PIOUS POLITICS: POLITICAL THEOLOGY IN THE ARAB WORLD AND BEYOND

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ABSTRACT

Brandon Chase Gorman: Pious Politics: Political Theology in the Arab World and Beyond
(Under the direction of Charles Kurzman)

In this dissertation, I investigate the correlates and contents of Islam-centered political ideas among individual Muslims using a combination of survey data, cognitive interview data, and text data gathered from Arabic-language online messageboards. In the Chapters 2 and 3, I find that Muslims tend to support *shari'a* law and other Islamist political values do not systematically object to liberal global norms like democracy and human rights. The fourth chapter builds on these findings by exploring how Muslims discuss these issues online using a combination of dictionary-based and unsupervised text classification techniques on a sample of 214,861 posts made on the Arabic-language messageboard *majalisna.com*. I find that posters on this messageboard take issue with global norms not because of the content of the norms themselves, but because of their relationship with the West and powerful global actors. These results 1) provide evidence that the divide between Islamists and non-Islamists in the Muslim world is not as stark as the scholarly literature would otherwise suggest and 2) show that the expansion of international institutions and global culture can lead to both isomorphism and differentiation in local attitudes and practices.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On the afternoon of September 9th 2013, I hailed a taxi to take me home from an interview I was conducting in Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia. My conversation with the taxi driver took a predictable route – compliments on my Arabic, my knowledge of Islam, questions about my ethnoreligious heritage and my reason for being in Tunisia. The discussion of my dissertation topic – the relationship between *shari'a* and democracy – inevitably turned to an animated analysis of the situation in Tunisia since the revolution. Hands waving, the taxi driver enumerated a lengthy list of problems in the country: corruption, violence, infighting, rising prices, and a shortage of tourists. Intrigued, I probed – how will Tunisia solve all of these problems? My companion replied, "Of course you must know that God is the solution, faith is the solution, the answers are always in Islam." I probed further, asking him to clarify. He responded, "First, we must have term limits so that politicians don't become lazy and they work for the common good, and the laws must apply to politicians like everyone else. There should also be transparency in campaign financing, we have to know who is paying for these politicians," and so on, without mentioning Islam, God, or faith again for the remainder of his half-hour monologue.

I found this pattern repeated in other conversations. In early November, a man I met in a café told me that he supported the creation of a caliphate whose leader would be "elected, but not through democratic elections, through Islamic elections." Other self-described Salafists told me similar things: elections should be replaced with *shura* (a Qur'anic term meaning "consultation") and *bei'a* (allegiance), taxes should be replaced with analogous Islamic concepts, *khums* and *jizya*, and the civil state should be replaced with an Islamic one. Yet, despite these differences in terminology, respondents largely described slight reforms on existing policies and institutions when asked to clarify their stances. An Islamic Tunisia would still have elections, protect women's and minority rights, be a safe place for

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tourists, and have peaceful relations with its neighbors (in fact, these people argued, Tunisia would improve on all of these fronts). This phenomenon also permeated more mundane elements of life during my time in Tunisia. Tunisia's first "Islamic restaurant" opened in Sousse in December 2013; it differs from "secular" restaurants in only two ways: the waitresses are all veiled and the dining area is divided into family-sized units by movable partitions that allow conservative women to feel comfortable removing their head coverings.

This was not at all what I expected to find when I started my fieldwork, given the acrimonious and polarized public debate surrounding Islamism in the Arab world and around the world. Activists, politicians, and media outlets on both sides of the secular-Islamist divide depict the two sides as fundamentally incompatible, and this pessimism is echoed by scholars who depict Islamists as "ideological actors" that are committed, first and foremost, to realizing their vision of an Islamic moral and political order. The incongruence with my experience as a foreign researcher in Tunisia is what spurred the broad topic of this dissertation: what is Islamism and how and why do people invoke it? I explore these questions by adopting a broad and complementary set of data and methods.

In Chapter 2, entitled "Global Boundary Inversion: International Organizations, Muslim Identity, and *Shari'a* Law," I investigate Islamism as a form of boundary work targeted at international organizations and other powerful global actors that many perceive as indifferent or even hostile towards Muslims worldwide. Using a mixed-method design combining quantitative analyses of data from values surveys in twelve majority-Muslim countries with a qualitative analysis of data drawn from cognitive interviews I performed with fifty Tunisians between 2013 and 2014, I find that individuals who support *shari'a* law – one of the cornerstones of modern Islamist ideology – do not systematically object to the content of global and/or Western norms (e.g., democracy, human rights, environmentalism) as previous scholarship would suggest. Instead, I find that outspoken support for *shari'a* is one way for Muslims to take a public stance on the perceived historical mistreatment of Muslims and the delegitimization of

their political concepts in global culture. This suggests that the diffusion of global culture produces both isomorphism and differentiation, weakening some symbolic boundaries while strengthening and creating others.

In Chapter 3, entitled "The Myth of the Secular-Islamist Divide in Muslim Politics," I evaluate the notion that secularists and Islamists in the Muslim world are engaged in "culture wars" that pit fundamentally divergent ideological blocs against one another in a zero-sum contest for power. Using a mixed-method design combining analyses of data from the second wave of the Arab Barometer surveys and in-depth interviews with Tunisians, I find little evidence that Islamists are different from non-Islamists in regards to attitudes about declaring others non-Muslims (*takfir)*, popular sovereignty, women's rights, or minority rights, though they are more likely to believe that democracy undermines Tunisian values and less likely to be tolerant of followers of other religions. Further, many of the "Islamic" political procedures advocated by Islamists bear striking resemblances to the secular procedures they seek to replace, and secularist respondents revealed in their interviews that they would potentially agree with many Islamist positions – such as applying *shari'a* – so long as their interpretations were implemented. By exploring the correlates and contents of Islamist and secularist ideologies at the individual level, this chapter shows that the so-called secular-Islamist divide in Muslim politics is not as deep or fundamental as it seems.

Chapter 4, entitled "Islamism and Democracy in the Arab Online Public Sphere," follows on the previous chapters using computational techniques to analyze discussion topics in 214,861 posts made on the Arabic-language messageboard *majalisna.com*. In this chapter, I employ two computer-assisted text classification techniques – unsupervised topic models using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) and dictionary-based classification – to investigate when and how individuals discuss Islamism and democracy online. Results indicate two major findings: 1) Islamism-related concepts like *shari'a* law are relatively common and dispersed among a wide range of topics and 2) democracy and democracy-

related concepts like elections tend to be clustered in explicitly political topics, and the people who discuss democracy are more likely to discuss international crises, conflicts, and conspiracy theories than those who do not. These results provide evidence in support of the previous two chapters by showing that the divide between Islamists and non-Islamists is not as stark as the scholarly literature would otherwise suggest and that democracy is a contentious topic among Arabic speakers because of its relationship with the West and powerful global actors. It is also among the first sociological studies to explore the content of the Arab Online Public Sphere (AOPS) by employing "big data" analysis techniques to Arabic-language text.

Taken together, the results of the three remaining chapters in this volume help to explain my experience in Tunisia. Rather than a coherent and consistent ideology, Islamism is a flexible medium of identity. Individual Muslims invoke different Islamist principles – such as implementing *shari'a* law – or, alternatively, avoid invoking these principles, somewhat strategically. Identifying as a *shari'a* supporter suggests not that a given individual endorses strict draconian punishments but rather that they take issue with the powerful global actors that openly criticize it. Likewise, people who object to Islamist ideological concepts are not uniform in their objects, and will support these concepts when they are divorced from the substantive policy and social positions their most vocal advocates. Finally, those who reject liberal ideological concepts like democracy appear to do so not necessarily because they object to their practice, but rather because of their cultural association with Western and other foreign actors. As such, the chapters that follow provide scholarly contributions to the literatures on global cultural diffusion, political attitudes in the Muslim world, Islamism, and online deliberation in the developing world.

**CHAPTER 2: GLOBAL BOUNDARY INVERSION: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
MUSLIM IDENTITY, AND *SHARI'A* LAW**

Introduction

Shari'a, or Islamic law, was largely replaced by Western-style legal codes in the early twentieth

century. Over the past few decades, however, it has been steadily reintroduced in majority-Muslim

countries due in part to "the powerful… discourse surrounding it, which holds promises for the 'ordinary

people'" (Peters 2005:146). Today, support for *shari'a* is regarded by many Muslims as a litmus test for

judging the cultural authenticity of social and political actors. After the 2011 uprising in Tunisia, for

example, the Islamist Ennahda Movement's decision to abandon their goal of implementing *shari'a* was

met with backlash from pro-*shari'a* groups who denounced Ennahda for failing to be authentically

Islamic (Torelli et al. 2012). Globally, however, the rise in the popularity of *shari'a* has become a point of

contention, with Western countries, international organizations, and human rights activists often

associating *shari'a* with stonings, floggings, forced marriages, and worse (Abiad 2008; Korteweg 2008).

Nearly 79 percent of Muslim respondents to values surveys in majority-Muslim countries "agree" or

"strongly agree" with implementing *shari'a*, and, as Figure 1 illustrates, support has increased since the

early 2000s when researchers began collecting systematic data on the topic. This increasing support for

shari'a alongside increasing criticism by international organizations and Western countries presents a

puzzle for sociological theories of global cultural diffusion that predict coalescence around globally-

legitimated norms.

I use the case of support for *shari'a* to investigate the relationship between perceived exclusion

from global norm-making processes and reservations about international institutions and global culture.

World polity theory, which posits that increasing connections via international organizations should lead

Figure 1: Percentage of Muslims Responding "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with Survey Item on Implementing *Shari'a* in Eight Majority-Muslim Countries
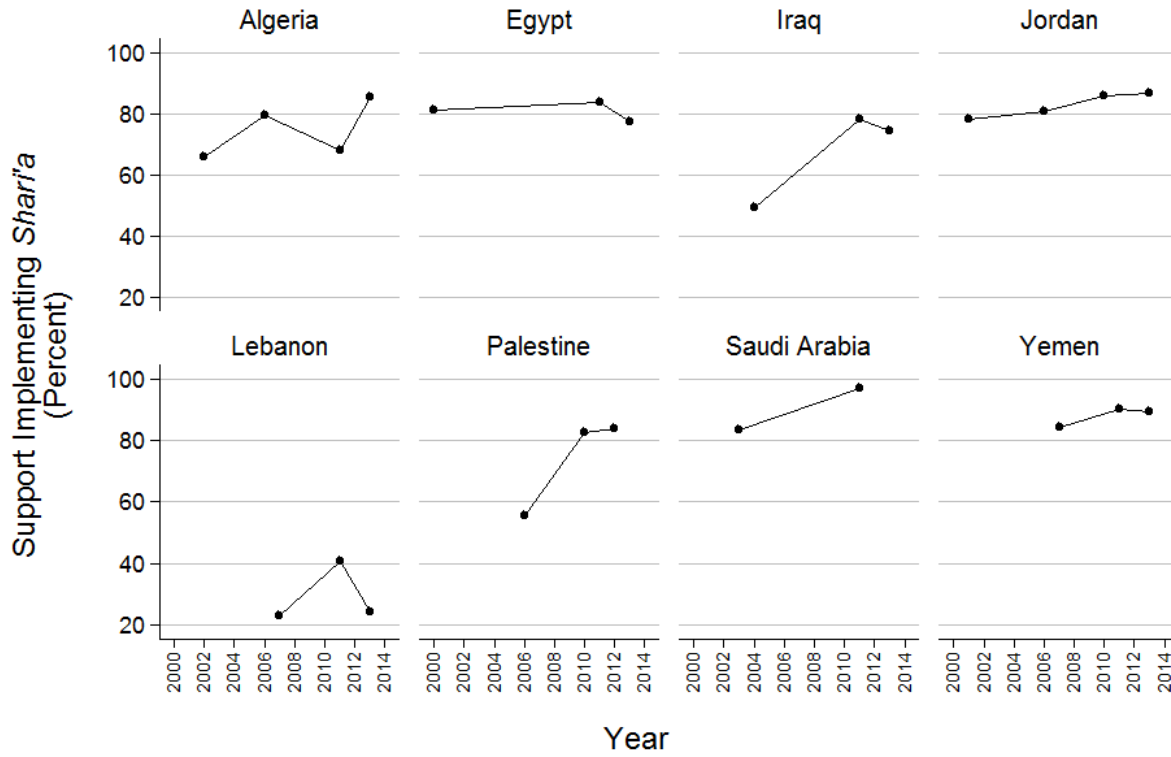
Sources: World Values Survey Wave 4 (1999-2004), Arab Barometer I (2006-2007), Arab Barometer II (2010-2011), Arab Barometer III (2012-2013).

Note: Countries included are those with data for more than one time point; non-Muslims are dropped from the sample in all countries. This figure indicates that overall support for *shari'a* has risen across all countries in this time period with the exception of Egypt, where support has remained relatively flat.

to global cultural isomorphism (Meyer et al. 1997), largely conceptualizes support for local cultural objects and practices as holdouts from this process (Barber 1995; Boyle and Carbone-López 2006; Boyle, McMorris, and Gómez 2002:26; Boyle and Meyer 1998:218–219). I contend that this phenomenon is better understood as a reaction to the exclusion of these cultural objects and practices from the repertoire of global norms, which can contribute to the formation of anti-global identity groups (Bail 2008; Hannerz 1990; Lamont and Molnár 2002). Specifically, I argue that discourses propagated by international institutions characterize *shari'a* as illegitimate, prompting many Muslims to engage in "boundary inversion" (Wimmer 2008) – articulating discourses that celebrate *shari'a* and proclaim its

superiority to globally-legitimated sociopolitical configurations. Thus, Muslims may not choose to support *shari'a* because of its ideological content, but rather because they feel purposefully excluded from global norm-making.

In what follows, I generate testable hypotheses about the determinants of support for *shari'a* drawn from previous research and boundary work theory. I test these hypotheses using a mixed-method design combining quantitative analyses of data from values surveys in twelve majority-Muslim countries with a qualitative analysis of data drawn from cognitive interviews I performed with fifty Tunisians between 2013 and 2014. Findings indicate: 1) a robust relationship between support for *shari'a* and reservations about international organizations and global actors and, 2) *shari'a* supporters explicitly frame their support in opposition to international organizations and actors irrespective of their attitudes toward the content of global norms and their personal understanding of *shari'a*. This suggests that support for alternatives to global norms is a reaction to, rather than a holdout from, global cultural diffusion. Further, results provide evidence that international institutionalization can lead not only to isomorphism but also to cultural differentiation.

Boundaries and the World Polity

World polity scholars argue that the spread of international organizations and their cultural norms – which include democracy, secularism, rationality, environmentalism, science promotion, women's rights, and human rights – contribute to the decreasing relevance of cultural boundaries and increasing global homogenization of cultural practices (Beck, Drori, and Meyer 2012; Boli 2005; Bush 2007; Frank, Hironaka, and Schofer 2000; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Longhofer and Schofer 2010; Meyer et al. 1997; Meyer and Jepperson 2000; Schofer 2004; Torfason and Ingram 2010). Meyer (2010:14) posits that the observed coalescence around global norms is not merely a mimetic process – instead, individuals eagerly conform to global culture because it appeals to "putatively universal principles." However, universalist discourses require both in-groups and out groups and therefore are

often exclusionary (Anderson 1991; Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006; Telles 2004). It is possible that the global-cultural appeal to universality contributes to cultural differentiation (Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1996) and that, by legitimating certain practices as "global", international institutions and their discourses implicitly delegitimate others (Halliday and Carruthers 2007:1140).

It is also unclear to what extent the isomorphic tendencies described by world polity scholarship are the result of individuals' assessments of global culture as universal. Recent studies have emphasized the boundaries in global institutional networks wrought by inequalities and global power dynamics (Beckfield 2003, 2010; Hagan et al. 2006; Hughes et al. 2009; Paxton et al. 2015). As a result of this stratification, the most powerful countries are the dominant producers and promoters of global norms (Cole 2006) which are either local cultural features presented as universal (Carruthers and Halliday 2006:534) or are intended to alter policies and practices in weaker countries (Barrett, Kurzman, and Shanahan 2010). While some local actors attempt redefine global norms to match already-existing cultural features (Rinaldo 2013; Vasi 2007), they do so at their own peril – international institutions often subject relatively weak countries to exclusion from global norm-making (Halliday 2009) or public shaming (Halliday et al. 2010:90–93) for nonconformity. As a result, many countries adopt global norms not due to their intrinsic appeal but because they lack the resources to "opt out" (Boyle and Preves 2000; Boyle et al. 2001).

While some world polity scholarship identifies local culture as a potential site of resistance against cultural isomorphism, this implies that global norms are encountered by local groups with pre-defined identities and cultures. Boundary work scholarship, on the other hand, suggests that identity groups result from a dialectical interplay between self-identification, or the process by which individuals form, articulate, and practice identities, and identification by external groups (Brubaker 2004; Wimmer 2008:1005). These scholars posit that the external identifications of legitimacy-granting institutions, such as international organizations, are especially influential (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:15; Tilly 1998).

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Thus, as international organizations become external identifiers of a given population, the imposition of their cultural norms changes that population's identification process. Anthropologists have found, for example, that Amazonian Indians in Brazil (Conklin and Graham 1995) and Mayans in Guatemala (Warren 1998) both overcame internal divisions to form pan-indigenous identities in the wake of United Nations rainforest protection programs in the 1980s and 1990s. The authors argue that these groups produced novel self-identifications as a result of external identifications that lumped them together as "indigenous populations."

However, external identifications rooted in legitimacy-granting institutions are not automatically adopted by target populations and sometimes produces opposition to external identifiers (Scott 1990; Tilly 1998). This is particularly true in the contemporary era, where the prevalence of mass media ensures that disparaging representations "are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor, and resistance" (Appadurai 1996:7). Indeed, group identities often thrive on embattlement and cultural boundaries become more salient when repeatedly challenged by outsiders (Gurrentz 2013; Smith et al. 1998; Stein 2001). For instance, Boyle and Carbone-López (2006:441) found that the international push to eliminate female genital cutting was deemed offensive by local opponents of the practice because of its perceived hostility toward African culture. Likewise, historical studies have shown that local nationalisms take on anti-global overtones when groups are targeted or excluded by international organizations. Gelvin (1998) and Milton-Edwards and Farrell (2010) show how nationalist sentiments in Syria and Palestine identify international organizations as enemies as a result of these countries' being defined as less-than-full members of the global community. Similarly, Ivković and Hagan (2006) found that Sarajevans became increasingly skeptical of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as a result of perceived marginalization in the tribunal process.

Opposition to the cultural-symbolic hierarchy among members of marginalized groups can take many forms. Drawing on Bourdieu (1977, 1984) and Melucci (1989), some boundary work scholars argue

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that individuals belonging to these groups can seek to change the meanings of boundaries by challenging the hierarchical ordering of the categories they create. Wimmer (2008:986) calls this process boundary inversion, wherein subordinate groups self-identify as a "chosen people" who are morally and culturally superior to dominant groups. Examples include "black power" (Morris 1999; Telles 2004), "red power" (Nagel 1995; Warren 1998), and other ethnicity-based minority movements in the Americas (Takezawa 1994) as well as the more subtle use of conspicuous consumption to cast black American culture as uniquely "hip" (Lamont and Molnár 2001). Scholars of Chinese foreign policy have noted a tendency for Chinese intellectuals and authorities to disparage the international system by calling for global "Sinicization" (Barmie 1996) epitomized by the slogan "only Chinese culture can save the world" (Zhao 1997:738); they have also noted that this discourse diminished as China became increasingly embedded in global institutional networks (Kent 2007).

The political struggle over the status of the coca leaf illustrates global boundary inversion aimed at international organizations. This mild narcotic, which has been consumed for millennia in Andean countries (Bolin 1998), became a potent symbol for Bolivian identity in the 1990s and early 2000s during a period of UN and IMF crackdowns and crop substitution programs (García et al. 2004:438–444; Metaal 2014:38). Scholars noted that disparaging external identifications targeting coca chewers and farmers were associated with local critiques of external identifiers. During his fieldwork in Bolivia, Grisaffi (2010:432–433) noted a mural on a state-owned building that read "…for us the coca leaf is the culture of our ancestors… to them it causes idiocy and insanity" and a common theme in Bolivian musical lyrics, that "if it was only legal… then the rest of the world would be able to benefit from this special leaf." Bolivian president Evo Morales called the international criminalization of the coca leaf a "historical injustice" (United Nations 2006:34) and, echoing a refrain of coca supporters who depict it as a "panacea for world hunger" (Metaal 2014:42), characterized coca as a potential "alternative source of nutrition for the entire world" (Morales 2014). Similarly, I argue that global actors' delegitimization of

shari'a results in boundary inversion, wherein Muslims increasingly support *shari'a* and elevate it as superior to the global culture from which it is excluded.

***Shari'a* and Global Culture**

The word *shari'a*, which means "the path" in Arabic, is a non-codified legal system based in the *Qur'an* and the example of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (Esposito 2011) that has historically been open to many interpretations, leading to a wide variation in what constitutes *shari'a* (Coulson 1964; Halliday 2003). More contemporary Muslims have continued this trajectory of diverse interpretations: for Islamic fundamentalists such as Ḥasan al-Bannā' and Sayyid Quṭb, *shari'a* is a total institution that governs all realms of life and is defined in opposition to Western forms of governance (Al-Bannā' 1978; Quṭb 1990). Islamic modernists, by contrast, believe that *shari'a* should be kept out of public life but still consider it crucially important in the private sphere (Kepel 1994:13–23; Kurzman 2002). Still others interpret *shari'a* as intrinsically liberal, arguing that it demands human rights, women's rights, and democracy (Kurzman 1998; Sadowski 2006). This suggests that support for *shari'a* does not inherently entail opposition to global norms.

While *shari'a* was replaced by secular legal codes in most countries[1] by the early 20th century (Hefner 2011), many studies indicate a resurgence in its popularity beginning in the 1970s and accelerating through the 1990s (Juergensmeyer 1993; Lawrence 1995; Roy 2006; Salvatore 1997). This era, which world polity scholars identify as the period of exponential expansion of global networks (Beckfield 2010; Koo and Ramirez 2009; Pubantz 2005), also saw the rise of Islam-based global institutions, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the promotion of Islamic alternatives to global norms (Arjomand 2004). While historical contention over *shari'a* was largely restricted to struggles between religious and political elites (Feldman 2008:106), the late 20th century resurgence in

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[1] It is important to note that this shift was not complete – scholars have shown that *shari'a* remained in place in family law in many majority-Muslim countries (e.g., An-Naʿīm 2002; Charrad 2001).

its popularity was fueled, in part, by ordinary Muslims. Intensifying calls for implementing *shari'a*

prompted Anwar Sadat to issue the 1980 amendment to the Egyptian constitution identifying it as a

source of legislation (Ayubi 1980:486–490); Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's implementation of *shari'a*

provisions in Pakistan during the 1970s and 1980s were met with substantial popular support (Kepel

2002:100–101). This "return to Islam" was so pronounced that Palestinian historian Hisham Sharabi,

who in 1966 wrote that Islam had "simply been bypassed" as a mobilizing ideology (1966:26), called

Islamism "the dominant ideological force in Arab Society" thirteen years later (1979:97; see also: Lewis

1979; Tessler 1980).

Islamic concepts like *shari'a* have come under scrutiny within international organizations and in

the international media, where they are often placed outside of the global legitimacy framework (Abiad

2008). While this is part of a global ideological trend toward limiting the role of religion in politics

(Casanova 1994), mainstream global discourses depict Islamic thought and practice as particularly "anti-

modern, fundamentalist, illiberal and un-democratic" (Casanova 2007:65). International organizations

have characterized the Muslim world as a "desert of non-compliance" due in large part to provisions

that refer to *shari'a* (Modirzadeh 2006:192) and have swiftly and unambiguously condemned its

application, even when implemented democratically (Kendhammer 2013a; Nmehielle 2004) and the

most sensationalized aspects of some *shari'a*-based penal codes – including floggings, amputations, and

stonings – do not occur (Kendhammer 2013b). The office of the former High Commissioner for Human

Rights Nevanethem Pillay reported that, even under ideal circumstances, *shari'a* is incapable of meeting

"international standards of [judicial] fairness" (United Nations 2009:6–7). Even more benign discussions

of *shari'a* among global actors tend to define it as illegitimate and backward: in a letter to the Security

Council, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted with concern that wartime chaos was forcing Afghans

to "revert" to *shari'a* (Ban 2008:7). The result, as described by An-Naʿīm, is that Muslims are exposed to

"the constant propaganda that their tradition is inherently regressive or authoritarian" (2011:283).

Historical and qualitative studies suggest that the delegitimization of *shari'a* among world polity

organizations has led some Muslims to seek to create an alternative global culture based on Islamic

principles as they understand them. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in

1948, for example, there have been various attempts, beginning with the Universal Islamic Declaration

of Human Rights in 1981, to outline a specifically "Islamic" declaration of human rights, all of which

emphasize the centrality of *shari'a* (Mayer 2007; Moosa 2000). A number of case studies similarly

suggest that, in majority-Muslim countries, some individuals and organizations that work towards the

implementation of global norms like women's and human rights couch their interests in the framework

of *shari'a* rather than (or in addition to) the language of international organizations (e.g., Kendhammer

2013a:482; Salime 2011:37–39). This shows that *shari'a* supporters may adhere to the content of global

norms while simultaneously avoiding identification with global norm-makers.

Why Do Some Muslims Support *Shari'a*?

Previous scholarship suggests a number of factors that may lead Muslims to support *shari'a*:

religiosity, orthodoxy, demographics, opposition to the content of global culture, and boundary work

resulting from domestic oppression. The current study theorizes an additional explanation – boundary

inversion targeted at international institutions and other global actors.

Religiosity

One body of literature suggests that support for *shari'a* is an intrinsic feature of Islam and, thus,

all Muslims should support *shari'a*, particularly more religious Muslims (e.g., Potrafke 2012). More

recent studies, on the other hand, have found that religiosity is only loosely related to support for

shari'a (Hoffman and Jamal 2012).

