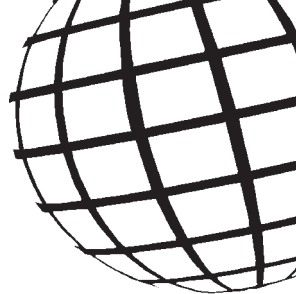


# Contesting Islams: The Emergence of the Revisionist Movement\*



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## Resumen:

El artículo analiza las trayectorias en las que el pensamiento islámico se manifiesta en la política estatal en algunos Estados de Medio Oriente y África del Norte como reacción a la primavera árabe. El objetivo de la publicación es poner de relieve un cambio ideológico en curso en el pensamiento político islámico de una línea radical a una moderada, más secular, cambio que se ha ido consolidando en la última década. El artículo sostiene que tal transformación se da en la forma de movimientos revisionistas capaces de participar en la política del Estado durante la primavera árabe. Además, este documento afirma la necesidad de la supervivencia y la continuación de estos poderes islámicos moderados para demostrar que un modelo islámico moderado secular existe en realidad, y que podría ser una alternativa al discurso islámico radical. Por otro parte, este trabajo mantiene que el derrocamiento de Morsi en el golpe de Estado en Egipto puede llevar, una vez más, a la radicalización de los movimientos islámicos, lo cual implicaría paralizar la evolución y el progreso de la línea moderada del pensamiento político islámico. Esto puede conducir previamente al debilitamiento de los partidos religiosos para luego retornar al modo radical adoptado anteriormente.

## Abstract

This paper examines the trajectories in which Islamic thought manifested itself in state politics in some of the states of the MENA region in light of the Arab Spring. The purpose of this paper is to highlight an ongoing ideological shift in Islamic political thought from a radical to a more secular moderate line of thought, which has been consolidating over the past decade. This paper argues that such an ideological shift is taking place in the form of revisionist movements which were able to engage in state politics during the Arab Spring. In addition, this paper asserts the need for the survival and continuity of these moderate Islamic powers as they prove that a secular moderate Islamic model does in fact exist and could be an alternative to radical Islamic discourse. In addition, this paper argues that the overthrowing of Morsi in a coup d'état in Egypt may lead to re-radicalization and would cripple the evolution and progress of the moderate line of thought within Islam. This may thus lead to the once curbed power of religious parties to resolve to the previously adopted radical mode of thought.

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**Palabras clave:**

Islam radical – Islam moderado – Estado – Primavera Árabe.

**Key Words:**

Radical Islam – Moderate Islam – State – Arab Spring

**Section 1:  
Introduction**

On the morning of October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2011, an incredible event took place in the Arab World. Tunisia, the initial country engulfed by the Arab Spring held their first parliamentary elections. These elections set a new precedent for democracy in the Middle East, a far cry from the authoritarian regimes that had become synonymous with the politics of the region. On Election Day fears of the old system of vote tampering or buying, and other corrupt practices were rampant; yet as the day progressed, suspicion had morphed into enthusiasm. Two days later, the official results announced the moderate Islamist Party *Ennahda* had won the majority of the seats in the parliament. In doing so, they ignited a heated debate on political Islam. The results brought both an escalation and some hesitation from those who had questioned the capacity of moderate Islamists to embrace calls for liberalization and secularization. Apprehension was not focused on the movement's commitment to the democratic process, but rather its commitment to secular law as opposed to the imposition of *sharia law*, as demanded by the protesters during the Arab Spring. In March 2012, *Ennahda* declared that it would not advocate for *sharia* as the main source of legislation in the new constitution. Such a declaration indicated a tendency towards maintaining the secular nature of the state. *Ennahda*'s stance on the issue was criticized by hardline Islamists who demanded a holistic implementation of Islamic Shari'a however; it was warmly welcomed by secular parties.

In November of 2011, that trend would continue with the success of the Party for Justice and Development, headed by Abdelillah Bennkirane, in Morocco as the party acquired roughly 107 seats out of 325 seats according to IFES ([www.electionguide.org](http://www.electionguide.org): 2011). The elections remain an unprecedented step for liberalization in the history of Moroccan politics. However, it is the Islamists that led the way, having more power than any other political party in the history of Morocco.

