods of time. Such behaviours are hard to capture and explain when the intention is primarily to determine whether a long-term process is taking place. This article argues that these instances of moderate and radical actions are important to track and understand in and of themselves. From these, we are able to see the Islamist party's internal and external context, and they highlight the dynamics that might facilitate or hinder a process of moderation in their political system.

Going behind the inclusion-moderation debate also allows us to address the complexity of behaviours exhibited by Islamist and religious conservative parties when they have received a measure of governing power. Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) and President Morsi, in their short period in government, exhibited a complex array of behaviours that included radical pronouncements and actions with moderate ones. In that case, FJP's political/religious competition with various groups including Al-Wasat and Salafi parties, the interaction between the Brotherhood and the party, and the nascent internal structure of the party might be considered possible explanatory factors. In Turkey, time has revealed Erdoğan's intolerance towards opposition to the extent that Turkey is now often described as a competitive authoritarian regime (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016). Nonetheless, it would be difficult to argue that Erdoğan's ideology has not moderated from his earlier days with the Islamist Welfare Party; the trouble with the AKP is not reversion to a more radical Islamist ideology, but behaviours that silence the opposition and criticism and disregard democratic norms and institutional horizontal accountability.

Ennahda in Tunisia, on the other hand, in many ways represents precisely a party that has moderated in both ideology and behaviour. It has ultimately behaved as a democratic actor, even in government, during this delicate transitional period of Tunisia's democratization process (McCarthy, 2018). It did so, nonetheless, without a history of being included in the political system (Cavatorta & Merone, 2013). The Party of Justice and Development in Morocco, however, with its role as the lead party in parliament since 2011, could be seen as displaying the behaviour of a party with power that reflects a moderation process. Taken together, although these cases create problems for the approaches emphasizing moderation as a long-term process, we

believe our approach highlights systematic dynamics that can explain these divergent outcomes.

Systemic and intraparty organizational requisites of moderation as strategic interaction

Scholars within the Islamist party moderation literature have provided examples of ideological and behavioural moderation and some compare these parties with European social democratic parties in the twentieth century. As mentioned above, this long-term process comparison has problems, starting with the difference in regime types that the radical parties are operating in. There are studies, however, that address the dynamics of parties attempting to change their ideology in response to changing political contexts. As Przeworski and Sprague (1986) and Kitschelt (1994) indicate, for example, social-democratic (SD) parties have taken distinct approaches and operated on differing ideological tangents with varying degrees of success based on their domestic political context. Both works present a potential guide by taking into account the society, the particular alignments in the individual party systems and the nature of the party's leadership, ideology, and organizational structure to explain ideological change and the political fortunes of SD parties across different cases. This could be the transferable wisdom from this scholarship to the study of Islamist party moderation. While we acknowledge that the context in which Islamist parties operate is different, similar dynamics may be applicable to explaining Islamist party moderation and democratization.

Kitschelt (1994), for example, is not claiming or intending to measure a *process* of change among SD parties. Instead, his observations of SD party behaviour span only two decades (the 1970s and 1980s) in order to study variation in the incorporation of 'left-libertarian' ideals into party platforms as *strategic behaviour* operating in a specific inter- and intra-party environment. This might be a key point of transferable wisdom from Kitschelt's (1994) work; in most cases, we only have enough observations of Islamist parties to discuss 'moderate' or immoderate (strategic) behaviour, not an extended timeframe that would allow us to draw definitive conclusions on a *process*.

A similar dynamic might be argued to exist for Islamist parties within their political environments. It is reasonable to assume that tendencies and opportunities to be moderate or radical in one's position exist within these political movements. Furthermore, based on existing dynamics, a party's desire or ability to behave accordingly will vary, even for the same party across time. As Przeworski and Sprague (1986, p. 82) succinctly put it: 'Histories of particular parties are replete with strategic reversals, with changes of direction, with controversies and schisms'. Thus, we will understand better these parties' manifestations of moderation or radicalism and the decisions they make if we

more systematically account for patterns across cases arising from external and internal factors. These behaviours, understood as occurring within particular environments, thus, also provide us with indications of the operating of the whole system, of which the Islamist party is one part.