Orthodoxy

Moral cosmology theory suggests that political positions based on religion stem from beliefs

relating to the source of moral authority (Davis and Robinson 1996, 1999, 2006; Ferguson et al. 2014;

Starks and Robinson 2005). This approach distinguishes between two fundamentally different conceptions of the role of God in the universe. Religious modernists, on the one hand, believe that individuals are the ultimate judges of morality and that God is largely a passive force in human existence (Starks and Robinson 2009:651). The religiously orthodox, by contrast, believe that God is the ultimate moral arbiter, that the revealed word of God is inerrant, and that God takes an active hand in shaping people's daily lives (*ibid*.).

This scholarship argues that orthodoxy, due to its God-centered orientation, is associated with conservative social attitudes, egalitarian economic attitudes, and skepticism about popular sovereignty (Blouin et al. 2013; Davis and Robinson 1999, 2006). According to this line of reasoning, individuals that display a high level of orthodoxy in their belief system (e.g., helping the poor as a religious requirement, strict adherence to scriptural rules, application of religious solutions to social problems) should be more likely to support *shari'a*, while individuals who have a strong commitment to popular sovereignty should be less likely to support *shari'a*. Indeed, much of the work in this area in majority-Muslim countries uses support for *shari'a* as a straightforward proxy for orthodoxy (e.g., Acevedo 2008; Davis and Robinson 2006; Junisbai 2010; Moaddel and Karabenick 2008).

Demographics

If *shari'a* is a constitutive feature of a pre- or anti-modern Islamic ideology, support for it should be most prevalent among older and less educated individuals who are less likely to be exposed to global cultural trends (Boyle et al. 2002). On the other hand, demographic pressures might also lead Muslims to embrace *shari'a* as a solution to economic and political problems at the behest of political entrepreneurs. Many studies indicate that young men with a moderate amount of education are most likely to support *shari'a* (Blaydes and Linzer 2008; Ibrahim 1980; Tessler 1997).

Cultural Content

Some scholarship conceptualizes religious political concepts like *shari'a* as components of a totalizing meaning system that inspires its adherents to axiomatically reject cultural innovation. For scholars in this area, religion "bolsters individuals' acceptance of 'traditional' norms over the norms promoted by the international community, and Islam has served as a base of resistance to a number of global norms" (Boyle et al. 2002:16; see also: Boyle and Meyer 1998:218–219). The specific aspects of global culture that ostensibly run counter to *shari'a* range from abstract ideological principles such as individualism (Juergensmeyer 1993:191, 2008; Lawrence 1995), capitalism (Barber 1995; Mandaville 2007:99), democracy (Ciftci 2012; Potrafke 2012), human rights (Kendhammer 2013a; Moosa 2000), and women's empowerment (Charrad 2001:5; Fish 2011), to cultural objects including "fine arts, novels, [and] music" (Roy 2007:74). This suggests that individuals with ideological objections to the content of global norms are more likely to support *shari'a*.

Boundaries

Among the theoretical approaches that conceptualize the integration of religion and politics as a form of symbolic boundary work, subcultural identity theory suggests that individuals may endorse *shari'a* not out of religious obligation, but as a form of resistance against perceived marginalization in domestic culture and politics. Smith et al. (1998) argue that evangelicals, fundamentalists, and other religious subcultures in the United States thrive by drawing symbolic boundaries between their adherents and mainstream American culture. Thus, individuals may adopt Islamist discourses in response to unpopular domestic states' hegemony over religious institutions and discourses (Hirschkind 1997; Moaddel 2005:291; Tessler 1997). In addition, Tuğal's (2009) study of Islamist communities in Turkey carving out identity spaces in opposition to mainstream, secular Turkish society suggests that, in majority-Muslim countries, *shari'a* supporters may be more likely to feel embattled or discriminated against.

Others posit that support for *shari'a* is a form of resistance against political, economic, and military domination at the hands of powerful external actors, such as the United States, that marginalize and subordinate Muslims in the international system (Ayoob 2005; Jamal 2012; Kepel 1994). Thus, support for *shari'a* is, in part, an outcome of powerful actors' historical mistreatment of Muslims and backing of oppressive secular-autocratic domestic regimes, and supporting it "makes a clearly anti-Western statement" (Peters 2005:145). This suggests that individuals who think that external forces are obstacles to reform and development in the Muslim world are more likely to support *shari'a* than those that do not. While this approach explicitly ties support for *shari'a* with global power dynamics, it focuses on state politics rather than international institutions and global norm-making processes. The current study additionally proposes that Muslims support *shari'a* as a form of boundary inversion targeted at international institutions whose discourses place Islamic political concepts outside the bounds of the global legitimacy framework. I hypothesize that many Muslims who support *shari'a* frame their support specifically in reference to international institutions.

Methods and Data

I use a mixed-method design to explore the relationship between support for *shari'a* and attitudes toward international institutions. First, I test for a statistical relationship between support for *shari'a* and key independent variables using ordinary least squares and ordered logistic regression models with country-level fixed effects. I analyze two sources of data: 1) the second wave[2] of the Arab Barometer (AB) survey, which includes data on over 10,000 respondents across ten Arab countries – Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen – in 2010 and 2011 and, 2) the fourth wave[3] of the World Values Survey (WVS) with responses from approximately 8,000

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[2] Only the second AB wave contains survey items about a number of relevant independent variables, including orthodoxy, global norms (e.g., tolerance and women's rights), and attitudes about the international community.

[3] Only the fourth WVS wave contains survey items about *shari'a*.

individuals across six majority-Muslim countries – Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Nigeria, and

Saudi Arabia – between 1999 and 2004.[4]

I use qualitative results from fifty semi-structured interviews that I performed in Tunisia

between August 2013 and March 2014 to validate findings from the quantitative analyses and examine

the content of pro-*shari'a* attitudes. Most interviews were conducted in Tunisian Arabic, with a handful

in English at the request of the respondent. I conducted the interviews using cognitive interviewing

techniques, which involve asking respondents to answer a standard set of survey items along with open-

ended follow-up questions in order to provide insight into respondents' perceptions of the survey items

and the justifications for their answers (Miller 2014). I chose respondents using a combination of

convenience and purposive sampling (Teddlie and Yu 2007) designed to capture the full range of support

for *shari'a* among respondents, with self-identified Salafists[5] oversampled. Respondents ranged in age

from 22 to 64 years (mean=33.32), were 60% men (N=30) and 40% women (N=20), and the vast majority

had or expected to acquire a college degree[6] (80%, N=40).

Cognitive interviewing is an ideal data collection method for this kind of analysis. Because

interview questions were chosen from AB and WVS survey questionnaires, the resulting data provide

insight into the content of pro- and anti-*shari'a* attitudes by allowing *shari'a* supporters and opponents

to justify their answers in their own words (Gorman 2015). This allows me to: 1) ensure that the results

of the quantitative analyses accurately reflect respondents' cognitive schemas – a strategy that Small

(2011) calls triangulation – and, 2) test the hypothesis that support for *shari'a* is tantamount to global

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[4] Non-Muslims are dropped from both samples.

[5] Salafism is an interpretation of Sunni Islam that forbids theological innovation and advocates adherence to the social structures that existed at the beginning of Islamic history.

[6] My sample is younger and more educated than the Tunisian population as a whole. According to the AB data, the mean age in Tunisia is 36.79 and roughly 38% have or expect to acquire a college degree. For the 20-30 year age range (62% of my sample), roughly 49% have or expect to acquire a college degree.

boundary inversion by evaluating whether *shari'a* supporters discursively elevate it as superior to global norms. The former is particularly important given the possibility that being interviewed by a foreign researcher may have influenced interviewees' responses.

Who Supports *Shari'a*? – Quantitative Data and Method

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for the quantitative models is *support for shari'a*. For the AB data, I construct an index using four survey items presenting respondents with the statement that the government and parliament[7] should enact: 1) laws in accordance with *shari'a*; 2) penal laws in accordance with *shari'a*; 3) personal status laws in accordance with *shari'a* and; 4) inheritance laws in accordance with *shari'a*, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.8731). (See Appendix 1A for a list of indices drawn from both datasets and their related indicators). The resulting index is the sum of all individual indicators scaled to a theoretical range of 1-100, and any missing indicator results in a missing index score (N=1,036; roughly 9% of respondents).

In the WVS data, there is only one survey item that deals with *shari'a*. It presents respondents with the statement "The government and parliament should implement only the laws of the *shari'a*," with a five-item Likert response scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Figure 2 presents the distribution of the dependent variables in both datasets and shows that, while *shari'a* is popular among Muslims, there is considerable variation in the responses: nearly 30% of respondents are ambivalent or opposed to its implementation.

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[7] In Saudi Arabia, all questions with the stem "The government and parliament…" are worded "The government and *Shura* Council…"

Figure 2: Histograms Describing Dependent Variables
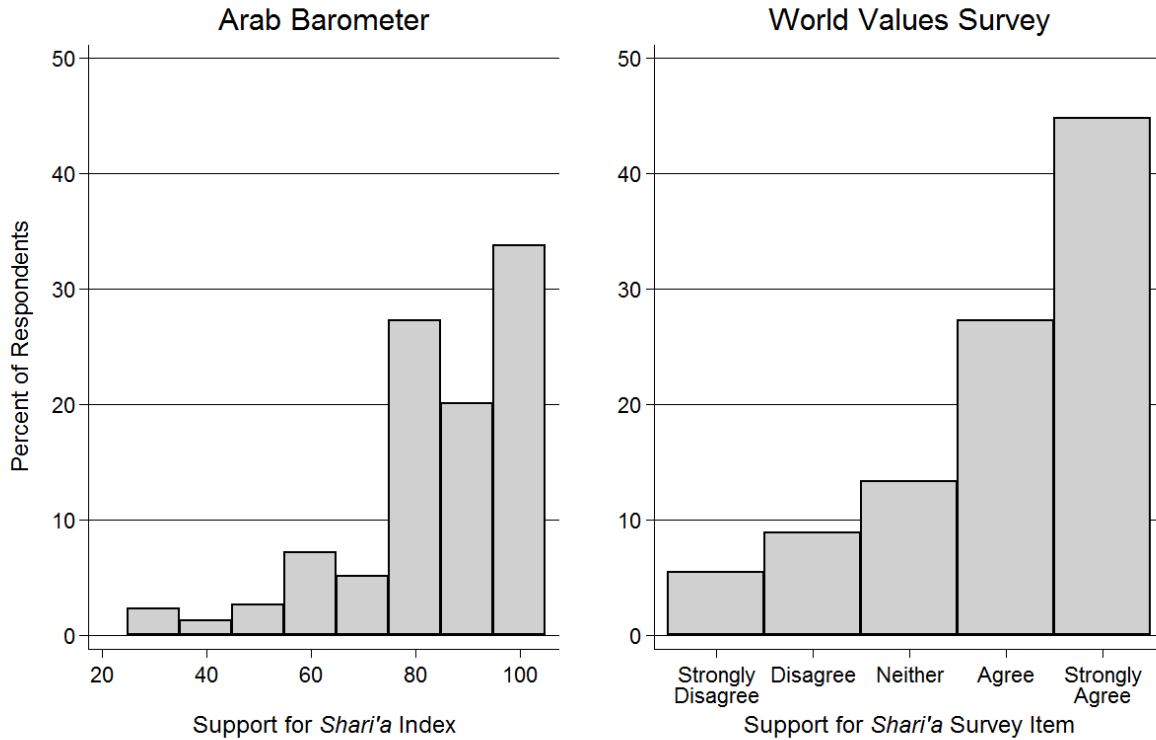
Note: The theoretical range for the support for *shari'a* index used in the AB data is 0-100; its empirical range is 25-100.

Religiosity

For the AB data, I use two measures of religiosity. The first is *self-reported religiosity*[8] with responses ranging from "religious" to "not religious." The second is an additive *religiosity index* constructed from three survey items that assess how often the respondent watches or listens to religious programs on the radio or television, reads religious books, and listens to or reads the Qur'an with responses ranging from rarely[9] to daily (Cronbach's alpha = 0.7687); this index is z-standardized to

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[8] I include self-reported religiosity as a separate variable in models using both datasets for two reasons. First, the correlation between this variable and other measures of religiosity is relatively weak (range: 0.1062 to 0.3478). Second, scholarship on attitudes in majority-Muslim countries indicates that self-reports are not reliable indicators of religiosity in these contexts (e.g., Hoffman and Jamal 2012; Jamal and Tessler 2008).

[9] Because respondents were given the option to choose "never" in the Tunisian sample, I combined this option with "rarely."

enhance comparability across independent variables. For the WVS data, I use responses to two survey items to measure religiosity: a binary variable that captures *self-reported religiosity* and an ordinal variable describing *religious service attendance*, with responses ranging from "never" to "more than once a week."

Orthodoxy

To measure the *doctrine* component religious orthodoxy in the AB sample, I construct a z-standardized additive index using responses to three survey items asking respondents to what extent helping the poor, public prayer, and not listening to music are criteria for individual piety, with responses ranging from to "absolutely irrelevant" to "to a great extent" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.7047). In the WVS sample, I construct a z-standardized additive index using three binary variables that measure whether respondents believe that religious institutions have solutions to moral, social, and family problems (Cronbach's alpha = 0.7539). According to previous research, religiously orthodox individuals should be also skeptical of *popular sovereignty*. I measure this aspect of orthodoxy[10] through a survey item that asks respondents if they think laws should be made according to the people's wishes, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." These variables are identical in both the AB and WVS data, although in the WVS there is a neutral category on the response scale.

Demographics

In both datasets, I include three demographic variables. The first is *age* in decades. The second indicates if the respondent is *female*. The third measures level of *education*, coded 1 if the respondent

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[10] I include support for popular sovereignty as a separate variable in models because the correlation between this variable and the other orthodoxy variables is very weak (range: 0.0051-0.0424) and because some scholarship suggests that orthodoxy is unrelated to support for popular sovereignty (e.g., Pepinsky, Liddle, and Mujani 2012).

has at least some college. This variable was recoded due to differences in response categories between the datasets and across countries.[11]

Cultural Content

I measure individual attitudes about six global norms. In the AB data, I construct a z-standardized index that measures support for *women's empowerment* using five survey items that ask respondents whether they believe that women should be able to work outside the home, have the same employment opportunities as men, travel abroad, and assume judicial and ministerial positions (Cronbach's alpha = 0.7996). I assess attitudes about *democracy* using a survey item[12] that asks respondents whether they think that, despite its faults, democracy is better than any other political system, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." I measure *racial* and *religious tolerance* using two binary variables that ask respondents if they would be comfortable having "people of a different race or color" or "followers of other religions" as neighbors.[13] Finally, I construct a binary measure that captures whether the respondent is an *association member*, coded 1 if the respondent belongs to a union, charity, or non-governmental organization.

In the WVS data, I construct a z-standardized index that measures attitudes toward *women's empowerment* using two survey items that ask to what extent being a good mother and good wife are important traits for women (Cronbach's alpha = 0.7947). As in the AB data, I assess attitudes about

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[11] In the AB dataset, for example, Tunisian respondents were presented a 6-item response scale while respondents in other countries were presented with a 7-item response scale.

[12] I use this question because it measures diffuse support for democracy in general rather than specific support for particular aspects of democracy, thus more accurately measuring support for democracy as an element of global culture. There is a similar question which asks respondents to what extent they think democracy is a "good" political system. Results of models using this alternative question are substantively very similar (not reported).

[13] While similar questions exist in the WVS data, I do not include them in models for two reasons. First, they were not asked to over 35% of respondents in the sample. Second, rather than prompting respondents to give their opinions about specific groups as in the AB survey, in the WVS respondents are asked if there are any people that they would not like to have as neighbors in an open-ended question. Because respondents are not prompted to think about specific groups, this variable likely measures exposure to, rather than tolerance for, dissimilar groups.

democracy via a survey item that asks respondents whether they think that, despite its faults, democracy is better than any other political system. I measure *trust in science* using a survey item that asks respondents whether they think scientific advances will harm or help mankind, with higher values associated with more pro-science responses. Finally, I measure individual support for *environmentalism* using a binary survey item that asks respondents whether they prioritize protecting the environment over economic growth.

<u>*Boundaries*</u>

To evaluate individual perceptions of *domestic oppression*, I use a survey item that asks respondents to what extent they feel they are treated equally to other citizens in their country, with responses ranging from "not at all" to "to a great extent."

To measure reservations about the international community in the AB data, I use five survey items. The first asks whether external calls for reform are *illegitimate*, recoded as a dummy variable with all "unacceptable" responses coded as 1. I employ this coding strategy because many of the responses categories do not discriminate between different intensities of attitudes but instead are justifications for choices (e.g., "unacceptable on principle" vs. "unacceptable because they are harmful to national interests"). The second item is a three-category variable that captures the respondent's ideal level of openness to the outside world, with higher values indicating a preference for being more *closed*. The third variable is a binary measuring whether the respondent thinks that the Arab[14] world is *globally embattled*, coded as 1 if the respondent answered the question "what is the most important challenge the Arab world currently faces?" with the response "curbing foreign interference." The fourth measures feelings of global *dependency*, asking respondents whether or not foreign interference is an obstacle to reform in their countries.

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[14] Because the AB survey was conducted in Arab countries, this question asks only about the Arab world.

Because the WVS data contains survey items that ask for respondents' opinions on the United

Nations, I use these to measure reservations about international institutions directly. First, I use a

question asking for the respondent's *confidence in the United Nations*, with responses ranging from

"none at all" to "a great deal". Second, I construct a z-standardized index using questions that probe

respondents' feelings towards the UN in five *policy areas*: aid to developing countries, environmental

protection, international peacekeeping, refugees, and human rights (Cronbach's alpha = 0.6737). Higher

scores indicate that the respondent believes the UN is justified in promoting policies in that area. Finally,

in order to measure and control for feelings of *Muslim identity*, I constructed a dummy variable from a

survey item that asks respondents "which of the following best describes you?" with the response

"above all, I am a Muslim" coded as 1.

Missing Data

Missing data were imputed using iterative chained equations. I created five imputations per

dataset and transformed all variables before imputing (Von Hippel 2009). To avoid perfect prediction

problems when imputing categorical variables, I implemented an augmented-regression approach which

adds observations with small weights to the data during estimation (White et al. 2010). Finally, before

running models on the imputed data, I dropped any cases that had missing values on the dependent

variable (Von Hippel 2007).

Models

For the AB data, I estimate linear regression models with country-level fixed effects to control

for unobserved country-level effects. For individual *i* in country *j*, the model is:

$$Y_{ij} = U_j + X_{ij}\beta + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Where Y_{ij} is the support for *shari'a* index, X_{ij} is a matrix of individual-level covariates, β is a vector of

coefficients, U_j is a country-specific intercept term, and ε_{ij} is an individual error term. For the WVS data,

because the dependent variable is ordinal, I estimate an ordered logistic regression model with country-level fixed effects. For individual i in country j, the model is:

$$Log\left(\frac{\Pr(Y_{ij} \leq m|X)}{\Pr(Y_{ij} > m|X)}\right) = \tau_m - X_{ij}\beta + U_j$$

Where m is a category for the ordinal support for *shari'a* variable, τ is a cut point, X_{ij} is a matrix of individual-level covariates, β is a vector of coefficients, and U_j is a country-specific constant term. While statistical literature indicates that the use of fixed effects in nonlinear regression models can produce inconsistent coefficients, this is only an issue when the number of observations per group is small. In the case of the WVS data, which has hundreds or thousands of observations per country, including country-level fixed effects is appropriate (Hsiao 2014:196–205). As a robustness check, I also ran a series of linear regression models with country-level fixed effects, treating the categorical variable as continuous, with substantively similar results (see Appendix 1B). For both datasets, I include sampling weights to replicate nationally-representative samples.

Who Supports *Shari'a*? – Quantitative Results

Table 1 presents the results of the linear regression models using the AB data. Table 2 presents the results of the ordered logistic regression models using the WVS data.

Religiosity

All of the variables measuring religiosity are significantly and positively related to support for *shari'a* in all models across both datasets.

Orthodoxy

All of the variables measuring doctrinal orthodoxy are significantly associated with support for *shari'a* in the expected direction in all models across both datasets. The analysis shows inconsistent results for the association between support for popular sovereignty and *shari'a*, however: it is

significantly and negatively associated with support for *shari'a* in the AB data but positively associated with support for *shari'a* in the WVS data*.*

<u>*Demographics*</u>

The results for the demographic variables are inconsistent. Age has a negative association with support for *shari'a* in the AB model but fails to achieve statistical significance in the full WVS model. For sex and education, the results of the different datasets point in opposite directions – the AB models suggest that women and people with college educations are more likely to support *shari'a* while the WVS models suggest the opposite. These results cast doubt on the argument that support for *shari'a* is a pre-modern ideological holdover adopted by traditionalists and individuals with relatively little exposure to global culture.

<u>*Cultural Content*</u>

The results for the variables measuring attitudes toward global norms are also mixed. Consistent with previous literature, positive attitudes about women's empowerment are significantly and negatively associated with support for *shari'a* in all models across both datasets. Among the other variables, however, a different pattern emerges. In models using both datasets, support for democracy is positively and significantly associated with support for *shari'a*. While the coefficient for religious tolerance is negative and significant in the AB nested model, it loses its significance to the religiosity variables in the full model. The reverse is true for the racial tolerance variable, which is not significant in the nested model but is positively associated with support for *shari'a* in the full model. Belonging to a voluntary association is not a significant predictor of support for *shari'a* in any model. Both trust in science and environmentalism are positively and significantly associated with support for *shari'a* in both the WVS models. Taken together, these results indicate that support for *shari'a* does not necessarily entail a rejection of global culture; in fact, support for *shari'a* is associated with greater enthusiasm for certain global norms (e.g., democracy, scientism, and environmentalism).

Table 1: Fixed Effects Regressions on Support for *Shari'a* (Arab Barometer)

	Religiosity	Orthodoxy	Demographics	Cultural Content	Boundaries	Full
Religiosity						
Self-Reported	1.9456***					1.7385***
	(0.3125)					(0.3124)
Religiosity Index	1.9111***					1.4774***
	(0.2034)					(0.2118)
Orthodoxy						
Doctrine Index		2.7489***				1.9809***
		(0.1889)				(0.1969)
Pop. Sovereignty		-0.5894**				-0.4875*
		(0.1998)				(0.1969)
Demographics						
Age			-0.4303**			-0.7114***
			(0.1529)			(0.1496)
College			1.1690***			1.1048***
			(0.3346)			(0.3279)
Female			1.5700***			1.9543***
			(0.3221)			(0.3410)
Cultural Content						
Women Empowerment				-1.0731***		-1.0555***
				(0.1957)		(0.2034)
Democracy				1.3027***		1.5138***
				(0.2615)		(0.2515)
Religious Tolerance				-0.8407*		-0.1801
				(0.3744)		(0.3623)
Racial Tolerance				0.7549		0.9003*
				(0.4272)		(0.4224)
Association Member				0.7426		0.3577
				(0.4026)		(0.3910)
Boundaries						
Domestic Oppression					-0.3505	-0.0706
					(0.1883)	(0.1795)
Closed to IC					0.6846***	0.4221*
					(0.2140)	(0.2065)
IC Illegitimate					0.8335*	0.9608**
					(0.3754)	(0.3625)
Globally Embattled					0.8571*	0.9411*
					(0.4368)	(0.4301)
Dependency					1.5495***	1.1107***
					(0.1954)	(0.1965)
Constant	79.0260***	84.6180***	82.4067***	78.1143***	78.0430***	73.9818***
	(0.9285)	(0.8552)	(0.8624)	(1.1384)	(0.9664)	(1.7615)
N	11006	11006	11006	11006	11006	11006
r^2	0.2835	0.2860	0.2684	0.2708	0.2726	0.3148

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Note: Reported r^2 is the mean value across all imputed datasets.

Table 2: Ordered Logistic Regressions with Country-Level Fixed Effects on Support for *Shari'a* (World Values Survey)

	Religiosity	Orthodoxy	Demographics	Cultural Content	Boundaries	Full
Religiosity						
Self-Reported	0.7166***					0.5339***
	(0.0843)					(0.0861)
Mosque Attendance	0.0466***					0.0433***
	(0.0085)					(0.0089)
Orthodoxy						
Doctrine Index		0.2041***				0.2053***
		(0.0242)				(0.0251)
Pop. Sovereignty		0.1463***				0.1374***
		(0.0235)				(0.0239)
Demographics						
Age			0.0405*			0.0217
			(0.0164)			(0.0166)
College			-0.1771***			-0.1794***
			(0.0545)			(0.0559)
Female			0.1099*			-0.1177*
			(0.0435)			(0.0464)
Cultural Content						
Women Empowerment				-0.2511***		-0.2344***
				(0.0250)		(0.0260)
Democracy				0.1229**		0.1331***
				(0.0378)		(0.0369)
Trust in Science				0.1294***		0.0771*
				(0.0374)		(0.0387)
Environmentalism				0.1423**		0.1289**
				(0.0458)		(0.0462)
Boundaries						
UN Confidence					-0.0725**	-0.0934***
					(0.0237)	(0.0252)
UN Policy Index					-0.0744***	-0.0626**
					(0.0233)	(0.0243)
Muslim Identity					0.4661***	0.4724***
					(0.0503)	(0.0516)
Cutpoint 1	-1.0244***	-1.4227***	-1.9111***	-1.2071***	-2.0877***	-0.2854
	(0.1103)	(0.1212)	(0.0879)	(0.1843)	(0.1066)	(0.2380)
Cutpoint 2	0.0932	-0.2981*	-0.7979***	-0.0847	-0.9665***	0.8646***
	(0.1062)	(0.1174)	(0.0842)	(0.1828)	(0.1018)	(0.2364)
Cutpoint 3	1.0205***	0.6333***	0.1246	0.8492***	-0.0353	1.8261***
	(0.1071)	(0.1183)	(0.0839)	(0.1833)	(0.1015)	(0.2373)
Cutpoint 4	2.3608***	1.9751***	1.4544***	2.1974***	1.3054***	3.2159***
	(0.1010)	(0.1218)	(0.0870)	(0.1862)	(0.1025)	(0.2400)
N	7932	7932	7932	7932	7932	7932

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

The variable measuring feelings of domestic oppression was not statistically significant in any AB model. This suggests that *shari'a* supporters do not feel more embattled by domestic actors than individuals who do not support *shari'a*.

