ISLAMIST POLITICAL AGENCY IN EGYPT AND TUNISIA

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Introduction ........................................................................................................... 3

Chapter One: Giving Rise to Reform? Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood in the Lead Up to the Arab Spring ................................................................. 9

Birth of a Movement: From Ideology to Movement ............................................. 10

Beginnings of the Brotherhood ................................................................. 10

The Founding of Islamism in Tunisia ......................................................... 16

Engage and Endure: Approaches to a Public Presence .................................. 22

Ennahda: Limits of Participation ................................................................. 26

Tempered Transitions: The Brotherhood and Ennahda, A Comparison in Political Evolutions ................................................................. 27

Chapter Two: Calling for Change: Islamists Amidst the Arab Spring ....... 30

A Spark in the Night: The Ouster of Authoritarianism ................................ 32

Bye Bye Ben Ali: Revolution Takes Tunisia .............................................. 32

Mubarak Must Go: Taking Over Tahrir ...................................................... 36

Ballot Play: Open Elections and the Islamists, the Brotherhood at the Ballot ................................................................. 41

Taking Tunisia: Ennahda in Elections ......................................................... 43

Analyzing the Arab Spring: Outlooks and Outcomes for the Brotherhood and Ennahda ................................................................. 46

Chapter Three: Democracy, Islamists, and the Legacy of the Arab Spring ...... 52
Dealing with Democracy: Islamists in Power………………..54

Tunisia in Trouble? Engaging Opponents…………… 54

Falling Apart at the Seams: The Brotherhood’s Egypt……………………………..61

The Meaning of Progress: Where Does this Leave Egypt and Tunisia?………………………….67

Conclusion………………………………………………………………….71

Closing Words: A Look Towards the Future……………….78

References………………………………………………………………………79
Islamist Political Agency in Egypt and Tunisia

In early 2011, two North African countries shocked the world as popular protests consumed each nation and then rapidly spread across the region. The world watched closely as the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt led to the successful removal of entrenched authoritarian regimes. Then the two countries shocked the world again. Popular protest was not new in the region. In fact, mass mobilization and demonstrations were a frequent occurrence in the North African states. The defining characteristic of these protests, were that they actually succeeded in deposing the seemingly stable authoritarian regimes of Mubarak and Ben Ali (Lynch 2012 71). However, this was still not the most surprising outcome from the Arab Spring. Perhaps the most astonishing result was the decision to elect Tunisia’s Islamist organization, the Ennahda Movement, and Egypt’s Islamist group, the Muslim Brotherhood, to power through democratic elections.

The Muslim Brotherhood have been the most organized and popular anti-regime movement in Egypt for more than eighty years. They have done increasingly well in elections and were well situated to take on the government role when the opportunity presented itself. Ennahda’s election on the other hand was a bit more extraordinary. The Ennahda Movement had been entirely cut off from Tunisian society in the early years of Ben Ali’s rule and had been living in exile abroad. In their absence, the only Islamist presence around was the progressively more popular Salafist movement. The Muslim Brotherhood and Ennahda’s election to power is certainly not the first time an Islamist group has been elected to power. The AKP in
Turkey has been elected several times. However, Islamist politics in Turkey are distinctive because Turkey is and has always been a fiercely secular society. Egypt and Tunisia, though their leaders have imposed secular policies at times, are still enthusiastically Islamic and this Islamic nature continues to be enshrined in each country’s national constitution.

The inclusion-moderation hypothesis is the primary theory used to analyze Islamist political participation and has been put forth by numerous scholars in the field. Samuel Huntington defined the inclusion-moderation hypothesis as a “trade off in which radicals moderate their political agenda and agree to play by the rules of the game to become eligible to take advantage of political openings” (Schwedler 2006 12). This theory argues that an Islamist party’s inclusion into an existing political system, even an authoritarian one, inherently moderates its behavior and ideology. This thesis’s intent however is not to determine how or why Islamist groups moderate. It is, however, interested in analyzing how this process of moderation has affected the development of Ennahda’s and the Brotherhood’s political fortunes now that they have risen to power.

While the inclusion moderation hypothesis addresses how and why Islamists groups moderate, it fails to speak to what this moderation means in terms of political behavior, especially in a democracy or transitioning state. This lack of attention stems from the fact that many scholars did not actually see an end to the authoritarian regimes in place anytime soon. Carrie Wickham observed that often times Islamist groups would moderate strategically even in the absence of democratic openings, as
the Brotherhood did. Even limited institutional openings supported by the regime were enough to provide critical political learning exercises for Islamists (Wickham 2004 205). Wickham also reaffirms that many Islamists’ primary motivation for moderation may be purely pragmatic. Moderation by inclusion is not only a tool to increase the prospects of future inclusion, but also a defense against regime repression (Wickham 2004 224-5).

Nathan Brown’s observations of Islamist participation in semiauthoritarian systems strikes at the heart of how the Brotherhood perceives their own political participation as well as why the Brothers fear commitment. He again emphasizes the pragmatic nature of Islamist participation by citing that political adaptation is driven by a need to stave off state repression and an organizational survival strategy (Brown 2012 183). He also explores the reasons behind the timid nature of the Brotherhood in power by offering the analysis that the Brotherhood survived due to its very general and ambiguous nature. The benefits of political participation in a semiauthoritarian regime could be retracted at any time, so the Brothers’ best strategy was to maintain general positions that appealed to the broadest swaths of audience (Brown 2012 162).

A review of the historical development alongside the current literature on the inclusion-moderation hypothesis would suggest that the Brotherhood is most prepared to manage a democratic transition and a new government. They have had decades of experience participating under an authoritarian system and were much more organized than the reconstituted Ennahda. Yet in a review of their actions since the elections, Ennahda appears to be a more effective political body than the Brotherhood. The years
of inclusion the Brotherhood experienced under Mubarak and his predecessors have
turned the Brotherhood into an ineffective governing political entity. There is no
question about the Brotherhood’s moderate nature. They have played by the rules for
years, despite being officially outlawed, and have claimed to be a voice for all
Egyptians. It is the way in which the Brotherhood learned to moderate that has
inhibited its ability to effectively rule Egypt post-Arab Spring. Ennahda on the other
hand has emerged as a strong political force that has demonstrated repeated
commitment to pluralism, cooperation and democratic transition. They have
moderated in spite of their forced exclusion, and is this political isolation that has
allowed them to remain untainted from limiting effects of authoritarian politics. While
the Brotherhood shies away from specificity and definitive positions, Ennahda has
thus far taken decisive action in regards to policies and opinions that are necessary for
political transition.

There is no case study on Tunisia as it pertains to the inclusion-moderation
hypothesis primarily because Islamist participation in Tunisia did not exist. The
Brotherhood is a clear example of the validity of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis
in explaining how and why Islamist movements participate under authoritarian
conditions. However, the analysis has not been extended to note how moderation
affects Islamist political forces in a democratic setting in Egypt or Tunisia because
neither group was ever presented with the political opportunity.

This thesis seeks to enhance the current literature on Islamist political
participation through an addendum to the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. There is
no debate whether inclusion produces moderation within Islamist organizations. It has been proven in several cases that indeed participation breeds moderation. However, few have looked at the inclusion-moderation hypothesis in terms of Islamists in power. In a world in which two Islamist movements have come to power in Islamic states, it is interesting to distinguish how Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and Tunisia’s Ennahda govern so differently. An evaluation of several key policies and changes undertaken since Ennahda took control demonstrates the greater potential for democratic transition, as well as continued Islamist presence in power, that deems Ennahda more successful than its Egyptian counterpart. The difference in Egypt is that the Brotherhood’s decades long training of pragmatic participation under authoritarianism has left it unable to decisively implement reform. Nathan Brown supports this claim by observing that, “gray zone regimes tend to produce gray zone movements willing to hint at ideological softening but only in a general way that stops short of a costly commitment” (Brown 2012 183).