Party organizational structure and moderation

Up to this point, we have argued that the use of more moderate or radical behaviours or pronouncements by party leadership would depend on extra- and intra-party forces. Although some literature touches on the nuances of external and internal dynamics as factors that influence the *process* of moderation (Buehler, 2013; Tomsa, 2012; Wegner, 2011), we would like to emphasize how such forces affect strategic decision-making whether or not the end result is the consolidation of relational i.e., *Michelsian* or pro-system) or substantive (pro-democratic) moderation. Since these instances of moderate or radical behaviour or manifest ideology stem from members or groups of members within a party, a logical starting point in the investigation of determinants of such behaviour is the internal party organizational structure and dynamic. While the environment external to the party – i.e., socioeconomic structures, political and electoral institutions, party system dynamics, electoral demographics, etc. – certainly conditions group strategy (Volpi & Clark, 2019), it is the dynamics and structures within the party that determine to what extent the party is able to respond quickly and/or consistently to strategic opportunities (Masoud, 2014). As Kitschelt (1994, p. 216) argues, 'the key intervening variable is a party's organizational structure that facilitates or impedes strategic flexibility'.

The longer and more extensively an Islamist party has established itself and built up a material and organizational structure, including elements created by a pre-existing social movement organization, the more it has to gain from self-preserving moderate behaviour. Whether or not the political arena is glutted with Islamist party options is another critical issue. For example, if the party has to worry about positioning itself against a rival already occupying a more moderate position, opportunities might exist in which more radical behaviour or pronouncements might be strategically welcome (Tepe, 2012). In this regard, Indonesia's PKS seems to illustrate this dynamic: it is an Islamist party with a moderate Muslim party to its left and more radical Islamists to its right in Indonesian political space. Though evidence abounds that this party has clearly established itself within the system as a pragmatic player, its continued balancing act between moderate and more radical positions seems to reflect the strategic manoeuvring of a party with important rivals to its ideological right and left (Buehler, 2013; Tomsa, 2012).

We would normally discuss the median voter in democracies in relation to a party's position relative to the centre. However, the authoritarian or quasi-democratic contexts of many Islamist parties require us to consider their ideological position relative to the regime's 'winning coalition'. In most cases, though, as with the electorate, the regime is less radical than the Islamist parties. Thus, moderate behaviours, but also moderate interpretations and applications of ideology, are still strategically beneficial for Islamist parties. This course of action helps gain greater social support to avoid the ire of the regime and to protect one's organizational network and infrastructure. Why is it, then, that we encounter uncertainties and different outcomes in moderation, sometimes in short periods of time, that do not always seem to work to the advantage of Islamist parties?

We propose that manifestations of party behaviour and ideology stem from two broad internal factors: 1) the level of the centralization of power within the party (Kitschelt, 1994; Luebbert, 1986) and 2) the nature of the institutional and ideological linkage with a social movement (Brown, 2012; Wegner, 2011). Thus, we argue that *hierarchical political party leadership structures, which can ensure discipline and control factions, will moderate (or behave radically) strategically in response to the systemic environment*.[4] The flexible strategic capability of certain Islamist parties stands in contrast to the inconsistent pronouncements and actions of decentralized parties that are composed of powerful factions or that have diffused resources and organizational structures. Time also often plays a critical role in strengthening the leadership hierarchy as Michel's 'Iron Law' anticipated more than 100 years ago; Islamist parties newly developing their organization are unlikely to have the hierarchical strength and professionalization that would ensure discipline and control factions that seasoned parties would.