In contrast with the inconsistent effects of attitudes toward specific global norms, all of the models suggest that support for *shari'a* is associated with skepticism about the role of the international community. The AB models indicate that individuals who believe external calls for reform are illegitimate, would like to be more closed to the outside world, feel as though foreign influence is the biggest problem in the Arab world, and believe that foreign interference is an obstacle to reform are more likely to support *shari'a*. The coefficients show that, holding the other variables constant at their means, a respondent with the least supportive attitudes towards the international community scores approximately 7% higher on the dependent variable than one with the most supportive attitudes. Figure 3 illustrates this association, falling between the effect of orthodoxy and religiosity.

Results of the WVS models indicate that individuals who express confidence in the UN in general as well as in specific policy areas are less likely to support *shari'a*. The variable measuring Muslim identity is significant in the anticipated direction: respondents who see themselves as Muslims above all are more likely support implementing *shari'a*. Figure 4 illustrates the results of the ordinal logistic regression model (Table 2) by showing the predicted probabilities of belonging to each category of the dependent variable given high and low values of independent variables measuring religiosity, orthodoxy, and boundaries with other variables held constant at their means. The figure shows that respondents who have reservations about the UN are over 13% more likely to "strongly agree" with implementing *shari'a* than respondents who are not: higher than the effect of Muslim identity (approximately 11%), similar to the effect of orthodoxy (approximately 14%), and lower than the effect of religiosity (approximately 19%). Figure 5 recasts this finding as the predicted probability that a respondent will

"agree" or "strongly agree" with implementing *shari'a* given high and low values of the key groups of

independent variables.

Figure 3: Cumulative Effects of Independent Variables on Support for *Shari'a* Index (Arab Barometer)
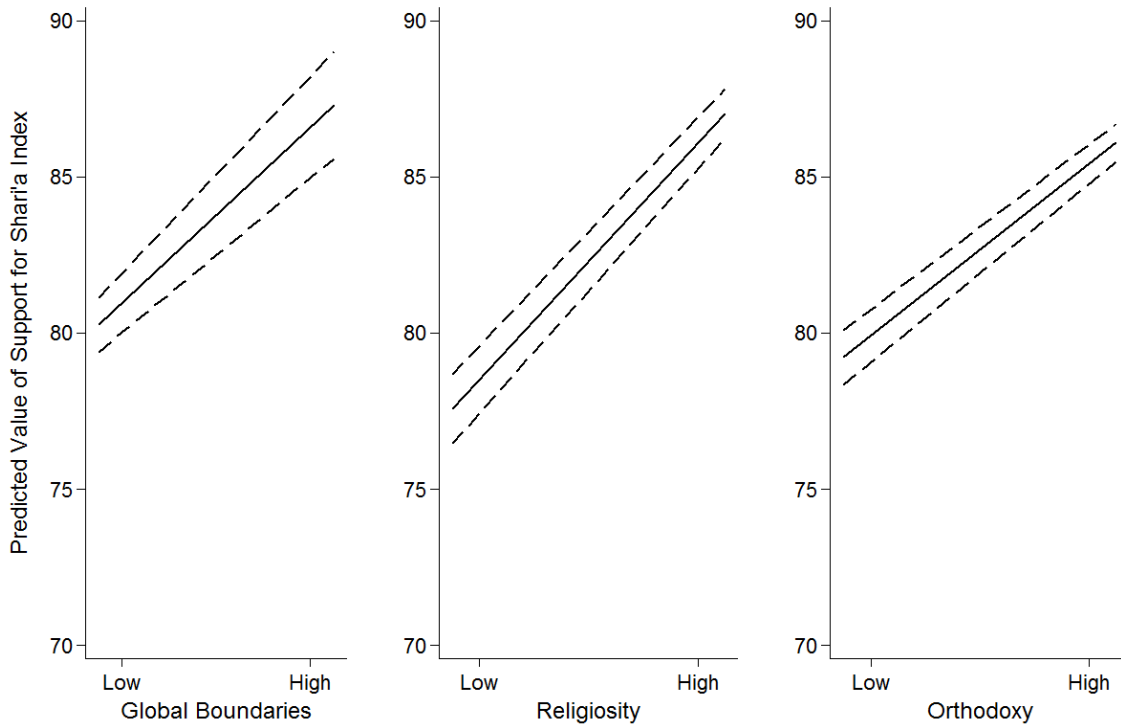
Note: This figure compares the cumulative effect of moving from the lowest to highest values for each set of statistically significant independent variables on the 1-100 support for *shari'a* index with 95% confidence intervals. For global boundaries, this figure illustrates the cumulative effect of moving from the most supportive attitudes toward the international community to the least supportive attitudes. The popular sovereignty component of orthodoxy is excluded because it has inconsistent effects.

These results provide evidence that support for *shari'a* is associated with reservations about

international institutions and the international community broadly construed. With the exception of

attitudes toward women's empowerment, results of models from both datasets demonstrate that

shari'a supporters do not systematically object to the content of global norms. Similarly, the models

show that demographic indicators are inconsistently associated with support for *shari'a*, calling into

question arguments that theorize it as a component of an anti-modern ideology.

Figure 4: Cumulative Effects of Independent Variables on Predicted Probabilities of Ordinal Support for *Shari'a* Variable (World Values Survey)
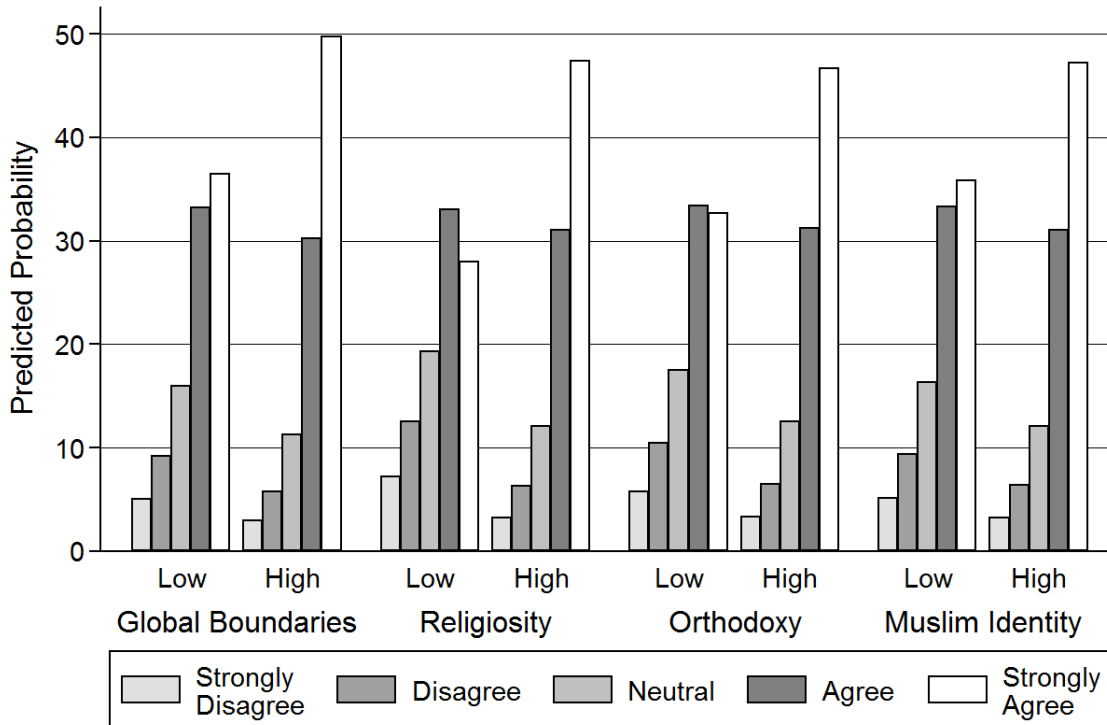
Note: This figure compares the cumulative effect of moving from the lowest to highest values for each set of statistically significant independent variables on the probability of belonging to each category of the support for *shari'a* variable. The global boundaries group is reverse coded: "low" indicates a positive attitude toward the UN and "high" indicates a negative attitude. The popular sovereignty component of orthodoxy is excluded because it has inconsistent effects.

Why Do Some Muslims Support *Shari'a*? – Qualitative Data, Method, and Results

The cognitive interviews, in which respondents were asked to justify their responses to closed-ended survey questions about implementing *shari'a*, did not contain any questions about international organizations because they were designed to gather data on how respondents understand the relationship between *shari'a* and democracy. Discussions of international organizations and global culture, however, emerged in many of the interviews as respondents justified their support for *shari'a* or lack thereof. Figure 6 shows that the distribution of interview respondents on the support for *shari'a* measure is similar to that of the AB and WVS datasets, although not quite as left skewed. To analyze the content of these interview data, I employ a coding scheme that groups respondent justifications into

Figure 5: Cumulative Effects of Independent Variables on Predicted Probabilities of "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" Responses to Ordinal Support for *Shari'a* Variable (World Values Survey)
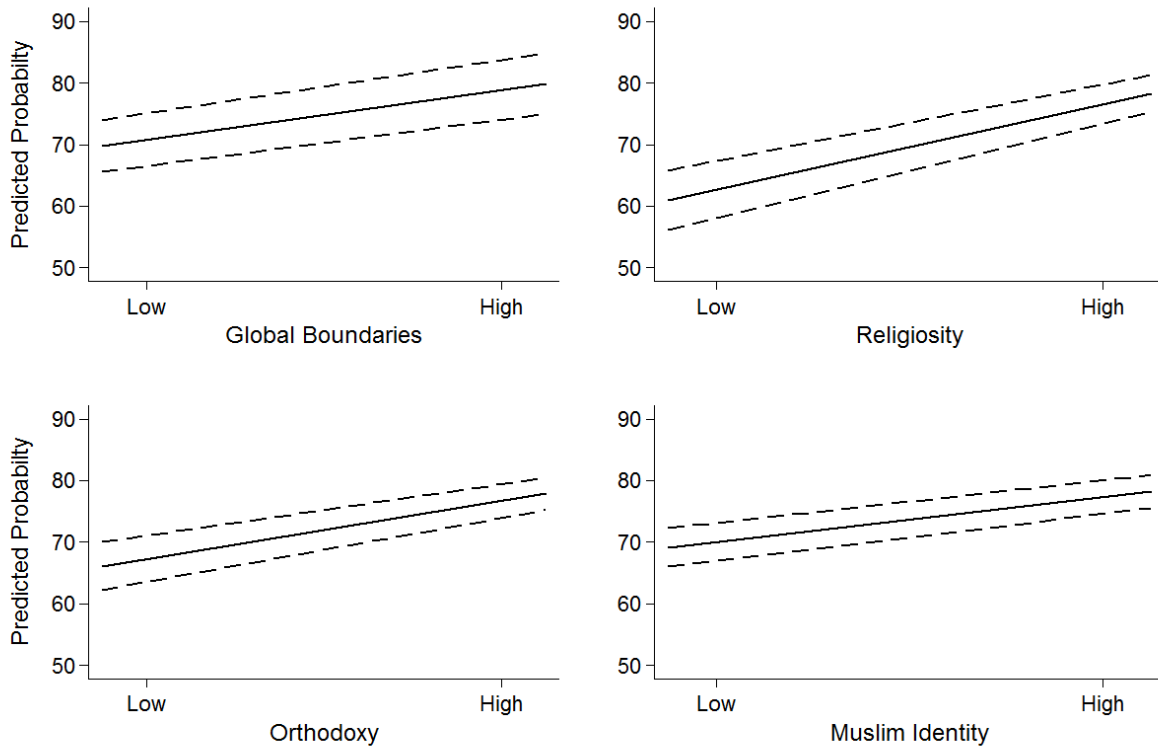
Note: This figure compares the cumulative effect of moving from the lowest to highest values for each set of statistically significant independent variables on the probability of belonging to the "agree" or "strongly agree" categories of the support for *shari'a* variable with 95% confidence intervals. The global boundaries group is reverse coded: "low" indicates a positive attitude toward the UN and "high" indicates a negative attitude. The popular sovereignty component of orthodoxy is excluded because it has inconsistent effects.

one or more of the four following substantive categories: religiosity, orthodoxy, domestic boundary work, and global boundary work; approximately 54% of my respondents who supported implementing *shari'a* invoked global boundary work (see Appendix 1D for example excerpts and more information about category prevalence).

While respondents who supported *shari'a* defined it in myriad ways, a common thread ran through all of their justifications: Muslim identity. Ali, who "agreed" with implementing *shari'a*, said:

> *We can't say that the government must implement the laws of the* shari'a*. It's not obligatory. But it is preferable that the government makes laws according to the* shari'a *because we are in a Muslim state and Islam has historically been our religion. (36, retail store manager, Kairouan)*

31

Even some respondents that disagreed with the survey item about implementing *shari'a*, when asked to justify their answers, responded that they actually did support *shari'a*. Rym, a 29 year old college student living in Tunis who disagreed with the closed-ended question about implementing *shari'a*, justified her response by saying she was afraid of an Iranian-style political system but insisted: "I can't be against *shari'a*, because I'm Muslim." Rym and others like her saw *shari'a* as a central, but contested, aspect of Muslim identity.

Figure 6: Distribution of Interview Responses for Support for *Shari'a* Item
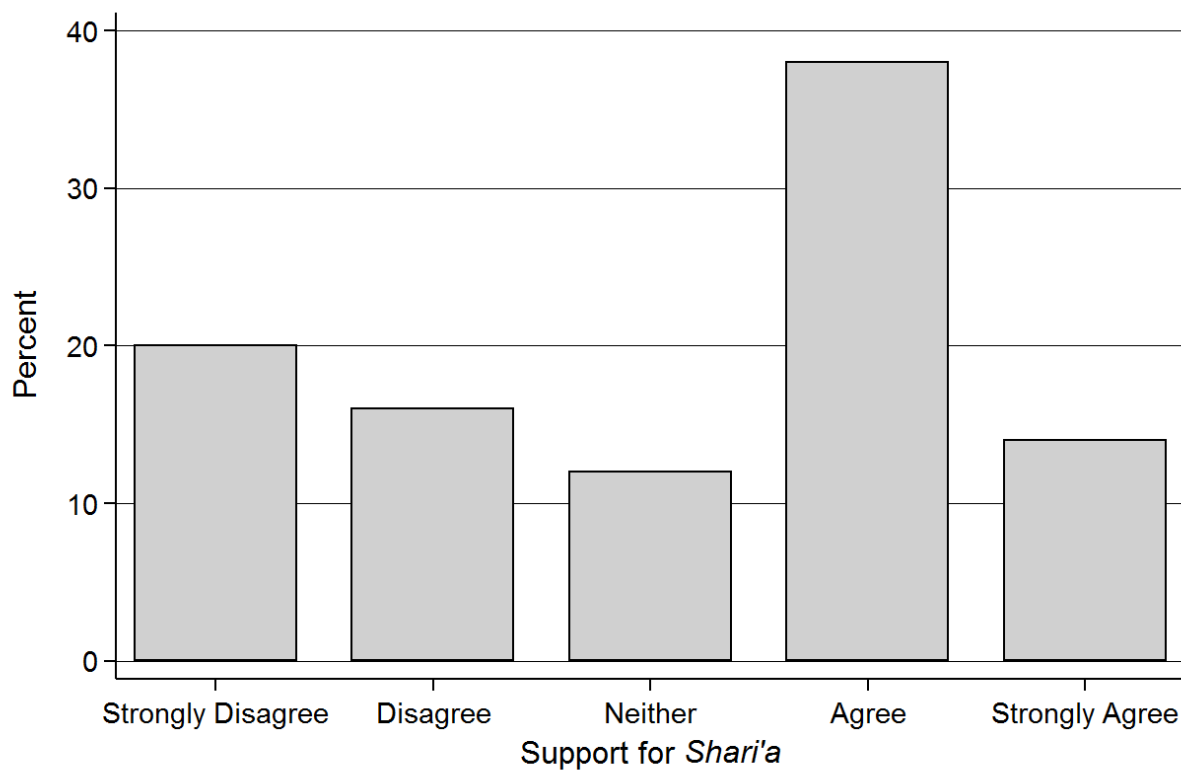
Note: This figure describes responses to the support for *shari'a* item included in the qualitative interview questionnaire ("The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with the *shari'a*"), taken verbatim from the Arab Barometer Survey.

Consistent with my hypotheses, many *shari'a* supporters expressed feelings that Muslims are globally embattled not only by powerful Western countries, but also by international organizations. Salim was keen to criticize international organizations for their perceived hypocrisy:

Concerning associations that look after human rights, that look after the rights of Christians and secular minorities, those associations urgently apply pressure to protect these people's rights, but when it comes to the rights of Muslim people who are killed by the millions in Myanmar-Burma, Iraq, and other countries, we don't see any action. (28, electrician, Bizerte)

Faisal, a 29-year-old auto mechanic from Bizerte, performs global boundary work when he rejects democracy, arguing that it "is used for the geostrategic interests of the American empire and its proxies like… NGOs and the UN." Chokri saw the world similarly:

The American empire is struggling against China, but both consider Islam the greatest threat, a sleeping giant. They want to be careful not to awaken the theory of shari'a. *They want to isolate Islam until it becomes nothing more than a failed political project. (29, college student, Tunis)*

He was suspicious of the United States and China, and thought that Islam and "the theory of *shari'a*" were under attack from both.

Interview results also provide evidence that Muslims who express support for *shari'a* are engaging in global boundary inversion, elevating *shari'a* above international actors and global culture. Omar, a well-known *shari'a* advocate who "strongly agreed" with its implementation, lamented:

What is happening in England [after the financial collapse] is that their banks use Islamic finance now. You are using shari'a *only for economics. Why don't you use it in social relations and politics? Because you think with your pockets, and you only want to gain money! (64, retired, Bizerte)*

Later in our conversation, Omar described the interaction between Muslims and the outside world in terms of the eternal struggle between God and Satan:

Satan told God that he would lead people astray from the truth and destroy them, and this is what is happening. Tunisian students go to Russia or the US or some other country and learn things, then they come back to apply the Russian or American life here in Tunisia. This is why we have so many ideologies, secularists, communists, rightists, leftists. But the Muslim culture is better than all of those cultures and ideologies, and this is what the shari'a *embodies. (64, retired, Bizerte)*

Although many *shari'a* supporters said that they objected to the content of Western or global culture, the specific content to which they objected varied widely. While Omar elevated *shari'a* above both globally-legitimated neoliberal financial practices and political systems, Ibrahim, a self-described Salafist who "strongly agreed" with implementing *shari'a*, critiqued individualism:

A lot of international organizations come to Tunisia and they are surprised about the degree of altruism and hospitality of the Tunisian people. In Arab countries you can find people who are starving, but they will still give you food. If you go to Europe, nobody will give you anything. This is inhuman! (25, shop owner, Bizerte).

There were strong indications, however, that he did not object to this "inhuman" culture in its entirety: Ibrahim owns a movie shop that primarily sells American and European media; during our interview, he was dressed in expensive and fashionable European clothing rather than the plain *qamis* (robe) often attributed to Salafists. This suggests that *shari'a* supporters may be more unified in their objection to the actions of dominant global norm-makers than to the content of global culture.

Finally, many respondents who opposed implementing *shari'a* justified their opposition in terms of international legitimacy. Seif, a 28-year-old college student living in Tunis responded that a system based on *shari'a* would be very bad because "democracy is the internationally legitimate political system," going on to say that *shari'a* is too "irrational" and "emotional" to be appropriate in the contemporary era of "objective rationality." Manel, a medical doctor employed by an INGO who vehemently opposed implementing *shari'a*, said that she would support an Islamist politician only:

…if he had a progressive interpretation of shari'a *that did not contradict international law and universal values. If someone gave me that kind of interpretation of* shari'a*, I wouldn't see him as a religious person. I would see him as a universal human being who is applying the universal values of humanity. (54, medical doctor, Sfax)*

Others expressed concern that applying *shari'a* would endanger Tunisia's status in the international community. Rym, for example, was concerned that applying *shari'a* would damage Tunisia's "good relations with all of the countries in the Mediterranean basin."

Results of the qualitative analyses suggest that the statistical correlation between support for *shari'a* and reservations about the international community and international organizations established in the quantitative models reflects a global boundary inversion process. People who indicated support for *shari'a* on the closed-ended survey questionnaire linked this support with skepticism about international organizations and their most powerful members in their own discourses. Further, my

results show that respondents who opposed implementing *shari'a* justified their position in reference to their support of international organizations and powerful global actors by attributing universality to their discourses.

Discussion and Conclusion

Previous world polity scholarship has suggested that popular support for *shari'a* is an idiosyncratic holdout from the processes that produce global cultural isomorphism. Scholars in this area argue that Islam provides Muslims with an "alternative meaning system" whose tenets are intrinsically at odds with global norms (Boyle et al. 2002:26). The current study proposes that support for *shari'a* does not imply an ideological clash between Islam and secular modernism but rather is associated with feelings of exclusion and marginalization from global norm-making processes. My findings support this claim – results of quantitative models suggest that religiosity and orthodoxy, both proxies for holding an explicitly "Islamic" meaning system, are significant, but not exhaustive, predictors of support for *shari'a*. While *shari'a* supporters tend to be less than enthusiastic about women's empowerment, results of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses show that they do not appear to see a contradiction between *shari'a* and a host of other global norms including democracy, religious and racial tolerance, trust in science, and environmentalism. Instead, it appears that *shari'a* supporters take issue with the way that international organizations and other powerful global actors neglect and marginalize Muslims: quantitative results indicate that individuals who hold reservations about the international community and international organizations are significantly more likely to support *shari'a* and qualitative results show that many respondents linked their support for *shari'a* with distrust for international organizations and their most powerful members.

These findings support the argument that many Muslims embrace *shari'a* as a boundary inversion strategy, attempting to redefine the global cultural-symbolic hierarchy and place themselves and their political concepts at its apex. In an international environment that has consistently kept

majority-Muslim societies in subordinate positions since the mandate era of the League of Nations and continues to delegitimate *shari'a* and other Islamic political concepts, many Muslims conceptualize *shari'a* as a historically-situated boundary marker rather than a coherent ideology. Outspoken support for *shari'a* is thus one way of taking a stance on the perceived historical mistreatment of Muslims and the delegitimization of their political concepts in global culture. This is similar to Kurzman's (2011) finding that many people who expressed support for Osama bin Laden in the wake of the 9/11 attacks shared his perception that Muslims have been historically victimized by the United States but not his political ideology. In order to verify the causality of this relationship, future research may take an experimental approach, exposing some individuals to negative messages about *shari'a* drawn from global discourses to determine the effect of this exposure on attitudes.

World polity scholarship has empirically demonstrated that the spread of global culture diminishes the importance of cultural and political boundaries. Yet, while Meyer et al. (1997) point out that normative prohibitions are central to global culture and Halliday et al. (2010) have shown that international organizations publicly shame nonconforming actors, scholars in this area do not explicitly consider that, in specifying the elements of global legitimacy, international organizations define certain groups and practices as outside of its bounds. By bringing boundary work literature to bear on global culture diffusion processes, the current study proposes that negative exemplars – like *shari'a* – are fundamental components of global culture and that international organizations and other global norm makers define global legitimacy in reference to these illegitimate concepts and practices. Future research might investigate the mechanisms by which local cultural objects and practices become institutionalized as negative exemplars in global culture.

We already know that people elevate cultural objects in response to external identifications that challenge their legitimacy. This insight is often overlooked when it comes to global culture, where isomorphism is commonly depicted as a foregone conclusion. Meyer (2010:12), for example, writes that

global culture is so universally appealing that "Third World national states most avidly sacrifice their

traditional cultural identities and adopt… models reflecting standard global values" with "voluntaristic

eagerness." Even scholars who recognize the unevenness of and contention around the spread of global

culture tend to assume that local holdouts will eventually "be pulled in the direction of the global"

(Carruthers and Halliday 2006:573). The present study shows that support for *shari'a* in majority-Muslim

countries is not an idiosyncratic holdout to the processes that produce global cultural isomorphism but

is, instead, partially a product of those processes. This suggests that the diffusion of global culture

produces both isomorphism and differentiation, weakening some symbolic boundaries while

strengthening and creating others.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYTH OF THE SECULAR-ISLAMIST DIVIDE IN MUSLIM POLITICS

Introduction

On the afternoon of September 9th 2013, I hailed a taxi to take me home from an interview I was conducting in Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia. My conversation with the taxi driver took a predictable route – compliments on my Arabic, my knowledge of Islam, questions about my ethnoreligious heritage and my reason for being in Tunisia. The discussion of my dissertation topic – the relationship between *shari'a* and democracy – inevitably turned to an animated analysis of the situation in Tunisia since the revolution. Hands waving, the taxi driver enumerated a lengthy list of problems in the country: corruption, violence, infighting, rising prices, and a shortage of tourists. Intrigued, I probed – how will Tunisia solve all of these problems? My companion replied, "Of course you must know that God is the solution, faith is the solution, the answers are always in Islam." I probed further, asking him to clarify. He responded, "First, we must have term limits so that politicians don't become lazy and they work for the common good, and the laws must apply to politicians like everyone else. There should also be transparency in campaign financing, we have to know who is paying for these politicians," and so on, without mentioning Islam, God, or faith again for the remainder of his half-hour monologue.