This paper will offer a side-by-side comparison of both the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Ennahda Movement in Tunisia in an effort to highlight the differences of their political development. It is from a close examination of this development that claims can be made as to why these two Islamist groups have grown into very different political leaders with contrasting governing styles. Chapter one offers a historical account of each group’s founding and evolution. It will look at how each groups has grown from the time of their founding up until the time of the Arab Spring. The conclusion of this chapter will then compare the development of the
Muslim Brotherhood with that of Ennahda’s and make claims about the causes of this deviation. Chapter two examines the role of each Islamist group within the context of the Arab Spring uprisings and the proceeding elections. It will review each group’s campaign strategy as well as try to interpret why Ennahda and the Brotherhood were as successful as they were. Finally, chapter three considers how each respective Islamist movement has fared since the elections by looking at their achievements, failures and rhetoric since taking office. It is clear by this point that the way in which Islamists govern in Egypt and Tunisia are very different. The conclusion of this chapter offers insight into what the future of Egypt and Tunisia may look like.

A case study between Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood was done in an attempt to emphasize how different political experiences can impact political behavior. Both groups exist in constitutionally Islamic states and at one time claimed to originate from similar ideology. They are also both the first to have been elected to power in Islamic state. Yet, Ennahda appears to be handling Tunisia’s political transition better than the Brotherhood. In its conclusion, this thesis will argue that though the inclusion-moderation hypothesis is useful in understanding how and why Islamist groups moderate, it fails to offer any useful tool for how moderation translates into political behavior in a democracy. It will also contend that inclusion within a political system is not the only way by which an Islamist group can moderate, as is the case with Ennahda.
Giving Rise to Reform? Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood in the Lead Up to the Arab Spring

The entire world waited patiently as the first democratic elections to be held since the Arab Spring revolutions, and in several cases many decades, unfolded in Tunisia. Much to everyone’s surprise, the Tunisians gave voice to a force long ago suppressed through the decades of complete isolation under Ben Ali. The Islamist Ennahda party claimed 41.5% of Tunisian votes in the October 2011 election and gave rise simultaneously to doubtful and hopeful citizens across the region (Wolf & Lefevre 2012 561). Several months later, Egypt followed suit with elections of its own in spring of 2011. The results revealed Dr. Mohammed Morsi, of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party as the new Egyptian President by nearly 880,000 votes (Nafi 2012 2). Though the elections produced victories for both Islamist movements, the political development of each organization offers a contrasting tale of how each group arrived at this point.

On the surface, the difference between the two organizations is not easily recognizable. Both groups claim to have analogous origins and use similar rhetoric at their founding. However, the Muslim Brotherhood has been in existence nearly fifty years longer than that of their Tunisian contemporaries, giving them significantly more experience as a political organization. The Muslim Brotherhood, though officially outlawed, has remained relevant through perpetual cycles of tolerance and repression under successive regimes (Lynch 2012 819). It has adapted to the mandate of each regime as a long-term survival strategy, giving it the knowledge and ability to
conform itself to almost any political situation. Ennahda however, began in the throes of a political crisis between leftists and the ruling regime, acting first not as an agent of political clout but as a protector or religious principles. This was then followed by nearly thirty years of tremendous seclusion. It is these dynamic narratives that yield the Ennahda and Muslim Brotherhood recognized today.

**Birth of a Movement: from Ideology to Movement**

**Beginnings of the Brotherhood**

The Muslim Brotherhood was created in 1928 by Egyptian schoolteacher Hassan al Banna. When Banna moved to Cairo, he was struck by the political divide that consumed the city and watched as the educated youth continually defected from the Islamic way of life (Mitchell 1969 5). He saw Islam in Egypt as under attack from all angles, and Banna made it his life’s duty to reverse these secularizing trends through teaching and guidance (Mitchell 1969 6). He moved to Ismailiyaa, a town located on the west bank of the Suez Canal, and devoted his days and nights to teaching the Islamic way. In 1928, several members of a camp labor force approached him to lead a group that would fight for Islam and thus, the Society of Muslim Brothers was born. The group took an oath to God to become the troops for the Islamic message, and Banna named the group accordingly. “We are brothers in the service of Islam, hence we are the Muslim Brothers” (Mitchell 1969 8). For the first three years of the Society’s existence, Banna concentrated on expanding membership around Ismailiyaa. As the group grew in numbers, so did the resistance to the organization by citizens of Ismailiyaa, which prompted Banna to request a transfer to
Cairo in 1932. There the organization merged with the Society for Islamic Culture, headed by Banna’s younger brother to form the first Brotherhood chapter in Cairo (Mitchell 1969 10). From 1932-1939, the Society grew into one of the most important organizations on the Egyptian political scene, as its diverse membership represented nearly every group of Egyptian society (Mitchell 1969 12). Its primary activity throughout the 1930s consisted of communications to the government about the state of Egyptian society. Propaganda and advertising also comprised a key component of Brotherhood activities (Mitchell 1969 13). These first ten years produced a core set of Brotherhood ideology that defined its version of Islam. The Brotherhood defined Islam as a total system and the final arbiter in all categories, relying primarily on the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet (Mitchell 1969 14). According to Banna, this definition also translated into eight primary objectives of the movement’s actions. The Muslim Brotherhood is:

“1) A Salafi call (da’wa): because they call for returning Islam to its purist meaning from God’s Book and the Sunnah of his Prophet.

2) A Sunni Way (tariqa): because they take it upon themselves to work according to the pure Sunnah in all things especially in beliefs.

3) A Sufi truth: because they know the essence of goodness is purity of soul and purity of heart and persistence in work.

4) A political entity: because they call for the reform of internal government and the revision of the Islamic Ummah’s relations with other nations.

5) A sports group: because they care about their bodies and believe that a strong believer is better than a weak one.

6) A scientific, cultural solidarity: because Islam makes the quest for knowledge an ordinance from God for every Muslim man and woman and because the Muslim Brotherhood clubs are in reality schools for education and enculturation and institutes for pedagogy for the body, mind and spirit.

7) A commercial company
8) A social idea: because they are concerned with the ills of Islamic society and they try to reach ways of remedying and healing the Ummah from them.”

(Tadros 2012 4).

This statement by Banna embodied the flexible approach of the movement. The Brotherhood learned very quickly how to modify its organization to maximize the ever-changing restrictions of each regime and learned how to transition seamlessly back and forth between a da’wa institution, social service provider, enterprise, and a competitive political force.

The late 1930s marked the movement’s cultivation as a political actor. In its fifth general conference in 1939, the movement was officially defined as a political organization and Banna acknowledged a year prior that political activity comprised a primary part of the movement’s interest (Mitchell 1969 16). The group’s actions and fundraising for Palestine during partition actually marked its first physical entrance into political affairs. Throughout the 1940s, the group faced tenuous relationships with the Wafdist government, who negotiated with Banna in 1941 to ban alcohol and prostitution, but then shut down every branch of the group in 1942. In 1943 however, this action was reversed (Mitchell 1969 27). A new law in 1945 caused the group to split into two autonomous organizations, a political and a social. The Brotherhood was declared a political, social and religious organization thereby making it only partially eligible for government aid under the new law. In light of this, a new section of welfare and social services was established as a practically autonomous arm of the organization, creating a legal protection for the society’s social services (Mitchell 1969 37). Eventually, in 1948, the order was given for the complete dissolution of the
Muslim Brotherhood citing the charge that they were planning for imminent revolution (Mitchell 1969 58).