In the summer of 2012, this time in Egypt; The Freedom and Justice Party, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, also achieved a parliamentary majority. The success of the Brotherhood, a known conservative force in the region, once again questioned the duality of the Islamic and the secular. Was it plausible for the two to act within a single sphere? Or was it true, as some

suggested that the elections were the foundation for an Islamic state. The epitome of the Muslim Brotherhood's success was the election of one of the Brotherhood's own, Mohammed Morsi, as president on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2012. Shortly thereafter, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2012 Prime Minister Hisham Qandil announced his new government would be comprised of thirty five cabinet members, twenty-eight of whom were newcomers, including four from the Muslim Brotherhood. The event led liberal and secular groups to walk out of the constituent assembly as they believed it would impose strict Islamic teachings and practices supported by the Muslim Brotherhood. The situation was further complicated when president Morsi issued a declaration immunizing his decrees from challenge. He justified his actions by stating that this was necessary to protect the work of the constituent assembly. Hostilities and suspicions of his ultimate aim intensified as many protestors took to the streets again in opposition to his feared authoritarianism. Watching from the sidelines was the Egyptian military. As events intensified, a clash was brewing. The culmination took place on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, in the removal of the democratically elected president Morsi in a coup d'état. Official disclosures state that Morsi was removed by the Egyptian military on the grounds that he had granted himself unlimited power. Their stated aim was to protect the nation against what they saw as the beginnings of a repeat of the Mubarak era.

Despite the coup d'état; the Brotherhood's failure in Egypt is also in part because of their miscalculations. The Brotherhood failed to sustain its preliminary success in Egypt. They were unsuccessful in building viable coalitions and chose to focus more on consolidating their rule. In addition their extensive use of threatening rhetoric enhanced the validity of the complaints among the opposition. (Brown, Nathan: October 2013). However, the fact remains that the majority of the Egyptian people chose these men and women to lead them. As the military is now the acting government of Egypt, questions remain. If given a chance to rule, would the Muslim Brotherhood have found a moderate secular Islamic medium within which to rule the nation? How do the actions of the Egyptian military undermine the demands of the protesters of the Arab Spring? And finally, how can the international community ignore the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood won the election- a win for their organization, but also a win for moderate Islam? We will never be sure, as in Egypt, democracy was cut short. This paper asserts that the actions of the Egyptian military are exactly the kind that destabilizes the development and implementation of a flourishing secular Islamic doctrine.

For nearly a decade now, a revisionist movement in Islamic political thought has been thriving, partly in response to September 11<sup>th</sup>, but also to a variety of issues unique to the Muslim world. (Roy: 2012). This shift has seen Islamists stepping to the forefront, taking a more lenient approach to electoral politics and a more diverse approach to Islam and the state. The aforementioned results of the various parliamentary elections clearly demonstrate a popularization within the minds of Islamic civil societies, irrespective of their

nation, towards acceptance of this new moderate ideal. However, the success of this shift from radicalism to moderation can be and is negatively affected by actions such as the overthrow of Morsi in Egypt and the Russian-American deal in Syria, which has left moderate Islamists on the ground devoid of sufficient support for their cause.

In the following section, the paper explains the evolution of the trends in Islamic political thought with regard to internal and external pressures. It highlights how radicalizing trends came about and explains the context in which an ideological shift occurred bringing about the revisionist movement. Section 3 of this paper explains the political context in Tunis, Egypt and Morocco, which are said to demonstrate most clearly the ideological shift.

## **Section 2:**

### **The evolution of the trends in Islamic political thought.**

The radicalization of political Islam dates back to Sayed Qutub during the 1960s. Qutub called for the establishment of an Islamic state governed by Islamic Sharia and advocated for the formation of a revolutionary vanguard whose duty was to wage war, *jihad*, against the non-Islamic systems that were deemed illegitimate according to divine law (Qutub, 1964). A highly influential man and a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood, his work and the work of others like him radicalized Islamic thought for many years. Radicalization would assume greater strength in Egypt and elsewhere following the disappointment of the Middle East Peace Process: Camp David on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1978 (Carter, 2006). The failure of this agreement was largely seen as a failure of secularism to answer the larger political questions that

have long plagued the Muslim world. Keeping with this trend the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 is a notable example of radical Islamic ideology successfully overthrowing a Western supported secular leader, Reza Shah (Kinzer, 2003). While the Iranian revolution should have been a clear indication of the influential power of radical Islam, it remained underestimated.

The American involvement in the First and Second Gulf War during the late 80s and early 90s concluding with the attack on Iraq in 1991 also led to the reinforcement of the radical school of thought (Sciolino, 1991). The idea propagated by hardliners was that Islamic Sharia served as the all-encompassing solution, especially when taking into consideration the failures of the different governing models that

adopted nationalistic or secular ideologies. Evidence of the extremists and their opposition to democratic participation can further be seen in Algeria, in 1991. Parliamentary elections were cancelled by the military in a coup that

ultimately lead to the Algerian Civil War (Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut, 1999). The West and the larger international community remained concerned about radicalism yet continued to miscalculate its potential. This eventually climaxed in Salafi jihadist movements and their transnational demonstrations of violence, in 1998 in Kenya and then in 2001 in New York City.

