

*THE ROLE OF FRIDAY SERMON IN SHAPING THE OPINION OF THE
WORSHIPPERS IN JORDAN*

(WITH FOCUS ON THE CHANGING LEGAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT,
AND COVERAGE IN THE PRESS AND NEW MEDIA)

By

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ABSTRACT

This field study investigates the intricate relationship between Friday sermon (*khutba*) and the worshippers' public opinion in Jordan. Prompted by the *taboo* label assigned to scholarship on *khutba*, it probes whether the agenda-setting, framing and priming process in mass communication (the media) applies to public communication (the mosque).

The hypothesis is that in a marketplace for loyalties, the preacher can impact his worshippers' perception of reality in as much as he can circumvent State regulations and meet his audience's expectations by setting their agenda re *khutba* theme and its attributes.

Field observations (six months' long with three Informants) are crosscut with conclusions drawn from in-depth interviews with concerned actors, thematic content analysis of 24 different *khutbas* in Amman and Zarqa, analysis of relevant coverage in the print and online media, and a questionnaire to 200 mosque-goers. The period covered is 2008 till 2013, crosscutting the Arab Spring and its ensuing political change.

Thematic analysis shows the mosque preacher frames his *khutba* to endorse a certain definition for the salient theme, suggest a causal interpretation, furnish for a moral evaluation, and recommend a certain treatment (Entman 1993:52). This process works as a hedge against possible clash with pertinent regulations, and is filled with content drawn from the mutual expectations between preacher and an ostensibly dormant religious audience yet highly interactive on social media.

The influence of this speech is affirmative for the legitimacy of the regime by helping it crowd out political competitors, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The worshippers do not expect the preacher to come up methodological solutions for complex political issues, therefore the dichotomy

between citizens' disagreement with then changing State regulations (2006) and the vindication of the Muslim Brotherhood movement as the prime victim of State control.

The losers in this shuffle for allegiances' game are the State and Muslim Brotherhood. The spillover is the preacher and congregation reaching implicit consensus in setting the *khutba's* agenda and its attributes, as both have the wit to fathom the officialdom's scheme thanks to diverse available sources to reinterpret controversial content.

Through this process of framing contest the audience integrates the perceived message into packages forged by means of prior personal experiences and discussions with others in the religious space and the public sphere. Therefore none of the frames can exclusively shape the opinion of the worshippers (Nisbet 2010: 47 & 48) as these frames are effective in as much as they resonate with the audience's prevalent schema and their strongly held value constructs such as ideology, political affiliation or religious belief.

This conclusion opens up for questions regarding the nature of agenda settings tools being used by both the State and actors in the religious sphere concerning their functions and viability. The Researcher recommends that a team of researchers equipped with sound knowledge and experience in ethnography, critique-based approach and quantitative scholarship further fathoms this interdisciplinary field in order to unravel how the agenda-setting, framing and priming processes work together in shaping public opinion in an Arab and Islamic context.

CHAPTER ONE

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

1.1. Background

Debate on the religious discourse, Friday congregational sermon in particular, has gained considerable attention in recent years. In Jordan, the input of academic research on this issue has not been correspondent to the importance given to it by worldwide academic and think-tank circles. It mostly consists of holding seminars or papers in tandem with the political euphoria that followed the 09/11 event and its repercussions (aka *war on terrorism/terror*), and recently the *Arab Spring*, but hardly any field study that delves into the local religious sphere and deconstructs it so as to unveil its underpinning elements and factors for change. A modest academic interest does not match that given to mosque speech by the media, officialdom or public debate. The researcher of this study (further on, the Researcher; an activist who works in media research and development) decided to contribute to this field by means of empirical field research, thereby delving into what seems to be a social taboo in Jordan (Al-Rousan 2009:1&5)¹.

Scholars attest to the influence that religious discourse, sermon in particular, has on society in the USA (Gring 2008:269). Debate about mosque speech and its impact on social and political life in Jordan appears to have gained increased consideration in recent years. Al-Rousan (2009:5) attributes this to the narrative that links between the mosque and terrorism. But as previously noted, this interest stops short of exploring how much the mosque, the single institution entitled to

¹ Dr. Safwat Al-Rousan, Department of Educational and Social Sciences, Faculty of Ajloun, Al-Balqa Applied University, Irbid, Jordan.

conduct Friday sermons², shapes the mindset of the congregation and public opinion at large.

With the advent of the Internet and a subsequent increase in penetration of online and social media³, in addition to State intervention in terms of regulations targeting both the media and mosque discourse, public debate has taken the form of interactive dialogue. This debate tackles a platform which has for long been constrained in one-way communication formula to the public (from orator to the audience); a factor for change which renders this study more relevance and significance. Al-Rousan (2009:4) views that,

“The mosque has been the most controversial issue in Jordanian society, particularly since the eighties of the last century. The discussion included issues related to its religious role, how effective is this role, and its political and social functions. But the link between the mosque and politics remains the most important issue with regard to the mosque in Jordan”⁴

Nevertheless, given the intermeshed relationship between citizen, State and the mosque in Jordan (given Islam is the State religion as per constitution, a considerable number of built mosques, King as direct descendent of Prophet Mohammad, and a high religiosity rate among people⁵), a serious question must

² The notion by Al-Rousan regarding the exclusivity of mosque as the place where Friday sermon is conducted is opposed by preacher Wael Battiri, who believes this limitation has no reference in Quran or *hadith*, rather embedded in State regulations and policies, although Battiri indicates that some Islamist groups disavow the State-run and would conduct their prayer and sermon in open space in Hay Nazzal in Amman.

³ By April 2015 there were five million Internet users, four million facebook accounts in Jordan which ranked 46th in World Internet speed. Jordan produces around 75 percent of Arabic content on the Internet.

Sources: <http://www.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleno=227156> and <http://www.maqar.com/?id=86792> and <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/most-online-arabic-content-lacks-accuracy-quality-%E2%80%94-experts> accessed on September 17th, 2015.

⁴ Transliteration by the Researcher from the original Arabic text.

⁵ While some ensuing polls indicate a prevalent religiosity penchant among Jordanians, a study by Al-Rousan et al (2013) shows that the ‘religious identity’ constitutes only 17 percent as constituent of the ‘youth identity’ in Jordan.

Source: <http://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/jsr/article/view/4000> accessed on February 07th, 2015.

be raised about how much impact religious speech, particularly Friday sermon, has on shaping people's worldviews and choices? For the Jordanian State, religion is a fundamental component of its political ideology, but how do religious and political actors view the impact of mosque speech in light of the regulatory tools which the State had enacted in order to counterbalance the influence that Friday sermon wield on public opinion? Shteivi⁶ (1996:90) maintains that,

*“The result of the subordination of religion to the State is obvious and mainly serves to provide political support to the State and further legitimize its policies and practices without any major challenge. Furthermore, the alliance between official Islam and the State has been used as a major weapon in the competition with the Islamic movements and groups in the country, by presenting a distinct and specific interpretation of Islam”.*⁷

Furthermore, given the mono-directional nature of Friday sermons on one side, and the interactive nature of new media on the other, this study attempts to answer how does the media and online users perceive this state-mosque relationship, particularly that a high level of religiosity in Jordan does not proportionately correlate to, or necessarily translate into, a high level of involvement in religious services, nor correspond to a high level of spiritual needs, as a survey by Moaddel & Azad⁸ (2002:5) depicts. Nevertheless, the Researcher views that the impact of religious speech in a setting like the mosque transcends

⁶ Musa Shteivi “holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Cincinnati / Ohio / United States in 1991. He is a Sociologist with 17 years of experience in teaching at the University of Jordan where he used to teach in the Gender Studies and the Human Rights and Development programs, in addition, to the Sociology Department.”
Source: <http://www.jcss.org/Contents/Director.aspx#.VNYFXp2UeSo> accessed on February 07th, 2015.

⁷ Source: http://www.passia.org/publications/research_studies/Jordan-Palestine/pdf/3.pdf accessed on September 17th, 2015.

⁸ Mansoor Moaddel, Professor of sociology at Eastern Michigan University.
Source: <http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/61413.pdf> accessed on February 07th, 2015.
Taghi Azadarmaki, Professor of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, Iran.

State limitations as it builds on the communal memory of collective practice of rituals and subordination to religious discourse compiled throughout ages. Smith (2008:29) argues that,

“collective memory is housed in gestures, bodily practice, sounds, habits, movements, and postures [...] They derive their power from being performed in settings of everyday life among the community and with a particular relationship to place. These might be the most delicate, fragile, and elusive pieces of collective memory but they are also powerful and enduring.”

This field study alludes heavily to the only study on Friday sermons which Antoun (1989) had conducted in Jordan in the early 1960s. The author maintains that given the “*cultural gap*” that exists between the mosque’s audience and Imam/preacher, as a “*religious specialist*” the latter should take on the indispensable role of “*cultural broker*”⁹ by presenting “*choice*” and the “*reinterpretation of tradition*” to his folk congregation.

Akin to the aforementioned study, this field study highlights the religious, social, political, economic and economic content as the relevant areas of interest which, along with the contextualization of the mosque setting in time and space, are factors that should be taken into consideration in studying the interplay between the religious speech, State, political/religious actors and worshippers in Jordan.

As a theoretical module, this study examines how the preacher, affected by State regulations and directives and suggestions, apply agenda-setting, framing, and priming effects in order to shape the worshippers’ public perception of reality.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid, p.257

¹⁰ Edelman (1993:232) claims that the selection of frames is mostly “*driven by ideology and prejudice*”. Scheufele (p.116) states that “*how people think about an issue is influenced by the accessibility of frames*”. Scheufele (p.103) cites Brosius and Eps (1995) who contends that framing is not a concept with general applicability or explicability but a metaphor that is context-specific, while other scholars as Popkin (1994) went even further in as not to differentiate between agenda-setting, framing and priming given that framing is considered a second-level agenda-setting effect, and priming as the final impact of both processes.

Source: <http://www.phil-fak.uni->

The aim of both the State (by proxy of the religious establishment) and the preacher (whether a staff of awqaf or freelancer) is to influence what information and meaning is to be relayed as input to the audience/congregation, hence what information the recipient worshippers deem as important given their repeated exposure to the relayed messages (agenda-setting), and how preachers package and frame elements of the sermon (framing) in such a way as to manipulate choices undertaken by the audiences who interpret and process that input and act accordingly (priming).

Framing and agenda-setting entail identical psychological processes, but their cognitive courses of action are different. The cognitive process associated with agenda-setting is called *processing* which implies that the more frequently an issue is covered by the news media, the more readily that issue flashes in the memory of the audience. The effect on the audience is attributed to the cumulative influence of a very large number of messages, words, phrases and images which differ in content yet deal with the same common issues. Agenda-setting also bears great impact on what the recipient thinks that other recipients are thinking of, therefore assigning more significance to issues or themes that have been broadly tackled by the media. Friday sermon, which mostly embeds the same language and metaphors directed to a homogeneous congregation, presumably resembles the optimum domain for this communication process and its ensuing effects. The Researcher postulates that this principle applicable to the news media applies also to the public communication sphere (between preacher and worshippers in the mosque), given the communal sense of religious affinity which binds the wider community of Muslims in the world, namely the *umma*.

The effects of the *agenda-setting* module (McCombs and Shaw, 1968) appear in how easy the collective memory of people can feed them with issues covered repetitively by the media. The impact of *framing* is determined by the extent to

which the conveyed messages suit the thoughts and knowledge which people already have in their minds. While the salience¹¹ of the issue being broadcast or preached is an agenda-setting effect, priming explains how information pertaining to these issues is stored in people's mind. This data stimulates the mind therefore influencing people's judgment and decision making in real life.

In the mosque's setting related to our field study, the preacher/Imam and the religious establishment (State institutions behind the screen) attempt to influence the worshippers' judgment of issues (*priming*). This is done by feeding the minds of the congregation with issues intended to become most salient in their minds and easy to access and retrieve (*agenda setting*). The preacher also characterizes the sermon issue in a religious package in such a way as to fit beliefs and information already stored in the collective mind of his audience (*framing*). Danowski (2007, 2009) considers framing as a means to shape the process of agenda setting, providing a positive or negative view about the issue at hand.

The priming concept (Iyengar, Peters and Kender, 1982) is important as it evaluates the news' effect on the audience, the sermon's effect among the worshippers in our case. By highlighting a particular theme within the sermon (which might as well be less important), yet obscuring another more or equally important one (especially if primed by the State or political/religious actors), the worshippers are influenced by this salient theme while deeming others as obscure or less relevant. The transmission of the choice of themes and the attributes of these themes from the preacher to his congregation is meant to leave a *priming* effect on the ground within the latter group.

¹¹ By salience we borrow the definition of (McCombs & Bell, 95), namely "*whether or not something is perceived as important or prominent*".

1.2. Justification of the Study

In his analysis to framing in cultural settings, Reese (2010:23) posits that any study should begin with the justification of its importance.

The Researcher, working in media research and development projects, embarked on this study given the passionate trend of focusing on reform projects and studies nationwide. Most of these undertakings tackle factors that shape the mindset of the people and formulate public opinion such as family, media or education. However, there is hardly any scholarship that targets the apparently "*taboo*" subject of religiosity, as Al-Rousan (2009:1) has aptly described it.

Scientific research highlights the mosque podium (*minbar*) as an efficient means of communication. Fathi (2001:168) contended that *minbar* is more efficient in disseminating information than commonplace interpersonal contacts given the commonality between the parties involved as compared to a situation where the same content is being conveyed through different asymmetrical intermediaries. In addition, communication through *minbar* is more agile given the context that several members of the target audience are concurrently exposed to the same message. Fathi (p.171) asserts that given the dearth of scholarship on *minbar* and its influence, *minbar* as a means of communal communication is worthy of more interest in social science research.

Whilst neighboring Arab countries have drawn remarkable attention by researchers¹², Brown (2006:3) contended that Jordan's share of research is disproportionate to the fact the country has a legal Islamist party (The Islamic Action Front, political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood movement). The movement

¹² Examples:

* Mosque and State in Iraq's New Constitution; Townley, Stephen, (2006), Denver Journal of International Law and Policy.

* Syria, the Ba'ath Regime and the Islamic Movement: Stepping on a New Path? Zisser, E. 2005. The Muslim World Journal. Vol. 95.

was established in 1946 with the independence of Jordan, and its relationship with the State is best described as a historical gamut of alliance, cooptation, contention and containment respectively. Also, Kuypers (2010: 286) pinpoints to the lack of rhetorical studies in the social scientific realm, and attributes this dearth to the fact that researchers are unfamiliar with what represents validity in rhetorical scholarship. Kuypers (p.288) defines rhetoric as a persuasive exercise that attempts to impact our personal and communal behaviors by inducing a voluntary concurrence with the orator that his disposition is better than another.

Mosques seem not to be the Islamists' most important platform to Islamize society, as they also resort to organize and mobilize the youth through informal networks that traverse through the mosques, Islamic centers and societies such as Quran memorization centers, family-based *dawa* groups and professional syndicates.

While research indicates that religiosity plays a crucial role in the life of Jordanians¹³, surveys¹⁴ yield data that this significance does not necessarily transform into significant involvement in religious services (Moaddel et al, 2002: 5). This disparity between belief and communal participation is worth investigation so as to find out which factors play role in transforming religiosity into daily life action, and how much a reference does the mosque speech (mainly Friday sermon) constitute for the pious in this respect. This issue has recently taken precedence with State concerns about the continuum of society Islamization, radicalism, violence and the ensuing "*terrorism*".

¹³ As per an undisclosed survey (2008) facilitated to the researcher by an anonymous State official, 98 percent of Jordanians parents think of religion as an important element of their life, while religious teaching guides 91 percent of the parents in their daily life.

¹⁴ Moaddel and Azad, Comparative Sociology, Volume 1, Issue 3, pages 299 – 319, citing The Worldviews of Islamic Publics: The Cases of Egypt, Iran, and Jordan. http://www.worldvaluessurvey.com/Upload/5_Iran.pdf accessed on September 03rd, 2010. The survey shows that only 28 percent of the 1200 Jordanian respondents indicated they attend religious services more than once a week. When asked, "Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are (1) a religious person, (2) not a religious person or (3) a convinced atheist?" 85 percent described themselves as religious.

Jarrar (2009:8&9), focusing on the mosque as the radicals' platform for spreading ideology, posits that an ample literature on the lawful, diplomatic and military reaction to terrorism is being faced with a dearth in ideological response, and hardly anything concerning its impact on societies, especially those subject to authoritarian regimes.

From a Jordanian perspective, Antoun (1989:105) contends that,

“The fact is, the study of the audience’s understanding, interpretation of, and response to religious messages [...] is a subject about which we know almost nothing. And until we do, the study of Islamic sermons or any others, for that matter, will be incomplete”.

This study by the Researcher is an attempt to understand the relationship between the mosque preacher as a “*social broker*”, State as regulator, sermon as the message, and the audience as a seemingly apathetic recipient of the message yet quite interactive in commenting on the sender and the message through different media platforms or in public space.

While academic scholarship behoove social scientific orientation when investigating the subject of religious discourse (adherence to parameters of quantitative and qualitative research), this effort stems from a critical rhetorical perspective where the Researcher is guided by a ‘hunch’ given the cultural frame that resides in the orator, text (sermon), audience (worshippers), and context (a predominantly Islamic culture).

1.3. Objectives of the Study and its Significance

This field study is an attempt to shed light on the intricacies that govern the apparently simplistic cause-and-effect relationship between religious discourse and the worshippers' public opinion. This is done by posing Friday sermon, the worshippers and media in Jordan as focal point of analysis. Based on selected examples of multifarious actors, the study will examine the complex interplay between Friday sermons and the way the worshippers' perceive actuality through the application of social sciences' approaches.

As ubiquitous as mosques seem to be in Jordan (6243 established, and 772 under construction)¹⁵, and as vested as religiosity appears to be in the life of Jordanians according to statistics (mosques catering to around 1.5 million citizens on each Friday)¹⁶, questions nevertheless abound about how effective mosque speech is in shaping the viewpoints of the worshippers; to what extent do worshippers at the mosque really pay attention to the sermon and act accordingly; how much does the State in reality has stake in shaping the worshippers' opinion through regulating the mosque's message therefore indirectly setting their agenda¹⁷ by proxy of the preacher; whether sermons have changed in content due to changes in legislations and the political context; how effective is the media in engaging citizens to discuss the mono-directional and patriarchal public speech of the mosque?

This query also begs the question on whether the mosque is limited to the space-time definition of the mosque, or the State's definition of the mosque, or there exist other type(s) of mosques that stay aloof of the influence of State regulations and control, if at all influential!

¹⁵ Source: http://www.awqaf.gov.jo/pages.php?menu_id=90 accessed on September 17th, 2010.

¹⁶ See supra footnote # 4.

¹⁷ John Kingdon (1995:3) defines "*agenda*" as "*a list of subjects or problems to which government officials and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention to at any given time*".

The hypothesis is that Friday congregational sermon, as a public communication tool, shapes the opinion of the worshippers in as much as the orator constructs and conveys meaning in his speech, based on concepts and models historically cultivated in the mindset of the message receivers which have an aggregate impact on their perception about reality.

Scheufele et al (2010: 114) posit that the communicator can transform the audience's perception of reality given the interactive influence between the framed message and the "underlying culturally shared audience schema". D. Reese (2010: 24) elicits a link between societal connection of meaning and the historical evolution of beliefs that across time have been taken for-granted by the society members.

The message is premeditatedly chosen, framed and primed in order to impact people's judgment about social reality. This process takes place with the participation of State institutions through institutionalized intervention by which they attempt to monopolize religious representations, manipulate the consecrated message to control the religious sphere, and ultimately impacting the public and political spheres.

No authoritative scholarship has so far embarked on answering these questions except an old study by Antoun (1989) who contends that studying the Islamic sermon [*khutba*] is important to solve significant queries being raised in a number of humanities and cultural scholarships.

In another partly-related study by Al-Rousan (2009:1) titled "*change in the mosque's image and function in contemporary Jordanian society*"¹⁸, the scholar attributes the dearth of scholarship on mosque-related issues to the tumult that would come out of tackling such issues within different strata of the Islamic

¹⁸ Translation by the Researcher from the Arabic title *Tabaddul Sourat al-Jame' wa Wadhifatuhu fi al-Mujtama' al-Urduni al-Mu'aser: Muqaraba Sociolojijyah* تبدل صورة الجامع ووظيفته في المجتمع الأردني ا
مقاربة سوسولوجية

societies. This has rendered access to sociological reference on the impact of the ubiquitous mosque in Jordan, save some studies of architectural and purely religious focus, not an easy task to carry out.

1.4. Review of the Literature

1.4.1. Studies on the Religious Phenomenon

In his study “*The religious phenomenon in the Arab-Muslim community*”¹⁹, Haidar Ali Ibrahim (1999) calls for adopting the social-historical interpretation of the religious phenomenon by tracking its time evolution and social and cultural contexts, that is, avoiding mutual interaction between religion and other social phenomena. Ibrahim attributes the “*deficiency*” in relevant research to the emergence of an approach that employs faith or religious ideology as an indispensable part of the study. Thus, objectivity of the study becomes “*impossible*” given the researcher’s position as an observer directly incorporated in the observable fact and not just a participant, therefore coming out with end results and suppositions that are self-expressive.

The Researcher in this study²⁰ comments on Ibrahim’s epistemological disposition the methodological notion that, in certain settings, field research in human sciences and the observation of interrelated factors require not only the researcher becoming an “*integrated observer*”, but more so undertaking the task of cultural immersion, that is, total subjectivity in co-living the moment but inter-subjectivity when penning down and explaining field findings. Ibrahim criticizes the tendency of some “*non-sociologist*” researchers who, in studying the role of religion in social change, they theorize their work confined to Durkheim’s hypothesis and selectively quote this sociologist’s works to corroborate their own findings. Ibrahim (Ibid) calls

¹⁹ *a-Dzahira a-Diniya fil Mujtama’ al-Arabi al-Islami* الظاهرة الدينية في المجتمع العربي الإسلامي

Source:

<https://anthropohira.wordpress.com/2012/10/13/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7/>
accessed on January 24th, 2015.

²⁰ The term “The Researcher in this study” is being repetitively used in lieu of the pronoun “I”. This should not imply the Researcher being detached from the subject theme, as in qualitative research; on the contrary, he is an integral “participant” guided by his culturally preordained schemata.

for treating religion as a “*meaning system*” established by society to give a comprehensive framework to human behavior and understanding. Ibrahim instead calls for resorting to the Durkheim’s model, which focuses on the ideological questioning of what is good and right (values), if it can amalgamate the sociological perspective with historical materialism given the numerous points of convergence between them, especially the historical development of phenomena, including thoughts and their modus operandi with other phenomena. Ibrahim also contends that the religious phenomenon, the subject, has remained outside the field of scientific study since it includes the supra-human and the transcendent.

The study of the religious phenomenon occupied large space in contemporary Arab-Islamic thought, but sociology in the Arab world, in terms of its definitions and renowned attempts within the academia and research institutions, did not sufficiently contribute to the study of religious phenomenon by using its own means of analysis despite its paramount importance. Ibrahim (Ibid) views that the religious phenomenon acts as a factor in identifying and influencing the orientation of social thought in the Arab and Muslim world. Religion impacted research and knowledge in the Arab community in terms of the selection of theories, methods and fields as it delineated the limits that do not conflict with the teachings of religion and its ethos *in order to preserve unity and cohesion in society*. This has kept the religious phenomenon away from being considered a field of science as it embeds the supra-human and transcendent, stopping at the level of explanation and interpretation. Sociology did not sufficiently contribute to the study of the religious phenomenon, which forms a crisis in Arab sociology. The study of the phenomenon of religious belief as including the dogma and religious ideology together deprived studies of their objectivity. Some of these approaches contend that a Muslim community is distinguished from other human societies and therefore is not subject to their underpinning laws, as its phenomena transcend the level of human research.

Other studies seek to formulate a kind of sociology remote from social sciences established in Western academia which ignore the rights of God and the individuals; an approach which renders the sociologist a man of clergy and nature. In studying religious belief and politics, Asad²¹ stresses the importance of studying the “senses” in order to discover and categorize ways they can construct sensitivities and attitudes that are distinct from beliefs. Asad also questions the notion that formality in rituals is essentially an external type of coercion, for it is only when forms become elements in strategic interaction that they serve as an approach to direct or control others. The effects of public forms are diverse in as much as they have a say in the construction and reconstruction of the self and cultivating it in a social setting.

To wit, if we think of formal performance (in our case, rituals that proceed or precede Friday sermon) not as an action that denies choice by imposing formalities (subjectivity to orthodoxy in creed), but as an activity that aims at orthopraxy (correctness of behaviour, responsiveness and manners as in *sunna*), one may construe the repetition of ritualistic forms as something that goes beyond the blind compliance with predominant tradition or submission to authority. Asad elucidates that, while unlimited choice is not allowed in the development of proper formality needed to cultivate ethical virtues, it does entail the proper exercise of judgment. Therefore, forms are both potentialities and limitations indispensable for imaginative thought and behaviour. This is because the appropriateness of formal performance requires not merely the blind repetition of customary rituals, but also originality in performing them in appropriate circumstances.

Asad also warns of a Western tendency to perceive codes of conduct in dress, manner, daily prayers, etc., and the cultivation of religious sensitivities (such as the control of sentiments in speech, behaviour towards others, and respect toward

²¹ Asad, T. (2008) *Thinking about Religious Belief and Politics*, UC Berkeley Graduate Lectures. Source: <http://iah.unc.edu/images/events/EventDocuments/asadreligionpolitics> or <http://www.uctv.tv/shows/Thinking-about-Religion-Belief-and-Politics-with-Talal-Asad-15122> accessed on February 08th, 2015.

the sacred voice) as restriction and repression. This is because, for the Muslim worshipper, discipline is connected to a strong acknowledgement, esteem and orientation of divine and sacrosanct presence. Asad adds that,

“if political or religious authority imposes norms of conduct and doctrine on the individual, and if this imposition is accepted, then this must be a case of “sincere but inauthentic belief”²²

Instead of dealing with this behaviour in terms of belief (inauthentic belief or false consciousness), Asad suggests that scholars investigate how these senses are cultivated or how they formulate, and hence what political opinions these formations make possible or otherwise.

A study in northern Jordan by Al-Rousan (2009:51) depicts that another research approach intends to strip the Arab mind of its ability by rendering it incapable of reasoning and prone to error, thereby diminishing the scientific production of sociology of religion as compared to production in other fields. Despite the great importance of Islam, Arab sociologists avoided the risk of tackling the core problematic issue of religion in Arab and Islamic societies, but have conducted studies on religion akin to those of religious institutions and movements; descriptive studies on the results or functions of religion. There also emerged a research trend with a positive interpretation of religion, such as the role of religion in development, social change and social control; a method to create common ground between religion and reality. A yet another stream tried to study the emergence of the so-called Islamic awakening or religious revival, or religious groups or extremist movements, and the nature of these studies was characterized by political and media approaches in the following up of events; a

²² Ibid.

descriptive expert-based approach instead of a methodological academic one. Asad, cited in Jakobsen (2015:4)²³ argues that,

“What matter in Islam [...] are not abstract truth claims with no practical relevance, but ‘practical rules and principles aimed at developing a distinctive set of virtues’, therefore, Islamic religiosity does not work very well under the conditions of liberal democracy: it is realized only as an embodied practice, it makes claims on social and political life, and it insists contrary to our most sacred-liberal beliefs that ‘the individual does not own itself”.

In December 2014, anthropologist Mohanna Haddad commented to the Researcher that Western sociology had studied religion and its impact on society in the light of secularization, an approach that goes back to the enlightenment period and the ensuing separation of church and state with the completion of the Western constitutions. This secularization process never took place in the world called Islamic; instead of religion being enveloped in the social process, the social processes remained enveloped in the religious phenomena, containing their justification and negation. Richard Antoun (1989:188) maintains that,

“the separation of church and state is irrelevant as an issue in Jordan not only because there is no “church,” that is, a formal ecclesiastical organization, from which to separate but also because government and religion are perceived as mutually implied”.

In a Western context, Hashemi (2012)²⁴ points out that,

“it is in the dynamic ‘twin tolerations’- whereby state institutions and religious authorities learn to respect certain minimum boundaries of freedom of action- that an understanding of the relationship between religion and democracy can be rooted”.

²³ Source:

https://www.academia.edu/9400881/Secularism_Islam_and_Liberal_Democracy_A_Habermasian_Critique_of_Talal_Asad accessed on February 09th, 2015.

²⁴ Source: http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU_Brief_IslamDemocracy_1219.pdf accessed on April 23rd, 2015.

Studies on religion and the state has increased after the political change that took place in Iran in the late seventies, and schools of thought moved away from the social theory in the interpretation of religion or of religious movements and roles, and were limited to certain sayings by Durkheim, drifting away from religion as a system of meaning formed by the individual or community that gives a comprehensive framework for the human mind and understanding. There also emerged a critique-minded stream in dealing with the religious phenomenon linking religion to backwardness; more of an intellectual clash, especially after the June 1967 war between Arab countries and Israel.

Ibrahim put forward a general challenge related to the approach and vision pursued by the researchers of the Islamic religious phenomenon, as it represents a stream of researchers whose studies and writings are marred with multiple concepts, hanging around the phenomenon without tackling its core, which renders their writings rich in language, but more of an ideological speech far from carrying scientific features.

Religion attempts to safeguard the present social order given it notably shapes its underpinning beliefs and ethics. This could be all the more evident in societies where religion and its institutions play dominant role in the life of society members, whether individually or collectively.

In a panel discussion on “*Politics and Religion, and the Prospects for Transformation in the Arab World*”²⁵, pundits pinpointed to an augmented state interference with religious matters, whether in educational curricula, *fatwa* [religious decree], or Friday sermon. The aim is to serve the state’s agenda and political orientations which can be seen as politicization and exploitation of religion by Arab governments.

²⁵ Transliteration by the Researcher from the original Arabic text, Source: Middle East Studies Center, Report on a panel discussion, Amman, 23/09/2006 *السياسة والدين وأفاق التحول في الوطن العربي* http://www.mesc.com.jo/Activities/Act_Discuss/seminars/mesc-15-08.html#1 accessed on January 20th, 2015.

Antoun (1989:187) denotes that Muslim societies were and are still characterized by the lack of dichotomy between religion and politics. Citing D. Eugene Smith (1970), Antoun describes these societies as having an “*organic*” religious system in spite of all their social structural and cultural diversities, by which religion is communally expressed in structures of “*societal*” rather than “*religious*” nature. An “*organic*” system has three features- an integrality ideology, mechanisms of religious control in society, and a dominant regime. This system integrates religion and government. As the ruler embodies the role of the custodian of World order and the State, his authority is validated by the religious bureaucrats, laws and regulations are the expression the divine authority, and education is a reflection of the divine teaching. Antoun (Ibid) attests that there is no proper dichotomy between religion and state in a modernizing Muslim country like Jordan, as the custody of the mosques has since the early Islamic era rested within the purview of state care and control. The “*organic*” feature of Jordan’s religious system is evident as the king, the direct descendent of Prophet Mohammad, is the sole custodian of the Muslim [and Christian] shrines in occupied Jerusalem. The non-separation of state and religion is there not because there is no formal religious institution from which to separate, but because religion and the State are deemed as jointly implied.

1.4.2. Studies on Political Movements, Jordanian State and the Mosque

The centrality of the mosque has always been essential during shifts of regimes and conflicts among forces competing for power in the Muslim history. This issue has become all the more relevant in today’s Jordanian social and political context given the declared ‘war on terrorism’ following the 09/11 events in USA and the 11/09 events in Amman (bombing hotels by Al-Qaeda), and most recently the Arab Spring and the rise of radical narrative in the region. These developments beget

change in the dynamics that govern the relationship between state, religious institutions, Islamic movements and religious speech in general. The reliance of Islamist movements on the mosque as a their legitimate sphere of influence to Islamize society through *dawa*, and as their bailiwick to impact public opinion and mobilize the masses and shape the political sphere are all factors which render this trio (political movements, state, mosque) worthy of academic study.

Antoun (1989:239) observes that following World War II, the process of Islamization proceeded apace in terms of the focus on orthopraxy Islam, mainly through the staffing of jurisconsults and judges, marriage officials and Imams in addition to a parallel focus on worship. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, although preachers in rural Jordan have gradually become more co-opted into the State system, financial independence provided by this bureaucratization process gave the preachers ample room to contest local customs that contradict with the prevalent norms in Islam, and to go up against local power groups incongruent to the religious institution.

Islamization²⁶ preceded fundamentalism and is an ongoing process that will persist in the Muslim world regardless of the rise or ebb in fundamentalism or Islamic revival. Amidst this scenery, a burgeoning State power and a concurrent secularization²⁷ of society as a facet of modernization did not deter the Islamic religious institution from carrying on with its mandate to convey its own values to the majority of people through a corpus of preachers, Imams, scholars, judges and other religious functionaries.

Jarrar (2009:63-66) attributes the change in Jordan's policy toward the Islamist movements to the "*war on terror*" announced by Western powers following the

²⁶ Antoun (1989:242) defines Islamization as "*the process of institutionalization, social organization, differentiation of roles, proselytization, and systemization of doctrine*".

²⁷ By "*secularization*" Antoun (p.189) does not imply the Western concept of separation of State and church, but that of State expanding its regulatory functions in many aspects including education, training and the bureaucratization of local Imams.

09/11 events, giving the Jordanian regime the mantle it needs to extend its scope of legal control from the political sphere to the religious one so as to dwarf opposition to its pro-Western policies. However, the 2005 terrorist bombing in Amman pushed the government to make known its counter-ideological approach to curb the Islamists' ability to mobilize political dissent. This approach took the shape of preventive and deterrent anti-terrorism legislations, regulating the religious space to control the ins and outs of religious activity, and controlling social platforms to be in sole command of collective action. As to the effect of this approach, Jarrar differentiates between the audience of radical Islamists, who resort to informal networks of mobilization such as makeshift mosques, and legitimate Islamic opposition such as preachers of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. While restrictive legislations have managed to reign in the radicals' reach, these groups would always find informal ways to disseminate their radical thought. As for the *legitimate* group, State restrictive measures would alienate the majority moderates driving them toward more radicalism. Jarrar however does not posit any tangible evidence to prove this distinction. As vested as the mosque is in the life of Jordanians, Wicktorowicz (1999:219), who studied the discourse of the salafi movement in Jordan, views that very scarce scholarship has been published in order to fathom the effect of the mosque discourse over people.

The Researcher however views that a decade after the enactment of the anti-terror legislations, the Jordanian regime has proved adept in reigning in both groups (salafis and Muslim Brotherhood). Contrary to Jarrar's conclusion, the government has ultimately allowed the radicals to conduct Friday prayers in open space (especially in their redoubt of Salt city near Amman), therefore exposing their modus operandi and narrative so that the regime can construct its own counter-narrative in return. In March 2015, a former intelligence brass described this approach to the Researcher as an antidote or "*vaccine*" policy without which the State would not be immune to these radical groups and their stretched arm in the region as they now constitute a "*real threat to the country*".

As for the legitimate dissent group (Muslim Brotherhood), although the policy of stripping them off the mosque platform had ostensibly driven many to become more radical, in Spring 2015 the State has managed to drive a wedge between radicals and moderates, ultimately causing a split²⁸ in the movement that rendered the original group an illegal entity. Contrary to analysis by pundits and scholars²⁹ who, akin to Jarrar's disposition expected that soft and hard containment of the religious speech begets more extremist narrative (therefore proposing the alternative panacea of genuine political reform), the Jordanian regime managed to run the dynamics of social action in such a way as to manipulate the religious space by selectively allowing the radical groups (jihadist salafists and *their* party) to occupy the public space, while pushing the moderate members of the Muslim Brotherhood movement into a yet more radical path; to wit, an exposure tactic concerning the jihadists, but a 'divide and rule' approach against the movement.

Rousan (2009:237) presents one of the rare sociological studies on the changed picture and function of the mosque in contemporary Jordan. This Jordanian researcher mourns the once inclusive role of the mosque (the only institution Arabs knew in the start of their Muslim state) whence the mosque had exceeded its religious function to play an inclusive political, economic, educational, social and military role. One factor behind the ebb of this role is the increasing political and educational awareness in Jordanian society. The remaining religious role also lost its impact after the mosque has lost its institutional form. This is because the Muslim worshipper practices his due rituals to please his community and society, and to enhance his feeling of belongingness to *umma*.

²⁸ Source: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/jordan-muslim-brotherhood-revoke-membership-crisis.html> accessed on April 24th, 2015.

²⁹ See for example- *The Mosque and the State: After the Arab Spring*, by Nader Hashemi (December 2012), a joint publication by The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding and the British Council.
Source: http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU_Brief_IslamDemocracy_1219.pdf accessed on October 13th, 2015.

The ability of the preacher to exploit his religious role to influence the political and social realm rendered the mosque a target for the ruling authority to control its speech in order to justify reality and maintain a status quo. The aforementioned study concludes that the mosque oscillates between being subservient to and under the financial control of either the ruling authority to prop up its narrative, or the Islamist movements to support their reformist project.

The study also highlights the “*concealed role*” of Friday sermon in fueling a feeling of a “*foreign danger*” among the worshippers in order to enhance people’s loyalty to the Jordanian regime. Rousan (p. 240) contends that from the 1960s till mid 1990s, the mosque continued to produce its own discourse which embeds the features of the historical political discourse, but nowadays’ discourse has lost its once influential role on the masses. And as a rationalization panacea, the mosque discourse has been localized “*Jordanized*” so as to deal with the objective circumstances of the Jordanian arena, which begot a compromised public narrative that is distorted and bereft of traditional Islamic landmarks, because the locus of the Islamic discourse is its comprehensive worldview. The study also views that people who attend Friday sermons *en masse* are worried about the political role of the mosque, which illustrates the failure of the Islamist and political groups in using the mosque as a launch pad to secure a state of balance between its religious and political role, especially in light of the State’s involvement in combating terror and radical narrative, therefore people avoiding contact with political operatives especially in times of political arrest, something the Researcher has witnessed in his close interaction with the worshippers herewith (see the Participant Observation part, 5.1.2., Association with Fellow Worshippers).

Recently, the centrality of the mosque as a vehicle for political change has become evident with the outbreak of the political awakening in some Arab countries, (aka the Arab Spring), which emancipated in northern African countries and spread into Levant. Calls for toppling the regimes have sent its ripples into

Jordan, albeit limited to reforming the regime. The role of the mosque as a platform for both Islamic and other pro-reform movements has been essential in serving as the launch-base for street protests led by the main opposition party, the Islamic Action Front. In March 2011, the Islamic movement led these protests under the guise of a youth movement called *24 adhar* (March 24th). Mosques were being used as a threshold for public protests mainly after Friday prayers. Therefore, part of the period covered in this field study is influenced by this context, especially the “participant observation” field study. This environment encouraged other banned Islamic groups such as the salafi jihadists and *hizbu’ttahrir* (*tahrir party*) to take to the street and contest the government through peaceful means, contrary to their tenets which disavow the State and officialdom as apostates. The jihadist stream has found in the mosque and its sphere a proper platform to address the worshippers and society at large with demands to release jihadist prisoners, and to enforce shari’a as *the* law. The State was being tolerant and restrained in its traditional retort until the movement gained impetus and wide coverage by the media, and the notion that the chasm between the jihadists’ new discourse and that of IAF has become blurred. Thereafter, the State cracked down on a sit-in by the Jihadist stream which took place in Zarqa city following Friday sermon on April 15th, 2011, detaining and imprisoning dozens of its recruits. This was followed by continuous protests by the stream and supporters from other political and tribal figures demanding the release of jihadist prisoners. The Researcher was a witness to these protests as part of this field study alongside a team of collaborators (Informants) as shown in the “participant observation” part (Chapter Five). Tribal presence was of paramount importance in these protests especially where the mosque is located in a tribal district. The mosque would then become the ideal pulpit to announce a communiqué by the stream, and the neighborhood being used as a public space for pro-state and anti-state discourse simultaneously. The clan in this setting plays the role of both a propeller for protest, and guardian for both protest groups, given members of both groups belong to the same clan. This tactical allegiance between the salafi jihadist stream

and the clan, historically the backbone of the Hashemite regime, has been justified by a tribal sheikh to the Researcher as,

“a thorn of spite against the government which has confiscated our public land properties- wahijat asha’iriyyah”.

Mainstream media, including Islamist newspapers, tend to avoid publishing viewpoints that highlight this atypical relationship.

This field study views that State control over the mosque has become all the more evident in tandem with political awakening, taking varying modes with the mounting tension in the political scenery in Jordan and the region. W. Cant Smith cited in Antoun (1989) states that any commonplace action by the community has its dual meanings and repercussions of correct behavior in this life, and a soteriological [salvation] consequence in the hereafter. Antoun (1989:183) views that this set of meaning and consequences prevailed throughout Islamic history, and still permeates the way Jordanians view their State and the monarch.

The Researcher posits that the official State engagement in the religious sphere has been twofold: while exercising its customary control over the mosque amidst the abrupt change in the political scenery in Jordan and the region, the regime has become more concerned about the role which the mosque can play in the religio-spatial dimension. In as far as the mosque complements the role of dissenting discourse active in public space the State would shore up its restrictions. The other side is the State overlooking the intrusion to public space (mosque and its adjoining open space) by new and outlawed actors, namely the salafi jihadist stream and *tahrir party* as a tactic to demystify their discourse and modus operandi.

Throughout the period covered in the “participant observation” field study (January-July 2011), recorded observations and those narrated by the three participating Informants demonstrate several evolving forms of State intervention

in the mosque. The government has been active in assigning the Imam and preacher, guiding them on which issues to tackle or not, and how to deal with pertinent issues (i.e. preachers cutting their sermons short, calling upon the worshippers to instill calmness during political unrest, urging citizens to participate in casting their ballots during elections, or slamming non-compliant Islamic groups by proxy of the preacher).

The mosque represents the public space where a tug of war between the Jordanian State and Islamic movements takes place in order to influence public opinion. A constitutional monarchy with the government appointed by King through his prime minister, the Hashemite monarchic system has for long taken Islam as a pillar to ossify its legitimacy³⁰. Historically, the Muslim Brotherhood movement had played into the hands of the government since its licensing in 1946 (also Jordan's Independence year) as both parties would find mutual interest in curbing secular and leftist pan-Arab movements in the 1950s, and Palestinian armed militia following the 1967 war with Israel. This exchange of interests enabled the Muslim Brotherhood movement to spread *dawa* and establish its charity network. The mosque constituted the ideal space for the movement to compete against other Islamic movements and practice political influence by recruiting new members, mobilizing supporters and building its social base (Abu Rumman 2007:12). This open space was further invested by the movement after establishing its legal political arm in 1992, The Islamic Action Front. However, this status of coexistence would at times run into a snag, and even collide, with the changing political climate in the region and its repercussions on homeland, on top of which was the enactment of the peace treaty which Jordan had signed with Israel in 1994, and the rising power of HAMAS as a Palestinian military movement organizationally linked to the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan, both opposed to any peace deal with Israel.

³⁰ Source: http://kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en_US/pages/view/id/148.html accessed on October 13th, 2015.

In the late 1980s and following the Gulf War of 1991, the ideas and stances by the Muslim Brotherhood movement have become marred with a yet more radical approach and conduct. An anti-Israeli and anti-USA speech enabled the movement to amass social credit among the public, mainly using the mosques as a platform, much to the resentment of the government which accused the movement of pursuing a policy of altercation and inflaming public opinion against the regime. Abu Rumman (2007:28) states that,

“what actually changed were the political and historical circumstances which had led to a state of coexistence and historical alliance, based on mutual interests in the face of common internal and external enemies”.

The Researcher, a media observer and close to figures of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the salafist stream, views that a harbinger of things to come was the movement’s principle of *“public dawa; secret organization”* which was tolerable during the era of mutual interests and cohabitation with the regime, but turned unacceptable when transparency in political positions and discourse toward the State in times of regional and local instability was a practical exigency. Abdulkathem cited in Horani et al (1997:16)³¹, states that what engendered this official stance toward the movement was its inception as extension to the mother movement established in Egypt in 1928. In a turbulent region, the Jordanian government strives to stay aloof of intervention by foreign powers facilitated through local political movements who would use the mosque to prop up public support to their ideologies and views regarding Jordan’s foreign policy.

Shteivi (1996:97) describes the relationship between the State and political movements as contingent on the threat posed to the State. The regime would then pursue a *“pragmatic”* policy towards religious manifestations depending on the source of threat, be it secular or religious, in order to ensure a certain balance between Islamic and secular political groups. Shteivi warns of the future

³¹ *Al-Harakat wat-Tandhimat al-Islamiya fil Urdun*, Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and Sindbad Publishing House, Amman, Jordan, 1997. (الحركات والتنظيمات الإسلامية في الأردن)

repercussions of a continuum of State and religion being hostage to each other, and society itself sandwiched between both parties (as the case with many Arab and Muslim states). Shteivi proposes the panacea in full-fledged democracy approach if the State would “*possess legitimacy in and of itself*”³². Shteivi posits that this disposition (established in the mid 1990s as less official reliance on religion by the State for the sake of embracing more democracy) overlooks and simplifies the role of the mosque as a key platform to amass public support. The mosque being used by both parties (the State and Muslim Brotherhood as the prime opposition front and the most organized movement in Jordan) to ratchet up public support for their respective policy and ideology.

Former Islamic movement leader and statesman Bassam Al Omoush (2011:4)³³ contends that the Muslim Brotherhood movement used the parliament as a *dawa* podium more than a political platform (i.e. one leading deputy would always give a no-confidence vote in the 1960s and 1980s given the government did not govern according to Islam). The 1970s and 1980s were the movement’s golden period as it pursued a purely *dawa* approach, and its main concern was to establish the call for Islam and contest counter secular or Islamic thoughts, while other leftist and pan-Arab streams would celebrate the birthday of Lenin and post his picture on mosque gates. Al Omoush views that the movement’s reliance on spreading Islamic thought facilitated their public diffusion until the early nineties when they entered parliament and therefore “*found themselves in the political arena and lost the mosque platform*”³⁴. However, the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in political life in the 1990s was that of improvisation, void of a technical political program despite the fact that by participating in the cabinet in 1989 they had managed to control the mosques, hospitals, schools, courts, the poor and communities at large. Al Omoush attributes extremism in the movement’s narrative

³² Ibid

³³ *Al-Khitab al-Ikhwani wa-Sulta al-Siyasiya*, Al-Rai Studies Center, edition #3, November 03rd, 2011. 2011/11/3 الخميس، العدد 3، الخيميس، مركز الرأي للدراسات، السلطة السياسية، الخطاب الإخواني والسلمة السياسية، ضايا الساعة،

³⁴ Ibid.

since 1989 to the economic setback and its social ramifications; regional support to Intifada (uprising in Palestine) and its effect on Palestinian camps in Jordan; contending speech by rival independent Islamist and leftist deputies under the dome; an emerging tempered speech influenced by *tahrir* party and skeptical to any official stance; long absence of a parliamentary life; lack of individual and political freedoms; the Gulf War in 1991, Oslo Agreement in 1993; the ensuing peace treaty between Jordan and Israel in 1994, and lately the Arab Spring which kicked off in January 2011. In the latest factor, public protests emulated those in other Arab countries, mainly blocking key streets and squares, but then receded to a commonly approved place, al-Husseini Mosque in downtown Amman. Al Omoush concludes with a call for the movement to preserve its *dawa* mission, to reread the local and regional political dossiers, not to embrace negative speech against State policies, and to revive the historical union between the movement and King for the good of Islam, Jordan and Palestine.

In the forthcoming interviews with the movement's figures and content analysis to mosque sermons, the Researcher views this call by Al Omoush as far from being embraced by the movement, nor is facilitated by the government through its regulatory directives, legislations or speech by preachers who were appointed to replace the movement's ousted preachers.

In Egypt, Georges Fahmi³⁵ views that attempts by the Egyptian state to tighten control over the public sphere by means of monopolizing public religious activities (including mosque as key platform of outreach by the Muslim Brotherhood movement) would eventually complicate things as it causes the emergence of a

³⁵ "Georges Fahmi is a researcher at the Arab Forum for Alternatives in Egypt. He holds a doctorate from the European University Institute in Italy. His research interests include relations between the religious sphere and the state, democratization, and religious minorities in the Middle East."

Source: http://carnegie-mec.org/2014/09/18/egyptian-state-and-religious-sphere/hpac?mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRonvanNZKXonjHpfsX76e8pWKKg38431UFwdcjKPmjr1YIHTct0aPyQAgobGp5I5FEIQ7XYTLB2t60MWA%3D%3D accessed on April 21st, 2015.

corresponding religious sphere which stays aloof of state control, ultimately nurturing an environment ideal for the spread of radical thought. This situation would be bolstered by people losing their confidence in the official religious establishments while looking for a more independent religious discourse through social media and religious studies in makeshift mosques. Fahmi refers to a similar case in the 1970s following the era of former president Gamal Abdel Nasser whose policy to curb Muslim Brotherhood resulted in their recruits permeating society by means of philanthropy, education and preaching. Fahmi however fails to explain the spread of radical Islam during the subsequent era of presidents Anwar Sadat or Hosni Mubarak who had embraced a lenient policy towards Muslim Brotherhood while mounting tight control over the public sphere.

Wictorowicz (2001:52) says that the mosque constitutes a melting pot for post-sermon protests³⁶ which cannot be easily regulated by governments because officials cannot stop people from praying, protests are often of impromptu nature, and common sentiments are stirred up when communal gatherings occur. This potential by the mosque induced governments to control collective action by integrating the mosques and their events into direct state administration through the ministry of awqaf. This writer views that only competent preachers would resort to quoting *ayat* [verses of Quran] and *hadith* in order to “*masque*” or frame³⁷ the right intention of their criticism to State policies and current conditions. They “*insulate*” themselves from direct retaliation by State officials by directly “*wrapping*” the sermon in the word of *Allah* [God], something presumably immune to State reprisal. The fact that some preachers use veiled resemblance does not always

³⁶ Source: The Management of Islamic Activism. Wictorowicz, Q. (2001). *State University of New York*, http://books.google.jo/books?id=7axGGohEgl8C&pg=PA51&lpg=PA51&dq=%22Religio-Spatial%22+%22mosque%22+%22sermon%22&source=bl&ots=9iigh5EBLv&sig=8AqY9-IFl8KZwrnPele90c_UrYY&hl=en&sa=X&ei=CSNhU6GqN8mL0AWj4oDYCA&ved=0CCYQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false accessed on April 30th, 2014.

³⁷ The Researcher in this paper analyses the “*framing*” technique used by some preachers to circumvent or to co-opt state control.

translate into disseminating their true intent to the pious, as only a few worshippers manage to perceive the implicit message. The Researcher in this study condones this notion by Wictorowicz by means of co-living the moment with a few worshippers over a period of six months (Chapter Five) and analyzing salient themes in 24 different sermons which the Researcher had attended (Chapter Three).

The regulation of the mosque speech introduced by the State in 2006 has apparently diminished this potential by competent preachers and Imams, as many are being replaced by less educated and apolitical ones. The State resorted to diminishing the role of the "*religious establishment*"³⁸ (mainly ministry of awqaf) in controlling the religious sphere, thereon relegating this important role to the security establishment by means of changing pertinent regulations and restricting the role of the awqaf officialdom to summoning and warning noncompliant preachers. The aim is to manipulate the religious sphere in such a way as to expel nonmainstream preachers from mosque podiums either by retreating to their organizational base (as the case with the Muslim Brotherhood preachers) or pushing jihadist salafi preachers to conduct Friday prayers in public space instead of elusive makeshift mosques, therefore a policy of exposure and vulnerability of their recruits to the security apparatus. This policy necessitates not an administrative body to plot, implement and assess, but an intelligence-based security corpse. Fabb (2012) cited in Nielsen³⁹ (2014:7) stated that,

³⁸ Premier Abdullah Ensour acknowledged the weakness of the official religious establishment as one of the reasons for the growth of "extremism" in addition to the "spread of ignorance in the reality of Islam and the poor level of the workers in mosques."

Source: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/853186-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9?s=be5fecc77ecfa9c567b55f4a2802d28c> accessed on February 20th, 2015.

³⁹ Nielsen, Richard (2014) *Networks, Careers, and the Jihadi Radicalization of Muslim Clerics*. Nielsen is Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“By taking control of the previously independent financial endowments for all of the most important religious institutions, political leaders gained the ability to bring the clerical class into compliance by cutting off funding”

Lawrence (1984) views that Islamic fundamentalists want to shift religion out of the firm formal worship setting in the mosque into the wider public space so as to adjust the private and public life of Muslims according to the tents of their faith.

By appointing less qualified preachers and curtailing the role of ministry of awqaf, the State widens the cultural gap between the preachers (mostly uneducated) and congregation, and lessens the gap between the upper-echelon and lower-echelon religious chains of command, therefore lessening the propensity of political conflict conducive to potential violence and civil unrest. Antoun (1989:241) depicts the case of the Iranian revolution of 1979. As the Shah regime had missed the role of manipulating the religious sphere, a deeply religious working class has interacted intimately with local-level preachers and supported them financially. The unpredicted but logical consequence was the Iranian revolution by Ruhollah Khomeini.

Abu Hanieh (2008:11)⁴⁰ depicts the case of the Islamic movements and women’s participation in political life. Islamic movements in Jordan which shun democratic practice establish their narrative on the belief of the integrity of Islamic experience throughout history, validity of Islam and its comprehensiveness to all emerging issues, yet this speech is characterized by inertia and tradition, albeit an emerging positive yet lethargic and slow alteration in their practical approach (towards women’s issues in particular) given their strict principles. On the other hand, political parties involved in democratic life have managed to acclimatize their perspective towards religion, state and society. Women in these parties have started demanding and acquiring more active roles in the decision making process and the production of speech. However, the ability of Islamist parties to move

⁴⁰ Abu Haniyeh, Hassan. *Al-Mara’ was-Siyasa min Mandhour al-Harakat al-Islamiya fil Urdun*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2008. المرأة والسياسة من منظور الحركات السياسية في الأردن، الإصدار الثاني، آب 2008

onward with women's' rights is being faltered due to the hardliners and ambivalent tendencies within their cadres. In spite of their ideological idiosyncrasy, Islamic movements in their entirety proclaim in their speech that their ultimate goal is to reinstate the puritanical Islamic way of life.

The Researcher in this study focuses solely on the male gender in the mosque, but would also allude to the woman as a behind-the-door actor who may influence the behavior of husband and children in light of the sermon content.

1.4.3. Studies on Friday Congregational Sermon and the Preacher

Perhaps the most relevant albeit old study on Friday sermons in Jordan is that of Richard Antoun (1989) who conducted a comparative ethnographic field study between 1959 and 1986 in the northern village of *kufralma*, Irbid governorate, henceforth the archaic reference and repetitive allusion by the Researcher to this unique study. The author's methodology was to analyze the content of sermons he attended and recorded while observing the conduct of the preacher and his wider role in community, therefore letting the sermon content guide him in the course of investigation. This modus operandi enabled the author discover how the sermon's theme(s) crosscut the whole variety of human concern enough to counter-argue the Western negative stereotypes about Islam or viewpoints taken out of their context.

While the supra study has helped the Researcher gain insight into the nature of relationship between the State and religious establishment way before the 2006 Amendment to the Law (given the utter dearth in relevant scholarship), the Researcher's approach and methodology herewith is more geared into *thematic content analysis*, therefore it cannot be labeled as full-fledged ethnography albeit its reliance on *partial participant observation* (*partial* in terms of the time span and

limited number of Informants) in order to validate, invalidate or ponder(ate) on conclusions drawn by other research tools the Researcher employs.

In his study, Antoun documented, analyzed and highlighted the experiential dimension of the sermon as a “*cultural product*” and preacher as the “*cultural broker*”⁴¹. Displaying the capability and degree of diversity in the preaching ritual, the author explores the process by which the cultural brokers selectively convey to their community the Islamic corpus of religious beliefs, ritual norms and ethical standards. The study demonstrates the flexibility of this corpus and its capacity to be interpreted and prescribed as significant for social process, and sheds light on the symbolic message of the congregational sermon and the articulation of this message with different actors in society such as the clan, village community, pious worshippers or State.