When it comes to strongly hierarchical or centralized party structures in Kitschelt's (1994, p. 214) typology, of particular relevance is the 'Leninist cadre party', which he describes as 'a small, tightly knit network of political leaders at the helm and, beneath them, a vast transmission belt of party-subordinated and incorporated mass organizations'. Considering the tendency of Islamist parties to utilize existing formal and informal ties to religious communities and associations in order to mobilize support (El-Ghobashy, 2005; Karakaya & Yildirim, 2013; Schwedler, 2011; Wickham, 2004), the description provided by Kitschelt for Europe has close parallels to the organizational structure of many Islamist parties in most Muslim societies. To the extent that the party has strong central leadership, such an Islamist party should be able to engage in moderation of its ideology and behaviours where it is strategically expedient. Where power is not centralized in one location, even if organizational capacity and hierarchy is strong, moderate actions and stances should be less frequent and more volatile due to internal power conflicts and factionalization.

Established parties inevitably contain factions that would interpret party ideology or steer party strategy differently. As Kitschelt (1994, p. 207) suggests, parties are 'miniature political systems with contending actors', not 'unitary actors'. Therefore, the extent to which a party has the organizational capacity to enforce its will, this determines whether the party is likely to move quickly and flexibly in a strategic direction or whether its behaviour will appear capricious. While many Islamist parties in Muslim-majority countries have centralized authority structures and strong capacity, there are cases where the organizational capacity or coherence is strained, creating significant challenges to strategic moderation. A prime historical example of a party in such a predicament is the Islah party in Yemen. The party was a coalition of religious and conservative power centres that initially formed to ensure the dominance of the northern political elites over those of the South and the Yemen Socialist Party (Schwedler, 2006). Composed of prominent religious leaders, tribal leaders and merchants, and members of Yemen's Muslim Brotherhood organization, the party has not established a strong centralized power structure and is splintered among several factions with distinct interests. The civil war between the Houthis and the weak regime propped up by Saudi Arabia has largely sidelined the earlier non-militia political entities, but the loose social networks tying together the factions of this Islamist party have not fared well in crisis.

Malaysia's PAS provides another example of a party that, due to the federal structure of Malaysia, has had competing loci of power and strategic realities between the national and state leadership. Although it does have a central party organ and strong organizational capacity, Malaysia's federal structure and politics, which has allowed PAS to address potholes at the state governance level, creates competing interests within the party and variation in behaviour and speech within the party depending on the context of the audience (Chin, 1996; Moten & Mokhtar, 2006). How the party presents itself in Kelantan state often differs greatly in rhetoric to the national stage. In both of these cases above, the parties have frequently generated contradictory responses to the strategic environment due to decentralization in the respective party's power structure. PAS in Muslim Malay dominant states has often made a much more explicit appeal to Islamic law provisions than PAS elites in the more ethnically and religiously diverse states. Success among different electorates in different regions encourages the contradictions from state to state.

Turkey provides support for the flip side of our argument with an Islamist party that developed a strong organizational capacity and an increasingly centralized base of power that has allowed great strategic flexibility. Within a few years from its founding, the success of the AKP and its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was based on his ability to take advantage of a free hand to strategically moderate or radicalize. Mecham (2004, p. 351) argues that the

AKP's success resulted from the ability of its leadership to make and implement strategic decisions that 'transformed the dominant Islamist movement in Turkey into a politically sophisticated, progressive, and moderate participant in normal politics'. Erdoğan has proven to be sophisticated, but his strong control of the party has enabled him freely to behave moderately or more radically according to his perceptions of the strategic context (Lancaster, 2014)

Interestingly, in a vein quite unique for contenders for government rule in Turkey, when the AKP was young organizationally, it promoted tenets of intra-party democracy with primary elections for the party list, extensive debates on policy formulations, and checks on leadership – strong evidence for the internalization of democratic moderation. This intra-party democratic experiment within the AKP was short-lived, arguably for the politically strategic reasons anticipated by Michels (1962). Allowing all factions a voice, particularly the Islamists, created problems for a party framing itself as the new political centre. Channelling all decision and speaking power to Erdoğan and his select few ensured the flexibility to respond to national and international political dynamics as needed (Lancaster, 2014; Tepe, 2005). The building of a centralized power structure as the party developed allowed the AKP to compete effectively with its rivals and avoid instances of evident lack of discipline, like the party's failure to pass a resolution concerning the 2003 Iraqi invasion due to dissent among their own members (Kesgin & Kaarbo, 2010).