The violent attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 redefined the image of Islam in the hearts and minds of Western citizens, governments, and media. Throughout the early 2000s, this new image would shape international policy toward the MENA region as well as forever alter the Muslim experience in the West. The new “Islamist”, the “fundamentalist”, the “radical” built a stereotype upon a minority; it allowed a fringe movement to have a voice for an entire religion leaving the mainstream Muslim world to live with the consequences.

The majority of the Islamic movement, who in spite of experiencing an upswing in conservative thought, is and always has been moderate. In a direct response to this new emboldened extremism, the Islamic world was largely left with a population who no longer put faith in an Islamic State. Muslims, in the Arab world and beyond, began to look for new ways to transform their societies and body politic. In a survey conducted in Egypt, Jordan and Iran by Monsoor Moaddel in 1999 and 2001, only five months after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, a shift in public attitude towards religious institutionalism was revealed. The pre-9/11 results found that nearly 81 percent of Egyptians saw religious authorities in favorable terms, compared to only 57 percent following the 9/11 attacks (Moaddal, 2003). In essence, the public had become disillusioned with the concept of an Islamic State. Prototypes in Iran, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia have garnered critique and have little popular support in the wider region. The descending nature of the radical ideology, embodied in an extremist Islamic state, has paved a way for a liberal Islamic wave. (El-Affendi 2003: 38). The effect of the populations growing separation from uncompromising Sharia combined with its violent portrayal in the media has no doubt had a significant impact on Islamists. As a result, many have turned back to the movement and its foundations in search of a new philosophy. Moderates sought to examine, redefine and consolidate their political Islamic identity in a way that could easily separate their movement from its radical counterpart.

It is this new movement built on revisionist thought that has ascended to parliamentary majorities and the heads of government around the region. The transformation is clear in platform and policy indicating an increasing shift towards a secular political Islamic world. In light of the Arab Spring, the world is witnessing a revisionist society calling for a temperate trend within Islam, both in policy and in practice. By reengaging with its theological base, these

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liberal men and women have created a new representation of Islam to counteract the once popularizing conservative extremist ideology.

### **Section 3: Framing the Moderate Islamist movement**

The Western world has been quick to judge the moderate movements, ignoring the new rhetoric and questioning its moderation and commitment to democracy. The new moderate platforms were viewed merely a means of deception to gain power. Once in power, they would then implement a “fundamentalist dogma”, focused on creating an Islamic global rule (Ehrenfeld, 2011: 80). Literature demonizing the movement as inherently anti-democratic or radical builds upon the foundations laid by Orientalist theories propagating “Islamaphobia” in literature and policy, creating an unproductive or inaccurate picture of the dynamic nature of the moderate Islamic movement (Ferjani, 2005: 83). In opposition to “radical Islamists theory” a growing body of literature has formed depicting the new moderates as post-Islamic,

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“an endeavor to fuse religiosity and rights, Faith and Freedom, Islam and liberty...an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on its head by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in place of a singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scriptures, and the future instead of the past (Bayat, 2005: 5).”

The post-Islamist structure seeks to analyze the incorporation and legitimacy of democratic principles into the Islamist framework. Overwhelmingly the analysis finds a positive correlation between the two, suggesting that the moderate Islamists began using democratic tools as early as the 1990s. In Amr Hamzawy’s *The West and Moderate Islam* (2005), he writes the following:

Throughout the last decade the mainstream of Islamist movements has been moving toward more pragmatism, based on prioritizing gradual democratic reforms as the way ahead for their political integration and as the only viable strategy to challenge the persistent authoritarianism in the Arab World. Furthermore, the new pragmatism among non-violent Islamist movements materializes in an atmosphere of relative openness toward American and European policies in the Arab world, and an initial willingness to engage them less ideologically.

He notes earlier that,

“..Non-Violent Islamist movements such as the Egyptian and Jordanian branches of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Moroccan Justice and Development Party well rooted in the social and cultural fabric of Arab countries and possess therefore a great potential for forging broad alliances for political transformation.”

As Hamzawy aptly recognizes, scholars are still writing on the incompatibility of democracy and Islam, while political Islam has already evolved beyond the scope of this analysis. It is not a stagnant entity; instead, it has been molded by internal and external pressures. The literature suggests that the democratic shift is not a phenomenon unique to the Arab Spring. Rather, it developed over time and under the many radical, oppressive authoritarian regimes as an opposition movement. The moderate Islamists counteracted rigid ideals through their pragmatic and democratic principles.