Though the group was officially dissolved in 1949, it maintained a significant presence in Egyptian political life. Nasser showed leniency towards the Brotherhood for the first half of the 1950s (Tadros 2012 6). In 1953, Nasser even went so far as to dissolve all political parties, but exempted the Brotherhood claiming they were a social organization and not an official political party. The new regime had only been in power for six months and could not afford a direct confrontation with the largest and most organized popular force in the country (Kepel 1985 26). The following year, tolerant relations broke down when a member of a radical Islamist organization attempted to assassinate Nasser. This in turn prompted the Nasser government to incite brutal retaliation against the Brothers, whom they blamed for the attack. The government burned the Brotherhood headquarters, tortured and arrested leaders, and began a brutal campaign amongst the population in hopes of turning them against the popular organization (Kepel 1985 27).

The assassination provoked a roundup of the Brotherhood members who were then put into a series of concentration camps. Sayyid Qutb, a prominent scholar and Brotherhood member who was interned at one of these camps, wrote his influential “Milestones” in the context of a 1957 massacre inside them. His work found sympathy amongst many of the imprisoned members, and encouraged the Brothers to reorganize (Kepel 1985 29). The meetings of the Brothers led to discussions of taking power from the Nasser government by force in light of their recent experiences. The members
were divided between taking power by coup and through the gradual re-education of society. The discussions were hardly an actual threat, but Nasser was suffering from low approval and was looking for a cause to reunite the Egyptian people behind him (Kepel 1985 32). Thus, in 1965, the Nasser regime orchestrated a series of Muslim Brother hangings, which included Sayyid Qutb. Thousands more continued to be arrested and tortured for years until Sadat took power in 1970 (Blaydes 2011 149).

When President Sadat took office, the Brotherhood again experienced a period of respite while the government sought to counter the perceived communist threat from Nasser sympathizers. Under Sadat’s open market policy and the state’s retreat from welfare provision, the Brotherhood thrived as a movement and established its permanent position as a key provider of social services within the state. In 1981, a member of the radical Islamist group Jihad assassinated Anwar Sadat potentially threatening the reconciled peace between the Brotherhood and the proceeding government. However, when Mubarak succeeded Sadat in 1981, he tolerated the Brotherhood’s presence, though with suspicion, in an attempt to quell the Egyptian irritation at the lack of social services provided by the state. This seven-year period in which the Brotherhood was granted clemency by the Mubarak regime allowed for it to actively accumulate a strong populist base within the middle class (Tadros 2012 6).

1984 marked the first instance of formal political participation by the Brothers. Its participation in the 1984 elections presented the first desire of the organization to change the political situation from within the existing infrastructure, which in turn increased its public legitimacy (Ghanem & Mustafa 2011 397). As the Brotherhood
expanded and the full scale of its activity was realized, the cordial relations with the government gradually spoiled between 1988 and 1992 (Rashwan 42). Then in 1990, the Muslim Brotherhood along with most other opposition parties chose to boycott the elections over a new National Democratic Party (NDP) law prohibiting parties from running and only permitting individual candidates (Harnisch and Mecham 2009 194). The Mubarak regime marked this act of protest as the beginning of a series of challenges to their authority (Ghanem & Mustafa 2011 399).

The regime felt increasingly threatened as the Brotherhood chose to participate again in the 1995 elections. It had acquired leadership positions in most of the existing professional organizations and student unions, which concerned Mubarak (Ghanem & Mustafa 2011 399). The crackdowns of 1995, based on a charge of conspiracy to overthrow the regime, were the most far reaching since the instances in the 1950s (Blaydes 2011 150). Though the Brothers had successfully partaken in two election cycles prior, it was not until the 2000 elections that the Brother successfully instituted itself as the primary opposition to Mubarak and his regime when they won seventeen seats out of the total seventy candidates they ran on the ballot. The significance of the 2000 run was that the Brother’s seventeen seats equaled the number of seats all the secular opposition parties won combined in spite of the stringent restrictions the regime had placed on candidates in hopes of effectively skewing electoral results (Ghanem & Mustafa 2011 400). Mubarak’s NDP would bargain with alternative political parties for the number of seats each party could win in exchange for a say in which politician assumed the position (Tadros 2012 23). Though hardly
transparent, the elections were an opportune channel for the Brotherhood’s public participation in a way that satisfied both their desire to have an active presence and to do so within the confines of regime restrictions.

The Founding of Islamism in Tunisia

Tension between Islamists and government is nothing novel in the Muslim world, but the repression of Tunisia’s Ennahda party was unique in its total eradication of any organizational presence within Tunisian society. Unlike Egypt, organized Islamism in Tunisia began in the throes of an economic crisis in the late 1960s, catalyzed by a failed change from socialism to economic liberalism. This transition left thousands unemployed and in economic straits, leading to an identity crisis that the Islamists were quick to fill (Hamidi 1998 11). In 1970, three young professionals, Hammida Enniefer, Abdelfattah Morou and Rashid Ghannouchi met and gave birth to the idea of a Tunisian Islamist movement. They targeted the youth that had been marginalized by the modernization policies of the Bourguiba regime (Hamidi 1998 12). Under the cover of the Association for the Safeguarding of the Holy Quran, the new group organized meetings and offered public lectures until the government ordered the new members out for being too “enthusiastic” (Hamidi 1998 19). That first cell established under the moniker of Jamaa al Islamiyya, was based at the University of Tunis, the only university in Tunisia. The university acted as the perfect breeding ground for activism as the student unions were becoming increasingly political and the
new Islamist group were repeatedly and violently attacked by the Marxist organizations (Hamidi 1998 26).

What is now called “Black Friday”, January 26, 1978, marks the first instance of political posturing by the Islamists, who had up until this point pursued only da’wa, the call to Islam. Due to rising economic disparity, the labor unions chose to strike and the army was called in to shut the uprisings down. The result left hundreds massacred. The Islamists felt compelled to take sides, denouncing the government’s action (Hamidi 1998 31). For three more years, Ghannouchi remained focused on the call to Islam, until finally in 1973 he realized that da’wa as a function of Islamist groups did not operate as intended in non-democratic Tunisia. Instead, he shifted the group’s focus to secret meetings and lectures, adapted from Brotherhood ideology, which remained the primary influence of the group from 1973 onwards (Hamidi 1998 21).

The clandestine nature of the group worked until its discovery by the government in 1980. This prompted the group to pre-empt government action by going public. Yet, the same year, an attack on the city of Gafsa led to a slaughter of many in response by the army. Public disgust incited Bourguiba to claim a new era of openness and potential for a multiparty system (Hamidi 1998 38).

The Islamists had long declared Bourguiba the “enemy of Islam” and the MTI envisioned themselves as saviors of Islam. In 1956, Bourguiba shut down the Islamic courts as well as the historic Zeitouna university. Zeitouna was one of the leading centers of Islamic authority. The following year, he prohibited the hijab in government offices and courts, and prohibited fasting during Ramadan in 1960. In fact, Bourguiba
took deliberate efforts to publicly drink orange juice every morning on national television, citing fasting as a detriment to the economy (Hamidi 1998 13). The Islamic Tendency Movement immediately chose to be confrontational with the ruling regime stating a desire to ultimately overthrow the regime in power (Allani 2009 261). The group applied for official registration as a political party under the name of the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) on June 6, 1981.

The new Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) claimed to reformulate Islamist thought, establish itself as a political force, create a new system of social justice, and revive the unity of Islam (Hamidi 1998 45). Not surprisingly, the authorities responded to the open threats of ousting with harsh series of prosecution for key Islamist members beginning in 1981. This began the ‘period of hardship’ for the Tunisian Islamic movement where nearly 107 of its top activists were imprisoned for almost eleven years (Allani 2009 262).