During their first two national election campaigns, the AKP refused to take positions considered the domain of religious conservatives, even the socially popular prospect of creating legislation to liberalize the restrictive headscarf law. Instead, in 2002 Erdoğan's campaign repeatedly emphasized that the AKP was at the very 'social center of society' and took strong positions on honest governance and economic policy (Wuthrich, 2015). Their turn towards increasing nationalist and religious rhetoric in their campaign speeches during and after the 2011 national elections points out once again the AKP's and Erdoğan's strategic flexibility. In 2011, their major rival to the left, the Republican People's Party (CHP), under new leadership, moved towards the centre and began to make policy appeals that muddled the lines between the parties in terms of policy output and appeal. In response, the AKP tapped into religious conservative rhetoric while maintaining its pragmatic policy appeals. Seizing the opportunity casued by a sex tape scandal within the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), their switch to a nationalist campaign discourse was an attempt to lure MHP's voters and cause that party to fall below the required 10 per cent national threshold, potentially bringing more seats to the AKP (Wuthrich, 2015). Since 2011, Erdoğan has further centralized his authority in the party (and throughout the country as

a whole) enabling him to flexibly engage strategically to take advantage of the political environment.

The moderation trend of PKS in Indonesia lends further support to the proposition above. The genesis of PKS, *Jemaah Tarbiyah*, was formed as student-led ideological political movement characterized by strict internal procedures and hierarchical rules in the 1970s. After a political party (PK) formed following the resignation of Suharto in 1998, the leaders of the movement quickly realized that the party needed to be steered in a more pragmatic direction in the face of poor electoral outcomes. A visible split between idealists and pragmatists marked the consecutive legislative and presidential elections. However, the strong centralized leadership hierarchy of the party (named PKS after 2003) did not allow internal factional politics to interfere with strategic manoeuvring despite operating in a federal and decentralized political system (Buehler, 2013). While there were exceptions as observed in the debate about pornography law, the party managed to tone down the Islamist ideology and form alliances with even non-Muslim groups (Tomsa, 2012). The impressive showing in the 2004 elections consolidated the power of party leadership and made further moderation possible. Thus, moderation became possible for PKS to the extent that the organizational structure and centralized leadership inherited from *Tarbiyah* allowed party leaders to overcome factional politics.

Social movement linkages and moderation

Considering that the political structures of most new multi-party environments would encourage organization around a strong leader or central leadership, where would competing sources of power come from in Islamist parties that might hamper strategic opportunities to moderate? Arguably, there has been one major obstruction to centralized power in Islamist parties: competing loci of power from a parent social movement organization, and this has two outcomes. First, *parties who remain organizationally intertwined with an institutionalized social movement demonstrate ideological strategic flexibility more infrequently than those without such a movement.*

A number of scholars have noted the limiting influence of social movement organizations (SMO) on the political parties initiated by them (Brown, 2012; Wegner, 2011). The reason is fairly predictable. A social movement is created to affect a change within society proper, and for most Islamist movements this involves both a spiritual mission or calling (*da'wa*) – i.e., spreading the knowledge and virtues of the faith – and a social welfare one – i.e., responding to the needy and downtrodden. Such movements require a clear mission, a central hierarchy that can implement the mission, and an effective organizational structure. When movements initiate parties to represent their 'brand name' as political openings arise, it necessitates the creation

of two organizational structures within the umbrella movement. The political elite emerging from the organization do not become the new centre of the movement, but rather an important wing, its political representative.