I found this pattern repeated in other conversations. In early November, a man I met in a café told me that he supported the creation of a caliphate whose leader would be "elected, but not through democratic elections, through Islamic elections." Other self-described Salafists told me similar things: elections should be replaced with *shura* (a Qur'anic term meaning "consultation") and *bei'a* (allegiance), taxes should be replaced with analogous Islamic concepts, *khums* and *jizya*, and the civil state should be replaced with an Islamic one. Yet, despite these differences in terminology, respondents largely described slight reforms on existing policies and institutions when asked to clarify their stances. An

Islamic Tunisia would still have elections, protect women's and minority rights, be a safe place for tourists, and have peaceful relations with its neighbors (in fact, these people argued, Tunisia would improve on all of these fronts). This phenomenon also permeated more mundane elements of life during my time in Tunisia. Tunisia's first "Islamic restaurant" opened in Sousse in December 2013; it differs from "secular" restaurants in only two ways: the waitresses are all veiled and the dining area is divided into family-sized units by movable partitions that allow conservative women to feel comfortable removing their head coverings.

In this paper, I argue that opinions about the relative appropriateness of religious actors, institutions, and values in politics represent an important source of social division in majority-Muslim societies, but that this division is not as deep as previous scholarship, drawn largely from analyses of political parties and other formal organizations, suggests. To investigate this phenomenon, I used a mixed-method design combining quantitative analyses of data from the second wave of the Arab Barometer survey and qualitative data drawn from in-depth cognitive interviews with fifty Tunisians on the topic of religious involvement in politics. Contrary to expectations that these differences apply across a wide variety of social and political attitudes, results show that substantive differences are limited to relatively few issue areas and that self-identified secularists and Islamists both incorporate elements of their opponents' ideologies in their attitudes and discourses.

The Secular-Islamist Divide

Images of the Muslim world as polarized into warring camps with irreconcilable views on the appropriate place for religion in politics abound. In Tunisia after the Arab Spring, for example, leaders of Islamist and secularist political parties depict one another as fundamentally flawed. The following quotes from Mohamed Kilani, the president of the Tunisian Socialist Party, and Rached al-Ghannouchi, the president of the Tunisian Islamist Ennahda Movement, illustrate this tendency:

> The Islamists want to further their project by any means necessary, but the leftist democratic forces stand united in opposition to them. We want to highlight this conflict in order to defend democracy and freedom of speech. (Kilani 2013)

> What we call political Islam has demonstrated great heroism in the face of the horrible, monumentally spiritually impoverished nature of the so-called liberals, modernists, and progressives. (al-Ghannouchi 2013)

Domestic, regional, and international media likewise tend to reference the seemingly-irreconcilable gulf between secularists and Islamists in the Muslim world. Recent headlines include: "What Middle East Moderates?" (Zakaria 2014), "In Tunisia, the Secularists Win" (Portes 2014), "Iraqis Open Vote for Parliament: An Islamist-Secular Split is Seen" (Filkins 2005), "In Tunisia after Arab Spring, Islamists' New Freedoms Create New Muslim Divide" (Fisher 2012).

Scholars have also tended to portray Muslims as divided along these lines. Much scholarship on politics in the Muslim world tends to focus on Islamist political parties and radical Islamist organizations that capitalize on the recent global resurgence of religion by projecting themselves as protectors of Islamic morality and an alternative to failed secular ideologies (Gorski and Altınordu 2008; Juergensmeyer 2008; Lawrence 1995; Roy 1994). These groups are largely seen as "ideological actors" that are committed, first and foremost, to realizing their vision of an Islamic moral and political order (Schwedler 2006). While some of the more flexible Islamist groups are willing to cooperate with non-Islamists, many scholars argue that they only appear to alter their ideologies in attempts to gain power (Karakaya and Yildirim 2013; Yildirim 2012) and that this cooperation is contingent on secular groups' willingness to avoid confrontation on "red line" issues such as gender equality and implementation of Islamic *shari'a* law (Browers 2009; Schwedler and Clark 2006; Tezcur 2009; Wickham 2004). However, scholars in this area are careful to point out that most contemporary Islamist groups have relatively moderate political ideologies (Bayat 2007a; Kurzman and Naqvi 2010; Mandaville 2007; Nasr 2005; Schwedler 2006).

While scholarship on Islamist political organizations abound, there is relatively little work on the potential constituencies of these groups, an omission that has serious consequences since constituent preferences may drive ideology and Islamist parties and organizations are likely competing for the same mass base (Schwedler 2013; Tezcur 2009; Wickham 2011:222). What little work has been done in this area has come to widely different conclusions. Some argue that voters may be more conservative than the Islamists who seek to represent them (e.g., Hamid 2011:72); critics counter that the "Islamist electorate" is willing and able to change its attitudes on particularly divisive issues like women's rights (e.g., Catalano 2013). Others point out that Islamist groups have "attracted support from large groups of people who may not be particularly pious" (Sadowski 2006:227; see also: Pepinsky, Liddle, and Mujani 2012), but may instead adopt Islamist orientations instrumentally (Blaydes and Linzer 2008). Lynch (2007) depicts the secular-Islamist divide as relatively shallow by showing that individual Islamist and secular bloggers are often able to find common ground in online spaces.

It is possible that the scholarly and popular focus on divergent Islamist and secularist ideologies and the relative lack of studies examining Islamist constituencies are related. In US-focused political science, scholars on partisan polarization have come to the conclusion that polarization among political elites obscures the cross-ideological agreement on most social and policy issues at the mass level (Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2011; Mason 2013, 2015). It is plausible that the same mechanism is at work in majority-Muslim polities, with most people agreeing on most issues but disagreeing on relatively few symbolic and highly divisive "takeoff issues" (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007:808). This paper investigates this phenomenon in the Muslim world by focusing on the attitudes of non-elite individuals (Browers 2009), broken out by issue-position (Clark and Schwedler 2003). I posit that in majority-Muslim societies, as in the US case, polarization may be more extreme among political elites acting as political entrepreneurs than among their potential constituents.

Polarization, Political Identity, and Islamism

The idea of a sharp divide between secularists and Islamists in the Muslim world implies an environment of deep political polarization, or the separation of society into sharply opposing camps with fundamentally divergent views. Scholars have identified two indicators of polarization. The first is that attitudes and political identities should be distributed bimodally, with most people taking extreme positions and very few holding moderate, middle-ground positions (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Fiorina and Abrams 2008). In the context of majority-Muslim societies, a polarization approach would lead us to expect wide variation on issues like the establishment of an Islamic state, which is considered by many to be the most extreme form of Islamism (Ayoob 2004; Feldman 2008; Nasr 2005; Roy 1994; Sutton and Vertigans 2006). Most people should hold intense pro- or anti-Islamic state attitudes with relatively few people holding moderate or conciliatory attitudes.

The second indicator of polarization is constraint, or consistency of attitudes and social identities among competing groups (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Perrin, Roos, and Gauchat 2014). In the context of majority-Muslim societies, the assumption of polarization leads to two expectations. First, attitudes and identities related to Islamism, such as support for an Islamic state, support for implementing *shari'a* law, preferring Islamist political parties to secular political parties, preference for direct clerical involvement in politics, and feeling that piety is a desirable characteristic in politicians, should be consistently related to one another (Ibrahim 1980; Moaddel and Karabenick 2008; Tibi 2013). Second, reservations about potentially divisive takeoff issues, like liberal democracy (Filali-Ansary 1996; Gurses 2014; Lewis 1996), women's empowerment (Ismail 2003; Schwedler and Clark 2006), and the rights of non-Muslims (Collins and Owen 2012; Schwedler 2011; Ye'or 2002), should be consistently associated with Islamists and not associated with secularists.

While most work on Islamist political parties and organizations shows that there is ideological polarization among these groups and their secularist rivals, there are reasons to question whether this level of polarization exists at the individual level. In the US context, polarization is deeper among political elites than among individuals (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Fiorina et al. 2011; Fischer and Mattson 2009) and people experience and report attitudinal polarization despite its absence (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Mason 2013, 2015); there is little reason to think that this does not apply in the Muslim world. Likewise, experiences of political polarization are exacerbated by exposure to explicitly partisan news media (Levendusky 2013a, 2013b), which has increased in many countries, including Tunisia, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring (el-Issawi 2011). Where polarization does exist, we would expect it to be most pronounced among committed partisans, as they are more likely to be exposed to partisan media and to "opt in" to the consistent package of attitudes and behaviors promoted by political elites and fellow partisans (DellaPosta, Shi, and Macy 2015; Malka and Lelkes 2010; Perrin et al. 2014).

Case Selection: Islamism in Tunisia

The current study uses the case of Tunisia to evaluate the depth and content of ideological differences between secularists and Islamists in majority-Muslim societies. The historical trajectory of Islamist politics in the country suggests that Tunisia is a good case to study this phenomenon. Tunisia's history with Islamist politics begins with the founding of the Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique (MTI) – now known as the Ennahda Movement – in 1981 by its founder, spiritual leader, and current president Rached al-Ghannouchi. Early in its history, MTI adopted a radical ideology: members and sympathizers were responsible for bombings and other violence and Ghannouchi himself vocally endorsed implementing *shari'a* law (Allani 2009). As a result, MTI was subjugated and outlawed, and Ghannouchi himself was repeatedly arrested and eventually exiled from Tunisia in 1989. Since that time, Ghannouchi's ideology has moderated, and he has come to embrace democracy, women's rights, and

human rights (Cavatorta and Merone 2013; Kurzman 1998), though Tibi (2013) argues that Ennahda's official ideology remains radical since it calls for the establishment of an Islamic state based on *shari'a* (p. 29).

One of the reasons for the early failure of the MTI is that its ideology failed to resonate among a wide spectrum of the Tunisian population (Hermassi 1994). Because of the strong history of state-sponsored assertive secularism (Kuru 2007) modeled on French laïcité, secular socialism has been the "dominant form of political expression" in Tunisia (Ismail 2003:141). As a result, Ennahda has historically seen state-sponsored secularism as one of its main grievances and has often refused to enter into a dialogue with leftists despite common interests (*ibid.* 144). Because of this history, the intensity of the secular-Islamist divide may be worse in North African countries that are former French colonies (Cavatorta 2009). Indeed, Haugbølle and Cavatorta (2011) describe the ideological divisions between secularists and Islamists in Tunisia as "profound" and describe Ennahda as having a "very different ideology" than any other party in Tunisia, rendering cross-ideological cooperation difficult (pp. 326, 330). Ghannouchi returned to Tunisia in 2011 following the fall of Ben Ali and, while Ennahda won the largest share of seats in the National Constituent Assembly in the first post-Ben Ali elections, the next nine parties to win seats were all avowedly leftist or secular (Schwedler 2013:17), and in the following elections of October 2014 they were unseated by the leftist-secular Nidaa Tounes.

Its recent history makes Tunisia an ideal case for studying political polarization. Since the fall of Ben Ali in January 2011, Tunisia has become the only true success story of the Arab Spring, holding free and fair elections and experiencing a peaceful transfer of power. Despite this success, it is likely that the Arab Spring may have contributed to ideological polarization. Social psychologists theorize that competition between groups increases the salience of competing group identities (Tajfel 1982), and that this is exacerbated by partisan "sorting" through elections, discussions, and exposure to partisan news

media (Levendusky 2009; Mason 2013, 2015). Just this sort of sorting appears to have occurred, at least at the party level, in Tunisia's unsettled political field after the Arab Spring.

Methods and Data

The present study uses a mixed-method design to explore the contours of the secular-Islamist divide in Tunisia. Using data from the second wave of the Arab Barometer survey's nationally representative sample of Tunisians, I first test for statistical correlates related to an Islamist political orientation at the individual level based on previous scholarship using survey-weighted logistic regression. These data describe political attitudes of 1,196 individuals and were collected in October and September of 2011. The Tunisian sample is unique in that respondents were asked which form of state they prefer (civil or religious)[15] and their opinions on what constitutes both forms of governance.

Second, I triangulate and add depth to the quantitative analyses with results from semi-structured qualitative interviews that I performed between August 2013 and March 2014. Interview data were gathered on 50 respondents in five cities across the country. Most interviews were conducted in Tunisian Arabic, with a handful in English at the request of the respondent. I conducted the interviews using cognitive interviewing, which involves asking respondents to answer a set of survey items along with open-ended follow-up questions in order to provide insight into respondents' perceptions of the survey items and the justifications for their answers (Gorman 2015). Interview questions were chosen among the Arab Barometer survey questions used in the quantitative analyses. Respondents were chosen using a combination of convenience and purposive sampling (Teddlie and Yu 2007) designed to oversample for self-described Islamists and Salafists.

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[15] While the survey question asks about a "religious state," all of the respondents were Muslims and the definitional questions all refer to Islam. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that respondents interpreted this to mean an Islamic state.

Variables – Arab Barometer Survey

Dependent Variables – Measuring Islamism

The outcome variable of interest in the current study is individual-level Islamism. While is no

single definition of Islamism in the scholarly literature of Muslim politics, scholars do tend to agree on a

certain set of identities and beliefs that are associated with it: support for an Islamic state, support for

implementing *shari'a* law, preferring Islamist political parties to secular political parties, preference for

direct clerical involvement in politics, and feeling that piety is a desirable characteristic in politicians

(Ayoob 2004; Bayat 2007a; Feldman 2008; Ibrahim 1980; Moaddel and Karabenick 2008; Nasr 2005; Roy

1994; Sutton and Vertigans 2006; Tibi 2013). Because of the contention over what constitutes Islamism,

I use two measures to operationalize Islamist ideology at the individual level. First, I construct a scale

measuring *state type preference* using three questions that are unique to the Tunisian sample in the

Arab Barometer. The first question asks whether the respondent would prefer the state be "a civil state"

or "a religious state." The second question asks respondents to select definitions of their preferred state

type from three potential choices. From these questions, I constructed a continuum ranging from

proponents of an assertive secular system (1 = most secular) to a system governed by *shari'a* (5 = most

Islamist). Table 3 illustrates the construction of this measure.

Second, I use five individual survey items in the Arab Barometer data that correspond to the

attitudes and identities associated with Islamism mentioned in the previous paragraph. The first of these

is the binary variable capturing whether the respondent would prefer the state be an *Islamic state*. The

second captures each respondent's party preference, with *Islamist voters* coded as 1.[16] The final three

variables measure support for implementing *shari'a law*, for *clerical influence* over government

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[16] Since the survey was administered in late September and early October of 2011, just before the post-Ben Ali
Constituent Assembly elections, this question asked prospective voters for whom they would vote, were the
election held tomorrow. The relevant Islamist parties in Tunisia mentioned by respondents in their answers to this
question were the Ennahda Movement and the El-Fadhila Movement.

decisions, and for preferring *pious officials* in government, using the following questions, all of which

have 4-point Likert response scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree":

> *The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with the Islamic* shari'a*.*
>
> *Religious leaders (imams, preachers, priests) should have influence over government decisions.*
>
> *Tunisia would be better off if pious people held public positions.*

Table 3: Details on State Type Preference Variable Construction

"Do you prefer that the state be…"	"A _____ state is…"	Islamism Score
Civil	… one in which the people are the source of power, the state is governed by the constitution and the law with citizenship being the highest value irrespective of religion or race, and secularism constitutes its cultural and civilizational frame of reference.	1
	… one in which the people are the source of power and the state is governed by the constitution and the law with citizenship being the highest value irrespective of religion or race.	2
	… one in which the people are the source of power, the state is governed by the constitution and the law with citizenship being the highest value irrespective of religion or race, and Islam constitutes its cultural and civilizational frame of reference.	3
Religious	… one in which the people are the source of power, the state is governed by the constitution and the law with citizenship being the highest value irrespective of religion or race, and Islam constitutes its cultural and civilizational frame of reference.	3
	… one in which political alternation depends on elections open to Islamic parties only.	4
	… one in which the people are the source of power, the state is governed by the constitution and the law with citizenship being the highest value irrespective of religion or race, and Islam constitutes its cultural and civilizational frame of reference.	5

Note: This table shows the combination of the state type preference question and the state type definition questions to create an ideological variable ranging from most secularist (1, at top) to most Islamist (5, at bottom). The definitions labeled 3 for civil and religious states are identical.

In what follows, I evaluate these variables as components of a coherent ideology and empirically

test the relationship between each one and a number of independent variables identified in the relevant

scholarly literatures.

Independent Variables – Demographics

Previous literature has pointed to a number of demographic variables that may be associated

with holding an Islamist ideology. Scholars have indicated that older people (Kurzman and Naqvi 2010),

women (Tessler 2002; c.f., Lawrence 1995), and people living in urban environments (Ibrahim 1980; c.f.,

Kurzman and Naqvi 2010) may be more likely to hold Islamist political ideologies. I include three

variables to incorporate these factors: 1) *age* in years, 2) sex, coded 1 if the respondent is *female* and, 3)

binary variable coded 1 if the respondent lives in an *urban* area.

A number of scholars of political Islam have also argued that Islamist attitudes thrive among

poor, dispossessed populations (Davis 2006; Ibrahim 2002; Kepel 2003; Lust-Okar 2004; Pape 2005),

while others argue that Islamism is an ideology of the educated middle classes (Bayat 2007b; Hermassi

1984, 1994; Ismail 2003; Zghal 1981) or is a result of contact with the West (Lawrence 1995). To test

these theories, I include four variables: 1) an ordinal measure of *education* ranging from 1 (illiterate) to 6

(graduate-level degrees), 2) a (logged) measure of monthly household *income* in US dollars, 3) a binary

variable coded 1 if the respondent is *unemployed*, and 4) a binary variable coded 1 if the respondent has

visited a Western country in the past six months.

Independent Variables – Belief and Ideology

Involvement in religious organizations impacts individuals' socialization and affects their

involvement in political activities (Lipset 1960; Verba, Brady, and Schlozman 1995; Wuthnow 1999);

thus, more religious people are more likely to hold Islamist political ideologies (Collins and Owen 2012;

Ismail 2003; Keddie 1998). In order to test for a relationship between religious practice and Islamist

ideology, I constructed a variable measuring overall *religiosity* using a series of questions that ask

respondents to rate the frequency with which they: 1) pray daily; 2) watch or listen to religious

programs on the radio or television; 3) attend religious lessons in mosques; 4) listen to or read the

Qur'an; and 5) read religious books. I combined these with a question which asks respondents to

evaluate their own religiosity, with responses ranging from "religious" to "not religious" (Cronbach's

alpha = 0.7542).[17] I also measure the respondent's attitude toward *takfir*, or declaring other Muslims

nonbelievers (Esposito 2002; Kepel 2002; Tibi 2013), by asking respondents to evaluate the statement

"disagreement with some scholars in religious interpretation should not be used to label people as non-

believers" with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Many scholars argue that individuals with Islamist orientations hold illiberal political attitudes; I

test the relationship between Islamist ideology and political liberalism in three areas. First, because

Islamists are hypothesized to be less receptive to political democracy (Gurses 2014; Lewis 1996; Meyer,

Tope, and Price 2008), I include two attitudinal variables. The first asks respondents whether they think

democracy undermines Tunisian culture and society, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to

"strongly agree." The second assesses support for *popular sovereignty* through a question that asks

respondents if they think laws should be made according to the people's wishes, with responses ranging

from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Second, scholars have pointed out that Islamists often consider issues related to gender equality

takeoff issues, adhering to patriarchal attitudes and refusing to compromise (Alexander and Welzel

2011; Fish 2011; Ismail 2003; Schwedler and Clark 2006). In order to test for a relationship between

support for *women's empowerment* and individual Islamism, I constructed a variable using a series of

questions that ask respondents to rate their level of agreement with the statements: 1) a woman can

become the prime minister or president of a Muslim state; 2) women can assume judicial positions in a

Muslim state and; 3) women can become ministers in a Muslim state (Cronbach's alpha = 0.8182).

Finally, it is possible that Islamists, like other conservative religious groups around the world,

may be relatively intolerant of followers of other religions and thus prefer to afford non-Muslims fewer

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[17] All non-binary attitudinal independent variables are z-standardized (mean=0, standard deviation=1) to facilitate
interpretation of statistical results.

legal rights (Abou El Fadl 2005; Collins and Owen 2012; Kurzman and Türkoğlu 2015; Schwedler 2011;

Ye'or 2002). I test this relationship using two variables. The first measures whether the respondent

believes non-Muslims should face legal *discrimination* in a Muslim country, with responses ranging from

"strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The second captures *religious tolerance*, coded 1 if the

respondent says they would have no problem with having followers of another religion as neighbors.

Measuring the Secular-Islamist Divide – Definitional Results

There are two empirical conditions that indicate polarization: 1) bimodality, or the absence of a

moderate "middle" category of attitudes and; 2) ideological constraint, or consistency among policy

attitudes and political identity. While a culture wars-style polarization hypothesis would predict a

bimodal distribution of secularist/Islamist attitudes, the data on state type preferences tell a different

story. Figure 7 is a histogram that illustrates the distribution of these attitudes in the data, ranked from

"most secular" to "most Islamist", and shows that attitudes are distributed near-normally with very few

respondents in the extreme tails of the distribution. Figure 8 provides a more detailed breakdown of this

data. The circles at the top indicate the percentages of respondents that chose either a civil or Islamic

state, and the circles at the bottom indicate how respondents defined their choice of state.

The figure shows that 47% of those who prefer an Islamic state and 64% of those who prefer a civil state

define their ideal system in exactly the same way: "one in which the people are the source of power, the

state is governed by the constitution and the law with citizenship being the highest value, and Islam

constitutes its cultural and civilizational background." What appears to be a stark divide in the first

question evaporates as respondents define their preferred state type. Regardless of the label they

attach to it, most secularist and Islamist respondents agree that they want a modern state that

represents their identities as Muslims.

Figure 7: Histogram Describing Distribution of State Type Preferences
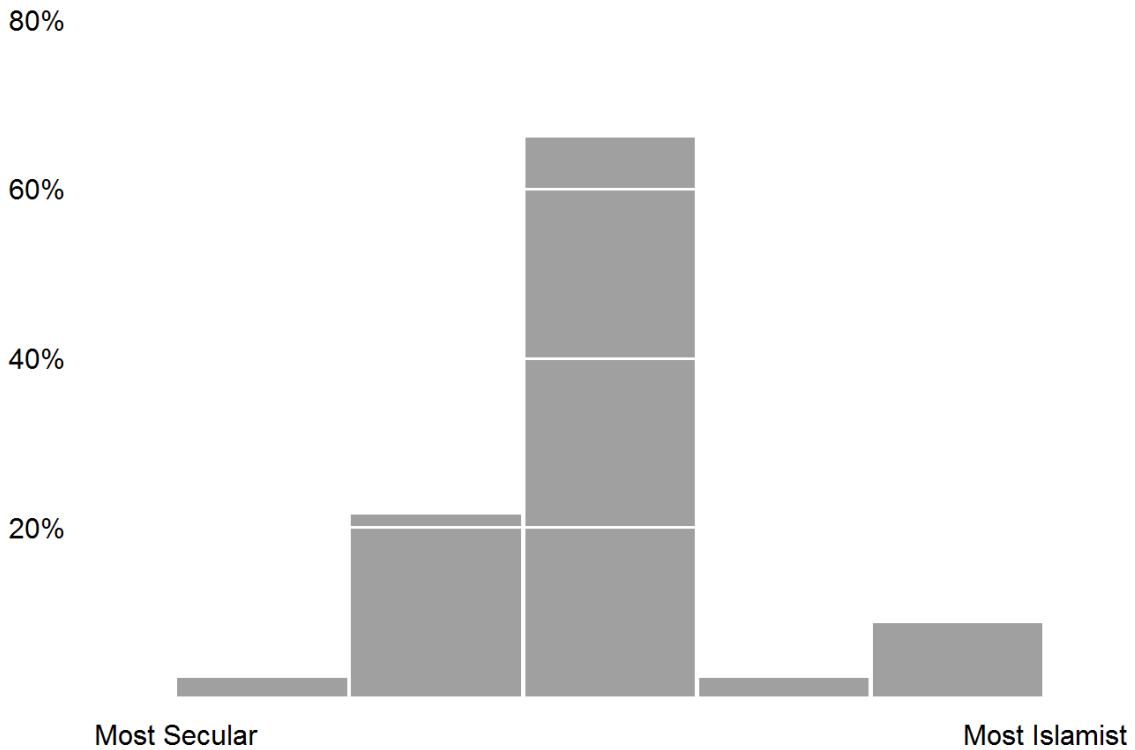
Note: This figure is based on two questions unique to the Tunisian sample of the Arab Barometer second wave. They ask respondents 1) whether they would prefer the state be Islamic or civil, and 2) to select definitions of Islamic and civil states from three potential choices. The x-axis ranges from most secular (a civil state that is assertively secular) to most Islamist (an Islamic state that enforces *shari'a* law) and the y-axis is the percentage of respondents that fall in a given category. The figure shows that most respondents fall in the middle of the spectrum, with relatively few on the extreme ends.

Descriptive analyses of the data indicate a fair amount of constraint among Islamists, though not enough to empirically show that the other five dependent variables are indicators of some larger latent construct. Figure 9 shows the number of respondents who gave Islamist responses to the entire range these survey questions (ordinal variables are dichotomized into "disagree" and "agree" categories) and shows that, as the number of Islamist responses increases, the number of respondents decreases; relatively few respondents gave Islamist responses to four or five questions (8% and 4%, respectively).