Over the next six years, the MTI committed itself to expansion and change through nonviolence and democratic means (Hamidi 1998 45). The secret meetings continued and were discovered again in 1983, leading to yet another series of arrests. However in 1984, the government issued amnesty to the members (Hamidi 1998 47). The prosecutions led to divisions within the MTI that in turn created three strains of Islamist groups in Tunisia. Some leaders left to create an organization that prioritized ideology over politics, focusing instead on the da’wa call. This group became the Progressive Islamists of Tunisia. The remaining members splintered between two groups: one moderate and one radical. Abdelfattah Morou, who abdicated violent
positioning against the government, headed the moderate trend. The other, led by Salah Karkar called for a continued and intensified revolt against the regime. During this time, Ghannouchi continued to forge his own movement between that of Morou’s and Karkar’s (Allani 2009 262).

In January 1984 Prime Minister Muhammed Mzali fired the Minister of Interior over the January Bread Uprisings. The price of bread, a staple in Tunisia, skyrocketed during this time and Mzali thought the uprisings that occurred in response was a conspiracy by the Minister of the Interior and members of the trade union. He proceeded to fire the Minister and sentence the secretary general of the labor union, an active political force, to prison. These moves alienated many of his political constituents and he decided to improve relations with the Islamists as a peace offering. He reached out to the Islamists in prison, while Morou continuously attempted to convince Bourguiba of the passiveness of his movement (Allani 2009 262). With Mzali as an official ally, the government began releasing members of the MTI and Mourou was officially invited for a visit to the Prime Minister’s house in 1984. Mzali further agreed to legalize the Islamic movement in 1985 for its assurance that it would not politicize Islam. This temporary success proved short lived. The Movement faced a second round of prosecutions from the Borguiba government in 1987 ending with a life sentence for Ghannouchi and arrests of over 200 members. Ghannouchi’s absence put the more radical and oppositional Karkar in charge in his place (Hamidi 1998 53). The Tunisian state had fallen into disrepair after the Mzali government, with the economy and security of the state continuously deteriorating (Allani 2009 263).
In August of that same year, four bombings took place in the cities of Sousse and Monastir, and the government charged the Islamists. They had purportedly “received” a confession from a man claiming to have been given instructions from the MTI, though leaders of the group claimed not to know any such person (Hamdi 53). A new assault led by Bourguiba put the Islamists on public trial for a slew of charges including treason, amassing arms, and colluding with Iran to name just a few. It was at this point that the Islamists and the world realized that Bourguiba would never settle for simply prohibiting the growth of the movement, but the total annihilation of it. International and domestic media, and opposition groups stood by the Islamists innocence while international governments secretly pled with Bourguiba to not use the death penalty (Hamidi 55). Karkar and other leaders began planning a military coup as their final attack on the Bourguiba regime, but were instead beaten by Ben Ali only twenty four hours prior (Hamidi 58).

When Ben Ali assumed office, a new era of relations began. Ben Ali was aware of how close the Islamists had come to taking power, and chose to seek a peaceful resolution to the existing government-Islamist relations. He offered amnesty to Ghannouchi and other sentenced members, while also allowing exiled members to return. At the same time, Ben Ali sought to restrict the MTI’s access to power once and for all by banning all political parties with a religious base (Hamidi 1998 64). It also became illegal to give public lectures in mosques, a key facet of Islamist recruitment, without preapproval by the government (Hamidi 1998 66). Yet, Ben Ali was not interested in removing Islamic influence from public life. He frequently
utilized Islamic rhetoric and promoted Islamic values as a tool to strengthen his new regime’s legitimacy (Torelli 2012 69). In 1988, the MTI changed its name to Ennahda, while deciding to restrict its use of Islam so as not to breach the rules of the new party law (Hamidi 1998 67). Seizing the opportunity to participate in Ben Ali’s new era of “openness”, Ennahda quickly wrote a constitution that reflected its position on all aspects of Tunisian life. At the core of these was the promotion of Arab and Islamic identity, protecting civil society, improving the status of women, and promoting shura (council) as a foundation for democracy (Davis 1997 86).

Ben Ali’s acceptance of the Movement was threefold: he allowed the movement to participate in the High Council in 1988, he permitted the Movement to have representation in the Islamic High Council in 1989 and also granted its participation in the 1989 parliamentary elections. Ennahda’s work in the high council accepted a modern political regime along with the need to safeguard previously acquired rights for women. Its membership in the Islamic High Council signaled a path of working with political opponents. It was in the parliamentary elections where Ennahda squandered any traction it had previously earned with the regime. Though banned from running as a party, Ennahda candidates could still run as independents and they did. The electoral system in Tunisia guaranteed that the ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) would win every seat, but Ennahda still won almost fifteen percent of the vote while other opposition groups won none. This gave Ennahda a legitimate claim as the only group capable of challenging the RCD (Davis 1997 87).
The popularity of Ennahda during the elections concerned the Ben Ali government and incited the most severe crackdown to date. This was the effective end of Ennahda’s formal existence within Tunisia. The year 1990 saw the arrests of nearly one hundred Islamists and in 1991 Ennahda was accused of conspiring to overthrow the regime (Hamidi 1998 73). Ennahda members were abrasively arrested and banished from Tunisian political and social life (Torelli 2012 69). Ghannouchi left the country a month after the 1989 elections and the government took a series of actions to permanently ban the Movement from ever reentering Tunisian politics. The 1990s saw the eradication of the Ennahda newspaper, Al Fajr, and the dissolution of its student union. The government also discovered an Islamist presence in the security establishment leading to a third round of prosecutions in 1991 (Allani 2009 256). The eradication of an Ennahda presence was so complete, that the only place Ghannouchi could find political asylum was London. The international campaign launched by Ben Ali was intended to keep him out of the Arab world and isolated from the international press (Hamidi 1998 73).

**Engage and Endure: Approaches to a Public Presence**

The 2005 elections marked the first multi party elections Egypt held in nearly thirty years. The Brotherhood’s victory resulted in eighty-eight parliament seats (Tadros 2012 19). In comparison with the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), the Muslim Brotherhood won two out of every three races, making it the leader of the largest opposition bloc (Brown 2012 92). Though many were hopeful by the
seemingly competitive nature of the elections, the apparent success was an extensive orchestration on behalf of the NDP. The Party leadership would approach their “competitors” with an offer on the number of seats each would “win” in the election in exchange for a say on which political figures took those seats in the Parliament (Tadros 2012 22).

In a political atmosphere of known corruption, it is easy to wonder exactly what incentivized the Muslim Brotherhood to continually engage in the existing system. The choice to participate was a strategic choice that optimized the movement’s exposure within the authoritarian regime. It enhanced the movement’s public presence, though it seemed to contradict with official Brotherhood ideology. The benefits of such participation, orchestrated as it was, offered the movement expanded channels for dissemination of their message, enhanced freedom in their organization, and the development of new political skills while also maintaining increased access to media and public spaces (Brown 2012 132). However, electoral victories also provide the Brothers with an oversight role. The 2005 elections allowed the Brothers to measure future opposition and gauge the methods by which these groups operate. The advantage to working alongside the regime outweighed its consequences by giving the Brotherhood leadership direct access to the tools and institutions it believed it would successfully acquire when the Mubarak regime imploded under its own corruption (Blaydes 2011 153). Hence participation becomes training for a day in which the Brotherhood can eventually assume control.
At its base, the Brotherhood is still a group of people. Brotherhood membership, as we will see, is the most powerful tool at the organization’s disposal, especially in its ability to mobilize such large populations so quickly and effectively. This is done through a coordinated effort of targeted solicitation, diffuse network of social service providers and signaling the strength of its movement to the voters. As noted, the Brotherhood’s social service sector provides critical legal protection for Brotherhood activity and a sustained presence at times when political repression makes political mobility practically impossible (Mitchell 1969 37). The Brotherhood itself only provides a fraction of the social services offered by a variety of Islamic organizations, but benefits from its conflation with the rest of Islamic sector (Blaydes 2011 155).