Wegner (2011, pp. 58–59) highlights this in her analysis of the PJD in Morroco: 'From the ISMO's [i.e., Islamist social movement organization] point of view … the party will never be more than a means to an end – an instrument designed for a special field of social action'. This creates a tension of competing interests between two centres of power, ultimately limiting the strategic capacity of the political organization, centralized and capable though it may be in its own organizational structure. This does not mean that SMOs themselves and their accompanying ideology are static, and recent scholarship has shown the flexibility of social movements to shift goals and understandings, especially during 'moments of crises' (Volpi & Clark, 2019). However, the party's reason for existence, at least initially, is to represent the parent SMO, and thus, they cannot appear to be diverging from the vision of the movement leaders. This naturally restricts the political wing's range of motion and speed in which to act. No matter how expedient a strategically moderate move might be to bolster mobilization for the political wing, in such cases where the party and SMO are linked, they are tethered to the resources and social capital that the established movement provides. Thus, party leadership is regularly forced to acquiesce to the outlook of the leadership of the parent SMO, who see political engagement as secondary to the ultimate goal (Wickham, 2013). This tension resembles a common obstacle for Western European Social Democratic parties whose dependence on class-based membership and trade unions imposed significant constraints on party electoral strategies (Przeworski & Sprague, 1986).

Furthermore, not only does the parent SMO of a dependent representative party provide a competing centre of power with often competing strategic interests but it also provides an established ideology that cannot simply be dismissed for strategic reasons. In this case, the established set of traditions and ideology have been institutionalized prior to party existence, and the party leadership is groomed within these ideas; thus, the constraints on moderation, particularly on its ideological element, will necessitate long debates and usually reinterpretations of the traditional discourse rather than mere abandonment of it to reach strategic goals. Parties created from such movements must be distinguished from parties who create their own political movement.

The distinction of the purpose and originator of the party-social movement linkage is illustrated by comparing the factional break-away parties of *Al-Wasat* from the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and the AKP from the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey. The Al-Wasat group broke away from the Muslim Brothers but only made a minor dent in their parent organization and encountered mediocre reception from the regime and the electorate (El-Ghobashy, 2005; Stacher, 2002). The AKP in Turkey, however, split from the *Milli Görüş* movement's ideological framework and went on to acquire

virtually all of the parent party's mobilized electoral support, achieving greater success than the parent parties ever did.

What made the difference? The best explanation for the very distinct turn of events seems to be the nature of the movements' legitimacy and its relationship to the organizational structure. At the time of the split, both movements had a large network of social outreach organizations and associations that were essential to the mobilization of popular electoral support. For the Muslim Brothers, however, that network was grounded in the institutional framework of an SMO with a well-established 'brand name', and the long-established mission of this network restricted the strategic flexibility of the movement's political representatives (El-Ghobashy, 2005). They could not simultaneously operate with strategic flexibility and reap the gains of a social movement that was tied to its well-established mission and principles.

In Turkey, although Necmettin Erbakan entered national politics on behalf of an Islamist viewpoint in 1969, the well-known Islamist movement he brought into existence, *Milli Görüş* (MG), was formulated as a description of his party's political outlook (Erbakan, 1975). Although his foray into politics has been attributed to support from the Sheikh of a large Nakshibendi order connected to the İskenderpaşa mosque, Mehmet Zahid Kotku (Çakır, 1990; Yavuz, 2003), the party was conceived as a larger umbrella that would draw the support of many other religious communities (Yıldız, 2003). Thus, the MG was a vehicle for party political mobilizatıon. As a platform and movement, it developed in more coherent ways after the first party closure in 1971 when there was a need to sustain political momentum between party closures by the state. It was in the 1980 s that this political platform took on the characteristics of a grassroots political movement tied to a party, and it was bolstered primarily by an informal network of devout social activist organizations (White, 2002). The activists associated with the movement were primarily concerned with political change, and party mobilization was the movement's primary goal.