The importance of this study stems from the fact that it archives the historical context of religious speech in Jordan when scholarship was scarce and the academic institution had barely existed in the Kingdom. The study also sheds light on the “*framing*” of religious speech as a political tool the regime resorted to in order to ossify its legitimacy and inculcate a modernist way of life in a predominantly Muslim society run by a Western-allied regime.

Antoun stems from the point of differentiating between “*government Islam*”, “*people’s Islam*” and “*local influential’s Islam*”⁴². “*Government Islam*” is related to religious scholars and judges co-opted into the State system as fixed public servants in grand mosques (*jawame*) directly run by ministry of awqaf, while “*people’s Islam*” is associated with preachers who may act contrary to customary preaching norms and their mosques serve as platforms for dissonant speech. On the other hand, “*local influential’s Islam*” is propagated by preachers who shift their

⁴¹ Ibid, p.4

⁴² Ibid, pp.212 & 213

opinion in tandem with the way public opinion sways. This distinction does not rule out the possibility of the same preacher blending two or more manifestations of Islam, or the notion that these manifestations might be time-bound and one replacing the other. This distinction and interweave pinpoint to the notion that Islamic discourse does not propagate Islam as a distinct set of principles, sacraments and entities, but interlace of various strands that work together in the *organization of social structure* and the *accommodation of tradition*.

In his study, Antoun views the Islamic sermon [*khutba*] as a form of rhetoric or an argument which embeds associated images and symbols made up in such a way as to articulate a key meaning replete with symbolism as an exemplar of the Islamic culture, Prophet Mohammad being the role model and first preacher⁴³. Therefore, *khutba* is inextricably linked to its social structural milieu and the resulting change in society.

Antoun differentiates between the Western term of “*sermon*” and the Islamic *khutba*, in a sense that orthopraxy [*sunna* – right conduct; norms that guide routine relations between community members], rather than orthodoxy [creed, rituals, as the case with Christianity], is institutionalized in *khutba*.⁴⁴ In addition, Rosenberg’s argument that “*the medium is the message*”⁴⁵ relates to American folk sermons in which the preacher invokes the audience’s reaction, whereas in *khutba*, the audience’s response is constrained through encoded worship rituals: the starting *dars dini* [religious lesson that precedes the prayer and the ensuing sermon]; the three calls for prayer; the two consecutive sermons with defined fashion and

⁴³ Ibid, p. 106.

⁴⁴ Religious guidance for Muslims’ practical life was the main focus of *khutba* studied in a in mosques of Southern California, USA in 2009, as concluded in the ‘participant observation’-based study: *The Muslim Friday Khutba: Veiled and Unveiled Themes*. Mazen Hashem (PhD), Fellow at Institute for Social Policy and Understanding and a Lecturer at the University of Southern California.
Source: http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU%20-%20The_Muslim_Friday_Khutba.pdf accessed on May 01st, 2015.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 102

length; and the concluding prayers performed both individually and communally. These rituals proclaim the worldview from an Islamic perspective coupled with the speech [rather than discourse] delivered in classical Arabic which sacralizes the message of salvation. Antoun maintains that these formulae confer assurances that “*frame*” any discussion of life-felt issues. It is in this sense that the “*medium*” to a large extent constitutes the “*message*”.

This inference is not completely congruent with findings by the Researcher where the majority of the respondent worshippers in the *thematic analysis* chapter say they feel bored of listening to political or economic content in the sermon, therefore the static audience do not always perceive non-religious content albeit “*sacralized*”⁴⁶ by the supra rituals. In this sense, the Researcher views that the corpus of sender (preacher), message (sermon), receiver (audience/ worshippers) and the setting (including the rituals), all are factors which together mold the “*message*” as both preacher and audience are tied up to mutual expectations which frame and delineate the message which carries information and meaning depending on the salient political occurring in the country or region.

Although Antoun describes the nature of the Islamic religious organization in a northern Jordanian village in the 1960s as “*congregational rather than Episcopala*”⁴⁷, in a sense that the peasant community solely defines the contract of the preacher’s work, this referential has changed in the 21st century and has become under the purview of ministry of awqaf under whose jurisdiction both civil servant Imams and freelance preachers can deliver the sermon. However, this has not rendered the congregation neutral or a totally static actor, especially when the political context is dynamic. In November 16th 2012, the worshippers in the northern city of Irbid forced the preacher to step down the *minbar* after the latter

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 103

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 84

has described the protesters against price increase as “*disbanded people*”⁴⁸. In another incident on September 19th 2014, some worshippers in a mosque in the impoverished Hay Nazzal of eastern Amman attempted to prevent an awqaf-appointed preacher from ascending the *minbar*⁴⁹.

As for the influence of the sermon on the audience, Antoun (p. 140-141) focuses on the fact that Islam is more about orthopraxy (sunna, way of life) than orthodoxy (creed), and Muslims internalize attitudes conveyed in the sermon and act accordingly by following the example of Prophet Mohammad, his companions and the ensuing caliphs. Also, rituals and calls for prayer that precede, interject or follow the sermon have a persuasive effect for a considerable part of the worshippers. Therefore, sermons have a molding influence as they invoke,

“calls to action delivered on a regular basis in an optimally legitimate cultural and social context- in the mosque, face-to-face on the occasion of the Friday congregational prayer with the sermon punctuated by numerous religious formulae”.⁵⁰

Antoun disagrees with evaluations made by Gibb (1947) and Geertz (1968) that an increased religiosity in terms of veiling, pilgrimage, attendance of Friday sermons is more of hypocrisy than piety. Although conferring some truth on the depiction by Rahman (1966) that traditional Islam is deterministic, invoking political submission,

⁴⁸ Source: [⁴⁹ Source: <http://ahkelak.com/page.aspx?pg=7&si=6&ni=71870&md=newsdetail#.VB1436mE4Ks.facebook> accessed on November 14th, 2014.](http://www.jfranews.net/more-47701-19-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%84%20%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A8%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9%20%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF%20%D8%A7%D9%86%20%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%81%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%86%20%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89%20%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%20%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%85%D9%84(%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%88) accessed on November 14th, 2014.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

⁵⁰ Ibid.

leading to passivity and cynicism and stressing “justification by faith”, sermons Antoun studied from 1959-1967 do not bear the inference that,

“Islam does not emphasize humanistic values, is not action-oriented, cannot or does not check despotism, and stresses nominal and formal aspects of religion than moral action and moral intent”⁵¹.

On the contrary, Antoun’s field study points out an Islam that calls attention to moral action and refuses ceremonial designation of religious duty in favor of delving into ethical intentions. Therefore, Antoun’s study in socio-anthropology becomes all the more valuable and relevant given its variance with the way other Western researchers viewed Islam and its corpus of law, ethics and rituals, mainly Friday congregational sermon. One example is Antoun (p.246) citing Daniel (1960) who viewed Islam as a religion with a penchant toward violence and control. Such writers perceive Friday congregational prayer akin to the way they perceive Jewish or Christian rituals, and the impact of this negative moral view of Islam according to Antoun exceeds the U.S. public opinion to the U.S. academia. On the other hand, Antoun (p.251) is assiduous in pointing out that certain parts of the sermon do imply that the Islamic corpus of law and ethics embed some negative stereotypes for certain groups of society such as women, politics [*hizbi*], in addition to constraining implications that furnish for religious and legal discrimination against other faiths such as Christians and Jews, a label the Researcher also highlights in this study.

Apart from the supra study, the Researcher could not come across previous studies on this specific subject in Jordan except an old study by Borthwick (1965), who in a book edited by Prosser (1973: pp. 379-381), records a historical perspective of the mosque sermons recorded on radio stations from three Arab countries, including Jordan. The writer states that prior to World War II (WWII), mosque sermons were being recited, therefore creating a channel of communication among the *ulama*. In the aftermath of WWII and in order to institute

⁵¹ Antoun (1989:248).

communication between *ulama* and the Muslim masses, Arab reformers sought to write down the sermons, making their language simpler and tackling life-felt issues. The ruling elites rushed to strip their enemies of this communication tool useful to mobilize the masses. Borthwick designates Jordan as a country where official censorship was imposed on sermons, resulting in preachers trying to integrate their governments' reformist policies with the Quran, *hadith* and Islamic tradition. This view is also held by Antoun (1989:140) who, although admitting that the rural preacher to some extent succumbs to the religious officialdom, in his role as a "*linker*" and "*interpreter*", this "*social broker*" still enjoys substantial freedom to chose his own themes and content for the sermon, a degree of autonomy at the time [1960s] was also applicable for preachers living in centralized polities in urban Egypt. Antoun (p.257) points out the necessary function of the preacher as a "*cultural broker*" who exercises interpretation as he presents the tradition in his product (the sermon) to his audience in order to bridge the gap that exists between him as a specialist and his mundane audience. This space of freedom available to the preacher who has the wit to circumvent State regulations half a century ago is also highlighted in this study.

Friday sermons were used as a framing tool by the ruling elites to legitimize their nationalist messages to the Islamic-oriented audience. Sermon as an Islamic institution derives its legitimacy from being a tradition as old as Islam; a regular practice and an established component of the Islamic nurtured society; sermons are preached in mosques whose architecture for the worshippers is reminiscent to the past glorious of Islam. The writer argues that this legitimacy renders the worshippers more attentive to the sermon and ready to abide by the modern messages now communicated through the mosque podium. This process bridges a communication gap that exists between the ruling elites and the traditionalist community. The post WWII modernizing ruling elites would direct the sermon and feed it with modern messages which preachers in return frame in the legitimacy myth of the traditional masses.

In another study, Mizher (p.4)⁵² views that Friday sermon is exclusively characterized by being one of the main rituals of Islam, conducted in a devout setting, embedding the obligation to focus on and hearken to the preacher, sustainable and recurrent every week, and attended by a diversity of worshippers, therefore writing about Friday sermon is of paramount importance.

An evaluation study on Friday sermon and the orator in Iraq by Safa Ali Hussein⁵³ distinguishes Friday oration among other types of speech for being the most influential for Muslims given its religiously obligatory nature, and for being the most familiar and repetitive among all types of oration. The author attests to the scarcity of studies on Friday sermon and calls for an increased interest in the subject issue. The elements of the sermon are verbal oration, audience, persuasion and lobbying; the orator being the most important element in the sermon given his stance as the successor of Prophet Mohammad on the mosque podium. In early Islam the orators used to be the caliphs and regional princes given their sovereignty and eloquence. Thereafter, with the expansion of Islam, those rulers lacked these attributes and the sermon became a profession with scientific criteria that requires capacitating the orator who should acquire an innate talent, eloquent tongue, be well versed in *shari'a* jurisprudence, aware of his audience's mindset and social strata, promptitude, good manners and role model, intellectual, clever and of a leadership character. Through interviews and questionnaires, the study states that the ratios of mosque orators who lack these attributes range between 9 to 33 percent; a high proportion given the eminence and sanctity of Friday sermon as an obligation and one of the main pillars of Islam. The writer attributes this degraded level of orators to the vast number of mosques therefore the scarcity of

⁵² Translation by the Researcher from the following original Arabic,
Source:
http://d1.islamhouse.com/data/ar/ih_books/single/ar_Friday_sermon_and_its_role_in_the_upbringi ng_of_the_nation.pdf
accessed on January 12th, 2015.

⁵³ *Friday Sermon and its Orator, a Corrective Study*.
Source: <http://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&ald=42841> (Iraqi Academic Scientific Journals)
accessed on April 19th, 2014.

orators, lack of understanding and appreciation to the role of the sermon and orator by both state and society at large, low level or professionalism and seriousness by the orators, and low level of education in *shari'a* schools.

These results are akin to the situation of the mosques in Jordan in terms of the government's inability to equip the ubiquitous mosques with competent preachers. The question remains whether the governments are serious in letting the mosque preacher shape the public opinion without chaffing under its official control and censorship.

The study covered the historical background of the mosque and sermon in early Islam, but lacked the theoretical underpinnings in public communication necessary to consolidate its prepositions, and stopped short of shedding light on the legal and political contexts surrounding the religious speech in Iraq, something the Researcher will attempt to cover in this study.

In a context where the worshippers are a minority (USA), Hashem (2009:13) says the main function of Friday sermon is "*to remind forgetful humans*", based on Quranic verse that reminding is beneficial to the believers, therefore it is the duty of every Muslim to remind his fellow believer of the principles of Islam. Besides, the urge to remind in the sermon is dominant because of people's inherent capacity to do good or evil, therefore reminding in public religious speech is logical. Another indirect reason which Hashem (p.14) cites is the notion that the preacher is entrusted to an untainted religious text; therefore he is a mere deliverer of this knowledge rather than an agent inspired by Allah. Being tied up to the expectations of the mosque attendees, the preacher should be cautious to transfer this entrusted knowledge by anchoring his message with references in the Quran, *hadith*, and glean examples from the historical Islamic literature. This would limit the preacher's choice to attach "*frills*" to the religious texts as the Muslim tradition expects only little scholarship in him. Untrained preachers tend to avoid frilling their sermon so as to avoid correction by the audience and lose their

self-image, whereas competent preachers stick to the limits of parochial themes they were trained to, as reliance on historical references bestows blessings upon them. Within the confines of this expectation between preacher and audience, the former delivers a “*dormant but generative message*” which, although floated in meaning and not quite effective, it can be cognitively tackled in the future. Hashem (p.15) contends that by “*floating*” a metaphor in the minds of the audience, the preacher allows this meaning to impact their behavior or the way the worshippers assess issues in real life scenario.

Given that Sunni Islam did not invent a clerical system, and there is no official practice to ordinate the preacher, the concept of Imamate is lax. Therefore, a community leader knowledgeable of the corpus of Islamic teachings can assume this role. On the other hand, *ulama* are expert scholars who, although have acquired considerable prominence and reverence, they usually do not directly practice command in the religious sphere. In Jordan, the State managed to relegate to itself a task which Islam had not invoked in the first place; that is to decide who can and who cannot be an Imam/preacher. This is being done not through ordination or excommunication (any Muslim can deliver a sermon as a practice which has followed the enactment of the 2006 Amendment to the law) but by creating a socio-legal context which works as a censorship for would-be preachers.

1.5. Study's Problematic Issue

The Researcher views that a hybrid of factors accumulated throughout ages participated in shaping the mindset of the worshippers at the mosque. The mosque speech is just one of these factors, some of which crosscut producing messages that people intake thereby formulating a non-monolithic frame of the mind regarding Islam and its manifestations in orthodoxy (creed) and orthopraxy⁵⁴ (*sunna*). Historically, this frame is believed to have cultivated a cultural context which in the second half of the twentieth century became further reinforced by the media outlets, particularly State television⁵⁵.

One study that highlighted this field of communication is Cultivation Theory by George Gerbner (1973), who assumed that the influence of mass media on the audience is strong and enduring given the ever-present and consonant flow of messages which the media outlets feed the audience with⁵⁶. Media effects depend primarily on the selective informational intakes by the audiences and their homogenous set of social and economic connections, and are assumed by return to reinforce people's established attitudes rather than create new ones. The Cultivation Theory presumes that what matters in the analysis of the contribution of communication means to the receivers' conception of social reality is the overall pattern of messages. Mass media, television in particular, inculcate mundane life by feeding the audience with social context thereby the audiences' concept of social reality is shaped by the images and lifestyle which the mass media conveys.

⁵⁴ Orthopraxy refers to the application of Muslim laws and ethics in real life and the way religion is directed towards society rather than theology or State (see Antoun 1989:10).

⁵⁵ 83 percent of Jordanians rely on satellite television to follow political news, State television (JTV) topping the list of all viewed media outlets (23.4 percent), whether local or international. Source: <http://www.dohainstitute.org/file/Get/8e6e492d-62bc-4f6d-9792-45440ac7b9c8> accessed on January 13th, 2015. A separate study by Pies & Madanat (2011:6) shows that JTV is only deemed more credible in local news (38 percent). Source: http://www.mediaact.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/WP4/WP4_Jordan.pdf accessed on January 13th, 2015.

⁵⁶ Scheufele et al, Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models, *Journal of Communication* 57 (2007), p.10.

The general pattern of messages in the contribution of communication vehicles (mosque podium in our case) to the audiences' conception of social reality is what the Researcher will analyze using the here below research tools. However, field research as a tool to validate, invalidate or ponderate the hypothesis proposed by the Researcher will not be based on Cultivation Theory, given the long span of time it took Gerbner to test his hypothesis; something impractical in the course of this study.

In response to the core questions the Researcher has posed in this study, and more relevant and practical than the Cultivation Theory, this study will probe whether the 'agenda-setting theory' and its accompanying factors in mass communication, namely framing and priming, do apply to the public communication sphere; mosque speech in our case.

Agenda-setting research in political communication was sparked by a study carried out by McCombs and Shaw (1972), who pinpointed to a great correspondence between the prominences that the mass media lays on certain issues and the significance attributed to these issues by the mass audience (public object agenda versus media object agenda as described by Du (2008:52))⁵⁷. The Researcher in this study concludes that the correlation between agenda-setting in Friday sermons and public agenda-building is not isolated from social reality, but contingent upon other variables, mainly the audience's (mosque worshippers) pre-cultivated norms and values, and the preacher's prior knowledge of these norms and values. This is akin to the idea that in agenda-setting, the effect is not a factor of a few messages being received by the audience, but attributed to the

⁵⁷ Ying Roselyn Du (2008), Mass Media's Agenda Setting Function in the Age of Globalization: A Multilevel Agenda-Setting Test. A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.
Source: <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/etd/id/2219>
accessed on May 13th, 2015.

cumulative impact of a multitude of messages, each carrying a different content but all of which tackle the same common problem.

Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (1998) cited in Du (2008:10) maintain that a main source for constructing and transmitting news framing to the public is ideology which wields prime impact on news framing by means of the dominant ideology in society (in our case, Islam), elite ideology or policy orientation which the government or administration practices (in our case, the religious establishment, awqaf departments and/or security apparatus), and media ideology by routine journalistic practice.

De Vreese (2005:52)⁵⁸ argues that frame-setting (second stage of agenda-setting) takes place in the interaction between media frames and the predispositions and prior knowledge of the audience. Trampota (2006:123) cited in Kalvas⁵⁹, *et al* (no date) contends that in the course of the framing process many participants attempt to enforce their own point of view on the subject issue “*so that it resonates with their needs*”.

The Researcher views that in a public communication setting where the dominant ideology tend to shape the message, framing takes place through the interaction between the preacher and his audience where the dominant ideas and views of the worshippers in the mosque, coupled with policy orientation and regulations on the part of the government, and the occupational ideology framed in the media (which also set the agenda for the preacher and audience in terms of selective salience of issues), all three factors work together to exert influence on the

⁵⁸ Source: http://msap-unlam.ac.id/download/bahan__bacaan/New%20Framing.pdf accessed on May 13th, 2015.

⁵⁹ František Kalvas, head of Department of Sociology, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. His research covers media effects, public opinion, and survey methodology.
Source:
http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:JbcVaQKFQEUJ:wapor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Kalvas_Vane_Stipkova_Kreidl.doc+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=jo accessed on May 13th, 2015.

worshippers who listen to the sermon. In the context of popular communication, setting the agenda by the medium (minbar) on the receiver (worshippers) is only one side of actuality; the other side entails some degree of reciprocity between the speaking minbar, the listening worshippers and State regulators whereby these three variables all build up the agenda (salient issues in the sermon) and thereby influence the public sphere.

A spillover of agenda setting is *priming*, defined by Iyengar & Kinder (1987)⁶⁰ as an alteration in people's principles that they exercise to create political judgment. This process takes place when, based on news content, audiences use specific issues as yardsticks to assess the performance of governments and politicians. In political communication, priming and agenda setting are a function of memory and accessibility-based models of information processing. Diatram et al (2007) cited in Scheufele (2000) stated that people form attitudes, judge on issues and make decisions based on the most salient issues and those that are easy to bring to mind. (Ibid)

In Jordan, the formation of public opinion in the religious sphere started with mosques furnishing "*cultivating*" peoples' perception of social reality. Thereof, as of the mid sixties of the twentieth century, mass media started making certain issues more salient in the audiences' minds (agenda setting) - often issues that appeal to the already cultivated norms, thereby shaping the concerns which people tally when judging about issues and leaders. *Priming* is an extension to agenda-setting, that is, by having certain issues more salient in the audiences' intellect, media outlets and communication platforms shape the reflections that the people consider when judging on public figures, political leaders and relevant issues.

⁶⁰ Kalvas et al citing Iyengar, S & Kinder, D. R. (1987), *News that Matters*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Source: wapor.org/wp-content/uploads/.../Kalvas_Vane_Stipkova_Kreidl.doc accessed on January 26th, 2015.

But while the locus of effect in agenda-setting and priming lies with the intensified accessibility which a problem gets from its handling in the news (Price & Tewksbury, 1997), that is, *whether* we think of an issue, framing has to do with *how* we think about it. With framing, the locus of effect lies with the particular way these issues are presented. It refers to how the communicators use forms of presentation to portray issues in ways which resonate with the audiences' already cultivated schema. It also describes how in certain issues the audiences make use of information and presentation features as they shape their opinions and impressions. In psychology, framing as a micro-level construct has to do with the way communicators (in our case, preachers/Imams) present information in such a way which resonates with the audiences' existing schema (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). In sociology, framing as a micro-level construct refers to the way by which people use information and modes of presentation as they form their consciousness on relevant issues.

Research on political-effects articulated by McQuail (2005) and labeled as "*negation effect*" states that framing and priming are based on the thought that mass media had potentially powerful attitudinal effects which to a great deal are a function of existing predispositions and other features of the audience which in return affect how the audience processes mass media messages. Framing contest in religious speech goes beyond the mere premeditated mobilization of senses as to rationalize action, build up recruitment and attain public support. What gives it ground to perform effectively is the principle of one Islamic nation (*umma*) where a Muslim is only free in as much as he/she adheres to the *umma's* collective predispositions. A similar conclusion is drawn by Borthwick (1965: chapter 5) who views the sermon as effective as a legitimizing actor and weak as a modernizer, adding that from an Islamic viewpoint, individual freedom is only perceived of with respect to *umma*, the wider Islamic nation. Al-Shaqsi (2006) posits that,

"Framing processes include a wide range of cultural practices and processes through which meaning is constructed and mobilized. At a minimum, people need to identify collectively and feel aggrieved or

successful mobilization is unlikely. Framing processes can thus provide the sort of shared meanings necessary to facilitate social mobilization”.

Possibly, nothing resembles this framing structure more than religion; a frame by itself, and Friday congregational prayer [which includes a sermon] is *par excellence* the ideal legitimization for framing as a means to influence public discourse. Al-Shaqsi (2006) citing Klapper (1960) embraced the utilitarian view that factors which reconcile media messages and the audiences' response (such as opinion leaders' group norms, selective perception, individual predispositions, message diffusion through interpersonal channels, and the commercialization of mass media) underpin the role of psychological and social elements in understanding the end product of the media.

Lerner (1958) compared the characteristics of the audience to mass media communications in modern societies (as anonymous, heterogeneous receiving descriptive content by professional communicators), with the audience in traditional societies where the communication process is based on primary group contacts (face-to-face channel, prescriptive content uttered by hierarchical source).

The Researcher views that mosque preachers send messages to the audience that appeal to their cultural context. Part of this context is the legal environment which the State has laid down, and the extent to which the State and its extended influence can, in the preachers' perception, exert due control over the mosque podium as a medium for public communication. By enacting regulations to religious speech, the government had presupposed that Friday sermon wields impact on the mosque worshippers. The Researcher views that it is not Friday sermon or mosque speech *per se* which primarily formulates the mindset of the worshipper, but that a prevalent Islamic culture had furnished the individual frames which guide the preacher in acting as a “*cultural broker*” (Antoun 1989:4), and the worshipper in processing the religious input.

Through partial participant observation (emic approach), the Researcher will explore the extent to which the mosque's main element, Friday sermon, and other factors play role in shaping the masses' viewpoints regarding social reality in general, and consequently play role in undertaking conscious decisions. This however does not necessarily presuppose that Friday sermons do address the daily concerns of the people or propose practical solutions to their daily concerns.

1.6. Research Questions and Hypothesis

1.6.1. Research Questions

The aforementioned furnishes for the following research questions:

- How do State institutions set the agenda for the Islamic speech in the mosque?
- What role did the consecutive laws of preaching, guidance and sermonizing at mosques play in regulating the mosque discourse in general and in censoring the speech of the Islamic movement through Friday prayer?
- How did the latest Amendment (2006) to the Law of Preaching, Guidance and Sermonizing at Mosques shape or alter the speech of different Islamic ideologies/movements via Friday sermon?
- How do religious and non-religious State figures view the change in the influence of mosque speech over the worshippers' opinion as a result of the 2006 Amendment?
- What social reality do sermons, outside of State intervention, present to the sermon audience? Given that State regulations came to rectify/change something in the normal sermon discourse, what is that normal discourse towards which the regulations are directed?
- How does the press tackle Friday sermon, and how do interactive new media platforms engage the users in holding different actors into account?

1.6.2. Hypothesis

The Researcher views that regulating the mosque oratory has to some extent influenced the content of Friday sermons. This process is being effected in as much as the preacher manages to deliver the sermon using frames that circumvent State regulations, and aided by the notion that the historical accretion of these frames had set the worshippers' agenda. This is based on topics which the preacher tackles and the attributes he gives to these issues. The preacher in

return is bound to the expectations of his congregation, and whether consciously or not, he selects from a gamut of interpretations to feed his sermon with content that appeases to both State and audience. The Researcher condones the postulation posed by Nisbet (2010:46)⁶¹ that,

“the storyteller’s preferred meanings are filtered by the predispositions of the audience, which in return, shape their judgments and decisions”.

Frames are best described by Erving Goffman (1974) cited in D’angelo (p. 45) as “*schemata of interpretation*” that allows individuals to situate, make sense of, categorize and brand issues, events and topics. Therefore, words prompt the audience to confer meaning through the lens of the prevailing cultural beliefs and worldviews. Price and Tewksbury’s (1997)⁶² contend that for a message frame to be effective it has to be relevant and applicable to a definite existing interpretive representation which the audience obtained through social learning.

In a religious setting, frames are most influential when they resonate with strongly held perceptual lenses of the worshippers who would generate strong feelings about another value constructs which the preacher has suddenly presented as salient and relevant to the congregation.

The ensuing parts of the study, validated through partial participant observation, will try to answer the question of whether this agenda of the preacher, as one actor in the wider religious establishment, is being transformed to become the agenda and the attitudes of the mosque congregation.

⁶¹ Matthew C. Nisbet (2010), Knowledge into Action: Framing the Debates over Climate Change and Poverty. Chapter Three: *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* edited by Paul D’Angelo, Jim A. Kuypers.

Source:

<https://books.google.jo/books?id=9jSMAGAAQBAJ&pg=PA100&lpg=PA100&dq=framing+coding&source=bl&ots=pkRQgBDMmB&sig=sHHIMM0G-anoSnIs3fChdzeQ7wE&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CEsQ6AEwCWovChMI-KOOs7WWxglVBxByCh1PhQDq#v=onepage&q&f=false>
accessed on June 23rd, 2015.

⁶² Ibid.

A general observation by Ottaway⁶³ states that a common feature which categorizes Muslim parties in Arab countries (including Jordan) is their failure to persuade people they can come up with better responses than anyone else. The Muslim Brotherhood, the foremost influential Islamic movement in Jordan which relies on the mosque to influence its grassroots base, has allegedly failed to deliver a mosque speech convincing enough to garner public support, especially after the political setback the movement had suffered in the 2007 parliamentary elections⁶⁴. However, these elections were later on admitted of being subject to rigging and fraud⁶⁵. The problem does not lie with the mosque *per se*, as polls conducted in 2008 show the vast majority of Jordanian youth placing their trust in national institutions such as worship places and the *zakat* fund. On the other hand, in social integration/self group identity only one third self-identify with the Islamic religion, two thirds believe slogans launched in society do not represent their ambitions, and as low as three percent say they are members in religious institutions⁶⁶. Therefore, religious allegiance of the movement's public base is only conditionally associated to the movement. State regulations (mainly the 2006 Amendment) expelled the movement's preachers from the mosque minbar, but their speech was already void of content that carries real elements of change and in keeping with the State policy of co-optation. Following the 2006 Amendment

⁶³ Marina Ottaway, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, quoted in F. Gregory Gause III (2009), *Islamists and the Grave Bell*, from the September October 2009 issue of *The National Interest*.

Source: <http://www.nationalinterest.org/PRINTERFRIENDLY.aspx?id=22036> accessed on October 20th, 2009.

⁶⁴ See notes by Gause (2009) in *supra* footnote, and Abu Rumman (2007) p.68.

⁶⁵ Source: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/11/17/jordan-s-elections-observer-s-view/37d6> accessed on June 04th, 2013.

⁶⁶ Shteivi (2008), *Jordanian Youth: Attitudes, Values and Perceptions* - a social survey conducted between 17-30 August, 2008 on a national sample of 2000 youth from across the Kingdom aging between (18-30). [*"A questionnaire was developed, presented to a committee of experts and tested before conducting the field survey"*]. This age group comprises almost 40 percent of the population according to official statistics.

Source: http://www.dos.gov.jo/sdb_pop/sdb_pop_e/index.htm accessed on October 24th, 2010.

which was induced for political purposes, the State retained its legal sanctions and the movement was taken aback as it has lost its platform necessary to enlist public support. Apparently, the Amendment ostensibly affected an already void and bombastic rhetoric, while reducing the movement's ability to utilize the mosque, and left the pious to the detriment of state-friendly ill-educated preachers⁶⁷.

Khalifeh Al-Dayat, former mayor of Deir Alla municipality in Jordan Valley told the Researcher the State has had to enlist support by mosque servants to take over the function of the main Imam and preacher, an action which has inflicted even more on the quality of sermons.

Askari (1974) views that as a means of public communication, the *khatib* [preacher] uses Friday congregational prayer to support certain policies, awaken public sentiments, or spread utter propaganda⁶⁸. Durkheim, Marx, Radcliffe-Brown and Bloch cited in Antoun (1989:125) view that religious symbols and rituals serve either to reflect the norms of society or to emphasize them and confirm social structural claims. The sermon which this writer analyzed does not merely reflect the prevalent "*patri-oriented*" community in the village, but emphasizes *rahm* [kinship] as an alternative symbol delivered by the preacher and deemed minor in the lives of 1960s' Jordanian villagers.

Official surveillance to mosque speech has not been totally effective in controlling the speech of other evasive Muslim groups who eschew involvement in political life and rely on face-to-face interaction through informal networks. Jarrar (2009:66) viewed that to some extent, the State's restrictive legislations tend to control the reach of radical Islamists, diminish their discourse and its mobilizing outcome on mainstream Islamists; nonetheless, fundamentalists will always try to find other informal structures to spread their message of change.

As the vast majority of Jordanians express high level of religiosity, the State's

⁶⁷ As per comment by a retired security officer to a study by the Researcher on June 04th, 2013

⁶⁸ As cited in Fathi (1981).

public policy is to curtail Islamic opposition and activism through regulating Friday sermons, based on its security-driven assumption that sermons have an impact on people's attitudes. However, content analysis to Friday sermons which the Researcher has attended reveals these sermons are disconnected from the concerns of people and their life-felt needs at the practical level. Abu Rumman (2007:62) concludes that the Muslim Brotherhood movement's take on foreign policy is unrealistic, and all through its history it has failed to provide a viable strategy to develop and reform the economy; its discourse representing general principles and ideals rather than pragmatic political alternatives. Hashem (2009:13) states that,

“the degree to which khutbas stay close to Islamic texts and do not venture much into the texts' possible horizons is quite striking. In fact most khutbas, and the larger part of any khutba, are typically geared toward preaching what Muslims already know.”

Through cultural immersion, the Researcher herewith investigates whether this public policy of “*legal deterrence*” posed by Jarrar (2009:32) has or has not affected the attitudes of the worshippers at mosques and their adherence to the mosque speech as reference in shaping their worldviews. What shapes the opinion of the worshipper and sustains religiosity in society, albeit not translated into parallel involvement in religious services, is an array of historically cultivated factors that formulate the communal religious space. Friday sermons embedded in those “other factors” constitute only one and not the predominantly effective factor. Hannah, et al (2008) categorized radicalized mosques, prisons and educational institutions as the three nodes for radical Islam, with more leverage given to prisons in the case of radical Muslims⁶⁹. An unpublished and classified survey conducted for a State entity in Jordan in 2008 and disclosed by a friend of the Researcher shows that in a paternal religious society the least of reference for the youth are the father and Imam, while peers and the mother top the list.

⁶⁹ Source: http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/2008/RAND_TR571.pdf accessed on October 18th, 2010.

In the absence of examples on sermons prior to the 2006 Amendment to the law, this portion of the research will expand on and try to clarify to what extent have State regulations affected the way worshippers take the Imam and his sermon as reference in their views about social reality and in undertaking life-felt decisions.

The Researcher intends to investigate these “*other factors*” by means of participant observation with a limited number of worshippers at mosques in central Jordan (Amman and Zarqa, two major and socioeconomically interconnected cities). The objective is to validate, invalidate or ponder(ate) the *supra* perception of policy makers based on the premise that the content of Friday sermons does not significantly affect the mindset of the worshipper at the mosque, and Friday congregational sermon is more of a religious ritualistic practice than a stylebook to deal with life-felt issues.

1.7. Data Collection and Analysis, Methodology

The Researcher resorted to quantitative and qualitative research methods, using the following five tools for observation, data collection and analysis:

1.7.1. In-depth interviews with concerned actors

Interviews were mostly conducted face to face, audio-recorded then transcribed from Arabic into English. Out of the 14 interviews only one interviewee (Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi, the jihadist salafi doctrinaire) asked the audio interview be deleted after transcription for security reasons. Interviewees were mosque Imams, government officials (actual and former), members of parliament, and worshippers/attendants of Friday sermon.

Interviewees were chosen according to their direct role in legislating relevant regulations or being subject to these regulations. One interview would lead the Researcher to another and pinpoint to other potential actors; a snow-ball method. The Researcher faced the technical difficulty of transcribing these numerous interviews; time management as certain actors were busy (i.e. deputies during the sitting parliament); and red tape with regard to interviews with State figures. Some target interviewees apologized or declined to answer back, especially those close to decision making circles or the Royal Court.

Several interviewees commended this study as missing and very much needed in the Jordanian context, although some State officials posed concern and questioned the motives behind delving in this subject by the Researcher.

1.7.2. Thematic content analysis of Friday sermons

Although this study took place after the Amendment to the laws that regulate mosque speech was enacted in 2006, therefore incomparability of prior versus post-Amendment content, thematic content analysis of Friday sermons and media coverage on relevant issues is a core data collection method in this study. Sreberni & Mohammadi (1994) highlight the analysis of communications as the ideal way to investigate the dynamics of social change as it sheds light on the development of opposition vis-a-vis State repression.

1.7.3. A stock analysis of news coverage (print and online)

The Researcher tracked news on mosque-related issues, with focus on the interactive feedback by readers/users of the mushrooming electronic websites, many of whom are worshippers at mosques. Mosque regulations were enacted concomitantly with laws aimed at "*terrorism*", in addition to regulations targeting the media, therefore the natural tendency of people to use new media and social media to express their different views. This platform for disseminating news and opinions by users takes precedence as Internet penetration ratio is on the rise in Jordan⁷⁰.

1.7.4. Participant Observation

The Researcher carries out a partial participant observation limited to visiting the mosque to attend Friday congregational sermon, listen to the sermon, relate the

⁷⁰ In April 2011, Internet penetration rate reached 38 percent of the population as per The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission. By 2015 it reached 76 percent. Sources: <http://www.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=84104> and <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/internet-penetration-rises-76-cent-q1> accessed on October 16th, 2015.

content of the sermon to the political and social and legal milieus, seek the background of the speech, delineate correlations, and apply the effects to the personal behavior of the accompanying Informants (three in total).

Following the Martian perspective (Genzuk 2003: 3), and while trying to understand the observed setting, the Researcher would also attempt to see the normal setting as seen by someone from a different background, be it social or religious, given the insider (Informant) is accustomed to the setting and thus may not notice it, while the observer (the Researcher) views things from an angle which the insider may not notice or question. This does not imply the Researcher becoming a full member of the group under observation, rather attempts to gain an insider and outsider's perspective by staying at the edge of the observed community.

The Researcher carried out this field study between January and July 2011 at different mosques in the Greater Amman area. This was possible thanks to help rendered by "*privileged informants*" limited to the foregoing three regular worshippers; the only persons who readied to participate, while others declined due to the sensitivity of the subject, inability to commit oneself to a lengthy study, or personal unfamiliarity with the Researcher. In this sense (limited time span and number of Informants), this constitutes a partial participant observation field study, but central in correlating conclusions by other methodologies used in this study.

This study has not been subsidized and the Researcher did not pay the informants any honorarium in exchange of their participation, nor did they ask for such remuneration. The aim of the investigation is to develop an insider's view of what is happening during Friday congregational prayer, to experience the environment and correlate it with the sermon, and to feel what it is like to be a worshipper. That is, to use partial participant observation as a unique means to understand how the audiences interact with the sermon and its context, including coming into terms with the regulating law and its influence.

Encounters in mosques and social mingling with the informants, whenever possible, helped the Researcher sense and understand certain behaviors and reactions by the preacher, worshipper and the State with regards to the influence of the sermon and the context that engulfs it. These observations become all the more important when certain outcomes of quantitative nature give an impersonal image of the subject and deconstruct the religious sphere, whereas the actuality begs an interpretation of a qualitative nature. Thus, the outcomes of this part of the study helped the Researcher validate, invalidate or ponderate certain results and findings by other research tools of the study, especially when using quantitative tools which lack an in-depth and qualitative approach such as the questionnaire.

Apart from an old but scarce and significant study by Richard Antoun (1989), the Researcher is most likely the first Arab Christian to conduct such a study in Jordan, therefore being faced with concerns posed by family members and acquaintances given the "*cultural immersion*" required to conduct this peculiar study, which even Muslim scholars would not indulge in. The fact that "*privileged informants*" have had to accompany the Researcher during visits to the mosques would sometimes compound the debacle as one Informant is affiliated with the jihadist salafi thought, at times was known as target to the security apparatus.

A friendly and cooperative spirit prevailed between the Researcher (a Jordanian Christian), and each of the three Informants. The degree of receptiveness was the same even with SJ who has a salafi jihadist penchant, supposedly the most radical among them. SJ had been banned from preaching in mosques given that in one of his sermons he urged the worshippers not to greet Christians on their holidays.

The Researcher was active in advocating the release of detained jihadist recruits in Jordan, whether on social media or through sit-ins, and answered a demand by SJ to join 100 Jordanian figures in signing a public petition demanding the release

of jihadist prisoners in Jordan⁷¹. Also, SJ would also seek the Researcher's advice on the best way to portray the jihadists' protests in the wake of the Arab Spring.

SJ was all receptive to the idea of the Researcher praying with him at mosques, although he knew such a prayer was void unless the non-Moslem proclaimed *al-shahadatayn*⁷². This *fiqh* point was later clarified during a visit the two conducted on February 15th, 2010 to the doctrinaire of the salafi jihadist movement, Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi.

Only one Informant (MA) invited the Researcher to embrace Islam, notwithstanding his rather moderate perception of Islam as compared to SJ. This could be attributed to the fact that MA was a member of a *dawa* group active in his neighborhood. When asked whether this invitation was driven by his own conviction or upon urge by the Imam, MA replied, "*both*".

From the forgoing incident one can infer that fellow worshippers and the preacher are influential on the worshipper's perception of the other regardless of the school of thought the worshipper belongs to, as long as the worshipper can reconcile his own convictions with guidance by the Imam or preacher.

The third Informant (AA) expressed his acceptance of Christians notwithstanding his rivalry to the Shiite sect, primarily based on the teachings of the mosque preacher. His position towards the "*other*" can be understood as an attempt to prove his being a devout Muslim by slamming other Muslim sects deemed as heresies. This was the part of the sermon AA remembered most. Thus, a Christian

⁷¹ Source: <http://ar.ammannet.net/?p=131598> accessed on December 15th, 2011.

⁷² The *shahadatayn* is to publicly declare "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God".

does not constitute a problem for AA although the former does not admit the prophecy of Mohammad.

It should be noted here that a feeling of receptiveness to the Researcher was evident through reciprocal visitations to informants' homes; keenness about the Researcher's safety and his belongings while inside the mosque; beseeching Allah's blessings on him during pilgrimage to Mecca (by MA); introduction to mutual friends and going to visit them; initiation of phone calls and suggestions to visit mosques; keenness not to cause nuisance in commuting to the mosque; facilitating the recording of some sermons; and the notion that before his onset to pilgrimage in Mecca, MA called the Researcher asking to clear himself of any moral debt or hurt that he might have caused so as to fulfill a clean duty according to the teachings of Islam.

These observations contradict with what how some preachers label Christians in their sermons, and denote that worshippers either do not act upon hate speech (which had driven the State to amend pertinent regulations), or do not take this content as targeting Jordanian Christians, but "*Western crusaders*".

The aforementioned remarks possibly indicate that what the State deems as "*hate speech*" by some preachers does not translate into a blanket detestation of the "*other*" by the worshippers in mundane life. One can also construe that the 2006 Amendment to the law did not stem from the government's alleged need to combat hate speech, as former MP Emad Maayah alleged in the interview⁷³, but from other undisclosed purposes.

⁷³ See the interview in Chapter Six.

1.7.5. Questionnaire

The Researcher carried out a qualitative survey, not a quantitative one, although it resorts to quantitative data to infer qualitative relationships between variables by means of correlating this data with data produced by other research tools of the study [in-depth interviews, participant observation, analysis of the media coverage], therefore illuminating the working out of the analysis in a detailed fashion.

1.8. Research Sample

In the *content analysis* part, the Researcher attended and recorded Friday sermons in 24 different mosques between June and December 2008 in the Greater Amman area and Zarqa city, this is two years after the enactment of the Amendment to the Law of Preaching and Guidance at Mosques in 2006 (thereon, the Law). This area is being chosen for research practicality as it constitutes more than 50 percent of the population, and the peculiar nature of Zarqa as a hotbed for several Islamist movements and its diversified demography. Mosques are being chosen according to their proximity and accessibility, or following the choice of the accompanying research enthusiasts/ worshippers.

Regarding the press coverage, the Researcher tracked news published in Jordan's five main daily newspapers, official Petra News Agency, and several online newspapers or electronic websites, in addition to readers' comments especially on changing law regulations. The aim was to view how much salient news and comments by readers and officials corroborate or contradict with research findings.

As for the *participant observation* part, the Researcher asked twelve mosque-goers and Imams to help him find out four people plus one Imam ready to spend time with and study their behavior, each representing different religious affinity and social strata. Most of the volunteers declined due to the stretched period of study (six months), and the only available Imam apologized due to his ailing health. The Researcher was thus left with only three Informants; two who work as taxi drivers, with no particular affinity to any religious group, and the other one works as a journalist/editor informally affiliated to the jihadist salafi movement. As to their level of income, one Informant is a middle class citizen, and the other two can be classified in the lower middle class stratum, all married and between 30 and 50 years old. The period of investigation spanned between January-June 2011 with some interruptions due to time limitations of the Informants, and pressure by the

Researcher's parents and family members especially after his involvement in after Friday sermon sit-ins by the salafi jihadist movement and reform activists between May and June 2011.

The Researcher follows and strives to adhere to the methodological principles of participant observation-based research outlined by Genzuk (2003:374) deemed fit to the local context of this study. The Researcher here below states these principles, justification of why there were used and how they helped the Researcher understand the different aspects of the study which were not possible to identify with had the project been limited to the other tools.

1) Naturalism: the researcher can best carry out the research and capture human behavior of the worshippers by "*first-hand contact*" as opposed to inferences from "*artificial settings*" such as what the actors would say in interviews about what, how and why they behave elsewhere. In order to make it possible to generalize the discovered results to other similar settings, the Researcher strives to as much as possible reduce his influence on the behavior of the Informant. Naturalism also implies that events and processes should be interpreted in light of how they relate to the context in which they occur. The Researcher came to this conclusion after having asked fifteen worshippers upon their exit from the mosque⁷⁴ about the sermon theme which they and the Researcher have just attended; none of the inquired worshippers could answer the question! The reason could be that these people are not accustomed to broach such a question in such a setting, or that they were absentminded during the sermon (as some interviewees opined; see Chapter Six).

Thus far, the best way to discover whether a worshipper can remember the theme of the sermon and its influence on him is to co-live the moment with him, feel him and observe his behavior and opinions inside and outside the mosque.

⁷⁴ An-Nasr Mosque in Amman on August 01st, 2008.

2) Understanding: in order to effectively explain actions by the worshipper, a researcher must understand the underpinning cultural perspectives. Although the social setting being studied is of time and space proximity to the Researcher (a Jordanian Christian), the Researcher had never been to a mosque or close to the life of a worshipper right after his participation in a Friday congregational sermon. Nevertheless, this gives the Researcher the benefit of averting the construction of an *a priori* miscomprehension *because* the setting is familiar. Therefore, the Researcher tends to ask questions and raise issues albeit their being familiar to him as a fellow citizen.

3) Discovery: in lieu of approaching the setting being studied and the resulting phenomena with a set of predispositions and hypothesis, thereby being chained by these assumptions, the Researcher would instead construct hypothesis and theoretical ideas that explain and lay down a frame of the ensuing observations as they unfold over the course of the research. Therefore, the field study is exploratory and can be modified as it proceeds instead of being constrained by an *a priori* approach. The objective is to analyze each of the above queries at first-hand level and deconstruct the underpinning factors so as to come out with a logical and consistent conclusion as to what shapes the opinion of the folk worshipper in Jordan.

The Researcher faced several obstacles which to some extent limited a full-fledge field research as desired. These are- limited time available for the participant Informants (two of them who work as taxi drivers and finish their tedious work late in the evening and want to be with family); limited financial resources as most encounters require going to a café to extrapolates; pressure by kinship and family members who deem this work endangering to the Researcher's security especially when covering street protests or mingling with jihadist salafi operatives; in addition to the psychological notion that praying at mosques while not adhering to the Muslim faith is deemed as sheer hypocrisy.

The three Informants who participated in this study constitute an “*opportunistic sample*”⁷⁵. The Researcher herewith refers to these participants in pseudo initials in adherence to ethical and professional codes related to participant observation research criteria. These Informants are:

1) MA: a 40 years old taxi driver from Amman; media activist; Jordanian of Palestinian origin; lower middle class stratum; married to one woman; father of four children; high school education; no particular political or religious affinity.

2) AA: a 40 years old taxi driver from Amman; lower middle class stratum; Jordanian of Palestinian origin; married to one woman; father of three children; high school education; introduced to the researcher by MA; no particular political or religious affinity.

3) SJ: a 35 years old from Amman who works a language editor in an Islamist newspaper; lower middle class stratum; Jordanian of Palestinian origin; married to one woman; father of three children; high school education; close to the jihadist salafi movement.

In the course of the tools being used, the Researcher analyses salient behaviors and tendencies by these Informants. The aim is to uncover idiosyncrasies germane to the Informant [worshipper] regarding the following angles: his choice of the mosque, association with fellow worshippers, attitude towards the Researcher, association with friends and family members, personal behavior, religious authority reference, and State and the mosque.

⁷⁵ Antoun (1989:196) defines an opportunistic sample as a convenient sample of available informants willing to answer the questions.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EVOLUTION OF THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

2.1. A Historical Background/ Political and Legal Context

The Law of Preaching, Guidance, Sermonizing and Teaching at Mosques (“Law”) dates back to 1955. Prior to this period, an embryonic Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan utilized the mosques to organize meetings in urban centers⁷⁶. Boulby (1999) viewed that the movement’s main recruitment vehicle was the *usra* (family) of which it would seek out recruits mainly at mosques. Given Jordanians were bereft of other influential institutions, the mosque constituted their major venue for culture and education across the towns of Transjordan. The ensuing period of Jordan’s history was an era of political upheaval in the region⁷⁷. The Muslim Brotherhood and the *tahrir party* stayed out of the Congress⁷⁸, although the constitution, promulgated in 1952 sketched down people’s basic rights such as equality before the law, freedom of conscience, freedom to conduct religious ceremonies, individual liberty, freedom of opinion, right to property, the right to hold public assemblies and to establish political parties.

Abu Rumman (2007:19) describes the 1950s and 1960s as reflecting the inception, introduction, establishment and ongoing growth of the movement in

⁷⁶ (Mitchel, *The Society*, 9, cited in Boulby 1999:42)

⁷⁷ Dann (1989) contended that King Hussein Bin Talal (1953-1999) believed that, “*nothing but brute force applied at once – with minimal time allowed for preparation- could save him and the Hashemite state from disaster. The [Patriotic] Congress spanned the opposition that had identified with the Nabulsi administration: the government coalition of National Socialists, Ba’ath and Communist, Independents connected with Amin al-Husayni; and the Qawmiyeen [pan-Arab nationalists]*” (pp.60-64).

⁷⁸ Boulby (1999) viewed that “*the former had thrown in their lot with Hussein for the time being, and the latter disliked identifying with secularists of any hue... Martial law, proclaimed under the provisions of the 1952 constitution, was applied widely... The American government had from the first accepted Hussein’s claim to be an aggressive fighter against Communism, and it had encouraged him to shore up his stand’*.”

society as they disseminated their dawa (propagation of Islam) by investing in mosques, schools and benevolent activities. The State's response was to bolster the movement against the influential nationalist-leftist front of the 1950 and 1960s, and the rise of the Palestinian factions in the 1970s. Boulby (1999:159) describes the 1960s and 1970s as a period when the movement would put up a communal support base by establishing its own bodies and the permeation of Ministries such as education, and religious affairs. The dynamics of the relationship between the State and the movement enabled the latter to shore up its popular base, build its public welfare system, social networks, electoral platform, and press on to a peak of alliance before heading down to crisis both internally and with the regime. Al-Horani et al (1997:19 & 276)⁷⁹ stated that the Prime Minister issued a decree allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to propagate its dawa at mosques and public fora with no interference by the security apparatus, save in the case of law violation by the movement which persuaded its crowds against the communists and left-wing parties by means of sermons delivered at the mosques and other podiums. To contain the influence of the communists, Boulby (1999:20) stated that King Hussein⁸⁰ managed to solicit the movement's support, thereby fortifying an unstated coalition with it which would stand the test of time through the 1980s.

Bearing in mind that Islam is the country's official religion, successive Jordanian governments took notice of the influence of the mosque khatib (preacher) on public opinion and realized the important benefits or perils proceeding from the mosque podium. Gole (2002:173) stated that Islam carves out its own public space as new Islamic discourse, communal rituals, and traditions materialize and mix into public life. In the ensuing period, this public space thus far been controlled by state-inhibited discourse on Islam and its various manifestations came to be challenged by a competing version of Islamic discourse, values and behaviors. In an interview conducted with Abdullah Uqaylah on July 26th, 1992 and cited in

⁷⁹ Transliteration by the Researcher from the original Arabic text.

⁸⁰ The Hashemite dynasty in Jordan claims to be the offspring of Prophet Mohammad.

Boulby (1999:77), the former Muslim Brotherhood figure contended that during their campaigns for the 1989 and 1993 parliamentary elections, the movement would,

“organize and mobilize support through “institutional infrastructures of mosques, schools, university campuses and medical centers, as well as through the use of big assemblies, discussion meetings, and street banners”⁸¹

Ibrahim Zeid al Kilani, a prominent figure of the movement and Minister of Awqaf in 1990 attributed his success in the 1993 parliamentary elections to the Friday sermons he used to deliver⁸². Mosques constituted a disputed arena for amassing support whether by the movement or the regime. Jarrar (2009:46&64) contended that the security apparatus utilized mosques to persuade and recruit young jihadist fighters to head to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupation forces. Not long before the *war on terror* in the wake of the September 11, 2001 events, opposition trends including Islamists explained that public opinion reached an unmatched state of concurrence to contest the uncontested political, social and economic policies of the state. The regime would retaliate by passing and enacting new legislative measures to reassert the dominance of official Islam over public space, thereby containing the movement’s speech within other, non-public spheres.

Boulby (1999:116) viewed that the motives that stand behind the government targeting the movement in the 1989-1993 period were the latter’s large social base and considerable representation in parliament, its agenda to Islamize society, and its backing of improved pluralism, public freedoms and calls to hold the governments accountable. Abu Rumman (2007:76) contended that the movement

⁸¹ Waterbury (A Political Economy, 131) cited in Boulby (1999:83) stated “*The school, like the mosque, has the advantage of being an institution within which it is very difficult for authorities to control political activities among people who congregate in a perfectly legal manner.*” While an article published in Jordan Times in June 19th, 1992 refers to a governmental decree banning prayers in open spaces.

⁸² Reference - Al Ghad newspaper, p. 14 (04/07/2010). See Annex I, p.7.

was unable to rise above the effects of state policies to do away with the movement's civil society networks, or adapt and come up with alternative strategies to serve its grassroots. This tradeoff between popularity and change on the ground was not something easily attainable for the movement. Hamid (2005:10) viewed that the Islamic Action Front as operating openly but under scrutiny by the media. IAF was required to synchronize oratory and practice, a stance which predictably proved almost impossible as it lacked vital guidance, unambiguous vision, and readiness to risk the dissatisfaction of its popular base, henceforth the IAF finding itself in a political limbo incapable of mapping out a clear policy for the future. The Researcher views that this intransigence in IAF's policy and mother movement reflected on its discourse in the mosque, ultimately propping up the level of contestation with the State which, moved by other objective motives, resorted to regulate the Law as a means to control the religious sphere.

2.2. State and Religiosity

Abu Rumman (2011) describes the Jordanian model in managing the relationship between State and religiosity as that of "conservative secularism"⁸³. Antoun (1989:189) upholds this point positing that policies of modernizing the state in a secular fashion are apace without a parallel decline in the reach of religion in society. According to this political model, the State, historically sustained since its inception in 1921, pursued a formula of "*balances*" by avoiding both strong linkage and direct confrontation between State and religion. While the regime did not base its legitimacy on sheer religious reference, it has not given up on the religious dimension of internal policies, and to a lesser degree external policies. Abu Rumman adds that these "*balances*" were reflected in the constitution (religion of the State is Islam, but the nation is the source of all powers), and on the State's relationship with the Islamists, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, when it allowed them to register and enabled them to reach out and influence society. However, this formula retained a visible whitespace and sometimes intellectual clash with movements call to instate an Islamic state. The State maintained a clear distance from the Movement's discourse and ideology, or engaging in policies subject to religious considerations in determining political interests. In contrast, the government issued instructions and regulations affirming respect for Islamic sentiments, as happens in the fasting month of Ramadan when nightclubs are closed and eating in public and the sale alcohol is banned. The author concludes that State policy towards the Islamists is generally subject to purely political and security considerations, and does not affect religious and doctrinal dimensions of these groups save in aspects where they would lead to security problems or social tension, thereby the State avoiding unnecessary collision with the public mood. At the same time, Abu Rumman views that there is a "*strategic cautiousness*" approach towards these movements, even regarding movements working within

⁸³ The Jordanian Model in Managing the Relationship between Religion and State. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011, Amman, Jordan (translation from the Arabic version).