Figure 8: Choice of Islamic or Civil State and Definition of Respondent Choice
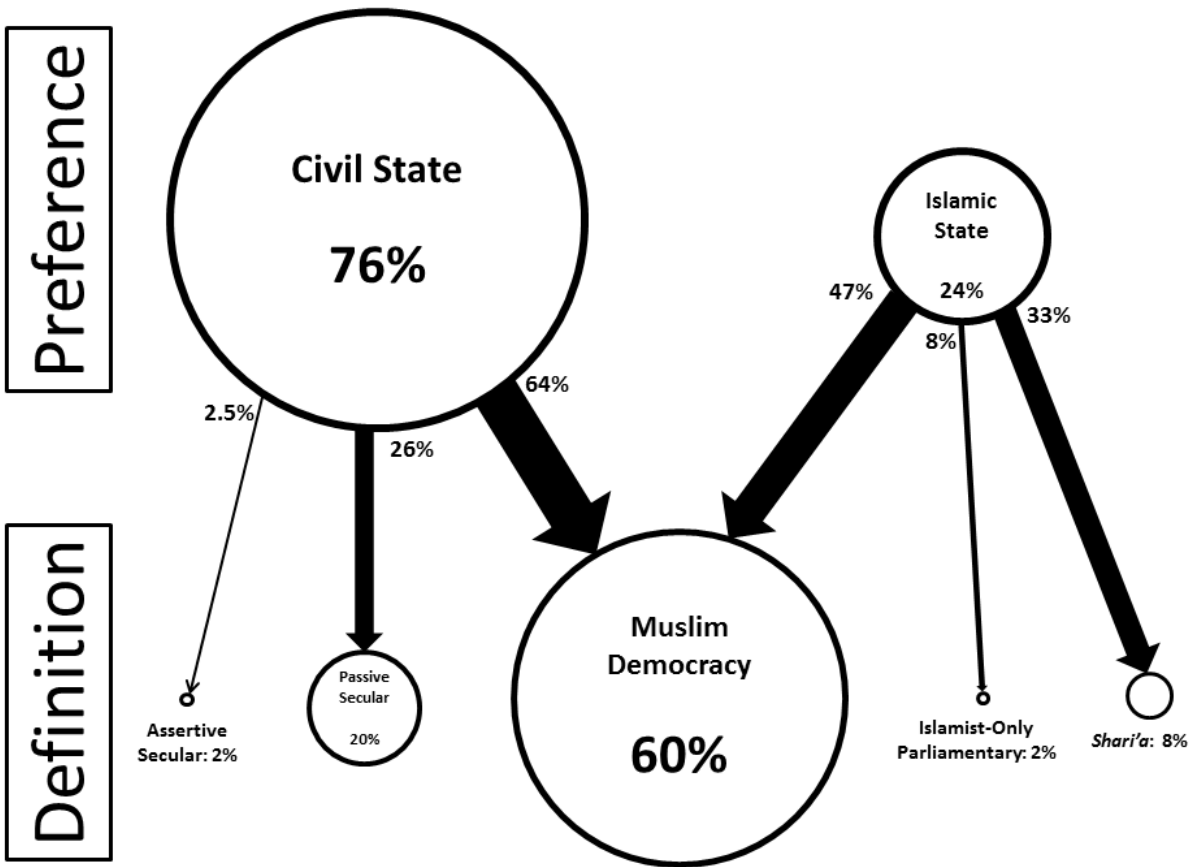
Note: This figure is based on two questions unique to the Tunisian sample of the Arab Barometer second wave. They ask respondents 1) whether they would prefer the state be Islamic or civil, and 2) to select definitions of Islamic and civil states from three potential choices. The circles on top represent state type preference and the bubbles on the bottom represent the respondent's definition of that choice. The arrows represent the percentage of respondents in each category that chose a given definition. The figure shows that most respondents, whether they chose an Islamic or civil state, prefer a state in which "the people are the source of power, the state is governed by the constitution and the law with citizenship being the highest value, and Islam constitutes its cultural and civilizational background."

Likewise, as the correlation matrix in Table 4 shows, the bivariate correlations between these variables range from 0.12 to 0.59.

In addition, the Cronbach's alpha score for the five dependent variables is 0.66, which is short of the acceptable range for indices. Taken together, these results indicate that there may be less polarization between secularists and Islamists than previous literature would suggest.

Figure 9: Bar Chart Showing Number of Respondents Giving "Islamist" Responses to Survey Items
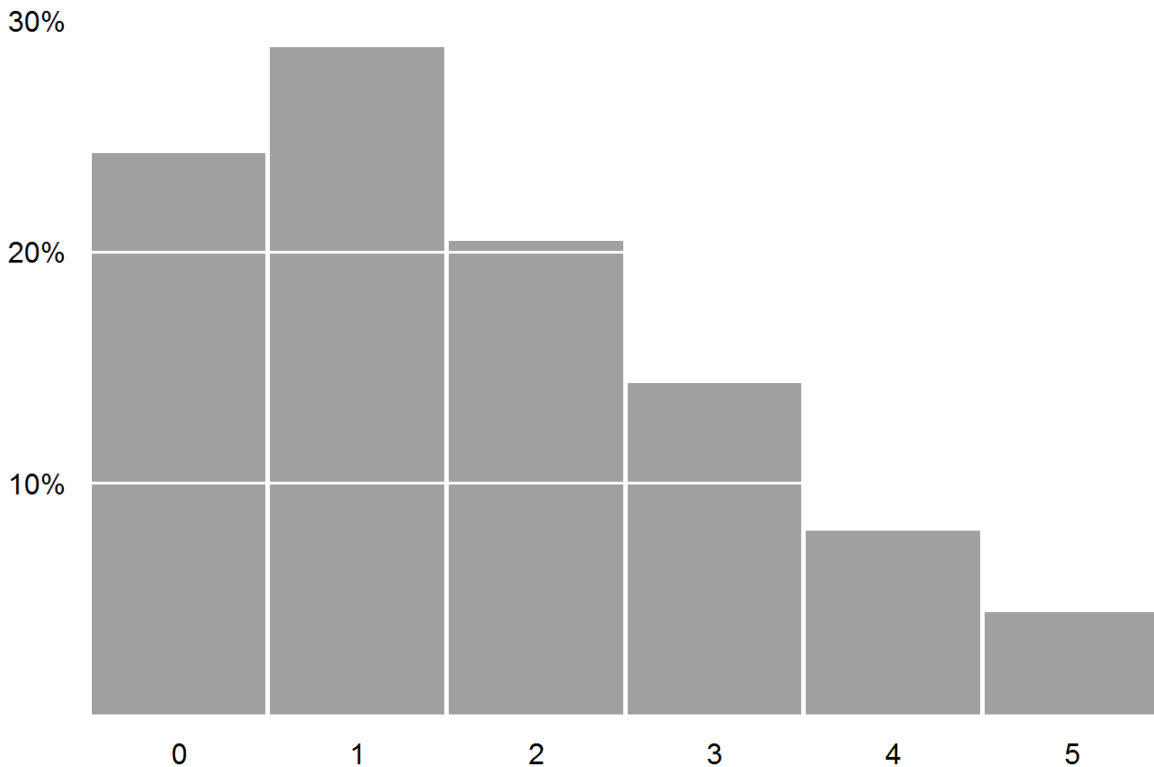
Note: This figure shows the percentage of respondents who gave "Islamist" responses to zero to five of the dependent variables measuring Islamism – a score of zero indicates that the respondent gave no Islamist responses, while a score of five indicates that the respondent gave Islamist responses to all five dependent variables. The figure shows that very few respondents were consistently Islamist in their expressed attitudes. All ordinal dependent variables (*support* shari'a, *clerical influence over government*, and *prefer pious government officials*) are dichotomized into "disagree" and "agree" responses for this figure. The *state type* dependent variable is excluded because it is constructed from the *Islamic state* variable.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for Variables Measuring Islamist Attitudes

	Islamic State	Islamist Voter	Support *Shari'a*	Clerical Influence	Pious Officials
Islamic State	-				
Islamist Voter	0.20	-			
Support *Shari'a*	0.29	0.19	-		
Clerical Influence	0.21	0.12	0.23	-	
Pious Officials	0.36	0.22	0.31	0.59	-

Note: All correlations are statistically significant at p<0.001. The *state type* dependent variable is excluded because it is constructed from the *Islamic state* variable; its correlations are very similar to those for the *Islamic state* variable.

Evaluating the Secular-Islamist Divide – Attitudinal Results

Models

In order to test for relationships between Islamism and theoretically-important independent variables, I estimate a series of regression models with sampling weights applied to ensure a nationally-representative sample. For binary dependent variables (*Islamic state* and *Islamist voter*), the logistic regression model is:

$$\Pr(Y) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(U + X\beta + \varepsilon_i)}}$$

Where Pr(*Y*) is the probability of an individual scoring 1 on the dependent variable, *X* is a matrix of covariates, *β* is a vector of coefficients, *U* is a constant intercept term, and ε_i is an individual-specific error term. I use robust standard errors in all models. For ordinal dependent variables (*preferred state type*, *support* shari'a, *clerical influence over government*, and *prefer pious government officials*), the ordered logistic regression model is:

$$Log\left(\frac{\Pr(Y \le m|X)}{\Pr(Y > m|X)}\right) = \tau_m - X\beta + U$$

Where Pr(*Y*) is the probability of an individual's score on the dependent variable being *m* ordered category of the dependent variable, *X* is a matrix of covariates, *β* is a vector of coefficients, τ is a cut point, and *U* is a constant term.

Missing Data

Missing data were imputed using the iterative chained equations approach, creating five imputations for each dependent variable for a total of six imputed datasets. All variables were transformed before imputing (Von Hippel 2009). To avoid perfect prediction problems when imputing categorical variables, I implemented an augmented-regression approach which adds a few observations with small weights to the data during estimation to avoid perfect prediction (White, Daniel, and Royston 2010).

Model Results – Demographics

Table 5 presents the results of the regression models using the Arab Barometer data. Results show that women and young people may be less likely to express Islamist orientations than men and older people. Neither urban dwelling nor unemployment has a statistically significant effect in any multivariate model. Education and income are negatively and significantly associated with Islamist ideology in full models for five of six dependent variables, indicating that Islamism is appealing to individuals with a relatively low socioeconomic status. Having visited a Western country in the past six months is positively and significantly related to support for implementing *shari'a* law only (Model 8).

1*Model Results – Belief and Ideology*

The variable measuring religious belief and practice is a positive and significant predictor of holding an Islamist orientation across all models, as predicted by previous theories. The *takfir* variable, on the other hand, is not a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable in any multivariate model. While the variable capturing the feeling that democracy undermines Tunisian cultural values is a significant and positive predictor of Islamism in half of the multivariate models (Models 4, 10, and 12), support for popular sovereignty is significantly and positively associated with support for *shari'a* (Model 8) but statistically unrelated to the other dependent variables. The women's empowerment variable does not have a statistically significant relationship with Islamism in any multivariate model. Endorsement of limited rights for non-Muslims has an inconsistent relationship with the dependent variables: it is negatively associated with support for *shari'a* (Model 8) but positively associated with preference for clerical influence over government and pious government officials (Models 11 and 12). Finally, religious tolerance is negatively associated with the dependent variable in three of six multivariate models (Models 4, 8, and 10).

Results of these models demonstrate that people who hold Islamist political orientations are more likely to engage in religious practice and see themselves as religious than secularists, but provide

Table 5: Results of Regression Models with Islamism Measures as Dependent Variables

	State Type		Islamic State		Islamist Voter		Support Implementing *Shari'a*		Clerics Influence Government		Prefer Pious Government Officials	
	(1) Bivariate	(2) Multivariate	(3) Bivariate	(4) Multivariate	(5) Bivariate	(6) Multivariate	(7) Bivariate	(8) Multivariate	(9) Bivariate	(10) Multivariate	(11) Bivariate	(12) Multivariate
Demographics												
Age	0.02 (0.05)	-0.16* (0.06)	0.14** (0.02)	-0.07 (0.07)	-0.09 (0.04)	-0.22*** (0.06)	0.17*** (0.04)	0.00 (0.05)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.13** (0.05)	0.19*** (0.04)	0.04 (0.05)
Female	-0.08 (0.13)	-0.34* (0.16)	0.17 (0.15)	-0.17 (0.18)	-0.49** (0.14)	-0.56** (0.17)	0.01 (0.12)	-0.11 (0.15)	-0.11 (0.13)	-0.26 (0.15)	-0.07 (0.12)	-0.32* (0.15)
Urban	-0.17 (0.14)	0.01 (0.16)	-0.31* (0.15)	-0.01 (0.19)	0.27 (0.16)	0.24 (0.18)	-0.25 (0.15)	-0.09 (0.17)	-0.14 (0.14)	0.12 (0.16)	-0.09 (0.14)	0.20 (0.15)
Education	-0.10* (0.04)	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.23*** (0.05)	-0.12 (0.07)	0.03 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.18*** (0.04)	-0.10 (0.06)	-0.19*** (0.04)	-0.20** (0.06)	-0.30*** (0.05)	-0.23*** (0.06)
Income (log)	-0.25** (0.08)	-0.26* (0.12)	-0.49*** (0.11)	-0.40** (0.14)	0.12 (0.09)	0.01 (0.13)	-0.35** (0.09)	-0.29* (0.13)	-0.09 (0.08)	0.14 (0.10)	-0.29** (0.09)	-0.06 (0.12)
Unemployed	0.00 (0.14)	0.06 (0.17)	0.21 (0.15)	0.02 (0.18)	-0.21 (0.14)	0.02 (0.16)	0.05 (0.12)	-0.12 (0.14)	0.14 (0.13)	0.18 (0.14)	0.25* (0.13)	-0.26 (0.14)
Visited West	-0.39 (0.28)	-0.05 (0.30)	-0.08 (0.28)	0.26 (0.32)	0.45 (0.25)	0.54 (0.28)	0.26 (0.28)	0.59* (0.28)	-0.31 (0.28)	-0.24 (0.30)	-0.21 (0.28)	-0.03 (0.29)
Belief & Ideology												
Religiosity	0.57*** (0.08)	0.66*** (0.08)	0.55*** (0.08)	0.57*** (0.09)	0.39*** (0.08)	0.50*** (0.08)	0.57*** (0.06)	0.57*** (0.07)	0.32*** (0.07)	0.37*** (0.07)	0.54*** (0.08)	0.59*** (0.09)
Takfir	0.01 (0.07)	0.00 (0.07)	0.02 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.09)	-0.12 (0.06)	-0.10 (0.08)	0.25** (0.08)	0.14 (0.10)	0.21** (0.07)	0.08 (0.08)
Democracy Undermining	0.19* (0.08)	0.16 (0.08)	0.23* (0.09)	0.20* (0.09)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.03 (0.09)	0.12 (0.07)	0.13 (0.07)	0.49*** (0.07)	0.45*** (0.08)	0.36*** (0.08)	0.34** (0.09)
Popular Sovereignty	0.10 (0.08)	0.11 (0.08)	0.08 (0.08)	0.05 (0.09)	-0.05 (0.07)	-0.03 (0.08)	0.41*** (0.08)	0.41*** (0.08)	-0.01 (0.07)	0.02 (0.07)	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.08)
Women's Empowerment	-0.04 (0.07)	0.08 (0.08)	0.05 (0.08)	0.15 (0.09)	-0.22** (0.07)	-0.13 (0.08)	-0.19* (0.07)	-0.14 (0.08)	-0.21** (0.08)	-0.08 (0.08)	-0.22** (0.08)	-0.08 (0.08)
Non-Muslim Discrimination	-0.03 (0.07)	0.02 (0.08)	0.02 (0.09)	-0.02 (0.10)	-0.07 (0.08)	-0.04 (0.08)	-0.24** (0.07)	-0.29** (0.09)	0.51*** (0.08)	0.41*** (0.09)	0.48*** (0.08)	0.44*** (0.08)
Religious Tolerance	-0.36* (0.16)	-0.23 (0.18)	-0.60*** (0.17)	-0.47* (0.19)	0.21 (0.19)	0.15 (0.20)	-0.29 (0.16)	-0.36* (0.18)	-0.78*** (0.16)	-0.51** (0.18)	-0.43* (0.18)	-0.04 (0.19)
N	1072	1072	1072	1072	1072	1072	1072	1072	1072	1072	1072	1072

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Even (light shaded) rows contain *β* coefficients for fourteen separate bivariate models, odd rows (dark shaded) describe models including all independent variables. Models for binary dependent variables ("Islamic State" and "Islamist Voter") are logistic regression models. All other models are ordered logistic regression models. Coefficients presented as log-odds.

less evidence that the two differ in other substantive areas. For example, secularists appear to be just as likely as Islamists to consider *takfir* appropriate. Likewise, there is little evidence that Islamists are more likely to be illiberal than secularists. While Islamists appear to have more reservations about the application of democracy in Tunisia, this seems to have no bearing on attitudes toward popular sovereignty. The two groups do not empirically differ on attitudes toward women's empowerment, an issue-area about which they are theorized to sharply disagree. Finally, the differences between the groups in terms of treatment of non-Muslims show a fair amount of disagreement but also attitudinal overlap. Support for legal discrimination against non-Muslims is positively associated with two dependent variables (*prefer clerical influence over government* and *prefer pious government officials*) but is negatively associated with support for implementing *shari'a*; tolerance for non-Muslim neighbors is associated positively associated with three of six dependent variables.

Explaining the Secular-Islamist Divide – Discursive Results

Let us now turn to the results of the cognitive interviews that I conducted in Tunisia between August 2013 and March 2014. Because responses from these interviews are drawn from questions in the Arab Barometer survey, they provide depth and clarification to the statistical analyses. The names of individual respondents have been changed to protect their identities.

Liberal and Secular Elements in Islamist Discourses

Results of quantitative analyses indicate that there are relatively few areas of difference in political ideology between Islamists and secularists; interview results highlight some of these differences. Many Islamists took issue with concepts like democracy and offered Islamic alternatives to secular practices. One key point of contention was around elections, which some respondents argued should be replaced with Islamic concepts like *shura* (consultation). Many respondents who endorsed *shura* described it as a quasi-democratic system with limited franchise:

> *Salim:* Shura *is a kind of election, but not everyone is allowed to vote... the elder people in the society who are known to be intelligent, wise, and intellectually mature, they are the ones who will vote. (28, electrician, Bizerte)*

> *Noureddine: In Islam we should listen to everybody when making a decision. The difference between* shura *and democracy is that with* shura *the experts are the ones who make the final decisions after listening to all of the consultations. (27, engineer, Bizerte)*

While these examples indicate that many Islamist-oriented individuals do indeed hold illiberal political attitudes, my interviews with self-described secularists show that a preference for expert rule is common among the latter group as well, and for many of the same reasons, as Rym's response illustrates:

> *Expert rule is a very good system, you can see it now. The parliament is doing stupid things, wasting time, and fighting. There is still no constitution. They should be cooperating, but they aren't. Tunisians need good governance, not infighting. It would be better if Tunisia was governed by a technocratic elite. (28, college student, Tunis)*

The *shura* examples provide evidence that there are substantive differences between secularists and Islamists, but the results of my interviews suggest that even some individuals who expressed a desire for a revolutionary break with the current political system in Tunisia defined their ideal state in terms that would be familiar to a global, secular audience. Abdelaziz, a self-described Salafist with kinship ties to the Islamist group *Ansar al-Shari'a*, for example, defined the ideal Islamic state in part as a European-style welfare state:

> *I want my political system to allow me to think, live, participate, and be active in my society. That's why I prefer an Islamic system in its true conception… the Islam that Omar Ibn Abi Khattab told us to follow. He was a genius, he took the* zakat *and used them to translate religious materials, he made a social security system long before its birth in Europe. This is the Islam that I love, and I would like to see Islam not only in the mosques but also in the government, as Sayyid Qutb envisioned. (32, high school administrator, Kairouan)*

Abdelaziz went on to say that "this is not the religion you can find in… Saudi Arabia, where the monarchs live in riches" while exploiting laborers and "telling people what they should and should not do."

Similarly, Fadi, an adamant Islamist and 61-year-old small business owner from Kairouan, used the example of Omar Ibn Abi Khattab to describe the ideal Islamic political system, which encourages "the

spread of freedom, justice, equality," and the "rights of workers" who he repeatedly described as systematically abused and marginalized. Others echoed the anti-discriminatory language in global discourses as they justified their support for Islamist positions like implementing *shari'a*. A few examples include:

> *Hamza: The first pillar of* shari'a *is respect of religion, all religions. If you have an Islamic government where the ruler applies Islam, he must also respect the concept of the modern state. He should preserve the Christian religion, the Jewish religion, and protect all of the people. He should provide everyone with… social justice. (24, college student, Tunis)*

> *Salim: We have the* shari'a *in our religion, and in it you can find all of the components of a thriving socio-economic and cultural system that protects all people regardless of their color, ethnicity, or religion. (28, electrician, Bizerte)*

Habib, who agreed with the survey question about implementing *shari'a*, said:

> *The problem is not with* shari'a*, but with how it is being discussed and applied. If we all sit around a table and talk about the philosophy of Islam, we would have to talk about justice, freedom, development, and strengthening the capacities of the state and society. (33, graphic designer, Kairouan)*

During his interview, Habib referred to the Netherlands as a model for democracy and the United Kingdom as a place where religious freedom and freedom of expression strike an appropriate balance.

Finally, I found little evidence that secularists and Islamists diverge on economic issues. Perhaps the clearest example of this in the Tunisian context is tourism. Nearly every self-described Islamist I interviewed was very keen to emphasize to me how tourism would remain an integral part of the Tunisian economy, although many went to great lengths to describe what "Islamic" tourism would look like. Elyes, for example, offered an Islamic alternative to the sort of drinking-on-the-beach tourism that is popular among Westerners traveling to Tunisia, proposing:

> *Islamic tourism is tourism that focuses on places of special importance to Islamic history, like Zeitouna or the Great Mosque in Kairouan. This will help promote a good image of Islam around the world. Also, in Islamic tourism religious experts provide oversight to make sure that an accurate and positive image of Islam is being projected, and that the tourists and tourism sector employees adhere to Islamic principles. (28, mechanic, Bizerte)*

One of the largest areas of disagreement between secularists and Islamists has to do with the prohibition of alcohol. When it comes to tourists and other foreigners, however, even Eskander, who introduced himself to me as a "jihadist and terrorist," took a hands-off approach:

> *If investors or tourists want to come to Tunisia, as long as they don't come to fight our religion, they are welcome. If they are Christians or Jews they can drink in private, but if they drink outside they should be punished because this propagates bad behavior and is not good in front of other people. (21, home security system installer, Kairouan)*

Thus, even the most rigidly Islamist-minded individuals share a desire for a thriving, tourism-based economy with their secular counterparts and are willing to compromise on controversial and potentially polarizing issues – such as alcohol consumption – in order to safeguard the economic success of the country as a whole.

Illiberal and Islamist Elements in Secularist Discourses

Just as many Islamists I spoke with were eager to offer illiberal policies and practices like *shura* that deviated from the secular status quo, many of the self-declared secularists I interviewed offered critiques of these policies and practices. Among the most popular targets of critique was Islamists' focus on implementing *shari'a*, which many secularists described as backwards:

> *Jihan: Because of all of our human progress – people, ideas, technology – Islamic* shari'a *cannot be the system used to rule and govern Tunisia... Let me give you an example. In the Islamic* shari'a *stealing is prohibited, and thieves should have their hands cut off, but this is unacceptable today from a legal and human rights perspective… We live in a new era, a new time. (40, small business owner, Kairouan)*

> *Jalel: It would be impossible to let an Islamist group govern in the name of God… For example, women are a vital part of our society, they can't be excluded. But literalists would say that women shouldn't go outside their home. Nobody will accept this today. It would be a new form of dictatorship! (25, office administrator, Sfax)*

Likewise, many secularists and leftists expressed a distaste for Islamists in general. Leila, a self-described communist, was fearful that the Islamist-led Tunisian government would force women to wear *niqab*:

> *… if they're convinced that* [*wearing* niqab] *is good, I don't care if they wear it. On the other hand, I should have the right to invite people not to wear it. That's the problem in Tunisia. They have the right to invite people to wear* niqab *and everything, but other people don't have the right to invite people not to do it! You'll be condemned to death! (21, college student, Tunis)*

This distaste for Islamists went beyond fears of backwards and draconian policies. Leila, for example, went on to describe women wearing *niqab* as "disrespectful" of other people and described bearded men as "dirty and disgusting." Similarly, while speaking with a group of secularists at a café in Tunis in late August, I witnessed a conversation during which everyone shared their favorite *niqab*- and beard-related urban legends, mocking people who wear these as uneducated and dangerous.

The results of my interviews also show that Tunisian secularists are not consistently liberal in their political attitudes. Fatima, a female entrepreneur, said of women's empowerment:

> *I am with the emancipation and freedom of women. I'm with equality and participation of both men and women in society. But nobody should give up their natural roles in society to go out and do whatever they want. (46, hotel owner, Sfax)*

This "special roles" discourse is common among Islamist organizations and anathema to most secular organizations and global discourses on women's empowerment. More striking was the consensus among a wide range of secularists that, as Darine, a 24-year-old college student from Tunis put it, "people should enjoy only a limited number of freedoms." Hedi, a vocal secularist, told me that a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections would be very good for Tunisia because:

> *People are ignorant and they don't know how to use democracy. At some point, we just need sustainability. Just one person doing his best… for sure he will be a bit selfish, but at least he will ensure stability. It's impossible to implement a fully democratic system... we don't need a lot of captains for the same boat. (30, professional consultant, Tunis)*

Later in the interview, Hedi went on to offer words of praise for the decisive actions of leaders like Hitler and Stalin – and he was far from alone. At a café in Bizerte in August, a young man very loudly expressed his opinion that "Tunisia needs a dictator who is a cross between Hitler and Stalin" because Tunisians are "too uneducated to govern themselves." It is unlikely that any of these secularist discourses would find much support among global audiences.