Post-Islamist theory correctly points to a new trend in the Islamic political thought. However, it does not seek to explain the evolution of the theology that is at the core of the Islamists platform. Rather, this framework is influential in shifting the discussion to the mainstream Islamist groups and their incorporation of democratic principles since the 1990s. The effects of this new body of work are slowly being felt throughout the region. In late 2006, one of the most influential intellectuals in the Jihadist movement, Sayyid Imam al-Sharif (aka) Dr. Fadl in collaboration with other Jihadist intellectuals released a new publication, “Rationalizing Jihadist Action in Egypt and the World.” In it, they dispelled the use of violence, and the radical jihadist cause (Al-Anani, 2009: 3). The new interpretation spread beyond intellectual leaders, as many within the Jihadist movement began to question the theological basis for violence. Undoubtedly, this strengthens and enlarges the revisionist movement. In this way, post-Islamist theory and the debate of democracy and inclusion have succeeded in converting many of the former supporters of violent Islam. This is not to suggest all Jihadists are moving towards a moderate Islamist interpretation, but it does create a framework which can be applied and propagated as the voice of the pragmatic and more inclusive Islamist movements.

Further, this highlights the shift in the accepted paradigm following the escalation of violent Islam. This has led to a revision of theology and a new interpretation of the texts built on more temperate principles. For the Jihadist movement, temperance meant the relinquishing of power obtained through force, for the tolerant Islamists it meant a move towards a power by consensus. This new framework built upon and in reaction to the violent Jihadist theory does not seek to contradict previous philosophies, but to expand the overall body of literature to include theoretical analysis so as to strengthen the legitimate and moderate theological shift currently taking place within Islamic political thought. Revisionists now seek to reinterpret the Islamic texts to comply with the current context of society. This framework poses an obstruction



to the traditional jihadist epistemological framework which views the texts free of historical context, calling for the direct application of the *sharia*.

As noted above the implementation of a revisionist framework to analyze political Islam has already been applied to the Jihadi Islamist movements. The revisionist trend in the Jihadi movement began in 1997 with the de-radicalization of the Islamist Group in Egypt and its declaration against the use of violence (Ashour, 2008). However, the trend did not become wide spread until the 2000s after the zenith of radical Islamists in 2001 and the subsequent years during the American occupation of Iraq. But others did follow as violence became more prevalent and unpalatable to leaders of the movement. Armed Islamist groups following this trend can be found across the Muslim World in Egypt, Jordan, Tajikistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Ashour, 2008).

The advent of new interpretation resulted from two significant changes in the radical Islamist discourse. The first being the non-violent redefinition of the core ideological support for the Jihadist movement, such as, “*takfir* (accusing other Muslims of being infidels), *hisba* (the duty of Muslims to call for good and ban evil), and even Jihad...” The second was the new debate led by leaders within the movement that called the use of violence illegitimate and un-Islamic, calling their previous notions simplistic interpretations (Hamzawy and Grebowski, 2010: 5).” The two shifts pushed for a new dynamic within Islam, it signaled a theological evolution in the most radical of the Islamist organizations dispelling the representation of stagnant Islamist philosophy.

This body of work sets a new precedent in the analysis of political Islam; it sets up a framework in which to view theological evolution as the result of social circumstance that is separate from religious framework. Historic events are tremendously influential in the creation of philosophy. The social pressure resulting from the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks not only lead to the revision of Jihadi thought, but also set a standard for the moderate Islamic movement.

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 shocked the world in a dramatic crescendo of Jihadist Islam, ushering in a period of uncertainty for every Islamic organization. The event symbolized for many the confrontation of two civilizations; as Americans mourned; the world was shown images of celebrations in the streets of MENA countries. The pictures created a flurry of misconceptions depicting an entire region as a hotbed of terrorist activity, with openly supportive populations. Following the attacks the United States mobilized troops, entering Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. While Jihadist activity continued to flourish, in Madrid in 2004, London in 2005, they also turned inward, attacking other Muslims as in the 2003 bombings in Casablanca, Morocco and the 2005 bombings in Amman, Jordan. The climax of the jihadist movement sent a shockwave to the bedrock of the Islamic community.

That moment in history was not only followed by an unprecedented repression of Islamists, both moderate and radical, but also a turning point for the population. The violent acts presented an Islam that was intolerant, stag-



nant, and aggressive. In the minds of many, Islam became the new enemy of progress, a barrier, an arbitrator of oppression upon the minds of the Arab world. In the face of this crisis, moderate Islamists plunged into an identity crisis. The pragmatic, open, inclusive Muslim movement was unable to escape the association with the violent Jihadist in Western suspicion. The wave of violence and terror in a sense forced the hand of the Islamist movement in a revisionist direction, as a matter of survival the movement had to rethink its program.

### **Revisionist Thought: A Corresponding Paradigm**

Through their published bodies of work, and the propagation of their ideals, a new diverse and inclusive framework has emerged. It is utilizing this framework and employing this paradigm that this paper will analyze the progression and success of a secular political Islam in the Islamic body politic of Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt.