العلمانية المحافظة: النموذج الأردني في ادارة العلاقة بين الدين والدولة، نشر عام 2011 عن مؤسسة فريدريش ايبيرت، عمان، الأردن
Source: <http://www.judran.net/?p=964> accessed on January 28th, 2015.

the official circles and state interests given the fact that all these movements, although differing in tactics, they all share the dream of establishing an Islamic state. According to the supra study, there are two "*kitchens*" which draw the state policy towards religiosity. One is the "*security kitchen*", concerned mainly with the security side in relation to the religious establishment such as the awqaf (Islamic endowments), shari'a colleges and the Islamic rooted charity works. This "*kitchen*" prioritizes considerations of social, political and security stability, ensuring that in managing these institutions they do not go astray of the line of official policies as in the mosques since there are "*established links*" with respect to Friday sermons, preaching lessons and the Holy Quran memorizing centers. The other "*kitchen*" is attached to the Royal Court and headed by Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad, concerned mainly with the academic and cognitive aspect, in addition to overseeing the appointment of directors of religious institutions such as the supreme judge, general mufti, minister of awqaf, and presidents of the Islamic universities. Nevertheless, Abu Rumman contends that to date, there is no formal council with clear and defined powers to delineate the policy of the State towards religiosity and which sets forth development stages of State institutions involved in this field, a fact which impairs any steps taken towards building a religious message of the State. The Researcher here below refers to one vivid example of this imparity. In November 2004, King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein initiated the Amman Message ("AM") which sought to,

*"declare what Islam is and what it is not, and what actions represent it and what actions do not... to clarify to the modern world the true nature of Islam and the nature of true Islam"*⁸⁴.

This blueprint for *tolerant Islam* was later on imbued with religious authority by fatwas (pl. of fatwa- a legal religious ruling or edict) issued by the World leading ulama (senior Islamic scholars) whom by July 2006 endorsed the AM's fundamental rulings recognizing the legitimacy of Islam's eight *madh'habs* (legal

⁸⁴ Source: <http://ammanmessage.com>
accessed on September 01st, 2010

methodologies) and precisely defining who is a Muslim, prohibiting *takfir* (disavowing others as apostates) amongst Muslims, and setting forth the standards and prerequisites for *fatwa* issuance. In this regards, Price (1994:670) puts forth the notion that,

“Legislation is commonly used by the controlling group or groups in the market to enforce and reinforce identities useful to them”.

The AM is sought to be instituted, spread and implemented through diverse pragmatic channels such as- to endorse legislations with the *supra* Three Points of the AM to define Islam and outlaw *takfir* as religious reference; forge inter-Islamic treaties; and disseminate the message through the wide use of publishing and multi-media, school curricula and university courses, and the *training of mosque* Imams to *include it in their sermons*.

In what appeared to be a tactical stance (Jarrar 2009:27), the Muslim Brotherhood Movement of Jordan, the main opposition front, announced in 2006 its adherence to the AM⁸⁵. Boukhars (2006:5) illustrates the Movement’s general purpose, and the regime’s counter policy as,

“the development of a broadly based and active Islamist civil society which would potentially lead to the establishment of an Islamist state... The regime tolerated the Brotherhood’s pragmatic dissent while seeking to utilize its flexibility and ideological weight to discredit the most radical, uncompromising Salafis”.

Amongst factors that explain the escalating crisis between the Jordanian regime and the Movement, Abu Rumman (2007:29) pinpoints to the fact that the latter had evolved as the most influential shaper of public opinion in the Kingdom which drove the state security apparatus wary of their strength and expanding popularity. Abu Rumman & Abu Hanieh (2009) state that *takfir* was one of the recent threats

⁸⁵ Source:

http://ammanmessage.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=35
accessed on September 01st, 2010.

to Jordanian national security which drove the State to redefine and globalize its security strategy to confront the globalized Jihad⁸⁶. Among the new strategies which the State has adopted was further focus to crack down on the principle of takfir through banning extremists from participating in public fora or in religious institutions. Knowing the impact mosques have on citizens⁸⁷, the Jordanian parliament also enacted laws regulating sermons delivered at mosques or any other public forums that advocate terrorism, and criminalizing any type of calling to, encouraging or abetting terrorism. Abu Rumman & Abu Hanieh (2009:156&158)) alluded to publishing the “*Amman Letter*” [Message] as,

“an example of the kind of instruments that would be used in intellectually confronting extremist thinking on the one hand, and for presenting Jordan as the role model and representative of “Moderate Islam”, on the other”.

Jarrar (2009:27) contended that on the outset, AM was an ideologically refined retaliation to the misrepresentation of Islam by Osama Bin-Laden and Al Qaeda followers, but it also exposed a new route in tackling the political opposition, especially the Islamic movement, its foreign adherence, and in essence its part in amassing extremist political opposition to achieve the movement’s political objectives,

“Most importantly, it placed parameters for the issuance of religious edicts fatwas which radical Islamists use as a vehicle to spread their ideology, including the takfiri ideology i.e. to declare a person an apostate. In the immediate term, the Message was a benign effort to counteract and reduce

⁸⁶ The word *jihad* connotes “*holy war*” in Islam. The verb *jaahada* means “*to strive or struggle in the path of God*”. *Inward jihad* refers to “*the personal struggle to become a better Muslim*” while the outer *jihad* is “*the effort to make one’s society reflect the principles of submission to God... Muslims commonly use the term jihadists for those who engage in this outer struggle with violence*”. Source: *Confronting Misoislamia*, p. 119-120, (Hussain, A) cited in *Teaching Religion and Violence* (Pennington 2012) *Oxford University Press*, Inc. http://books.google.jo/books?hl=en&lr=&id=7BW_RA-7AtQC&oi=fnd&pg=PA118&dq=jack%2Bshaheen%2Bsermon&ots=qxBdzvwOZ_&sig=ISW-xyV54t5gBFdhlznelwMbWFQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false accessed on August 05th, 2014.

⁸⁷ According to official data, Imams and preachers meet with 1.5 million citizens of different society strata every week. See Annex I, p.16.

the political credibility of radical Islamists. Thus, it lacked the legal framework or teeth to delegitimize such acts by making it a crime punishable under the law”.

This view is further corroborated by Al-Rousan (2009: 220) who contends that the government promoted AM through mosque podiums as a tool to,

"to ferret out the discourse of violence and terrorism and instill a discourse of tolerance in its place".

However, from the political parties' point of view this move is being interpreted as clampdown on freedoms. In the short run, the AM was a gentle attempt to thwart and diminish the political authority of Islamic fundamentalists. Hence, it did not possess legal support or strength to delegitimize and legally criminalize their acts. In addition, it did not succeed in attracting noteworthy audiences, especially among Jordanians because it was a top-down scheme propagated by a pro-Western king⁸⁸ deemed as lacking sufficient credibility as a religious point of reference in the Muslim world to issue this counter discourse. Jordan's close alliance with the US has watered down such initiative to a mere pro-American propaganda⁸⁹. Another failure reason for the AM is the nucleus of Al-Qaeda cadres and its dedicated ranks of associated radical groups who have proved unaffected by counter-ideological speech and received it as an offensive discourse. The ensuing years witnessed a basket of legislations and policies enacted by the Jordanian state aimed at curtailing the strength of the movement including new regulations targeting preaching and guidance at mosques. The importance of mosques as informal social podiums used to disseminate religiosity and rally communal action became more evident with the amending laws that

⁸⁸ Jarrar (2009) contends that "King Abdullah implicitly acknowledged this in a speech in Washington D.C. in September 2005 in which he noted that "God willing, [the Amman Message] will expand to engage the popular preachers and grassroots activists -- what is called the (Muslim street)" Quoted in Jordan Times, September 14 2005. (p.27&28)

⁸⁹ US Ambassador to Jordan Robert Stephen Beecroft visited Ministry of Awqaf and commended it for conducting workshops to mosque Imams on the Amman Message. Source (http://www.alrai.com/pages.php?news_id=359856). See Annex II, p.21.

regulate the media and publications. Governments in Islamic countries know the role mosques can be used to foment social and political change. Kifner (1989:1) cited in Sreberni & Mohammadi (1994) contends that,

"in the Iranian revolution, new technology spread the word of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, first through tape cassettes telephoned from abroad and played over mosque loudspeakers".

This requires the state to regulate religious speech and control its outreach. Jarrar (2009:31) attributes the motive which drove the Jordanian state to regulate communal religious space as to help thwart the diffusion of non-conformist Islamic views thereby restraining oppositional figures from utilizing public religious platforms to rally dissent.

The Researcher herewith depicts a case where the ministry of awqaf replies back to a *letter to the editor* by a reader objecting incitements to women via mosque podiums, saying,

"The ministry was taken aback by the newspaper publishing this article before sending it first to the ministry or asking its opinion. This action is unfamiliar with a well respected newspaper"⁹⁰

This opinion by the officialdom denounces a mainstream newspaper publishing an objection by a citizen, expecting all state-friendly assets to back its policies by obscuring information to the public; a notion the state is keen not to stoke public opinion when it comes to its dominion over the religious sphere.

⁹⁰ Al Rai Newspaper, 30/10/2010.

2.3. The Mosque as a Religio-Spatial Setting

Antoun (1989:263) contends that following Mohammad's emigration to Medina in A.D. 622, popular attendance of *salat al-jum'a* [Friday congregational prayer] became a mandatory injunction indicating religious and political significance for all free male adults who carry arms and are eligible to protect the newly established *umma*, or Muslim nation. This requisite attendance has become a unanimous religious injunction by the four *sunni* schools of Islamic jurisprudence. The *shafi'i* school of law (which Jordan's fatwa system follows⁹¹) maintains that forty male Muslims are needed to qualify a Friday congregational prayer, a condition not being applied in Jordan. The aim of *khutba* according to Imam al-Ghazali is to,

*"help man realize his religion and to revive and animate the indifferent; the sermon should draw on verses of the Quran, authentic traditions of the Prophet, and edifying tales of the prophets and saints of past; the sermon might even include recitation of poetry and weeping, but it should not arouse false hopes (of salvation)."*⁹²

Mohammad's successive caliphs and their appointed governors and judges would lead the congregation in prayers and deliver *khutba* [sermon] which often includes political announcements. The Imam or preacher delivers *khutba* on behalf of the community, dressing in formal traditional costume and engulfed in a prescribed and ceremonial framework of prayer and worship formulae which follows the *adhan* [call for prayer]. In modern times, the preacher delivers his speech in classical Arabic, but would sometimes choose to utilize colloquial Arabic in order to draw examples from mundane life or to stress a certain point. It is also customary to point out to the ruler's name after conferring salutations upon Prophet Mohammad, his household and companions therefore conferring

⁹¹ Jordan follows the *shafi'i* school in its fatwa system.
Source: website of General Iftaa' Department
<http://www.aliftaa.jo/ShowContent.aspx?Id=47#.VLE6NCuUeSo>
accessed on January 10th, 2015.

⁹² Antoun R. (1989) *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World: A Jordanian Case Study in Comparative Perspective*, Princeton Legacy Library, p. 88.

legitimacy upon him. Following the Prophet's practice, the preacher delivers two successive sermons; the first is longer and called the *sermon of warning or exhortation*, the preacher then sits down on the minbar before proceeding to the second and shorter *descriptive* or *qualifying* sermon which includes the lifting up of prayer to Allah to invoke blessings again on Prophet Mohammad, his household and his companions.

A field investigator in Jordan, Antoun elucidates that the phenomenon of preacher existed even before Islam, playing the role of his tribe's spokesperson whose stigma was that of a bellicose power, praising his own tribe and defaming its adversaries. This attribute was retained in the early Islamic period, save that the religious value replaced the tribal pedigree. Since the emergence of the Islamic *umma* in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah [Medina], the mosque played a multifunctional role; it was the institution where Muslims deliberate their salient and communal issues such as war and peace, a shelter and an educational institute. This *umma* is at the same time a religious and political community of believers who adhere to one jurisdiction under Allah. The *minbar* was the eminent platform which embodies a religio-political influence wherefrom important communal declarations are delivered, and the sermon embedded more social and political essence than content of pure religious or ritualistic nature. Sermons would mesh religion with issues pertaining to the family, soteriology (directed to salvation) and eschatology, rituals and moral principles, and then the preacher concludes with asserting that the Quran and Mohammad (as statesman and prophet) was the first preacher in Islam and a role model for Muslims in all ages. In addition, the religious and ceremonial parts of the sermon gives legitimacy to the sociopolitical meanings given the minbar is considered the most consecrated part of the mosque which carries blessings on the worshippers. Preachers with excessive emotional gimmicks were criticized.

The mosque furnishes the religio-spatial structure where Muslims interact as a community and practice their rituals. As the fundamental body for religious

practice, the role of the mosque is composite and multifaceted. Historically, it is where Muslims pray, gather together for the Friday sermon and religious lessons, obtain fatwas, collect and disseminate *zakat*. The mosque also served as the platform where the religious and political symbols are blended to rally a sense of camaraderie and collective action among Muslims.

Antoun⁹³ infers that the mosque preacher tackles issues pertaining to this life and the hereafter; language and style are more formal and classical when tackling religious concerns and educating the worshippers in *shari'a* and Islamic ethics, therefore uniting the Islamic community with relevant laws; the religious institution is divided in allegiance as free preachers relate to the mundane people while judges, scholars and appointed preachers are attached to the caliph.

The Researcher in this study elicits a varied view based on observations collected at several mosques; the speech of appointed preachers who are attached to the officialdom, therefore the regime, is laced with lingo that contradicts with the established laws and traditions of the country. This is a telltale of a preordained turn-a-blind-eye policy which prioritizes the exercise of control over the mosque for political and security-driven purposes. Once this policy has accomplished its objectives, the propagation of antagonistic/hate speech further serves the interest of the regime as it instills an image of a religious establishment keen on Islam in face of aggressions by several enemies (West and Israel). Besides, this leeway exposes to the security apparatus preachers who have a jihadist penchant.

Mosques in Jordan fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places, objectives of which include,

⁹³ Ibid, pp. 70-71

“The maintenance, development, preservation, and management of mosques and Awqaf funds; the development of mosques to deliver the message of Islamic education”⁹⁴.

To achieve this, the Ministry will,

“Maintain, preserve and manage the affairs of Islamic Holy places and maintain Islamic relics such as mosques and holy shrines; Oversee the construction, maintenance and financial management of mosques to enable them to carry their mission; Guide Muslims to virtuous ways and acquaint them with principles of their faith through sermons and preaching, lectures, seminars, publications and other methods that serve the purpose”⁹⁵.

The Ministry of Awqaf’s statistics show that less than half of the mosques are manned with state-appointed Imams. In addition to the state-run mosques, there are private mosques built by donations of individuals. These mosques have their own Imams and their sermons were not as subject to state control as the state-run mosques, hence the need for the state to regulate their speech as well.

Noteworthy to observe is that the vast majority of Jordanian parents (98 percent) think of religion is an important element in their life, while religious teaching guides 91 percent of parents in their daily life⁹⁶. In a separate survey, 96 percent said that religion was very important in their lives, and 86 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that religiosity is a very important trait for a woman⁹⁷. Fathi

⁹⁴Source:

http://images.jordan.gov.jo/wps/wcm/connect/gov/eGov/Government+Ministries+_+Entities/Ministry+of+Awqaf+Islamic+Affairs+and+Holy+Places/General+Information/ accessed on September 05th, 2010.

⁹⁵ Source:

http://images.jordan.gov.jo/wps/wcm/connect/gov/eGov/Government+Ministries+_+Entities/Ministry+of+Awqaf+Islamic+Affairs+and+Holy+Places/General+Information/ accessed on September 05th, 2010.

⁹⁶ Source: undisclosed survey (2008) facilitated to the researcher by an anonymous State official.

⁹⁷ Source: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.com/Upload/5_Iran.pdf accessed on September 03rd, 2010. Total: 1200 respondents, all Muslims. Source: Moaddel and Azad. The Worldviews of Islamic Publics: The Cases of Egypt, Iran, and Jordan. Jordanian parents account for 34 percent of the population [Source: Department of Statistics/ Unemployment Survey 2005].

(1981:163-172) viewed that the mosque is not merely a place where the community of worshippers practice their weekly prayer but it also represents the locus of their community. This is clear when we look at the non-religious activities conducted and mediated through mosques especially in villages which the Researcher elaborates in the media coverage part (Chapter Four, Annex# Three).

Al-Rousan (2009:3) describes the mosque as reflecting the authority of the group in Muslim community and a source of its symbols. It represents a place to practice the most important forms of religious activity for Muslims, surrounded by a halo of sacredness which makes Muslims look unto it as one of the most important holy places that constituted the symbol of their state because of its association with the sanctity of Allah the Creator and the person of Prophet Muhammad. Its importance stems from being the prime place for worship, which is a sacred place for the performance of rites and rituals, and expresses Muslims' religious and social solidarity. If we assume that the mosque is an institution with multiple functions and roles from a religious point of view and from the verdict of history, what essentially governs these functions are a gamut of religious directives, and the political system forms their function and scope. The mosque differs from one Islamic society to another in terms of laws and directives that regulate it on the one hand, and its effectiveness and impact on society on the other hand, although mosques are involved in one common denominator; their religious function. Mosques in Jordanian society have been the most controversial issue particularly in the post-mid-eighties of the last century, including their religious, political and social role, but the political role remains the most relevant and important link. The main reason behind this controversy is the speech which linked between religion and terrorism, thereby directly reflecting on the mosque.

Abuhilalah⁹⁸ views that it is not a religious duty to expand in building mosques, based on a *hadith* that the whole earth has been made to me [Prophet

⁹⁸ Article by Yaser Abuhilalah, Al-Ghad Newspaper, May 5th, 2009.

Mohammad] a mosque and for purification, and that even during the apex of the Islamic civilization, mosque building did not witness the expansion we see today. Abuhilalah criticizes the exaggeration in mosque decoration and architecture in Western Amman while cultural annexes are absent.

2.4. The Introduction of Regulations over the Mosque

Jordan constitution was promulgated in 1952 in the era of the unity of the two Banks (Trans-Jordan and Palestine), the presence of many political parties and their strong representation in parliament. Article (107) of Jordan constitution stipulates that,

“The organisation of the affairs of Moslem Waqfs and the administration of their financial matters, among other matters, shall be regulated by a special law⁹⁹”.

Albeit it's tactical alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood movement, Boulby (1999:62) highlights the notion that the regime's worries about the Movement came to surface in 1955 when the government passed a decree subjecting Friday sermons to close monitoring and control. Pending the passing of this law, which only took place in 1962, mosques came under the jurisdiction of the Department of Awqaf¹⁰⁰ [Islamic Endowments] presided by the Supreme [Islamic] Judge. In the ensuing period, 1962 till 1967, the State lifted martial law and recommenced parliamentary life. Article two of the 1955 Law stated,

“notwithstanding the provisions of any law in force, no one is allowed to preach, guide, sermonize or teach at any mosque, whether conducting this in the present or not, unless licensed in writing by the Supreme Judge or who acts on his behalf in the directorates and regions”.

⁹⁹ Source: Legislations Pertaining to Ministry of Awqaf, 2008: pp. 6 & 7.

¹⁰⁰ A waqf is defined as “appropriating an owned property as an inalienable property of God, and dedicating its yields to a certain entity even if availed. The ‘waqf’ is considered charitable if its yields are dedicated to a piety as a start, and as a progeny if its yields are dedicated to a person (or specific persons), their offspring after them and to a charitable entity upon their demise”. The awqaf (pl. of waqf) are defined as “all Islamic endowments, including mosques, whether financed by the budget of Ministry of Awqaf (MoA) or not”. The ‘mosque’ is defined as “the place dedicated to perform the prayer, and is open for everyone to conduct requisite prayers and other acts of worship. Its annexes include the Holy Quran quarters, library, women’s praying area, Islamic center, mosque-staff housing, ritual cleansing area, mosque garden and arena, and any other edifices annexed to it” [Source: website of Ministry of Awqaf].

In 1962, a Royal decree dissolved the parliament due to an alleged lack of cooperation between the legislative and executive bodies¹⁰¹, henceforth the cabinet could endorse the Temporary Law of Counseling, Preaching and Guidance¹⁰². The point of reference for applying the 1962 Law became Prime Minister instead of the Supreme Judge as was the case with the 1955's Law. The Council of Ministers also endorsed the Temporary Law of the Council of Preaching & Guidance (No. 45/1962) with the membership of a staff of Ministry of Interior, Council of Awqaf, and General Directorate of Guidance and News; a sign of a yet more security-driven control. As per article (6) of the Temporary Law, the Council's remit of responsibilities included,

“the supervision over mosques, their annexes (libraries, clubs, gardens) and religious institutes which equip graduates to carry out preaching, guidance and other Islamic rituals, and appointing general directors, and all imams, teachers and staff who would carry out tasks which the management of the mosques and religious institutions deem necessary.”¹⁰³

Abu Rumman (2007:12) contended that the “*public temperament*” towards the Muslim Brotherhood movement changed in the 1980s as signs of belligerent Islamic action began to surface. The government resorted to endorsing the Law of Preaching, Guidance and Teaching at Mosques no. (7) of the year 1986, article (6) of which entitled The Council of Preaching and Guidance to regulate and watch over sermonizing, guidance, preaching and teaching at mosques, and oversee the cleansing of mosques from disparity, disagreement and disorder.

Article (7) of the Law stated:

¹⁰¹ Aruri (1972) contended that “King [Hussein bin Talal] dissolved Parliament for voting Rifai [Prime Minister] out of office. He charged that it ‘did not truly reflect the electorates’ will”. (p.181)

¹⁰² According to Article 94 of Jordan Constitution “*In cases where the National Assembly is not sitting or is dissolved, the Council of Ministers has, with the approval of the King, the power to issue provisional laws covering matters which require necessary measures which admit of no delay or which necessitate expenditures incapable of postponement. Such provisional laws, which shall not be contrary to the provisions of the Constitution, shall have the force of law, provided they are presented before the Assembly at the beginning of its next session, and the Assembly may approve or amend such laws*” (Source: Jordan Foreign Ministry official website).

¹⁰³ Source <http://lob.gov.jo/ui/laws> accessed on May 15th, 2010

- A. *In case where a preacher violates articles of this Law, Minister can ban him from preaching as notified by the General Secretary and the Director of Preaching and Guidance of the Ministry.*
- B. *If the preacher insists on preaching after informing him of the banning decision by a written notice, he is punished with a jail sentence of one week to one month, and a fine of twenty to hundred Jordanian Dinars.*
- C. *The Minister can lift the ban from the person who was banned from preaching according to paragraph (A) of this article if he deems the banning reasons no more persist and the preacher has become qualified to carry out the task of preaching and guidance.*
- D. *Fatwas¹⁰⁴ are issued by the general Ifta [the act of issuing a fatwa] staff whether by the General Mufti or muftis commissioned by the General Ifta Department in the entire Kingdom.”¹⁰⁵*

Interviewed former Member of Parliament and IAF member, Taysir Fityani, rejected the exclusive right of the General Mufti to issue fatwa and attributed this to the State’s attempt to exclude knowledgeable scholars from this task¹⁰⁶. The government in 1987 issued the Ordinance of Preaching, Guidance, Sermonizing and Imamate at Mosques as part of the *supra* Law which sets forth

¹⁰⁴ A fatwa is “an Islamic legal opinion or ruling” (Abu Rumman 2007: 36). Legislation by Ministry of Awqaf (2008, pp.48-49) stipulates “The General Mufti is appointed by a Royal decree and manages issues of Department of Ifta, carries out the general Ifta policy, heads the Council of Ifta and Islamic Research and Studies. The Council of Ministers assigns members of the Council based on the General Mufti’s recommendation. The General Mufti issues fatwa(s) in issues related to him and avails to the Council cases within its remit of expertise. No person or any entity is permitted to confront legal fatwas issued in general cases contrary to the provisions of Law of Ifta. No person or entity is allowed to contest or doubt fatwas issued by the Council and the General Mufti with the aim of offense and defamation”.

¹⁰⁵ Source: Legislations Pertaining to Ministry of Awqaf (2008:27-29)

¹⁰⁶ Fityani added “We were surprised to find Fatwas are confined to certain people and penalties levied on whosoever otherwise have issued a Fatwa... It is not accepted that Ifta is exclusive to the General Mufti or that someone who practices Ifta be subject to penalties such as fines, imprisonment and confinement. It is of no sense that if someone has asked me about the decree of prayer I end up in prison or pay financial penalty. Thus, the Law has not differentiated between general Fatwa related to the country and special Fatwa(s) related to individuals and their daily issues. This stems out of attempts to confine, alienate, and ban experts from practicing their missions and tasks”.

minimum academic qualifications for preachers and Imams, their preconditioned accreditation by a committee assigned by Minister of Awqaf, and the exclusive jurisdiction of ministry of awqaf to assign Imams to preach, teach, sermonize or guide at mosques. Under this Law, a preacher could not delegate others to undertake his aforementioned tasks without the written approval by the Director of Awqaf; Imams were required to keep a record of the names of orators, themes of their sermons, dates of their visits to the mosque and other activities carried out at the mosque. The Ordinance also stipulated punitive measures in case of violations. The preacher is someone who preaches guides and teaches in mosques, whereas the Imam¹⁰⁷ is the one who conducts the task of Imamate for the Muslims during their prayer at mosques.

Interviewed Abdul'ilah al-Takhaineh, Assistant of Director of Legal Affairs at Ministry of Awqaf, viewed that,

“Preaching and guidance are two synonyms which refer to religious lectures given at the mosque’s arena or in other public places (schools, universities, public halls etc.). Under the umbrella of preaching and guidance come the tasks of sermonizing, teaching Quran, and organizing circles of lessons inside the mosques’ arenas or their annexes. The sermon is the Friday sermon delivered at Ad-dhuhr [noon] prayer or in a feast day (Al Fitr and Al Adha holidays). Anyone who would undertake any of the previous tasks needs permission by the Ministry”.

Mohammad Shaqra (a mosque Imam in Amman and former Minister of Awqaf) differentiates between Imamate and guidance as,

“Imamate constitutes the highest rank one can reach as it resembles the Prophet’s (Mohammad) statute, and is loftier than guidance. It has two features – the Imam drawing people to pray behind him thereby bringing

¹⁰⁷ The concept of ‘Imamate’ is being used not in the Shiite sense of the word, but to define the task of the Imam in the mosque, namely leading the people in prayer “*The Shi’ite doctrines on leadership and imamate are also different from those of Sunni counterparts. The Sunnis, who are in the majority, maintain that caliphate and government are elective and do not partake in the dogma and belief structure of Islam. The Shi’ites, on the other hand, consider imamate as a part of Shi’ite theology and the Imam, being chosen of God, receives his title through hereditary succession from within the household of the Prophet*” (Kamali 2005: 286).

them closer to God, and the Imam embodying in himself the Prophet's most important sacrament; that is prayer. Thereby, the prayer part of the mosque is not subject to the Law of Preaching & Guidance because the Law is not concerned with drawing the pious to the Imam given the prayer itself is the effective factor".

Apparently, a State-affiliated official gives more importance to rituals than to guidance for the worshippers, implicitly insinuating the fact that sermons are void of issues that tackle people's life-felt needs.

2.5. Regulations during the Post-Democracy Era/ The 2006 Law Amendment and its Toll

The following period (1989 onward) witnessed the initiation of a historical political-reform program. Robinson (1998:387-410) states that,

“during this time Jordan has held [several] parliamentary elections, enacted a number of liberalizing laws, removed many restrictions on the press, and minimized the role that the security services, or mukhabarat, play in suppressing the opposition. Moreover, the liberalization program survived a number of severe challenges, including the Gulf War...; the implementation of a difficult austerity program; and the conclusion of a controversial peace treaty with Israel”.

Boulby (1999:59&136) views that these elections constitute a momentous turning point in the regime’s history, heralding the country’s second parliamentary experience and the Muslim Brotherhood’s ascension to power whose relationship with the regime in the following period turned unpleasant in the 1980s, as the latter, watching the Movement’s political power on the rise, opted to change its policy from cooptation to that of containment.

In 2001, a new law, the Law of Islamic Awqaf, Affairs and Shrines (number 32), was endorsed, which stipulated,

- *The establishment of an endowment to help support mosques with Imams, preachers and teachers, so that a Ministry fund by the name (Dawa [calling, missionary work] Fund) is to be established and financed by support from the General Budget and other donations.*
- *All mosques in the Kingdom are endowed.*
- *Avail to Ministry [of Awqaf] the right of supervising and administering all the mosques¹⁰⁸.*

¹⁰⁸ Source: Legislations of Ministry of Awqaf, 2008

In April 2006, the Jordanian Parliament promulgated an Amendment to the 1986 Law according to which Paragraph (A) of Article (6) now reads,

“[The Council] establishes a general policy of sermonizing, guidance, preaching, teaching and overseeing its concerns” (Ibid),

Henceforth, this subjects all issues pertaining to the mosque under the jurisdiction of the Council of Preaching and Guidance. Article (7) of the same Law was also amended as follows: “

- A. No one is allowed to deliver a speech, teach, sermonize or guide at mosques unless qualified and has a written approval by Minister [of Awqaf] or whom the Minister delegates.*
- B. In case a preacher violates articles of this Law, the Minister can prevent him from sermonizing or teaching or preaching or guidance at mosques as notified by the General Secretary and the Director of Preaching and Guidance of the Ministry, given he [the preacher] is notified in writing of the banning decision.*
- C. The Minister can lift the ban from the person who is banned from preaching according to paragraph (B) of this article if he deems the banning reasons no more exist and the preacher has become qualified to carry out the task of preaching and guidance.*
- D. With consideration to the regulations of legislations in force, anyone who violates the regulations of paragraphs (A) and (B) of this article is punished with a jail sentence of one week to one month, and a fine of twenty to hundred Jordanian Dinars.” (Ibid)*

Al-Rousan (2009:46) attributes this legislative change to an outdated law which the government has deemed overlooking a pressing need to regulate preaching and teaching at mosques, while the Islamic movement (Muslim Brotherhood) interpreted it as a direct targeting by the government against the movement, thereby causing a lot of criticism to the Amendment. This view is upheld by Jarrar (2010:64765) who lists State control over the religious space and rituals among

the counter ideological approaches adopted by the government following the 2005 terrorist attacks against hotels in Amman. The aim was to deter the recruitment of worshippers and limit the movement's ability to enlist public support. The Researcher condones Jarrar's view given the package of parallel legislations targeting individual freedoms in general and the Islamic movement in particular. These laws include the law of public assembly, the anti-terrorism law, the press and publications law, and the fatwa law. However, the mosque is viewed by the Jordanian State as very effective and much more influential than the media, as a classified Wikileaks document depicts a statement by a former chairman of the Royal Hashemite Court¹⁰⁹. This viewpoint is also shared by interviewed IAF deputy Taysir Fityani who views the Law of Preaching, Sermonizing and Teaching at Mosques as "*the most dangerous among these laws*". Apparently, the law aphorism and comments by State officials suggest the ban on Imams was being applied on a selective standard (whosoever violates the law), but comments by members of the movement indicate there was a blanket ban on their Imams. This is further corroborated by views of researchers specialized in the movement in Jordan.

Abu Rumman (2007:68) asserts the government has banned members of the movement from carrying out their activities at mosques, these activities being indispensable for enabling the movement to communicate and relate to Jordanians, and sustain a broad social network. The ban was also applied at different levels and due to changing political temperaments between Jordan and neighboring countries. Horani et al (1997:278) described the mid-eighties, when Jordan pursued a rapprochement policy with Syria, as a policy to curtail the Movement's activities and cracking down on the free will of its mosques preachers. This view is also maintained by Abu Rumman (2007:76) who described this policy as one of the means the regime adopted to restrict the Movement's influence, adding that recently the regime has endorsed the Preaching and Counseling Law,

¹⁰⁹ Source: <http://ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=85300> accessed on September 02nd, 2011.

and the Anti-Terrorism Law, thereby holding people legally accountable if they carry out any kind of religious preaching without previous authorization by Ministry of Awqaf. In addition, The 2005 annual report of the National Centre for Human Rights (covering the period June 01st, 2003 till December 31st, 2004) depicts the following text on Freedom of Opinion and Expression - Restriction on Methods of Expression and the Right to Communication,

“Mosque pulpits were not safe from restrictions to freedom of opinion and expressions”¹¹⁰.

On September 08th, 2004, Ammannet.net (the first online radio in Jordan and a community-based FM station) reported the security apparatus has seized the house of Dr. Ibrahim Zeid Al-Kilani, former Minister of Awqaf, and the houses of other members of the Islamic Action Front arresting 39 of its prominent figures for delivering speeches and religious lessons at mosques without a prior permission by Ministry of Awqaf. A Ministry of Interior source said some people stood up at mosques' platforms and delivered speeches in which they disdained the State, its policy and leadership without acquiring the prior approval of the Ministry of Awqaf.

¹¹⁰ Source: <http://www.nchr.org.jo/english/Publications/AnnualReports.aspx> page 31 accessed on July 22nd, 2011.

This annual report depicted the human rights' situation in the Kingdom from June 01st, 2003 until December 31st, 2004, that is two years before the 2006 Amendment was enacted. The NCHR is state-funded and its chairman of the board of trustees is appointed by a royal decree. The Report added that *“In September 2004, administrative governors detained a number of speakers for violating the provisions of the preaching law, on the pretext that they did not obtain licenses from the Ministry of Awqaf (MOA) to give the Friday speech. The Ministry went further than that by seeking to unify the topics of the Friday speech, thereby violating not just the right of freedom of opinion and expression, but also the principles of the Islamic Shari'ah, which urges the call to God's true path through wisdom, and order good deeds and banning bad deeds. Mosques are homes for prayer and knowledge, and a meeting place for Muslims to communicate and discuss matters of their religion and life. Terrorism and religious extremism did not rise from mosques where everything takes place in public. It resulted from marginalization and in isolated environments of individuals who had no chances in life and therefore preferred death, or whose ties with society decreased and whose trust in the state diminished and so they rebelled against it. Dialogue, allowing means of knowledge and communication, and enhancing methods of expression, as well as taking into consideration the requirements of justice, redress and equality in the enjoyment of right is the acceptable means of fighting terrorism and extremism, not banning, prohibiting, restricting and incriminating”*.

Abu Rumman and Abu Hanieh (2009:158) listed the Parliament passing laws against preaching or advocating terrorism in any shape, especially in Mosque sermons, among the recent policies the State has undertaken to curb threats to national security by extreme Islamists. A study by Hashem (2009)¹¹¹ emphasizes that,

“within the Islamic context, a centralized regulatory system for the khutba is not conceivable. Some Muslim governments have tried such an approach; it largely failed. While it might have succeeded in suppressing unwanted messages, it delegitimized appointed khatibs and, by default, gave credence to alternative voices. Some European countries tried such an approach (France, in particular), and we cannot say that it was a success.”

The key question to be broached is how the latest changes in the regulatory environment changed the dynamics that govern the relationship between the State and actors who contest the state’s influence in the religio-political sphere, mainly the Muslim brotherhood movement; whether pertinent laws and regulations have influenced Friday sermon; or whether Friday sermons do wield influence over the worshippers in the first place.

¹¹¹ Source:

file:///C:/Users/philipmdanat/Desktop/Thesis/Studies/ISPU%20-%20The_Muslim_Friday_Khutba.pdf

accessed on May 01st, 2015.

CHAPTER THREE

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF FRIDAY SERMONS

3.1. Methodology

Between June and December 2008 the Researcher attended and recorded 24 Friday sermons in 24 different mosques in the Greater Amman and Zarqa directorates where 55 percent of the population lives. These two main cities are geographically connected, therefore the demographic integration between them albeit the peculiar nature of each city. While Amman is the metropolitan capital, Zarqa constitutes a mosaic of ethnic, tribal, religious and economic varieties. It is also a breeding ground for several Islamic movements, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood movement whose preachers are being banned from preaching following the Amendment of the Law in 2006, and the jihadist salafi stream (movement) that thrives in the in-between shantytown of Ruseifeh.

This survey commenced two years after the enactment of the Amendment to the Law in 2006, henceforth the impracticality of drawing comparisons and conclusions regarding the resulting change in mosque speech prior to the Amendment, at least from the point of view of the recorded sermons. However, certain perceptions can be drawn from the relevant literature and interviews which the Researcher conducted with Imams/ preachers and other involved actors.

The first three visits to mosques were carried out through previous arrangements with the Imams by the help of research collaborators, but when the Researcher became acquainted with the setting, ensuing visits were being directly implemented without hindrance whether by government officials or mosque staff. Although, then Minister of Awqaf Abdulfattah Salah, when interviewed by the Researcher, he objected that these visits were being carried out without a prior

consent by the ministry. The Researcher checked with a legal expert on the minister's objection and found it groundless.

All sermons were audio-recorded, then salient themes penned down right after the Researcher has returned home for memory aid in case the recording was not clear¹¹². The Researcher translated dominant themes into English, and with the help of a collaborator, most of the sermons were transcribed (into Arabic).

The objective of the analysis is to track down dominant topics and relate them to the socio-political and legal contexts in light of the 2006's amendment to the Law to find out the mode by which the preachers (whether independently or by proxy of the official religious establishment) circumvent relevant regulations by means of *framing* in order to impact the opinion of the worshippers.

The reason why themes, instead of words, are being taken as the unit of analysis is the impracticality of finding frames in a single sentence uttered by the preacher; instead, frames are implicit, yet discoverable across a series of themes that resonate with the cultural context of the worshippers and their pre-cultivated schema. In this sense, the Researcher is a critic who embraces the disposition of (Kuypers 2010: 292) that "*criticism is an argument*", therefore arguing for a particular understanding of the religious rhetoric, and analyzing it is an art well established in qualitative research. From a rhetorical perspective, there are no *a priori* assumptions to discover salient themes, but through analyzing the sermon text in its cultural context frames are being detected. This is because frames can be discovered by searching for them in the sermon's narrative as they "*convey thematically consonant meanings across...time*" (Entman, 1999:7, cited in Kuypers 2010:301). This "*across time*" factor is best exemplified in mosque sermons which embed consonant concepts, metaphors and idioms engraved in a sacralized text

¹¹² In some cases the recording was not quite clear given the Researcher could not place the recorder close to the *minbar* or sit in front of it.

and empowered in culturally accepted norms historically cultivated in the audiences' schema.

3.2. Categorization of Sermon Themes/ Operational Definitions

Based on empirical observation of the 24 recorded sermons, an *a posteriori* breakdown of the content classifies salient themes into spiritual, social, political and economic issues, in addition to preachers' rhetoric regarding *other* Islamic groups or other religious and ethnic groups, and last but not least is *du'a* [supplication] which concludes the sermon and carries important religious, political and other messages. Although this typology is congruent to how some actors/ interviewees¹¹³ view the role of Friday congregational sermon (one of the mosque's main functions), these themes have appeared after recorded sermons were classified and frames appeared as salient or tacit in the given text.

Thematic classification draws from the sermon itself, while *du'a* is given a separate category. Other content of liturgical nature in the sermon is excluded, especially in the prelude, and the same applies to *du'a*, except when the preacher mentions the Muslim ruler/king, alludes to other sects in Islam, other religions or ethnic groups, or mentions jihad and other worldly issues.

The Researcher could not cite similar scholarship from where to derive a definition for each *category*, therefore the normative meanings ascribed to each one of them. However, this ascription is also related to the context. For example, unemployment and inflation define the *economic factor* given the causal relationship between these two factors¹¹⁴, and the fact they appear as major socio-economic indicators in local and international data¹¹⁵.

¹¹³ Interviewee Taysir Fityani views the role of the mosque as a general and integrated role-political, economic, social, cultural and religious. See other viewpoints in Chapter Six.

¹¹⁴ Source: http://eml.berkeley.edu/~webfac/wood/e100b_sp08/lecture15.pdf accessed on August 10th, 2015.

¹¹⁵ Source: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/overview> accessed on August 10th, 2015.

Du'a is given a separate category given its genre position in the sermon (Al-Habach, M, no date, p. 12 & 13).

Thematic categorization of the subject sermons depicts the following chart:

	Spiritual Content	Social Content	Political Content	Economic Content	Instigation towards the Other	Total
Number of themes	44	33	17	8	16	118
Percentage	37%	28%	14%	7%	14%	100%

In analyzing each of the above cohorts, and to serve the research and its objectives, the Researcher sets forth a separate *operational definition* to each of these cohorts. A record of the subject themes can be found in Annex # Two.

3.2.1. Spiritual Content

The Researcher sets forth the operational definition for *spiritual content* as that which connotes exhortation for the worshippers to adhere to Islamic ethos, the fundamental tenets of Islam, symbols and way of life in Islam but without direct indication to its overlap with the sociopolitical environment.¹¹⁶ This includes enjoining right and forbidding wrong; the virtues of Ramadan and other Islamic holidays; the status of the Islamic holy sites (especially *al-Aqsa* mosque); lessons

¹¹⁶ This does not imply the separation between State and religion, politics and religion or any reference to secularism as in the West, given that Islam does not condone this principle in life. In Jordan, although the State had induced some secular legislation, separation between state and religion as in the West does not exist especially in legislations pertaining to civil status of people (see section 1.4.1.).

from the Islamic history and forays; exclusivity of Islam as *the* true religion; refuting heresies in Islam (i.e. Shiites; Quraniyoun¹¹⁷); the role model of Prophet Mohammad and his household and companions; fate and destiny and doomsday; forbidding usury (*riba*); avoiding internal strife (*fitna*); cursing the enemies of Islam.

This cohort also refers to the five pillars of Islam, namely the profession of faith through *shahadatayn*¹¹⁸; *salat*: conducting the five daily ritual prayers; *zakat*: giving of alms; *sawm*: fasting the holy month of Ramadan; *hajj*: pilgrimage to Mecca. Among these *five pillars*, only the *shahadatayn* relates to belief, while the remaining pillars refer to deeds which crosscut with the milieu in which the Muslim lives. It is incumbent on the preacher to remind the worshippers to observe these pillars either directly or by reference to examples in the life of Prophet Mohammad and his companions and Islamic history.

A close *participant observation* to the three participating Informants/worshippers indicates discussion going on among themselves and within their families about injunctions by the preacher; a talk that halts if the preacher cajoles the regime or if the political occurring is louder than the customary religious duty.

Content which resemble cliché or common religious statements repetitive as mere ritual, especially in the first part of the sermon, is not factored for in this cohort as it does not constitute a subjective part of the sermon theme. However, this content still provides for the ideological foundation of information and guidance that the preacher imparts in his weekly theme. Antoun (1989) described sermons delivered in a rural Jordanian mosque in the 1960s as,

¹¹⁷ Al-Quraniyoun is a group which emerged in the twentieth century who “*under the guise of ‘returning to the Quran’ have rejected in totality, the legal authority of the sunna [...] they are also known as ahl-Quran, Quranites, Submitters, and inkar-e-hadith’*.”
Source: <https://www.academia.edu/Documents/in/Quraniyoon> accessed on October 24th, 2014.

¹¹⁸ The two *shahada*(s) are: declaring there is no god but Allah, and Mohammad is the messenger of Allah.

“framed in the prayer formulae that adumbrate, denote and enunciate that message [of salvation], their construction often makes the climax of the sermon coincidental with asking for particular works of righteousness”.

This cliché/formula in the prayer part includes *tahlil* (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah; *basmala* (In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful); *takbir* (Allah is greatest); *tasbeeh* (I proclaim Allah’s glory); *tahmeed* (Praised be Allah); *ta’awwudh* (I take Allah’s refuge from Satan the rejected); *tasliya* (O Alla, bless and greet with peace our *cid* Mohammad and the household of Mohammad).

By bypassing these calls, the Researcher does not underestimate the impact of this normative content on the worshipper, but that this impact cannot be verified or gauged given their generic nature. Antoun (1989:171) maintains that these calls are persuasive to a great portion over the congregation, and because of their centrality, intricacy and concentration, key rituals and pillars of faith are subject to symbolic interpretation in spite of their doctrinal nature.

As shown in the foregoing table, sheer spiritual content constitutes 37 percent of the sermon themes. Mubarak (no date)¹¹⁹ says that Friday prayer consists of two segments; the first is longer and has a more religious nature, whereas the second is shorter with political substance tackling issues pertaining to the daily life of the worshippers.

Among the 24 sermons in the second part of the sermon, only five preachers commended the worshippers to adhere to one or more of the five tenets of faith wherein three mentioned *zakat*, one combined *sawm* and *hajj*, and the remaining preacher joined *sawm* and *salat*. These obligations of faith are mentioned not as a cliché supplication repeated in each sermon, but alluded to in one or more of the sermon themes listed above.

¹¹⁹ Hadia Mubarak, The Oxford Encyclopaedia, Oxford University Press.

Source:

<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0461#ThePoliticalFunctionoftheKhutbah>
accessed on June 28th, 2014.

Apparently, *zakat*¹²⁰ has a higher preponderance, as it comes next to prayer in Quran¹²¹. This salience of *zakat* also enables the mosque to perform certain duties apart from the ritual ones such as almsgiving throughout *da'wa*, and *zakat* committees who also encourage the mosque neighborhood to attend prayers and religious lessons. Then come *sawm* and *haji*, and *sawm* and *salat* respectively, most likely in juxtaposition with the timely fasting month of Ramadan. However, the fact that only three of the 24 preachers urged the worshippers to pay off their *zakat* is probably based on their prior knowledge that the worshippers are more inclined to give *zakat* directly to the poor or through the mosque committee¹²², and that in an Islamic state, Muslims are required to provide their *zakat* to *bayt mal al-muslimeen* [the house of the money of Muslims] responsible for supporting the poor and the orphan¹²³, instead of paying it to Ministry of Awqaf whose revenues are subject to political formulae and secular considerations.

The subsequent notion that several preachers urged the king to rule according to Islamic shari'a *instead of "unjust" manmade or statutory laws* (a perception also shared by a wide array of Jordanians) possibly supports this assumption. A nationwide survey depicts that around three quarters of Jordanians believe that applicable laws should be strictly based on the Quran.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Muslims should pay 2.5 percent of their income as *zakat*. People can pay *zakat* directly to the poor and the needy, through charity organizations, or through the endowment of *zakat* at the Ministry of Awqaf which in return supports the mosques. Other than that, people can also pay *sadaka* [alms] through a mosque committee.

¹²¹ Surat 2:43 "*And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience]*".
Source: <http://quran.com/2>
accessed on September 17th, 2015.

¹²² This view is being relayed to the Researcher by banned preacher Wael Battiri; that most people prefer to pay their *zakat* directly to its due recipients or through charity organizations.

¹²³ Source: <http://scholar.najah.edu/content/provision-wealth-orphan-islamic-jurisprudence>
accessed on September 26th, 2014.

¹²⁴ Source: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/07/10/chapter-3-role-of-islam-in-politics/>
accessed on July 04th, 2014.

By starting the sermon with a spiritual essence, the preacher establishes the dogmatic underpinning and the necessary framework for issues of down-to-earth nature, therefore an ideological foundation for the sermon theme, and possibly a hedge against potential counterarguments or answerability by the State. Out of the 80 suggested sermon themes in the non-mandatory toolkit of Ministry of Awqaf¹²⁵, half are of pure religious nature, indicating the State is keen to employ the religious speech to furnish for the ideological guidelines of people's life-felt issues and to stay away from concentrating on political issues or exegesis that may depart from the source. The State also attempts to stave off preachers from loading up their sermons with political issues, as Informant SJ indicates,

"the Imams of the two mosques I regularly attend (Masjed Nazzal and Masjed Zeinab) [...] received official ordinance by Ministry of Awqaf not to tackle [...] political issues in their sermons"

This policy is nevertheless selective, as the State through the ministry of awqaf sometimes instructs the Imams to urge the worshippers to thwart public protests¹²⁶, especially when orchestrated by the Muslim Brotherhood movement.

Antoun (1989:102) views that the sermon does not merely convey information to the worshippers regarding their proper behavior; it also imparts decisive meaning which carries an affective as well as cognitive feature. This understanding, passed

¹²⁵ Antoun (p.139) recounts that by 1964, the Department of Religious Endowments [awqaf] started distributing its monthly newsletter with suggested sermon themes, asking preachers to keep a written copy of the sermon. Antoun noticed that in spite of this governmental policy, preachers have had a considerable space of freedom as to choose their sermon topics.

¹²⁶ On August 21st, 2014, Ministry of Awqaf sent a circular to the awqaf directorates in the kingdom asking them to urge the worshippers not to participate in a nationwide sit-in and strike by the Association of Jordanian Teachers (controlled by the Muslim brotherhood movement), backed by a fatwa that getting paid for any idle day is considered "*haram* (forbidden)".
Source: <http://alsawt.net/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%85-%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B6/>
accessed on August 21st, 2015.

on via prayer formulae which accompany the sermon and declare the Islamic ethos, constitutes a *reassuring frame for any debate on life-felt issues*.

This writer views that most significant is that the sermon topics comprise vacant frames¹²⁷ which may contain variable content, and their effect is not restrictive but open to interpretation. One example is the topic of jihad to defend the sacred sites of Muslims, which could as well serve as a political call to deter Zionism on the one hand or a connotation to the nature of miracles on the other (the night journey of Prophet Mohammad to *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem)). This observation is congruent to Entman's (1993:52) definition of framing as selecting and communicating certain aspects of a perceived reality,

"in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation".

This is also explained by the "*spreading activation*" nature of framing (Scheufele et al, 2010: 117) where if framing applies to parts or the entirety of the audience's schema all other associated schemata are prone to be activated as well.

Therefore, if the preacher's sermon resonates with the "*act of jihad*" schema, the cause, consequences and treatment cognitive schemata of jihad in the mind of the worshipper are also activated.

With regard to the worshippers, as concluded in the Media Coverage (Chapter Four) and the Questionnaire (Chapter Seven), the audience is more inclined to listen to religious substance that nourishes their query for faith-based guidance on life-felt issues rather than emotional discourse that stands idle of changing the course of things.

Friday sermon is meant to inculcate religious awareness in a society with high religious affinity where variant actors attempt to contest the religious establishment in shaping the worldview of the worshipper. Spiritual framing of the sermon theme

¹²⁷ Ibid (p.136)

is significant to the regime which tends to ascertain its legitimacy by self-reference to religious symbols (King as the ancestor of Prophet Mohammad, the custodian of the Islamic shrines in Jerusalem, and the guardian of pluralism in Islam through the Amman Message and other royal initiatives). These prerogatives and pedigrees are best sustained by framing the desired messages in a spiritual envelope such as the call for moderation and tolerance in Islam, timely focus on *al-Aqsa* mosque, or pledging obedience to and conferring blessings upon the Muslim ruler. Al-Rousan (2009: 6&7) defines Friday sermon as a process through which religious symbols in a Muslim community are restored so that the community retains the symbols of its religious and social structure.

This process of selecting a certain perspective and a particular interpretation to the message is inevitable as Van Gorp (2007) and McQuail (2005:379) indicate; therefore it embeds a certain way of thinking into the course of communication. Entman (1993:52), cited in Esther Vlieger and Loet Leydesdorff (2011: 30), adds that framing is either conscious or unconscious where, by selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salience¹²⁸ than others, the speaker endorses a particular issue giving it his own definition, interpretation, evaluation and recommendation. In our case, the preacher, whether intentionally or not, focuses on certain facts while ignoring others given that a particular idea never has its intrinsic meaning (Gamson 1989), but is backed in the frame given to it by the communicator.

Entman (1993) elucidates that framing is evident in the sender, the content itself, the receiver and within the cultural milieu. The Researcher views that a prevalent Islamic culture had furnished the individual frames which guide the worshippers in processing the religious input uttered by the preacher who in return is tied up to the expectations of his constant and harkening audience.

¹²⁸ Salience refers to “*whether or not something is perceived as important or prominent*” (McCombs & Bell, p. 95).

Pure spiritual content also serves as a safe haven used by the preachers to avoid involvement in controversial socio-political or economy-related issues which require technical wit to prescribe solutions for, or might bring about unwanted self censorship and reproach by the State, especially in times when the government is facing public unrest, heightened political opposition by the Islamic movement or regional turmoil. Spiritual speech is employed as a frame to pass on decrees related to different political and social issues such as forbidding *riba*, or attacking Jews and their allies through direct indisputable reference to the *hadith* and Quran. By the same token, and as Imam Shaqra maintained (in the Interviews, Chapter Six), a preacher can better off convey his political message [frame it in a religious substance] without necessarily stoking the ire of the government.

Spiritual speech which explains the deity and its oneness, or monotheism (*tawhid*), might also be seen as a framework to uphold a top-down hierarchical and authoritarian politico-religious agency which defies full-fledge democracy and reform recipes suggested by Western donors and the opposition. An example of this framing course is when the preacher calls upon the worshippers to follow the footsteps of Prophet Mohammad and his household and companions, follow the injunctions of the religious scholars and Muslim ruler, then concludes the sermon by enjoining Allah's blessings upon King Abdullah II, the 43rd descendant of Prophet Mohammad.

Bloch (1975:15) maintains that formalized speech¹²⁹ reinforces hierarchical relations in society, diminishes the prospects of defying traditional authority and thwarts the tackling of certain issues or conflict-ridden acts by the speaker. In contrast, Antoun (p.232) demonstrates that the preacher succinctly introduces a certain event, problem or personality into the course of formal discourse. One

¹²⁹ Antoun (p. 229) describes formalized speech as “*an established form set generally by the tradition of the Prophet's own practice and specified much more narrowly by the practices of the rightly guided caliphs, their successors, and the scholars of Islam.*”

This formal shape of the sermon is evident when it gives no space for modification of the main sermon theme or for tackling of additional subjects, and is punctuated with several prayer formulae that juxtapose certain phrases.

example is when the preacher favors the King for a certain duty in juxtaposition to responsibilities undertaken by Prophet Mohammad and the successive Islamic leaders, therefore ascribing to the country's monarch a mantle of authority and legitimacy. This formal oratory, along with its accompanying rituals, communicates messages of political significance relevant to the contemporary scene, and their effectiveness lies in being ensconced in formal mono-directional discourse, from orator to audience. This formality is preserved by the worshipper's sense of *umma* wherein an individual's possible disapproval to the sermon content is suppressed or by the collective choice by the community of worshippers to hearken to the sermon. Antoun (p. 130) defines the traditional referent of *umma* as,

“the religious community of Muslims founded by Muhammad and lasting to the present day to the extent that Muslims continue to inform their lives by Islamic law and ethics”,

But the writer also denotes a modern referent as “*the sovereign nation-state*”. In our case, the preachers most likely take on the first definition. By doing so they legitimize the nation-state by calling upon the worshippers to obey the Muslim ruler and bestow divine blessings upon him by means of ossifying the collective bond of *umma*. This *du'a* is seen (as shown in Participant Observation- Chapter Five) as incongruent to the basic tenets of Islam by both pro-regime worshippers (Informant “MA”) and anti-state worshippers/Imams (Informant “SJ”). This independent perception of *spiritual content* in the sermon denotes a space of emancipation enjoyed by the worshippers from the hegemony of the official religious establishment and the preacher who should take on the task of the *cultural broker* who reinterprets tradition and therefore bridge between ideology and politics.

3.2.2. Social Content

The operational definition for this speech refers to the way Islam prescribes the relationships among Muslims, and between Muslims and other religious and ethnic groups in society and at large; social habits and traditions; the nature of social contract; collective behavior necessary to enhance social justice and peace in the Islamic nation. This includes calls for harmony and unity among Muslims; enjoining or forbidding certain behaviors and their ensuing repercussions; the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in society; the vice of emulating the disbelievers; the status of women in society; Islamic society as a role model for social justice; almsgiving and the payment of *zakat* as a means to attain social justice; methods of fighting wickedness in society; the status and significance of family in society; tribalism and nepotism; consumerism.

Twenty eight percent of the total themes tackled social issues. The vast majority of Jordanians are Muslims who view religion as “*very important*” in running their daily life¹³⁰. As shown in the interviews with the worshippers (Chapter Six), 83 percent of the respondents feel the sermon theme has addressed a problem in society, while around two thirds believe the theme has changed a certain behavior in their life or corrected certain misconceptions about the sermon theme.

Given the notion that *the nation* (not the Quran) is the source of all powers, but Islam being the State religion (as per Constitution), Muslim clergy would rationally use the *minbar* to prescribe Islam as the legitimate and practical reference in guiding and running the worshippers’ individual and collective concerns. This guiding principle is backed by the pervasive nature of the mosque in Jordan, and the notion that the regime invests in the religious sphere to promote its legitimacy among the people, therefore a useful tool to address sociopolitical issues with a

¹³⁰ Pew Research Global Attitudes Project depicts 99 percent of Jordanians say “*religion is ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’ in their personal lives*”.

Source: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/09/17/chapter-2-religiosity/> accessed on June 30th, 2014.

religious framework to permeate the public sphere by means of influencing the religious speech as previously noted.