The Brotherhood also has a distinct constituency. Its primary support stems from the marginalized, but educated youth, who have degrees and are without work. These unemployed intellectuals often blame their misfortune on a lack of morality in Egypt, to which the Islamist groups readily offer a solution (Wickham 2002). Women have also proved an invaluable resource for the Brothers in terms of activism and recruitment. They are carefully trained and have a greater deal of mobility within Egyptian society, making house calls to other women that a male could not make. Their mass presence at the polls has created an effective propaganda campaign for the Brotherhood as well in which the women who sacrifices for her political voice plays an emotional game on Egyptians and foreigners alike (Blaydes 2011 159).
The Brotherhood is keenly aware of its demographic appeal amongst these particular social classes and develops a targeted approach to reaching its core audience. It has built its reputation on running clean, highly organized political campaigns, amassing nearly 25,000 volunteers around election season (Al Ahram 2005). These activists have developed a personal recruitment tactic based on face-to-face house calls, which has proven extremely effective. They are even trained in soliciting feedback from voters on why they chose not to support the Brotherhood on election day, giving the movement a list of policies needing improvement. This feedback is arguably a mechanism for generating the Brotherhood’s accountability to its populace. Furthermore, the Brotherhood is extremely selective in choosing which governates it decides to run candidates in. An extensive demographic analysis is completed on each area and the Muslim Brothers will work in a place for two to three years before ever fielding a candidate there. They even administer questionnaires in order to determine how successful a candidate will be in any particular area and gauge the interests of each locale (Blaydes 2011 158).

Though its behind the scenes work is arguably the most critical component of a successful campaign, the Muslim Brotherhood also relies heavily on political signaling prior to and during the elections to demonstrate its strength and popularity (Blaydes 2011 159). Political science scholars have argued, “when the probability that an individual vote will affect the result of an election increases, voter turnout inherently increases with it” (Blais 2000 58). Noting this, the Brotherhood employs three characteristic methods - marches, rallies, and strategic candidate selection by region-
for manufacturing ostensible support. Marches and rallies are the primary way it chooses to disperse information to communities about the voter preferences of the area. It also chooses carefully the regions from which it runs candidates and maintains a very active presence in these regions through a sophisticated Internet site and the sponsoring of local dinners (Blaydes 2011 160).

**Ennahda: Limits of Participation**

Unlike the Brothers, a detailed account of Ennahda’s participatory methodology does not exist. What constituency Ennahda was able to amass before its complete eradication stemmed from a class of young educated professionals, Tunisians in the lower socio-economic strata, and women. The students the MTI attracted were most often students of technology from which the regime usually drew its own support making the organization even more politically threatening (Waltz 1986 664). The women viewed the MTI as a channel through which to become more politically visible in ways that they were not in other political and social organizations (Waltz 1986 660). Ennahda’s political positioning was also enabled by the tightening grip and aggressive secularization policies of the ruling regimes. In theory, Tunisia has always been an Islamic state. However, since its 1956 independence, the sharia courts have been abolished, only state-prepared sermons can be taught in the mosque, and the code of personal status is only a very loose interpretation of Islamic law. Even religious education has been compromised, through the creation of a faculty of theology that replaces Tunisia’s equivalent of Al Azhar. When creating their platform,
the MTI did not have to offer a comprehensive Islamic solution to Tunisia’s problems. Rather, by merely rejecting the way Islam was practiced in Tunisia, they positioned themselves as an anti-system organization that responded to Tunisia’s neglected Muslim population (Waltz 1986 660).

While the movement oscillated between moderation and radicalization, Ghannouchi ultimately sought reform through means of nonviolence and democracy, but his absence during exile put the more radical Karkar in a position of power (Hamidi 1998 53). However, Karkar was prevented from implementing any violently confrontational policies by Ben Ali’s firm control over all aspects of Tunisian society. In fact, Ben Ali had maintained one of the most severe levels of control over the media, allowing him to also effectively control public discourse (Lynch 2012 74). The mobility of the Muslim Brothers within Mubarak’s regime, though restricted at times, never achieved the level of rigidity as it did in Tunisia. Ennahda had not been around long enough to develop a presence in the social sector and was of no significance or necessity to Ben Ali once he had vested himself with complete authority. Ennahda was entirely disposable, and Ben Ali had the means to ensure they could never return.

Tempered Transitions: The Brotherhood and Ennahda, A Comparison in Political Evolution

The political development of any Islamist group is dependent on two crucial factors: time and regime characteristics. Both the Muslim Brotherhood and Ennahda underwent similar cycles of tolerance and repression. However, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Tunisia’s Ennahda Movement represent very different
developmental trajectories and have evolved into distinct political entities. Though they share some general association, the link between them is merely circumstantial. The only real connection Ennahda has with the Brotherhood is nominal. Ghannouchi was influenced by the experiences and documents of the movement and chose to transition his primarily religious organization into a functioning political one.

So what causes such diverging paths in organizations with similar goals of assuming political power? Perhaps the most recognizable disparity between both movements is the time span in which each course of development occurs. The Brotherhood has over an eighty-year life span that has afforded it a strategic advantage in mastering the flexibility it would need to navigate the ever-changing limitations of each successive regime. Ennahda was completely expelled from Tunisian public life through Ben Ali’s extensive control of politics and the media, which whittled its existence to a less than twenty-year life. From the 1990s onwards, Ben Ali effectively silenced the Ennahda voice and maintained an aggressive international campaign that muted an exiled Ghannouchi.

The forcefulness of the Ben Ali regime towards the Islamists is also a critical tool of evaluation for analyzing Ennahda’s development. As is usually the case, Islamist groups exist within particular political frameworks and this existence is contingent upon those regimes in power. What most Islamists truly want is to be granted legitimacy by the existing regimes, not necessarily to entirely change the regime in power (Ghanem and Mustafa 2011 394). This attribute causes the movements to learn to work within the existing political frameworks so as to offer
political competition to the ruling government, without credibly threatening its power. The Brotherhood benefitted in this case from the general tolerance of its existence by the ruling party. Though each leader aggressively sought to prevent any real political challenge, each administration also condoned periods of lenience towards the Islamists when it suited their credibility to do so. The Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak regimes profited in the form of appeasement from granting participation to the largest and most popular public force in Egypt. When the threat to each individual’s power appeared conceivable, then a new series of crackdowns would begin until the Brotherhood became a strategic advantage for the regime once again.

In the case of Tunisia, the restrictions of the Islamists by the authoritarian regime were undoubtedly greater than those experienced by the Muslim Brotherhood. Ben Ali became so fearful of Ennahda’s influence that he effectively eliminated the movement from all facets of political and social life through continual arrests, and unyielding control of Tunisian media and politics. Political participation by the Islamists achieves several milestones that mark their political development. Participation establishes a precedent and a right to a political presence, it increases the visibility of Islamic culture, it demonstrates Islam’s ability to solve a diverse set of problems, and strengthens the Islamic leadership while also adding to a group’s experience (Ghanem and Mustafa 2011 401). These milestones can hardly be achieved if the opportunity never exists.

The Brotherhood’s much longer existence is not the primary distinction between the development of it and Ennahda. The sixty more years it had certainly
offered an expanded opportunity for garnering experience but was not the key factor in the diverging trajectories of the two groups. Rather, the rigidity of the Tunisian regime, in comparison to that of the Egyptian, removed any chance for the Ennahda movement to successfully establish itself as a political force and maintain this presence. It would not be until the ouster of Ben Ali following the Arab Spring revolutions that Ennahda could safely return and reclaim its position as a democratic force in Tunisia.