Finally, the interview results show that many secularists incorporate explicitly Islamist ideas into their political ideologies; this was most apparent in secularist justifications for opposing implementation

of *shari'a*. Many respondents said that, despite their survey questionnaire answers to the contrary, they

would support implementing *shari'a* so long as it was defined according to their own interpretation. As

Fatima, who strongly disagreed with the survey question about implementing *shari'a*, lamented:

> *The rules of Islam regulate and legislate all parts of life – trade, ethics, how you deal with your children.* Shari'a *is something clear, something that I am truly convinced of. The problem with* shari'a *is that everyone explains it according to their own ideas. (47, hotel administrator, Sfax)*

Similarly, Mohamed strongly disagreed with the survey question about implementing *shari'a* but

nonetheless had positive words to say about it:

> *I don't think that* shari'a *is something inflexible. I think that it is an open door for people to grow intellectually and to participate in decision-making because it gives priority to the people, not to religious scholars. This is* shari'a *from my personal point of view. (34, manager, Kairouan)*

Taher, who also strongly disagreed with the survey question about implementing *shari'a*, answered

similarly:

> *Talking about* shari'a *can be constraining, because you're trying to impose your personal definition of* shari'a *that I don't agree with. If we actually talk about what* shari'a *is, we find out it is just a bunch of rules… if those rules are about human rights, no cheating, no stealing, transparency, open government, if you say that is* shari'a*, then of course I want* shari'a*. (27, consultant, Tunis)*

These examples show that *shari'a* – often described as one of the key pillars of Islamist ideology – is a

deeply contested symbol of Muslim identity that even avowed secularists are unwilling to turn against.

Instead, many secularists appropriate elements of Islamist discourses in ways that would be

recognizable to both Islamists and a liberal global audience.

Building on the quantitative analyses, results of the interview analyses provide additional

evidence of substantive overlaps between secularists and Islamists. There are some major differences

between the groups in a handful of specific policy areas and a good deal of out-group animosity.

However, the presented evidence suggests that: 1) Islamist are not uniformly illiberal, 2) secularists are

not uniformly liberal, and 3) members of both groups often adopt elements of the opposing group's

ideology and discourse. Thus, while secularists and Islamists tend to employ a different set of symbolic

imagery and ideological justifications, many appear united as Tunisians around a whole host of issues related to governance, rights, economic development, and social justice.

Discussion and Conclusion

Drawing on careful analyses of a wide and diverse range of empirical evidence, previous scholarship has argued that Islamists are "ideological actors" so committed to their ideological principles that cooperation with other groups is difficult if not impossible (Clark 2006; Schwedler 2006; Schwedler and Clark 2006). Most of the research in this area, however, has focused on political parties and organizations rather than their potential constituents or supporters. Political scientists have shown that elites and parties tend to be more ideologically-driven than the masses (Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Fiorina et al. 2011), particularly if they position themselves as carriers of religious morality (Jenkins 2007; Smilde 2007). Thus, while there is substantial evidence documenting the ideological struggles between secularist and Islamist parties and organizations in the Muslim world, it is unclear if attitudes at the individual level follow the same pattern of polarization.

The current study proposes that individual support for Islamist political positions – such as the creation of an Islamic state and implementing *shari'a* law – is not necessarily associated with illiberal attitudes. Drawing on theories that conceptualize political ideologies as boundary markers that separate social identity groups, I argue that most secularists and Islamists agree on most substantive political issues. Descriptive quantitative results suggest that most Tunisians – both self-described secularists and self-described Islamists – desire a political system that has high levels of transparency, citizen participation, and accountability, with Islam as its cultural and civilizational frame of reference. Similarly, the results of the regression analyses find no statistical difference between Islamists and secularists on attitudes relating to the appropriateness of *takfir*, popular sovereignty, or women's empowerment, and little difference on support for legal discrimination against non-Muslims. While there is some evidence that Islamists more likely to have reservations about democracy *per se* and less likely to be tolerant of

followers of other religions, these relationships are statistically associated with only half of the measures of Islamism employed in this study. Qualitative analyses of interview data indicate that there is more substantive overlap between secularists and Islamists than the quantitative results suggest: even Salafists and self-described radicals tend to agree with secular-minded Tunisians on the importance of social justice and minority rights, and vocal secularists are often willing to entertain implementing *shari'a* law in the abstract.

The current study's most apparent limitation is that the results are based on data only from Tunisia. Because of Tunisia's unique historical trajectory – a long tradition of state-led assertive secularization, an institutionalized moderate religious field, a charismatic leader of the Islamist movement in Rached al-Ghannouchi, and recent political openings in the aftermath of the Arab Spring – it is unclear to what extent findings from Tunisia generalize to the rest of the Muslim world. For example, Ghannouchi, who was keen to cooperate with leftists after the Arab Spring and afforded them many concessions in the country's first post-uprising elections (Schwedler 2013), may play the role of a moderator between the two ideological blocs. However, some scholars have criticized Ghannouchi for being inconsistently liberal and for continuing to call for the establishment of an Islamic state (Filali-Ansary 1996; Tibi 2013).

Likewise, Tunisia's history of secular politics may have ensured that individual Tunisian Islamists are more moderate than Islamists in other countries and regions and, because of this Tunisian exceptionalism, there may be more polarization elsewhere in the Muslim world. Yet, it is possible that the post-independence Tunisian state, with its policy of assertive secularism, may have a higher degree of polarization than other majority-Muslim contexts (Cavatorta 2009; Cavatorta and Merone 2013; Haugbølle and Cavatorta 2011). Future research, drawing on new data at the individual level, should extend this line of inquiry to other contexts, investigating how the contours of the secular-Islamist divide differ from country to country and over time.

Social scientists already know that ideological polarization operates differently on the elite and mass levels, with the latter exhibiting less evidence of ideological constraint and bimodal distributions of political attitudes. However, the relative lack of studies of individual-level political attitudes among partisans in the Muslim world has obscured widespread agreement on many social and political issues. The results of the current study indicate that, like Americans, Tunisians general agreement on these issues is overshadowed by the experience of deep polarization exacerbated by political entrepreneurs. By bringing the constituents back in, this study is one step towards offering a more complete picture of the relationships between political Islam, secularism, and liberal political attitudes.

CHAPTER 4: ISLAMISM AND DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB ONLINE PUBLIC SPHERE

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I have investigated Islamism, or the idea that politics and social

relations should be organized around some set of explicitly Islamic principles. Using a combination of

statistical analyses of survey data and content analyses of cognitive interviews I performed in Tunisia, I

explored the correlates and causes of Islamist identities and ideologies, focusing specifically on the

relationship between Islamism and global norms such as democracy, women's rights, human rights,

environmentalism, and so on. In these previous chapters, I found that the ideological divide between

Islamists and non-Islamists is less stark than the existing scholarly literature would expect, that people

who have Islamist political preferences (e.g., supporting *shari'a* law) do not necessarily object to the

content of global norms, and that adopting Islamist identities and ideologies is a form of boundary work

that many Muslims use to take a stance on the perceived historical mistreatment of Muslims by

powerful global actors.

The current chapter builds on the previous studies by investigating how Muslims discuss

Islamism and a particularly salient global norm, democracy, online. I employ a combination of

dictionary-based and unsupervised (Latent Dirichlet allocation, or LDA) text classification techniques to

analyze over 200,000 posts on the popular Arabic-language messageboard *majalisna.com*. I then use

fixed-effects logistic regression models to evaluate the relationships between the broad topics identified

by the LDA models and the sub-topics of Islamism and democracy at the document level (messageboard

post) as well as the individual level (messageboard poster). Results indicate two primary sets of findings.

First, there is relatively little evidence of a substantive divide between Islamists and non-Islamists on the

forums: discussion of Islamism-related concepts (like *shari'a* law) are relatively evenly distributed

throughout the broad forum topics, and people who discuss these concepts are no more likely to engage in political discussions than those who do not. Second, democracy is a contentious topic because of its relationship to the West and other powerful global actors: democracy-related posts tend to be clustered in political topics, and people who discuss democracy are more likely to post about international crises, conflicts, and conspiracy theories than those who do not.

Data and the Online Public Sphere

As data scientists often remind us, we live in a world of exponentially increasing data production thanks to the spread of computer technology and online communication. Unfortunately, social scientists have been slow to adapt to these changes in data structure and availability (Bail 2014b; Farrell and Petersen 2010; Lazer et al. 2009). There are some notable exceptions to this trend, however. For example, King and Lowe (2003) use automated techniques to build a dataset of events by having computers "read' news sources, Hopkins and King (2010) and Montgomery et al. (2012) classify text media using supervised classification techniques, Bail (2012, 2014a) uses plagiarism detection software to show how discursive fields settle after major historical ruptures, Gaby and Caren (2012) illustrate how the Occupy movement recruited people using user-generated content and user-driven sharing of pictures, and Golder and Macy (2011) use tweets to track cycles of affect variation over time. This work, while cutting-edge, is still dominated by analyses of English-language text despite increasing internet penetration and the growing size of the non-English online sphere. This chapter will join these previous studies in using millions of instances of text data to trace the contours of discursive fields using internet data; it will build on them by, among other things, analyzing Arabic-language text.

Text production is perhaps the most pervasive and persistent form of political behavior (Monroe and Schrodt 2008). The advent of the internet and digital communication has increasingly granted individuals the opportunity to comment in public spaces on topics of general interest to a broad audience, leading to the creating of what some call "online public spheres" (Poor 2005) that are difficult

for existing elites to control (Tufekci and Wilson 2012) and reduce the importance of geographical

boundaries, facilitating networking among dispersed individuals (Caren, Jowers, and Gaby 2012). The

idea that internet discussions comprise a public sphere has been supported empirically; research has

shown that internet use increases political knowledge and participation among users (Wagner and

Gainous 2013), and that people discuss political issues in a variety of online settings, including forums

for reality television shows (Graham 2012).

The Arab Online Public Sphere

A handful of area studies scholars have investigated the expansion of a transnational Arab public

sphere, beginning with the advent of Al-Jazeera and other Arabic-language satellite television networks

(Eickelman and Salvatore 2004) and, more recently, internet posts on news websites (Douai and Nofal

2012; Lynch 2006) and social media sites like Facebook (Hanna 2013). According to this scholarship,

these increasingly-available media create an Arab public sphere by addressing an "imagined community"

(Anderson 2006) that is Arabic-speaking and concerned with transnational Arab-Islamic issues

(Eickelman and Salvatore 2004; Lynch 2006), although some have reported evidence for national

clustering of topics, especially in the blogosphere (Etling et al. 2010). Regardless, it seems as though

Arabs consider the emerging internet-facilitated pattern of communication a public sphere and, thus,

scholars can consider it as such.

The little research that has been done on the AOPS has drawn strikingly similar conclusions.

Douai and Nofal (2012) find that the discourses in the AOPS are diverse and open and are not always

biased in favor of Arabs and/or Muslims, and Lynch (2007) finds that supporters of Islamist and

secularist ideologies are able to find common ground on the blogosphere. Lynch's (2006) examination of

the topics of Al-Jazeera programs, while not drawn from internet texts, is instructive in illustrating the

most likely topics of discussion in the AOPS. These include western imperialism, elections in the west

and how their results might affect Arabs, political hotspots in the Arab/Muslim world like Palestine

(Etling et al. 2010), and elections in the Arab/Muslim world. Previous research suggests that concepts

related to democracy and religion should abound on Arabic-language message boards. Discussions of

the latter may be particularly prevalent, given the underrepresentation of Islamist arguments on

satellite television channels (Lynch 2006) and the tendency for these actors to turn to alternative outlets

to express their views and build their networks (for some examples, see Hirschkind 2001, 2006).

Data

The data for this project were gathered from the internet messageboard *majalisna.com*, an

Arabic-language general issue messageboard based in the Sultanate of Oman. The complete dataset

consists of a 214,861 posts made by 5,500 unique individual posters between 14 October 2000 and 18

March 2013. *Majalisna* is administered entirely in Arabic and posters reside in at least 53 countries

around the world including the Arab world, the West, China, Russia, and South America.[18] *Majalisna* is a

relatively popular forum, with an average of 81 posts by 16 unique posters per day over the specified

time period. Like other online discussion sites, however, the content tends to be dominated by a small

number of highly prolific individual posters (Hagemann 2002; Hanna 2013; Hindman 2009). Table 7 lists

the top ten countries by number of individual posters, Figure 10 is a time series illustrating monthly

patterns of activity on the forum, and Figure 11 shows the post count distribution for individual posters.

Much of the research on the AOPS has focused on text generated on social media sites (e.g.,

Hanna 2013; Tufekci and Wilson 2012) or online news media like Al-Jazeera (e.g., Douai and Nofal 2012;

Lynch 2006). To my knowledge, there are no studies analyzing Arabic-language posts on internet

messageboards. While this reliance on social media and media outlets for text data is understandable

due to the relative ease of accessing these data, I argue that data drawn from messageboards offers a

number of distinct advantages. First, messageboards predate social media outlets like Facebook and

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[18] Providing location is voluntary on *Majalisna*, and only 2,296 (approximately 42 percent) of posters report their national location. The actual number of countries, therefore, could be higher than 53.

Twitter by a significant margin; messageboard data is thus useful for studying text about longer-term

historical topics (e.g., the September 11th attacks, the beginning of the 2003 Iraq war, etc.). Second,

because messageboard posts are long-form, the volume of data they produce per document is relatively

large, making them more suitable for certain text analysis techniques (like LDA). Third, messageboards

are forums for discussion among complete strangers, which may result in interaction among a more

diverse set of opinions than a Facebook page that restricts access to members only. Finally, because

messageboards are more anonymous than other social media sites, posters may be more likely to

express controversial or dangerous opinions. For these reasons, I argue that internet messageboards are

Table 6: Internet Use Statistics in the Arab World

Country	Internet Users	Facebook Users	Messageboard Users
Algeria	46%	72%	37%
Egypt	30%	82%	40%
Iraq	26%	82%	49%
Jordan	48%	57%	17%
Kuwait	82%	72%	54%
Lebanon	64%	83%	30%
Libya	50%	62%	16%
Morocco	50%	78%	33%
Palestine	53%	71%	35%
Sudan	47%	76%	41%
Tunisia	31%	69%	21%
Yemen	37%	80%	42%

Note: Figures drawn from the third wave of the Arab Barometer survey, which covers 2012-2015. The percentage of internet users is the percentage of individuals who gave any response to the question "How often do you use the internet?" other than "I do not use the internet." Facebook and messageboard users are presented as percentage of internet users in each country.

Table 7: Ten Countries with the Highest Number of Majalisna Members

Rank	Country	Members
1	Egypt	4,352
2	Oman	3,886
3	Palestine	3,032
4	Saudi Arabia	2,652
5	Jordan	1,646
6	Syria	1,575
7	Yemen	1,507
8	Sweden	1,021
9	Morocco	1,015
10	Germany	902

Note: *Majalisna* members with unknown locations are dropped from the sample in this table.

a useful source of data on top of the more popular platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Table 6

describes internet use in the Arab world among the twelve countries included in the third wave of the

Arab Barometer survey. It shows that, while messageboard use is rarer than Facebook membership, a

large number of Arab internet users in each country also post on messageboards (between 17% and

54%).

Text Classification Methods

The two most common techniques for computer-assisted text analysis – unsupervised topic

modeling and dictionary-based analyses – each have strengths and weaknesses. Following Guo and

colleagues' (2016) advice, the current study uses both in an attempt to overcome the weaknesses and

emphasize the strengths of each technique.

Unsupervised Topic Modeling: Latent Dirichlet Allocation

In much the same way that exploratory factor analyses use item covariances to uncover latent

constructs in a dataset, unsupervised machine learning algorithms, such as topic modeling attempt to

learn the "hidden structure" in a dataset. In essence, the algorithm attempts to discover the multiple

latent "topics" within the data given the frequency with which words appear within a given text, and

every document is assumed to have some proportion of each topic but to varying extents. The algorithm

then assigns each text a weighted mixture of topics based on these word frequencies. While there are a

wide variety of topic modeling algorithms, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) is the most commonly used

(Blei, Ng, and Jordan 2003; Hoffman, Bach, and Blei 2010).

Unsupervised topic modeling algorithms like LDA have a number of important strengths. First,

because they require little input from researchers, they dramatically reduce the resources required to

analyze large text corpuses. Second, because computers are automated systems, they may discover

topics that human researchers may otherwise miss (Quinn et al. 2010; Riffe, Fico, and Lacy 2014). Third,

topic models like LDA are "mixed-membership models," meaning that each document is assumed

Figure 10: Monthly Time Series of Posting Activity
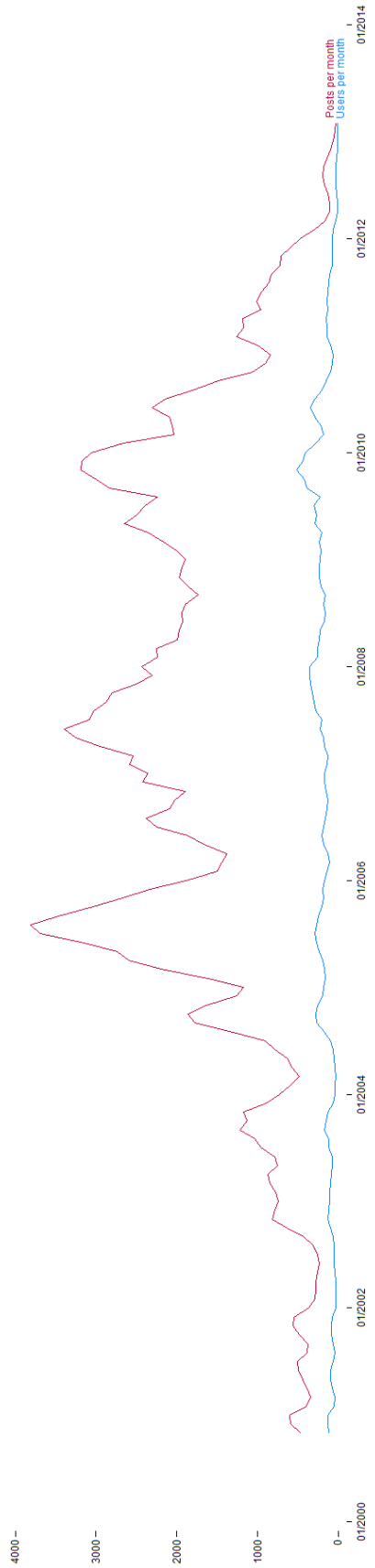
Note: Figure displays three-month moving averages.

Figure 11: Histogram of Post Activity by Individual Posters
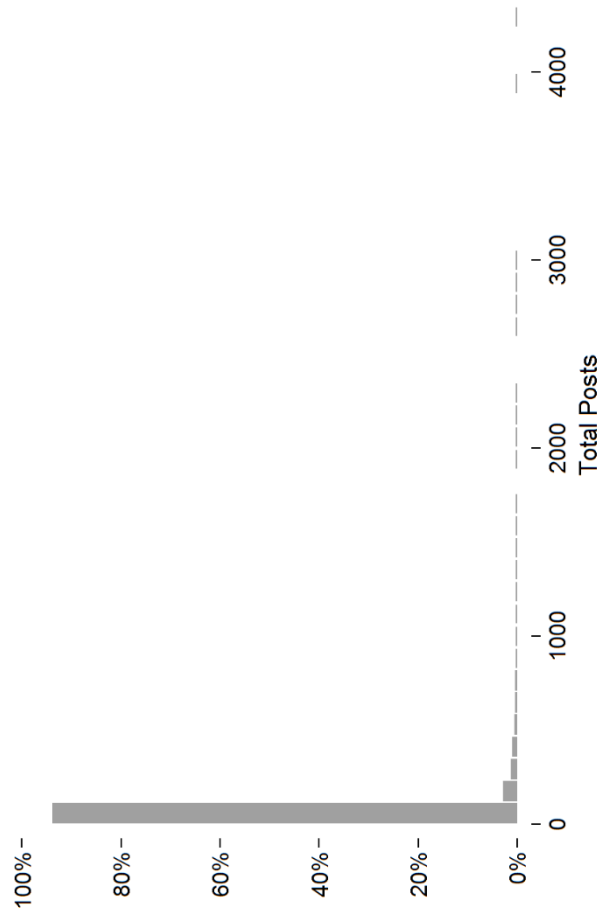
to contain some mixture of topics rather than being limited to exhibiting a single topic (Blei and Lafferty 2009; Blei et al. 2003). In a first-of-its-kind study, Guo and colleagues (2016) find that LDA models perform better than more labor-intensive approaches in outlining the topics present in extremely large text corpuses.

These models also have substantial weaknesses, most of which derive from the fact that they are (usually) entirely inductive.[19] First, the lack of input on the part of the researcher makes assessing reliability and validity difficult (Hillard, Purpura, and Wilkerson 2008), and leading scholars suggest that unsupervised topic modeling always be paired with supplementary analyses, as they are prone to producing both false positives and nonsensical topics (Zamith and Lewis 2015). Second, while topic models are good at identifying very broad and common topics, they often fail to identify rare or very specific subtopics (Guo et al. 2016; Hillard et al. 2008). Finally, while topic models have been demonstrated to be effective when analyzing routinized and edited media like newspapers and scholarly journal articles, they work less well with natural language text generated on social media, which tends to be irregular and less formulaic (Tang, Zhang, and Mei 2013). Thus, text data gathered on social media need to be thoroughly normalized before analyzing them with topic models.

The current study uses LDA to identify the broad contours of the *Majalisna* data. To prepare the data for analysis, I first performed character normalization: eliminating *tashkeel* and *tatweel*, converting *alef-hamza* constructions to simple *alef*, converting non-*alef hamza* constructions to unseated *hamza*, changing *alef maksura* to *yeh* and *taa marbuta* to *heh*, and reducing the number of characters that repeat three or more times to one. I then stemmed the entire corpus, reducing each word to a base form (Manning, Raghavan, and Schütze 2008). Because Arabic is a root-based language, there are a number of strategies for stemming – I chose to use Tashaphyne (Zerrouki 2010), a so-called "light"

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[19] While there have been some advances in hybrid "supervised topic models," these remain underused, especially in the social sciences (McAuliffe and Blei 2008). The technical aspects of these hybrid methods are too detailed to discuss here.

stemmer, because it uses common verb forms, grammatical constructions, and pluralization patterns to

produce a minimum representation of each word without stripping it down to its root (El-Defrawy, El-

Sonbaty, and Belal 2015).[20] I also removed all punctuation, numbers, extra spaces, special characters,

and stop words. Then I used the CountVectorizer module from the scikit-learn machine learning toolkit

to generate a term-frequency list that included any remaining word that occurred in less than 95% of

the documents but more than 50. Finally, I ran a 10-topic LDA model on the resulting data and

generated a document-classification score for each topic in each document.

The model found ten substantive topics that fall into four broad categories. They are: self-help,

storytelling, and addressing the forums (conversational); romance and marriage (relationships); Qur'anic

studies, religious storytelling, and religious idioms (religion); and history and the Arab world in crisis

(politics). Table 8 lists these topics and the top ten words most associated with them in English (see

Appendix 2A for a more thorough examination of the Arabic features associated with each topic). The

time series in Figure 12 shows how these topics have been invoked on *Majalisna* over time and indicates

that most topics, with the exception of the political topics, are invoked at a relatively stable rate.

Dictionary-Based Classification: Islamism and Democracy

One of the major weaknesses of the topic modeling approach to text classification is that is

misses relatively rare sub-topics that are generally of interest to researchers. Employing a dictionary-

based method – i.e., using and refining a set of search terms to identify documents exhibiting a

particular sub-topic – allows for a more focused analysis (Eshbaugh-Soha 2010; Grimmer and Stewart

2013). Used in unison, the two methods are helpful in identifying how specific sub-topics are related to

broader, more general topics (Guo et al. 2016). For the current study, I used a dictionary list to identify

two sub-topics: Islamism and democracy. The English-equivalent dictionary list for each sub-topic is

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[20] For example, the three-letter root for the word "يساعدون" or "they are helping" is "سعد" which translates to "to be happy/fortunate." The Tashaphyne light stemmer identifies the stem of "يساعدون" as "ساعد" or "to help."

presented in Table 9 (see Appendix 2B for more detailed information on the dictionary lists in Arabic). I

used a regular expression parser in Python to identify posts that contained at least one item on the

dictionary lists using normalized, but un-stemmed, text. The program identified 2,711 posts with

Islamism-related words (1.26% of all posts) and 5,213 posts with democracy-related words (2.43% of all

posts). The time series in Figure 13 illustrates the relative invocation of these sub-themes over time. The

figure shows that the distribution of the Islamism- and democracy-related subtopics is more volatile

than the broad LDA-identified topics, and that they track most closely to the political LDA topics

("History" and "Arab world in crisis"). It also shows a series of local spikes in the democracy category

immediately following the 9/11 attacks, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the 2006 elections that brought

Hamas to power in Gaza, and the Arab Spring beginning in early 2011.

Topic and Subtopic Comparisons: Methods and Results

Taken together, the LDA and dictionary-based text analysis techniques supply data on the broad

contours of discussion on the forums as well as the relative occurrence of two substantively interesting

(and somewhat narrow) sub-topics: Islamism and democracy. Likewise, because the data were gathered

from a public messageboard, it is possible to generate data at the level of individual posts as well as

individual posters. This allows me to explore which broad topics are most closely related to each sub-

topic and to find out which broad topics individual posters who discuss Islamism and democracy are also

likely to talk about. For this stage of the analysis, I employ a series of logistic regression models using the

broad LDA topics to predict the occurrence of Islamism- and democracy-related themes at both the post

and poster levels.

Variables

At the post level, I use two binary dependent variables generated by the dictionary classification

script that describe whether each post contains a word associated with either Islamism or democracy. At

Table 8: LDA Topics with Top Ten Most Informative Features

Conversational			Relationships		Religion			Politics	
Self-help	Storytelling	Addressing the forums	Romance	Marriage	Qur'anic studies	Religious storytelling	Religious idioms	History	Arab world in crisis
Personality	Days	Thank	Love	To see	Qur'an verse	Salvation	Praise	Countries	Arabs
Work	Until	Topic / Post	To learn	Husband	The Qur'an	To Pray	To Pray	Arabs	Iraq
To find	One / only	Good	To say	Hadith	Name	Messenger	O God	World	To kill
People	Day	Delight	Heart	Man	Lord	High	Blessed	Unity	Egypt
Scientific	Water	Beautiful	Loneliness	Right	Keep / protect	To be satisfied	Glory	Work	The people
Psychological	To find	Thanks	Say (imper.)	Expensive	Generous	To say	To forgive	Islam	America
Realization	To feel	Sister	To get to know	To say	First	Prayer	Merciful	First	Islamic
Life	Age	Peace	If only…	Woman	Will (God's)	The Prophet	Companions	President	Palestine
To get to know	Man	Wonderful	People	Women	Hearts	Servant (of)	God	Religion	Israel
Self	Whenever	Sharing	Selves / souls	One another	Gracious	Peace	Salvation	History	Countries

Note: The English words and phrases in this table are approximations of the Arabic roots. See Appendix 2A for more detailed information about Arabic-language features.