For Erdoğan and the AKP founders, the split from the MG movement banner occurred at a time when the ageing Necmettin Erbakan was severely limited in his capacity to lead the movement tied together by his personalistic leadership, especially since the 1980s. Thus, when Erdoğan and the others split after the party closure in 2001, most of the cadre from the mobilization network strategically moved with this opportunity for new charismatic leadership, based on Erdoğan's political fame and popular myths formed around his personality, leaving an empty shell of a political movement behind.[5] Since a leader with pious Muslim credentials (e.g. Erbakan) had been one of the defining features of the movement, when his ability to continue leading was in question, it was possible to make a strategic shift. This points out that the when and why behind the creation of a movement matters; a movement created to sustain a political party might redefine itself as different leaders arise from the movement. Such a scenario is far less likely for a party that is

created to represent an established social movement with a well-defined social identity and presence. Furthermore, the consequences of breaking away from a well-known SMO and its mobilizing resources also explain why political parties do not always disentangle themselves from the party to gain enhanced strategic flexibility.

Morocco's PJD is another interesting example demonstrating that, if a party can amicably disentangle itself organizationally from the mother SMO – i.e., when it is no longer beholden to its parent movement resources – it increases its ability to behave more strategically and moderate its discourse. For the PJD, unlike the previous cases, the break was not a factional split from the parent SMO, but a mutual decision to part ways between the party and its parent social movement for mutual benefit (Wegner & Pellicer, 2009). While the Movement of Unity and Reform (MUR) was more influential over the party in 2000 and 2002 with respect to decisions not to join the government, this changed in 2003 when PJD organized its election campaigns independently, distanced itself from MUR, and engaged more strategically towards political system dynamics. During the period PJD was beholden to MUR, its moderation was largely behavioural and functioned to protect the SMO from punishment from the state. As autonomy increased, so did flexibility and moderation regarding the Islamist agenda, and this led to major gains for the party, including the Prime Ministry, following the 2011 and 2016 elections.

A second obstruction preventing an Islamist party to engage more freely is the issue of ideological rigidity, which is also tied to the limitations of pre-existing SMOs. *Thus, we argue that for parties engendered by pre-existing social movements with well-established ideology, instances of moderation will occur comparatively more often in behaviour rather than in ideology*. Where constraints on party leadership's strategic decision-making capacity do exist, the strategic pressure to moderate will most frequently find an outlet in behaviours rather than in pronouncements. Behaviours are naturally temporal and contingent and, thus, more easily justified even when apparently contradictory to principles.[6] Where a party operates as a representative for an SMO, moderate behaviours by the representative party often help ensure that the interests and gains of the social movement are not endangered by the regime. In this regard, from the standpoint of the SMO or the principles that are seen as the end, the moderate behaviours (working with or uniting in opposition to regime policy) can more easily be understood as the means that are, thusly, justified. This is not to say that repeated behaviour that contradicts traditional principles will not lead to re-interpretations of those principles, but where decision-making constraints exist, moderate behaviours require less justification and debate, help the movement protect its gains, and, therefore, will likely be a more frequent strategic recourse.

The detailed accounts of Islamist parties provided within the moderation-inclusion literature also bears out this phenomenon. Jordan's Islamic Action Front has portrayed a party that has been far more flexible behaviourally (rather than ideologically) demonstrated by its willingness to cooperate with the regime or opposition parties when it served their interests, even though these too involved deliberation (Schwedler, 2006). Ideological moderation, where it occurred at all, involved the reframing of the long-established ideological concepts like *shari'a* rather than an abandonment or deletion of the concept altogether. With time, IAF leaders were able to justify (behavioural) participation in elections or cooperation with Leftists as strategic though radical references to Islam remained on the table (Schwedler, 2013).