Whereas the Constitution equates between all Jordanians before the law, with no discrimination regarding their rights and duties on the basis of race, language or religion, preachers however promulgate a sense of unity and commonality among “*Muslims*” rather than a bond of equal citizenship among all Jordanians, including non-Muslims. This eclectic sense of favoritism is further galvanized as the preacher urges the worshippers not to take Jews and Christians as their allies¹³¹ or to emulate their lifestyle, attributing to these two groups (labeled as *kuffar* [disbelievers] or *mushrikun* [polytheists]) certain wrong doings such as “consumerism”.

In a timely different context (the 1960s), Antoun (1989:193) records a sermon in which the preacher has likened *ahl al-kitab* (the people of the Scripture, namely Jews and Arab Christians), with the unbelievers who ridicule Islam as *the* true faith. The writer quotes al-Baydawi’s interpretation of the Quran in which a similar verse¹³² may construe *ahzab*¹³³ [parties] as confederate sectarians and agents of social discord who engaged in theological arguments about the nature of God and Jesus, in contrast to the Unitarian or monotheist Muslim view about Allah. Antoun (p.196) adds that the implications of the Quranic meaning for *hizb* (party) are such that divisions within society imply weakening the wider Islamic *umma*.

¹³¹ The Quranic verse in Surat Al-M ‘idah 5:51 says:

“O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.”

Source: <http://quran.com/5>

accessed on June 30th, 2014.

¹³² Surah 5:57, A) “O believers, take not as your friends those of them, who were given the Book before you, and the unbeliever, who take your religion in mockery and as a sport- and fear God, if you are believers...”, (Ibid).

¹³³ Al-Ahzab refers to “those who deny part of Quran”. Antoun (1989:193) contends that Mohammad’s severe opposition to these groups, particularly Jews and Christians, was based on the Prophet’s assurance regarding the revelation of all prophets.

One would argue that the State prefers to turn a blind eye to this seemingly exclusionary speech given the prevalence of other pressing priorities, and officials reckoning that in the short term, the impact of this discourse on public opinion is minimal vis-à-vis the more tolerant counter speech espoused by the State, or the prevalent tradition of tolerance and coexistence in society. Another view held by Jarrar (2009:47) maintains that the Jordanian government does not have the capacity to monitor all the mosques and enact the pertinent law in such a way as to rein in what it deems as *takfiri* thought or *hate speech*. The Researcher nevertheless views that the regime has the statecraft capable enough to render this speech play into its hand by inculcating a sense of religiosity and commonality among the worshippers as long as this pietism does not amount to direct opposition to its policies or causing civil unrest in the short run, a policy more efficient than just reining in the *takfiri* speech.

In addition, a preacher's cajole to his audience is a reflection of a speech that beseeches the applause of the worshippers. This state of reciprocal expectations between the preacher and the worshippers is such that the preacher sets the agenda of the sermon themes based on what would beget the approbation of the recipient worshippers¹³⁴, while on the other hand the worshippers choose to pray at a certain mosque if, among and atop other motives, the preacher addresses life-felt issues which require faith-based definition, causal interpretation¹³⁵, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendations for worldly problems (following Entmans' definition of *framing*) and an appeal to public sentiments.

As marked in the *participant observation* part of the study (Chapter Five), the only common factor regarding the worshippers' decision on where to pray is the

¹³⁴ As outlined in an earlier note, Hashem (2009:15) depicts the same case of mutual expectations between khatib and audience in US mosques (khatib being worried about losing the audience if he delivers a highly intellectual sermon at the expense of heart purification, therefore tuning his sermon to meet these expectations).

¹³⁵ See Chapter Five - Participant Observation, 5.1.1., Choice of the Mosque.

nearness of the mosque to one's own residence, a condition that would change if the preacher has not related his sermon to the surrounding milieu.

Prescription on how the Muslims should respond to evil is two folded; while one preacher would exclusively relegate the use of force in fighting wickedness to the State, another preacher generalized the use of force to Muslims after curbing wickedness by mere word has failed.

Another indirect divergence from the established laws and tradition is when the preacher forbids *riba*, whereas the banking system in Jordan is mostly not shari'a-compliant and functions on interest rate. Although the sermon is void of direct attack against the prevalent banking system in Jordan (could amount to felony by the penal code), an indirect invoking of shari'a-compliant loan is when the preacher, by and large, calls upon the king to adhere to shari'a *instead of "iniquitous statutory laws"*.

In verifying the impact of this discourse on the worshippers, a more focused insight by the Researcher through limited¹³⁶ participant observation did not depict a way of thinking or a behavior by the Informants that construes bigotry or social exclusion, something evident in the Informant's amicable dealing with a non-Muslim (the Researcher himself), strict adherence to shari'a when it comes to socializing with female fellow pilgrims, attitude toward an ultra-pious wife, or driving commuters to a bank.

The notion that Friday sermons were not used as a channel of communication to promote sociopolitical modernization in Jordan is apparent in the analysis of Friday sermons in Jordanian mosques (in addition to Syrian and Egyptian), an observation which Borthwick (1965:108 & 189) cited in Antoun (1989). This erstwhile study shows that while sermons in urban mosques in these Muslim

¹³⁶ This tool is referred to as *limited* in terms of the timespan [six months], and the number of participating Informants [three].

countries do promote loyalties, their development of skills necessary to modernize society is negligent,

“preachers are promoting nationalism but they are not furthering political modernization [which] involves the development of skills rather than emotions”.

This view is starkly contrasted by Antoun (1989) who, while admitting that his 26 recorded sermons embed only a “*few implications for modernization or modernity*”, this writer bases this “*stark*” disagreement with Borthwick on the notion that a number of other sermons [without stating how many!] did focus on issues “not unrelated to modernity” such as education, work, justice, marriage, reconciliation, and magic. This argument is based on the distinction Manning Nash (1977:21) makes between “*modernization*”, as the improvement of “*skills*” necessary to pursue knowledge and technology, and “*modernity*”, which refers to “attitudes” that should be instilled or buttressed to assist the appliance of this pursuit for modernization in all stages of production. Antoun (p.127), citing Nash (p.8), defines modernization as a process which bifurcates into technological innovation and the mobilization of people out of a traditional culture into a modern society. Throughout his fifteen years of study, Antoun (p.128) argues that evidence from *minbar* and the life of villagers indicates a positive relationship between religious renaissance and modernization.

The Researcher agrees with this writer’s disposition that the preachers may promote “*modernization*” in their sermons without necessarily invoking “*modernity*”, or vice versa. Some of the sermons in this study do invoke attitudes conducive to “*social mobilization*” such as attacking charm, magicians, superstitious tales, tribalism and nepotism, in addition to banning violence against women. However, these values are offset by other exhortations that do not inculcate certain attitudes and values conducive to civil peace (a prerequisite condition for modernity) such as invoking violence (fighting wickedness by sword), sectarianism (disavowing other faith groups as infidels or apostates and worthy of curse by Allah), or the

absence of invoking egalitarianism between all citizens (limiting the acts of *birr* [good] and *taqwa* [piety] to fellow Muslims), to name but some observations. One separate example is a news report¹³⁷ about a campaign launched by an entrepreneurial youth community project in Eastern Amman in 2005 where the campaign's entrepreneur reported that,

“There were leaflets on the streets and speeches in mosques claiming Ruwwad [project's name] was a front for foreign investment and that girls weren't safe there”.

This apparent dualism between theocracy and a civil state renders this speech subservient to the regime's inclination to ossify its religious legitimacy while at the same time maintaining the rule of law by making sure this speech does not metamorphose into act on the ground rather remain confined to the religious space.

3.2.3. Political Content

The operational definition of *political content* refers to religious messages that embed constructs of meaning which, if enforced, they may entail alteration in Jordan's relationship with other countries [i.e. invoking Muslims to enjoin *mujahedeen* has a political connotation as it involves sending activists to fight in foreign countries; sympathy with “*brotherly Muslims*” especially *mujahedeen* in belligerent zones], or exhortation to induce change in the balance of relationship between the State and religion, religious symbols which invoke public sentiments and collective action, and reference to sayings by Islamic leaders of other sects. The issue of *al-Aqsa* Mosque is deemed political when the preacher calls upon the worshippers to liberate it, unlike when brought up as a pure religious symbol associated with the night journey of Prophet Mohammad (*al-Isra' wal Mi'raj*) in which case it is classified under *religious content*.

¹³⁷ Source: <http://www.cnbc.com/id/102435840#> accessed on February 20th, 2015.

Political and religious content are mutually intertwined. As Antoun (1989:245) citing Cantwell Smith (1957) indicates; the quality of life for a Muslim largely depends on the course of history and the resulting social implications. This is due to the fact that since the birth of *umma*, the religio-political role of the Islamic state (in safeguarding the worship and enactment of shari'a law and ethics) is closely related to its politico-military function- to protect the *umma* against internal strife [*fitna*] and external threat [*ghazwa*].¹³⁸ Therefore, any commonplace act by the community of believers implies a meaning of right conduct in this world and soteriological consequences for the life hereafter so that the religious and political acts are interchangeably consequential. For example, apostasy is akin to treachery, and lethargy in protecting the homeland is tantamount to religious regression.

Out of the 17 themes of political nature [constituting 14 percent of total themes in the 24 sermons], 15 themes [88 percent] alluded to the Arab-Israeli struggle, primarily the issue of Palestine and *al-Aqsa* mosque. The remaining two themes are of less relevance to the worshippers', namely refuting statements by Lebanese Shiite leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, and urging Muslims to join the *mujahedeen*. However, the first issue connotes preference to religious over political affinity given the ebb in Nasrallah's popularity which had surged following Hezbollah's victorious fight against Israel in 2006, but has lately plummeted in light of the current sectarian strife between Shiites and Sunnis in the region.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ A study by Mazen Hashem on the discourse of Friday *khutba*(s) delivered in Southern California mosques depicts the concept of *umma* as cited within three parameters "the exemplary potential of the ummah, the duty to help its people, and the importance of unity within the ummah's social divisions".

Source: "*The Ummah in the Khutba: A Religious Sermon or a Civil Discourse?*" Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, Volume 30, Issue 1, 2010.

Source: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13602001003650606#.VUOE9PmUeSo> accessed on May 01st, 2015.

¹³⁹ The rate of Jordanians who consider Hezbollah as an "*illegal resistance organization*" has surged from as low as three percent in 2004 to 66 percent in 2015 (according to The Center for Strategic Studies in Amman), whereas Pew Research depicts 55 percent of Muslim Jordanians expressing a favorable view of Hezbollah in 2010, a rate which dropped to 18 percent in 2014.

Political substance in the recorded sermons relates to issues close to the minds and hearts of Jordanians, that is- Israel and the Palestinian issue (given more than half of the population are Jordanians of Palestinian origin,¹⁴⁰ especially in Zarqa city); the symbolic eminence of al-Aqsa mosque for the *umma* at large; the centrality of Palestine to the Jordanian people in general; political and religious hostility towards Israel as a bordering militant and religious country which endangers the very existence of Jordan (calls by the Israeli right wing for Jordan to become the alternative homeland for the Palestinian people); *al-Aqsa* mosque as a religious symbol yet of political significance, and King Abdullah as its sole custodian; jihad and the fact that several Jordanians had left the country to fulfill this chief religious duty in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

As outlined in the worshippers' views (Chapter Seven), around two thirds of the respondents expressed boredom of listening to sermons that tackle political (and economic) issues¹⁴¹, and a close ratio said the preacher had addressed a political issue in his sermon. Although a relatively long time span between the two studies¹⁴², when asked to rate proposed sermon themes according to their importance, Jerusalem/ Palestinian issue topped the list, whereas the pressing

Sources (accessed on May 30th, 2015):

<http://css.ju.edu.jo/Photos/635663460639723359.pdf>

<http://jordannews.com/jordan/34454.html>

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2010/12/02/muslims-around-the-world-divided-on-amas-and-hezbollah/>

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/01/concerns-about-islamic-extremism-on-the-rise-in-middle-east/>.

However, these variant rates depict a public opinion oscillating between Hezbollah as a competent foe to Israel and its role in the sectarian fight between Sunni and Shiite Muslims mainly in Syrian and Iraq.

¹⁴⁰ Source: http://photos.state.gov/libraries/jordan/231771/PDFs/09_hr_jordan.pdf (page 16) accessed on October 05th, 2014.

¹⁴¹ In Antoun's study (1989:202), political diversity is construed by the tested villagers in negative terms as with *ahzab* "party men". Out of 65 sermons, only one dealt with a clear political subject (the loss of Palestine). Antoun attributes this apathy in tackling political issues to the preacher, and the fact that the congregation has a negative image of parties.

¹⁴² The two studies were conducted in 2008 and 2013 respectively. In the former study, Jordanian society was still reeling under the direct repercussions of the war against Iraq in 2003, and the latter being conducted at the hiatus of the Syrian crisis (a spillover of the Arab Spring).

local political issue, that is reform in Jordan, is rated last and way far from the top three issues.

These findings are in congruence with the aforementioned political issue, that is the Israeli-Arab conflict, as it reflects an issue of top concern for the worshippers (*al-Aqsa* Mosque, Israel, jihad) albeit its occurrence outside the borders of Jordan, whereas the local political issue of reform, or the Syrian refugee crisis (which at the time entails direct impact on Jordan) are not rated as important.

The Researcher views that although the worshippers do not expect the preacher to come up with practical and workable solutions for complex political situations, they still listen to sermons that offer a religious underpinning for hot political issues, offering definition, interpretation, moral justification and treatment recommendation for these issues (following Entman's definition of 'framing'), therefore fulfilling the religious duty to pray and listen, albeit without high expectations to foresee an emancipation or a way out of the *status quo ante* by the preacher¹⁴³. It also ossifies the issue of Palestine and *al-Aqsa* mosque in the collective memory of the worshippers whose nostalgic hopes for restoring the occupied lands and the Islamic holy places lies in the sacred and religious realm given the realpolitik by the 'secular' Arab states has failed, therefore fulfilling the pinnacle religious duty of jihad¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴³ Imam al-Ghazali, a renowned jurist of the eleventh century, advised that the sermon content should "draw on verses of the Quran, authentic traditions of the Prophet, and edifying tales of the prophets and saints of past; the sermon might even include recitation of poetry and weeping, but it should not arouse false hopes (of salvation)." Source: Antoun (1989:88).

¹⁴⁴ [Hadith] Narrated Abdullah bin Masud: "I asked Allah's Apostle, "O Allah's Apostle! What is the best deed?" He replied, "To offer the prayers at their early stated fixed times." I asked, "What is next in goodness?" He replied, "To be good and dutiful to your parents." I further asked, what is next in goodness?" He replied, "To participate in Jihad in Allah's Cause." I did not ask Allah's Apostle anymore and if I had asked him more, he would have told me more".

Source: <http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/052-sbt.php> accessed on October 07th, 2014.

When put in an historical perspective, Antoun (p.225) depicts the prescription for solving a political issue by a 1960s' preacher in rural Jordan according to the following sequence: religious awakening; political and if need be compulsory alliance of *umma*; armed struggle against the enemy respectively. In this rather old study, this prescription by the preacher is in juxtaposition with the audience's perception regarding the "most important factor in history" where almost half of the respondents selected "*military force*", and when asked "what is the best practical solution to the Palestine problem", the majority associated the solution to a divine will.

This comparative observation indicates that the religious discourse has since long not altered the panacea prescribed by the preacher for political and security challenges facing the country, wherein the *supra formulae* by both preacher and congregation suggests that political and religious solutions entwine together. As previously inferred, both preacher and the worshippers act according to intertwined expectations, that is, the preacher sets the agenda for his sermon's topics according to the expectations of his congregation (that is, the preacher's selected themes become the audience's preferred themes), framing them in a religious mantle to invoke legitimacy and reference upon his speech (that is, attributes of these themes move from the preacher's agenda to the audience's agenda). On the other hand, the congregation expects the preacher to tackle salient and hot political issues framed in a religious context and gleaned from the tradition of the Prophet and his companions and the ensuing Islamic history, but without necessarily expecting the preacher to prescribe *realpolitik* or solutions which fall within the purview of experienced polities.

3.2.4. Economic Content

The Researcher sets forth the operational definition for *economic content* as that which includes economic factors that directly influence the living standard of the people, namely the rising prices, poverty and unemployment. The latter is not being mentioned in any sermon (although an apparent imbalance in the economy of Jordan¹⁴⁵ with serious social implications), while poverty is included even when framed in a religious construct.

The least in the listed sermon themes [only seven percent] is the economy and its main parameter, price increase. Probably the issue of the rising prices is mentioned among the plights that invoke the worshippers to plea Allah to save Muslims from,

“Oh Allah, protect us from the high prices and plague, usury, adultery, earthquakes and tribulations, bad temptations both obvious and hidden...”

In Arabic language, both the high cost of living (*ghala*) and plague (*waba*) rhyme well in *du'a*, and the same goes with usury (*riba*) and adultery (*zina*), while unemployment (*bataalah*) does not dwell in the historic tradition of religious supplication.

The time of this data goes back to summer 2008 when the spillover of the Global Financial Crisis has not yet hit Jordan's economy. When placed in comparison to the context of the worshippers' views (Questionnaire- Chapter Seven conducted during summer 2013 at the hiatus of the Syrian refugee crisis), economy came second in important issues to tackle in Friday sermons, and adjacent in rating to the Syrian crisis, presumably a cause for the price increase, at least in the felt realm of Jordanians.

¹⁴⁵ Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS> accessed on August 22nd, 2015.

Economic indicators depict that the aggregate impact of the refugee influx on Jordan has been contained, with some positive signs of boosting certain sectors of the economy. As for employment opportunities, the direct impact has been negative but mainly among non-Jordanians (Egyptian labor force)¹⁴⁶. Economist Yusuf Mansur¹⁴⁷ indicates a positive spillover of the refugee crisis on the Jordanian economy,

“the slight improvements in growth and even the decrease in unemployment were due to this ‘regional disaster’. The influx of Syrians increased demand, supplied the labour force with the missing middle- and semi-skilled workers we always needed”.

For the worshipper, the priority of price hike and its next precedence, the Syrian crisis, are closely related. However, given economic figures do not portray a drastic impact on the economy, the impact is more psychological than a felt one, or a felt impact but not yet fully reflective of the gradual degradation in the quality of public services offered to Jordanian citizens at that time, mainly education and healthcare.

The supra comparison between the two distant eras (2008 and 2013) speaks of the salience and importance of economic issues to the Jordanian worshipper, hence for the preacher, in times of crisis and its regression when the economy is well and stable. This conclusion does not necessarily imply the worshippers expect the panacea for the economic hardships to proceed out the mouth of the mosque preacher, given the majority of the sample worshippers feel bored when listening to sermons which tackle economical issues, as evident in the supra Questionnaire. Antoun (1989:231) citing Bloch (1975:15) argues that,

¹⁴⁶ Source: The World Bank- Jordan Economy Monitor, spring 2013 (p. 14) http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/MNA/Jordan_EM_Spring_2013.pdf accessed on July 11th, 2014.

¹⁴⁷ Source: <http://m.jordantimes.com/cost-of-syrian-conflict> accessed on May 28th, 2015.

“the effect of always comparing particular events to the same general illustrations reduces the specificity of utterances so that all events are made to appear as though they were alike”,

The writer adds that this fusing of events,

“transforms the dangerous and uncertain present into the fixed eternal and orderly past” (Ibid).

For Bloch (Ibid), the paradoxical effect of the juxtaposition of events that are variant in their historicity and context on the audiences is to strengthen a sense of unison and camaraderie, not merely with their past, but with one another in their present life. A study on the Jordanian mosque by Al-Rousan (p.146) brings to light the conclusion that the emerging economic function of the mosque comes after the religious function, however, this function is not being expressed in the religious speech per se, but of which the mosque constitutes a platform for social connectedness on an individual and collective level (mosque as a public space where economic interaction thrives and social interaction might enhance business-related activities).

Sermon content related to the economy is presented in a religious frame rather than a cause-and-effect rationale, but still within the holistic approach of the Islamic view in the metaphysical scope of faith. This is apparent in preachers attributing the economic hardships to divine castigation against iniquity by people [high prices, plagues and hardships are the consequences of wrongdoings by Muslims; night clubs, music festivals, alcoholic beverages are all signs of wickedness therefore Allah reacted by causing the prices to go up; the rising prices are a sign of punishment by Allah].¹⁴⁸ The worshippers on one hand need to quench their feeling of frustration, and possibly the preacher on the other hand

¹⁴⁸ In his similar but timely variant study, Antoun (1989:196) citing Munson (house of St Abd Allah, 17ff), states that “*in recent Muslim history the dominance of infidels (European colonialists and in the latest historical incidence, the State of Israel) is regarded as God’s punishment for immoral behavior, heedlessness, and the repudiation of Scripture*”.

wants to send an indirect and taciturn message on behalf of the worshippers to the government that the economy is of prime concern and people are not feeling well, therefore functioning as the spokesperson of the *umma* at large.

Tackling issues pertaining to the economy might imply that the preacher gets involved in complicated official policies of which he is not savvy, such as calling upon the government to work out structural economic solutions which in the common sense might require lifting off the price subsidies, a policy probably deemed by the public as tantamount to hegemonic and imperialistic pressure by the World Bank. A way out of this conundrum is to attenuate this topic by timid reference to price increase and to interpret the cause-effect factor in the metaphysical realm (iniquity in society therefore Allah reacted by letting the prices go up), while the panacea lies in calling upon Allah to save Muslims from the rising prices by simply enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, or commissioning the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice. This is also the case in other parts of the sermon as mentioning price increase in the final supplication (*du'a*) is more salient when compared to other issues. From the worshippers' perspective, *participant observation* indicates causal interpretation that is not congruent to a logical cause-and-effect relationship.

3.2.5. Instigation toward the Other

The Researcher takes account of speech that stigmatizes adherents to other religious or ethnic groups, including other schools of thought within Islam. This speech is being given a separate cohort given its salience in the *media coverage* and the *participant observation* chapters, and the notion that the State had endorsed the 2006 Amendment to the Law in order to purportedly address hate speech, a tactic deemed as a pretext to control the religious sphere as shown in the several interviews conducted with concerned figures of the Muslim

Brotherhood movement (see Chapter Six), let alone other citations by different writers as posed in Chapter Two.

The operational definition of this content refers to the negative or antagonistic rhetoric uttered against the *other*, be this other the enemies of Islam and Muslims, Jews, Americans, crusaders, Christians, or *nasara* [Arab Christians] mentioned either directly or indirectly by reference to *ahl al-kitab* [people of the scripture]. It also includes adherents to other Islamic schools of thought such as the Shiites or *quraniyoun*. In this domain, the Researcher does not include references to Jews and Christians in *al-fatihah* (the opening *surah* of the Quran), although this *surah* refers to both groups in negative stereotypes¹⁴⁹. The reason is that although this dictum is repetitive in Friday sermons, it does not constitute a subjective verbatim by the preacher, but a generic ritual prayer based on direct quotation from the Quran, notwithstanding its potential impact on the worshippers.

It is notable that eleven out of the 24 sermons (46 percent) embed content that negatively stigmatize followers of other Islamic sects, other religions and ethnic groups, or *kuffar* (infidels/disbelievers) in general. Reportedly, this speech traces back to the 1960s when Antoun (1989) documented content of sermons by a Jordanian rural preacher who injected in his preaching messages used by doctrinaires of fundamentalist and radical Islam in Egypt where he had received his academic qualification in shari'a and Islamic studies.

Part of the content in this cohort is framed by ascribing wrongdoings to disbelievers (*kuffar*), or socially ostracizing them by urging the worshippers not to take them as allies based on a direct quotation from a verse in the Quran, or even by restricting the blessings of Allah upon *Muslims*. The pun here is that around three percent of Jordanians are not Muslims. The ascription of this guidance to a

¹⁴⁹ “*The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.*”

Source: <http://quran.com/1>
accessed on June 15th, 2014.

divine writ clashes with the constitution¹⁵⁰, laws and traditions of the country, and the Amman Message¹⁵¹ launched by the king and endorsed by most of the world Islamic schools of thought and coined as the mantle of tolerance in Islam.

It is also noted that when the preacher denounces adherents of other faith groups in society or abroad, the sermon concludes with *du'a* that bestows blessings upon the king, or praises the role of the king's ancestors in safeguarding *al-Aqsa* Mosque. The Researcher views that this kind of speech functions as an appeasing strategy to gain the worshippers' applause by stressing a communal loyalty to *umma*, yet this discourse is being presented in a religious framework as a hedge against official answerability by the State in light of the regulations endorsed in 2006.

The following table classifies referent stereotypes:

Group Name	Recurrence	Percentage
Shiites	1	7%
Quraniyoun	1	7%
<i>Ahl Al Kitab</i> (Jews & Christians)	1	7%
Enemies of Islam, Arabs or non-Arabs	1	7%
Jews	2	13%

¹⁵⁰ Article (2) of Jordan Constitution stipulates that "*Islam is the religion of the State*", but Article 24 says (i) "*The Nation is the source of all powers*", and as per Article (1), Jordan's (system of government is parliamentary with a hereditary monarchy).

¹⁵¹ Jordan King Abdullah II said "*The biggest concern we have is the enrooted negative perception of isolation between the followers of religions, what leads to fragmentation of the social fabric. This requires all of us to focus on the theme of education and upbringing for the protection of future generations, and this is the responsibility of the family and other educational institutions, as well as mosques and churches... Arab Christians are the closest to understand Islam and its real values*", while Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad, Chief Advisor to King Abdullah II for Religious and Cultural Affairs, maintained that "*Christians were in this region before Muslims... They are suffering ...merely because they are Christians*" (Transliteration from the original Arabic text by the Researcher).

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ci8ngU5nAXk#t=22>
accessed on September 28th, 2014

Jews and <i>Nasara</i>	4	27%
Jews and crusaders	1	7%
Jews and Americans	1	7%
Jews and disbelievers	1	7%
Call for the use of force to curb wickedness	2	13%
Total	15	

Apparently, Jews top the list of anathematized groups (73 percent in total), whether referred to alone or together with other groups. This stigma in the religious discourse should be viewed in the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict, but also engrained in religious teachings that People of the Book had deliberately distorted their Holy Scriptures, henceforth borne the consequences of this act against themselves and their progeny¹⁵².

The highest rate in referring to Jews came not in conjunction with the Americans, Israel's foremost political ally, or even with the historically political term of "crusaders", but to *nasara*, an idiom in the Quran which includes Arab Christians, who in no way are viewed as enemies of Islam or allies to Israel. On the contrary, the Arab and Palestinian struggle against Israel is replete with Christian persona who spearheaded the cultural and armed struggle against Israel.

Although one preacher attributed this seemingly *hate speech* to a timely-driven necessity to let the worshippers, by proxy of the *minbar*, fret about their frustration against Christians and Jews in concurrence with the Western and Israeli aggression against the Muslim nation, one term being used to describe the Christians is "*nasara*", a connotation to Arab Christians, including Jordanians.

¹⁵² Adang, Camilla P. "Torah" Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an. General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC, Brill, 2010, Brill Online, University of Pennsylvania (18 October 2010, pp. 3 & 4).
Source: http://brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=q3_COM-00206
accessed on January 08th, 2015.

This speech also defies the pretext posed by the government and legislators for endorsing the 2006 Amendment to the Law; that is, to combat hate speech, and the fact that Jordan had signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 endorsed by then sitting parliament, and the fact that many Jordanians adhere to the Christian faith while a smaller portion belongs to the Shiite sect and the Quraniyoun. This framing for the use of force (by calling Allah to grant Muslims victory against these groups) is being used by the same preacher whose pretext for saying this is “*to let the worshippers fret about their frustration*”.

In this regard, it is worth pinpointing to a concomitant survey¹⁵³ which shows that 96 percent of Jordanians expressed an “*unfavorable*” view of Jews, while 73 percent expressed a “*favorable*” view towards Christians. Given the view toward Christians in the general sense is reasonably favorable, it is unlikely that Jordanians hold an unfavorable stance toward Jordanian Christians (*nasara*). Antoun (1989) however recounts a rather negative view towards Christians and Jews upheld by a Jordanian villager in the 1960s who believes these two groups had distorted their holy books, and more importantly Christians who had committed the unpardonable blasphemy of polytheism, therefore a deterrent to give them Muslim girls in marriage. Therefore, it is more likely that the preachers refer to Western Christians when they call upon Allah to curse *Nasara*, even when the term itself pinpoints to local Christians, let alone the fact that *Nasara* is a generic term used by the Quran in reference to *ahl al-kitab*, that is, Jews, and, *Nasara* [all those who have the Christian Scriptures]. Add to this the notion that the gradual increase in the “*favorable*” views and a gradual decrease in the “*unfavorable*” views from 2005 up to 2008 is a sign that the Jordanian preachers refer more to Western Christians, given the time proximity of the earlier survey to the Western war against Iraq in 2003. The gradual increase in the “*favorable*” ratio applies also to Jews, although in minimal margins, which explains that people’s

¹⁵³ Source: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/09/17/chapter-1-views-of-religious-groups/> accessed on July 12th, 2014.

marginal propensity to express negative perceptions about the “*other*” tends to decline as they move away from the bellicose points in history.

Antoun (p.237) citing Munson (1984:19) maintains that for the fundamentalists¹⁵⁴, moral choice, such as choice between God and Satan, is essential, but in the Islamic sense what drives fundamentalism is the rage against Western colonialism, especially the invasive and subtle cultural and economic penetration which even surpasses political repression. In this purview fundamentalists comprehend domination by foreign powers as an indication of anger by Allah, and emancipation can only be attained by firm adherence to principles of the Quran.

The Researcher on his part did not sense any sort of exclusionism by the worshippers whom he joined in their Friday prayers and socialized with during the second half of 2008. None of the three Informants in the observation part of the study conducted in the first half of 2011 denied alliance with a non-Muslim, at least not with a Christian (the Researcher), as one of them has also had a Christian superior staff at work, while another called the Jews “*our cousins*”. The third Participant, a mosque preacher who was being banned from delivering sermons for calling upon the audience not to greet *Nasara* on their religious holidays, sent the Researcher a Short Message Service in December 2014 saying “wishing you a blessed *eid* [holiday]”.

Another stereotype being noticed, although in a minimal rate, is attacking Shiite Islam by slamming their religious symbols such as Hassan Nasrallah, secretary-general of *Hezbollah*, who at times gained popular support in the Arab world, including Jordan¹⁵⁵, especially following the 2006 war of attrition with Israel.

Besides, Shiites claim they were the descendants of Prophet Mohammad, or *ahl*

¹⁵⁴ Munson (1984: 19) defines fundamentalism as “*the belief that a specific set of sacred scriptures are the divine and inerrant word of God and that all believers must conform to the literal text of these scriptures in their everyday lives...*”

¹⁵⁵ Source:

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/events/2008/4/14%20middle%20east/0414_middle_east_telham_i.pdf accessed on September 27th, 2014.

*al-bayt*¹⁵⁶, therefore contesting the Hashemite claim to this prophetic pedigree. To turn a blind eye to this anti-Shiite rhetoric in the mosques goes in tandem with Jordan's foreign policy concerning the evolving "*Shiite Crescent*" which King Abdullah II had first coined in 2004¹⁵⁷. As the King was using a political term to insinuate a religious sectarian threat to Jordan in addressing the Western media, public diplomacy at home needs a religious mantle via *minbar* to stress both dimensions, political and religious, henceforth engendering a homogenous *Sunni* Islam which should stand aloof of any infiltration by the rival Shiite political-Islam that is rife in Iran, Iraq [thousands of Iraqi refugees live in Jordan], Lebanon, and Syria.

Another religious recipe for dealing with wickedness in society is the following,

Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said, "*Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest form of Faith*", [narrated by Muslim].¹⁵⁸

This induction embeds a framing on how to straighten society; to object iniquity if not workable by hand then by word and heart. This decree for the use of force (hand) to deter wickedness (although another preacher restricted the use of force to scholars and the pious), is entwined in the same sermon by cursing the "*enemies of Islam, whether Arabs or non-Arabs*", hence indirectly pinpointing to Jews and Christians, and probably to the Shiites. In a civic state which does not govern by the Quran alone, this speech implies an implicit encroachment on the

¹⁵⁶ Source:

https://www.academia.edu/1401596/Prophet_Saviour_and_Revolutionary_Manufacturing_Hassan_Nasrallahs_Charisma
accessed on September 27th, 2014.

¹⁵⁷ Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jan/26/worlddispatch.ianblack>
accessed on September 27th, 2014.

¹⁵⁸ Source: <http://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/184> accessed on August 22nd, 2015.

"عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: (من رأى منكم منكراً فليغيره بيده، فإن لم يستطع فليأسه، فإن لم يستطع فليقلبه، وذلك أضعف الإيمان) ."

rule of law to deter wickedness. This encroachment on the *social contract* by the preacher is being indirectly given legitimacy by a policy of turning a blind eye by the State. On the other hand, the impact of this speech on the worshippers is unlikely to bear hostile actions on the ground in the short run, although in the long run it may cultivate an increased propensity to resort to violence in case the State has failed to monopolize the use of force in a tense and volatile region. Sheikh Wael Battiri agrees that,

“such an impact on the worshipper is negligible given the majority of the worshippers pray only on Friday and listen to the sermon whereas the mind is dormant, and they do so only to stave off social answerability about fulfilling this main religious duty, unlike other pious worshippers (a minority) who pray and listen to the sermon as a guidance to their mundane life”¹⁵⁹.

A concurrent event to some of the subject sermons was Muslims commemorating the incineration of *al-Aqsa Mosque*¹⁶⁰ in Jerusalem. Jarrar stated that,

“...the state even after tightening its control does not enjoy complete hegemony over the mosque and its religious space. Critical Imams refer to the use of religious symbols and analogies from Quran to discuss political topics and mobilize opposition as a legal “loophole” in which the government cannot contradict or punish for”. (p.51)

While interviewed deputy Maayah views that,

¹⁵⁹ This opinion by Battiri was gleaned in a telephone conversation with the Researcher on August 22nd, 2015.

¹⁶⁰ In Islam, *al-Aqsa mosque (al-Masjid al-Aqsa)* is the second oldest, after Al-Ka'ba mosque in Mecca, and the third most holy and important in Sunni Islam after the Mecca and Medina mosques. In 1969, arson by a non-Jewish Australian tourist “destroyed a priceless one-thousand-year-old wood and ivory pulpit (minbar) that had been sent from Aleppo by Saladin. Damage to the mosque later was restored by contributions from Jordan at a cost of about \$US9 million”.

Source: http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_alaqsa_fire_1969.php accessed on October 21st, 2010.

"the Amendment to the Law has managed to control these issues [through] establishing preconceived conditions for him [the preacher] so that only an authorized person can speak out".

Apparently, the 2006 amendment has failed to curtail hate speech, but one can also infer that the State did not intend to strictly apply pertinent penalties as the change in relevant legislations was initially meant to deal with a political contingent situation related to the war against terrorism and the local need to curb the influence of Muslim Brotherhood movement which who opposed the 1994 peace treaty with Israel and boycotted several parliamentary elections.

In an interview with former deputy Hamza Mansour, this Muslim Brotherhood leading figure said he was banned from delivering sermons in 1993 following the western invasion of Baghdad, then allowed back for a short period before being banned again in 2008. Mansour depicts "*cracking down on officials*" and "*always talking about Palestine and the Jews*" as the pretexts which officials had drawn to proscribe him. Another preacher in Aqaba, former deputy Bader Saleh Riati, said,

"I started preaching in 1972 until 1994 when I became a candidate [parliament]. Throughout this period I was banned from preaching three times for a period of two years, and the reason was that I tackled the reconciliation with the Jews, the Camp David treaty and the Arab leaders' dash to peace".

Riati alluded to speech targeting Jews as hate speech which the state bans following the peace treaty with Israel in 1994. This view is further corroborated by former deputy and Muslim Brotherhood hardliner Dr. Mohammad Abu Fares, who said,

"since 1993 I was banned from delivering sermons that is 16 years. That was after meetings with the minister [of awqaf] who would say: you speak and aim at spreading awareness among people by infusing the spirit of fight and attacking the enemies of Allah... with whom we have the Araba peace treaty... You in fact warn people against the danger of this treaty".

Thus, a reading of this policy is that the State, having achieved its goal of stripping the Islamic movement of one of its main platforms used to enlist public support, is not now keen to fully enforce the Law given it has already fulfilled the purpose behind endorsing the Amendment to the Law.

Jarrar (2009) contends that the State policy in countering radical Islamic opposition focuses on a sense of balance between curbing radical ideology (which utilizes instrumental political objectives to recruit supporters and radicalize the people), and marginalizing oppositional dissent without turning it into a fundamentalist opposition that solicits sympathy by the public, inspire pious indoctrination and a resulting resort to violent behavior. Act 19 of Article 13 of the Political Parties law of the year 2007 reads,

“a. Parties are entitled to use the state’s public facilities after taking a prior permission from the Minister and in coordination with the concerned authority, b. the funds, equipment, venues of professional associations, charitable societies, religious institutions for the interest shall not be used by and for the purposes of any partisan organization, c. premises and buildings of religious institutions and mosques shall not be used for any partisan activity.”¹⁶¹

Jarrar (2009) adds that one of the main aims of radical Islamists is to provoke the State into espousing security measures that expose the limits of the rule of law. Nonetheless, the State will fall to radicals’ strategy if it fails to make a distinction between political actors (i.e. Muslim Brotherhood movement which vocally shuns violence as its policy and abide by democratic means), and other Islamist movements who resort to violence as their *modus operandi* such as the jihadists, beside the fact that this approach is inefficient in preventing the extremists from spreading their thought through the mosque as their informal ground to recruit people.

¹⁶¹ Source: <http://www.nchr.org.jo/english/Publications/AnnualReports.aspx> accessed on July 22nd, 2011.

The Researcher views that although most of the mosques are being purged of radical orators, whether jihadists or those who belong to Muslim Brotherhood, persistent hate speech and the call for violence are signs that this speech still appeals to the public (or at least during certain but cyclic situations such as the Western war on terrorism or *al-Aqsa* mosque memorial). As such, some preachers who do not belong to either group (Muslim Brotherhood or the jihadist salafi thought) would push the envelope furthermore by enforcing people's established attitudes through generating messages that support these attitudes and ideologies that sustain them. The State¹⁶² uses this clemency as a mantle to unravel preachers who sympathize with these two groups and become possible recruits who might embrace their narrative and modus operandi. By doing this the State can build its counter policy and discourse. This policy views a controllable presence of jihadists and radical Muslim Brotherhood members in Jordan as a necessary antidote to preempt and deter their external threat, without which the internal threat would remain clandestine and obscure.

3.2.6. Du'a (Supplication to Allah):

If we exclude religious content of ritualistic formula in *du'a*, supplication that concludes the Friday congregational sermon mostly falls within the rubric of political content, nevertheless, the Researcher opts to assign it a separate category given this component comes after the preacher has finished addressing the prime sermon topic, but uses *du'a* in order to frame and pass on certain explicit and tacit messages.

Du'a contains almost the same religious wording repeated in every sermon, mainly bestowing divine prayer and blessings upon Prophet Mohammad, his household and companions, and the Muslim nation at large, reminiscent to Allah's blessings

¹⁶² An interview with an anonymous State security brass conducted as part of a separate study the Researcher conducted in March 2015.

upon Ibrahim (Prophet Abraham). Otherwise, most salient and important in *du'a* is when the preacher alludes to the Muslim ruler either by totally ignoring the King (whether mentioning his name in different formula or ignoring it), or invoking the king/ruler to “*rule according to the Quran and sunna instead of unjust manmade laws*”, therefore a frame that construes an exhortation to bring the regime closer to an Islamic state. This disparity between a Western-style State (whose religion is Islam but Quran is not *the* source of legislation) and a state whose shari'a is *the* law (as invoked by the preachers) is apparent as some of the Informants in the “participant observation” part agree with the preacher not ascribing honorific title to the king while at the same time they collaborate with the security apparatus.

Only one third of Jordanians view that Islam currently plays a large role in the political life of the country¹⁶³, two thirds deem this role as “*small*” while eight-in-ten view this “*small role*” as “*negative*” for Jordan. It is therefore expectable of the worshippers to listen to the preacher invoking the king to rule according to Islam. On his side, the preacher presumably knows these expectations do exist in the mindset of a highly religious audience, therefore the need to axiomatically nourish their expectations with this connotation in his supplication, a proposition also posed by Pederson (1950) who, cited in Antoun (1989), views that the preacher constantly speaks on behalf of the people.

These considerations delineate the limits of the religious speech presented in a political framework; actually a prosaic content with no impact on the ground except that of letting the audience express their fretfulness by proxy, especially in time when the political atmosphere is heightened, a trend which ultimately serves certain interests of the State.

Following is the as in the 24 attended sermons:

¹⁶³ Source: A survey by Pew Global Attitudes Project conducted in Jordan during spring 2008. Sample size (national): 1,000; Margin of error: three percent; Mode: face-to-face. Source: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/07/10/chapter-3-role-of-islam-in-politics/> accessed on July 11th, 2014.

Total Du'a = 24		Du'a for the king	Du'a for the king to rule according to shari'a	Du'a to bless the king	Du'a to bless <i>mujahedeen</i>
Pure religious du'a	Du'a+				
3	21	17	10	7	8
13%	87%	81%	59%	41%	47%

The above table shows that 21 out of the 24 preachers bring the sermon to a classification of *du'a* close with *du'a* that exceeds the customary sheer religious supplication [*du'a+* in the table]. Seventeen sermons out of these 21 (81 percent) include a certain *du'a* for the king, among them 10 sermons (59 percent) embed calls for the king to rule according to the Quran, including two preachers who called upon the king to stay away from hypocrisy and not to rule according to “*unjust manmade laws*”. It is worthy to note that these two preachers had also propagated instigating speech against Christians and/or Jews, adding a call for Muslims to support the *mujahedeen* worldwide.

Seven preachers (41 percent) called for Allah to bless the king (grant him victory, wisdom, protection, guidance, and an entourage of devout people), among them only two who called upon the king to “*rule according to Quran*”.

Ten of the 17 preachers who mentioned the king addressed him merely as “*al-malik*” [the king], or, “*malik al-bilad*” [king of the homeland]; another two called him “*raa'i al-bilad*” [shepherd of the homeland], while the remaining three called him by his name, King Abdullah, but none of these five preachers called upon the king to rule according to the Quran.

Apparently, to rule according to the Quran should not be in contrast with the claim to prophetic lineage by the Hashemite dynasty¹⁶⁴. The State is tolerant to a rhetoric which engenders a symbolic Islamic identity as long as this speech does not instigate anti-regime sentiments. On the contrary, the regime uses this policy as a *modus vivendi* to endure. Accordingly, the Jordanian regime and its extended arm in society employs the religious space and its pertinent regulations as a muzzle to curb the Islamic opposition, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood movement, and strip it from this platform to contest the State in shaping the public mood (Jarrar p. 47). In the same vein, the regime opens up for an alternative speech to fill in the vacuum in the religious space in concordance with the dominant ideology and society's tendency for increased religiosity. Dietram et al cited Morgan & Signorelli (1990) states that,

“Cultivation means that dominant modes of cultural production tend to generate messages and representations that nourish and sustain the dominant ideologies, world views, perspectives and practices of the institutions and cultural contexts from which they arise”.

The Researcher interprets the one fifth of sermons avoiding any citation to the king as a tacit undermining to the monarchy by some preachers who, albeit have no allegiance with the Muslim Brotherhood movement or other fundamentalist streams, they still carry a dose of religiosity that is at odds with the semi-secular nature of the State. By doing so, these preachers avoid being at odds with the Islamic teaching if they pay homage to the ruler/caliphate and avert direct clash with the security apparatus. One inference is that these preachers (in addition to the other two who did mention the king, urged him to rule according to the Quran but also hinted to hypocrisy and manmade laws) try to obliquely water down the prophetic pedigree acclaimed by the king. One example is former preacher Wael Battiri who says that awqaf officials would summon him and urge him not to discuss politics in his sermons, but require him to include *du'a* for “King Abdullah”.

¹⁶⁴ Shteiwi (1996) viewed that in Jordan “*The State derives its religious legitimacy by declaring Islam as the official religion of the State and by tracing the origin of the Royal family back to the Hashemite family of the Prophet.*”

Battiri would pay a lip service by calling upon all Muslim rulers to abide by shari'a, bless them if they adhere to shari'a and beseech Allah to correct their path if they did not. If official pressure intensifies, this once banned preacher would frame the message by merely mentioning *malik al-bilad* [king of the homeland]. As for politics, Battiri would frame the message by talking about certain religious topics which already embed political significance wherein the audience has enough wit to read between the lines and unearth the preacher's encoded message. One example is *surah* (4:59) which says,

"O you, who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

Although this verse ostensibly invokes the Muslim believers to obey their Muslim ruler, Battiri puts forth a condition for this act of obedience, that the ruler himself ought to be obedient to Allah and his Messenger, otherwise he is not worthy of the people's obedience.

This kind of speech uttered by dissonant preachers functions as a frame to abate the regime's claim of prophetic pedigree given the government does not apply shari'a as *the* law, therefore a tactic by the preacher to come to a middle ground with the officialdom. Another notice that sustains this conclusion is the ten preachers who, through *du'a*, they send messages invoking the regime to rule according to the Quran but without ascribing any honorific title to the king, nor would they cajole the regime by even mentioning the king's name!

The fact the State is keen that preachers do mention the king's name in *du'a* is a view upheld by Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi, the renowned jihadist doctrinaire whose interview on February 15th, 2010 reveals the salafi recruits were being interrogated by the security apparatus who reprimanded them for not mentioning the king by his name and bestow blessings upon him in their sermons. In addition, interviewee Emad Maayah (a former high ranking brass and Head of the National Steering Committee in parliament who described the Committee's role as "*active*

role in articulating the Amendment to the Law"), included "supplication to his majesty the king" among the basic roles of the mosque.

On the other hand, only two of the seven preachers who blessed the king, and none of the five who expressed some reverence to his name, urged him to rule according to the Quran.

The concordance of a pro-regime speech which avoids an invocation to instill a yet more religious foundation for the State is a framing praxis which some preachers resort to in order to back the regime's legitimacy. The Researcher views that what enhances the preponderance of this speech is the evolving legal environment which necessarily brings into play a type of discourse that sends the State and the public eclectic messages while still working within the confines of pertinent regulations. The legitimate platform for this speech is the *du'a* which ought to stay aloof of political essence¹⁶⁵, but is being employed as a conduit to pass on desired structures of meaning by different actors when loading the sermon with this speech might be difficult.

Eight sermons ended with *du'a* to bless the *mujahedeen*, mostly citing jihadists in Palestine, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Somalia, Iraq and Chechnya. Although in Islam jihad in the broader sense entails spiritual discipline and the pursuit of personal piety to attain virtue¹⁶⁶, preachers limit their supplication to bellicose jihad, mostly in countries where *al-Qaeda* jihadists thrive. Half of these sermons contain speech which embeds instigation against the "*enemies of Islam*", disbelievers, Jews, Christians or a combination of these groups. Worth mentioning here that most of the jihadist doctrinaires are Jordanians of Palestinian origin who had

¹⁶⁵ Sheikh Wael Battiri explained to the Researcher that *du'a* was not part of the sermon in the earlier Muslim era, but was introduced into Friday sermon during the Umayyad caliphate when the religious space was being used to prop up the legitimacy of the successive caliphs.

¹⁶⁶ Jihad is defined as "*a holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty; a personal struggle in devotion to Islam especially involving spiritual discipline*".
Source: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/jihad>
accessed on October 03rd, 2014.

furnished for the ideological foundation of belligerent jihad, namely Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, Abu Anas Al-Shami, Abu Mohammad Al-Maqdisi and Abu Qatada Al-Filistini. Therefore, in times when “*aggression against Islam and Muslims*” makes the news, a common denominator for the preachers is to follow suit and nourish the audience with rhetoric that appeals to the masses, at least half of whom are Jordanians of Palestinian origin, some Iraqis and Egyptians or even Jordanians with strong affinity to the issue of Palestine and the defense of Islam.

Other *du’a* calls upon Allah to safeguard Muslims from price hike (four sermons), send rain (two sermons); heal the sick (one sermon); safety for Jordan (one sermon); restoring *al-Aqsa* mosque (one sermon); other appeals of mere religious nature (four sermons). Again, all of these supplications mentioned “*Muslims*” as *the* recipients of Allah’s blessings. For the worshipper, this kind of discourse might not seem exclusionary towards the “*other*” citizen or seeding bigotry in society, as 86 percent of the responding worshippers (Questionnaire- Chapter Seven) did not sense a call for extremism or negative perceptions by the preacher. The *supra* survey which denotes how Jordanians perceive Christians in general and the inference from the *participant observation* part uphold this conclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF ISSUES RELATED TO FRIDAY SERMON AND THE MOSQUE SETTING FROM 2007 TILL 2010

4.1. Methodology

The aim of this part of the study is to categorize and analyze the main issues covered in the local press and online journalism, in addition to readers' interaction with the pertinent news and reports. Throughout four years of sporadic observation (2007 – 2010), the study will provide us with insight on what the daily newspapers and news websites published of news related to Friday sermon and its communal context in the mosque, and how do comments and reactions by the readers/users developed regarding these news, namely State interference in the religious sphere in the aftermath of enacting the 2006 regulations targeting the mosque speech. This is being done in an *a posteriori* approach, that is, allowing the media content to guide the Researcher in categorizing the content and therefore in the direction of analysis.

The Researcher tracked down news and comments by readers published in Jordan's five main daily newspapers (print and online), Petra news agency website (official) and several electronic (news) websites. The aim is to view how much salient news and comments by the readers and pertinent actors corroborate with other research findings in the analysis parts of each chapter. After reading the news and comments by online readers, a comparison is drawn on how the opinions of officials and those of the readers developed throughout the years.

4.2. Categorization/ Reading of the Data

The following chart depicts change in the quantity of news and comments throughout the monitoring period:

Year	News about State interference		Citizens criticize State interference		Citizens commend State interference		News about sermon content		Total/ Percentage	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
2007	3	10%	2	1%	0	0%	1	5%	6	2%
2008	4	14%	4	3%	0	0%	4	21%	12	5%
2009	11	38%	4	3%	0	0%	4	21%	19	7%
2010	11	38%	139	93%	63	100%	10	53%	223	86%
Total/ Percentage	29	11%	149	57%	63	24%	19	7%	260	100%

The above table shows a gradual rise in the four categories (news about sermon content, news about state interference, and readers/users' reaction whether pro or con), but on the other hand, a sudden preponderance of relevant news and comments in the year 2010 (86%). Noteworthy to say that from 2007 to 2010, internet penetration by Jordanians has almost doubled¹⁶⁷, yet readers tend to comment more via news websites than through online newspapers, most of which have an editorial tradition not to publish readers' comments, if any. Apparently, it took the readers/users a few years to feel the newly introduced State intervention and its impact on the quality of sermons. This period also witnessed a heated climate between the State and Muslim Brotherhood movement.

News about State interference and news concerning sermon content raise

¹⁶⁷ Source: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/me/jo.htm> accessed on March 29th, 2014.

perpetually, therefore a correlation between the two categories, which reflects in the readers being sharply divided with regard to State intervention, a telltale that although people prefer quality sermons, one third of the commentators in 2010 (63 pro vs. 139 con) can unravel the political motives that drove the State to enact the new regulations, therefore their backing to the government whose motive was to target the Muslim Brotherhood movement and not to curtail religiosity per se in society. This pro-State ratio, although a minority, speaks of politicized worshippers who deem the Muslim Brotherhood as a movement with political motives than of pure religious dawa message.

Online interaction related to the religious sphere, especially the resulting gravitation between the State and Islamists, is of apparent concern by people given the number of worshippers who attend and listen to the weekly Friday sermons addressing life-felt issues and political occurring at homeland and the volatile region around. One news report generated 119 comments, half of which were posted on Saturday, a weekend holiday for the public and private sector employees who enjoy relative access to the Internet at work¹⁶⁸. Nevertheless, their active engagement in commenting on this news on their day-off is a sign of substantial access to the Internet at home or elsewhere¹⁶⁹, and a high concern about the subject issue. On the other hand, this policy to ostracize the movement's preachers, in addition to curtailing the reach of mosque microphones, among other procedures, has consequently left its footprint on the content and reach of Friday sermons. This could be the motive behind the majority of comments by readers and worshippers who disavow and vocally object State intervention in Friday sermons, as their rate outnumber those who condone it (approx. 70 percent and 30 percent respectively).

¹⁶⁸ Approximately 99 percent of public sector facilities and 74 percent of private sector facilities have access to the Internet. Source: Survey of the Use of Information and Communications Technology inside Facilities, 2010, Ministry of Information and Communications Technology.

¹⁶⁹ Proportion of computer use for personal purposes in 2010 is 91.1 percent; for work purposes 16.9 percent; and for learning and practicing 56.3 percent. Source: Selected Communications and Information Indicators, Department of Statistics 2010-2012.

Following the Amendment to the Law 2006, preachers affiliated with Muslim Motherhood are being banned from delivering Friday sermons at mosques, and by 2010, the result of this policy has become evident. As stated in the interviews section, both the movement's figures and State officials attest to the fact that unqualified preachers occupy the mosque podiums. In spite of attempts by ministry of awqaf to qualify a number of Imams and preachers, the ubiquitous presence of mosques in the Kingdom and a low pay rate for this job rendered this profession unappealing for most of the shari'a graduates, with a resulting shortage in their cadre that has become a tedious issue for the government to resolve¹⁷⁰, and eventually limited improvement in this situation.

The political context of this situation was such that in 2009, King Abdullah II dissolved parliament, halfway before the maturity of its four-year mandate, on the basis the House had passed unprofessional legislations and failed to tackle poverty and unemployment. The pertinent electoral law was a one-man-one-vote system, which limits the reach of Islamist candidates to the favor of tribal figures. The Islamic Action Front decided to boycott the upcoming elections, whose discourse is counteracted by a 'civil state' discourse by the king, with no alternative agency to fill in the gap in a highly religious society. As evident in some news items (see Annex# Three), the government resorted to mosque preachers to encourage voting and tackle mundane issues (whilst politics-savvy preachers were being ousted), but the result was counter-effective as seen in the commentary of an academia,

"Friday sermon has become habitual, boring and without arousing sentiments of devotion within the devout, after those who now stand up the podiums are the unqualified in education, culture and eloquence"¹⁷¹.

¹⁷⁰ In March 2014, the government decided to hire Imams and mosque servants from Egypt to cover the shortage in staff.

¹⁷¹ Dr. Mohammad Oqla, Dean of Faculty of Shari'a at Yarmouk University, Al Ghad Newspaper, p. 15 (07/04/2010).

Also, observing the behavior of the Informants (Participant Observation- Chapter Five) shows that even pro-State worshippers disavow the preacher/Imam if they feel his religious injunctions and edicts are being tainted by State intervention, no matter whether this guidance by the preacher agrees with the tenets of Islam or not.

One salient issue which has borne dynamic comments by the readers is a decree announced by the government in September 2009 limiting the use of mosque microphones to exclusively broadcast the call for prayer and the following prayers, but not Friday sermon. The vast majority of the readers objected this decision by refuting its justification by the government which on the other hand shrugs off noise caused by weddings and pubs; attributing it to State's affinity to the West and USA; deeming this decree a gradual attempt by the government to ban other Islamic manifestations in a presumably Islamic country. On the other hand, worth mentioning here that in September 2009, *Muslim Brotherhood* hardliner leader Hamza Mansour agreed with this official decree¹⁷², and justified it as,

“Reading Quran and delivering Friday sermons through microphones is unnecessary for the Muslim to heed prayer time, because Friday sermon is merely for the sake of those inside the mosque, not for those outside. In addition, mosques are ubiquitous in every district and broadcasting al-adhan [call for prayer] via microphones is to alert the negligent to come to pray... Quran should be revered even when listening to it...”

On April 02nd, 2014, the Researcher interviewed Mansour again on this issue¹⁷³ who gave the same justification, saying the movement's opposition to State decisions is not a blanket one, but limited to “erroneous legislations and policies”. The Researcher views that three years after the 2006 Amendment, whence the

¹⁷² Source: <http://www.assawsana.com/portal/newsshow.aspx?id=35867> accessed on September 01st, 2010.