#### ***Morocco***

The trajectory of the Islamic ideologies of Morocco evolved in a segmented rather than a linear fashion. The movements are represented in multiple forms that are as unique as the history of Islam in the country itself. Political Islam in Morocco is a mosaic of movements that prescribe to and challenge trends in the larger spectrum of Islamism. Like other nations in the Middle East and Northern Africa the country supports, Salafi, Salafi Jihadist, and radical Islamist movements, however the country also hosts parties such as the Justice and Charity Party, a unique representation of Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine Islamist discourse.

The Salafi and Salafi Jihadist movement have always played a marginal role in the political Islamic sphere; never gaining popular support in the population. Conservative citizens instead favored the Justice and Charity party, which after gaining widespread popular support was officially outlawed in 1990 (Laskier, 2003: 6). Representing the most popular Islamist force in the country, the organization cultivated a large following. But popularity and critique of the monarchy brought challenges for the outlawed party. The lack of a legal consolidated Islamic party led to the establishment of the Party for Justice and Development (PJD). The PJD was created in 1997 through the coalition of several smaller Islamic organizations. At its inception the party was built upon a platform of conservative ideologies drawing from the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi movement (Amghar, 2007: 1). Between the years of 1997 and 2001 the party enjoyed relative freedom to express harsh critiques of western intrusion into Moroccan Culture (Hirichi, 2007). The party's platform during 1997-2002 political cycle focused on, "non-Islamic banking, alcohol consumption, Islamic education, immoral practices in the tourism industry, and reforming the cinema industry to ensure that it complied with

Islamic teachings (Hamzawy, 2008: 12).” The platform had a singular purpose of safeguarding Morocco’s Islamic community, demonizing the western ties created by the Monarchy, and propagating a conservative movement within the nation. It wasn’t until after the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the Casablanca bombings in 2003 that the party would develop a moderate platform, redefining itself from an Islamic movement to a party based upon “Islamic references” (Khalaf 2006).

Preceding the 2001 attacks, the Moroccan monarchy transformed its open policy towards Salafi strains of political Islam to suppression, in light of the regime’s close relationship with the United States. This suppression was reinforced after the 2003 terrorist bombings in Casablanca. The bombings created a national controversy and a crisis for the growing Party for Justice and Development. As secularist parties called for the dismantling of the party, the movement was forced to reevaluate its position as a conservative Islamic movement (Hamzawy, 2008: 11). The state responded through the creation of a new law outlawing religious based parties; forcing the Islamist PJD to recreate the image of the party and political platform (Khalaf, 2006).

In stark contrast to the party’s 1997-2002 cycle platform; the new agenda focused solely on issues including greater transparency, decreased corruption and increased accountability among members (Hamzawy, 2008: 10). The party also sought three major reforms to the constitution, “(1) institute all necessary mechanisms to secure the independence of the judiciary; (2) expand the supervisory and legislative prerogatives of the House of Representatives and review those of the House of Councilors; and (3) ensure that the executive branch is accountable to parliament (Hamzawy, 2008: 12).” The disappearance of religious rhetoric from the platform created a void in the ideology. The platform does not overtly suggest a revision of the party’s Islamic principles; it is possible the void of Islamist dialogue is a survival strategy. However, following 2003, the party supported policy transformations that indicate a clear shift to a moderate Islamist party.

The 2005 revision of the personal status code in Morocco tested the PJDs commitment to moderate Islamist principles. The code based on the status of women and the family in Islamic principles underwent a controversial revision that represented a monumental step in women’s rights. The conservative Islamist movement, the Justice and Charity party, opposed the process on the basis that a revision would signify a step away from Islamic principles. Yet in a historic move the PJD chose to support the new code’s construction, despite its liberal interpretation of Islamic family law (Hamzawy, 2008: 9). The support of the new personal status code signified that the party was open to the reinterpretation of Islamic principles to promote a more liberalized Moroccan society. In an even more controversial measure, in January of 2012, the party’s newly elected Prime minister, Abdellilah Benkirane, consented to the relaxation of abortion laws, specifically in cases of rape (Jay, 2012), an extremely controversial issue in a country that currently allows a rapist to be absolved of charges if he marries his victim.

In a matter of ten years, the dramatic reformation of the PJD over from the 1997-2002 cycle to the 2002-2007 cycle signaled a shift in policy platform that is almost unrecognizable, the party that was built upon conservative Islamist principles and Salafism, preceding 2002 showed a remarkable commitment to a more liberalized interpretation of Islam. The party not only recreated their political focus, but through support in revisionist policy changes, especially in the realm of women's rights, have shown an evolution in their theological basis from conservative Islamic principles to merely a party influenced by "Islamic references."