As can be seen, the attitude of each prospective regime towards the Islamists during each movement’s political development will undeniably establish each group’s propensity for democratic reform once they are elected to power. As Nathan Brown notes, “movement evolutions is limited not only by the restrictions set by semi authoritarian politics, but also by the unreliability of the openings it provides. Regimes that choose not to make credible commitments to liberalization are unlikely to find Islamist oppositions that will make full commitment to liberalizations” (Brown 2012 229). The actions of both Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood will build on this observation as each group is forced to grapple with its newly achieved power following the wake of the post-Arab Spring elections.

**Calling for Change: Islamists Amidst the Arab Spring**

The protests that proliferated the Arab World in 2011 consumed international attention. Every state of the MENA region watched carefully as Tunisian dictator Ben Ali succumbed to the revolution cries of the Tunisian people. The success of this ousting inspired the Egyptians, who then quickly overtook Tahrir Square for eighteen
days until dictator Hosni Mubarak fell like his contemporary. Since 2011, academics and diplomats alike have taken turns speculating what unique phenomenon caused the first successful Arab uprisings in decades.

However, upon closer inspection, the uprisings of 2011 are themselves no novel occurrence. The Arab World, particularly Tunisia and Egypt, have long resisted the decades of repression, poverty and unemployment. As Marc Lynch points out, the difference of the 2011 protests is not that they happened, but that they were successful in driving both Ben Ali and Mubarak from power, that traditional regime responses backfired, and how rapidly the protests spread to nearly every country in the region (Lynch 2012 71). The democratic openings created by the ouster of the authoritarian regimes afforded the Islamists ample opportunity to visibly insert themselves into leading roles of the public sphere.

Though apparently similar on the surface, these revolutions occurred within very different political contexts. Egypt, with its population of over eighty million, is nearly six times larger in land than the country of Tunisia. In contrast, Tunisia has a highly urbanized population of only ten million with an income that is two times higher than Egypt’s average (Gelvin 2012 34). These factors were distinguishing characteristics of each revolution and will remain challenges to the new Islamists regimes.
A Spark in the Night: The Ouster of Authoritarianism
Bye Bye Ben Ali: Revolution Takes Tunisia

When Mohamed Bouazizi set himself in the rural town of Sidi Bou Zid on December 17, 2010, Tunisians took notice. Mohamed Bouazizi was a street vendor whose produce cart had been confiscated earlier in the day by regime officials who proceeded to repeatedly harass him. Ben Ali used Bouazizi’s act to enhance his political reputation by visiting him in the hospital, even after he reportedly responded to the news of Bouazizi’s immolation with, “Let him die.” Instead, Ben Ali’s presence only further enraged Tunisians who were insistently calling for Ben Ali’s departure. One of Ben Ali’s greatest errors was authorizing the use of deadly force against the protesters (Schraeder 2011 11). In the end, approximately three hundred Tunisians were killed in response to the uprisings, until the army eventually sided with the opposition, ultimately forcing Ben Ali out (Hamid 2011 112).

The protests cited a number of grievances including unemployment, food inflation, corruption, poor living conditions, lack of freedoms and lack of government responsiveness. While many Tunisians quickly took to the streets, it was not until the Tunisian General Labor Union joined in that the protests truly gained momentum. Ben Ali initially tried to pacify the protesters with a promise of 300,000 new jobs, new parliamentary elections, and a “national dialogue”, but to no avail (Gelvin 2013). A symbol of the Tunisians’ resolve was the protestors holding up baguettes to symbolize that they could not be bought off with bread and a middle class existence alone (Clancy Smith 2013 468).
On January 14, 2011, following a month of protests, Ben Ali stepped down after nearly twenty-three years in power (McCaffrey 2012 41). The army surrounded the presidential palace while Ben Ali appointed his prime minister to head the caretaker government (Gelvin 2013). Ben Ali fled the country, eventually finding refuge in Saudi Arabia (Clancy Smith 2013). Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi asserted he would be assuming power upon Ben Ali’s departure, which instigated uproar amongst Tunisians who claimed that, per the constitution, the speaker should actually assume control. Tunisians were ever fearful that they would lose their revolution to remnants of the old regime and as it turns out, this was a very justified fear. Ben Ali had never formally resigned and was planning a comeback. At this point, the demonstrators could have left Tunis. Throughout the entire month however, their call had not been for the fall of the president, but “the people the demand the fall of the regime!” (Nouei hed 2012 77). Following his leave, Tunisian parliamentary elections were held in October 2011 with nearly ninety percent voter turnout (Gelvin 2013).

Ennahda’s leader Rashid al Ghannouchi finally returned to Tunisia after twenty years in exile on January 30, 2011. He was met at the airport by hundreds of supporters (and a small group of protesting secularists) who climbed and pushed their way for even a glimpse of the renowned leader. Throughout the uprisings, Ennahda was very careful not to take an active role. No statements were issued, Islamist slogans were not raised, and Ghannouchi deliberately waited two weeks to return so as not to be perceived as a Khomeini style return to claim victory (Nouei hed 2012 82). Ennahda
gained legal recognition as a political party on March 1, 2011 (Hamid 2011 112). The interim government granted it leaders amnesty and the organization was quick to establish itself as a leader within Tunisian society (Lynch 2012 148). One young volunteer at Ghannouchi’s return was asked how, after so many years, the group was able to organize so quickly and effectively. He replied, “Our activities were stopped. But you cannot stop an ideology” (Noueihed 2012 81).

As has been noted, protests were nothing new to Tunisia. The corruption of Ben Ali and his family, rising rates of unemployment, limited opportunities for economic advancement and the growing economic disparity between the coast and interior regions have instigated perpetual resistance by Tunisians (Lynch 2012 73). Another unique factor of Tunisian society was Ben Ali’s total control of media and public discourse. Ben Ali was perhaps most famous for two things: the corruption of his family, and his mukhabarat (intelligence based) police state. Ben Ali’s regime seemed to many impervious to change. He relied on a massive network of nearly 35,000 military troops, in addition to a security apparatus of an estimated 130,000.

The size of Tunisia’s security apparatus was large enough to create a police presence for the country the size of France (which has approximately six times the population) (Schraeder 2011 7). In addition, Ben Ali’s wife, Leila Trabelsi and her family were notorious for consuming significant portions of Tunisia’s economy. Leila helped her ten siblings to gain control of businesses throughout Tunisia, while one of her brothers illegally assumed control of numerous businesses. By the end of Ben Ali’s term, his extended family owned nearly 180 major Tunisian companies across a variety of
sectors (Schraeder 2011 9). When these controls finally broke down, the regime became extremely vulnerable to public dissent (Lynch 2012 74).

Another defining feature of Mohamed Bouazizi’s act of protest was that it occurred in Sidi Bou Zid. Dozens had immolated themselves in years prior, but the communal ties in a rural town such as Sidi Bou Zid should have been strong enough to protect Bouazizi from the humiliation he received. As political scientist Christopher Alexander put it, “In a place like Sidi Bou Zid, half the town or more is likely the cousin of Mohamed Bouazizi. His actions suggests that corruption of the regime had tainted Tunisia to its core” (McCaffrey 2012 44).

Despite Ben Ali’s seemingly secure control of Tunisian society, anti-regime political expression did not entirely disappear. Citizens began engaging with political dissent in mediums beyond regime control, by expanding online and through targeted journalism. For ordinary citizens, the safest and most accessible way of practicing their right to political dissent was by moving it into the private sphere and making subtle lifestyle changes. Tunisians began adopting lifestyles that defied the secular regime’s accepted values and behaviors leading to a discreet but significant increase in Islamization. Turning to Islam was not overtly political. Years of secularist policies had left many Tunisians clamoring for their more traditional Islamic values. However, Islam and Islamism always carried distinctly anti-regime overtones (Haugbolle 2012 189). Ben Ali’s forced secularization policies combined with the repression of Islamists ignored the fact that a majority of Tunisia’s population cherished Islamic values. Thus, despite its exclusion, Islamism remained a powerful social force and its
absence in Tunisian society was a primary factor in the rise of the Salafis (Haugbolle 2012 191).