¹⁷³ Interview audio-recorded and was conducted at Mansour's office at the Islamic Action Front in Amman.

movement members are being sacked off this vital means of communication with its grassroots and the public at large, the movement has become indifferent to it, or even prefers to see this ban apply also to non-Muslim Brotherhood preachers (especially the salafis)¹⁷⁴, therefore its blithely reaction to this additional decree of State censorship. In the supra mentioned interview, Mansour did not even remember the 2006 Amendment to the law, although he had then (2007-2011) chaired the Islamist parliamentary bloc, and even back in the 1993 parliament, the then deputy had argued that,

*“We were under intense pressure in the pulpits and mosques”.*¹⁷⁵

This oblivion by a top Islamist figure to an important legislation signifies that eight years after the new regulation which ousted the movement’s preachers and limited their reach to the worshippers, the Amendment per se is no more an earmark in the political reminiscence of this Islamic leader; that the Islamic movement has acquired alternative means of communication to influence the public opinion; or the movement has adapted to the new reality after the Law has taken its toll on the religious sphere. Another possible explanation is a gesture questioning the importance of the Amendment to the law, or that Mansour really does not remember this regulatory change given his reportedly ailing health condition at the time of the interview¹⁷⁶.

Most covered issues are news about the worshippers complaining from the shortage in mosque Imams and preachers, therefore leaving it for the unqualified to deliver sermons and causing disruptions among the pious. The Ministry of

¹⁷⁴ In July 2015, former preacher Wael Battiri attested to the Researcher the preponderance of the salafi preachers in *fiqh* issues as compared to the Muslim Brotherhood preachers whose excellence lies in their capacity to organize well and to stir political emotions of the worshippers.

¹⁷⁵ Source: http://www.al-sijill.com/sijill_items/sitem5331.htm accessed on April 11th, 2014 (Transliteration from the original Arabic text by the Researcher).

¹⁷⁶ Source <http://www.jordanews.com/jordan/25817.html> accessed on December 29th, 2014.

Awqaf attributed the shortage in its cadre to the fact that people abstain from assuming this underpaid job with its preconditions, while analyst Mohammad Abu Rumman¹⁷⁷ opines that,

"...State preachers and orators are often void of a balanced and coherent vision on fiqh, especially after the Ministry of Awqaf has excluded most of the Muslim Brotherhood movement preachers who - politics aside- are the most capable, trained, and qualified to deliver intellectual fiqh [Islamic jurisprudence] discourse".

This view is conforming to the way Muslim Brotherhood leaders, including those who assumed official positions, interpret the appropriation of Imamate and preaching posts by the State and the exclusion of the movement's sheikhs from these positions. Minister of Awqaf admits to the shortage in Imams, but asserts that all mosques are manned with qualified preachers¹⁷⁸. This political bureaucrat counted 2,500 preachers who hold a university degree, which leaves more than 3,500 mosques of the approximately 5,500 mosques in the Kingdom¹⁷⁹ with preachers of either middle college degree, higher school degree or even a lesser educational qualification. Whereas the Department of Statistics records 909 male preachers in 2008¹⁸⁰, among them 500 university graduates and 409 non-university graduates, serving 4,962 operating mosques in the kingdom. The pun here is that the minister might have also counted the Imams (2,386 Imams in 2008) whose primary task does not include delivering sermons, which explains the discrepancy in his alleged numbers.

¹⁷⁷ Source: <http://www.alghad.com/index.php?article=7889&searchFor=> "\ \ published on Al Ghad newspaper (06/01/2008). See Annex I, p.31 (translation by the Researcher).

¹⁷⁸ Al Rai newspaper, (30/10/2010), See Annex I, p.1.

¹⁷⁹ Source: Minsitry of Awqaf website http://www.awqaf.gov.jo/pages.php?menu_id=90 accessed on November 18th, 2010.

¹⁸⁰ Including speakers from outside the ministry.

The following chart shows the number of mosques and preachers¹⁸¹ in each governorate¹⁸² compared to the population¹⁸³:

	Governorate	Population/ Percentage		Number of Mosques & Percentage		Number/ Percentage of Preachers ¹⁸⁴		Citizen per Mosque
1	Amman	2,367,000	39%	1406	27%	165	18%	1,683
5	Irbid	1,088,100	18%	868	16%	228	25%	1,254
2	Zarqa	910,800	15%	615	8%	83	9%	1,481
4	Balqa	409,500	7%	347	7%	126	14%	1,180
6	Mafraq	287,300	5%	659	12%	78	8%	436
9	Karak	238,400	4%	394	7%	38	4%	605
8	Jarash	183,400	3%	214	4%	44	5%	857
3	Madaba	152,900	3%	168	3%	37	4%	910
7	Ajloun	140,600	2%	138	3%	50	5%	1,019
12	Aqaba	133,200	2%	90	2%	3	0.3%	1,480
11	Maan	116,200	2%	208	4%	28	3%	559
10	Tafilah	85,600	1%	170	3%	47	5%	504
	Total/ Percentage	6,113,000	100%	5277	100%	927	100%	

¹⁸¹ Source: <http://awqaf.gov.jo/uploaded/pdfs/al-nasharah%20al-e7sa2eyah.pdf> accessed on May 02nd, 2014.

¹⁸² Researcher grouped different directorates to their governorate for easy match (Irbid governorate includes Ramtha, Al-Koura and Northern Aghwar directorates; and Zarqa governorates includes Rusaifa directorate)

¹⁸³ Source: http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/jorfig/2010/3_1.pdf accessed on May 02nd, 2014.

¹⁸⁴ Not on the payroll of ministry of awqaf.

The above chart depicts a relatively proportionate distribution of mosques to citizens in the four densest governorates, namely Amman, Irbid, Zarqa and Balqa, but an uneven manning of mosques with preachers. Albeit a stronghold for the Muslim Brotherhood movement, Irbid is a tribal governorate that has a higher percentage of preachers when compared to Zarqa, the main stronghold for the movement and highly populated with Jordanians of Palestinian origin and jihadist salafis, therefore a lesser tendency by the government to have preachers on its payroll from this city.

A chart¹⁸⁵ showing the change in the number of new established mosques demonstrates a gradual decrease in the years 2007 and 2008, namely 175 and 149 mosques, after it was 348 mosques in 2006. One logical explanation is the need to man these mosques with preachers after the number of available preachers has dropped down following the 2006 Amendment to the Law of preaching, therefore a drop in the propensity to license the new mosques in order to mitigate and obfuscate the impact of the new regulation which has resulted in the layout and banning of several preachers.

To further inquire on this issue the Researcher interviewed by a telephone call on May 08th, 2014 Abdul'ilah al-Takhayneh, legal advisor of the Ministry of Awqaf. al-Takhayneh disagrees with the Researcher's explanation and attributes this "timely" decrease to the natural increase in population and the resulting need to decide whether to construct new mosques or not, therefore mosques being constructed to meet the emerging need, then this process would stop if the need recedes back. Besides, mosques are being built by charity donors among the people then relegated to the ministry to oversee by law.

News coverage and respective comments by the readers depict the government being active in having Imams and preachers undergo training on life-felt issues

¹⁸⁵ Source: <http://awqaf.gov.jo/uploaded/pdfs/al-nasharah%20al-e7sa2eyah.pdf> accessed on May 02nd, 2014.

(i.e. corruption, social security, parental life, partum health, drugs, traffic accidents), but leaving the majority of the mosques with preachers unqualified to tackle these themes.

This is a telltale sign that the official policy to control the religious space deprived most of the mosques in the kingdom of their qualified preachers, or manned them with preachers unqualified to deliver convincing and nourishing content to the public. This policy has aggravated the situation as compared to the era prior to the 2006 law Amendment, whence the Muslim Brotherhood movement had managed to amass public support through its eloquent and well-paid cadre of preachers.

When compared to the movement's preachers backed by the movement, less qualified preachers on payroll by the government have a lesser chance to secure jobs elsewhere, therefore their being keen to heed the social and official redlines and deliver sermons that do not enlist public support to the movement. Whether they deliver quality sermons or not, or whether they tackle life-felt issues in concordance with the public mood, are issues irrelevant directly to their job security, although the Researcher based on direct observation to sermons views that preachers sometimes do address issues that appeal to public sentiments such as foreign attack on Islamic symbols. Participant observation by the Researcher denotes the worshipper being inclined to change the mosque he regularly goes to, usually the closest to his house, if he feels the preacher is influenced by the State or the group of worshippers he joins are subject to state security surveillance.

Apparently, when the government orchestrated the new regulations on mosques, the ramifications of the resulting shortage in preachers would weigh less than the cost of leaving the hand of the Muslim Brotherhood movement free to control the religious fora. Interviewed General Secretary of the movement, Sheikh Hamza Mansour, said that,

"Ulama [scholars] and Du'at [preachers] well experienced in khitaba [sermonizing] and teaching were being ousted... and replaced by people who would not trespass the official stance outlined by Ministry of Awqaf".

Former deputy and Islamist figure Taysir Fityani posed a similar explanation,

"Through inquiries posed to Ministry [of Awqaf], we came to know that after the Law was endorsed, 1300 khatibs [preachers] were graduates of high school or less and are not holders of a Shari'a certificate. How come the unqualified are allowed to practice one of the most important and dangerous professions! ... This is a venue for extremism and placing the wrong man in the right place".

Another former deputy and Islamist figure in Aqaba, Sheikh Bader Saleh al-Riati, who was banned several times, describes his own experience as,

"I was not allowed again until 2008, but this time the ban took place via phone call by the director of Awqaf saying (you are banned until a further notice). That was in May 2009; why? I do not know!"

Press coverage, interviews and thematic analysis to sermons demonstrate that the worshippers do complain about the low quality of State-assigned preachers, influential preachers being banned (often without justification); sermons still embed hate speech and condone violence. These observations defy the official justification behind endorsing the 2006 Amendment and the guiding principles of the Amman Message the king had launched in 2004. However, field participant observation by the Researcher does not depict a translation of this antagonistic speech into physical act on the ground or even social exclusion, except with regard to the Shiite sect of Islam in tandem with the rise of political dissent between Sunni and Shiite Islam in the region.

Criticism by the worshippers to consecutive governments does not necessarily reflect in a blanket support for the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Comments by the readers indicate that when it comes to the movement backing certain State

policies (i.e. limiting the use of microphones to the mosque's inner hall)¹⁸⁶, the majority of comments rebuffed justifications posed by both State and the movement. In addition, complaints by the worshippers go beyond the Imam's credentials in oratory and religious jurisprudence to pinpoint to his reported behavior in the mosque (i.e. malfunction of finances, lack of social interaction with the mosque community). The State's grip on the religious communal space and its parallel appropriation of the movement's main source of finance, namely the Islamic Center Society, illustrates the movement's inability to man mosques with influential and committed preachers, therefore the resulting bemoan by the online users.

Both newspapers and online websites depict very limited interaction between the readers and Ministry of Awqaf, especially on its own website or on local news websites. There is no online ombudsman or even counter comments by the ministry to these complaints. Even in the local press, a lack of transparency and accountability by the ministry is apparent. Dissatisfied by a mainstream newspaper which published an article written by a female reader (who complained against a Friday sermon which propagated incitement targeting women), the ministry spokesperson reproved the newspaper for not referring to the ministry for opinion¹⁸⁷ before publishing this comment. This is stark example of a policy of obfuscation and censorship by the government to sermon-related issues published in mainstream press.

¹⁸⁶ Sources:

- <http://www.assawsana.com/portal/newsshow.aspx?id=35865> (01/09/2010);
 - <http://www.assawsana.com/portal/newsshow.aspx?id=35867> (01/09/2010);
 - <http://ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNo=70290> (28/09/2010);
 - Ad-dustour newspaper (09/03/2008);
 - Al Ghad newspaper (26/08/2009).
- See Annex I.

¹⁸⁷ Al Rai newspaper, (30/10/2010). See Annex I, p.1. The government has more than a 60 percent share in the capital of Al Rai, the largest newspaper in Jordan.

CHAPTER FIVE

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The Researcher employed 'participant observation' in as much as the available resources allowed (three collaborators/Informants for a six months period from January 2011 till July 2011). Therefore this tool does not amount to full-fledge cultural immersion in an ethnography approach, but a close eye on the sermon, the preacher, the worshippers and the context given that frames in rhetorical communication affect all of these actors. The aim is to describe the basis unit (individual participation and views), which should serve as an inductive tool to measure a social order that is more collective as shown in the interviews with the concerned actors (Chapter Six).

Herewith is a typology of the observations which emerged in an *a posteriori* mode, that is, grouping the observations after the period of study has come to an end, therefore letting the final product of this field study guide the Researcher in discovering and demystifying which issues became salient throughout this interaction. These angles are: the Informant's choice of the mosque; Informant's association with fellow worshippers; Informant's association with friends and family members; State and the mosque; Informant's personal behaviour; Informant's authority reference. As for the Informants' attitudes toward the Researcher, they are embedded in Chapter One for relevance purposes.

5.1. Analysis of the Research

5.1.1. Choice of the Mosque

Mosques are ubiquitous in Jordan (more than six thousand mosques catering to four million citizens and seven million expats¹⁸⁸) making it easy for the worshippers to access a worship place to perform their due prayers and rituals. The Ministry of Awqaf has a special directorate with the mandate of maintaining existing mosques, forming committees and commissions to establish and run additional mosques, maintaining their contents, overseeing their libraries and developing mosques to serve local communities¹⁸⁹.

By observing the behavior of the three Informants, the only common factor regarding the decision where to pray on Friday is nearness of the mosque to one's residence. As for Informant SJ, this condition would change if the preacher did not relate the sermon to the political occurring. The vicinity factor would also change if the sermon was lengthy; limited to pure religious substance that lacks dealing with life-felt issues; preacher did not resemble a role model for the worshipper (i.e. because of his political stance, something the neighborhood deems as a flattery and sycophancy to the regime). As for AA, a minor nuisance in choosing where to pray at the nearest mosque was not finding a parking lot in case a vehicle is used to commute to the mosque.

This concludes that a worshipper chooses to pray at a mosque close to his residence where he can socialize with acquaintances and relatives, therefore enhancing a Muslim's sense of affinity to *umma*, especially if the mosque is hosting a mass congregation therefore inducing divine blessings. A similar notion

¹⁸⁸ Census source: <http://www.maqar.com/?id=87830> accessed on August 17th, 2015.

¹⁸⁹ Mosque numbers surpass those in Arab and Muslim countries. Source <http://ar.ammannet.net/?p=85497> accessed on September 23rd, 2011.

is posed by MA, who attends *salat at'tarawih* prayer during the fasting month of Ramadan when, as more people attend the mosque a stronger feeling of communal adherence to faith is enhanced. MA also maintains that since 2006, the State security has propped up its surveillance on a mosque fundraising committee he was part of, therefore his inclination to avoid association with such groups and their choice of the mosque.

The foregoing citations may draw the conclusion that a worshipper's decision to engage in a religious obligation is far more than merely occupying his share of the religious space, as this decision is communal before being individual- either seeking the company of a friend or a kin, or a multitude of unknown worshippers for a sense of commonality that supplants the *individual*.

Therefore, in case the sermon was not up to expectations, a worshipper's reaction is to recline and surrender to the choice of the congregation rather than risk leaving the mosque alone, given the decision to attend the sermon was to fulfill a *communal* religious duty in the first place. Thereafter, the worshipper may explicitly react to the sermon by means of the virtual sphere (i.e. social media), choose to change the mosque the following week, or perform certain religious gimmicks during the sermon (i.e. *salat al-Istikhara*¹⁹⁰, as in the case of SJ).

The choice of whether to keep going to the same mosque is also influenced by State interference, whether through content censorship (the congregation feeling the preacher cajoles the regime), or direct security surveillance (avoiding association with both security cadre inside the mosque and *dawa* operatives), as the supra case of MA denotes).

¹⁹⁰ *Salat al-Istikhara* is a special prayer to beseech divine goodness and wisdom if the worshipper was not sure about his actions.

5.1.2. Association with Fellow Worshippers

Two Informants went to the mosque accompanied by an acquaintance or to meet a relative there. In the case of SJ, this camaraderie sparked conversation about the "political context" outside the mosque, but no discussion about the sermon itself when the street is politically hyper. Therefore, the mosque should serve as a launching platform to ignite the street with sermons calibrated to the political occurring.

One observation regarding MA was that inviting other worshippers¹⁹¹ to accompany him to the mosque was a religious obligation, but when this invitation entailed possible misconceptions by the preacher and the congregation about his association with State security personnel (he happened to be in their office), MA decided to avoid the company¹⁹². MA also decided not to self-associate with groups who gather at the mosques after religious lessons and try to formulate clandestine *dawa* teams. Albeit this restriction, this Informant would visit friends, or friends of friends, and encourage them to go to the mosque to pray, but would only do it with *dawa* friends whom he trusts.

These observations confirm what the previous section denotes regarding the communal nature of prayer- a worshipper prefers to accompany others or invite them for prayer; a duty which does not stop at listening to the sermon or urging fellow Muslims to attend it, but goes further as to safeguard the sermon from State interference, given the notion that the worshipper embodies not only himself but the collective conscience of *umma*. In addition, although prayer is a religious duty

¹⁹¹ MA happened to be at a police station when he encouraged a security man to go and pray with him.

¹⁹² This came in the aftermath of the 2005 bomb attacks against hotels in Amman and the 2006 Amendment to the law whence the security apparatus had tightened its grip on mosques and *dawa* groups who preach around and urge the residents to attend the mosque. These groups were banned since then except in *al-Hujjaj* mosque in the outskirts of Amman, a hotbed for the extremists.

and one of the main pillars of Islam, when the political environment is dynamic, the impact of the genre content of the sermon (religious content) on the fellow worshippers is overwhelmed by the political occurring (although religious duty, not politics, is the main drive behind performing the prayer) except when the sermon identifies with the political ambiance outside the mosque. This is because, for a Muslim, the mosque exceeds the role designated to it by the State and preacher, and that communal fellowship strengthens the collective structure of meaning especially when the sermon lacks content germane to the political context.

This notion speaks of the worshippers viewing the mosque (and Friday sermon as its locus) as an institution which exceeds the mere concept of a “religious place”; a setting which ought to resemble the original status and function the mosque used to occupy during the early Islamic era, whence the collective affairs of *umma* were being tackled, something the current religious establishment [ministry of awqaf] has failed to sustain. Therefore, to the worshippers, social interaction in the religious fora is not primarily a matter of permission or proscription, but a cognitive state of the mind that the sacralized message of the mosque is life-relevant, communal and interactive.

Put Friday in a comparative perspective, performing prayers in the mosque during weekdays seems less crowded, worshippers are mostly elders, and interaction between the pious and Imam during the religious lesson is negligible, albeit permissible. Informant MA bears witness that when contested with mundane activities of non-religious nature, the mosque is less popular to the worshippers who are more concerned with the duty of performing Friday congregational prayer than attending the religious lesson that precedes.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ On Monday January 17th, 2011, MA told the Researcher that when *Bab al-Hara* was debut (a popular Syrian television drama series in 2010), people would limit their *raka'at* (prostration during prayer) to the minimum so they can rush home and watch the drama.

Another contestant to the sermon content is the religious setting. Informant MA told the Researcher that he went to Mecca to perform hajj, and was chosen by the commuters as the "pilgrimage *emir*" to guide them through; a must for three or more pilgrims according to *sunna*. At the pilgrimage site, MA was highly influenced by the prevalence of the spiritual ambiance and the interaction with fellow worshippers. Upon his return from *hajj*, most of MA's talk centered on the rituals that he and his companions performed rather than on what the preacher has said. At the pilgrimage site, and unlike when this Informant prays at Jordanian mosques, MA was totally immersed in the surrounding ambiance and forgot anything to do with family concerns or pressures back at home, save for *du'a* to bless his family and friends, including the Researcher.

The aforementioned cases indicate that the mosque resembles more than a 'public religious space', but less than a 'public sphere'. However, this geophysical feature of the mosque transforms into a 'public sphere' when *khutba* becomes part of the socio-political setting that takes place outside the mosque, and when the hierarchical and patri-oriented structure of the religious space is disarmed via group discussions outside the mosque or through the media. The more enhanced the feeling of communal religiosity, and the more sacralized the setting is, the more the worshippers move away from the direct impact of the sermon content to the ritualistic impact of the communal sphere. On the other hand, the more dynamic the political setting is, the more the worshippers shift their attention from the 'religious space' setting (having already performed their religious duty) to the public sphere where they become the main actor, albeit still in a religious framework given the notion that this interaction between *khutba* and the mosque's setting is the historically accepted *genre* role of the mosque. This role is what the State is keen to control via regulations and security control to rule out political contestants.

5.1.3 Association with Friends and Family Members

Most of the encounters with the three Informants took place inside mosques or cafés, away from family settings. Whenever invited to their houses, mingling with family members of the Informants is restricted to junior male siblings. This is due to the conservative nature of the Jordanian society in general, especially with devoted Muslims who believe in gender separation in public as evident with the three Informants. Nevertheless, one Informant would divulge something about his private life. A glimpse of this is what MA shares about his wife, an active *dawa* preacher, about whom this Informant expressed disapproval due to her excessive involvement in mosque-related events and activities; an exaggerated chastity. This case of MA shows that this concealed role of the mother is disliked by her husband if she crosses the boundary and becomes hyperactive in mosque-related activities, ultimately infringing on her husband's prerogatives. Therefore mosque intrusion to socially accepted norms (male dominance) is a source of nuisance for the worshipper. This norm (in our case, conjugal duties by the wife toward her husband) is driven by social values, but in order for the male worshipper to justify it, he interprets it in a religious context; conjugal relationship being a right enshrined in religious teachings.

MA also highlights the role of the mother at home as that of behind-the-door inspirer. This Informant elucidated the difference between men and women's status during Friday sermons - while men should hearken to the sermon and if they mutter their prayer is void, women at *musalla* [females' section of the mosque] listen to religious lessons delivered by a *dawa* woman who can only recite verses from the Quran, or listen to the sermon through loudspeakers. Women are not allowed to speak out about societal issues or discuss life-felt issues in public at the mosque, because according to MA who was speaking about the case of the nearby *al-Hijra* mosque, women can discuss these issues with their husbands thereafter. MA added that women seem to be more of a reference for

family members than their spouses¹⁹⁴, and their viewpoints tend to be more influential than the father who spends most of the day at work, therefore inapt to tackle minute mundane issues of their sons and daughters, let alone the more affectionate nature of the mother.

The other encounter with a family member was when the Researcher accompanied MA to an evening religious lesson at a mosque in eastern Amman. As his daughter's fiancé attended the same mosque, MA had told his kin he would come accompanied by a "*non-Muslim who is searching for the truth*", so as to avoid social answerability by a family member, although the Researcher had accompanied MA to other mosques in the neighborhood without noticing this overt cautiousness. This is probably because, unlike in Friday sermon when the worshippers leave en masse, religious lessons entail more personal scrutiny about the social setting and less about the content, given the message inside is more personalized than in *khutba* where the message is public and a more communal sense of *umma* is present.

MA seems to be influenced by his fellow worshippers (regardless of whether he knows them or not) with whom he would sometimes discuss issues highlighted in the sermon on their way out of the mosque; these deliberations bearing more influence on him than the impact of the religious lesson that precedes prayer, the sermon or the preacher himself. During the fasting month of Ramadan, when observance to religious directives tends to be stronger, MA conveys admonishments by the mosque preachers to his friends to abide by.

As a reporter, SJ is keen to cover public protests by the jihadist salafi movement and be present in post-prayer gatherings, therefore going to the mosque

¹⁹⁴ This leverage for women is further elucidated in the study of Antoun (1989) who depicts that in the studied village women are banned from entering the mosque by tradition, yet their dominant presence is proven as they constitute a significant reference group for the preacher who urges the audience to inform them of the sermon themes.

accompanied by his friends rather than with family members; a guise needed to stay close to the group he sympathizes with, although not ostensibly.

SJ's referent to the neighborhood Imam and to his family is apparent following an advice by the Imam not to leave his parents and go to work in Saudi Arabia; an act considered *uqouq* [ingratitude to parents] in Islam. Although this kinship affinity is calibrated by what the Imam decrees, it does not constitute blanket consent to family pressure regarding association with what the parents consider a controversial religious group (jihadists). In this regard, SJ did not feel he should refer to the Imam for opinion given his breadwinner status, let alone his own experience as a previously banned preacher, and the fact that his profession as a reporter gives him a leeway to stay close to relevant events.

Above citations conclude that a worshipper is keen to discuss the sermon's content with his closest surroundings (as shown in Chapter Seven, where two thirds of the sample worshippers believe the sermon has brought about an outstanding subject that deserves public dissemination). This does not necessarily translate into the worshipper being the sole source for guidance at home, given the veiled role of the woman/mother. However, a worshipper does not allow the religious reference to encroach on his basic rights enshrined in the Quran and Hadith (i.e. association with religious groups, conjugal rights, or job security).

The delineation of the border line between the religious sphere and the social sphere is a product of acknowledgement and adherence to religious teachings and social values constructed only partly through reference to the religious agency, while other considerations include the family, job and peers' effect.

5.1.4. State and the Mosque

On February 08th, 2011 (at the onset of the Arab Spring), Informant MA noticed that Friday sermons have recently started focusing on calming down the worshippers, calling upon them to be patient and obedient to *ouli al-amr* [Muslim rulers] as the Quran prescribes. The Imam where MA prays said he had received a circulation by Department of Preaching and Guidance/ Ministry of Awqaf urging him and other preachers to heed official guidelines to instill calmness among the worshippers. The Imam also stressed the importance of national unity and avoiding dissent among Muslims in the homeland. One example is when MA went to pray at Salem bin Harb Mosque on January 10th, 2011,

“There, the sermon was unusually very short (nine minutes, while sermons usually last for 20 to 40 minutes). When I protested and asked the Imam why, he said this was due to the ongoing protests against the government, and his obligation was to water down the worshippers’ sentiments and diffuse any potential for communal protests after dismissal”.

Whereas in a different setting like Ruseifeh (near Amman; a shantytown and hotbed for radical Islamists and Palestinian refugees), Informant AA, who prays at ar-Ruhman Mosque, said that on Tuesday March 08th, 2011, Imam Abulhayja stressed in his latest sermons that unjust rulers must be ousted and disobeyed by Muslims. This blanket description of “unjust rulers” may construe the jihadist doctrine of *hakimiyyah*, which designates the ruler as *kafer* [apostate] and should be uprooted if he did not rule according to *shari’a*; a possible reference to King Abdullah II in this area where the jihadists thrive. Noteworthy to say that this Friday had witnessed nationwide protests against the deteriorating living conditions with calls for the cabinet to step down¹⁹⁵. In this context, preachers proclaimed different messages to the worshippers, each according to his own perception of where the

¹⁹⁵ The Muslim Brotherhood movement did not participate. On November 19th the Researcher inquired the case with Ali Abusokkar, Chairman of the Shura Council of IAF, who said the movement was engaged with another activity that very day, and denied a speculation that this was the product of a gentleman agreement between the movement and government so as to ease tension around mosques.

redline stands in light of the changing political ambiance, even with regard to doctrinal issues such as submission to the Muslim ruler.

In addition to circulations for preachers and Imams, the State uses the media as a channel for pro-State religious speech parallel to speech delivered in the mosques. Issues of political nature (the Arab Spring, reform, protests) are being invoked in sermons more than the norm before the outbreak of protests, but only in concordance with the government's policy so as to suppress public calls for its resignation. On March 28th, 2011, Informant MA told the Researcher the following observation as both were on their way to the mosque,

“as a taxi driver who always listens to radio, for the past three weeks State-oriented radio stations were for the first time broadcasting religious lessons prior to dhuhr [noon] prayer on Fridays out of the three mainstream mosques in Amman [...] wherefrom preachers would urge the worshippers to go home after prayer and refrain from enjoining street protests. Friday sermons have lately concentrated on political issues not dealt with before, including the current protests. I would have accepted this rhetoric had it been the norm before, but given they only came to address a timely issue, I do not accept them as religious guidance, and in this regard the mosque has no influence on me, unless the preacher talks about sheer fiqh and sunna”.

The State also practices 'soft containment' against the media in order to censor anti-State discourse, as this encounter with SJ on Saturday April 23rd, 2011 denotes,

“Covering a post-prayer sit-in organized by the salafi jihadist movement in Zarqa a week ago when the police cracked down on protesters who were purportedly were carrying white arms to defend themselves against pro-regime thugs, the newspaper where I work declined to publish my report, and after uploading it on my face book page I received several condemnations, including a threat, apparently from the secret police, and I expect more pressure in the coming days”.

The fact that this internal censorship is practiced by an Islamic newspaper (considered the mouthpiece of the Muslim Brotherhood movement) is an indication

the movement reckons the extent to which the State is sensitive and alert regarding the usage of mosques to diffuse anti-State speech in society. Besides, a new actor (in this case, the salafi jihadist movement) is now contesting both Muslim Brotherhood and the State in a quest to permeate the religious sphere, both sides being cautious about the influence that this new player may wield on the worshippers.

In other Friday sermons, preachers received official instructions not to include political issues in their sermons; an indication the State is redrawing the limits of the religious speech in tandem with the shift in the political context. A way out of this official pressure is for the preacher to redefine political terms and frame ongoing events in a religious context that appeals to both State and the worshippers, a tactic that requires some wit as in the following case,

“On Friday March 25th, the Researcher went with SJ and another friend of his to perform Friday prayer at Masjid Aljami’a Al Urdiniya [The University of Jordan mosque]¹⁹⁶. After performing the opening prayer [salute of the mosque], the preacher talked about the ongoing protests in different Arab countries and ensuing calls for reform, defining "reform" as adherence to Quran and sunna and enacting shari’a laws, concluding his sermon with du’a for Allah to grant “the king of the homeland a clout of good advisors, guidance and provision”, but without calling the king by his name (Abdullah II bin Al Hussein)]”.

In this example, the preacher resorted to framing by imbuing a religious attribute for reform, and by wielding to official pressure to bless the king but without mentioning his official name at this heightened time, therefore appealing to both the public and officialdom.

As for the impact of State directives, more often than not do Imams and preachers concede to pertinent regulations, whereas others try to find a way to reconcile their

¹⁹⁶ The University of Jordan is a state university established in 1962, the oldest in the Kingdom. On that day, sit-ins and demonstrations by youth-oriented movements and opposition parties, including Islamic movements, would ratchet up their demands for reform including a constitutional monarchy.

conscience as men of faith and principle on the one hand, while warding off official pressure on the other. MA contended that on January 06th, 2010,

“during the campaign for parliamentary elections slated for November 2010, most of the visited mosques were urging the pious to participate in the elections, including Imam al-Awaysheh of al-Hijra mosque, who, if asked to deliver a State-friendly sermon, he would delegate another knowledgeable man to do it, thereby avoiding the pangs of his own conscience if he did and possible inquiry by the awqaf officials if he refused”.

Other preachers embed their sermons implicit messages by the State, such as tolerance and moderation in accordance with Amman Message, or a religious fiat to the peace treaty with Israel- a target of condemnation by street protesters, especially the Islamists. This speech resembles a counter-discourse by the State to public calls (especially by Muslim Brotherhood) to annul the treaty which Jordan had signed with Israel in 1994. It also implicitly promotes for the Amman Message which calls for moderation, as the following case depicts,

“On Friday January 21st, 2011 the Researcher went with Informant AA to perform Friday prayer at al-Birr wal-Ihsan mosque in Tabarbour, north of Amman. The preacher commanded the worshippers not to inflict harm on other Muslims, adding that this duty also includes ahl al-kitab¹⁹⁷ who live amongst us. The preacher also urged the worshippers to honor their pacts by following the footsteps of Prophet Mohammad, saying it is permissible for the Muslim state to forge agreements and pacts with non-Muslim countries. Following the prayer, AA commented “the preacher must have been guided by awqaf to tackle this issue in light of the current circumstances¹⁹⁸”.

In this sermon the preacher is framing two messages- by propagating tolerance with non-Muslims he paves the way for the second tacit frame ‘peace with the

¹⁹⁷ People of the Book, meaning Christians and Jews, but in the Jordanian context, the term refers more to Christian Jordanians.

¹⁹⁸ The context was nationwide demonstrations following Friday sermons calling for resignation of the government, the repeal of Wadi Araba accord; the peace treaty Jordan had forged with Israel in 1994.

enemies' by implicitly including Jews among *ahl al-Kitab*, as no Jews live in Jordan.

Other preachers would implicitly criticize the State, back the State, and infringe the law by uttering 'hate speech', all in one sermon. One can infer that these preachers reckon where the red lines are now being redrawn, and where the State's tolerance stands. More than written laws, a preacher's reference in such a case is practice and *urf* [custom and traditions compatible with shari'a law]. One example is the following,

“On April 01st, 2011 the Researcher went with MA to perform Friday prayer at thu-noorayn mosque in downtown Amman, adjacent to Amman Municipality, given news that harakat 24 azhar (March 24th movement) will hold a demonstration there [...] The preacher started the sermon by asserting that Islah [reform] is well vetted in Islam, condemned the killing of Muslims without legitimate reasons such as kufr [apostasy] or shirk [associating false deities with Allah], the punishment of which can only be inflicted by the ascribed authorities¹⁹⁹. The preacher then called on the worshippers to line up behind the leader of the homeland, His Majesty King Abdullah, beseeching Allah to grant victory to the jihadists in Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya and elsewhere, and concluded the sermon by cursing the Jews and beseeching Allah to humiliate them”.

The above citation suggests that State interference in sermon content is selective and multifarious, but not imposed on preachers as blanket must-do given that the preachers may yield to State pressure each according to his personal conviction and in variant degrees, as part of this subordination is self-censorship. As for the law enforcement, it seems that what matters for the government is not an equal and fair enforcement of the law, but selective enactment depending on the changing political scenario; as long as the preachers who contest the State in occupying the religious sphere are being banned, breaking pertinent laws can be overlooked. The interpretation to this is that the government would pass laws that

¹⁹⁹ During the previous week, protests two protestors were killed and the authorities strived to prove their death was natural.

regulate the religious speech in order to tackle contingent political and security challenges it is facing. The following case is a vivid example,

“On Monday, March 14th 2011, Informant MA told the Researcher that last Friday he had gone to Ashab Ar-Rasul mosque in Marka al-Janoubia in eastern Amman. There the preacher condemned three ousted Arab leaders (Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Zeinul Abidin Ben Ali of Tunis, and Moammar Qaddafi of Libya), all being rejected by their people, calling them unjust leaders and cursing them. Then the preacher urged the worshippers to preserve national unity in Jordan, obey the king, and refrain from going out in demonstrations or protests as some "outlawed" people would do. MA views that the preacher has acted against Jordanian law, which bans slander against leaders of Arab countries, and against shari'a code which bans gossip and slander in general. MA felt the preacher has heightened his diatribe to arouse the emotions of the worshippers on the foreign front then quenched their sentiments when it came to homeland issues”.

State interference in sermon content is also noticeable as sermons tend to be brief. Sermons do relate to the political environment, the Arab Spring, as preachers tend to re-brand/frame this term so as to deflate anti-State sentiments, and supplication for King Abdullah II is intensified but without mentioning his name (although the security would sometimes pressure defiant Imams to do so²⁰⁰). Worshippers' response in “Amen” to this *du'a* is rather reduced when they feel it is pre-orchestrated and exaggerated, and when the overall atmosphere is on the edge. One example is the following,

*“On April 29th, 2011 the Researcher went with Informant SJ to perform Friday prayer at al-Kitab wa-Sunnah Mosque in Mgablein area, southeast of Amman. We noticed some security presence around the mosque and the atmosphere inside and outside has been tense given the ongoing protests. The Imam demanded all Arab regimes to heed demands for freedom by their peoples, and concluded the sermon by the usual *du'a* to bless “the king” but without mentioning his name. I could see SJ responding with “Amen” to all the supplications save this one²⁰¹”.*

²⁰⁰ See the interview with Mohammad Al Maqdisi in Annex Five.

²⁰¹ A grim appearance on worshippers' faces was later confirmed by one worshipper in his blog <http://www.assabeel.net/local-news/الجهاديين-شخصيات-وطنية-وعشائرية-38992/.html>

This mosque (al-Kitab wa-Sunnah) is located in a tribal district, and east Jordanian tribes are known as the backbone for the Jordanian regime. The security had arrested a member of the Huneiti clan, Dr. Sa'ad Al-Huneiti²⁰² who is an outspoken figure of the salafi jihadist movement which was organizing a sit-in nearby, therefore the heated pro-State speech by the preacher. The clan was divided- some backing the regime while others were sympathetic to their detained son. Right after the prayer, a group of the clan prevented the jihadist protesters from entering the mosque to announce the sit-in, and the preacher was urging the worshippers to attack the jihadists. This was followed by a street show off, with both sides standing parallel to each other- a verbose sit-in in a nearby tent by the jihadists and other sympathizers, including some members of the clan, and a demonstration by pro-State clan members. The police was neutral; blocking the path between both sides and preserving security in spite of speeches antagonistic to the regime by some opposition figures [tribal sheikhs and leftists who sympathize with the jihadists].

This event demonstrates that given the tribal sensitivity, a clamp down by the State against the jihadists is being conducted by proxy; that is, surrogated to thugs who attempted to contain anti-State speech inside the mosque and its vicinity by delivering a parallel speech. The result was the security forces preventing the new contesting actors [jihadists and their supporters] from assuming full control over the public space adjacent to the mosque, while securing control over the mosque podium by marching the support of a preacher who is beholden to the State and the clan.

A 'soft containment' policy by the State to *lèse-majesté* in mosque speech was preceded by 'hard containment' in the wake of the enforcement of the 2006 Amendment to the Law of Preaching and Guidance at Mosques. The Arab Spring and anti-State protests in Jordan targeting both the government and the secret

²⁰² Source: <http://ar.ammannet.net/?p=106096> accessed on October 13th, 2015.

security apparatus (*mukhabarat*) brought about unprecedented assault on King Abdullah II and Queen Rania, with the latter complaining about “*rumors that touched my integrity... without any shred of truth*”²⁰³. This transformation in delineating the red lines is reflected in a diluted State sensitivity to the King’s status in sermons. One analogy which serves to compare the actual State tolerance with past incidents is the following,

“On Tuesday March 08th, 2011 the Researcher met with Informant AA for two hours and a half at a café [...]. AA also mentioned that some four or five years ago another young Imam delivered a speech at the same mosque calling for Muslims to disavow King (Abdullah II) as a disbeliever and enact jihad to establish a state based on shari’a. Right after the prayer and dismissal of the worshippers, AA saw the Imam being handcuffed and arrested by [security] men clad in civil attire. The Researcher asked AA whether this incident occurred before or after the Amendment to the Law of Preaching and Guidance in 2006; AA answered it took place in the wake of that Amendment”.

In the context of local protests and the Arab Spring, where new actors (namely the salafi jihadists and *tahrir party* gained access to and managed to intrude the religious space to propagate their cause, the Imam would tacitly pave the way for their involvement by a deliberate lack of action, as this field observation denotes,

“On Friday, April 29th, 2011 the Researcher went on to pick up Informant SJ and headed to al-Kitab wa’Ssunnah Mosque in Mgablein area, south east of Amman [...] The mosque was fully packed (some 500 people). After the sermon a young bearded man entered the hall and invited the worshippers to a sit-in organized by the salafi movement to demand the release of jihadist detainees. Unlike bombastic invitations in previous occasions, this one came so calm and composed following the clampdown by the State against jihadists by means of tightened security measures and the media. As a journalist, SJ wanted to scan the area around the mosque before heading to the sit-in tent. We noticed some security presence around the mosque although not quite visible from the nearby tent [...] SJ indicated the Imam had “paved the way for the speaker” by warning all the Arab leaders (which the audience deem as including Jordan) and that a prearrangement

²⁰³ Interview with Al Arabiya, Part 4, See minute 02:10.
Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcMvPpl6e_Y
accessed on August 23rd, 2014

between the Imam and the jihadist intruder ought to have taken place the day before.”

Another case was when an outlawed party stormed the prayer hall in a mosque that serves a State university. The Imam and preacher abstained from banning the intruder and disappeared from the scene so as not to associate with the banned group, nor to appear as opponent to their call,

“On Friday March 25th, the Islamic movement held an open sit-in at the northern entrance of Amman, a replica to the Tahrir Square sit-in which took place in Cairo in February 2011. The State took this as a clear defiance and change in its traditional relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Chants were defiant and degrading to the secret police, and for the first time, slogans were calling for a constitutional monarchy. On that day, the Researcher went with Informant SJ and a friend of his to perform Friday prayer at Masjid Aljami’a Al Urdiniya [...] SJ had informed the Researcher he is choosing this mosque because the tahrir party is planning for a demonstration inside the mosque right after the prayer. On our way to the mosque, SJ (as a reporter) took photos of the gendarme vehicles and some vans manned with secret police clad in civil uniform and stationed some 500 meters away from the mosque entrance. Seeing SJ taking photos with his digital camera, those men shut the window curtains to conceal their faces. SJ said the State is perplexed regarding the ongoing protests but more so in places close to mosques. The Researcher asked SJ whether this mosque belongs to any particular group; SJ denied saying "not at all, especially with this mosque" [...] Right after the closing prayer, a group of men stormed the prayer hall chanting Islamic slogan (Allahu Akbar, bayan min hizbu’ttahrir, or, God is greatest, a communiqué by hizbu’ttahrir) while some youth held black banners with verses from Quran. An old man delivered a ten minutes statement saying that khilafah (Islamic Caliphate rule) will definitely be established. His companions were interrupting his verbose speech with Islamic chants, all this to the applause of his companions, but also by a considerable number of the worshippers, while a few others, including the Imam and the preacher, left the mosque as soon as this disrupt started”.

Outside the mosque, a friend of the Researcher introduced him to two of the secret security men of the university who were watching the *hizbu’ttahrir* demonstration. On their way back home, the Researcher, SJ and his friend saw the police blocking the road between this mosque and another demonstration taking place at the northern entrance of Amman. This mosque is adjacent to a

State university where security presence is tight. Although not up on the podium, yet this banned movement (*hizbu'ttahrir*) managed to grasp the moment and utilize the changing political atmosphere in the public sphere to intrude the religious sphere.

The conclusion one can infer is that the closer the mosque is to State control, the more subservient the preacher is, the more alert the State is to potential disruptions, and the less it is inclined to visibly entangle with anti-State discourse as long as it does not spill over into the public space outside the mosque and contest State presence and influence.

Noteworthy to say that in the wake of the Arab Spring and ensuing local protests, the jihadist speech (ubiquitous in makeshift mosques due to security pressure on the jihadist salafi movement) has for the first time returned to the traditional mosque as a platform to diffuse its discourse. In another occasion, the jihadists managed to enlist support by anti-State groups [tribal figures as in a previous observation] who would gather in nearby sit-in tents or houses following Friday prayers. State control over the mosque has somehow retrieved so as to deal with the core issue taking place in the public space. It should be noted that this did not come as a direct result of the changing legislations (such as the Law of Preaching and Guidance at Mosques) but in response to socio-political changes in the local and regional arena. In concordance, the jihadist speech has also changed. The jihadists' spokesperson Wesam Al- Omoush (aka, Abu Obaida), told the Researcher that,

“This strategic change in the movement’s ethos has lately surfaced in light of the Arab Spring and the movement discovering that change can be effected through peaceful means without unnecessary bloodshed against Muslim souls”.

An Informant’s impression is that in such cases the preacher tends to tailor his sermon in order to flatter the State if he noticed the security presence is obvious

inside the mosque, as in the aforementioned case of MA (section 6.1.2., Association with Fellow Worshippers).

The supra observations notwithstanding, the State is selective in demanding the preachers to abide by the law. This is obvious when a preacher breaches the law, or ascribes shari'a code as superior to civic laws in contradiction to pertinent laws and the constitution. This is also noticeable when a sermon embeds defamation, hate speech, implicit criticism to State security, or invoking jihad in countries where Jordan sends troops to quell jihad such as Afghanistan. This turn-a-blind-eye policy suggests that the State it is unworried about religious speech to which the worshippers are accustomed during heightened political circumstances, as it tends to invest this discourse to let people fret their frustration, especially when anti-State or anti-West sentiments are heightened. This same conclusion was conveyed to the Researcher by the Imam of Zaytounah mosque in southern Amman on August 22nd, 2008 following his anti-Jewish sermon (commemorating the incineration of *al-Aqsa* mosque in 1969).

As the pace of the protests escalates, State scrutiny over the mosque becomes more lenient in terms of using the mosque to contain public dissent, but more stringent in terms of curtailing the spill-over effect of the mosque speech into society. The fact that outlawed Islamic movements are allowed to use the mosque as a platform to diffuse their propaganda is a telltale the State is keen to let people fret their frustration as long as what goes inside the mosque does not spill over into wider uncontrollable or open protests outside the mosque. Another possible interpretation to this policy is a security-driven tactic to expose and demystify the modus operandi of some banned Islamic groups who were used to work underground and in makeshift mosques.

Mosques' coming under security surveillance is also apparent as some worshippers would shun certain Islamic groups who are active in and around the mosque for fear of being associated with such groups (see MA's observation in

section 6.1.2., Association with Fellow Worshippers). This state of fear is substantiated by Al-Rousan (2009) who explains that,

*“The experience of the mosque being active in political work carried with it a lot of conflicts resolved by the state often to its own advantage, which explains the continuing political and intellectual attraction among many sectors of society with respect to the functions of the mosque, and also explains the state of general abstinence from participating in activities carried out by the mosque, albeit far from politics, for fear of being carried out by the Muslim Brotherhood, or for fear of being considered as in favor of the opposition, thereby subject to scrutiny by the security apparatus”.*²⁰⁴

Worshippers would commend the preacher if the sermon was brief and relevant to their life-felt issues. However, this ‘relevance’ becomes counterproductive if the pious deemed the sermon premeditated to appease the State, or manipulated by the State to quell public dissent. Sermons tend to appeal to the worshippers’ opinion and that of the mosque’s vicinity, and the discourse embeds elements which inculcate positions already cultivated in people’s minds. This notion was confirmed by one Imam who had slammed USA, as the following case with Informant SJ depicts,

“The Researcher met with SJ on Friday March 11th, 2011 [...] SJ and the researcher headed to A’ssalam mosque in Jabal A’nnasr in eastern Amman [...] The two performed prayer and listened to the sermon which centered on the ongoing revolts in some Arab countries [...] The preacher also slammed USA and cursed it for its inconsistent position towards the "revolution" in Egypt; for condemning the killing of civilians by Arab leaders while backing Israel in its "carnage" against Gaza and Jenin [...] Regarding the sermon, SJ thinks the preacher failed to convey his message to the pious by not linking well between Friday in Arab revolts and the concept of Friday as a day of worship, adding that the preacher’s harsh criticism to USA inculcates an already existing anti-American sentiments among Muslims. SJ attributed these sentiments among Jordanians to the heavy Palestinian presence in Jordan and the eminence of the Palestinian cause in Islamic rhetoric whether among Jordanians of Palestinian origin beholden to the rhetoric of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, or among Jordanian tribes by the emerging jihadist salafi thought”.

²⁰⁴ Text is transliterated by the Researcher from the original Arabic text.

In an open marketplace to gain loyalties, contesting actors allow each other to redefine his borders and use unconventional tools to gauge the extent to which the new discourse can change reality on the ground, therefore the ability to shape the mindset of the people.

5.1.5. Informant's Personal Behavior

MA is an active worshipper and regular mosque visitor, a devout Muslim who strives to nourish himself with religious teaching and rituals during the day; a media activist who earns his living as a taxi driver,

"I asked MA what he listens to while driving his taxi. MA said he wakes up at 04:15 every morning to perform salat al fajr (dawn prayer) at the mosque in his vicinity, then from 06:00 till 06:50 he listens to Quran recital on Radio Al-Quran Al-Karim, tunes in to Hayat FM (an Islamic moderate radio station) for additional verses and religious nourishment, then the "morning show" on a local station, and during the day he tunes in to Quran recital with each following prayer".

This behavior heeds the teachings of Islam and social norms, something apparent in MA's chastity, passion to reconstruct the mosques, compassion and meekness in asking for forgiveness,

"On one occasion, MA suggested that we pray in the mosque yard adjacent to the women's musalla (prayer chamber). MA did not look at the women passing by but kept his head down while listening to the remainder of the religious lesson and adhan [call to prayer]".

"MA said the mosque was built mostly by citizens' donations and he was part of the fundraising committee".

"Upon leaving the mosque, MA gave a ride to an ailing old man and his grandson".

“Before his onset to Mecca, MA called the Researcher asking to clear himself of any moral debt or hurt he might have caused, adding he has asked the same from other friends so as to fulfill a clean duty according to Islam”.

“When asked why his car is void of Islamic posters and stickers, as other taxi drivers do, MA said this is against the traffic law which only sanctions medal-like Quran or writing its verses on the car tableau.”

Above citations draw the conclusion that, notwithstanding preachers’ calls for the worshippers to adhere to shari’a and not to positive law as reference, for MA (purportedly worked as a State security collaborator²⁰⁵ for over three decades) observance to religious duties is entwined with abiding by State laws and regulations, even on minor issues such as having religious ornamentals in his car. This duality gives MA the plasticity to be in sync with his religio-legal environment, and the clemency to discern how to behave in matters of indistinct nature. It should be noted that this Informant discerns that when a preacher contests the regime over the podium, he is doing so because the State is turning a blind eye to this eccentric speech, therefore it is up for the worshipper to delineate the limits between what the State and the mosque each variably call for in the religio-spacial domain. This is evident in MA’s ability to reconcile between injunctions of shari’a and the requisites of mundane life (resorting to his reasoning as adjudicator on issue of indistinct nature), an observation also evident in section 5.1.6. (Informant’s Authority Reference).

As for AA, a 51 years old regular worshipper and taxi driver who lives in the outskirts of Amman, he enjoined the Researcher through his friend MA who justified this Informants’ need to refer back to the State security (for whom he also worked as a collaborator) for permission to engage in this “*unprecedented study*”.

AA also showed zealousness towards the mosque and his faith,

²⁰⁵ MA stated that his collaboration with the State as informant was limited to things which might pose potential threat to the country, but has nothing to do what people opine about the regime.

“Before entering the mosque, AA picked up a paper from the street, folded it up and placed it into the street fence. When the Researcher inquired “why”, AA replied the paper includes letters in Arabic, the honorable language of Quran which ought to be revered”.

“Upon leaving the mosque, AA described a group of female beggars, who were collecting money from the worshippers, at the doorstep of the mosque, allegedly for the sick, as mere liars”.

Both MA and AA would call the Researcher and express their good wishes on religious holidays (Christmas and Easter), in contrary to SJ who had been banned from preaching for calling on the worshippers not to salute Christians on their feasts²⁰⁶. SJ explained this attitude as an obligation to fully adhere to his faith, given the disparity about how Islam and Christians view *Allah* (monotheism). However, this seemingly intolerant approach did not translate into cautiousness or suspicion toward the Researcher all through the study. On the contrary, SJ would consult the Researcher on issues pertaining to the salafi jihadist movement and their closed group’s deliberations he was part of, and amicably greet the Researcher with a hug and kiss (customary among males in Jordan).

One can infer that the mosque speech does not necessarily translate into hostile behavior by the worshippers when it comes to their view of the “other” citizen. What appears to be “hate speech” by State lexicon is being used as a mantle to justify an official policy of curtailing the opposition’s ability to enlist public support, and to contest the Islamic movements’ domain over the religio-spacial domain.

Other aspects of the sermon with injunctions for good deeds do translate into a day-to-day behavior by the worshippers, which validates an *a priori* disposition by the Researcher that the worshipper goes to the mosque primarily to perform a religious obligation that also guides his behavior (orthopraxy), than to receive political orientation by the preacher.

²⁰⁶ In December 2014, SJ sent the Researcher a message with his Christmas wishes, a telltale of a change in his perception of the jihadist worldview, and distance from his once prescriptive teaching as Imam and preacher.

5.1.6. Informant's Authority Reference

In a sermon which the Researcher and SJ attended on Friday, April 29th, 2011, the preacher urged the worshippers to take *ulama* [Islamic scholars] as their reference; attributing the degrading status of the Muslims to the fact that *umma* is not taking *ulama* as *the* reference. On Thursday night, May 05th, 2011 the Imam of Abu Alanda al-Kabir mosque talked about the Quran as the reference for Muslims. On April 08th, 2011 Sheikh Ra'ed, preacher of al-Qawasimi mosque, called the worshippers to abide by Quran and *sunna* (the way of life of Prophet Mohammad and his companions). These calls constitute, in their totality, a gamut of "reference(s)", starting from the Quran, to *sunna* (as in *hadith*), to *ulama* (Muslim scholars who reinterpret tradition through both Quran and *hadith*). Therefore, Islam is about how each society interprets it as evident in the historical corpus of Islamic tradition and schools of thought. Informants would also refer to their own reasoning in undecided matters based on the *hadith*²⁰⁷ "consult your heart, even if people issued you a fatwa".

Also embedded in this speech (though unintentionally) is the notion that there is no generic Islam, but a symbolic explanatory format that renders Islam a religious speech, or more aptly, a cultural product subject to maneuvering in the religio-political sphere. This speech gives the State the right to give its own interpretation of Islam and disarm any other actor which might attempt to "hijack"²⁰⁸ Islam, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, therefore a legitimacy contestation issue.

Although bypassing the constitution, laws and tradition, sermons do not

²⁰⁷ In Arabic - "

Source: <http://www.qaradawi.net/new/all-fatawa/5379-2011-09-29-15-13-36> accessed on August 12th, 2015.

²⁰⁸ "*Hijack*" is the term used by King Abdullah to accuse the Muslim Brotherhood movement with regard to the Arab Spring <http://www.worldbulletin.net/haber/150061/jordanian-king-says-brotherhood-hijacked-Arab-spring> and the "terrorists" regarding "*our faith*".

necessarily imply collision with the State given that Islam is the State religion according to the constitution; laws are derived from the constitution and embed Islamic jurisprudence, and *urf* (the prevalent tradition) should not be trespassed in several constitutional items and laws. On the contrary, these calls fulfill the regime's need for religion to engender its legitimacy. This is the case as long as these calls do not indicate an either/or option for the audience [such as the *hakimiyya* tenet by the jihadist salafi current, also embedded in the writings of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egyptian doctrinaire Sayyid Qutb²⁰⁹]. Although some preachers are exhaustive in their calls to apply shari'a and not man-made laws, the State is inclined to turn a blind eye to this seemingly fundamentalist approach as long as the preacher did not directly attack the Jordanian constitution or the king.

This conclusion is corroborated by the notion that a vast majority of the sample worshippers did not sense a call for extremism or negative perceptions by the preacher (as evident in Chapter Seven, 7.1) is a sign the religious sphere constitutes a melting pot for both the pious public and the State which seeks out their loyalty. The Researcher however views that the accretion of this speech will in the long run inculcate a culture that renders the officially assigned preacher (as the 'cultural broker' who, by proxy, interprets Islam and reinterprets tradition) sandwiched between the perceptions and expectations of the congregation of worshippers and the regulatory confines of the official religious establishment, ultimately limiting the State's maneuverability to enact modernism and reform in religious speech towards a modernized society.

With respect to the worshipper's personal behavior (choice and preference regarding attire, smoking, aesthetic expressions, relationship with parents) Informants refer to the religious authority for opinion, be it the mosque preacher, Imam or mufti as the case of AA depicts in the previous section (5.1.6). The

²⁰⁹ Source: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/714004475#.VcHvHfmqkko>

mosque preacher is also the reference for AA when it comes to business transactions,

“On Friday January 21st, 2011, upon AA’s suggestion we headed to al-Birr wal-Ihsan mosque in Tabarbour, Amman; his second time there [...] The preacher talked about the need to embrace a comprehensive approach to human security in the country, and this can be achieved by referring to shari’a as legislation instead of laws that emulate the blasphemous (kafer) West [...]. Upon dismissal, the Researcher accompanied the guest (AA) to his car down the street, and there the talk about car buying alluded to bank loans. AA explained that he has bought his own car thanks to a shari’a compliant loan even though better offers were at hand but involve riba. He referred his attitude to teaching by mosque preachers”.