### ***Tunisia***

In the 1970s, the Tunisian government under the leadership of President Habib Bourguiba made Islam the official religion in an attempt to diminish the rising tensions between the government and the opposing Islamic movement, the Movement de Tendence Islamique (MTI). Yet Bourguiba's intention was only to quell the population, not to incorporate Islamic principles into the secular system. The president became increasingly antagonistic towards Islamists pressures to use Islamist principles for solutions to national woes. In reaction, Bourguiba arrested members of the group en masse in 1981. Throughout the 1980s, the movement would continue to remain in direct confrontation with the government who periodically released and arrested members of the Islamists in relation to public approval of the state (El-Khawas, 1996: 393). However, the coup in 1987 by the Prime Minister, Zine al-Abidine bin Ali, promised a new age of democratic freedoms. But the new president refused to recognize MTI as an official political party. The movement in response changed their name to Hizb Ennahda (The Renaissance Party) in hopes to create a new image that would be legally allowed to participate in the state. Ben Ali only increased state repression by banning the party and its members from state elections (El-Khawas, 1996: 394). At the same time the President began to reincorporate Islam into the state, seeking to counteract the Islamist's opposition support base in the state. The re-Islamization process set up an Islamic identity based upon the states interpretation, which significantly was different from the Ennahda conservative Islamic principles (Rogers, 2007: 11). The division between the two ideologies gave grounds for the state to proclaim that the party was both un-Islamic and un-Tunisian, and characterized it as a criminal organization, expelling the movement from the country (Rogers, 2007: 21).

The repression of the party continued and increased in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Pressure compounded in 2002 when a Salafi jihadist organization targeted a synagogue in Djerba. This attack lead to an anti-terrorism bill that further repressed Islamist political parties across the spectrum and enhanced Ben Ali's control of the state (Boubekeur, 2009). In a paradox in the paradigm, the repression of the state and violent Islam lead to a counter movement of increased radicalism in youth, whom felt confined by the suppression of Islamism from the nation (Boubekeur, 2009). In Tunisia, the state suppressed

the party into exile until the revolution in 2011. The party returned to the state as a moderate Islamic party, intent upon rebuilding the nation alongside secular movements.

In the elections of 2011, the party built upon the model laid by the Justice and Development Party in Turkey as a means to legitimize their campaign for secular political Islam (Lynch, 2011). In the elections, Tunisian's showed their support for the party's platform electing Ennahda to parliamentary majority with 41.5 percent of the seats (Cammatt, 2011). Upon election, fears immediately rose regarding the implementation of Islamic ideals on the new constitution, but the movement dispelled concerns by announcing the constitution "will not cite Islamic Law (Fahim, 2012)." This commitment will be tested as the new system will again hold elections in just two years to inhibit the creation of another authoritarian power within the state (Churchill, 2012).

The question is whether or not the movement truly presents a contradiction to the paradigm. The organization has evolved into a moderate Islamic association operating in the framework of a secular political Islam. However, the Islamist movement in Tunisia outside of the PJD party experienced an increased radicalization after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and violent attacks within the state as a result of state's suppression. Preceding these acts the movement was also nearly eliminated from Tunisia and the movement's leadership were forced abroad, operating outside of its population base (Lynch, 2011). As a result it can be argued that the group developed separately of state pressures that resulted in the moderation of Islam, but it was not exempt from the international pressures that had demonized conservative Islam as a barrier to modernization after the rise of Jihadi Islam. It is apparent that the party has felt those pressures through its collaboration with secular movements, and commitment to a secular constitution. So while it is not apparent in rhetoric that the movement shifted its discourse following the 2001 attacks, this is only a result of the lack of discourse caused by state suppression not a contradiction to the paradigm.

### ***Egypt***

In 1928, the roots of the modern political Islamic movement were forged in Egypt with the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood was founded by Hassan al-Banna as an apolitical organization promoting religious reform transformed in the 1930s through rapid growth and political overtones. Finally entering into the political arena in 1941, the current British government was swift in outlawing the organization whose demonstrations called for the withdrawal of British troops (Munson, 2001: 488). Despite the ban the party continued to grow, boasting over two thousand members by 1949 (Munson, 2001: 489). Tensions grew between the government and the party leading to the assassination of the prime minister, and al-Banna. After the overthrow of the monarchy, the organization enjoyed amicable relations with the new government lead by Nasser. However, this ended in 1954 when a member of the Brotherhood attempted to assassinate the new leader (Stilt,

2010:77). Subsequently thousands of members were arrested including leading intellectuals such as Sayyid Qutb.

The transition of leaders with the death of Nasser in 1970 and the ascension of Anwar al-Sadat brought about another period of amicability. In 1979 this ended with the signing of the Camp David Accord and open hostility on behalf of the organization, leading to the mass arrests of Brotherhood members. Following the arrests in 1981 the Islamist Jihad offshoot of the organization assassinated Sadat, who would be replaced by Hosni Mubarak (Stilt, 2010: 78). Mubarak in an effort to combat the rising religious extremism tolerated the more Moderate main branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. The organization flourished throughout the 1980s leaving it in direct opposition to the state. The 1990s witnessed increasing authoritarian practices by the State, with hostility directed specifically at the Islamic organization (Stilt, 2010: 79). As a result the party had low numbers in the official political arena despite its popular support.