**Mubarak Must Go: Taking Over Tahrir**

Egyptians began their occupation of Tahrir less than two weeks after Ben Ali fled (Gelvin 2012). The Egyptian youth were no stranger to protests. They had gained valuable experience in organizing and mobilizing earlier in 2004 with the Kefaya (Enough) Movement to protest Gamal Mubarak’s ascension to power (Tadros 2012 25). The difference of the January 25 protests in 2011 was the Egyptian people had been inspired that there was a feasible chance of success following Ben Ali’s removal. The date January 25 had traditionally marked annual police force day, which remembered the role of police in resisting British colonialism in the Battle of Ismailiya (Tadros 2012 29).

The Internet activists who organized the January 25 demonstrations had previously called for similar demonstrations earlier but had no turnout larger than several hundred activists. January 25 was frequently a day for anti-Mubarak protests each year. Most attracted no more than a few hundred dedicated political activists that were easily dispersed by security services, who greatly outnumbered them. The cause seemed hopeless and ordinary citizens did not find the continuously failed demonstration and attacks by police appealing. Yet when Ben Ali left on January 14, everything changed. His removal was the proof Egyptians needed that protests could be successful (Noueiheid 2012 107). Youth activists began strategizing ways to avoid
the security apparatus. They created twenty starting points and used social media to reach as broad an audience as possible. When the activists marched on January 25, residents began joining them for the first time and the ranks swelled as the groups moved inwards.

The success of the January 25\textsuperscript{th} demonstrations led to a call for another protest on the 28\textsuperscript{th}, named the Day of Rage, with the intention of occupying Tahrir Square. The government shut down the Internet the night prior, suggesting an impending crackdown; but the demonstrators remained undeterred. By the afternoon of the 28\textsuperscript{th}, the crowds at Tahrir had gotten so large that they were impossible to stop by regular police forces and eventually the army was called in. At this point the Brotherhood had joined the demonstrations, immediately increasing the size (Noueihed 2012 108). The protesters who took to Tahrir on January 25 were haphazardly organized. Over the span of only eighteen days, almost six million Egyptians took to the streets, making the Arab Spring demonstrations the largest pro-democracy mobilization in Arab history (Hamid 2011 103). When the military did arrive, protestors greeted them with cheers and flowers, while climbing on the tanks for photo opportunities in attempt to bring the army to their side. In Egypt, the military was also generally well liked because it did not involve itself in domestic repression and was able to maintain its reputation as the trusted guardian of the state (Noueihed 2012 109).

The Brotherhood originally abstained from participating in the uprisings in an attempt to maintain cordial relations with the government. The thought was that the regime would crush the uprisings before the protesters were able to achieve any
substantial political change. The Brotherhood, who was no stranger to regime repression, feared that should a crackdown ensue, their participation in such blatant opposition would only lead to the nullification of its achieved presence within the current regime (Tadros 2012 31). The youth members of the Brotherhood who did partake in the uprisings from the start did so as Egyptian youth, rather than Brotherhood members, in keeping with secular and nationalist nature of the demonstrations (Tadros 2012 32).

When the Brotherhood finally did join the revolution from January 28 onward, they actively ordered their members to avoid using Islamic slogans and provided much needed manpower, organizational capacity and experience (Lynch 85). As one Brotherhood member put it, “If it is ever perceived that this revolution is an Islamic one, the U.S. and others will be able to justify a crackdown” (Hamid 2011 29). Media were given strict instructions to avoid outwardly Islamist symbols and actions that signaled a strong Islamist presence and the Islamists worked together with the youth, secular and other liberal forces until Mubarak’s ousting (Tadros 2012 35). The leaderless revolution, though secular in nature, certainly benefitted from the Brotherhood’s seasoned presence. Their involvement brought the Salafis into the fold, and their experience with regime security forces proved critical for protecting the protesters during the Battle of the Camel on February 2 (Tadros 2012 35). Paid thugs on camel and looters were hired to wreak havoc on the protesters in Tahrir, in hopes of intimidating them into submission (Noueihed 2012 109).
The Brotherhood was a significant facet of maintaining the revolutionary momentum for eighteen days. The Movement had a long history of social service that it used to nurture protesters for the two and a half weeks they would remain in Tahrir. The Brotherhood also controlled a number of media outlets, which it was able to use to generate a revolutionary mood in addition to the sheer numbers it provided in terms of manpower (Al Anani 2011). Individual stages were set up around the square, the largest of which with the largest audiences was controlled by the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood also had their own set of broadcasting services, and they were able to control who got access to the stage (Tadros 2012 35).

At the beginning of the uprisings, the protestors agreed on a strict policy of no collaboration with the regime until Mubarak was ousted from power. However, on February 6, the intentions of the Brotherhood were called into question when the Guidance Bureau was accused of holding clandestine meetings with the Vice President over the Brotherhood’s withdrawal from the protests in exchange for state recognition and political party status (Tadros 2012 36). Upon Mubarak’s leave however, the once unified, secular nature of the protests quickly receded.

On February 11, 2011 Mubarak was officially removed from office when the army took the government into its own hands. They assumed control, dissolved the parliament and suspended the constitution (Tudoroiu 2011 380). The Egyptian revolution was seemingly successful. Yet, there were some decisive factors that contributed to the revolution’s fruition. In fact, Egypt’s revolution should not have been successful at all. The regime knew what was forthcoming. Its security forces
were high alert, the Internet had been disrupted, Al-Jazeera’s signal had been jammed, the protest leaders were well known, and the demonstration times were openly advertised. It was only the meeting points that were kept well under wraps. (Lynch 2012 85). Mubarak had several opportunities to appease the masses and offer concessions in an attempt to slow their momentum. Instead, he underestimated the tenacity of the protestors and viewed them as disobedient children who needed subduing by thugs (Rutherford 2013). Had the military also decided to intervene, the efforts at Tahrir would have been a waste (Rutherford 2013). The protesters were keenly aware of the military’s role and hence tailored their chants to appeal to the troops (Hamid 2011 104).

Following Mubarak’s departure, the Brotherhood used their newfound prominence to promote their Islamic program subtly. On the 2nd of April, the youth coalition had argued a one million-man march, which the Brotherhood boycotted. By the 8 April, each corner of Tahrir was under the control of different groups, with the largest being the Brotherhood’s. Sheikh Qaradawi was invited to speak on the Brotherhood stage and Wael Ghonim; a key figure in the spearheading of the revolution was denied access to the Brotherhood stage (Tadros 2012 40-1). On July 29, 2011 the largest post Mubarak rally was organized to present an agreed upon set of demands between the Islamists and the secular groups. However, the Islamists clearly outnumbered their secular counterparts and broke the agreement by utilizing religious slogans and ideology. In response, the middle class of Cairo and Alexandria grew very wary of the Brotherhood in a post Mubarak context (Tudoroiu 2011 385).
Ballot Play: Open Elections and the Islamists
The Brotherhood at the Ballot

Mubarak left the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) in charge, and they became the sole party responsible of transitioning Egypt to a civilian government within six months. The first round of elections for the lower and upper houses of parliament took place earlier on while the SCAF was still in control of legislative and executive duties. During the revolution, the Brotherhood officially formed a political party, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), which it would use to field candidates for the parliamentary elections. The FJP was comprised primarily of Brotherhood members, which made up nearly 40% of its membership. The group was officially legalized on June 6, 2011 and representatives of the group claimed it would be based on sharia and an Islamic economic system (Shehata 2011). The FJP insists that they are an independent entity from the Brotherhood and that the party is a civil organization, not a theocratic one. They even stressed that they would only contest for half the parliament seats and run no presidential candidate (BBC 2011).