This same phenomenon was observed in the political wing of the Muslim Brothers and their short-lived Freedom and Justice Party offshoot in Egypt. In the period immediately before and after the Egyptian presidential elections in the summer of 2012, on the behavioural side, Morsi made efforts to ensure that Egypt would uphold its international agreements, particularly its peace treaty with Israel, helped broker a cease-fire between Hamas and Israel, installed independents and technocrats in key positions, and made overtures to Copts and women. Thus, while the Muslim Brothers' political wing evidenced a movement whose political behaviour demonstrated a willingness to play by the rules, it was still beholden to an SMO, whose spokesman was simultaneously pronouncing: 'We created a party to serve our ideas and wider mission. This is a matter of belief and we can never abandon it. The Shari'a is what God handed down to the people as a source of guidance' (reported in Wickham, 2013, p. 187). The tension between the SMO's ideological vision and the political wing's need for strategic space to manoeuvre was evident throughout the transition period in Egypt during the parliamentary debates and in the various positions taken in the presidential candidate selections. The events of 2013 put a halt to this dynamic tension, making it difficult to predict how this would have played out as the Freedom and Justice Party tried increasingly to operate in the new political space that had briefly opened up in Egypt.

In Tunisia, however, Ennahda, provides an opportunity to observe a party grappling with these dynamics over a short period of time. The party began as the political outgrowth of the MTI (Islamic Tendency Movement) when the potential for political participation presented itself in the late 1980s. As with many other organizations, the party was split in its priorities and approach between politics and da'wa. In the midst of this conflicting dynamic, the state ultimately cracked down heavily on Ennahda and some of the other opposition parties, imprisoning or exiling party members in the 1990s. Until Ben Ali stepped down, the party's main objective was essentially survival (Allani, 2009). Therefore, when the party began to reform following Ben Ali's departure, although there was a central leadership figure, Rachid Ghannouchi, there was little infrastructure in place to ensure discipline and a shared vision

Table 1. Overview of propositions and cases.

	Propositions	Inconsistent moderation	Strategic moderation
Party Organizational Structure	*Stong and centralized party leadership structures will be more free to moderate strategically in response to the systemic environment*	Structurally weak and/or not centralized • Islah (Yemen) • PAS (Malaysia) • Ennahda, pre-2014 (Tunisia)	Strong and centralized • AKP, post-2003 (Turkey) • Ennahda, post-2014 (Tunisia) • PKS (Indonesia)
Party-Social Movement Linkages	*Parties tied to a pre-existing social movement will show less ideological strategic flexibility than those operating autonomously from such a movement Parties tied to pre-existing social movements with established ideology will moderate more often in behaviour than ideology*	Strong Founding Social Movement • Ennahda, pre-2014 (Tunisia) • Islamic Action Front (Jordan) • Freedom and Justice Party (Egypt) • PJD, pre-2003 (Morocco) • Milli Görüş-Felicity Party, post 2001 (Turkey)	Strong Party • AKP (Turkey) • Milli Görüş Parties, pre-1998 (Turkey) • PJD, post-2007 (Morocco) • Ennahda, post-2014 (Tunisia)

in the quickly expanding movement (Cavatorta & Merone, 2013; Guazzone, 2013). This led to various behaviours and political pronouncements by a variety of activists who had signed on to the party. As the party centralized its decision-making, especially from 2014 on, Ghannouchi and the party leaders took steps to disentangle Ennahda from cultural, social, and charitable activities and focus solely on politics (McCarthy, 2018). In doing so, they increasingly demonstrated the flexibility to operate strategically in the new political environment.