Leading into the 2011 revolution in Egypt, the 2010 election reaffirmed Mubarak's suppression of the party from officials. Frustrations mounted in the population culminating in the protests, and removal of Mubarak from power. Following the removal, the Brotherhood created the Freedom and Justice party to run as a political representative of the movement. The party platform while still conservative promoted a more moderate face for the movement, and in the June 2012 elections they claimed the majority in parliament and their member Mohamed Morsi became the first elected President.

The Muslim Brotherhood arguably presents the most conservative ideology represented in the most recent elections in the Middle East and North Africa. Egypt, the catalyst of political Islam, has also had the most tumultuous relationship with the movement. Intellectuals within the movement laid the groundwork for not only moderate parties but also the most radical. The argument of a shifting paradigm in political Islamic thought would not be complete without the analysis of the Islamic movement in Egypt.

The original ideological formation of the MB was built upon the basis of the Hanbali School of Islamic jurisprudence, which calls for a literal reading of the Quran and Sunnah (Munson, 2001: 489). This more literal interpretation of Islam intersected with the belief of a single Islamic community that must unite against Western corruption; while at the same time pursuing greater individual morality through the use of grassroots activism (Munson, 2001: 490). After years of state suppression, and the assassination of their founder, the mass arrests after the Nasser assassination attempt lead to the cultivation of the radical writings of Sayyid Qutb. Qutb's radical jihadist thought brought about a new generation of Islamic organizations, who saw violence as a means to create an Islamic state.

The period following would leave the Brotherhood without its main leaders and in an ideological standoff between the moderate majority who rejects Qutb's philosophy of jihad and members who viewed it as a revitalization of the waning political Islamic movement. The latter would become the most

active group during the 1960s. The Qutbist faction of the Brotherhood envisioned a “revolutionary form of Islamic activism” in which they are the “vanguard of Islam (Zollner, 2007: 420).”

In opposition a moderate theological movement also pulsed within the MB lead by the general guide al-Hudaybi, who rejected the idea of *takfir*, noting that, “whoever judges that someone is no longer a Muslim... deviates from Islam and transgresses God’s will by judging another person’s faith (Leiken and Brooke, 2007).” In combination with the moderate movement, the incorporation of democracy as achievable alongside Islam brought about a new way for the Brotherhood to participate in formal politics.

The incorporation of democracy, was a break away from radicals but not a conservative Islamic interpretation which was still at the heart of the Muslim Brotherhood, not until the creation of the *Wasat* or *center party* an offshoot of the MB would a shift appear in Islamic ideology in Egypt. The *Wasat* party was created by young leaders in the MB who had established an ideology in which *Shari’a* becomes a general set of principles that allows for flexibility in public policy (Wickham, 2004: 208). The new platform also sees one community in which Muslims and Christians have equal rights, as a part of that it also give equal citizenship rights to women and non-Muslims (Wickham, 2004: 210) . Their liberal platform is reminiscent of both the Ennahda party and the PJD, yet they have not surpassed the main segment of the MB in popularity.

In comparison to the movements in Morocco, Turkey, and Tunisia, the Freedom and Justice party of Egypt cannot be defined as a secular political Islamic movement. In a twelve part press release the newly elected Mohamed Morsi discusses the vision for the future of Egypt, addressing issues such as education, corruption, employment, individual rights, etc. On individual rights the release states,

FJP took upon itself the tasks of rebuilding Egypt, respecting freedoms and safeguarding fundamental rights for every Egyptian, within a basic framework of good religious values, defending political and social freedoms indispensable for people to exercise their rights and improve their communities; as well as non-discrimination among citizens with regard to rights and duties on the basis of religion, sex, color, granting women all their rights – maintaining a balance between their rights and duties (Morsi, 2012)

What is notable within this statement and through the subsequent parts is a balance between a conservative Islamic philosophy and the incorporation of a democratic framework. Islam is evident throughout the party platform and the support for policies such as freedom for citizens is not based in universal human rights but is, “one of Islam’s duties (Morsi, 2012)”.

In the official program for the 2011 parliamentary elections the party reaffirms their commitment to a pluralistic system based on democratic principles



with *Shari'a* as a frame of reference not a direct interpretation (Party Program, 2011: 10). The seven fundamental principles a part of the new system are;

1. The principles of liberty, equality and equal opportunities,
2. Independence of the Judiciary,
3. Free and fair elections,
4. Accountability, responsibility and questioning authority
5. Decentralized local government, and impartiality of the administration,
6. Safeguarding citizenship rights, and the maintenance of national unity,
7. Revitalizing the role of individuals and civil society (Party Platform, 2011: 10)

While none of the fundamental principles make reference to an Islamic framework, the next section clarifies the party's dual commitment to promoting a, "national constitution Islamic modern democracy (Party Platform, 2011: 11)."