MA mentioned *riba* as the first *haram* (prohibition) the Imam should shun so that the clergy exemplify good example for the pious. However, MA justifies picking up commuters to banks by referring to muftis and Imams who condone this behavior given this time is different than the era of the companions of Prophet Mohammad, therefore each time has its own *sunna*.

As for SJ, the sheikh²¹⁰ of the mosque is his reference regarding family related issues (as shown in section 5.1.6), whereas the mufti is assigned by the government and therefore bound to its directives.

On issues of lesser impact upon one’s own life, a worshipper refers to both the mufti and Imam to justify his behavior,

“The Researcher met with Informant MA at a café in Amman following the latter’s return from umra²¹¹ [...] Unlike pilgrims who come back from hajj wearing Islamic rope or hat, MA’s dress was normal and his beard wasn’t extraordinarily long (as sunna prescribes). MA explained that although

²¹⁰ The term sheikh is used to describe a person who volunteers to conduct Imamate and/or preaching therefore not necessarily fully subdued to the officialdom.

²¹¹ Not a compulsory but highly commendable pilgrimage to Mecca that can be performed anytime during the year.

these things constitute sunna, muftis and Imams say our generation is different than the Prophet's era, therefore religious directives are subject to changing customs and traditions”.

Although, in deciding whether a religious obligation is time-sensitive or not, Informant MA refers more to the mufti²¹², given his higher knowledge compared to the preacher or Imam,

“On Sunday January 16th, 2011 the Researcher met with MA for about two hours at a café in Amman and took a drive with him in his own taxi cab [...] MA contended that although he strives to abide by his faith, he cannot fully do so given the day is different from the time of the Prophet, accordingly, religious guidelines should condone these differences. MA gave the example of his profession as a taxi driver where women ride in without their mahram (husband or a sibling). When asked wherefrom did he get this fiat, MA answered: “mostly from the Mufti”; and on why not the Imam or preacher, MA answered- “they are not as knowledgeable as they should be””.

This is not always the case, as Informants sometimes refer directly to the Quran even when the religious authority holds a different opinion. This is especially the case when the worshipper feels the preacher has acted based on State influence that contradicts with the Quran, as in the following example,

“On Friday, April 01st, 2011 the Researcher went with MA to perform Friday prayer. The Researcher had suggested thu-noorayn mosque in downtown Amman (adjacent to the Municipality) to pray in given news about harakat 24 a'dhar (March 24th movement) holding a demonstration there [...] As the Researcher gave a ride to MA back to his home, he asked him what he thinks of [the preacher] ascribing majesty to King Abdullah II; MA said this is against Islam. When asked about his reference on this issue, MA answered: “the Quran, given it is clear on this issue”, and that although the General Mufti had issued a fatwa (religious ruling) permitting this attribute to the king, MA still adheres to what the Quran says”.

Neither the Imam nor the mosque is referred to by SJ when reporting on public protests that took place around the mosque as the previously mentioned case in section 5.1.4. (State and the Mosque) shows.

²¹² *Mufti* is the person who gives a fatw .

A reference that at times supersedes the religious directives is the worshipper's self conviction and reasoning, given that Islam allows the Muslim to consult his own intuition on uncertain issues. A worshipper's personal belief besides logic and reason stands as reference even higher to orientation given by the religious authority,

“On Tuesday January 04th, 2011 the Researcher met with Informant MA for three hours at a café in Amman. I asked MA: on what grounds you decided to quit smoking? MA said that although the Friday preacher prohibits smoking, his decision did not stem from there but was based on the fact that smoking depletes his budget, which could otherwise be spent on other beneficial things; knowing to do good and not doing it is an evil habit a Muslim should avoid”.

Another case is by AA who, with regards to issues of uncertain nature, refers to the mufti and Imam for opinion, but on other issues he would rely on his own instinct as reference,

“On Tuesday March 08th, 2011 the Researcher met with AA for two hours and a half in a café in Amman [...]. AA said he has read the Bible in Arabic but could not understand it, and that he believes the Bible was distorted. The Researcher asked AA whether he went back to the Imam to check whether it was permissible to read the Bible. AA said he would only consult the Imam or a mufti on issues with no precedence, otherwise he relies on his own instinct and ability to reason, and even if he has erred, his good intention clears him out”.

Yet in certain settings (performing *hajj* with a team of worshippers, including females), MA adheres more to customs and tradition, even when the religious fiat is less restrictive,

“The Researcher met with MA at a café in Amman following the latter's return from umra [...] As for the way MA co-existed with his Jordanian fellow pilgrims at their residence in Saudi Arabia, MA said that based on his cultural upbringing he would cover up his body even more than what sunna sanctions (sunna according to MA requires Muslim men to cover body from knee up to navel).”

Religious lessons and their timing also stand as reference. The influence of communal worship and an active religious setting increases the worshipper's inclination to take them as reference, as the following case with MA shows,

"On Monday, March 14th 2011 the Researcher met with MA for 90 minutes at a friend's office. In his talk with a third friend MA said he won't bet; betting being forbidden in Islam. I asked MA: on what basis do you build this conviction? MA said that his reference is the lessons he listens to after a'tarawih prayers during the fasting month of Ramadan; a prayer that follows the evening iftar [breakfast], when Muslims attend religious lessons and pray the four raka'ats (prostrations). These lessons are more influential on MA given they are held during Ramadan when divine wage is doubled, and the fact that more people attend the mosque, therefore a stronger feeling of communal adherence to faith by umma".

This is further confirmed where a completely religious environment yields increased impact on MA,

"At the pilgrimage site [Mecca], and unlike the case in Jordanian mosques, I find myself totally immersed in the surrounding ambiance, leaving behind all my family concerns and pressures at home".

A worshipper's own interpretation to the Imam's speech also stands as reference ground for him; not an either/or choice, but both/and. One example is when civic laws alongside shari'a code are referred to when the Imam attacks Arab leaders as the supra case in section 5.1.6. (Informant's Authority Reference) denotes.

Religious doctrine is the reference when scientific evidence contests the sanctity of religious symbols (i.e. holy sites), as Informant MA denotes upon his return from the *hajj* journey to Mecca,

"MA explained the various tales about the holy sites, including a mountain which had split into two in the time of the Prophet, or the fact that Zamzam water cannot be pumped out through pipes onto other Saudi cities save by water trucks. The Researcher faced MA with a report on BBC that Zamzam

water contains arsenic substance, a cause for cancer; MA replied that he accepts religious tales per se no matter what scientific proof says”.

Even when the religious authority figures stand as reference for the worshipper, the mother/wife at home also has a say, as in the following observation,

“On Sunday January 16th, 2011, the Researcher met with MA for about two hours [...] Another point of religiosity was paintings at home, which, after attending the religious lesson, MA was convinced to take off any pictures from the wall, and when visiting his close friends he would urge them to do the same, so one friend called his wife and behind the curtain he conveyed to her his consent to this opinion by MA”.

This notion is further corroborated by an undisclosed survey conducted for a State entity in 2007 which shows the mother being a reference for children more than the father or even the Imam, a status also stipulated in *hadith* “*paradise lies under the feet of mothers*”²¹³.

Peers’ effect on the worshipper is evident through mutual engagement in religious activities, joint discussion about the sermon, and the exchange of recorded sermons. These behaviors are common with accompanying friends, taxi commuters or any other worshipper. The influence is more of assurance or denial to certain parts of the sermon as both parties try to sustain their opinions with verses from Quran or *hadith* as the following encounter depicts,

“Upon leaving the mosque, MA gave a ride to an ailing old man, and his grandson, who criticized the preacher saying he must have received 15 dinars by Ministry of Awqaf to say such things in his sermon”.

In addition to the following case,

“At the pilgrimage site [...] MA is more affected by his fellow worshippers (regardless of whether he knows them or not) with whom he would discuss

²¹³ Source: <http://www.onislam.net/english/ask-the-scholar/muslim-creed/muslim-belief/169127-does-paradise-lie-under-the-feet-of-a-non-muslim-mother.html> accessed on May 22nd, 2015.

the sermon content on their way out of the mosque; this encounter wielding more influence on him than the preacher, the religious lesson that precedes, or the sermon”.

“MA showed the Researcher his Bluetooth-equipped mobile phone which includes footage of some Friday sermons sent to him as MMS by some of his friends (including sermons delivered to salafi worshippers in Ma’an). In one of the recordings, MA cited a verse quoted by the preacher which according to him does not fit with the sermon theme”.

However, when a certain practice contradicts with the civic law, MA observes and adheres more to pertinent laws, as the following two examples demonstrate,

“On Monday January 17th, 2011 the Researcher accompanied Informant MA to an evening religious lesson at a mosque in Marka al-Janoubiya in eastern Amman [...] MA said the mosque was built thanks mostly to donations by the neighbors, and that he was part of the fundraising committee. However, he would not join them again due to the security grip and surveillance on these committees since 2006”.

“On Thursday January 06th, 2010 the Researcher met with MA in his taxi cab for around 90 minutes [...] When asked why his cab was void of Islamic posters and stickers as other taxi drivers do, MA said this is against traffic law which allows drivers to hang a medal-like Quran or write its verses on the tableau”

Also, MA himself is referred to by his peers,

“After returning home, MA received an SMS from one of his female fellow pilgrims asking him further questions on fiqh [things they were discussing in Mecca]”.

A worshipper’s previous expectations about the sermon affect his convictions afterwards,

“In Mecca, an infamous preacher (al-Sodais) talked for 21 minutes urging Muslims to obey their rulers and not to pursue fitnah [internal strife]. After the prayer, MA complained about the sermon theme for a nearby mufti based on the fact the preacher did not bestow Allah’s mercy upon the “martyrs” who died during the uprising in Syria and other Arab countries. The mufti declined to comment saying the sermon was necessary to avert fitnah. The sermon theme was further discussed by MA and his bus companions for two hours, and most of them opposed it. On the other hand, the sermon in Medina, which took 17 minutes, tackled the issue of preserving the holy sites of Muslims, but the bus group spent less time discussing it. MA explained that his previous expectations about the sermon theme have a great effect upon him afterwards; if the theme comes contrary to his expectations, his receptiveness to the sermon is equally affected”.

Religious lessons that precede Friday sermons or during *salat al-maghrib* (sunset prayer), in addition to MA’s knowledge of *hadith*, stand as reference and motivation to encourage others to attend mosque prayers, but this is contingent to MA being confident of the worshippers therefore staying aloof of security surveillance.

Another factor that stands as reference for the worshipper is the media (daily listening to Quran recital, and occasionally to religious lessons on public broadcasters), but this is conditional on the speech being the norm and not a pre-orchestrated agenda by the State to influence the worshippers.

Informant SJ refers to a communiqué by the jihadist movement, not the media, to confirm news about the killing of Osama Bin Laden, a jihadist role model for him,

“On Thursday night, May 05th, 2011 SJ (a journalist) called the Researcher and asked if he would accompany him to a post-prayer demonstration the following day. On Friday the two headed to Abu Alanda al-Kabir mosque southeast of Amman, where the Popular Committee to Defend the Rights of Political Prisoners (composed of jihadist salafi and other activists) was organizing a sit-in. SJ visited this mosque once before. On our way most of the talk centered on the killing of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, and the fact the jihadist salafi movement would not open a wake until al-Qaeda has officially mourned its leader. This news came to SJ as we were leaving the mosque, and SJ was apparently sad to hear it. SJ told the Researcher how it all started with Bin Laden- when he was visited by the deceased

jihadist mentor Abdullah Azzam to raise funds for the mujahedeen in Afghanistan, and to their surprise Bin laden handed them over a one million dollar check”.

The Imam is also seen as reference when the worshipper invites others to embrace Islam, an act that also reflects the worshipper's own inclination, as the following case with MA shows. This was the only invitation by an Informant to the Researcher, as MA used to be a *dawa* activist, whereas other informants who come from more radical schools of thought in Islam, such as SJ, never offered this invitation,

“The Researcher and MA went to Thu-noorayn Mosque in downtown Amman. Upon entering the mosque MA said his duty was to invite me to embrace Islam. I asked if this invitation was driven by his conviction or as an urge by the Imam, MA replied: “both”.”

Tafsir books [hermeneutics] are reference for the worshipper on prayer,

“On Friday March 11th, 2011 the Researcher met with SJ [...] and headed to A’ssalam mosque in Jabal A’nnasr in eastern Amman [...]. The two performed prayer and listened to the sermon which centered on the ongoing revolts in Arab countries [...] After the last prayer, the preacher called for another prayer- Al Asr [afternoon] prayer which follows Ad-duhr Prayer. However, SJ asked the Researcher that both should leave the mosque. Both put on their shoes and headed to the Researcher’s car, and when asked why leave before the prayer, SJ answered that although the worshippers are accustomed to joining the performance of the prayers, this step is most probably sanctioned by the Imam who had received a hint from the preacher, whereas it should be the Imam who performs the Iqama [calling for prayer] and not the preacher, and that a rainy day does not constitute an excuse sufficient to combine the two prayers together. Asked how did he come to build this conviction, SJ answered he had researched about the issue in tafsir books instead of seeking the Imam’s opinion as reference”.

Worshippers would also refer to *tafsir* books concerning other Muslim sects. In the following example, Informant AA accused the preacher of being guided by State officials given his over-pacific sermon. Where the preacher urged the worshippers

to take *shari'a* as their reference and follow the footsteps of Prophet Mohammad, he also slammed the civil laws of Jordan which emulate Western laws. Yet this apparently anti-State speech did not deter AA from accusing the preacher of succumbing to State pressure given his extra-tolerant stance in general,

“On Friday January 21st, 2011 the Researcher met with AA [...] Upon AA’s suggestion we headed to al-Bir wal Ihsan mosque in Tabarbour, north of Amman; his second time there [...], the Researcher and AA performed prayer together. The preacher talked about the need to embrace a comprehensive approach to human security in the country, and this can be achieved by referring to shari’a as legislation instead of laws that emulate the blasphemous (kafer) West, giving the example of demands to abolish the death penalty in Jordan²¹⁴, and calling for iqamat al hadd [enforcing punishments according to shari’a]. The preacher commanded Muslims not to cause harm to other Muslims, as this duty also includes ahl al kitab [people of the Book- meaning Christians and Jews] who live among us, and urged the Muslims to honor their pacts following the footsteps of Prophet Mohammad, saying it is permissible for Muslim states to forge agreements and pacts with non-Muslim countries. AA said the preacher has been guided by the Ministry of Awqaf to tackle this issue in light of the current circumstances (post-sermon nationwide demonstrations which call for the resignation of the government and the revocation of the peace treaty with Israel)”.

The Researcher then invited AA to his house for a cup of coffee. The talk alluded to other sects such as the Baha’i whom AA described as pseudo-Muslims, and Shiites whom he cursed. The Researcher asked AA how come he commends Christians but curses the Shiites, who are fellow Muslims. AA replied that Shiites doubt prophesy of Mohammad by Jibril [the archangel said to bore revelations from Allah to Prophet Mohammad]. When asked about his reference, AA said he reads *tarsi* books.

In another sermon with AA on April 08th, 2011 at *al-Qawasimi* mosque near the Ministry of Interior, the Researcher asked AA about the thing that mostly touched him and would remain in his mind throughout the week. AA replied- the preacher’s admonition for the worshippers to beware of cults, mainly the Shiites, labeling

²¹⁴ Although Jordan did not abolish the death penalty yet, this issue was discussed in parliament.

them *kuffar* [disbelievers]. AA attributed this to the way the preacher addressed the subject in his rhetoric, Quran citations and body language, adding he still remembers a similar sermon he attended at a mosque in Saudi Arabia in 1988. Noteworthy to say that AA did not refer to the preacher who had slammed the Shiites, but to *tafsir* books, probably due to his suspicions regarding the preacher. Whenever a religious authority succumbs to State authority, his role model is tarnished and his reference is belittled.

Mosques in the plural sense are not what affect MA's choices, but a particular mosque which he regularly attends. This is more evident during Ramadan when discussions with peers abound, but this does not imply that everything MA hears is taken for granted, as he sometimes argues certain points of the sermon with the Imam.

As for AA, he mentions the mosque he usually attends in the neighborhood, giving his opinion about the political context (anti-State discourse came out of the same mosque). SJ refers to the Imam of the mosque in his vicinity when he seeks advice or fatwa on family concerns. Regular attendance to a particular mosque, more often than not in his surrounding area, builds a trust relationship between the worshipper and the Imam who becomes one of his references on controversial issues.

As for the Imam designating majestic preface to King Abdullah II, MA believes that Quran and not the Imam stands as reference regarding this practice, notwithstanding MA's loyalty to the regime. As for his stance regarding a State-friendly speech, MA rejects the sermon as reference (except for content which represents untainted *fiqh*) if the official religious establishment appears to have manipulated it to influence public opinion.

In the case of SJ, the Imam's supplication is condoned save that which is not in agreement with his religious convictions (attributing majestic title to the king). With

reference to pro-State sermons, SJ does not mention it while talking with his fellow worshippers after the prayer, but highlights anti-State speech as an occurrence which has intruded the mainstream sermon. Pro-State sermon is disguised by SJ who reacts by performing *rak'at* (prayer) during the sermon,

“On Thursday night, May 05th, 2011 [...] du’a for the king received dim reaction by the worshippers, in spite of their big number. The reaction on SJ was to stand up and perform a rak’a, and then look at the Researcher upset. Following the sermon and the last prayer, and upon dismissal, SJ slammed the Imam and cursed him, saying he is "trivial... may Allah curse him; he is a typical Awqaf Ministry official; I was about to stand up and object him". I asked SJ why he stood up and perform the rak’a, SJ said: to fret out my anger and not to burst in anger”²¹⁵

For Informants MA and SJ (both at odds regarding their view of the king and State) they reject State interference in sermons, in which case the Quran becomes a reference refuge for them, although each one expresses his disagreement in a different manner, but they also single out pure religious content from the sermon they repudiate. When the State meddles in the religious speech, the Quran becomes the worshippers’ sole reference, and when no religious authority is available to discern the differences, the worshippers reconcile this by referring each to his own intuition and reasoning backed by verses of Quran.

²¹⁵ Later on, a blogger (<http://www.7iber.com/2011/05/abu-alanda/>) described what happened as "inside Abu Alanda mosque faces were unusually pale, giving the impression an odd mood prevails in the area".

CHAPTER SIX: INTERVIEWS

VIEWS OF THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ACTORS ON REGULATING THE MOSQUE DISCOURSE

6.1. Interview Methodology

The Researcher interviewed a group of figures directly related to the endorsement and the execution of the 1986 Law and its 2006 Amendment. They are:

- Three Imams (licensed and banned, whether sermonizing at mosques or other informal venues)
- Four government officials (previous and actual ministers of awqaf and their advisors)
- Seven members of parliament (including one senator, and deputies representing both pro-regime figures and the Muslim Brotherhood movement)

In total, fourteen interviewees are being selected and interviewed based on their involvement and aptitude to shed light on the subject issues, their geographical locations- mainly in the Amman and Zarqa areas which constitute 55 percent of the population, and their stance vis-à-vis the State. Only one target interviewee (Ahmad Hlayel – Imam of the Royal Hashemite Court) did not respond to telephone calls and a facsimile by the Researcher, therefore abstained after having verbally accepted a written request by the Researcher.

Some of the interviewees held more than one position at different times, therefore the relevance of their position and timeliness to the period of investigation is considered. Interviews were scheduled and organized so that each interviewee would give his input based on his remit of responsibility and personal experience, thereby giving room for the following interviewee to contest his predispositions,

analysis and information. Interviews are being conducted after the Researcher and a group of collaborators had visited and recorded a total of 24 Friday sermons in 24 different mosques in the Kingdom from the period of June till December 2008. The content of these sermons are being used to challenge some of the answers by the interviewees, especially State officials.

The span of the Islamic movements involved in this study includes:

- The Muslim Brotherhood of Jordan²¹⁶ and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the largest political actor which overtly and steadily participates in public and political life through municipal and parliamentary elections²¹⁷, trade unions and other forms of civil life. Abu Rumman (2007:16&29) describes IAF as,

“the only Islamic party which legitimately participates in public political life and plays a main role in the power and strength of the opposition... with a very strong influence on Jordanian public opinion”

While interviewee Hamza Mansour (former MP and member of IAF) describes the movement’s ideology and modus operandi as,

²¹⁶ The Muslim Brotherhood define themselves as “A group of Muslims, calling to govern according to the law of Allah, and live in the shadow of Islam as descended upon the Prophet of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him- PBUH) and according to what the good salaf [the righteous forebears] had called for, acted upon and for... The basis of teachings, concepts, ethics, virtues, laws, structures, guarantees, regulations and reforms is the book of Allah, and his Prophet’s sunna [way of the Prophet’s life and his companions] which if the umma abides by it will never go astray... it is a Sufi fact, as they acknowledge the basis of goodness is the purity of soul, the cleanness of heart, the peacefulness of bosom, the hard work, shunning people and love to Allah and brotherhood in him (blessed be him), and they are a political body which demands reform in governance, revision in the relationship of the umma with other nations, and nurturing the people on self-pride and dignity” (Source: Website of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan).

²¹⁷ The IAF participated in the 2007 parliamentary elections but decided to boycott the following elections in 2010 after polling its grassroots and leaders who overwhelmingly opted to boycott in protest of the electoral fraud in the 2007 elections and the elections law which limits the popularity of political parties in favor of tribal allegiances.
Source: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/10/20/jordan-s-parliamentary-elections-and-islamist-boycott/b3mo>
accessed on January 02nd, 2015.

“Jihad is a fundamental component of Islamic Sufism [...], a principal component of khutba [...]. Work should start with the human soul [...]. After I shape the individual character I move on to the family, the neighbor etc then the wider Jordanian circle”.

- The traditional salafi movement, whose policy is not to shun participation in political life²¹⁸. Boukhars (2006:4) defines their *modus operandi* as,

“through networks of storefront or makeshift mosques, they consolidated their ability to disseminate their ideas and operate in the shantytowns of the major cities in the Kingdom”

- The jihadist salafi movement, whose progress and ideology, as per Abu Rumman & Abu Hanieh (2009:59), is still evidently breeding across the country in spite of the jihadists’ recent setback resulting from crackdowns by the regime. Wiktorowicz (2000:233) contends that their salafi thought is propagated through means ingrained in informal networks such as mosque-related activities, informal teacher-student interaction, and home meetings and publications. The objective of the salafi movement is to,

“institute religious behavior and practices that capture the purity of Islam, as understood by the salaf (early Companions of the Prophet Mohammad). Salafis believe that because the salaf learned about Islam directly from the Prophet or those who knew him, they commanded a pure understanding of the religion. All decisions in life must therefore be based upon evidence from the Quran and Sunna [the Prophet’s way of life], as recorded in authentic sayings (hadiths) by the salaf”. (Ibid p: 221)

All interviews were conducted face-to-face, except with Bader Saleh al-Riati, MP and member of IAF who lives in Aqaba (340 KM from Amman), hence the facsimile medium. All interviews were requested through direct telephone calls, except with Minister of Awqaf, and his legal advisor, who pre-required a written request.

²¹⁸ Ibid (p. 15)

The Researcher faced the obstacle of conducting the interview with the Minister, and it took six months to interview relevant members of the IAF whom were active in successive sessions of then sitting parliament. Main points are being handwritten and interviews carried out in Arabic then transcribed by the Researcher into English. Contacts are being carried out through telephone or mobile calls (often preceded by SMS), facsimile (with Ministry of Awqaf, upon their request; and with Imams living afar). Interviews are mostly conducted at the interviewees' offices or in their houses (as with the jihadist salafi doctrinaire Issam al-Barqawi, alias Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi). Middlemen are being sought to conduct some of the interviews, especially with the jihadist salafis (given their illegal status), and with some Imams so as to familiarize the Researcher (a Jordanian Christian) with the unfamiliar setting of attending and recording Friday prayers.

At an initial stage, a prior consent of some Imams to attend their Friday sermons was being sought through acquaintances. The Researcher did not face any objection or problem thereof except a warning by then Minister of Awqaf, Abdulfattah Salah, and a remark by former Minister of Awqaf Ali Al-Faqir. The Researcher always proposed 'academic research' as the objective behind these appointments, and discussion topics were pre-prepared but posed in an open-ended fashion. Answers were analyzed on a case-by-case approach, and then based on questions in mind; specific patterns were assessed to corroborate certain conclusions in other parts of the study.

Interviews were carried out during the period of December 2008 – March 2010; a relatively long span of time due to red tape involved in interviewing government officials and parliamentarians, and the fact that one interview would open up and lead the Researcher to interview other relevant actors.

6.2. Interviews, Salient Themes of Investigation and Ensuing Conclusions

The Researcher interviewed 14 figures directly related to the endorsement and enactment of the Law to figure out their perceptions regarding the following six issues:

- The role of the mosque
- The context which engulfed the endorsement of the Law and the 2006 Amendment
- The motives behind endorsing the Law and the 2006 Amendment
- The role of State and non-State actors in enacting the Law and the 2006 Amendment
- The fate of the pre-Amendment discourse at the mosque
- The impact of enacting the 2006 Amendment to the Law

These issues were not posed in the same sequence, but in an open-ended fashion allowing the interviewees to allude to them without persistence by the Researcher.

The following chart depicts the different stances of the 14 different actors on these issues:

(A= Agree; D.A. = Disagree; N.O. = No Opinion)

	Imam/ Preacher			Government Official			Politician (Deputy/Senator/Activist)		
	A	D.A.	N.O.	A	D.A.	N.O.	A	D.A.	N.O.
Mosque has a political role to play	4/14	0/14	0/14	0/14	2/14	0/14	7/14	1/14	0/14
	29%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	50%	7%	0%
Context evolving the law & Amendment	3/14	0/14	1/14	0/14	2/14	1/14	7/14	0/14	0/14
	21%	0%	7%	0%	14%	7%	50%	0%	0%

mainly political									
Political motives behind endorsing law & Amendment	4/14 29%	0/14 0%	0/14 0%	0/14 0%	2/14 14%	1/14 7%	7/14 50%	0/14 0%	0/14 0%
State serious in enacting Amendment	0/14 0%	3/14 21%	1/14 7%	0/14 0%	3/14 21%	0/14 0%	5/14 36%	2/14 14%	0/14 0%
Jihadist & hate speech still persist after Amendment	2/11 18%	1/11 9%	0/14 0%	2/11 18%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	3/11 27%	2/11 18%	1/11 9%
Amendment negatively impacted mosque speech	3/11 27%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	0/11 0%	2/11 18%	0/11 0%	3/11 27%	3/11 27%	0/11 0%

6.2.1. The Role of the Mosque

The chart shows that 79 percent of the interviewees view that the politics fall within the purview of the mosque message, while the rest (21 percent) are mostly State officials and one Christian deputy (a former high ranking military officer) oppose this role. Three preachers of different schools of thought, all banned from preaching, agree that by default the mosque has a political mandate. Wael Battiri, close to the jihadist salafi movement and a journalist with As'Sabeel newspaper (Muslim Brotherhood), views that,

“Friday sermon is where Muslims get together on a weekly basis to discuss mutual concerns and find solutions for their problems. Therefore, the mosque is directly related to their lives and should impact the political arena, but all this under the condition that the State adheres to Islamic shari’a. Those who deny the mosque its political role do not understand their religion. The mosque should not be used by the government to impact politics unless it applies shari’a”.

Mohammad al-Maqdisi, doctrinaire of the jihadist salafi stream, considers that not the mosque but hyperspace and the public space are the prime platforms to address the worshippers. al-Maqdisi requests his right to deliver sheer fiqh (doctrine) as he recounts the last time he delivered a sermon in 1994 whence he attacked the legitimacy of the regime and the parliamentary elections, to be jailed afterwards. Therefore, this jihadist reference takes the religious essence of the sermon as a frame to delegitimize the ruler. In 2014, a state security officer told the Researcher that al-Maqdisi would spend the rest of his life in and out of prison due to his *“dangerous thoughts”*.

While, Dr. Ali al-Faqir²¹⁹, former minister of awqaf and a banned preacher inclined to Sufism, describes the mosque message as “serious” and its role as,

²¹⁹ Mufti of The Jordan Armed Forces in 1987, Minister of Awqaf in 1989, Deputy 1989-1993, currently a merchant.

“Creating awareness among Muslims after the polity have failed; preparing the conscience of the umma to what will follow”.

Mohammad Shaqra is a leading figure of the reformist Salafi stream who, unlike most members of the other Salafi groups (jihadist), condones working with the regime and through its institutions (Wiktorowicz, 2000). Shaqra contends that in his sermons he would not allude to politics because this talk is “*useless*”, and when once mentioned the peace treaty with Israel in his sermons he did not go as far as disavowing the State or cursing Jews.

Given that these banned preachers (two who are close to the jihadist salafi movement, and a Sufi and former government and army official) all believe that by definition political discourse falls within the purview of the mosque mandate, it follows that the State is weary and intolerant towards preachers who embrace this point of view. The fact that these preachers were banned from preaching in the 1990s is an indication this policy of proscription was engrained in the State’s mindset even before the Amendment was endorsed in 2006.

Deputy Emad Maayah²²⁰ holds a counterargument as he views the main role of the mosque as “not political” except if it condones the official policies of the State,

“the role of the mosque is spiritual and that of moral upbringing; enhancing love to the homeland which stems out of the love for God; supplication [du’a] to His Majesty the King, to consecutive governments of Jordan and to high ranking officials... This [politics] isn’t the role of the mosque. But I do not say the mosque should be void of this content. The role of the mosque, especially in times of crisis and wars, is a positively active role”.

A yet more restrictive disposition (cultural and spiritual/soteriological) is that of Minister of Awqaf, Abdulfattah Salah, who views the role of the mosque as,

²²⁰ A retired Assistant Commander-in-Chief of Jordan Armed Forces; former MP [Christian seat of Madaba city]; head of the National Steering Committee [NSC] which deliberated the 2006 Amendment.

“An educating role; guiding the people to what is good in this life and the hereafter”

Embedded in how the ministry’s legal advisor Mohammad Mobaidin describes the law and its Amendment is the perception that, although politics are not part of the mosque’s message, preachers do address these themes, but it is the State’s duty to clean up the mosque of any chaos or dispute, therefore the need for the Law Amendment.

The political component of the sermon is advocated by all interviewed figures of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Dr. Tayseer Fityani²²¹ considers the role of the mosque as,

“An all-purpose one – political, economic, social, cultural and religious, an integrated role”

Zaki Bani Ersheid²²², Secretary General of IAF and protagonist of an IAF stream close to Hamas²²³ (Abu Rumman 2007: 42), views that the mosque has two mandates; firstly to proclaim the stance of the Islamic state throughout Friday sermons, and secondly, the mosque is the best forum where people’s needs are being exposed and addressed,

“as governments acknowledged this role they wanted to relegate this role to the State... the mosque’s congregation holds no opposition as they come ready to listen and behave accordingly, and this is where the role of the mosque in shaping public opinion resides, whether through the Imam or in sessions afterwards when people come and leave. The minister of awqaf knows well the role of the mosque is far more important than most of the existing media outlets...”

²²¹ Fityani is an academic, former member of parliament (2003-2007), and a prominent figure of the Muslim Brotherhood movement.

²²² Abu Rumman (2007) contended that being close to Hamas, Bani Ershid’s nomination to assume the post of Secretary General of IAF provoked the regime and centrist Islamists (p.42).

²²³ HAMAS- a Palestinian Islamist armed political group banned by the Jordanian government.

Another *hawkish* figure, Mohammad Abu Fares, recounts several political issues in his sermons, for which he was banned from preaching since 1993; a sign that politics is not only part of the sermon theme, but something one has to pay a price for.

Hamza Mansour (Bani Ersheid's predecessor), described the mosque (and the school) as the focus of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan which,

“was a factor of acumen in this country and played a significant role... in averting the country the plight of extremism”.

Mansour recounts when he was summoned by minister of awqaf who admonished him for always bringing in the issue of Palestine and Jews. Likewise, former deputy Badr al-Riati of the Muslim Brotherhood movement said he was banned from preaching because he had tackled political issues, namely the peace treaties between the Arabs and Israel.

Former independent Islamist deputy, Layth Shbeilat, views that the role of the mosque has changed because of the change that occurred in the stance of the Islamist leaders who now fear the government, yet when they are strong no one can prevent them from defending the homeland through their rhetoric, but now there is a legal impediment.

Senator Abdulmajid Zuneibat (pro-regime Muslim Brotherhood figure) contends that the mosque is the prime shaper of public opinion, especially through preachers of the Islamic movement who discuss political issues and criticize policies of the government.

The vast majority of the interviewees agree the mosque should speak politics which comes at the core of defining its historical role and status in the Islamic nation, focusing mostly on Friday sermon as the main function of the mosque. Opposition figures (mainly *hawks* of the Muslim Brotherhood movement) do stress

the preeminence of this role, whereas State figures shun or deny this role ascribing the mosque an educational and moral duty, and if by any means the preacher should speak politics it should be State-friendly. In this domain, State figures do not prescribe politics as an integral part of the sermon, but while admitting that politics is inevitable, they conditionally sanction it. On the other hand, Islamist scholars and preachers who strictly adhere to Islamic shari'a but still work within the purview of State interests do establish this task of the mosque, but they handle it without political agendas used to shore up anti-State sentiments as they acknowledge where to delineate the redlines with the regime.

The foremost powerful and well organized political party, the Muslim Brotherhood movement, takes the mosque as the ideal platform to diffuse its thoughts and garner public support given the religious content of the sermon frame their political stances and give them authenticity. Its members, many who served as deputies, insist the mosque has a political role to play in shaping public opinion. This stance is not confined to the movement as indicated in the viewpoints of the two Salafi preachers (who adhere to the teaching of Prophet Mohammad and his direct companions), or the Sufi Imam who had also assumed official posts; all asserting this role though from a different approach. The Muslim Brotherhood movement is keen to use the mosque to contest the government and oppose its policies, especially the peace treaty with Israel. They do so relying on their grassroots base composed mainly of Jordanians of Palestinian origin, especially in their stronghold of Zarqa city.

Perceiving the worshipper as a passive receiver influenced by the preacher's directives, the government and its supporters in parliament, such as Maayah, conditionally sanction this political role but only if the sermon's content is 'positive' in order to deactivate this important tool used by the Islamic movement to contest State influence in the religious sphere; religiosity being employed as a tool to shore up the legitimacy of the Hashemite regime. In addition, the mosque inculcates extremist beliefs and anti-governmental sentiments ready to be used as

ammunition by the Islamic opposition once the governmental policies have failed; a “lie and wait” policy to establish their ultimate goal of shari’a-compliant society according to their doctrine.

State officials tend to shrug off dissonant political content in the sermon as long as it does not contest strategic State policies such as the peace treaty with Israel, or cause social unrest. Therefore, politics in the sermon is not a taboo per se, given that political topics at times might serve as panacea to allow people to fret their frustration, or can even be used to back governmental policies or State strategies²²⁴. One possible way is to use the extremist discourse as a scarecrow to bedevil the Islamic movement and rein in the opposition. Thus far, politics constitute a taboo if used as a tool to contest States control over the public and religious space. Price (1994:677) contends that,

“The function of the government in a market for loyalties ordinarily goes far beyond its role as regulator and enforcer for a cartel of identity producers...Not only have governments sought to exclude a range of destabilizing narratives, they have also sought to ensure that a sense of national identity is available and, if possible, prevails”.

Al-Rousan (2010: 246-247) attributes the receding political role of the mosque, though still embedded in its discourse, to the rising political awareness in society. This awareness came alongside the educational and upbringing renaissance which has caused the educational and social role of the mosque to ebb. Another reason for the declining educational role is the low level of preachers and pressures on them by the State. Al-Rousan adds that the prime role of the mosque is religious, but even this role is incapable of influencing people’s attitudes and behavior given the parallel influence by other alternative means such as religious lessons on satellite televisions and other societal institutions, beside the fact that the mosque’s speech is void, old fashioned and non-interactive. One function of the mosque which Al-Rousan (p. 146) highlights as the most important conclusion

²²⁴ Jarrar (2009:46) points out that at one point the Jordanian security apparatus used state-run mosques to mobilize young Jordanians to go and fight the Soviets in Afghanistan.

in his study is the emerging economic function which comes after the religious function. This function is not being expressed in the religious speech itself, but of which the mosque constitutes a linkage on the individual and collective level. This notion by Al-Rousan, that the economic role is not salient in the mosque speech, agrees with the ensuing conclusions in this study (worshippers in Friday congregational prayer feel bored from listening to economic themes in the sermon).

6.2.2. The Context which Engulfed the Endorsement of the Law and its 2006 Amendment

Except the two officials of Ministry of Awqaf who referred the context and motives behind the Amendment to mere directorial matters, all interviewees, including Maayah and Zunaibat, linked the motives to the political environment, whether local or regional, but mostly regional as per the Muslim Brotherhood figures. Minister Salah refused to answer this question, a sign this issue being sensitive to high ranking officials and requires self censorship.

The fact that deputy Maayah is affirmative regarding the political context, but defiant to politics being part of the mosque message, indicates an official containment policy by proxy, and a conviction to officially besiege the mosque from its dynamic environment. Likewise, the salafi Imam Muhammad Shaqra, close to the State but revered as a referential scholar even by extremist Islamists, referred the enactment of consecutive laws of Awqaf to certain conditions Jordan has been going through and not according to the personal whims of concerned parties.

The notion that official denial to relate the Amendment to the political context is limited to State officials in office yet vocal among State cronies is a sign of self censorship and a security-driven policy by the regime. This course of action by the

officialdom has marred the reign of King Abdullah II vis-à-vis the approach adopted by his predecessor, King Hussein bin Talal, who used to personally handle this once “political” dossier until his demise in 1999 (Abu Rumman 2007:24).

Viewpoints mentioned here below denote that the perspective within which the Law and its Amendment were being endorsed is mostly related to curbing the opposition (mainly the Muslim Brotherhood movement; vocal at mosques), thereby safeguarding the *national interest*, and to squelch public dissent against foreign policy concerning the regime’s pro-Western role in the region, mainly regarding Israel and Iraq. This comes in the context of mounting public dissent against Western policies condoned by the regime which drove the latter to control religious discourse in the religious space, thereby thwarting the use of the mosque platform by the Islamic opposition as a means to rally public sentiments against governmental policies. This containment policy goes in tandem with what most of the interviewees think of politics as an integral part of the mosque message, vis-à-vis the counter stance by State allies and officials who limit the scope of this role to mere ritualistic religiosity and moral upbringing of the people, or politics which comply with State policies at the best.

A breakdown of the priorities declared by the Islamic Action Front in communiqués published on its website between 2005 and 2007 depicts little attention given to economic issues, least attention to social issues, major concern to regional or Arab issues, and political reform rating second to regional or Arab issues. Apparently, internal affairs have not been of high concern to the party vis-à-vis regional affairs, mainly Iraqi, Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian issues (Abu Rumman 2007:50). It is worth noting that the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood movement through its political arm has by and large been political in nature and provocative to the regime (whether regional, or political reform at home), thereby shaping the milieu according to which the government would later on delineate the religious sphere.

Jarrar (2009:29) denoted the “terrorist” bomb attacks which took place in Amman in 2005 as the spark which drove the State to espouse an “anti-terrorist approach” to curb Islamic extremism. This includes the enactment of anti-terrorism laws to deter the recruitment of zealous fanatics, control over religious activities through regulating the religious sphere, and exposing mainstream Islamists through controlling social platforms. Among the basket of legislations the State enacted to retaliate against the 11/9 attacks in Amman²²⁵ was the endorsement of The Law of Preaching, Guidance and Teaching in Mosques no. 59 of 2006 (Amending law no. 7 of 1986). In addition, the State grew anxious of the electoral success of the Islamists in the legislative elections of the Palestinian Territories and in Egypt in 2005 and 2006 successively. The government feared that Jordanian Islamists would use their foreign allegiance to shore up popularity and mobilize a radical religious and political opposition at home. Recognizing the influence of the mosque in disseminating extremist Islamic ideology and mobilizing dissent and anti-regime collective action, the State was keen to hold its grip on informal religious platforms²²⁶. As a preventive measure, in 2008 the State resorted to amend the Law of Public Assembly by redefining “public meetings” in a way that would curtail public opposition to its policies (Ibid, p.46&61). This is apparent in Maayah’s inkling that,

“there are other matters which affect the Law of Preaching and Guidance at mosques such as the Law of Public Assembly which prohibits any gatherings unlicensed by Ministry of Interior. If gatherings took place in unlicensed places or during unsafe events in a way that does not serve the national interests of Jordan, the authorities should then interfere to stop these practices through peaceful means”.

²²⁵ Three hotels were attacked by Al Qaeda suicide bombers on November 09th, 2005 resulting in the killing of 63 people.

²²⁶ The Pew Research Global Attitudes Project published survey figures in July 2005 that nearly 60 percent of Jordanians justified suicide bombings against civilian targets in defence of Islam. Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, Islamic Extremism.

Abdul Majeed Zuneibat, actual Senator²²⁷ and former General Monitor of the Muslim Brotherhood (Doves' stream) views that the Amendment,

“has come in the context of the States direct supervision over the mosque, and to regulate religious discourse so as to condone its general policy in light of criticism and objections against certain governmental policies whether in the local or external arenas, especially with regard to the relationship with the Zionist enemy. In addition, it came to contain the rising religious aggrandizement, especially the active role of the Islamic movement in Jordan, hence the Ministry of Awqaf banning several preachers who belong to the Islamic movement, in tandem with the political stances of consecutive governments”.

Wael Battiri, referred the context which engulfed the 2006 Amendment to,

“the Gulf War, I guess, and its repercussions as international coalitions and US have become the sole polar, thereby Jordan becoming subject to pressures by the US in the first place. These laws can be looked at in the light of Western and US-based dictations”.

Zaki Bani Ershead, contends that,

“Jordan was subject to pressures to carry out certain roles that would result in besieging the Islamic movement in Jordan”.

Apparently, the longstanding relationship between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood movement started taking a downward spiral by the mid 1980s onwards, and the context was both regional such as the dispute with neighboring Syria in 1982, the rise of HAMAS in 1987, and the peace treaty with Israel in 1994 in addition to local factors such as the resumption of democratic life in 1989, the new era of King Abdullah II in 1999, and the new elections law in 1993.

Hamza Mansour, referred the enactment of the law to,

²²⁷ Abu Rumman (2007) cited that Zuneibat had expressed his stance that *“the reality today is the modern civil state system and not an Islamic State of the Caliphate”* (p.48).

“the Wadi Araba Peace Treaty with Israel, [and] US interventions especially during the period when the Christian right wing was dominant in USA”.

This is further corroborated by analyst of Islamic movements, Mohammed Abu Rumman (2007:12), who maintained that,

“The 1990s ... witnessed a great transformation in policy symbolized by Jordan’s decision to enter into peace talks with Israel. Much legislation would be passed restricting civic action and the opposition’s ability to mobilize”.

Mohammad Abu Fares, a radical Muslim Brotherhood member and prominent figure of the hawks’ stream, referred the Law back to the time of the British mandate over Jordan,

“the Law was meant to control preachers and ulama [religious scholars] of the Islamic Movement who would slam the British occupation to Jordan”.

This view is corroborated by historian Boulby (1999:63) who states that monitoring the mosque preachers was a policy which the British had encouraged²²⁸.

Deputy and banned preacher of the IAF in Aqaba, Bader Saleh al-Riati²²⁹, referred the law to the resumption of democratic life in Jordan in 1989,

“when people chose candidates from the Islamic and pan-Arab streams, decision makers and enemies of our umma in the West did not like it, therefore study centers rushed to deliver opinions, advices, directions and recommendations, amongst which was... to expel the Islamic movement

²²⁸ Boulby (Ibid) quotes a “confidential memo from Mr. Wikeley in Jerusalem to Foreign office, OF 371 121464, January 3, 1956 (no. 494) stated: “A strike has been declared for tomorrow and the Governor of Jerusalem is nervous of more trouble. I have suggested to him that as it is obligatory day for Muslims he should do what he can to ensure that preachers in the Mosques do not inflame reactionary Moslem feelings.”

²²⁹ Assyjill monthly magazine reported in its January, 2009 issue that “... an official objection being issued against the content of sermons delivered by two of the movement’s sheikhs; Hamza Mansour in Amman, and Badr Al Riati in Aqaba. Mansour and Al Riati were among 20 orators of the Muslim Brotherhood allowed by the government to ascend mosque podiums during last year’s autumn, ending a two years ban on them”.

[Muslim Brotherhood] from podiums of guidance and influence, including the mosques”.

Most of the interviewees herewith pinpointed to external pressures over Jordan, State allegiance to the West, the resumption of democratic life and the consequent rise of the Islamic movement, which weigh the political leverage over the technical context espoused by State officials.

In the first two supra issues, all interviewees, including some State affiliates but not State officials, agree that politics is a main ingredient of the mosque discourse, and that in a marketplace of contested loyalties between the regime and the opposition, politics constitute the environment which drives the State to control the religious sphere. This does not imply that the State wants to ferret out politics from Friday sermon, the main component of the mosque discourse, but that the regime is keen to shape the religious discourse in such a way as to ossify its legitimacy and sway public opinion to its side. More so when democratic life is resumed and politics becomes the legitimate battlefield between the Islamic opposition, whose discourse capitalizes on hot regional issues (mainly the Palestinian issue) to appeal to the masses and cultivate public support that atones for its impotence in tackling economic and social issues which require genuine programs often debated in the interactive public sphere rather than the non-interactive patriarchic religious space.

6.2.3. Motives behind Endorsing the Law and the 2006 Amendment

The motivation that drove the State to endorse the Law and its 2006 Amendment cannot be separated from the aforesaid context, primarily the political milieu whether in the local or regional sphere. The regulation of the religious sphere goes back to the time of the British mandate which ended with the independence of the Kingdom in 1946, but had yet left its print on pertinent laws even after the Arabization of the Jordanian army in 1956. This is evident with the endorsement of

the anti-communist law of 1948, amended in 1953, and cancelled in 1990. Mohammad Abu Fares points out that the Law of Preaching and Guidance at Mosques,

“was meant to control the preachers and ulama [scholars] of the Islamic movement who would slam the British mandate over Jordan. This law was thereafter enacted with yet more strictness and control. By then, a man would be summoned and questioned, but the actual law enacted a penal sentence of imprisonment and fine. The aim behind it is still to confine mosque preachers to those loyal to the regime and the consecutive governments”.

Likewise is the stance of former Islamist deputy Layth Shbeilat, critical to both the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the regime, who views the law as similar in its motives to the anti-communism law which targeted any resistance to colonialism during the British mandate to Jordan and the post-colonialism period when the leftist and pan-Arab parties thrived in the Arab world.

Zaki Bani Ersheid views that as the government acknowledged the role of the mosque, the Amendment constitutes,

“...the appropriation of the mosque’s task in preaching the people and shaping public opinion. Minister of Awqaf knew well the role of the mosque was far more important than most of the existing media outlets. The philosophy behind this law was such that only the government’s official stance is proclaimed throughout the mosques, whereas other opinions are besieged”.

Emad Maayah correlated the law with the Law of Public Assembly which,

“prohibits any gathering unlicensed by Ministry of Interior”

This former deputy and top brass contends that the mosque has often trespassed its basic role, and justified the 2006 Amendment by the need to confine the mosque mandate to its religious role, to sanction who is and who is not qualified to preach, and to curb preachers who propagate hate speech.

Maayah's fellow NSC member and IAF figure Taysir Fityani described the Law as,

“politically driven before being thought driven, because authorities were weary of ideological streams that would guide society to its public good... The Law was the first episode in banning IAF members, but there were still chances to teach and counsel at mosques, and penalties were still limited”.

Hamza Mansour calls the law a “backward” and the government wanted to “dwarf the message of the mosque” and to “drain off the resources of the Islamic movement” by banning its preachers, adding that the justification behind it was the government’s need to silence voices opposed to the peace treaty with Israel, and to dilute public opposition against its policies regarding the elections law which curtailed the Islamists’ presence in parliament. Senator Zuneibat contends that the Law came to contain the rising religious expansion, especially the active role of the Islamic movement in Jordan.

On February 15th, 2010 the Researcher also interviewed Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi²³⁰, doctrinaire of the jihadist salafi movement, at his house in Rusaifah and asked him to comment on the State’s pretext to endorse the 2006 Amendment to the Law, namely, that the mosque podium is being used to transmit political agendas and *takfiri* thought,

“Well, you can prevent ikhwan [the Muslim Brotherhood] from propagating for the elections...but the issue does not stop here... a preacher who is not in their [government] pocket will be corneredTherefore he [the Imam] becomes under pressure and eventually quits sermonizing under pressure, or else they make him quit. ... even if you do not talk against them or slam them; unless you abide by their viewpoint you are doomed to become banned”.

²³⁰ When the Researcher asked the interviewee about what to record and what not to record (audio), the interviewee (Al Maqdisi) said the secret police (*al-mukhabarat*) had asked him that day “what does Madanat want from you!”; a sign of their former knowledge about the meeting.

MP and banned preacher of IAF in Aqaba, Bader Saleh al-Riati, views that the Amendment was drafted so that,

“The Ministry of Awqaf is directed to expel influential preachers albeit their high academic qualifications, and ban lessons and lectures at mosques unless they are pre-licensed by the minister”.

Minister of Awqaf, Abdulfattah Salah, refused to answer the Researcher’s question on “*What were the motives which drove the State to draft the Amendment to the Law of Preaching and Guidance in 2006 and present it to Parliament for endorsement?*” saying,

“The Law has already been endorsed and there is no point of discussing it herewith”,

While the minister’s legal advisor, Mohammad Mobaidin, contended that,

“the law was endorsed in 1986 with the aim of organizing the sermons and guidance issues, and formulating a council entitled to establish a policy for sermonizing and guidance in the kingdom. Regarding the latest Amendment endorsed in 2006, it was a slight Amendment to the Law which stipulated that any person who delivers sermons and guidance at mosques should be pre-commissioned to do so by Minister of Awqaf, and be qualified to do so... Although the previous law had stipulated this, it was actually subject to different interpretations... In the past, this context was embedded but now it has become forthright... Its aim was to clean up the mosques of any chaos or dispute.”

Salafi Imam Shaqra gives a similar justification saying the regulations (law and Amendments) are akin to administrative guidance (warning of mistakes which might cause internal strife) but have nothing to do with the content being said in the sermon. Another ministry official, al-Takhaineh, views that,

“The number of mosques in the Kingdom has tripled since 1990 due mainly to higher birth rates, migration to the Kingdom and an increased religious awareness amongst the people. Qualified people were reluctant to work for Ministry of Awqaf because of the long commitment conditions and low

salaries, so they were replaced by high-school graduates, more or less, and new programs were incepted to qualify them”.

The policy of restraining hate speech and dwarfing the capability of the Muslim Brotherhood movement to attack pro-peace stances cannot be isolated from politics as it has become a consistent official policy following the peace treaty with Israel and the war against terrorism which proceeded apace and Jordan has become party to in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 09/11 in USA and 11/09 in Jordan.

The aforementioned viewpoints show that ascribing political motives to the endorsement of the original law and its Amendment (through a parliament almost void of Islamist presence) is common among the Muslim Brotherhood movement (both State-friendly figures and opponents), salafis and a pro-state Islamist deputy. However, on the government's side, there seems to be a tendency to either shun the disclosure of the real motives behind endorsing the Amendment or water down any political intentions behind regulating the religious speech as this falls outside the purview of the officialdom, or else one might construe the government is in a contest to control the religious sphere which used to be co-opted with the Islamists.

For a government to regulate the religious sphere, this is something comprehensible and justified in Muslim countries. The inception of the law in 1986 coincided with the start of the rift between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan. Until then, disputes between both sides were harmoniously solved given the co-optation policy embraced by the regime which used the Islamists as a mantle to curb the influence of leftists and pan-Arab opposition, in addition to the regime's need to use religion as a pillar to brace its legitimacy. None of the Islamist commentators above had slammed the regime during this period, save a few who blamed the British. But when religiosity expands in society (as the ministry official explained) and actors active outside the purview of full regime control invest in the religious sphere in order to penetrate and control the

public sphere (therefore contesting the State's ability to shape public opinion) then it is the State's obligation to wrest momentum back from the Islamic movement lest the public opinion gravitates towards the well organized Islamic movement and oppose governmental policies.

From the supra viewpoints it can be inferred that members of IAF refer the 2006 Amendment to politically driven motives, mainly regional conflicts and their repercussions on Jordan, and a subsequent attempt by the regime to limit the Muslim Brotherhood movement's ability to utilize the mosque as a platform to amass public support. While State officials and State-friendly figures do not refer the Amendment to political factors, their answers embed a justification for official attempts to curb public gatherings by the opposition.

As for the jihadist salafis, the issue is to be or not to be under control by the security apparatus given their ideology of disavowing the regime as apostate and ignoramus and its ruler as *taghout* [tyrant]. According to this group, any walk-away from full submission to the regime by the mosque preacher brings about imminent ban and clamp down by the security apparatus. Apparently, members of the Muslim Brotherhood movement would not ostensibly go that far given their non-takfiri stance towards the regime, although both schools of thought (jihadists and Muslim Brotherhood) adhere to the writings of the jihadist theorist Sayyid Qutb. The takfiri roots in the ideology of these two groups is apparent for the State which strives to curtail the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda to Islamize society through their Friday diatribes and eventually debilitate the regime's religious legitimacy. The State is also keen to incapacitate the jihadists, but not to the extent of diminishing them. This policy is meant to prevent their recruits from adhering to external doctrinaires, and their discourse and modus operandi exposed to the security apparatus to demystify.

6.2.4. The Role of State and Non-State Actors in Enacting and Enforcing the Law and the 2006 Amendment

Maayah described his chairmanship to NSC as one of the “very important committees in parliament” which played active role in articulating the Law after being referred to the House Speaker by The Bureau of Legislation at the Prime Ministry. This deputy also denies any contact or pressure mounted on him during the parliamentary deliberations of the Amendment, whether by State figures or the palace, but assures that each sermon is being passed on to the security apparatus.

The monitoring of the mosque speech by the State is further confirmed by Mohammad Abu Fares, who views that,

“it is well known that they [State security] do monitor the preachers, and in every mosque they place more than one snitch who would write them a report [...] If a preacher attacked Jews and called for fighting and jihad, he is summoned either by the director of awqaf, or if he is a grand scholar the minister himself would call him in, blame him and hold him responsible, or he might even be threatened [...] Sometimes I talk and the governor would summon me and interrogate me [...] After I became a deputy in 1994 the administrative governor of Amman, Nawayseh, ordered my imprisonment in the police prison with all the sexual aggressors and drug addicts because I was teaching in the mosque. One day I was told by an official not to recite al-fatiha²³¹ in the mosques. I refused this request and went back from the Intelligence Department to tell people what happened to me and that now I keep delivering religious lessons to you in spite of everything”.

The repercussions of State control over the religious space beget self-censorship by the salafi Imams who work within the regime’s circle. Mohammad Shaqra describes his Imamate since the early seventies to the mid nineties as staying away from politics and tackling only Fiqh [Islamic jurisprudence], given that engagement in politics is not beneficial to the people. This policy has enabled Shaqra (a traditional salafi) to avoid being banned from guidance and Imamate

²³¹ *Al-Fatiha* is The Opening; the first chapter of Quran. It has an essential role in the daily prayers.

throughout his service. As to whether the Imams are subject to pressure by the ministry of awqaf, Shaqra contended,

“in general, I never felt strictness or severe pressure ...If the ministry of awqaf wanted me to focus on a certain political issue, this guidance was not compelling; they would just write down some non-mandatory general guidelines to the preachers. The Law was a kind of administrative guidance without inflicting on the content of the sermon. For example, preachers would tackle the public expenditure issue, which was a taboo theme, but the issue is how to tackle it. I mentioned the Wadi Araba Peace Treaty [with Israel] but I never cursed the State or Jews”.