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Figure 12: Monthly Time Series of LDA Topics

Note: Figure displays three-month moving averages. The y-axis represents the monthly mean document-classification score.

Table 9: Islamism and Democracy English-Equivalent Dictionary Lists

Sub-topic	Dictionary list
Islamism	*shari'a*, divine sovereignty, Islamic State, caliphate, caliph
Democracy	democracy, elections, vote, ballot, freedom

Note: This table presents only a very basic version of the dictionary of search terms used in the original Arabic. See Appendix 2B for more detailed information.

Figure 13: Monthly Time Series of Dictionary-Classified Topics
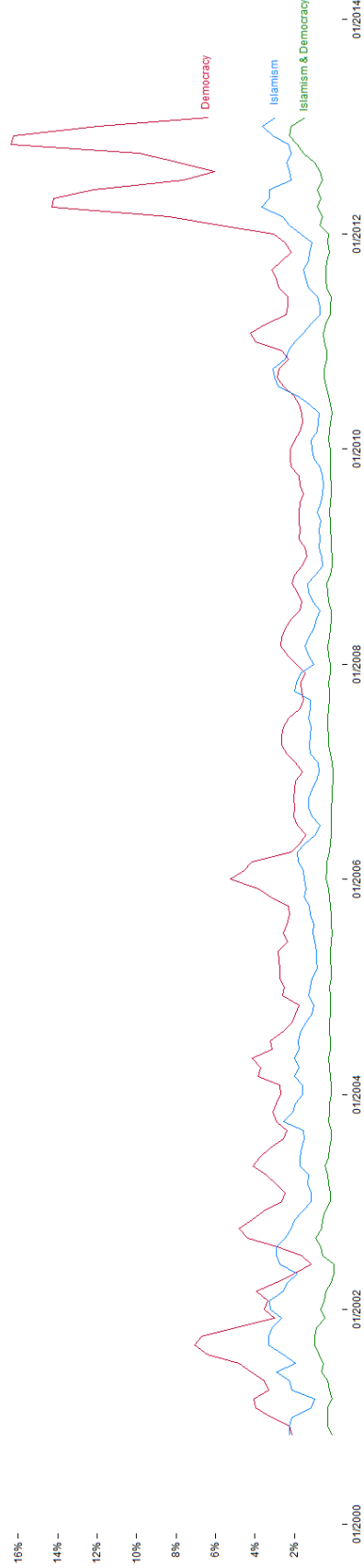
Note: Figure displays three-month moving averages. The y-axis represents the percentage of posts that invoked each theme in a given month.

the poster level, I generated a binary variable that describes whether an individual poster has ever made

an Islamism- or democracy-related post.

The relevant independent variables for this analysis are drawn from the document-classification

scores generated by the LDA models. In order to enhance comparability between scores, I re-scaled all

values to a theoretical range of 0-100. At the post level, these are the independent variables. At the

poster level, the independent variables are the mean document-classification scores for each poster

across all posts that were not classified as containing the sub-topic used as the dependent variable,

generated after re-scaling the raw values. This construction allows me to see what topics other than

Islamism or democracy an individual poster invokes.

All models include a series of controls. At the post level, I control for post length since LDA

models tend to assign more topics to longer posts. At the poster level, I control for both the mean length

of a poster's posts as well as their total number of posts to control for the uneven distribution of posts

between posters. In all models I include monthly fixed effects to control for unmeasured temporal

effects.

Models

Because all of the outcome variables are binary, I estimate a series of logistic regression models:

$$\Pr(Y) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(U + X\beta + \varepsilon)}}$$

Where Pr(Y) is the probability of a 1 on the dependent variable, X is a matrix of covariates, β is a vector

of coefficients, U is a constant intercept term, and ε is an error term. I use robust standard errors in all

models. At the post-level, standard errors are clustered around the individual poster.

Regression Results

Table 10 displays the results of the logistic regression models. Models 1-4 describe the post-

level models. Model 1 shows that Islamism-related language is less likely to appear in conversational

topics (self-help, storytelling, and addressing the forums), but somewhat more likely to appear in topics

related to culture and religion (marriage and Qur'anic studies). They are also less likely to appear in posts that are largely composed of religious idioms, which tend to be formulaic. Islamism-related topics are also slightly more likely to be invoked in posts that score highly on the "Arab world in crisis" topic. Model 2 builds on Model 1 by adding the democracy post classification as an independent variable and shows that Islamism- and democracy-related terms tend to appear together, although the effect size is modest.

Model 3 demonstrates that, unlike Islamism, democracy-related language is more likely to appear in two of the conversational topics – self-help and addressing the forums – but less likely to appear in storytelling posts. For self-help, this is likely a result of including the word "freedom" in the democracy dictionary, the "addressing the forums" result illustrates the relatively open and democratic nature of *Majalisna*'s forum administration.[21] Democracy is also less likely to be present in two of the three religious categories. Most importantly, however, is that democracy is substantially more likely to be invoked in posts that score high on the political topics, especially the "Arab world in crisis" topic. While this is also true of the Islamism sub-topic, the relationship between this LDA topic and the presence of democracy-related words is much stronger. This is apparent when comparing the effect of moving from the lowest to the highest score on this independent variable on the predicted probabilities of any given post containing either an Islamism- or democracy-related word holding all other variables constant at their means; moving from the lowest to highest value of the "Arab world in crisis" topic is associated with an approximately 900% increase in the predicted probability of a post containing an Islamism-related word (from 0.11% to 1.00%) but a 16,000% increase in the predicted probability of a post containing a democracy-related word (from 0.62% to 99.67%). Because of the highly negative,

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[21] Many of these posts, for example, are administrators asking for suggestions and feedback by reminding members that they have "rights" and that *Majalisna* is a "free space" for dialogue.

external focus of this topic, this provides evidence that Arabic speakers tend to discuss democracy in relation to problematic powerful global actors like the United States.

Finally, similarly to Model 3, Model 4 indicates that Islamism- and democracy-related terms tend to appear together, although the effect size is modest.

The results of the poster-level regression models (Models 5-8) tell a similar story. Individuals who post about Islamism are less likely to invoke some of the conversational topics but, outside of their Islamism posts, are no different from other posters in their tendency to discuss religious topics or politics. Democracy posters are likewise less likely to make conversational posts, but the results for the political topics are mixed. It appears that, aside from their posts that specifically mention a democracy-related word, democracy posters may be less likely to invoke the more neutral "history" topic than other posters, but significantly more likely to invoke the more contentious "Arab world in crisis" theme. Moving from the lowest to highest mean value of this variable[22] is associated with a nearly 1,700% increase in the predicted probability of a poster being a democracy poster (from a 1.2% probability to a 20.1% probability). Finally, Models 6 and 8 include the dictionary classifications for each of the dependent variables and suggest that making Islamism-related posts does not make a poster any more or less likely to also post about democracy (and vice versa).

Discussion and Conclusion

In the previous chapters, I investigated the correlates and contents of Islamist political ideologies among individual Muslims using a combination of survey and cognitive interview data. I found that people who hold Islamist political values, such as support for *shari'a* law and seeking to implement an Islamic state, do not systematically object to liberal global norms like democracy, but rather take issue with the actors and organizations that promote these norms. This chapter builds on these findings by exploring how Muslims discuss these issues online using a combination of dictionary-based and

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[22] At the poster level, this variable's empirical range is 0 to 23.84.

Table 10: Fixed-Effects Logistic Regression Models Predicting Islamism and Democracy Mentions

	Post-Level Models				Poster-Level Models			
	(1) Islamism	(2) Islamism	(3) Democracy	(4) Democracy	(5) Islamism	(6) Islamism	(7) Democracy	(8) Democracy
Conversational								
Self-help	-0.064***	-0.065***	0.022**	0.023**	0.011	0.026	0.046	0.044
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.065)	(0.068)	(0.081)	(0.082)
Storytelling	-0.052***	-0.052***	-0.064***	-0.064***	-0.361***	-0.244**	-0.241**	-0.241**
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.094)	(0.088)	(0.088)	(0.088)
Address Forum	-0.055***	-0.055***	0.013*	0.013*	-0.163*	-0.199*	-0.033	-0.034
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.083)	(0.085)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Relationships								
Romance	-0.067***	-0.066***	-0.051***	-0.050***	-0.251*	-0.322*	-0.220*	-0.223*
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.121)	(0.125)	(0.111)	(0.111)
Marriage	0.102***	0.102***	0.017	0.013	-0.004	-0.016	-0.053	-0.050
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.062)	(0.066)	(0.074)	(0.074)
Religious								
Qur'anic Studies	0.018**	-0.019**	-0.019	-0.020	-0.068	-0.041	-0.225	-0.222
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.116)	(0.093)	(0.118)	(0.118)
Religious Stories	0.001	0.002	-0.118***	-0.122***	-0.028	-0.039	0.033	0.330
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.063)	(0.063)
Idioms	-0.588***	-0.583***	-1.064***	-1.055***	-0.346	-0.446	-2.594**	-2.602**
	(0.098)	(0.099)	(0.223)	(0.222)	(0.253)	(0.470)	(0.854)	(0.852)
Politics								
History	0.007	0.005	0.036***	0.034***	-0.150	-0.195*	-0.256*	-0.256*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.081)	(0.085)	(0.099)	(0.099)
Arab World in Crisis	0.022**	0.020**	0.108***	0.107***	-0.033	-0.026	0.118*	0.119*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Poster Type								
Democracy Poster	-	0.202*	-	-	-	-0.090	-	-
		(0.078)				(0.170)		
Islamism Poster	-	-	-	0.212**	-	-	-	-0.077
				(0.078)				(0.162)
N	214,847	214,847	214,861	214,861	5,294	5,294	5,287	5,287

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Models 1-4 predict the occurrence of either an Islamism- or democracy-related word in a given post; Models 5-8 predict the likelihood that a given poster has ever made a post containing an Islamism- or democracy-related word. Standard errors for Models 1-4 are clustered around individual posters. Controls for post length and month-level fixed effects are included in all models.

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unsupervised topic modeling text classification techniques on a sample of 214,861 posts taken from the Arabic-language messageboard *majalisna.com*. Results of statistical analyses indicate that: 1) discussion of Islamism-related concepts are dispersed among a wide range of topics and 2) discussions of democracy and democracy-related concepts like elections tend to be clustered in explicitly political topics, and the people who discuss democracy are more likely to discuss international crises, conflicts, and conspiracy theories than those who do not.

Because this study is one of the few "big data" social science studies to analyze Arabic-language text, it provides insight into a new cultural context. It outlines some of the contours of the emerging Arab online public sphere – an important space for dialogue and discussion in a region of the world that is often rife with censorship. Likewise, while most quantitative text analyses in the social sciences deal with Tweets or Facebook posts, the current study's use of data from public online messageboards offers three key benefits: 1) messageboards have existed for longer than social media sites like Twitter and Facebook and thus provide historical text data over a longer time period, 2) messageboards are more anonymous than social media profiles, and thus participants may be more likely to share unpopular or potentially dangerous ideas on sites like *Majalisna* than on Twitter or Facebook, and 3) the long-form posting format and public nature of the boards means that total strangers interact on messageboards more frequently and in a more nuanced way than they do on Twitter or Facebook, where most interactions are between individuals who "friend" or "follow" one another.

The current study is not without limitations, however. The most pressing limitation is data: *Majalisna* is only one of many international Arabic-language online forums, so it is unclear how well results drawn from it are generalizable. Future research should incorporate data from other popular forums, like *startimes.com*, a forum with over 15 million unique posts. Second, while the topics identified by the unsupervised LDA models give a broad overview of the kinds of things *Majalisna* members discuss, it remains unclear how model specification might impact the categories and

distributions of topics. Thus, following the recommendations of leading machine learning researchers, it may be necessary to empirically validate both the relative fit of a number of alternative model specifications (Blei et al. 2003; Grimmer and Stewart 2013) as well as the results of the LDA models with human coders (Guo et al. 2016).

While the current study provides additional insight into the content of Islamist ideologies and its relationship to global norms like democracy, the results raise a number of additional questions that future research should address. First, it would be useful to know not only when Islamism- and democracy-related words are used, but also the specific content of these discussions: are Islam/democracy considered good or bad, and what are the justifications for these assessments? What are the actors associated with each, and how? Second, the causes of the temporal spikes in the political topics as well as the Islamism and democracy sub-topics are clear, but the content of those spikes is unclear: how do people talk about Islamism/democracy after the September 11th attacks, the 2003 Iraq invasion, the 2006 Palestinian elections, and the Arab Spring? Third, it stands to reason that the unprecedented rise of the so-called Islamic State has had a significant impact on these discussions.

The majority of the limitations to this study could be alleviated by employing a team of human coders. These coders could validate the results of the LDA models and/or code posts for a number of sub-topics and variations on sub-topics to be used in more rigorous supervised text classification models like ensemble Bayesian methods or random forest classifiers (Hopkins and King 2010; Montgomery et al. 2012). Because the documents in question are generally short, unedited natural language texts, hiring a team of native Arabic-speaking coders would be relatively inexpensive and possible using funds from small grants.

Appendix 1A: Quantitative Data

   The data for the quantitative analyses were taken from pre-existing sources, and I attempted to adhere to the original coding schemes wherever possible. Table 1A.1 describes the coding scheme for the Arab Barometer data. In total, I altered the coding for six of the variables in these data. Three of these – relprogram, quran, and pray – had their lowest response categories combined because "never" was only available in one country. Similarly, educ2 was collapsed into a binary measuring some college education because the response categories differed between countries. The two remaining questions – gc_illegit and foreign_out – were recoded because many of the response categories did not substantively differentiate between respondents.

Table 1A.1: Variables – Arab Barometer

Stubname	Full Question	Coding
divsov	"The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with *shari'a*."	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree
divsov2	"The government and parliament should enact penal laws in accordance with *shari'a*."	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree
divsov3	"The government and parliament should enact personal status laws (marriage, divorce) in accordance with *shari'a*."	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree
divsov4	"The government and parliament should enact inheritance laws in accordance with *shari'a*."	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree
relig_self	"Generally speaking, would you describe yourself as…"	1 = Not Religious 2 = Somewhat religious 3 = Religious
relprogram*	"Do you watch or listen to religious programs on the radio or television?"	1 = Rarely; Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Most of the time 4 = Always
quran*	"Do you listen to or read the Qur'an?"	1 = Rarely; Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Most of the time 4 = Always
relbooks*	"Do read religious books?"	1 = Rarely; Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Most of the time 4 = Always
islam_helppoor	"To what extent do you think that helping the poor is a criterion for an individual's piety?"	1 = To a great extent 2 = To a medium extent 3 = To a limited extent 4 = Absolutely irrelevant
nomusic	"To what extent do you think that not listening to music is a criterion for an individual's piety?"	1 = To a great extent 2 = To a medium extent 3 = To a limited extent 4 = Absolutely irrelevant
pray_req	"To what extent do you think that praying in a mosque is a criterion for an individual's piety?"	1 = To a great extent 2 = To a medium extent

		3 = To a limited extent
		4 = Absolutely irrelevant
popsov	"The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with the wishes of the people."	1 = Strongly disagree
		2 = Disagree
		3 = Agree
		4 = Strongly agree
age	Respondent's age in decades.	Continuous
female	Respondent's sex.	0 = Male
		1 = Female
educ2*	Respondent's self-reported educational attainment.	0 = No College
		1 = Some college or higher
outgroup	"To what extent do you feel that you are being treated equally to other citizens in your country?"	1 = To a great extent
		2 = To a medium extent
		3 = To a limited extent
		4 = Not at all
gc_illegit*	"Are external demands for reform…"	0 = Acceptable; acceptable with conditions
		1 = Unacceptable on principle; unacceptable because they are harmful to national interests
gc_closed	"It is better for your country…"	0 = To decrease its level of openness to the outside world
		1 = To maintain the current level of openness to the outside world
		2 = To open up to the outside world to a greater extent
foreign_out*	"In your opinion, what is the most important challenge the Arab world currently faces?"	0 = All others
		1 = Curbing foreign interference
dependency	"Foreign interference is an obstacle to reform in your country."	1 = Strongly disagree
		2 = Disagree
		3 = Agree
		4 = Strongly agree
women_outwork	"A married woman can work outside the home."	1 = Strongly disagree
		2 = Disagree
		3 = Agree
		4 = Strongly agree
women_travel	"It is permissible for a woman to travel abroad by herself."	1 = Strongly disagree
		2 = Disagree
		3 = Agree
		4 = Strongly agree
women_jobs	"Men and women should have equal work opportunities."	1 = Strongly disagree
		2 = Disagree
		3 = Agree
		4 = Strongly agree
women_judicial	"Women can assume judicial positions."	1 = Strongly disagree
		2 = Disagree
		3 = Agree
		4 = Strongly agree
women_minister	"A woman can become the prime minister or president of a Muslim country."	1 = Strongly disagree
		2 = Disagree
		3 = Agree
		4 = Strongly agree
democ_better	"A democratic system may have its problems, but it is better than other systems."	1 = Strongly disagree
		2 = Disagree
		3 = Agree
		4 = Strongly agree
relig_tolerance	"Which members of the following groups would you not like to have as neighbors: Followers of other religions."	1 = I do not want them to be my neighbors

		2 = I do not object
race_tolerance	"Which members of the following groups would you not like to have as neighbors: People of a different race or color."	1 = I do not want them to be my neighbors 2 = I do not object
association	"Are you a member of a: charitable society; professional trade association/trade union; a youth/cultural/sports association"	1 = Yes to any 2 = No to all

Note: Recoded variables are marked with an asterisk.

Where possible, I constructed indices where multiple survey items measuring the same attitude exist. Table 1A.2 presents the indices, the survey items used to construct them, and Cronbach's alpha scores for the AB dataset.

Table 1A.2: Indices – Arab Barometer

Index	Variable Type	Survey Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Support for *Shari'a*	Dependent	divsov, divsov2, divsov3, divsov4	0.8731
Religiosity	Independent	relprogram, quran, relbooks	0.7687
Orthodoxy	Independent	islam_helppoor, pray_req, nomusic	0.7047
Women's Empowerment	Independent	women_outwork, women_travel, women_jobs, women_judicial, women_minister	0.7996

Table 1A.3 describes the coding scheme for the World Values Survey data. In total, I altered the coding for four variables in these data. First, I recoded the relig_self variable because there were zero respondents who described themselves as a "convinced atheist" in the sample. Second, I recoded the college variable in order to maximize comparability between the two datasets. Third, I recoded the environment variable to include ambiguous or "other" responses as not concerned with the environment first and foremost. I recoded the muslimfirst variable because there was only one response of substantive interest.

Table 1A.3: Variables – World Values Survey

Stubname	Full Question	Coding
divsov	"The government and parliament should implement the laws of the *shari'a*."	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
relig_self*	"Would you say that you are…"	0 = Not a religious person, a convinced athiest 1 = A religious person
services	"Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services these days?	1 = Never 2 = Less often 3 = Once a year 4 = Only on special holy days 5 = Once a month 6 = Once a week 7 = more than once a week
mosque_moral	"Generally speaking, do you think that the religious institutions in your country are giving adequate answers to moral problems?"	0 = No 1 = Yes

mosque_social	"Generally speaking, do you think that the religious institutions in your country are giving adequate answers to social problems?"	0 = No 1 = Yes
mosque_family	"Generally speaking, do you think that the religious institutions in your country are giving adequate answers to family problems?"	0 = No 1 = Yes
popsov	"The government and parliament should make laws according to the people's wishes"	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
age	Age in decades.	Continuous
college*	Respondent's self-reported educational attainment.	0 = No college 1 = Some college or higher
female	Respondent's sex.	0 = Male 1 = Female
women_mother	"In your opinion, how important are each of the following traits in a woman: being a good mother?"	1 = Very important 2 = Somewhat important 3 = Neither 4 = A little important 5 = Not importat at all
women_wife	"In your opinion, how important are each of the following traits in a woman: being a good wife?"	1 = Very important 2 = Somewhat important 3 = Neither 4 = A little important 5 = Not importat at all
democ_better	"Democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government."	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree
scientism	"In the long run, do you think the scientific eadvance we are making will help or harm mankind?"	1 = Will harm 2 = Some of each 3 = Will help
environment*	"Here are two statements people sometimes make when discussing the environment and economic growth. Which comes closer to your own point of view? A. Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some job loss; B. Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent."	0 = Economy growth and protecting jobs; Other answer 1 = Protecting the environment.
conf_un	"I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them?"	1 = None at all 2 = Not very much 3 = Quite a lot 4 = A great deal
un_aid	"I'm going to mention some problems. For each one, would you tell me whether you think that policies in this area should be decided by the national governments, by the United Nations, or by the national governments with UN co-ordination?: Aid to developing countries."	1 = National governments 2 = National governments, with UN coordination 3 = The United Nations
un_environ	"I'm going to mention some problems. For each one, would you tell me whether you think that policies in this area should be decided by the national governments, by the United Nations, or by the national governments with UN co-ordination?: Protection of the environment."	1 = National governments 2 = National governments, with UN coordination 3 = The United Nations
un_refugee	"I'm going to mention some problems. For each one, would you tell me whether you think that policies in this area should be decided by the national governments, by the United	1 = National governments 2 = National governments, with UN coordination 3 = The United Nations

	Nations, or by the national governments with UN co-ordination?: Refugees."	
un_peacekeep	"I'm going to mention some problems. For each one, would you tell me whether you think that policies in this area should be decided by the national governments, by the United Nations, or by the national governments with UN co-ordination?: International peacekeeping."	1 = National governments 2 = National governments, with UN coordination 3 = The United Nations
un_humright	"I'm going to mention some problems. For each one, would you tell me whether you think that policies in this area should be decided by the national governments, by the United Nations, or by the national governments with UN co-ordination?: Human rights."	1 = National governments 2 = National governments, with UN coordination 3 = The United Nations
muslimfirst*	"Which of the following best describes you?"	0 = All others 1 = "Muslim above all"

Note: Recoded variables are marked with an asterisk.

Where possible, I constructed indices where multiple survey items measuring the same attitude exist. Table 1A.4 presents the indices, the survey items used to construct them, and the Cronbach's alpha scores for the WVS dataset.

Table 1A.4: Indices – World Values Survey

Index	Variable Type	Survey Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Orthodoxy	Independent	mosque_social, mosque_moral, mosque_family	0.7539
Women's Empowerment	Independent	women_mother, women_wife	0.7947
UN Policy Index	Independent	un_aid, un_environ, un_peacekeep, un_refugee, un_humright	0.6737

Appendix 1B: Quantitative Robustness Checks

Because including fixed effects in non-linear regressions is potentially problematic, I also ran a series of linear regression models using the WVS data. In order to make the ordinal variable more appropriate for a linear regression I applied a series of transformations, ending with a standardized reflected square root of the original variable. For individual i in country j, the model is:

$$Y_{ij} = U_j + X_{ij}\beta + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Where Y_{ij} is the respondent's score on the transformed support for *shari'a* item, X_{ij} is a matrix of individual-level covariates, β is a vector of coefficients, U_j is a country specific intercept term, and ε_{ij} is an individual error term. Table 1B.1 presents the results of the linear regression models, which are substantively very similar to the models in the primary analyses.

Table 1B.1: Fixed Effects Regressions on Support for Shari'a (World Values Survey)

	Religiosity	Orthodoxy	Demographics	Cultural Content	Boundaries	Full
Religiosity						
Self-Reported	0.3369***					0.2445***
	(0.0398)					(0.0411)
Mosque Attendance	0.0229***					0.0208***
	(0.0041)					(0.0041)
Orthodoxy						
Doctrine Index		0.0935***				0.0907***

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		(0.0118)				(0.0116)
Pop. Sovereignty		0.0606***				0.0573***
		(0.0104)				(0.0102)
Demographics						
Age			0.0174*			0.0098
			(0.0080)			(0.0078)
College			-0.0785**			-0.0715**
			(0.0266)			(0.0258)
Female			-0.0609**			-0.0575**
			(0.0211)			(0.0215)
Cultural Content						
Women Empowerment				-0.1258***		-0.1157***
				(0.0114)		(0.0117)
Democracy				0.0518**		0.0557***
				(0.0164)		(0.0159)
Trust in Science				0.0575**		0.0363*
				(0.0182)		(0.0181)
Environmentalism				0.0542*		0.0501*
				(0.0213)		(0.0210)
Boundaries						
UN Confidence					-0.0301**	-0.0389***
					(0.0105)	(0.0104)
UN Policy Index					-0.0333**	-0.0274*
					(0.0116)	(0.0114)
Muslim Identity					0.2330***	0.2241***
					(0.0251)	(0.0247)
Constant	-1.0411***	-0.8154***	-0.6040***	-0.9210***	-0.5536***	-1.3694***
	(0.0513)	(0.0550)	(0.0423)	(0.0853)	(0.1025)	(0.1054)
N	7932	7932	7932	7932	7932	7932
r^2	0.1676	0.1671	0.1572	0.1723	0.1675	0.2077

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Appendix 1C: Qualitative Data

I collected in-depth interview data in Tunisia between August 2013 and March 2014 in five cities across the country (see Figure 1C.1). I selected respondents using a combination of convenience, snowball, and purposive sampling. Respondents ranged in age from 22 to 64 years (mean=33.32), were 60% men (N=30) and 40% women (N=20), and the vast majority were college educated (80%, N=40). Due to the relative difficulty of finding *shari'a* supporters who were willing to be interviewed by a foreign researcher, I went through great effort to oversample self-described Salafists and Islamists. The distribution of my interview respondents on the support for *shari'a* measure is similar to that of the AB and WVS datasets, although not quite as dramatically left skewed (see Figure 1C.2).