In comparison to the liberal take on the rights of all citizens as equal, regardless of religious affiliation, the party takes a decidedly conservative stance on the position of women in society. The party emphasizes the importance of women based on their role as "wives, mothers and makers of men." Promotion of women rights is equated to the building of stronger families, while it does note a gap in the provisions for widows and divorced women (Party Platform, 2011: 26). As a part of their program and basis in *Shari'a* the party questions Egyptians compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The main points it raises are the conflicts with children's advocacy, homosexual rights, and principles of adoption (Party Platform, 2011: 25). The language used is inflammatory emphasizing the hypocrisy of these rights within Islam. Despite the digression in women's rights, the party does promote women's participation in politics and if there is a true commitment to democracy their voices could counteract the conservative policies of the party.

The FJP of Egypt has shown within the Islamic movement the paradigm is still shifting, the groundwork for a secular Islamic party has been laid in the principles of the *Wasat* party. It has been seen that the shift for the Muslim Brotherhood began following the increase in violent attacks following 2001. Although the party was excluded from official politics during the 2005 campaign for the movement, candidates affiliated with the MB moved away from, "pursuing a divisive religious or cultural agenda" in favor of socio-economic debates (Leiken and Brook, 2007). Similar to the shift

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witnessed in Morocco between the political cycles from 2001 to 2002, the absence of Islamic rhetoric symbolized a shift away from the pursuit of a conservative Islamic platform. In the most recent campaign the FJP changed the party's iconic slogan, "Islam is the Solution" to "Freedom is the Solution and Justice is the Application (Ikhwanweb, 2011)." The movement's success in the elections of 2012 will test the Islamic movement in Egypt's reform and revision to a moderate Islam.

#### **Section 4: Conclusion**

This ideology has been developing now for over a decade and has cemented itself within the population and the movements. As a political movement,

***As a political movement, Islamism has become a public entity that is shaped by internal and external pressures. Since its inception, the movement has been affected by its local and international contexts. It is these contexts that lead to the gradual radicalization of Islamic ideology that affected all the movements within political Islam.***

Islamism has become a public entity that is shaped by internal and external pressures. Since its inception, the movement has been affected by its local and international contexts. It is these contexts that lead to the gradual radicalization of Islamic ideology that affected all the movements within political Islam. The neo-fundamentalist and Salafi Jihadist height of influence came in the 1990s, as the Muslim world grew tired of Western cultural domination. In the subsequent years, the use of violence by Jihadist groups pushed Islamist ideology to the forefront of politics and classrooms around the globe. The discussion centered itself around the radical form of Islam that continued to make itself known through the media, and large acts of violence on the local and international front.

However, as the world watched the fringe transnational terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, the larger Muslim population was transforming. The movements that represent the bulk of the Islamic movement functioned under authoritarian regimes that limited freedoms the Islamist moderates saw as basic rights to the people. As economic, societal, and cultural pressures mounted within the MENA region, the strongest opposition movement left was the Islamist. With the decrease of nationalist and socialist parties around the region, they became the main opposition party to the state.

Throughout the 1990s, as post-Islamist theory suggests, Islamist movements across the region developed internal ideologies of democracy. While the new ideologies led to greater transparency and representation within the movement, Islamists remained conservative in their theological foundations. Leading into the 2000s, conservative Islam had reached its zenith, congruently with the dramatic culmination of Jihadi Islam on the world stage. The vio-

lence left a shadow on the public perception of Islam, despite its overwhelmingly moderate majority. As a result of international, government, and internal pressures even the moderate Islamist parties began to question their theological base as a means for survival in an increasingly liberal minded environment. The results of their identity crisis can be seen in the rhetoric, platforms, and policy surrounding the revitalized Islamic movements. With rise to power of Islamists in the region, the question of the hour is how truly moderate are the Islamic movements? And how does that interact with secular notions of democracy? The answer lies in the shifting paradigm, through the application of a revisionist framework shaped by Salafi-Jihadist literature; there is a clear movement away from conservative principles and a revision of theological foundations to create platforms that combine Islamic inspirations and secular foundations of political democracy. The shifting paradigm became concrete in the Arab Spring.

Through analysis of the transformation of political Islam, it is clear the paradigm has shifted in favor of a secular political Islam. In the coming years the Islamic movement will either prove or disprove their ability to function within political society shaped by secular constitutions and governments. However, the framework suggests the parties have been on the path to moderation and a secular political Islam since 2001, and the platforms of the Arab spring are merely a representation of the new paradigm.



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