This statement by Shaqra testifies that preachers apply self-censorship as acknowledgment to where the State delineates redlines which, if tackled, they ought to be observed with utmost discretion. This inference is further corroborated by Ali al-Faqir, former deputy and minister of awqaf in 1990,²³² and currently a banned preacher, who contended,

“the State would send me some signals which I could understand, although these were not mandatory”.

Apparently, the element of self-censorship is evident in the two interviews by Imams Shaqra and al-Faqir, who alongside their task as Imams and preachers they also served as high ranking government officials.

The Researcher asked Senator Zuneibat - what, if any, was the role of civil society, foreign sides, or influential State institutions in steering local policy to push for the Amendment and secure its endorsement? Zuneibat answered,

“No doubt there have been internal and external motives behind the endorsement of these Amendments which came in compliance with the American dominance over the region, because the religious discourse focuses on opposing the American role in the region”.

²³² Boulby (1999:142) states that the Muslim Brotherhood's interest in assuming the portfolio of the Ministry of Awqaf's, amongst other portfolios, was “not only because of its major concern with such issues as religious affairs and education, but because they would allow its deputies greater access to mobilizing its grass-roots networks”.

In March 2010, the Researcher asked Zuneibat about the role of Lower House of Parliament (especially the NSC) in deliberating and endorsing the Amendment. Zuneibat answered,

“By endorsing the amended Law of Preaching and Guidance, the Lower House of Parliament played a role in supporting the governmental tendency to regulate and steer religious discourse at mosques”.

In 2004, two years before the Amendment, Zuneibat had posited that,

“We requested that the Law of Preaching and Guidance should be activated, but we were deprived of this, and now we suffer from the consequences...the whole issue [banning the Islamic Movement’s orators from using the mosque podiums] is politically driven and comes in the context of targeting the Islamic Movement... our orators are being banned since the 1994’s Wadi Araba Treaty”²³³.

Two years after the Amendment was endorsed, it was apparent the government was persistent in guiding the Imams on what they should or should not say. Al Ghad newspaper issue of March 03rd, 2008 reported the governor of al-Zarqa (a hotbed for the Islamists) urging the mosque Imams to speak about issues of drugs and traffic accidents²³⁴.

As for al-Maqdisi, neither the law nor the Amendment is of any importance to the jihadist movement, given that jihadist operatives are already targeted by the State security, and their religious space is different [makeshift mosques]. This jihadist doctrinaire did not even hear about the Amendment!

Islamist activist Shbeilat, critical to the Muslim Brotherhood though appreciative of their honest feelings, blames their figures for not being serious in their opposition

²³³ Source: http://www.alarabiya.net/save_print.php?save=1&cont_id=7208 accessed on May 15th, 2010.

²³⁴ See Annex I, p.6.

to State policies, especially the peace treaty with Israel, and the fact that the Law and its Amendment targeted any segment of society that yearns to fight colonialism and occupation. This former deputy also mentioned that the Islamist movement should have boycotted the elections and used its tools to stir the street. Implied in this opinion is the movement's ability to actively use the mosque podium, a sign that the official clamp down was a containment policy to pass on the peace treaty with Israel through the sitting parliament, and that the Islamic movement was not bereft of necessary tools to oppose State policies.

Therefore, mosque regulations were enacted with yet more strictness in 2006 as the movement has no longer become a permanent fixture in the parliament.

Bani Ershead says the government uses some other Islamic streams to pressure the Muslim Brotherhood so as to disrupt its role and defame it. This leading Islamist figure did not give any account of his own experience or that of his companions, although he mentions that there still exist some preachers who carry out their role qualifiedly, whether in mosques or elsewhere.

Mansour says he was first banned from preaching in 1993 all through 2008 when the director of the Intelligence Department promised to sanction the banned preachers, who were lately ousted again. As for the difference between how the State enacted the Law, Mansour posits that,

“the Law stipulates that any preacher who trespasses the law should be warned, then sent to court for breaking the law. Now [with the Amendment] any governor can call you saying you should not deliver speeches, and he would have you sign a commitment that in case you preach again, deliver a speech or teach you will be subject to penalties”.

Implied in this statement is the notion that instead of judiciary measures by the general prosecutor, the government's hand is now stretched out to pre-empt any violation to the law by intimidating the preachers beforehand.

The Researcher interviewed Ministry of Awqaf official, Abdullah al-Takhaine (who asked the interview be handwritten and not recorded). al-Takhaine stated that the ministry had suggested yet more strict measures in its proposed Amendment, such as longer jail sentences and a written commitment by the banned preacher not to recur his 'violation', but these suggestions were not endorsed by the parliament. This suggests that the government through the ministry of awqaf was inclined to endorse tighter control and regulations over the mosques and the preachers who mostly belong to the Muslim Brotherhood movement.

Mobaidin explains that after the Amendment was proposed by the government, parliament referred it to NSC which tackles laws pertaining to public opinion, and that he was present in the deliberations with this committee but did not have any say in it as this was the sole role of the minister.

The Researcher views that this course of action between NSC and the government is unfamiliar, given the fact that parliamentary committees do consult official experts on contentious issues, but having discussed the Amendment solely with the minister is a sign this was not a technical issue but a purely political agenda guided by a security agenda.

Salah says the ministry has its own and private criteria in licensing preachers (although he refused to divulge these conditions), but in case a preacher diffuses a viewpoint contrary to Amman Message, he would be summoned for discussion. This statement implies that only compliant preachers are sanctioned. When the Researcher faced Salah with his findings that takfiri speech still exists, the minister answered that there are very few infringement cases and the awqaf officials tackle them case by case. But the minister indirectly justified hate speech against Jews and Americans by attributing this discourse to "*certain conditions*".

One can infer the State has been serious in enacting the pertinent regulations, but leaves a space for preachers to diffuse people's emotions in times of crisis, especially during Western or Israeli assault against fellow Muslim and Arab countries.

Battiri narrates a case when he sent a petition to the ministry to preach at mosques. After passing the qualification test, his interview did not go well as the interviewer (a Sufi) classified the applicant as a salafi. Battiri says he was banned several times (had opposed mixed-gender swimming, and greeting Christians during their feasts) and was apprehended one day in jail, although the ministry would sometimes invite him to preach given the dearth in the number of available preachers.

al-Riati pinpoints at the Senate as the propeller to pass the Law in 1997. After the deputies had rejected the Law, al-Riati recalls that the deputies were geared "by remote control" to endorse it. But when the Law was amended in 2006, the deputies rushed to endorse it this time as proposed by the government. Thereafter the security apparatus played a pivotal role in banning certain preachers, because this apparatus is the power which guides the government to ban or sanction preachers. al-Riati was banned several times,

"the last was in May 2009 when the director of awqaf called him saying "you are prohibited until further notice", but why, I know not!"

The majority of the interviewees, whether Imams, officials or politicians indicate the government leaves a leeway for infringements to the law, as several preachers were intermittently banned then allowed to preach again. A participant observation by the Researcher elicits the same notion- hate speech being propagated and other infringements by the preachers they do not stand accountable for.

Seemingly, the successive regulations were meant to deal with a certain political impasse (such as passing the peace treaty with Israel) more than genuinely curbing hate speech still vocal in sermons ever after the Amendment. Apparently,

the target of this control, namely the Amendment, was the Muslim Brotherhood movement whose discourse is not merely doctrinal but political in nature. But once the effect of the ban is accomplished, the practice of regulations waters down and the State seems less adamant at enforcing the law.

6.2.5. The Fate of the Pre-Amendment Discourse at Mosques (Proposition: law and Amendment failed to accomplish their goals)

As to how has the religious discourse morphed; has it simply receded or shifted into other podiums/settings, Zuneibat contends that official censorship over preachers continues in spite of the pre-licensing condition by the minister, but the mosque continues to be the principal influential podium in addressing the people and shaping public opinion. This pro-regime Islamist senator views that the Amendments came to impede the Islamic expansion, especially the role of the Islamic movement in preaching and guidance, as it was clear the movement's preachers are influential in steering public opinion and discussing issues which some preachers would not dare to tackle such as the foreign political stances and direct criticism to local governmental policies; the latest Amendment has limited the movement's role in this regard.

It should be noted here that although the worshippers opine they feel bored of listening to political substance in the sermon (see Chapter Four), this is true when the political atmosphere is calm, and vice versa. On the other hand, the participating Informants (Chapter Five) chose to pray in a certain mosque if they feel the preacher has addressed the political reality, and as long as he is not geared by official agenda.

When faced with the research findings that even after the 2006 Amendment, *takfiri* speech (disavowing others as apostates), or hate speech such as cursing Jews and Americans, is still laced in Friday sermons, deputy Maayah exclaimed,

“The State must be aware of this [...] but if not, then we are doomed”.

When the Researcher faced Minister of Awqaf, Abdulfattah Salah, with on-the-ground findings that Friday sermons still embed takfiri speech or cursing Jews and Americans, the minister reacted,

“you have no right to record at these mosques; you need an official approval... There are a very few infringement cases [takfiri content] which we tackle case by case [...] This is unacceptable but it can be attributed to certain conditions”.

While the minister’s advisor, Mobaidin, attributes this type of discourse to the situation of Muslims at large whereof the preacher has to address their conditions, be they in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan or elsewhere. As for the jihadist discourse, Mobaidin admits that it has not changed but been rationalized by the same preachers; those who have changed are very few. This viewpoint is corroborated by Abu fares who views that the post-Amendment discourse has not changed at all because the Law is not new; it was a temporary Law then became permanent. Abu Fares also contends that the jihadist discourse still persists.

Statements by the aforementioned State and State-friendly figures bear out the notion that the government’s control over the religious space cannot and should not completely wear away takfiri or hate speech; this speech being indispensable for people to vent their anger and to feel the State is present and responsive to foreign challenges facing the umma. In addition, although regulations targeting the religious speech are being enacted for political reasons, there still exist some preachers, other than the Islamic movement, who also exploit State tolerance in order to propagate antagonistic speech which at certain times appeals to the worshippers. The State in this case let go given that these preachers are not politically motivated nor can they organize the masses against the government; on the contrary, they enhance the image that the regime is the custodian of Islam (religion of the State as per constitution) and Islamic symbols.

Regarding the question of where has the takfiri or jihadist discourse wind up after the 2006 Amendment, Bani Ersheid argues that,

“this discourse still exists, but it has managed to remodel and adapt itself, and the content and setting of this discourse now disseminate through other means of communication with people such as wedding parties because it appeals to the supporters and carries out a mobilizing and provocative element throughout social events... There are still people who carry out this role [preaching] sometimes in mosques or even after prayers, not only on Friday prayers... especially in social events, particularly during funerals and wakes”.

Abu Fares holds a likewise view that the pre-Amendment jihadist discourse is,

“still ubiquitous; on and beside the podium, in lessons and preaching, in gatherings and seminars, lectures and festivals”.

al-Faqir considers that following the Law Amendment, mosque speech has moved into private sessions (weddings, wakes) and oratory festivals by the Muslim Brotherhood movement in addition to their gatherings, forums and the media as substitutes to the mosque podium.

Mansour did not answer the above question, saying merely that in the absence of reformers, unauthorized people issue fatwa (over the podium) which becomes subject to hearsay.

Battiri views that “*effective speech*” is now being proclaimed through satellite television stations (such as the infamous preacher Amr Khaled), Pal Talk, radio stations (state-run Jordan Radio which interviews foreign preachers, not locals!).

The Researcher asked al-Maqdisi regarding what some figures of the Islamic movement proclaim- mosque speech has moved on to social events, wakes and weddings, al-Maqdisi contended,

“These [platforms] constitute breathing spaces, but we still receive threats... They [security apparatus] often interrogate us; so this is not a setting which they do not watch over or which constitutes a genuine and free space left for us to use; no! But if you suffocate people what can they do; they would breathe out in these kinds of settings”.

As to what al-Maqdisi means by “suffocating people”, the interviewee answered,

“If they allow me to sermonize at mosques I will do...I will not slam the regime to start with, no! I like to deliver systematic sermons and educate people who know very little... people will abstain if you talk a lot, as this would transform Friday sermons into mere political discourse, because then you will dishearten people who need to be reminded of Allah and study their religion. So if I were allowed such a chance this will be a breathing space for people, but we are deprived of these chances. Neither do you [the regime] allow me to deliver a Friday sermon, nor conduct two or three religious lessons on fiqh [jurisprudence] or hadith [prophetic saying]! Not that you suffocate Abu Mohammad alone but other preachers as well. You only allow a preacher who would glorify you and praise you. So one starts looking for alternative ways; either secretive or clandestine lessons or breathe out in events of weddings or wakes. They deal with people in a police mindset”.

Here al-Maqdisi asserts a notion apparent in the participant Observation part and in the Questionnaire posed to the worshippers in a nearby mosque in Zarqa (his directorate); the worshippers yearn for sermons which educate the people in their religion, and that most people feel bored of listening to sermons which embed economic or political substance.

This viewpoint is also upheld by Shbeilat, who testifies that official repression drives people to behave in *taqiyya* [religious dissimulation]; holding on to a twofold type of discourse- one over the podium, but a different one in privacy when they trust you, therefore the veiled discourse is the true standpoint of the people.

al-Fitiani thinks that by endorsing the Amendment, the government, whether consciously or not, nurtures extremism in society by placing the wrong man [unqualified preachers] in the right place.

Shaqra admits he has not read the latest Amendment to the law, but the consequences of violating these regulations depend more on how the preacher handles his sermon and the issues that he tackles; a wit also shared by al-Maqdisi above.

The above-mentioned quotations reveal that more than two thirds of the interviewees²³⁵, whether State officials or Muslim Brotherhood figures, cannot deny the perception that the Law has not fully curtailed takfiri speech which spills over from the mosque onto other venues, whether open or concealed. State officials even implicitly justify the existence of the evasive takfiri speech by attributing it to the surrounding political context. The Muslim Brotherhood movement, which recognizes the legitimacy of the regime and functions within the confines of the established political and legal system, accuses the government of standing behind the diffusion of takfiri speech by enacting the Amendment, acknowledging it has lost its most effective platform, the mosque podium from which it could speak to its public base. Whereas the jihadist movement which disavows the regime as apostate cares less about the Law or its Amendment, because *de rigueur* it is being targeted by the security apparatus regardless of the content of its speech. In August 2013, a security brass informed the Researcher that al-Maqdisi is in jail because of his “dangerous thought” more than for his actions, and whenever out of prison they will return him back to jail. From this it appears the State is more concerned about using the regulations to disarm the Muslim Brotherhood, its political contender over the control of religious sphere and therefore the public opinion, rather than cleaning the mosques of hate speech, a content which still exists in Friday sermons. The State is also keen to use the Amendment as a mantle to rein in the jihadists who deny the legitimacy of the

²³⁵ The Researcher could only pose this question to 11 of the 14 interviewees.

regime. Therefore, the whereabouts of the takfiri speech and the ability to control it remains a peripheral issue when compared to the more critical question - which actor has the power to influence the masses and shape their mindset!

6.2.6. The Impact of Enacting the 2006 Amendment to the Law

Mohammad Abu Fares, a leading figure of the hardliner stream of IAF (Horani et al, 1997: 298) points out that,

“By then [before the Amendment], a man would be summoned and questioned, but the actual Law imposed a penal sentence of imprisonment and fines [...], sometimes they are arrested for days so they would either succumb to pressure or refrain from the opposition, or else they sustain and carry on so that the authorities would desperately give up on them and stand off because it has failed to affect them neither by prison nor by other means”.

Abu Fares alludes to the difference between the official treatment before and after the Amendment,

“in fact, the Law was there but it has been added some articles. Before, they [ministry of awqaf] would only ban the preacher from delivering a speech [Friday sermon], but now they have added teaching and guidance on top”.

al-Riati believes the Amendment has imposed several constraints through reigning in the sermons, lessons and lectures delivered at mosques especially by competent preachers who are being banned by the security apparatus.

The difference the government has induced in activating the Law [banning certain Imams from delivering Friday sermons as well as teaching and guidance inside or outside the mosque] is further confirmed by Fityani, who speaks of “*collective punishment*” among preachers in order to inflict a blanket punishment and justify punishing the Muslim Brotherhood preachers; a concealment tactic by the

government in an attempt to target the Islamic movement and not imbue on the Amendment a sectarian cast,

“The Law of Preaching and Guidance relegates the task of sermonizing and counseling at mosques to a group of State-friendly people... there were still chances to teach and guide at mosques and penalties were still limited, but thereafter, the whole issue has turned into total banning from sermonizing, teaching and guidance”²³⁶.

Senator and Lawyer Abdulmajid Zuneibat (interviewed in March 2010) clarifies that,

“The ministry of awqaf is the authority concerned with licensing preachers to deliver Friday sermons, and it follows up on preaching-related issues and complaints by imposing penalties, banning the preachers and referring them to the court which inflicts penalties on violations... Official censorship over the preachers continues in spite of licenses being issued by the minister of awqaf”.

Zuneibat is more vocal regarding the influence the Amendment has inflicted on the Islamic movement,

“The Amendments have come to stop the Islamic expansion in society, especially the role of the Islamic movement [Muslim Brotherhood] in preaching and guidance as it was clear the movement’s preachers are influential in steering public opinion and discussing issues which some preachers were not allowed to address, especially political stances and direct criticism to governmental policies. The latest legal Amendments have limited the movement’s role in this regard”.

As to the effect of the Amendment, Bani Ersheid states that,

“The Law of Preaching and Guidance has managed to appropriate the manaber [podiums], but not the masses... An additional besiege, pressure

²³⁶ Fityani added that “after the Law was endorsed, 1300 appointed preachers... did not hold a Shari’a certificate. How come the unqualified are allowed to practice one of the most important and dangerous professions! How will guidance in mosques be in the hand of unqualified people! The official authorities, whether they know or ignore, help in nurturing extremism in Jordanian society.” However, in a reply to a female citizen complaining from gender racism in Friday sermons, a Ministry of Awqaf’s official asserts they only recruit qualified preachers (see p.1. of Annex I).

and cornering of the Islamic movement will formulate a fertile environment for nurturing extremist and tense mindsets which would really hamper Jordan's national security”.

This statement by a *hawkish* Islamist figure and leader who adopts a confrontational policy and narrative with the regime sounds more like a warning bell to the State: national security resides not only with the regime, but also with the movement, so you either allow our preachers who gradually Islamize society (therefore contesting the State's presence over the religious sphere and its impact on public opinion), or else leave the arena for fanatic groups (including the movement's hardliners) to act through makeshift mosques or other subversive means. This view is also espoused by the independent Islamist Shbeilat, who views the effect of a suppressed religious discourse at mosques as driving people to,

“...act in a double-standard fashion. They have two types of discourse- one over the podium, but their actual discourse is different in private settings when they confide to you, therefore the concealed discourse is the actual one”.

This opinion is also upheld by a university scholar commissioned by the State to convince the jihadist salafi prison inmates to revise their takfiri thought. The scholar doubted the true intention of the *repentant* prisoners given they believe in *takiya* principle [obscuring what they really believe in]²³⁷. Another remark by a shari'a scholar denoted the apparent senselessness and boredom in Friday sermons given that those whom assumed the task of preaching are the incompetent²³⁸. This view is yet supported by a high ranking official directly related

²³⁷ Al Rai Newspaper, p.7 (15/12/2008), See Annex I, p.3.

²³⁸ Al Ghad newspaper, p.15 (07/04/2010), See Annex I, p. 7&8, whereas official statistics show that by 2012, 61.8% of the Friday speakers are university graduates
Source: http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/yearbook_2012.pdf
accessed on October 15th, 2013.

to the movement's portfolio, cited in Abu Rumman (2007:29)²³⁹, and who views that,

"They are not clear or transparent in their positions and in their discourse towards the State and its institutions...they have more than one face- with this fact self-evident in the basic principle or 'motto' to which the Brotherhood holds itself and its members "Spread the word openly, but organize secretly"

al-Faqir views that the Amendment entails arbitrariness and it has vexed the preachers given their reference has now become the administrative governor instead of the judiciary body.

Mobaidin rejects the idea that the Amendment has negatively affected the sermon as half of the population still attends Friday sermons without any interruption by anyone to the preacher. This public servant also downplays, albeit admitting, the notion that hate speech still exists, attributing it to political changes in the region which necessitates a certain reaction by the preacher.

Battiri, close to the salafi movement, views the pre-Amendment discourse as,

"influential, now being broadcast via satellite TV stations...away from censorship and control... through Paltalk rooms and the Internet or through some [Islamic] radio stations",

Battiri was banned from preaching several times, but has been called back to preach due to a resulting dearth in the number of preachers. While banned, Battiri was apprehended after delivering a post-Friday prayer²⁴⁰ religious lesson where he criticized the parliament for not cancelling a law that allows mixed-gender swimming, to be released after signing a commitment and a bail not to sermonize again or cause any gathering inside the mosque. This banned preacher views that the ceiling of freedom in speech has ebbed following the Amendment, especially if

²³⁹ Abu Rumman (2007- endnote no. 32 p.83).

²⁴⁰ This lesson took place in 2002 right after the sermon where thousands of worshippers were still present in the mosque.

the preacher slams the government or friendly countries such as USA or the Jews [Israel]. The official reaction would then be total banning from preaching and harsh reprimand by the governor. Battiri views that preachers' sermons in general have become barren and boring, as if the government intentionally chooses the preacher who is less influential.

While Maayah contends that,

“These kinds of sermons [hate speech] do circulate amongst people and if seen to bear certain effect then regulations and procedures should be implemented”.

Minister of Awqaf, Salah, and his legal advisor Mobaidin, deny that a sectarian division [salafi, jihadi, State-friendly, Muslim Brotherhood etc] of mosques existed prior to the Amendment, although he acknowledges that some limited infringement cases are being dealt with by the Ministry.

As to whether the 2006 Amendment to the law has affected the jihadist salafi thought in Jordan, al-Maqdisi states that,

“No, not the jihadist salafi thought in particular because this thought has been pressured since its earlier days; it was not dependant on the podiums for it to be affected, but I guess it [Amendment] would affect the common people...”

al-Maqdisi alludes to the Internet as the prime platform for the jihadist salafi thought as it opens up a sphere which the governments cannot outlaw. Abu Rumman (2007:69-70), talks about the “neo-preachers” phenomenon spreading among the youth especially through the Internet and media, a competitor that has left its toll on the Muslim Brotherhood's popularity. However, al-Maqdisi does not see that the Amendment has affected the Muslim Brotherhood movement alone given that,

“Some people might have initially directed this law according to their interest to pressure down the Muslim Brotherhood and their electoral discourse; in fact it has eventually targeted the Muslim worshipper himself at the mosque.”

Asking al-Maqdisi how he views the effect of the Amendment, specifically on the Muslim Brotherhood, the doctrinaire contended,

“No doubt they are unhappy about it... I guess it did affect them as they make use of the podiums for their electoral campaigns and to direct their preachers and followers through their own orators and podiums”²⁴¹.

Jarrar (2009:50) contends that the legal provisions have had little effect in terms of punitive measures being enacted, while the legal and regulative framework has brought about more of a deterrent factor. These restrictive measures sanctioned by some conservative voices in the West have had their toll on civil liberties in the Kingdom as they do not differentiate between Islamic groups who, while condoning to the political objectives of the extremists, they do not necessarily agree with their modus operandi. Jarrar is also doubtful about the effect of the regulating legislations on radical Islamists who mobilize their recruits through informal networks. This is due to their ability to find alternative measures through informal structures to circumvent these regulations and disseminate their views. On the other hand, the toll was more evident on the mainstream Islamists who operate within the State-controlled religious space.

The Researcher views that radical Islamists, such as the jihadist salafis, were relatively out of the reach of these regulations not because of their ability to bypass their restrictive measures, but because they are banned from preaching

²⁴¹ Al-Maqdisi added that *“the Law of Preaching and Guidance influences the government staff [preachers appointed by ministry of awqaf] but I am not a government employee therefore it does not affect me. In each setting I can organize private lessons at my home and other homes. I can make use of any setting. We have a verse in Quran that says “he made me a blessing wherever I am” – this verse was about Issa [Jesus] Peace Be Upon Him. This means my religion and tawhid ‘monotheism’ resides in my heart and I relay it whenever I am. I am not confined to the mosque podium. So I do not think the jihadi salafi stream has been hampered by the Law of Preaching and Guidance. It might have hampered those who use it for electoral propaganda and it possibly deprives them from relaying this propaganda to their people but as for me it has no affect”.*

even sheer *fiqh* at the mosques, a view also upheld by al-Maqdisi as mentioned earlier. Therefore, with or without the 2006 Amendment, extremists would still be out of the reach of relevant punitive measures, if any at all. Jarrar (p.66) also views that the State's restrictive measures will eventually isolate the overwhelming moderate Islamists and push them towards more radicalism thereby tapping into radical groups. Still, the Researcher views that expelling the Muslim Brotherhood preachers, whether fanatics or moderates, will push them to hold prayers in the open space, even enjoining the jihadists, therefore a policy to expose them and their true intentions about a civil state which their movement claims to embrace given its motto "*overt dawa, but covert organization*". Besides, the State cares less about radical speech at mosques as long as it does not translate into material action on the ground.

The *supra* statement by Bane Reship (that the Amendment would create a prolific setting to cultivate an extremist way of thinking which would ultimately hinder Jordan's national security) corroborates Jarrar's argument. Zune bat admits that the Amendment has limited the Islamic movement's role in Islamizing society and gearing public opinion. This view suggests that a lessened Islamization of society should also reflect in the diminishing propensity by the worshippers to join the radical groups.

In the above table, a relatively close ratio between those who agree the Amendment has negatively influenced the mosque speech (54%) vis-à-vis those who disagree (45%) is due to the notion that those who disagree are either jihadists whose platform is the evasive makeshift mosque, or Muslim Brotherhood figures close to the jihadist thought. The latter group wants to indicate that the government has failed to thwart their influence, or that "*competent*" preachers were being banned even prior to the Amendment. This is a sign that the type of preachers whom they consider fit for the podium are those who would dare defy the State's redlines and instill their own stigma on the religious space, therefore

impacting public opinion given the high number of people who regularly observe and attend Friday sermons.

Apparently, the 2006 Amendment has left its toll on the traditional discourse being Delivered at mosques, especially Friday sermons. State officials and State-friendly figures do not deny the existence of some “*infringement cases*”. IAF members and other Islamists focus on the degrading quality of mosque preachers, their discourse and its effect on the worshippers. While some of the interviewees depicted traditional means of communication such as satellite televisions and the Internet as the ideal platforms for alternative Islamic speech, others focus on the more elusive and interpersonal conduits such as schools, homes, festivals, weddings, prayers in open space and wakes, some of which play into the hands of the security apparatus as an exposure policy to ferret out the jihadists. Still, both channels of communication constitute a spillover of the State control and a latent factor for extremists that lie in wait to disseminate their *takfiri* thoughts. The Muslim Brotherhood movement is trying to ossify its traditional hierarchical structure with a more grassroots-based networking within its public base. IAF leaders (Bani Ersheid and Mansour, among others) warn of the spread of extremism as a result of this transformation in the traditional and open platforms of religious discourse.

Abu Rumman (2007:76) referred to the Amendment as one of the means the regime resorted to in order to weaken and curtail the Islamic movement’s capability to sustain strong political ties and straight touch and interaction with the citizens, concluding that banning the IAF activities in Jordanian mosques contributed to the movement losing half of its seats in the 2007 parliamentary elections. Less was the effect of the Amendment and its ensuing pressure on the non-traditional and more “*elusive*” podiums such as the makeshift mosques, or virtual means of interaction used by the jihadist salafi movement in Jordan. Jarrar (2009:66) views that a restrictive basket of legislations by the State tends to limit the reach of radical Islamists, lessen their message and mobilizing outcome on the mainstream Islamists; however, radicals will always seek other informal

arrangements to convey their message. This Islamic school of thought ends up benefiting from the spillover of the official crack-down on the mosque as their venues for mobilization and *dawa* through informal settings and social events constitute a safe haven for a fugitive Islamic discourse.

Stemmann (2008:15) assumes that the Jordanian government managed to limit the role which religious lessons play in mobilizing the recruits at the mosque following the signing of the peace accord with Israel in 1994, but these lessons have moved to the followers' homes where State vigilance and control is minimal.

Thus far, the Researcher views that State attempts to regulate the religious fora has had more influence on the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which has a formal hierarchical system and works within the confines of pertinent laws, than on the informal and underground movements such as the jihadist salafis. In both cases, non-conformist speech tends to move to other settings in order to attract adherents. This conclusion is yet to validate through a closer ogle on the messenger (the mosque preacher) and the recipient (the worshipper) by living as close as possible and observing their day-to-day actions and convictions so as to investigate the role of the sermon in shaping the worshipper's opinion. Ibahrine (2008:4) argues that,

“we should remember the current rise of ideological Islam and the diminishing importance of the official Islam. These hyperactive social actors are predisposed to challenge the power relations institutionalized in traditional religious discourse, characterized by its powerlessness.”

The question remains how much the State can regulate virtual speech, unveil informal means of communication and their ensuing networks (in the case of the jihadists), and deter the Islamic movement from rejuvenating its discourse and activating alternative means of communication within its public base such as educational institutions, religious lessons and professional syndicates.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PREACHER, THE SERMON AND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE SOCIAL MILIEU

The aim of this Chapter is to analyze the performance of the mosque preacher, his sermon and the impact it wields on the worshippers. Mizher (2008:151-152) asserts that in order to improve the sermon and its impact upon people, researchers should carry out surveys and questionnaires in different areas in order to explore the themes of the sermon, the successful preacher, and the impact of the sermon on the district.

In this survey, the preacher's performance is probed by inquiring his efficiency; any outstanding performance, whether he addressed any political and economic issues (given the pure religious part is present anyway). This section is further explored by asking the respondents to rate salient economic and political issues in the sermon, or whether the preacher has conveyed extremist or moderate expressions. The purpose is to verify the respondents' views regarding any religious quotations or dictums which per se reflect exclusion or libel against the "other". This part is tested by asking whether the Imam had alluded to other religions and in what way.

In summer 2013, the Researcher, with the help of collaborators, distributed the questionnaire to 200 worshippers upon their exit from the mosque on Fridays. In total 196 persons responded. The setting is mosques located in Rusaifa town (outskirts of Amman), and in Zarqa (the third largest city)²⁴²; both a hotbed for the Islamists and Muslim Brotherhood movement whose public base is mainly

²⁴² Constrained by access limitations, this is where the Researcher has managed to find collaborators to carry out the questionnaire.

Jordanians of Palestinian origin who constitute more than half the population in Jordan.

7.1. Respondents' views regarding the performance of the preacher:

#	Question	Yes		No		No Answer		
		#	%	#	%	#	%	
1	Was the Imam efficient in delivering his sermon	168	86	20	10	8	4	
2	Have you felt an outstanding or influential performance by the Imam	152	78	30	15	14	7	
3	Has the Imam addressed political issues in his sermon	112	57	77	39	9	4	
4	Has the Imam addressed economical issues in his sermon	131	67	53	27	12	6	
5	Is there a call by the Imam for compassion among people	146	75	40	20	10	5	
6	Do you sense a call for extremism and negative perceptions	5	3	169	86	22	11	
7	Do you sense a call for moderation	143	73	42	21	11	6	
8	Has he alluded to other religions	16	8	172	88	8	4	
9	If the Imam has dealt with the following issues, rate them according to their importance (order reads from left to right; (1) as most important, (4) as least important): 4. Reform in Jordan 3. Price hike in Jordan 2. Jerusalem/ Palestinian issue 1. Situation in Syria	Order	#	Order	#	Order	#	
			4321	(58)	1234	(21)	3124	(4)
			4213	(31)	1324	(8)	3214	(2)
			4123	(25)	1423	(5)	3412	(4)
			4231	(5)	1243	(2)	3241	(1)
			4312	(4)	1342	(1)	No	(13) answer
			4221	(1)	2314	(6)		
			4122	(1)	2341	(1)		
	4112	(1)	2416	(2)				

Reading of the Data:

Records in (Table1) related to respondents' views regarding the preacher's performance indicate that (86 percent) consider him efficient in delivering the sermon, while (10 percent) say he was inefficient, and (4 percent) abstained from answering. This could be attributed to the respondents' orientation as people who frequently visit the mosque and listen to the sermon by eloquent preachers given their established line of work and their ability to employ verses from the Quran, hadith and religious discourse to fit reality and draw certain conclusions for life. As for those who view the preacher was inefficient (10 percent), they might be more educated and more familiar with scientific ideas and thoughts, or that they are not as religious as the first group. The affirmative ratio indicates that people's expectations from the preacher have more to do with his eloquence and ability to present a coherent subject with suitable quotations and examples from the Quran than his ability to address the issue at hand.

Responses to Question2 (Have you felt an outstanding or influential performance by the Imam?) verify data posed in Question1 as 78 percent of the respondents answered positively, 15 percent answered negatively, and 7 percent abstained. It may be reasonable here to find the affirmative rate slightly lower than in the first question, and necessarily stems from the general perception that the preacher is efficient. This contradicts with what Khalifeh al-Dayyat, mayor of Deir Alla town in Jordan Valley, told the Researcher on Monday May 20th, 2013; that the expulsion of efficient Imams by the State has left the mosques deficient of personnel, which drove the government to allow unqualified mosque servants to teach and deliver Friday sermons²⁴³, therefore people participating *de rigueur* and not to acquire life-felt knowledge and guidance.

²⁴³ A ministry of awqaf official admits that more than half of the mosques in the kingdom do not have qualified Imams, but all mosques are staffed with qualified preachers. This assurance came in response to a letter to the editor by a female journalist who complained against incitement by mosque preachers against women. Source: Al-Rai newspaper, Issue of October 30th, 2010.

In Questions 3 and 4, on whether the preacher addresses political/economical issues in his sermon, the ratios are respectively 57/66 affirmative, 39/27 negative and who 4/6 abstained. It goes without saying that in general the economic situation in the country tops the concerns of the people²⁴⁴, and the notion that since the 2006 Amendment to the Law of Preaching and Guidance at Mosques, mosques chaff under State and security control, therefore the slight precedence of the economic issues over political themes in the sermon.

It is natural to depict that in Question5, the majority of the respondent worshippers (75 percent) denote that the mosque preacher calls for compassion among people, while 20 percent said “no” and 5 percent abstained. However, this negative ratio (20 percent) is still a significant number given the call for compassion is not only a religious duty but a humanitarian and societal value in general. This negative ratio also denotes the existence of preachers who proclaim a speech defiant to State injunctions such as the Amman Message or suggestions of sermon themes posed by ministry of awqaf.

This ratio is about the same as in Question7, which queries on whether the worshipper has sensed a call for moderation, where the answers’ ratio came 73, 21 and 6 percent respectively. It is likely that respondents with less religious inclination are sensitive and attentive to non-moderate discourse as they have their own standards for moderation among people based more on criteria such as secular law or international conventions than on sheer religious injunction.

While only 3 percent say they have sensed a call for extremism and negative perceptions, and 86 percent negated this in Question6, it is noteworthy to observe

²⁴⁴ As per a poll conducted in March 2013 by International Republican Institute (sample 1000, error margin 2.5% ±), 59 percent of Jordanians believe the country is going in the wrong direction, and the main two reasons are the rising prices (44 percent) while only 4 percent attribute it to lack of reform in general.

Source:

<http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2013%20April%2010%20Survey%20of%20Jordanian%20Public%20Opinion%2C%20March%204-7%2C%202013%20--%20Arabic%20version.pdf>

accessed on October 13th, 2015.

the relatively high abstention rate at 11 percent. Apparently, some worshippers prefer not to answer this delicate question with the highest abstention ratio in the entire questionnaire. This could be attributed to the controversy engulfing this rather political term used mostly by the State, which also connotes a Western political concept, and/or a conscience-related embarrassment of accusing the preacher of being extremist or fundamentalist.

In Question 8, only 8 percent affirmed the preacher alluded to other religions, 88 percent said no, and 4 percent abstained, whereas the Researcher noticed that in the prayer that precedes the sermon, the preacher recites *surat al-fatihah* [the opening *sura* in Quran], mentioning both Christians and Jews²⁴⁵ in rather negative terms,

“Guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom you have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray”

Adding to this other negative perceptions related to “other religions” which the Researcher had noticed while attending several sermons, one might infer that the Muslim worshipper takes these Quranic citations not as directly targeting his fellow citizens of other religions, but as a non-arguable label originated and sacralized in the Quran and hadith; a customary practice and an integral part of the prayer with no imperative exigencies for the worshipper’s daily life. The low ratio of respondents who affirm the preacher has alluded to other religions confirms this induction. It is also a sign that the worshippers rule out negative labels to the “other” if they came in the rituals, and would only take stock of them if the preacher mentioned them in the sermon theme.

Question (9) is posed at the end of this Chapter due to its elaborative nature!

²⁴⁵ Source: <http://www.qurantoday.com/fatihah.htm>
accessed on May 24th, 2013

7.2. Respondents' views regarding the sermon itself

#	Question	Yes		No		No Answer	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Have you sensed a prosaic sermon	30	15	157	80	9	5
2	Have you felt the theme of the sermon addressed a problem in society	163	83	21	11	12	6
3	Had you misconceptions about the theme of the sermon which the sermon has corrected	140	71	41	21	15	8
4	If you are to evaluate the sermon how much would you give it out of ten	6.8					
5	Do you think the sermon theme tackled reality	160	81	21	11	15	8
6	Has the theme of the sermon dealt with general issues	166	85	21	11	9	4
7	Has the sermon theme dealt with a personal issue of you	119	61	71	36	6	3
8	Do you think the sermon has brought about an outstanding subject that deserves public dissemination	131	67	47	24	18	9
9	Is there a conformity between the sermon theme and reality	142	73	44	22	10	5

Reading of the Data:

The low affirmative rate (15 percent) of the answers to Question1 (Have you sensed a prosaic sermon) corroborates answers to Question1 in the previous table, as the word *rakakah* in Arabic [prosaic] refers more to lingo being used. Imams/preachers are presumably university graduates who studied shari'a and

Arabic language, and are subject to continuous rehabilitation by Ministry of Awqaf. However, this rate defies the prevalent perception, especially by the Muslim Brotherhood figures following the Amendment to the Law with the ensuing ban on competent preachers and replacing them with incompetent ones, and a resulting shortage²⁴⁶ to cover all the mosques in the kingdom. As for qualifying existing preachers, apparently the State is more interested in advancing religious knowledge among them than enhancing their knowledge in politics, economy or other fields of knowledge. Worshippers who listen to Quran recitation cannot tolerate weak language by the preacher or shibboleth in his sermon, as Quran is considered the culmination of the Arabic language. Antoun (1989:103) observed that the preacher in a Jordanian village in 1960 delivered his sermons in classical Arabic, the consecrated language of Quran, and by doing so he authenticates the meanings embedded in the sermon by bestowing legitimacy on it and sacralizing its soteriological elements. The Researcher views that this observation has not changed in the 21st century.

Question2 shows that (83 percent) of the respondents say the sermon's theme addressed a problem in society, while (11 percent) say no, and (6 percent) abstain. Given the majority of the respondents say the preacher addressed political, economic and other issues in society, and the overall evaluation of the sermon is outstanding and efficient, it goes without saying that the sermon did tackle societal issues. The question remains whether the respondents are being influenced by the sermon, or have their conceptions been changed as a result, which takes us to Question3 where (71 percent) affirm this notion, (21 percent) negate it and (8 percent) abstain. This majority ratio shows that the worshippers, mostly frequent visitors of the mosque, take Friday sermon as referent in shaping their views concerning life-felt issues, especially when the country is facing

²⁴⁶ An awqaf official says more than half of the 6,000 mosques in the kingdom do not have an Imam.

Source: <http://www.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleno=222926> accessed on August 15th, 2015.

Another press account (<http://www.alrai.com/article/703191.html>) quotes an awqaf official who admits that this shortage had pushed the ministry to employ incompetent Imams and preachers in Mafraq directorate (adjacent to and northeast of Zarqa directorate).

security challenges such as the Syrian crisis, grinding economic problems, or societal disputes such as the ongoing campus violence.

Most likely, the moderate evaluation of the sermon in Question4 at (6.8 points out of 10), gives more credit to the sermon's religious content and general peace-making discourse in society than to essence that provides methodical solutions to the country's economic problems and challenges. This bears the notion that the worshipper at the mosque does not expect the preacher to undertake the role of an expert in economy or politics, but that of a pious instructor, or a social mediator who reinterprets the religious text and help the community of the worshippers internalize it into their worldviews. Another deduction is the perception that the quality of sermons has drawn back with the expulsion of competent preachers by the State following the 2006 Amendment to the Law.

Question5 (Do you think the sermon's theme tackles reality) scores (81 percent) as affirmative answers, (11 percent) negative, and (8 percent) with no opinion. This answer goes with figures in Question2 (Have you felt the theme of the sermon addressed a problem in society) and Question6 (Has the theme of the sermon dealt with general issues). It only depicts that the sermon embeds issues relevant to society, but nothing on whether it offers solutions to people's problems and needs.

When it comes to conformity between the sermon theme and reality as in Question9, (73 percent) of the respondents approve, (22 percent) disapprove and (5 percent) abstain. Though a relatively lower percentage, the affirmative respondents' share is still considerable, but the question remains whether the respondents' perceptions about reality have been altered or confirmed as a result of this compliance. When read in light of Q5 (Do you think the sermon theme tackled reality), we see that although the rates are not highly variant, a disproportionate rate of disapproval means that a considerable proportion of people view that although the sermon deals with real life issues, these issues do

not always fit reality. One possibility is that the preacher sets the agenda in a fashion inconsistent always with people's priorities, in a sense that he downplays certain issues which should take precedence.

Question7 depicts (61 percent) saying yes, (36 percent) no and a negligible (3 percent) with no answer. With almost two thirds of the respondents affirming relevance of their personal life to the sermon and the probability that these are frequent visitors to the mosque, even though the sermon does not offer a panacea for their problems, the mere submission to the mono-directional public speech (preacher to worshippers) and the joint contemplation with the community of worshippers (*salat djama'a*), gives the worshipper a sense of social cohesion and commonality with the *umma*, thereby the feeling that their personal issues can find their solutions in as much as they are commonly felt and shared; probably an eschatological solution; a dream for deliverance from an individual problem that can be pushed down the echelon of priority for the sake of commonly shared challenges. This might illustrate the variance in ratio between sermons that tackled personal issues and sermons that dealt with general issues.

With the high rates of efficiency in the sermon as shown in the previous answers (including Table1), those who believe the sermon is worth of dissemination to the public goes down to (67 percent), with the nay ratio standing at (24 percent) and (9 percent) who seem hesitant to give any answer. This is almost identical to the overall evaluation of the sermon (6.8/10), and exposes the point that while the rating is very good when the sermon addresses general issues, a downward appraisal is apparent when the concern is about personal issues that need sound advice and guidance. This is another sign the worshippers remain loyal to perform the prayer as a must ritual regardless of whether it guides them through the terrains of life or not. For the sermon content to disseminate from the religious sp to the public sphere is an issue which requires reconsideration by the worshippers given the higher competitiveness in the marketplace of ideas which embed public deliberation, and the preachers appearing not quite adept in proposing practical

solutions for the problems of the individual worshipper. This is further corroborated by on-the-ground observations (see Chapter Five) as the worshippers refer to sources other than the preacher in search for answers to life queries, including to their own intuition.

7.3. Respondents' views regarding the influence of the sermon

#	Question	Yes		No		No Answer	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Has the sermon affected you	165	84	20	10	11	6
2	Did you have misconceptions about the theme of the sermon which the sermon has managed to correct	140	71	41	21	15	8
3	Has the sermon changed a certain behavior in you	131	67	52	26	13	7
4	Do you feel bored of listening to sermons that tackle political issues	120	61	64	33	12	6
5	Do you feel bored of listening to sermons that tackle economical issues	120	61	66	34	10	5

Reading of the Data:

Question1 (has the sermon affected you) is being posed in the general sense; (84 percent) answered yes, only (10 percent) said no, and (6 percent) gave no answer. The following Question2, which inquires about the sermon modifying preconceptions in the worshippers²⁴⁷, affirmative rate goes down to (67 percent) that is (15 percent) drop from the general question. Question3 deals with change in behavior as a result of the sermon, and here the affirmative answers are (67 percent), [therefore, a (17 percent) drop off the general question], negative answers at (26 percent), and no answer at (7 percent). This depicts a logical sequence from the broad spectrum to the more practical and specific. Although this does not exactly correlate with Question7 in Table2 (Has the theme of the

²⁴⁷ This is being shown herewith for comparison purposes.

sermon dealt with a personal issue for you), where the affirmatives stand at (61 percent), the difference is negligible.

From the following two last Questions 4&5, which show that (61 percent) say they feel bored of listening to sermons which tackle political or economic issues, and almost the same rate saying the preacher did address political and economic issues, one could infer that the impact of the sermon falls within the spiritual and personal behavioral spheres, and that this sphere of influence constitutes a considerable element in the worshipper's decision to go to the mosque. It also draws attention to the idea that the worshipper's expectations from the preacher are largely limited to this area (religious serving as a frame to legitimize and give meaning to the societal/personal although the "personal" is a commonly shared value), whereas the more technical domains (political and economic) no more fall within the preacher's purview of expertise given they had been suppressed and censored by virtue of State control over the mosque. In addition, the worshipper attends the sermon in order to fulfill a religious duty rather than to receive political or economic edification.

7.4. Analysis of the Questionnaire Results

The Researcher asked the respondents to rate the following four issues according to their importance:

- Reform in Jordan
- Price hike in Jordan
- Jerusalem and the Palestinian issue
- The situation in Syria

The responses to these issues came as follows:

- 186 respondents answered completely.
- Three respondents answered: I do not care!
- Seven respondents left the question with no answer (or incomplete rating therefore being dropped).

	Add up of Rates	Ratings of Importance (1=highest; 4=lowest)
Reform in Jordan	598	4
Price hike in Jordan	442	2
Jerusalem and the Palestinian issue	355	1
The situation in Syria	452	3

The above table shows that the sequence of the importance for issues posed in the survey is as follows:

- The first important issue: Jerusalem and the Palestinian issue
- The second important issue: Price hike in Jordan
- The third important issue: The situation in Syria
- The least important issue: Reform in Jordan

It goes without saying that the issue of Palestine and Jerusalem tops the concerns of the respondents. The Researcher noticed this issue was also omnipresent in mosque sermons in the Kingdom given what al-Quds (the holy city of Jerusalem) resembles as the place to which Prophet Mohammad had taken a nightly journey to from Mecca [*al-Isra' wal Mi'raj*]²⁴⁸ as mentioned in the Quran], and the site of the third most sacred mosque in Islam, al-Masjid al-Aqsa. Calls to liberate al-Aqsa mosque is present in mosque sermons and other religious events, including the yearly commemoration of the mosque incineration in 1969. The Islamic Action Front, political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood movement whose public base is in Zarqa, had issued political communiqués in which the Palestinian issue ranked second in number²⁴⁹ after the relationship with the Jordanian regime. This precedence to the Palestinian issue could be attributed to the fact that the movement is controlled by the 'hawks', most of whom are Jordanians of Palestinian origin, and this discourse appeals to the people of Zarqa. With this public mood, one would expect that the worshippers should give precedence to this issue in the mosque.²⁵⁰ Even with State-friendly speech, the centrality of al-Quds to the Jordanian polity is deeply seated. The West Bank and Jerusalem were Jordanian territories since the unification 1950 until the Israeli occupation in 1967. Even then, Jordan was still linked in administrative and legal ties to

²⁴⁸ According to Islamic tradition, al-Isra wal Mi'raj are two parts of a physical and spiritual single night journey which Prophet Mohammad took to the 'farthest mosque' that is, al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

²⁴⁹ In 2007, the party issued 38 communiqués out of which 13 were related to the relationship between the Islamic movement and the regime, 8 on the Palestinian issue, 6 on political reform, 3 on normalization [with Israel], 3 on social issues, 2 on the Arab situation, 2 on internal organizational issues, and only one statement tackling the economy. Source: <http://www.judran.net/?p=48> (A study by Mohammad Abu Rumman) accessed on July 19th, 2013.

²⁵⁰ Results of the 2012/2013 Arab Opinion Index (AOI) show that Arab public opinion considers the Palestinian issue the issue of all Arabs and not just the Palestinians (84 percent, the same ratio in Jordan), while (69 percent) of the Jordanian respondents say they 'oppose' or 'somehow oppose' the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. AOI was conducted between July 2012 – March 2013 by the Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies (ACRPS) in 14 Arab countries, sample 20,350 respondents, margin of error 2-3% Source: <http://english.dohainstitute.org/content/af5000b3-46c7-45bb-b431-28b2de8b33c7>

Jerusalem and the West Bank until the legal and administrative disengagement decision on July 31st, 1988. With more than half the population of Palestinian origin, one can imagine the centrality of Palestine and Jerusalem in the conscience of the Jordanian people, and a craftsmanship by the officialdom as the regime uses religion as a means to ossify its legitimacy²⁵¹; King Abdullah II claims of being the 43rd descendent from the Prophet Mohammad, and religion constitutes an integral and important component of the culture. Al-Quds (Jerusalem) is a chapter in the non-mandatory guidebook for typical sermons which the Ministry of Awqaf distributes to the preachers to help them “*write a rational material for their Friday sermons [...] in a balanced manner*”.

While the worshippers prioritize the issue of Palestine, and largely oppose official tendencies to manipulate religion to gain public support, they however let go with a religious speech that praises the monarchy, given the public appreciation to the stability of the country, and the fact the Quran invokes obedience to the Muslim ruler. This is apparent as the multitude of worshippers say “Amin” which signifies “amen” to calls by the preacher/Imam to bless the king, although two participating Informants (in Chapter Five) have had their reservation to ascribing a majestic prefix to him. As for the government, the worshippers expect it to gain support by enacting genuine programs apt of tackling the country’s grinding economic problems rather than using the mosque podium to squelch public dissent and shore up support for its policies.

The repercussions of the Palestinian issue also wreak havoc on Jordanians in general. As the Israeli right wing in power considers Jordan the alternative homeland for Palestinians, this standpoint constitutes an alarm bell which ignites anti-Israeli sentiments among East Bank Jordanians given Arab nationalism is strongly rooted in their political upbringing, and the liberation of Palestine part of

²⁵¹ The AOI shows that (68 percent) of the Jordanian respondents (70 percent of the Arab world sample) ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ to the argument that “*the government has no right to use religion to gain people’s support for its policies*”.

their nationalistic and religious responsibility. Mosque preachers pick up this subject matter and use it to appease to the audience, especially in a city heavily inhabited by both Jordanian clans fiercely opposed to this Zionist concept, or Jordanians of Palestinian origin who cling to their right of return, some still living in refugee camps since 1948.

The second most important topic to tackle in Friday sermons in the eyes of the respondents is purely economic albeit with social repercussions; namely price hike! Official economic indicators²⁵² show relative stability over the past decade (2004-2012), depicting the following figures in 2012: Crude Activity Rate for the Jordanian Population²⁵³ at 24.4; Unemployment rate at 12.2 percent²⁵⁴; inflation rate at 4.7; GDP Per Capita²⁵⁵ on a steady rise, but so is the Consumer Price Index²⁵⁶ which rose steadily from 90.9 in 2004 to score 130.0 in 2011.²⁵⁷ However,

²⁵² Source: Department of Statistics Yearbook.

Source: http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/yearbook_2012.pdf accessed on October 16th, 2013.

²⁵³ Labour force divided by total population.

²⁵⁴ Unemployment Rate reached 14.0% during the third Quarter of 2013; the lowest rate was recorded in Zarqa Governorate at 9.8%.

Source http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/archive/Unemp/2013/3rd_Q.pdf accessed on October 16th, 2013.

²⁵⁵ Per capita GDP measures a country's standard of living, albeit not reflecting income distribution. It ranges between JD 1512.3 in 2004 to JD 3438.6 in 2012. Average size of household is steady between 2004 and 2012 at 5.4 persons/ family.

²⁵⁶ CPI measures changes in the price level of a basket of [consumer goods](#) and [services](#) purchased by family units.

²⁵⁷ As per a nationwide poll conducted in March 2013 by International Republican Institute (sample 1000, error margin 2.5% ±), 59 percent of Jordanians believe the country is going in the wrong direction, and the main two reasons are the rising prices (44 percent), only 4 percent attribute it to lack of reform in general. The poll shows that 28 percent of the sample view that price hike and the cost of living are the major problems facing Jordanians today, followed by bad economic situation (15 percent), unemployment (14 percent), the presence of Syrian refugees (11 percent), and lastly comes political reform at (9 percent). Whereas results of the 2012/2013 Arab Opinion Index (AOI) indicate that almost half of the respondents consider that "*our family income does not cover our needs and we face difficulty in covering them*".

Source:

<http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2013%20April%2010%20Survey%20of%20Jordanian%20Public%20Opinion%2C%20March%204-7%2C%202013%20--%20Arabic%20version.pdf> accessed on October 13th, 2015.

unequal income distribution is apparent²⁵⁸ as “poverty pockets” increased from 20 pockets in 2008 to 31 in 2012, and per capita share of economic sectors widely differing between a heavily manned sector and another with a low labor occupation. Figures also reveal that the drop off in Real GDP Growth (2005-2012) started even before the “Arab Spring”, which exonerates the Syrian crisis of being the prime propeller for this impact.

Regarding the labor market, statistics²⁵⁹ show that Jordanians received a smaller share of the net jobs created in 2012 compared to 2011²⁶⁰. The report attributes this decrease to the migration of a large number of Syrians to the Jordanian labor market because of the dominant circumstances in their country²⁶¹. However, unemployment rate did not increase in year 2012, which suggests that the precedence of this factor (price hike) is more of a mental factor than a genuine worrisome reflecting the life-felt hardships of Jordanians in general²⁶².

²⁵⁸ Analytical article by economist Salamah Darawi, Source: <http://www.maqar.com/?id=26337> accessed on October 17th, 2013.

²⁵⁹ Source:
http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/archive/job_creation/2013/Created%20Jobs.pdf accessed on October 16th, 2013.

²⁶⁰ Newly created jobs for Jordanians reached 87% of the total net newly created jobs (around 43 thousand job opportunities) compared with 48 thousand job opportunities during the last year, while the share of employment among non-Jordanians has increased in 2012 to about 17% of the net created jobs compared with 2011.

²⁶¹ By July 2013, the Syrian refugees acquired 38,000 jobs in Jordan. Source: Study by the Economic and Social Council in Jordan, cited in The Impact of Syrian refugee Crisis on Jordan July 2013, a study by economist Yusuf Mansur, <http://www.slideshare.net/YusufMansur1/inter-conference-on-the-socio-economic-27> accessed on October 17th, 2013.

²⁶² To corroborate this assumption, the Central Bank of Jordan gives the following figures in the first quarter of 2013 “Unemployment rate during the second quarter of 2013 increased to 12.6 percent compared to 11.6 percent during the same quarter in 2012”. However, the effect of the regional turmoil does not seem to have a major impact as in the following explanation “As a reflection of the repercussions of the Arab Spring and the unrest in the region that still have their effects on the Jordanian economy in various sectors. Real GDP grew by 2.6 percent during the first quarter of 2013 compared to 3.0 percent during the same quarter in 2012. When excluding “net taxes on products”, which grew by 3.5 percent compared to 2.1 percent during the same quarter in 2012, GDP at constant basic prices grew by 2.5 percent, compared to 3.1 percent during the same quarter in 2012”.

The Jordanian economy will lose two points in economic growth, that is 3 Or 3.5 percent instead of five percent. The governor of the Central Bank of Jordan attributes this drop to the direct and indirect impact of the Syrian refugees on the resources, general spending and environment. However, the governor expects the economy to prove resilient and absorb the effect of regional conflicts²⁶³.