The party took an electoral loss in 2014, largely due to its inability to govern well and the mixed messages in its early years, but the centralizing infrastructure and detachment from SMO activism have provided the party with a freer strategic hand to engage in compromise and collaboration, for good or bad, in the new democratic order (Yardımcı-Geyikçi & Tür, 2018). Ghannouchi and Ennahda have structured the party in this environment to be fully 'politicized' to use Nathan Brown's terminology. Nonetheless, in a country with a great deal of dissatisfaction for the slow pace of reforms and high degree of corruption, it is yet to be seen how their incorporation into the current system will play out for them, or Tunisia, going forward.Table 1 provides an overview of our discussion of intraparty dynamics for Islamist parties.

Conclusion

In this paper, we contribute to existing scholarship by highlighting the significant role of various intraparty dynamics such as organizational strength, social movement linkages, and ideological legacy as determinants of Islamist parties' moderate or radical behaviours in the context of the broader trend of moderation. The common organizational development of parties from Islamist SMOs often have a critical influence on the ability of an Islamist party to behave strategically. Inconsistent statements and positions may be the offshoot of the grappling between factions to lay claim to the guidance of the party or movement like Ennahda between 2011 and 2013, PAS in Malaysia, or the Islah Party in Yemen. Or behaviour and statements of political elites might be a balancing act between deference to foundational ideology and attempting to respond to openings in the current political environment, like the FJP in Egypt or IAF in Jordan. Ennahda since 2014, Turkey's AKP, and Morocco's PJD represent parties that have been able to create strong parties that are unleashed from the constraining linkages to a pre-existing SMO.

Although we believe that the inclusion-moderation debate has provided a rich theoretical debate on Islamist parties, a complete analysis of moderation requires the incorporation of such factors as organizational capacity, social movement roots, and the established ideological background of the party. The intraparty organizational dynamics, though strengthened, weakened, or altered by external forces, provide explanative power regarding the nature and frequency of moderation acts by Islamist parties. Thus, this study has taken a modest step in developing a broader conceptual and theoretical approach to the study of Islamist party moderation. We hope future scholarship will continue to illuminate these internal and external contextual factors that influence Islamist party behaviour.

Notes

1. We use the term radical to refer to political parties whose expressed ideology, if not action, is anti-system, i.e. intending a holistic change of the existing political system. In much of the literature, 'radical' parties of the right and left are discussed relative to democratic systems, but we are using the term specifically to describe the position of a party relative to the existing political system in which it resides. However much (or little) these parties might choose to operate within the boundaries of conventional politics, the expressed intent is to drastically restructure the political system once provided with governing authority. Many Islamist parties, similar to Communist and Christian Democratic Parties of earlier decades in Europe, promise a holistic change to the system of national government that is incompatible with its current configuration.

2. Useful categorizations exist that capture the variation of Islamist parties observed across Muslim-majority countries. Ozzano's (2013) typology would place most Islamist parties in a range between conservative and fundamentalist, matching Ayoob's (2009) and Yıldırım's (2016) categories of Muslim Democratic parties (conservative) and traditional Islamist parties (fundamentalist). Some parties in Muslim-majority countries, like Malaysia's PAS exhibit some elements of Ozzano's 'nationalist' category also.
3. They use the term *winning-coalition* as those whose support is essential to keep the ruler in power. In authoritarian regimes, this is often only a handful of powerful people.
4. This argument is similar to Kalyvas's (2000) argument who argues that hierarchical, autocratic, and centralized religious institutions can contribute to democratization. We differ from Kalyvas in two ways. First, our theory focuses on party organization and not a broader category of religious institution. Second, our main contention is that centralized and hierarchical party organizations will increase the likelihood of strategic moderation whereas Kalyvas is interested in explaining contribution to democratization through solution of commitment problems.
5. AKP's ideology and its credentials for building a coalition of four different ideological groups (liberal, conservative, Islamists, and leftists) also mattered in the party's success. However, our argument is mainly concerning the movement in relation to the party and thus we focus on the prospects of the party leader.
6. Psychology research provides ample evidence in support of this proposition (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; LaPiere, 1934).

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