Figure 1C.1: Interview Locations by City
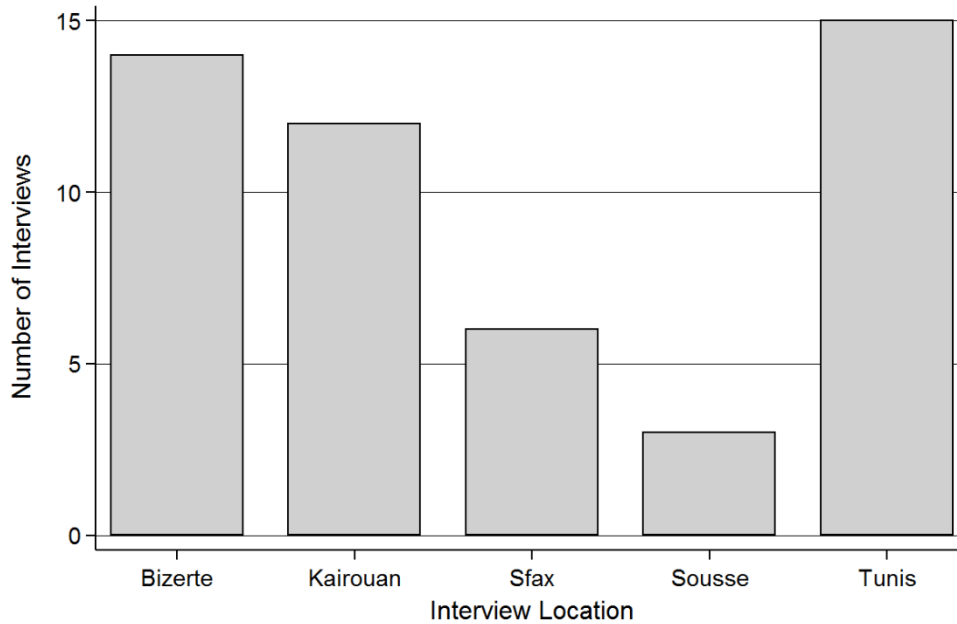
Figure 1C.2: Distribution of Interview Responses for Support for Shari'a Item
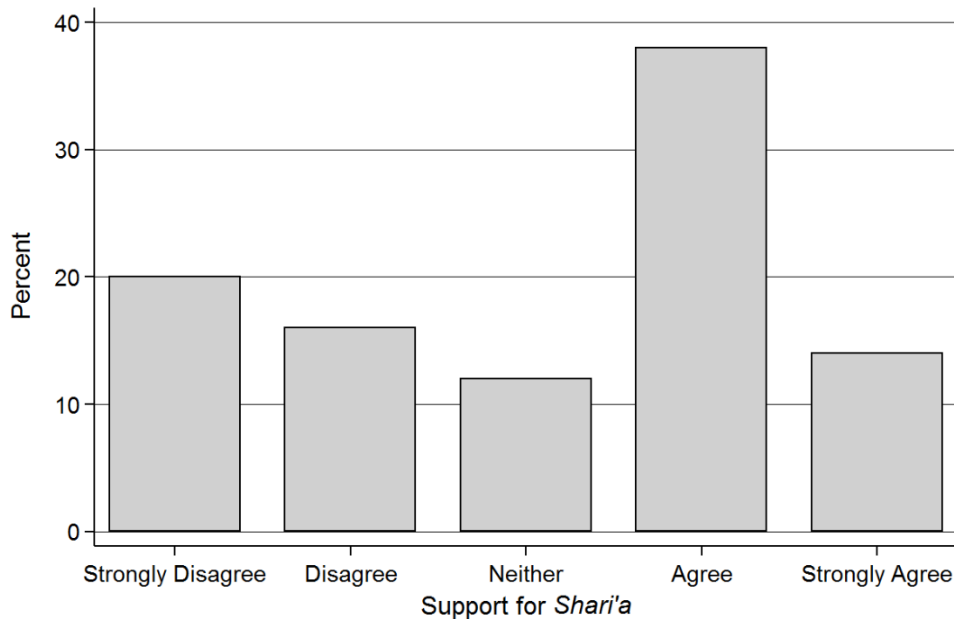
Note: This figure describes responses to the support for shari'a item included in the qualitative interview questionnaire ("The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with the shari'a"). This question was taken verbatim from the Arab Barometer Survey.

Appendix 1D: Qualitative Robustness Checks

I coded the interview data using a coding scheme that grouped respondent justifications for supporting *shari'a* into one or more of the four substantive categories described in the manuscript: religiosity, orthodoxy, domestic boundary work, and global boundary work. Figure 1D.1 illustrates the frequency with which people who supported *shari'a* in the closed-ended questionnaire invoked these

themes when justifying their support. The main manuscript contains examples for global boundary work; here, I will focus on the other three groups.

Many of the respondents who invoked the religiosity theme focused on their belief that all Muslims support *shari'a* as a matter of fact. Adel, a 29-year-old secondary school teacher from Bizerte and self-described Salafist, said that all Muslims support *shari'a* because they are "the only people who fully give themselves over to the will of God." Abderrahman, an imam at a prominent mosque in Kairouan, explained *shari'a* similarly:

> *[The goal of* shari'a*] is that all of the universe will say one phrase – 'God is one, we worship one God.' This is the goal of all of existence. The* shari'a*, the explanation of the word* shari'a*, it is the rules, the applications, the views that serve this goal: the goal of* tawhid *[monotheism]. Saying God is one. Saying this is what makes a person a Muslim. (26, imam khatib, Kairouan)*

Others argued that applying the *shari'a* would make it easier for Muslims to perform their religious obligations. Amine said:

> *Some people say that* shari'a *would be harmful to women and non-Muslims. This is not true. The Prophet (PBUH) lived with all kinds of people. The most important thing is* da'wa *[preaching] and piety. A system based on* shari'a *would make it easier for everyone to be Muslim. Once someone is convinced of the proper Islam, they will begin to make the right choices for themselves and society. There will be a revolution of morals. (27, mechanic, Bizerte)*

Many extended this line of reasoning, claiming that application of *shari'a* would lead not only to pious citizens but also to pious officials and thus a moral political system. Omar said that implementing *shari'a* would solve 95% of the problems in Tunisia because it would guarantee that "just, loyal, and decent people" would be in charge.

A number of respondents also gave justifications for their support of *shari'a* for reasons related to an orthodox belief system. These responses typically describe implementing *shari'a* as an obligation that Muslims have to God. Faouzi, for example, said:

> *Shari'a is about following the words of God and the Qur'an, the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions. It is about following what we've been told in the Qur'an, really, because the Prophet (PBUH) was not out doing things on his own, he was just applying what God revealed to him, without arguing and without asking questions. (25, mechanic, Bizerte)*

Adel used the example of a technical manual to describe why he supported *shari'a*:

> *If you buy a car, it comes with a guide from the people that made it. It has information about the car, how it is made and how to use it. Is it possible for you to go to the makers and tell them 'this is wrong'? No, they will laugh at you! Who made it? They made it! With God we have the same thing. Can you say God is wrong? No, that is* kufr *[disbelief]! It wasn't you that created everything, it wasn't the government that created everything. Cutting hands? Marrying four women? Who are we to question this? We just need to do whatever God says. (29, secondary school teacher, Bizerte)*

Thus, the application of *shari'a* is required of Muslims because God ordained it so, and humans are incapable of changing God's plan.

Finally, some *shari'a* supporters indicated that they felt discriminated against and marginalized by wider Tunisian society and engaged in boundary work directed at other domestic groups, mainly leftist groups. Hamza, a 25-year-old college student living in Tunis, said that *shari'a* would "protect public money from corrupt political parties, like the communist parties." Aymen, a 27-year-old hardware store employee in Bizerte, similarly says that "the people who give a bad impression of *shari'a* are leftists… they are hypocrites." He also lambastes Islamist political parties for not being authentically Islamic by invoking their stance on *shari'a*:

> *The people in charge, the people in political parties, they don't want* shari'a. *Even the so-called Islamist political parties don't want* shari'a. *This is in contradiction with what our Prophet (PBUH) said, what he told us to do… these so-called Islamist parties make divisions in the population, pitting Muslim against Muslim, creating* fitna *[disunity] by scattering people into* shia'at *[political factions]. God does not like that… they need to return to the* Sunnah *and the Qur'an. (27, hardware store employee, Bizerte).*

Others, like Ibrahim, argue that the national media play a key role in oppressing Salafists and others who support *shari'a*:

> *The solution to all of our problems is easy, we must govern according to the rule of God. But really this isn't easy, we are going to face a lot of struggles trying to do this because… the media always gives a bad impression of us, of Salafists. (25, shop owner, Bizerte)*

Figure 1D.1: Bar Graph of Themes in Respondent Justifications for Supporting Shari'a
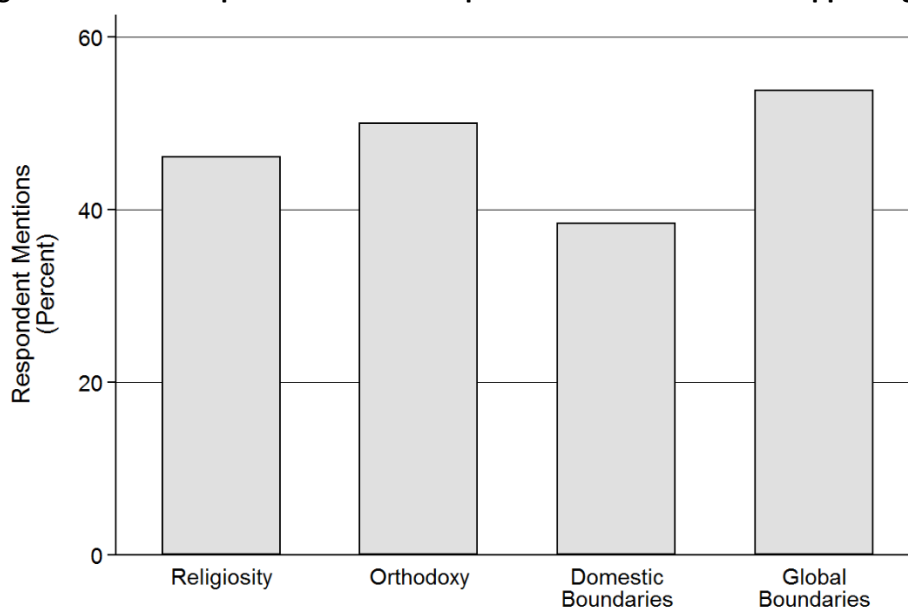
Note: This figure shows justifications for respondents who answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to the survey question "The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with the shari'a" (N=26). These themes are not mutually exclusive – the majority of responses involve more than one.

Appendix 2A: LDA Topic Validation

Because the text data employed by the current study are in Arabic, I only reported truncated validation information in the main text. In this appendix, I give more detailed information on each topic, including the most informative features in Arabic, a brief summary of the topic, and a sample post from each.

Topic 1: Self-Help

This topic mostly consists of self-help advice, horoscopes, dream interpretations, and pop psychology. There are often book reviews and summaries of blog posts made by psychologists, Islamic scholars with an interest in self-improvement, and self-help gurus. Table 2A.1 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation. Note that the reported features are post-normalization, and the letters in red for the sample word were added after reading through relevant posts.

Table 2A.1: Topic 1 - Self-Help

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	شخص	شخصية	Personality
2	عمل	عمل	Work
3	جد	وجد	To find
4	انس	إنسان	People / humanity
5	علم	علمي	Scientific
6	فس	نفسية	Psychological
7	حقيق	تحقيق	Realization
8	حيا	حياة	Life
9	عرف	تعرّف	To get to know
10	نفس	نفس	Self

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated August 14th 2005 in a thread entitled "The subconscious mind is the secret of your power over others and yourself":

Greetings everyone, I hope you are all doing fine. I am pleased to offer you all a course entitled 'Learn the Power of your Subconscious Mind.' I found it on another forum and I think it's very good. I have personally benefitted from it and I hope you will to. The useful things in this lesson are 1) the power that is inside you, 2) how the subconscious mind operates, 3) the ability of your subconscious mind to perform miracles, 4) the role of the mind in healing ….

Topic 2: Storytelling

Posts that score highly on this topic tend to be long-form stories, either fictional (e.g., stories about knights fighting dragons or vampire hunters) or dramatized real-life experiences (e.g., stories about meeting and becoming friends with a celebrity). The LDA model also included a handful of non-

story posts containing medical information as high on this topic. Table 2A.2 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.2: Topic 2 - Storytelling

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	ام	أيام	Days
2	حتي	حتى	Until
3	حد	واحد	One / only
4	وم	يوم	Day
5	اء	ماء	Water
6	جد	وجد	To find
7	شعر	شعر	To feel
8	عمر	عمر	Age
9	رجل	رجل	Man
10	عندم	عندما	When / Whenever

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated December 12th 2003 in a thread entitled "The story of a Saudi girl in Paris":

> *…I went home to relax and about a half hour later there was a knock at my door. I said 'Who is there?' A man answered but I couldn't understand what he said, so I got up and opened the door. 'Yes?' I said. 'We are detectives, you have to come with us now,' he replied. 'Why?' I asked. 'Those are just our orders,' he replied. I changed my clothes and went with them to the police station in Paris…*

Topic 3: Addressing the Forums

This topic consists largely of direct addresses to forum members: asking advice on posting, thanking people for posts, or administrators seeking feedback on forum management or reminding members of the forum rules. This topic is very common, as many posts begin with phrases like "thank you for sharing this" or end with "thank you for reading my post." Table 2A.3 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.3: Topic 3 - Addressing the forums.

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	شكر	شكر	Thank
2	وضوع	موضوع	Topic / post
3	خير	خير	Good
4	رور	سرور	Delight / pleasure
5	جميل	جميل	Beautiful

6	شكور	شكور	Thanks
7	خت	أخت	Sister
8	سلام	سلام	Peace
9	راءع	رائع	Wonderful
10	شارك	مشاركة	Sharing

Note that the word "sister" (أخت) appears here because many posts that address the forums address "brothers and sisters." The word "brother" (أخ) was eliminated during the text normalization process because it begins with an *alef* and is only two letters in length.

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated January 2nd 2007 in a thread entitled "The magic recipe for a better forum":

> *How can we make sure our forum is the best? The solution is simple. First, we must encourage new members – surely you can remember the first day that you posted on the forum and hoped everyone would respond… Second, before you write a new thread on any given section you should respond to two or three other threads at a minimum. This is very important to increase communication between members… Third, the most magical thing you can write is 'thank you for posting this thread, may God protect you.'…*

Topic 4: Romance

This topic mostly consists of love stories or people asking for and giving romantic advice. Some of the posts that score highly on this topic are also about family-related issues, such as naming children. Table 2A.4 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.4: Topic 4 - Romance

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	حب	حب	Love
2	علم	علم	To Learn
3	قول	قال	To say
4	قلب	قلب	Heart
5	حد	وحدة	Loneliness
6	قل	قل	Say (imperative)
7	عرف	تعرّف	To get to know
8	لو	لو	If only…
9	ناس	ناس	People
10	فس	أنفس	Selves / souls

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated May 9th 2002 in a thread entitled "Love… a lecture with Dr. Amrou Khaled":

> *Is love an instinct given to human by God? Can a man live without love? Of course we can say that everyone has love for our fathers, our mothers, and our sisters, and it is true that this kind of love originates from the love of God, but let's talk about love in a more specific sense, the love between men and women. Can humans live without love, an instinct that has existed since the creation of Adam? Recall that even though Adam was in paradise, he felt he needed something – he needed Eve. This is not a fantasy, it is from the hadith of the Prophet (PBUH)…*

Topic 5: Marriage

This topic deals specifically with marriage. Many of the posts that score high on this topic include references to the Qur'an and hadith as well as fatwa on topics related to marriage. To give an example, the rights of each spouse under an Islamic marriage is a common sub-topic, as is discussions of which people are allowed to see what parts of a woman's body before and after she is married. While this topic is relatively highly correlated with the romance topic (0.41), the feature set is distinct enough that the LDA model separated the two. Table 2A.5 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.5: Topic 5 - Marriage

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	را	رأى	To see
2	زوج	زوج	Husband
3	حديث	حديث	Hadith (saying/doing of the Prophet)
4	رجل	رجل	Man
5	حق	حق	Right
6	غال	غالي	Expensive / dear
7	قول	قال	To say
8	مر	امرأة	Woman
9	نساء	نساء	Women
10	عض	بعض	Some / one another

Note that the stem عض appears in this topic largely because of a specific linguistic construct: " بعضهم بعضكم \ البعض" or "one another."

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated October 17th 2013 in a thread entitled "The reasons for the spread of spinsterhood":

> *Anything that prevents women from their ability to marry an appropriate suitor must be stopped by her guardians. Many times these are foolish arguments given by short-sighted women, who say that their suitor is too old, too poor, or a religious hardliner. This is a waste of resources. It is irresponsible because it deprives women of their legitimate right to marry at a reasonable age*

and to be an active participant in creating their community. The creation of a new generation depends on women being married at a reasonable age…

It is interesting to note that a good number of the posts that score highly on this topic take a similar tone. They often discuss the "rights" of husbands and wives, but these are depicted as lopsided: husbands have the "right" to go out in the world and provide for their family, while wives have the "right" to get married and have children. There also appears to be a large subset of posts dealing with how women can make themselves suitable for marriage.

Topic 6: Qur'anic Studies

One of the most straightforward topics that the LDA model identified, posts that score highly on this topic tend to be Qur'anic exegesis. These posts often include long stretches of Qur'an verses and interpretations from both contemporary and historical Islamic scholars. They also include more heterodox "folk" interpretations such as numerology. Table 2A.6 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.6: Topic 6 – Qur'anic Studies

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	ور	سورة	Qur'an Verse
2	قرا	القرآن	The Qur'an
3	سم	إسم	Name
4	رب	رب	Lord
5	حفظ	حفظ	Keep / Protect
6	كريم	كريم	Generous
7	ول	أول	First
8	شاء	شاء	Will (e.g., God's)
9	قلوب	قلوب	Hearts
10	رحمن	رحمن	Gracious

Note that many of these features are words associated primarily with God (e.g., رحمن, شاء, حفظ, إسم) or the Qur'an (e.g., قرآن, سورة, كريم) in fixed phrases (e.g., "القرآن الكريم").

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated January 12th, 2010 in a thread entitled "The secret of the number 7!!!":

…The number of verses in surat al-fatiHa *[the opening verse to the Qur'an] is seven. Seven has a special meaning for believers: the number of the heavens (7) the number of Earths (7) the number of times believers circumambulate around the* Kaaba *(7) and travel between* Al-Safa *and* Al-Marwah *[during* Hajj *and* Umrah*] (7) and believers prostrate on seven bones. The Prophet (PBUH) mentioned the number seven many times ('avoid the seven sins'…) and so on. This repetition of the number seven is not by accident…*

Topic 7: Religious Storytelling

This topic is quite similar to topic 2, except the stories in the posts that score highly on it tend to be religious stories. Some of these stories are straight out of Islamic history, drawn from the Qur'an or hadith or even Sufi poetry and legends. Others are fictional dialogues between characters that are meant to have a religious meaning, and these dialogues often include the characters quoting Qur'an verses and giving examples about how to behave from the life of the Prophet. Table 2A.7 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.7: Topic 7 – Religious Storytelling

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	سلم	سلَّم	To grant salvation
2	صلي	صلى	Pray
3	رسول	رسول	Messenger
4	عالي	عالي	High
5	رض	رضى	To be satisfied
6	قول	قول	To say
7	صلا	صلاة	Prayer
8	نب	النبي	The Prophet
9	عبد	عبد	Servant (of)
10	سلام	سلام	Peace

As in topic 6, many of these features form fixed phrases that Muslims use when speaking about God, the Prophet, and the companions of the Prophet (e.g., "صلى الله اليه وسلم").

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated October 4th, 2008 in a thread entitled "Descriptions of the Prophet (PBUH)":

> *This summary includes the most important physical characteristics of the Prophet. It is good to find out more about him because the greater our knowledge is, the stronger our love for him will be. Do not let the image of the Prophet die in your mind's eye!... His face was like the sun and the moon, shining and serene. Ka'b bin Malik, may God be pleased with him, said 'The Prophet's (PBUH) face shone like a piece of the moon' (Bukhari and Muslim), and Abu Ishaq said: 'Bara was asked whether the face of the Prophet (PBUH) was like a sword. He replied, no, it is like the moon.' (Bukhari)…*

Topic 8: Religious Idioms

This topic consists of fixed-form idioms that Muslims use when praying or when referring to specific personalities in Islamic history. Many of the posts that score very highly on topics 6 and 7 also score highly on this topic, but the posts that score highest on this topic tend to be strings of phrases repeated over and over with no additional text in between. These appear to be public "prayer logs" that members use as a form of religious accountability – that is, as a way to incentivize them to say their

prayers. Table 2A.8 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.8: Topic 8 – Religious Idioms

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	حمد	الحمد	Praise
2	صل	صلى	To Pray
3	لهم	اللهم	O God
4	ار	مبارك	Blessed
5	بح	سبحان	Glory
6	غفر	غفر	To forgive
7	رحم	رحيم	Merciful
8	صحب	الصحابة	Companions of the Prophet
9	اله	الله	God
10	سلم	سلَّم	To grant salvation

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated November 5th, 2005 in a thread entitled "Your daily log of prayers for the Prophet Mohammad":

> *"O God, bless Mohammad and his kin…" (repeated 100x)*

Topic 9: History

Broadly, this topic consists of posts that have historical information. Many of these posts read like Wikipedia pages, recounting important dates and historical facts. Most are expressly interested with the history of the Arab world and Islamic history, but many also deal with European, Asian, American, and African history. Table 2A.9 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.9: Topic 9 - History

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	دول	دول	Countries / nations
2	عرب	عرب	Arabs
3	عالم	عالم	World / globe
4	حد	الوحدة	Unity
5	عمل	عمل	Work
6	اسلام	اسلام	Islam
7	ول	أولى / أول	First

8	رئيس	رئيس	President
9	دين	دين	Religion
10	اريخ	تاريخ	History

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated October 14th, 2004 in a thread entitled "The flags of the countries of the world":

> *You have seen the flags of the countries of the world, but do you know why these countries chose the colors of their flags? Do you know what the colors of your own country's flag mean? If you do, there are many around you who do not… After the fall of the Soviet Union, Armenia adopted a new flag with three colors. Red stands for the blood that was shed in the past, blue symbolizes the Armenian land, and orange signifies the courage of the Armenian people.*

Topic 10: Arab World in Crisis

This topic is one of the most coherent that the LDA model identified, and it emerged in every model specification that I tried while conducting this research. It is similar to topic 9 in that it deals with history and politics, but it is more specific. Posts that score very highly on this topic tend to be about current events, hotspots in the Arab world (e.g., Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon), controversial Islamist organizations (e.g., Hamas, Hezbollah, Al-Qa'ida), and powerful global actors (e.g., the UN, the US, EU countries, Russia, China). There also tends to be a good deal more commentary and analysis in these posts than the topic 9 posts, as well as quite a bit of conspiracy theorizing. Table 2A.10 below illustrates the top ten features associated with this topic, a sample word for each feature, and an English translation.

Table 2A.10: Topic 10 - Arab World in Crisis

Rank	Arabic Root	Arabic Word	English Word
1	عرب	عرب	Arabs
2	عراق	العراق	Iraq
3	قتل	قتل	To kill
4	صر	مصر	Egypt
5	شعب	الشعب	The people
6	مريك	أمريكا	America
7	سلام	إسلامي	Islamic
8	سط	فلسطين	Palestine
9	اسراءيل	إسرائيل	Israel
10	دول	دول	Countries / Nations

Below is a sample post from this topic, dated March 6th, 2007 in a thread entitled "The reality of mass graves and American disinformation (evidence) !!":

I should say in advance that we are against the killing of any human being, no matter their nationality, religion, political ideas, and beliefs. The fact that we say this reveals the lie that the malevolent American media has spread about the Arab nation. That is why we need to give an accurate description of the incidents that led to the creation of these graves. The victims of these mass graves are not victims of conscience, ethical or political, or victims of religious or sectarian cleansing as is reported by American propaganda. Instead, they are victims of the many wars that Iraq has suffered over the years.

Appendix 2B: Dictionary Search Terms

In order to minimize the number of false negatives returned by the dictionary classification script, I ran the regular expression parser using the un-normalized text data. That said, I attempted to include a number of stems for each relevant word in order to account for different ways of using these words as well as common misspellings (see Table 9 in the main manuscript). Table 2B.1 below provides the complete list of search terms in Arabic.

Table 2B.1: Arabic Search Terms

Sub-Topic	Feature (English)	Word (Arabic)	Search Terms
Islamism	*shari'a*	الشريعة	"شريعة" "شرعة الله" "شرائع"
	divine sovereignty	حاكمية	"حاكمية"
	Islamic state	دولة إسلامية	"دولة إسلامية" "دولة اسلامية" "الدولة الإسلامية" "الدولة الاسلامية"
	caliphate	خلافة	"خلافة"
	caliph	الخليفة	"الخليفة"
Democracy	democracy	الديمقراطية	"ديمقراط" "ديموقراط" "دموقراط" "دمقراط" "دمقرط" "ديمكراسي" "دمكراسي" "دمكراس"
	elections	إنتخابات	"انتخاب" "إنتخاب" "انتخب" "إنتخب"
	vote	تصويت	" تصويت"
	ballot	إقتراع	"اقتراع" "إقتراع" "اقترع" "إقترع"
	freedom	حرية	"حرية" "حريات"

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