From the above data (including footnotes) one can give a picture of the economy and security as two intertwined factors; while most of the people face economic hardships, though on a steady fashion, they still appreciate the level of security they cherish, especially when compared to the ongoing and escalated turmoil in the region. This equilibrium sways people to expect the mosque preacher to focus more on price hike as a means to lay pressure on the government, but without meddling with the national security, especially that public protests against governmental policies follow Friday sermons and take the mosque as a doorstep to demonstrate. This does not necessarily mean that the worshippers expect that a panacea to the country's economic problems to proceed out of the mouth of the preacher, but that out of the six thousand mosques in the kingdom, a unilateral message to the government might leave some impact, and/or, that by default, this stance is requested by the mosque preacher and falls within the purview of his religious tasks regardless of the influence. This is because the role of the preacher, following the role model of Prophet Mohammad, is to "remind"²⁶⁴ the faithful. The Arab public in general views that the challenges facing their governments (Jordan is one of the countries directly affected by the 'Arab Spring')

Source: http://www.cbj.gov.jo/uploads/monthly_english.pdf
accessed on October 18th, 2013.

²⁶³ Source:
<http://ara.reuters.com/article/businessNews/idARACAE9B2B0Q20131029?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0>
accessed on November 01st, 2013.

²⁶⁴ Surah 87: verses 6&9 "*We will make you recite, [O Muhammad], and you will not forget, [...] So remind, if the reminder should benefit*".
Source: <http://quran.com/87>
accessed on August 15th, 2015.

are in need of technocrats more than theocrats to handle them²⁶⁵. One can extrapolate that Jordanians want the religious sphere confined to places of worship given the fact that realpolitik is complex and the religious speech cannot tackle society's grinding economic problems by the stirring of emotions. Mosque sermons almost always exhort the pious to solidarity and *takaful*. A verse of the Quran which is a leitmotif over the *minbar* is,

*"... and establish prayer and give zakat and loan Allah a goodly loan. And whatever good you put forward for yourselves - you will find it with Allah. It is better and greater in reward"*²⁶⁶.

A hadith often referred to in the sermons is for Prophet Mohammad holding his middle finger and forefinger apart and saying in gesture,

*"I and the one who sponsors an orphan will be in Paradise like these two"*²⁶⁷.

This concept of *takaful*²⁶⁸ is an integral and permanent fixture of the sermon, and in time of crisis and economic hardships, much of the burden the State is ought to

²⁶⁵ The AOI poll reveals that (50 percent) of the respondents view "a political system governed by Islamic Shari'a law, devoid of political parties and elections" is "not at all suitable", while (21 percent) deem it as "very suitable" or "suitable". Majority of respondents (67 percent in Arab world; 69 percent in Jordan) are also opposed to the clergy having influence over public affairs or government decisions, while (53 percent) in Jordan are opposed to the clerics assuming public office. This reveals that while the majority of Jordanians (91 percent) and of their context (88 percent of Arabs) self-define as religious, Jordanians expect clerics to tackle a serious life-felt issue such as the price hike, but have no penchant to see the clerics' discourse shaping their mundane life.

²⁶⁶ Surat Al-Muzzammil 73:20 Reference: <http://quran.com/73> accessed on October 25th, 2013.
"وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ نُجَدِّدْهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا"
(20)

²⁶⁷ Source (In Arabic from Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

(كافل اليتيم له أو لغيره أنا وهو كهاتين في الجنة). في صحيحه من حديث أبي هريرة برقم 7660، واللفظ له.

: (انا وكافل اليتيم في الجنة هكذا، وقال بإصبعيه السبابة والوسطى). رواه البخاري في صحيحه من حديث سهل بن سعد برقم 6005 واللفظ له.

incur is relieved thanks to mosque preachers invoking social solidarity, and worshippers acting accordingly. One vivid example is the Syrian refugee crisis which, especially in its early stages, has recalled the Jordanian-Syrian blood bondage and mosque worshippers urging the faithful Muslims to overlook their needs and give alms to their fellow Muslim brothers.

The third most important issue is 'the situation in Syria', which comes close in the order of points and is closely interrelated to the second issue as a priority to tackle in Friday sermons. Jordan borders with Syria extend over 370 KM and both peoples who share kinship and blood ties enjoy visa exemption. On top of this, a pan-Arab affinity is strong among both peoples as Jordan was part of Greater Syria during the Ottoman rule. This bond was further reinforced during the 1950s and 1960s when the nationalist and left-wing parties were dominant in Levant. With the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis, Jordanian families on the Jordanian borders would welcome this human deluge and receive refugees at their homes, many of whom share kinship ties.

Given the presence of Syrians who had fled the fight between the Syrian regime and the Muslim Brotherhood in 1982, and the Zarqa-based Muslim Brotherhood movement backing anti-Syrian regime forces, one would expect the conflict in Syria to be a leitmotif in the third biggest city in Jordan. Zarqa is close to the capital Amman, but is also considered a hotbed for the Muslim Brotherhood movement. As the spokesperson of the Jordanian Committee to Support the Syrian People (chaired by top figures of the Muslim Brotherhood movement), the Researcher has had the chance to march in the streets of Zarqa and attend speech festivals where the movement relies on its public base to mobilize citizens against the Syrian regime and invoke relief aid to the refugees. By September 2013, there were approximately 1.3 million Syrians in Jordan (representing about

²⁶⁸ Sheikh Wael Battiri explained to the Researcher that while *Zakat* is an individual duty (*fard ayn*), in times of dire need Muslims should resort to *takaful* (a collective obligation, or *fard kifayah*, meaning if money available is sufficient to cover society needs, then no additional almsgiving is required), but in the case of dire need, *takaful* is akin to individual duty.

17.3 percent of the population), more than half a million of them are considered refugees, 80 percent living outside the refugees camps. 62 percent of the Syrians in Jordan are unregistered with UNHCR; therefore the Jordanian economy assumes the liability of the expenses of their stay. This burden reached nearly U.S. \$ 4 billion, which accounts for about 13 percent of the country's GDP gross and 45 percent of the total current expenditures of the government, draining more than 54 percent of the total domestic revenue of the country and accounting for about 90 percent of the fiscal deficit²⁶⁹. However, one has to look at the positive side of the picture. Between January and May 2013, Syrians came second after Jordanians in terms of registered capital²⁷⁰. Estimates speak of Syrian investments reaching US\$1 billion in Jordan- a total of 388 companies were registered in 2012, compared to 113 in 2011, let alone the increase in trade balance due to the rising use of Jordanian ports to move merchandise instead of the idle Syrian ports, and Jordan replacing Lebanon and Syria as a preferred tourism destination for the wealthy Gulf countries.

The Researcher conducted the questionnaire in an area where the Syrian refugees abound. As a relief activist in Zarqa, the Researcher witnessed their populated presence and its impact on the neighborhood; hence the priority of this issue which has reportedly affected employment chances for Jordanians²⁷¹, and

²⁶⁹ A lecture by economist Dr. Khaled Wazani entitled The Economic and Social Impact of the Syrian Refugees in Jordan, delivered on September 19th, 2013 at the Royal Jordanian National Defense Academy. Source <http://www.rjndc.edu.jo/news.aspx?lng=1&NewsID=82> accessed on October 16th, 2013.

²⁷⁰ Followed by Iraqi nationals; a sign that the refugee crisis on the long run brings about positive results on the economy.

²⁷¹ Syrian workers constitute thirty percent of the labour market in Jordan. Source: <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/ar/newspecialar/%D8%AA%D8%B0%D9%85%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9> accessed on July 13th, 2013

the economy and life in general (scarce water supplies²⁷², price hike, and social problems²⁷³). Given their impact on the economy²⁷⁴, including rising prices and rent, and relief aid exclusively distributed to the Syrians, no wonder this theme is very close in importance to the previous factor, namely the price hike. The mosque plays a pivotal role as Friday sermons are laden with calls for compassion and benevolence. This should drive people to donate *zakat*²⁷⁵ which would alleviate the economic hardships of the needy. The Researcher himself witnessed how the Muslim Brotherhood movement was active in collecting *zakat* from merchants in Zarqa to fulfill urgent needs of Syrian refugees. Almost all Friday sermons remind the worshippers to fulfill the 'five pillars of Islam', *zakat* among them. Nevertheless, Jordanians would groan about the direct impact of the recurring refugee crisis. As of 2008²⁷⁶, there were approximately two million Palestinian refugees in Jordan. Although almost 14 percent of the population lives below poverty line²⁷⁷, World

²⁷² As a relief activist responding to water shortages during Ramadan month in summer 2013, the Researcher was advised by the mayor of Bab Al-Hadid district in Rusaifa to distribute water bottles to Jordanian homes alongside the Syrian homes so as to avert negative reactions by the neighbourhood. Officials say the influx of Syrian refugees will cause the water deficit to increase 50% in 2013 (Source: <http://jordantimes.com/article/german-grant-to-address-increasing-demand-for-water-in-northern-region----ministry> accessed on October 19th, 2013). Jordan is one of the four most water scarce countries in the world. Source: http://web.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12431464431JO_Water-Strategy09.pdf accessed on October 19th, 2013).

²⁷³ According to a poll by The Center for Strategic Studies conducted in April 2013 (sample 1200, error margin 2.5% ±), 58 percent of the respondents said that the presence of the Syrian refugees in their area of residence has led to a lack in public services provided to them. Source: <http://www.css-jordan.org/Photos/635015077438673397.pdf> accessed on May 25th, 2013.

²⁷⁴ "The cost of hosting Syrian refugees on Jordan's economy has in 18 months exceeded JD590 million, which is around 3 per cent of the Kingdom's gross domestic product, as a recent study has found." Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107> accessed on July 13th, 2013

²⁷⁵ Zakat is obligatory to all Muslims who can give out of their accumulated wealth.

²⁷⁶ United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA), "UNRWA Statistics", 13 July 2008, Source: <http://web.archive.org/web/20080713042517/http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.html> accessed on October 31st, 2013.

²⁷⁷ While official data estimates poverty rate at 14.4 percent in 2015 (13.3 percent in 2008), World Bank figures estimates the ratio of Jordanians living below poverty line at 37.5 percent in 2015. Source: <http://www.alghad.com/m/articles/898519->

Bank classifies Jordan as an “*upper middle income country*”²⁷⁸.” As the positive prospects of the crisis would not pay off in the short run²⁷⁹, a negative mood induced by the imminent needs of the Jordanian citizen prevails. By the time this future prospect has come to fruition, citizens would have co-opted with the *status quo* of the Syrian refugee crisis and the pay-off is no more the prevalent discourse, reminiscent to the crisis of the Iraqi refugees in 2003 onwards.

In a roundtable by the Muslim Brotherhood, pundits concluded that in spite of the havoc which the Syrian refugee crisis has laid on the life of Jordanians in general, the Syrian crisis has brought about manifestations of solidarity and assistance between Jordanians and their fellow Syrians, where blood ties and kinship bind many families in the two countries²⁸⁰. It is no wonder to see the close correlation between the Economic factor, which scored 452, and the Syria factor which scored 452 in the survey; the only two factors close to each other in the opinion of the worshippers.

The least important of the themes is Reform in Jordan. Pro-reform policies driven by the Arab Spring and its resonance in Jordan drove King Abdullah II to enact constitutional Amendments (rendering more power to parliament, creating an independent body to monitor the elections and an anti-corruption commission,

<http://data.worldbank.org/country/jordan>
accessed on October 18th, 2015.

²⁷⁸ Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/jordan>
accessed on October 31st, 2013.

²⁷⁹ Still, the Syrian refugee crisis has brought new investments worth JD 150 million.
Translated from source <http://www.maqar.com/?id=35207>
accessed on October 31st, 2013.

²⁸⁰ Translated from source <http://www.maqar.com/?id=35207>
accessed on October 31st, 2013.

amending the elections law, and dealing with kleptocracy). To some extent, these measures have managed to water down public protests, but fell short of pleasing the Muslim Brotherhood movement, the main opposition front in Jordan. A national poll²⁸¹ shows that (26 percent) of the respondents believe the parliament is incapable of making progress on the path of reform, while (43 percent) answered 'maybe', a sign of a wide state of uncertainty regarding a prime product of the reform process. Former government consultant Yusuf Mansur views that the political impact of the Syrian crisis on Jordan,

“has lowered the expectations from reform; returning to slow political and economic reform, if any at all; IMF reform program taking off”²⁸².

The AOI depicts a clear majority of Jordanian respondents (63 percent) indicating they are “*unconfident at all*” or “*unconfident to some extent*” with their representative parliament. The supra opinion poll indicates how inferior people rate “reform” as a factor behind the “wrong direction” of the country as compared to the rising prices. A separate poll²⁸³ demonstrates that only (3 percent) of the national sample believe that political reform is the main problem Jordan is facing at the present.

The Researcher attributes this public leaning to two mutually dependent factors: Firstly, in a trade-off between political emancipation (reform) and security, regional turmoil has convinced Jordanians to highly appreciate the level of security they enjoy. Secondly, the regime would only enact reform commensurate to public and international pressure; ultimately citizens giving up on the regime being serious in

²⁸¹ Conducted by Identity Center between February 15th & March 15th, 2013; national sample 1200; error margin \pm 3%. Source: <http://www.identity-center.org/sites/default/files/A1.pdf> accessed on July 13th, 2013.

²⁸² International Conference on the Socio-Economic Dimension of the Syrian Conflict- Impact of Syrian Crisis on Jordan, by Yusuf Mansur (PhD), 4 July 2013. Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/YusufMansur1/inter-conference-on-the-socio-economic-27> accessed on October 17th, 2013.

²⁸³ Conducted by Center for Strategic Studies between October 17th & 22nd, 2012; sample 2500; error margin \pm 2.5%. Source: <http://www.css-jordan.org/Photos/634865918864430429.pdf> accessed on July 14th, 2013.

enacting real reform. Add more to this the fact that the average longevity of the cabinets in the past decade is 18 months, rendering any strategy to act out reform or structural developmental policies volatile. Therefore, the worshippers who have doubts that the mosque speech can significantly change the course of things have no penchant to prime 'reform' as a theme to attract attention to while performing their customary religious duty, neither do they expect complex political issues to be deconstructed or find their recipe through Friday sermons. This furnishes for the reading why reform is the lowest on the ladder of interests by the worshippers.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Friday congregational sermon represents the centerpiece of the mosque's function; the medium through which different actors (preacher, audience, State, law as institution, worshippers and society at large) interrelate to convey or receive messages of religious essence and worldly influence.

Thematic analysis of 24 attended sermons depict that the preachers embed messages that serve as a framework to endorse a certain definition for the subject issue, suggest a causal interpretation in a religious structure, furnish for a moral evaluation, and recommend a certain worldly-wise or soteriological treatment for. Throughout this process the preacher intends to reinforce, validate or deny certain values, symbols, beliefs, legitimacies or behaviors in society by means of, mostly, premeditated selection and salience of the message and the attributes of this message. The end is that the priority of this message be embraced by the worshippers, and its attributes (characteristics) move from the agenda of the preacher to the *umma* at large.

The spiritual essence of the sermon provides a framing tool for the preacher to tackle worldly concerns of the worshippers (personal, political, social or economic) in such as way as to bestow legitimacy upon or delegitimize certain values, symbols or institutions. This framing technique also works as a hedge against unnecessary clash with the pertinent regulations, and is filled with content drawn from the mutual expectations between the preacher and his pious audience.

Having achieved its objectives from pertinent regulations, the State invests in content which at times trespasses these regulations and values of society in order to achieve the more pressing need to control the religious space and employ it to

reinforce the legitimacy of the regime by crowding out political competitors. Price (1994) contends that,

“The market for loyalties has existed everywhere and at all times. What differs about today’s market is the range of participants, the scope of its boundaries, and the nature of the regulatory bodies capable of establishing and enforcing rules for participation and exclusion.”

In a realpolitik of an oligopoly nature (State and Muslim Brotherhood), the Researcher deems the influence of this speech as affirmative to the legitimacy of the regime by helping it crowd out the political competitor(s) and limit their ability to shape public opinion. On the long run however, this approach would result in the concentration of powers in the hand of the regime, ultimately weakening a healthy collective bargaining process for the shuffle of allegiances in the religious sphere. This is being done by the State diminishing the role of the administrative arm (ministry of awqaf) to ensure the mosque conducts mere ritualistic functions, while relegating the task of reining in noncompliant preachers to the security apparatus.

However, the preacher can circumvent this atmosphere of political gravitation by framing the sermon; to wit, by interrelate the message to an ever changing political context aided by expectations of an ostensibly dormant but highly religious audience. On the other hand, the worshipper is not a mere recipient of a sacralized message, but a co-maker who has a say in the shuffle for loyalties in the religious marketplace. A process of historical cultivation of a predominantly religious culture and an interactive media landscape render the worshipper (whether radical Islamist who disavows the State as apostate, or a pro-regime activist) immune to political gravitations between the State and other contestants in the religious domain; a notion evident in the worshipper being able to demystify the real motives behind the changing State regulations and their counter reactions by the preacher, therefore bridging the gap between a mono-directional religious speech and an interactive public sphere.

With regard to covering content germane to the religious sphere, the media in Jordan enjoys relative freedom, as State censorship to mosque-related news appears limited to the *awqaf* officials bemoaning a State-friendly newspaper which had trespassed the customary tradition of self censorship. This is also apparent in the high number of comments by the readers/users who criticize both the government and Islamic opposition. However, this pseudo environment of freedom seems limited to the electronic news websites, whereas newspapers, whether mainstream or independent (such as Al Arab Al Yawm) all lack inclusion of the readers in media accountability practices, apparently due to the lack of citizens' trust in traditional media.²⁸⁴ The supra case of the ministry of *awqaf* reprimanding a mainstream newspaper for publishing criticism to a purportedly 'hate speech' in the sermon is just one case²⁸⁵.

Public opposition to governmental policies in the press and online media does not necessarily translate into support for or sympathy with the Muslim Brotherhood movement; a possible indication the public does not directly attribute the degradation in the quality of Friday congregational sermons to the fact that the movement's preachers have been ostracized, nor is the public keen to see those preachers reassume their lost task of preaching and guidance at mosques.

²⁸⁴ Pies, J. & Madanat, P. (June 2011). Beyond State Regulation: How Online Practices Contribute to Holding the Media Accountable in Jordan, p. 36.

Source: http://www.mediaact.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/WP4/WP4_Jordan.pdf

Journalism Research and Development Centre, University of Tampere, Finland 2011.

²⁸⁵ By the end of this study, in August 2015, the Islamic daily newspaper As-Sabeel (Muslim Brotherhood) published a news about 150 Imams and preachers bemoaning "*an ofensing reprimand*" to them by the Amman *awqaf* director who, in his meeting with them, held them responsible for the week attendance in Friday sermon and its "*zero influence on human behavior and the development process*" and that "*the lack of preparation for their sermons has resulted in the great majority of citizens believing they go for Friday prayers merely out of an imposed obligation*". The link to this news was later on dropped <http://www.assabeel.net/local/item/127899-%D8%A3%D8%A6%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%91%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%AD> and checking with the newspaper they referred this censorship to pressure by the *awqaf* director. The news appears in another link accessed on August 31st, 2015. <http://www.almejharnews.com/index.php?page=article&id=119747>

Although the movement's preachers are replete with sound *fiqh* and politically loaded speech, worshippers are content with sermons that nourish their yearning for jurisprudence and religious teaching rather than diatribes that arouse public sentiments. As shown in a quantitative tool (questionnaire), the worshippers do not expect the preacher to come up a methodological solution for complex political issues, be they local or regional, as this task is elusive even to the political parties, therefore the dichotomy between citizens' disagreement with then changing State regulations (2006) and the vindication of the Muslim Brotherhood movement as the prime victim of State policies which had censored the religious speech and limited the movement's reach.

A close field study by means of 'participant observation' shows that the impact of the changing mosque regulations are being offset by the preachers' ability to circumvent State expansion by means of framing the sermon content, and the worshippers' strong affinity to the corpus of Islamic teaching and tradition, a reference which defies attempts by the State or preachers to instill a patri-oriented Islam that dwarfs the role of the mosque (and *khutba* as its prime message) to sheer religiosity when the dynamic political context requires the mosque to shoulder the all-inclusive task it used to shoulder during the early Islamic periods.

This conclusion is corroborated by interviews with concerned actors which reveal that the Hashemite Jordanian regime (which relies on religiosity as an indispensable pillar to uphold its legitimacy) has managed to diminish the role of the religious establishment (ministry of *awqaf*) to the extent that it stands defiant to the mosque shouldering its historical role of edifying the *umma* in all aspects, including political. Islamic parties and movements which participate in political life, Muslim Brotherhood in particular, are being directly affected by the new regulations which have juxtaposed an internationally driven scheme to rein in the radical religious speech, whereas other more extremist schools of thought (whether anti-State preachers or scholars who work within the confines of the

regime) appear to be indifferent about attempts by the State to censor religious speech. These groups with loose patriarchal structure appear to be more adept than the Muslim Brotherhood movement in adapting their modus operandi and the plasticity to invent new schemes to circumvent State control. On the other side the regime has proved it is keener to dwarf the Muslim Brotherhood movement (which contests the strategic policies of the government such as the peace treaty with Israel [1994] or challenge the regime during the Arab Spring (2010-2013)) than to reign in the more radical jihadist stream, even though the latter group disavows the very legitimacy of the regime. This is a telltale the State is more concerned with exercising monopoly over the religious space and its spillover in the public sphere than in curbing 'hate speech' in tandem with the Western war against terrorism. A close ogle on dissonant speech at mosques postulates the State prefers to nurture a manageable radical speech than have it metamorphose into makeshift mosques used by the jihadist stream to emerge as another contestant and defiant of the State's legitimacy. This notion defies the pretext the government had postulated to change the relevant legislations.

The overall evaluation by the worshippers to the performance of the preacher and the sermon content is relatively good, giving more credit to issues of religious nature or societal/behavioral but less so with themes of economic or political essence. Worshippers also attest to the influence of the sermon on their perception of reality and their personal life; a postulation more evident in the "communal" sphere than the "individual". This active role by the audience is upheld by framing researchers such as Entman (2010:333) who puts forth that,

"Although they are generally the least conscious and strategic of the frame choosers in the system, citizens are not passive receptacles for whatever frame dominates the media"

Just as Entman suggests a feedback by public opinion that ultimately influence the future framing behavior of the elites in power and the communicator, so this study posits that the worshippers, as a congregation, do impact the framing performance

of the mosque preacher. This tendency speaks of the congregation being content with a preacher who would nourish their religious needs and answers queries about life in a religious frame, therefore enhancing a sense of unanimity rather than eccentricity and social seclusion. What engenders this inference is the propensity among the worshippers to prioritize listening to speech that tickles their religiously-driven patriotic nostalgia (Palestine, al-Aqsa mosque, jihad) and/or addresses their imminent socioeconomic life-felt needs.

In a setting with high Islamic presence and activism (Zarqa city) including several radical Islamic groups, the worshippers do not perceive radical discourse or negative label about other faith groups as 'hate speech'; a telltale of a tight State control over the religious sphere by means of premeditated selection, salience and/or exclusion. But given the frequency of negative stereotypes and 'hate speech' uttered against other ethnic and religious groups in the thematic analysis part (see Chapter Three), one other explanation is the worshippers not perceiving this speech as radical or targeting other religious groups in society (mainly Christians) given the sacralized frame the sermon is being engulfed with. What upholds this conclusion is the "participant observation" part which rules out any negative perception or stance towards the Researcher by the participating Informants.

To conclude, a State's natural penchant to monopolize the religious space is offset by the preachers' competence to outwit this statecraft by means of framing techniques meant to imprint their preselected agenda of sermon themes and the attributes of these themes on the worshippers' schema. This official tendency is also offset by preachers being tied up to the prior expectations of an informed, albeit static, audience. This audience also has the wit to fathom the officialdom's scheme thanks to multifarious available reference sources they can resort to in order to interpret and reinterpret controversial religious content. Through this process of framing contest the audience integrates the perceived message into packages forged by means of their personal experiences and discussions with

others in the religious space and the public sphere. Therefore, none of the frames can exclusively shape the opinion of the worshippers (Nisbet 2010: 47 & 48) as these frames can gain effectiveness in as much as they resonate with the audience's prevalent popular culture and their strongly held value constructs such as ideology, political affiliation or religious belief. This conclusion condones a late acknowledgement by Habermas regarding the process through which norms are being produced in society. Habermas, cited in Salvatore & Eickelman (2004: 6), put forth that,

“the process through which norms are produced, which reflect general interest and create an “overlapping consensus” in society, can only be rooted in tradition, familiarity, and culture, through which individuals internalize the procedure of consensus [...] The communicative presuppositions for generating such a consensus are not the privilege of a particular culture”

The losers in this shuffle of allegiances' game are the major actors, namely State and Muslim Brotherhood. A security-driven policy by the former to reign in religious speech would weaken its capacity to maintain the delicate balance between religiosity and modernity (both prerequisites and pillars for legitimacy), and the latter has failed to construct and deliver a convincing religious speech tantamount to its *dawa* project. The spillover is the preacher and the congregation reaching an implicit consensus in setting the agenda for the sermon theme, and the attributes of content embedded in this sermon.

Hopefully, this eight years' research project has managed to employ qualitative and quantitative research tools to add academic value to an underestimated subject regarding the interesting interplay between religious speech, media and state in Jordan. Further scholarship is indispensable to analyze how framing and agenda setting, in a sociological approach, are used to construct meaning necessary to shape the worshippers' perception of reality.

This conclusion opens opportunities for questions related to the nature of the agenda settings of both the state and the leaders of the Friday sermons concerning their functions and viability. The Researcher recommends that a team of researchers equipped with sound knowledge and experience in ethnography, critique-based and quantitative scholarship further fathoms this interdisciplinary field in order to unravel how the agenda-setting, framing and priming processes work together to shape public opinion in an Arab and Islamic context. A Western vs. Middle-Eastern comparative approach is advisable to test the reliability of the agenda-setting theory on an international scale.

The lack of academia and think-tank circles in Jordan and the Arab world renders this quest all the more indispensable to reify the abstract religious sphere and normalize this taboo-considered field of knowledge.

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GLOSSARY OF THE ARABIC/ISLAMIC WORDS

Adh n: ““announcement”, a technical term for the call to the divine service of Friday and the five daily al ts. According to Mussulman tradition, the Prophet soon after his arrival at Medina (1 or 2 years after the Hidjra) deliberated with his companions on the best manner of announcing to the faithful the hour of prayer.”
http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/adhan-SIM_0318?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=adhan

Ahl al-Bait: ““the people of the house, of the family“. With reference to or n, xxxiii.33, the Sh ites (and in general the Mu ammedans friendly to Al) attribute to Al , F ima, their sons and their descendants to whom alone they restrict this appellation, the greatest moral and spiritual merits as well as the greatest influence on the political rule and religious guidance of Isl m. These ideas come to the surface in a more or less exaggerated form with regard to the Al des according to the views of those spheres [see sh a].”
http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/ahl-al-bait-SIM_0394?s.num=14&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=ahl+

Ahl al- Kit b: “the people of the Book“. Mu ammed calls so the Jews and Christians, in distinction from the heathens, on account of their possessing divine books of revelation (Tawr t = Torah; Zab r = Psalter; Indjil = Gospel), which, it is true, they transmit in a falsified form, but the recognition of which secures for them a privileged position for the heterodox. In contradistinction to the heathens Mu ammed granted them (Kor n, ix. 29) after their submission free public worship against payment of a poll-tax (djizya, q. v.)”.
http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/ahl-al-kitab-SIM_0401?s.num=3&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=kitab

Ahزاب (hizb): “(pl. a z b) means primarily “a group, faction, a group of supporters of a man who share his ideas and are ready to defend him”, and this is why the term has been adopted in modern Arabic to mean a political party; it means also “part, portion” and it is from this meaning that it has come to indicate a portion of the Qur’an as well as a group of liturgical formulae.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/hizb-SIM_2914?s.num=1&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=ahzab+

Al-Aqsa Mosque (al-Masjid al- k): “literally, “the remotest sanctuary.” There are three meanings to these words.1. The words occur in Qur’an, XVII, 1: “Praise Him who made His servant journey in the night (asr) from the sacred sanctuary (al-masjid al- ar m) to the remotest sanctuary (al-masjid al-a a), which we have surrounded with blessings to show him of our signs.” This verse, usually considered to have been revealed during the Prophet’s last year in Mecca before the Hidjra, is very difficult to explain within the context of the time.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-masjid-al-aksa-SIM_4998?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=al-Aqsa+

Al-F ti a: “the first and most popular S ra in the Qur’an). Its name means the “opener” (i. e. of the Qur’an). This short S ra which only contains seven verses has a certain number of peculiar features; it is at the beginning of the book, while all the other short S ras are at the end; it is in the form of a prayer while the others are in the form of a sermon or lecture; in reciting it the word am n (amen) is added to it, which is not done in any of the others.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/fatiha-SIM_2326?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=fatiha++

Al-Isra' wal Mi'raj: (Isr) "The term isr is taken from the Qur'an, S'ra xvii. 1: "Glory to Him who caused His servant to journey by night (asr bi' abdihi lailan) from the sacred place of worship to the further place of worship, which We have encircled with blessings, in order that We might show him some of our signs! Verily He (i. e. God) is the Hearer and the Beholder".

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/isra-SIM_3251?s.num=0&s.q=isra

All h: "God the Unique one, the Creator and Lord of the Judgment, polarizes the thought of Islam; He is the sole reason for its existence. ¶ All h was known to the pre-Islamic Arabs; he was one of the Meccan deities, possibly the supreme deity and certainly a creator-god (cf. Qur'an, xiii, 16; xxix, 61, 63; xxxi, 25; xxxix, 38; xliii, 87). He was already known, by antonomasia, as the God, al-Il h (the most likely etymology; another suggestion is the Aramaic Al h).—For All h before Islam, as shown by archaeological sources and the Qur'an, see il h ."

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=allah&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Am r: "commander, governor, prince. The term seems to be basically Islamic (Na'ii, 7, 964; Ibn Durayd, jamhara, iii, 437. In the Qur'an, only the expression ulu 'l-amr is found (s'ra iv, 59, 83), but am r occurs often in traditions (cf. Wensinck, Concordance, s.v.). The sources for the early period frequently use the terms mil [q.v.] and am r as synonyms (cf. Hamidullah, Documents, 36, 38 and 39, 83). In the reports on the meeting of the sa'fa, am r is used for the head of the Muslim community (abar I, 1840, 1841; Ibn Sa'd, II, 3, 126, 129)."

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/amir-SIM_0602?s.num=12&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=emir

Aya: "plu. y t, a sign, token, miracle, verse of the Qur'an. The original meaning is a sign or token and as such is found in the pre-Islamic poetry."

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=aya+&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Awqaf (waqf): “in Islamic law, the act of founding a charitable trust, and, hence the trust itself. A synonym, used mainly by Maliki jurists, is *habous*, *ubus* or *ubs* (in French often rendered as *habous*). The essential elements are that a person, with the intention of committing a pious deed, declares part of his or her property to be henceforth unalienable (*habous*, *tabous*) and designates persons or public utilities as beneficiaries of its yields (*al-ta'addu bi'l-manfa'a*, *tasbi' al-manfa'a*).”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=awqaf&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Basmala: “is the formula *bi-smi ll-hi l-ra m ni l-ra mi*, also called *tasmiya* (to pronounce the [divine] Name). Common translation: “In the name of God, the Clement, the Merciful”; R. Blachère’s translation: “In the name of God, the Merciful Benefactor”, etc. The formula occurs twice in the text of the *Qur'an*: in its complete form in *Sura xxvii*, 30, where it opens Solomon’s letter to the queen of Sheba: “It is from Solomon and reads: In the name of God, the Merciful Benefactor.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.num=0&s.rows=20&s.mode=DEFAULT&s.f.s2_parent=encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.au=&s.excl=&s.sub=&s.start=0&s.q=basmala+&s.head=

Bayt Mal al-Muslimeen (Bayt al-Mal): “in its concrete meaning “the House of wealth”, but particularly, in an abstract sense, the “fiscus” or “treasury” of the Muslim State.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/bayt-al-mal-COM_0109?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=to+bayt+mal+al-muslimeen+

Dawa: “, pl. *da'awat*, from the root *da'*, to call, invite, has the primary meaning call or invitation. In the *Qur'an*, XXX, 24, it is applied to the call to the dead to rise

from the tomb on the day of Judgement. It also has the sense of invitation to a meal and, as a result, of a meal with guests, *wal ma* : al-Bukhārī, Nikāḥ, 71, 74; LA, xviii, 285. It also means an appeal to God, prayer, vow...”.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=dawa+&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

jamā'a: “(literally, “union, unity”) “the whole body of Muslims, in opposition to the heretics, who are separated from the community as seceders” (Juynboll, *Handbuch des Islamischen Gesetzes*, p. 46, note 1). It is not to be confused with *idjma'*, the consensus of Muslim scholars of a particular period.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/djamaa-SIM_1960?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=%E1%B8%8Ej%CC%B2am%C4%81%CA%BFa

Du'a: “appeal, invocation (addressed to God) either on behalf of another or for oneself (li...), or else against someone (al...); hence: prayer of invocation, calling either for blessing, or for imprecation and cursing, connected with the Semitic idea of the effective value of the spoken word. Cf. Qur'an XVII, 11: “Man prays for evil as he prays for good”. *Du'a* therefore will have the general sense of personal prayer addressed to God, and can often be translated as “prayer of request”.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/dua-COM_0195?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=dua

Duat (Dawād, rarely, *dā'iya*): “he who summons” to the true faith, was a title used among several dissenting Muslim groups for their chief propagandists. It was evidently used by the early Mu'tazilites [q.v. in EI 1]; but became typical of the more rebellious among the Shi'ites. It appears in the Abbasid mission in Khurasan; and in some Zaydi usage. It was ascribed to followers of Abu 'l-Khaṭṭāb. It was especially important in the Isma'ili and associated movements (which were called

da wa , “summons”), where it designated generically the chief authorized representatives of the imām.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/dai-SIM_1668?s.num=0&s.q=dai

Eid (d): “festival. The word is derived by the Arab lexicographers from the root and explained as “the (periodically) returning”. But it is really one of those Aramaic loanwords, which are particularly numerous in the domain of religion; cf. for example the Syriac d “festival, holiday”. The Muslim year has two canonical festivals, the d al-a [q. v.] or “sacrificial festival” on the 10th hu ’l- idjja and the d al-fi r “festival of breaking the fast” on the 1st Shawwal.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/id-SIM_3111?s.num=7&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=raka

Fatw : “opinion on a point of law, the term “law” applying, in Islam, to all civil or religious matters. The act of giving a fatw is a futy or ift ; —the same term is used to denote the profession of the adviser;—the person who gives a fatw , or is engaged in that profession, is a muft ;—the person who asks for a fatw is a mustaft .”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/fatwa-COM_0219?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=fatwa

Fiqh (Fi h): (“intelligence, knowledge”) is the name given to jurisprudence in Islām. It is, like the *jurisprudentia* of the Romans, *rerum divinarum atque kumanarum notitia* and in its widest sense covers all aspects of religious, political and civil life. In addition to the laws regulating ritual and religious observances (ib d t), as far as concerns performance and abstinence, it includes the whole field of family law, the law of inheritance, of property and of contract, in a word provisions for all the legal questions that arise in social life (mu mal t); it also includes criminal law and ...

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/fikh-COM_0055?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=fiqh+

Fitna: “the primary meaning is “putting to the proof, discriminatory test”, as gold, al- jurdj n says in his Ta r f t (ed. Flügel, Leipzig 1845, 171), is tested by fire. Hence the idea of a temptation permitted or sent by God to test the believer’s faith, which, for the man wedded to his desires, would have the appearance of an invitation to abandon the faith. “Your goods and children are fitna ” (ur n, VIII, 28; LXIV, 15). The term fitna occurs many times in the ur n with the sense of temptation or trial of faith.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/fitna-SIM_2389?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=fitna

Ghazwa (Gh z): “plur. ghuz t, one who undertakes a ghazwa, particularly the leader of one; hence an honorary title for one who distinguishes himself in war against the unbelievers”.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/ghazi-SIM_2466?s.num=1&s.q=ghazwa

ad th: “(narrative, talk) with the definite article (al- ad th) is used for Tradition, being an account of what the Prophet said or did, or of his tacit approval of something said or done in his presence. Khabar (news, information) is sometimes used of traditions from the Prophet, sometimes from Companions or Successors. Athar , pl. th r (trace, vestige), usually refers to traditions from Companions or Successors, but is sometimes used of traditions from the Prophet. Sunna (custom) refers to a normative custom of the Prophet or of the early community.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=hadith&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Hajj (adjdj): “pilgrimage to Mecca, Araf t and Min , the fifth of the five “pillars” (ark n) of Islam. It is also called the Great Pilgrimage in contrast to the umra [q.v.]

or Little Pilgrimage. Its annual observance has had, and continues to have, a profound influence on the Muslim world. Those not taking part follow the pilgrims in thought; the religious teachers, and nowadays the press, radio and television help them...”.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/hadjj-COM_0249

Hizbu'ttahrir: “Taki al-Din al-Nabhani (1909-77), founder and chief ideologue of the Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al-tahrir al-islami), which has striven since its formation in 1952 to establish an Islamic state and has been particularly active in Jordan. Al-Nabhani was born near Haifa, studied at al-Azhar and the Dar al-Ulum in Cairo (1927-32), then returned to Palestine, where he taught religious sciences and worked in Islamic law courts.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/taki-al-din-al-nabhani-SIM_7339?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=hizb+tahrir

ikhwan (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin): “the Muslim Brethren”, Muslim movement, both religious and political, founded in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna. Many facets of the history of the Muslim Brethren are still unknown, which is to be expected since the movement engaged in many secret activities, on several occasions threatening the established régimes and being persecuted by them, many notorious militant members of it being now (1969) either in exile or living under police supervision in their own countries.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=ikhwan&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Iqama (Iqama): “is the second call to the al-t which is pronounced by the mu adhdhin in the mosque before each of the five prescribed daily al-t's as well as before the al-t at the Friday service. This second call gives the moment at which the al-t begins. The formulae of the iqama are the same as those of the

adh n [q. v.]. According ¶ to the anaf s, they are repeated as often as in the adh n; according to the other Fi h schools, they are pronounced only once with the exception of the words “God is great”, which are repeated twice at the beginning as well as at the end of the i ma.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/ikama-SIM_3140?s.num=0&s.rows=20&s.mode=DEFAULT&s.f.s2_parent=encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.start=0&s.q=iqamat

add: “(plural ud d), boundary, limit, stipulation, also barrier, obstacle. As a scientific term the word is used in several senses. In the or n, where it is always found in the plural, it means the “limits” laid down by God, i. e. the provisions of the Law, whether commands or prohibitions. It appears in this sense at the end of several verses, which contain legal provisions, e. g. S ra ii. 183, where it is said after the exposition of the rules regarding fasts: “These are God’s ud d (the bounds prescribed by God), come not too near them” (lest ye be in danger of crossing them).”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/hadd-SIM_2571?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=hadd

Iqamat Al Hadd/Hudud (Punishments): “a class of punishments prescribed by the Quran and the sunna for crimes considered to be against God. Although interpretations by Islamic jurists vary, such crimes commonly include theft, adultery, making unproven accusations of adultery, consuming intoxicants, armed robbery and apostasy. The prescribed punishments range from lashes to banishment to death. Strict evidence is required for conviction, such as four credible eyewitnesses to prove adultery. In addition, the crime must have been committed by a willful and sane adult.”

<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-appb/>

Jibril: “(jabr l, or jibr l, Gabriel, is the best known figure among the angels of Isl m. He is one of the four archangels, one of angels favoured by or “brought near” (mu arrab n) God, and one of the divine messengers. His duty is to bear the orders of God to mortal prophets and to reveal his mysteries to them. Gabriel plays an important part in the or n; Mu ammad applied the legend of this celestial messenger holding converse with the prophets to himself and believed that he had received his mission and the subject of his preaching from him.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/djabrail-SIM_1959?s.num=7&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=djibril

Khutba: “(a.), sermon, address by the kha b [q.v.]. The khu ba has a fixed place in Islamic ritual, viz. in the Friday-service, in the celebration of the two festivals, in services held at particular occasions such as an eclipse or excessive drought. On the Friday it precedes the al t , in all the other services the al t comes first.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/khutba-SIM_4352?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=khutba

Madhhab: “(pl. madh hib), inf. n. of dh-h-b , meaning “a way, course, mode, or manner, of acting or conduct or the like” (Lane, i, 983b); as a term of religion, philosophy, law, etc. “a doctrine, a tenet, an opinion with regard to a particular case”; and in law specifically, a technical term often translated as “school of law”, in particular one of the four legal systems recognised as orthodox by Sunn Muslims, viz. the anafiyya, M likiyya, Sh fi iyya and anbaliyya [q.vv.], and the Sh ja far and Zaydiyya legal schools.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/madhhab-SIM_8798?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=madhhab

Minbar: “the raised structure or pulpit from which solemn announcements to the Muslim community were made and from which sermons were preached. 1. Early historical evolution and place in the Islamic cult. In contrast to the mi r b [q.v.],

the minbar was introduced in the time of the Prophet himself. The word, often pronounced mimbar (cf. Brockelmann, Grundriss , i, 161), comes from the root n-b-r “high”; it could be derived from the Arabic quite easily with the meaning “elevation, stand”, but is more probably a loanword from the Ethiopie (Schwally, in ZDMG, lii [1898], 146-8; Nöldeke, Neue Be...”).

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/minbar-COM_0744?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=minbar

Mi r dj: “originally ladder, later “ascent”, especially Mu ammad’s ascension to heaven. In the ū r n, S ra lxxxi. 19—25 and liii. I—12, a vision is described in which a heavenly messenger appears to Mu ammad and S ra liii. 12-18 deals with a second message of a similar kind. In both cases the Prophet sees a heavenly figure approach him from the distance but there is no suggestion that he himself was carried off.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/miradj-SIM_4682?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=miradj+

Mu all : “the noun of place from all “to perform the Muslim worship, al t [q.v.]”, hence the place where the al t is performed on certain occasions. When Mu ammad had fixed his abode in Medina, he performed the ordinary al ts in his d r , which was also his masjid (not in the sense of temple).”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/musalla-COM_0806?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=musalla

Mushrikun (Shirk): “a term from the religious vocabulary, of ū r nic origin, which signifies the act of “associating” with God, in other words, accepting the presence at His side of other divinities; it may be translated either literally, by associationism or, in more explicit fashion, by polytheism. In numerous instances in the ū r n

there is criticism of the “associators” (al-mushrik n, 42 occurrences; also encountered nine times is the phrase alladh na ashrak), defined as those who invoke (yad na), adopt (yattakhidh na) and worship (ya bud na), besides God (min d ni 'll h)...”.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shirk-SIM_6965?s.num=0&s.rows=20&s.mode=DEFAULT&s.f.s2_parent=encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.start=0&s.q=mushrikun

Na ar : “Christians, more especially the adherents of the Oriental churches living under Muslim rule (differentiated from R m “Greek Christians”, Ifrandj “Western Christians”). The word is derived from the Syriac Na r y (Horovitz, Koran. Untersuchungen, p. 144 sqq.); the Arabic singular is Na r n .”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/nasara-COM_0094?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=nasara

Quran (al- ur n): “the Muslim scripture, containing the revelations recited by Mu ammad and preserved in a fixed, written form. The earliest attested usage of the term ur n is in the ur n itself, where it occurs about 70 times with a variety of meanings. Most Western scholars have now accepted the view developed by F. Schwally (Gesch. des Qor., i, 33 f.) and others that ur n is derived from the Syriac ery n , “scripture reading, lesson”, as used in Christian liturgy”.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=kuran&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Rib : “lit. increase, as a technical term, usury and interest, and in general any unjustified increase of capital for which no compensation is given. Derivatives from the same root are used in other Semitic languages to describe interest. In classical Islamic law. Transactions with a fixed time limit and payment of interest, as well as speculations of all kinds, formed an essential element in the highly developed trading system of Mecca”.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/riba-COM_0918?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=riba+

Salafiyya: “a neo-orthodox brand of Islamic reformism, originating in the late 19th century and centred on Egypt, aiming to regenerate Islam by a return to the tradition represented by the “pious forefathers” (al-salaf al- li , hence its name) of the Primitive Faith.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=salafi+&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

al t: “ritual prayer. Unlike other types of prayer—in particular the prayer of supplication [see du], the remembrance of the Divine Names [see dhikr] or f confraternities’ litanies [see wurd]—the al t , principal prayer of Islam, forms part of the ib d t or cultic obligations. The word clearly derives from the Syriac el t “prayer” and had adopted its Arabic form before the Islamic period (see Jeffery, 198-9).”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/salat-COM_0983?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=salat+

Salat al-Istikhara (Istikh ra): “deriving from a root kh-y-r which expresses the idea of option or choice, consists of entrusting God with the choice between two or more possible options, either through piety and submission to His will, or else through inability to decide oneself, on account of not knowing which choice is the most advantageous one. To the first category belong the akhy r or “chosen”, who regulate their lives according to the model inspired by God in the ur n and the Law; to the second belong the mustakh r n , those who seek to escape from indecision with the help of divine inspiration.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/istikhara-SIM_3682?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=Istikhara

Salat al-Tarawih (Tar w): “pl. of tarw a, the term for al t s which are performed in the nights of the month of Rama n. Tradition says that Mu ammad held these prayers in high esteem, with the precaution, however, that their performance should not become obligatory (al-Bukh r , Tar w , trad. 3). Umar is said to have been the first to assemble behind one ri those who performed their prayers in the mosque of Medina singly or in groups (loc. cit., trad. 2); he is also said to have preferred the first part of the night for these pious exercises.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/tarawih-SIM_7407?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=tarawih

awm: “with iy m, ma dar from the root s-w-m; the two terms are used indiscriminately. The original meaning of the word in Arabic is “to be at rest” (Th. Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge zur sem. Sprachw.*, Strassburg 1910, 36, n. 3; see previously, S. Fränkel, *De vocab. ... in Corano peregrinis*, Leiden 1880, 20: “quiescere”). The meaning “fasting” may have been taken from Judaeo-Aramaic and Syriac usage, when Mu ammad became better acquainted with the institution of fasting in Medina; This is the sense of the word in the *Medinan s ras*”.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/sawm-COM_1008?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=sawm

Shafi'i: “al-Sh fi iyya, a legal school (madhhab) of Sunn Islam whose members claim to follow the teachings of the Im m al-Sh fi r (d. 204/820 [q.v.]), Origins (first half of the 3rd/9th century). The issue of the institution of the Sn fi madhhab remains poorly understood, and it poses a series of problems, fundamental as well as chronological, which are not confined to this school alone, applying in an identical manner to the emergence of other legal schools within the Islamic legal system.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-shafiiyya-COM_1021?s.num=3&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=shafii

Shahadatayn (Tashahhud): “verbal noun of form V of sh-h-d, the recitation of the shah da [q.v.], especially in the al t [q.v.]. It must, however, be kept in mind that in this case shah da comprises not only the kalimat n, but (1) the following formula: “To God belong the blessed salutations and the good prayers”; (2) the formula “Hail upon thee, O Prophet, and God’s mercy and His blessing; hail upon us and upon God’s pious servants”; and (3) the shah da proper, consisting of the kalimat n.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=kalamat%C4%81n&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Shari’a¹: “Sharia, or Islamic law, offers moral and legal guidance for nearly all aspects of life – from marriage and divorce, to inheritance and contracts, to criminal punishments. Sharia, in its broadest definition, refers to the ethical principles set down in Islam’s holy book (the Quran) and examples of actions by the Prophet Muhammad (sunna). The Islamic jurisprudence that comes out of the human exercise of codifying and interpreting these principles is known as fiqh. Muslim scholars and jurists continue to debate the boundary between sharia and fiqh as well as other aspects of Islamic law.”

¹ Fiqh: literally means knowledge or intellect. In Islam it refers to the corpus of jurisprudential principles that cover all aspects of civic, spiritual, legal and political life. Hashem (2009:14) clarifies the difference between Fiqh and shari’a in that “*The Shari’ah is the overall organizing moral and practical principles within the Islamic outlook. Although sometimes erroneously translated as “Islamic law,” such a definition might be more appropriate to the Islamic term, fiqh. Yet even fiqh does not qualify the legal description, for it is not connected to the state and there is no attached mechanism of enforcement. Fiqh is the corpus of the ulama’s understandings of social, economic, political, as well as personal conduct based on what they understood from the Qur’an and Sunnah (the tradition of Prophet Muhammad). Therefore, fiqh might be described as the ulama’s socio-legal accounts as exist on the books.*” One example Hashem (p.23) drives to differentiate between shariah and fiqh is the following: “Properly understood, the Shari’ah stands as a comprehensive body of generative principles and directives that reflect Islam’s moral outlook, social philosophy, and legal precepts. It is not the Shari`ah principles that really raise questions about gender; rather, it is the fiqh (the corpus of jurisprudential writings) that try to apply Shari’ah principles in a specific time and space.”

<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/>

Shiite (Shi'a): "in the broad sense, refers to the movement upholding a privileged position of the Family of the Prophet (ahl al-bayt [q.v.]) in the political and religious leadership of the Muslim Community. The name is derived from shi'at 'Alī, i.e. the party or partisans of 'Alī, which was first used in the inter-Muslim war during 'Alī's caliphate distinguishing them from the shi'at Uthmān, the partisans of the murdered caliph Uthmān opposed to 'Alī."

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shia-SIM_6920?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=Shia

Sunna: "(a. pl. sunan; see above, s.v. sunan, for a different connotation), an ancient Arabian concept that was to play an increasingly important role during the formative centuries of Islam, acquiring a range of interrelated nuances. Eventually, some time after the preaching of Islam had begun, the term sunna came to stand for the generally approved standard or practice introduced by the Prophet as well as the pious Muslims of olden days, and at the instigation of al-Shāfi'ī, the sunna of the Prophet was awarded the position of the second root (aḥādīth) of Islamic law, the shar'īa ..."

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=sunna+&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Ta'awwudh: "means the use of the phrase aḥdhu bi'illāhi min ... "I take refuge with God against...", followed by the mention of the thing that the utterer of the phrase fears or abhors. The term isti'dhā "seeking refuge", is often used as a synonym. The phrase, with variants, is well attested in the Qur'ān, in particular in the last two sūras which each consist of one extended ta'awwudh [see al-mu'awwidhat n 1]. The litany-like enumeration of evil things in the first of the two foreshadows similar strains in a number of Prophetic invocations recorded in the ḥadīth".

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ta-awwud-h-SIM_7243?s.num=0&s.rows=20&s.mode=DEFAULT&s.f.s2_parent=encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.start=0&s.q=taawwudh

Tafsir: “pl. taf s r, explanation, commentary, verbal form: fassara to explain.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/tafsir-SIM_5605?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=tafsir

Tahil: “the verbal noun from hallala, form II verb, with two differing etymologies and meanings. (1) From hil l, the new moon, meaning “jubilation or excitement at seeing the new moon” [see hil l. i; talbiya]. (2) From the formula la il ha ill ’ll h, the first and main element of the Islamic profession of faith or shah da [q.v.]. The verbal form is here obtained by the so-called procedure of na t “cutting out, carving out”. The tah l then denotes the pronouncing, in a high and intelligible voice, of the formula in question, which implies formal and basic recognition of the divine unity.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.num=0&s.rows=20&s.mode=DEFAULT&s.f.s2_parent=encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.au=&s.excl=&s.sub=&s.start=0&s.q=tahlil+&s.head=

Takbir: “verbal noun of form II from the root k-b-r in the denominative sense, to pronounce the formula All hu akbar. It is already used in this sense in the sur n (e.g. LXXIV, 3; XVII, 111 with God as the object).”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/takbir-SIM_7330?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=Takb%C4%ABr

Takfir: “the verbal noun from the form II verb kaffara “to declare someone a k fir or unbeliever”. 1. General definition. From earliest Islamic times onwards, this was an accusation hurled at opponents by sectarians and zealots, such as the Kh ridjites [q.v.]; but a theologian like al-Ghaz l [q.v.] held that, since the

adoption of kufr was the equivalent here of apostasy, entailing the death penalty [see murtadd], it should not be lightly made (Fay al-tafri a bayn al-Islam wa 'l-zanda a , quoted in B. Lewis, The political language of Islam, Chicago-London 1988, 85-6).”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/takfir-COM_1154?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=takfir

Ta ya: “caution, fear (see Glossarium to abar , s.v. t- -d) or keitm n, “disguise”, is the technical term for dispensation from the requirements of religion under compulsion or threat of injury. Mu ammad himself avoided suffering in the cause of religion in dogmatics by docetism (S ra iv. 156) and in everyday life by the hidjra and by allowing in case of need the denial of the faith (S ra xvi. 108), friendship with unbelievers (iii. 27) and the eating of forbidden foods (vi. 119; v. 5). This point of view is general in Isl m.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/takiya-SIM_5633?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=takiya

Ta liya: “the invocation of God’s blessing upon the Prophet Mu ammad. The word has many applications, but commonly refers to the section of the tashahhud [q.v.] in the ritual al t [q.v.], following the ta iyya (“greeting”) and ¶ shah da [q.v.], in which the worshipper recites the al t al ’l-nab (ta liya being derived from this sense of “performing the al t”, perhaps). One typical formulation of the ta liya is known as al- alaw t al-ibr h miyya, see al t. III. B. A ta liya is also a part of the response to the adh n [q.v.], also known as the du al-was la.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/tasliya-SIM_7436?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=Ta%E1%B9%A3liya

Taqwa (Ta w): “a term of Islamic religion denoting piety. Ta w is a verbal noun from ta “to fear [God]”, itself a secondary formation from form VIII of w- -y , itta “to fear [God]” (see on this phenomenon, Wright, Arabic grammar, I, § 148

Rem. b). From this same secondary formation is derived the adjective *taqwa*, pl. *atqiy* "pious, God-fearing", in fact a synonym of the form VIII participle *muttaqin*." http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/takwa-COM_1457?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=taqwa

Tawhid: "in the true sense of the term, the act of believing and affirming that God is one and unique (*wahid*), in a word, monotheism. For the Muslim, it is believing and affirming what is stated by the first article of the Muslim profession of faith: "there is no other god but God" (*la ilaha illa Allah*). Often, this first *shahada* is specifically called *kalimat al-tawhid*, just as the name *sirat al-Tawhid* is sometimes given to *sura CXII (al-Ikhlâq)* which declares that God is a *had*, and that He has no equal". http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/tawhid-SIM_7454?s.num=0&s.rows=20&s.mode=DEFAULT&s.f.s2_parent=encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.start=0&s.q=tawhid

Ulama: "pl. of *alim*, active participle of *alima*, "to know, to be aware of", denotes scholars of almost all disciplines (*lugha*, *bayân*, *isbâh*, etc. [q.vv.]). However, the term refers more specifically to the scholars of the religious sciences (*faḥḥ*, *mufassir*, *mufti*, *muaddith*, *mutakallim*, *ri* etc. [q.vv.]), considered here exclusively in the context of Sunnism, where they are regarded as the guardians, transmitters and interpreters of religious knowledge, of Islamic doctrine and law...". http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.q=ulama&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=Search

Umra: "the little pilgrimage". The ceremonies of the (Muslim) *umra*. The *umra*, like the *hajj* [q. v.], can only be performed in a state of ritual purity (*ihram* [q.v.]). On assuming the *ihram*, the pilgrim (*muṭamir*) must make up his mind whether he

is going to perform the umra by itself or in combination with the hajj and express his intention in an appropriate naya [q. v.]”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/umra-SIM_5887?s.num=1&s.q=umra

Zakat: “the obligatory payment by Muslims of a determinate portion of specified categories of their lawful property for the benefit of the poor and other enumerated classes or, as generally in Islamic usage, the portion of property so paid.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/zakat-COM_1377?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=zakat+

Zamzam: “the sacred well of Mecca, also called the well of Isma‘il. It is in al-aram al-sharif S. E. of the Ka‘ba opposite the corner of the sanctuary in which the Black Stone is inserted. It is 140 feet deep and is surmounted by an elegant dome. The pilgrims drink its water as health-giving and take it home with them to give it to the sick. Zamzam in Arabic means “abundant water” and zamzama “to drink by little gulps” and “to mutter through the teeth”. Muslim tradition connects the origin of this well with the story of Abraham.”

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/zamzam-SIM_6074?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=zamzam

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