Parliamentary elections in late 2011-early 2012 gave the Brotherhood nearly forty-five percent of the lower house (People’s Assembly) and 58% of the upper (Shura Council) (Rutherford 2013). The SCAF had made several constitutional amendments regarding the electoral process, which gave the Brothers a significant electoral advantage. The democratic referendum held March 19, 2011 was regarding when parliamentary elections should be held. The motion passed with a 77% yes vote
for the earlier elections date. The Brotherhood was very active in campaigning for a yes vote, and the secularists were the primary opposition (Ashour 2011).

The first round of presidential elections occurred on May 23-24 2012. Thirteen candidates had received the necessary approval from the Presidential Election Commission and in the run up to balloting, there were five clear leading candidates. One of the leaders, Mohammad Morsi of the FJP, received the largest share of votes in the first round with approximately 24.8% of the votes. Shafiq came in second place with 23.7% of the votes, leading to the runoff round to occur on June 16 (Rutherford 2013). The large number of candidates running in the initial rounds of the presidential election prevented any one candidate from receiving the 50% threshold required to win (Nafi 2012 2). Only two days before the presidential runoff, the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) ruled that the law governing the election of the lower house of parliament was unconstitutional and dissolved it (Rutherford 2013). The lower house had a Brotherhood majority.

In the final hours of campaigning, Morsi used this dissolution as the prime target of his campaign, claiming the SCC action was both an attack on the Brotherhood and the democratic principles of the January 25 uprisings. From this point on, Morsi christened himself the “candidate of the revolution”, promising to fight against the counterrevolutionary forces within the military, judiciary and security services (Rutherford 2013). In the runoff election, Morsi won 52% of votes to Shafiq’s 48% making him the first elected national leader in Egypt’s five thousand year history. More than half of eligible voters, approximately twenty-six million out of
fifty-one million, participated in the final round of voting. This was nearly forty percent more than had even taken part in the first round (Nafi 2012 1). Morsi addressed public concerns in his inaugural address, promising to be a president for all Egyptians and to build a new Egypt that is civil, national, constitutional, and modern. Morsi also declared his intentions to create a national unity government that would include all Egyptian political currents (Rutherford 2013).

The relationship between the SCAF and Morsi would prove to be one of the most contentious issues for Morsi’s new government. As polls began counting the votes and Egyptians eagerly awaited the results, the SCAF released a constitutional declaration that granted itself sweeping legislative powers, control over the military budget, named itself responsible for who would write the permanent constitution, removed all civilian oversight of the army, and reconstituted the National Defense Council which put all national security policy under SCAF responsibility (BBC 2011).

**Taking Tunisia: Ennahda in Elections**

Tunisia held its first democratic elections on October 23, 2011 and almost ninety percent of the voting population turned out to participate in the long awaited event. There was little complaint of fraud either (Lynch 2012 149). In the lead up to the elections, polls showed the Islamists, who had only recently returned to Tunisian political life, as the most popular party with twenty percent approval (Usher 2012 48). Much to the surprise of everyone, the Ennahda party claimed eighty-nine out of 217 parliamentary seats and proved to be the most popular party in Tunisia. Despite this
fact, Ennahda only gained approximately thirty-seven percent of the popular vote due to the extreme fragmentation of votes across almost one hundred political parties (Spruansky 2012 61). Even still, its share of the popular vote was more than the next eight parties combined (Arieff 2011 4). The movement proceeded to form a national unity government with two leading secular parties (Lynch 2012 149). Hamadi Jebali, secretary general of Ennahda would be Prime Minister, with Moncef Marzouki as President and Ben Jafaar as leader of the Assembly (Haugbolle 2012 21).

Ennahda’s victory was largely a surprise primarily due to the fact that Ennahda had little time to prepare for the elections. It had no social sector to provide badly needed services, no authority within the religious establishment, no political office, and no media empire. In fact, Ennahda had to reconstitute itself completely from scratch (Lynch 2012 147). Ben Ali’s successful crackdown of the Ennahda party meant that most Tunisians under the age of thirty, which is more than half the population, had no recollection of or firsthand experience with the Islamist group (Hamid 2011 114). The interim government announced a week after Ben Ali left that the government would lift its ban on political party and recognize all parties, including the Islamists (BBC 2011). The group was finally legalized on March 1, 2011 and immediately began restoring its presence (BBC 2011).

Ennahda’s campaign centered on Ennahda’s role in restoring the place of Islam in Tunisia, not as a religion but more as an integral facet of Tunisian culture. Though Ennahda had long been absent from the political scene, their name was widely well known for the abuse they suffered under Ben Ali (Churchill 2011). The group began
reaching out to thousands of former activists and putting offices in every Tunisian province (Lynch 2012 148). Ennahda also supplied better information to the Tunisian public than most of its secular opponents. In an atmosphere that had long been ruled by the absence of media, it proved very challenging for voters to find adequate information on parties and candidates. What ads did appear, were strictly regulated and Tunisians complained afterward that all the candidates sounded the same. In order to differentiate itself, Ennahda relied heavily on grass roots mobilization and direct contact with voters, especially in rural areas. Secular parties were reluctant to meet voters beyond the city and thus any voter seeking information on other parties had to take a bust to the regional capital. Instead, Ennahda had posters, rallies, and offices in almost every district (Churchill 2011). Ghannouchi visited twenty-two of the twenty-four provinces personally during the campaign (Lynch 2012). Perhaps the key to Ennahda’s electoral victory was not only where they supplied their party information, but what information they supplied. Parties often distributed long pamphlets of literature about their platforms, ideologies, etc. Ennahda instead described where exactly voters could find Ennahda’s logo on the ballot and how to mark their choices. This strategy was essential, as the election ballots did not identify party leaders or candidates, but names and insignias. In a country with a limited literacy rate, a distinctive logo was also a critical component of the campaign process (Churchill 2011).

Fully aware of Tunisia’s long history of secularist policies and the increasing caution with which Tunisians viewed them, Ennahda was deliberate in emphasizing its
moderate and democratic orientation. Party leaders have gone so far as to refrain from referring to themselves as “Islamist” and instead use the term “Islamic” in light of the negative connotation of the Islamist label (Lewis 2011). At their final campaign rally, Ennahda once again tried to emphasize the party’s Muslim identity by correlating the compatibility of Islam and democracy while expressing a commitment to both. The group claimed it is focused on rhetoric of national unity and national consent (Zouari 2011). Ghannouchi stressed, “Our vision of Islam is a moderate one and since 1981 we have declared that we accept democracy without any restrictions and accept the decision of the people whether they come with us or against us” (Lewis 2011).

The extended absence of Ennahda under Ben Ali proved challenging to the group upon his removal. However, the organization was entirely uncompromised by the existing regime and could claim clean hands (Lynch 2012). In addition, many Tunisians claimed to have voted for Ennahda because its experience under systematic oppression and who conducted it made it better situated to ensure former regime members could not infiltrate the new political space (Robbins and Tessler 2012). It is important to note too, that though many secular parties did well, the parties that employed an explicitly anti Islamist campaign lost badly (Cammett 2012).

Analyzing the Arab Spring: Outlooks and Outcomes for the Brotherhood and Ennahda

As Shadi Hamid notes, Islamists in Arab countries have rarely been given the opportunity to rule so it is difficult to assess how they would act if they ever were in
power. Along the same note however, Islamist organizations are and will continue to be essential operators in the politics of transitioning countries. They are more eager and capable of mobilizing against any Arab regime, making them centers of opposition in states where the regime refuses to democratize or reform (Hamid 2011 31). As political space continues to open as it did with the Arab Spring revolutions, Islamist parties will persistently thrive and non-Islamist parties will find a need to adopt more conservative policies to align with voter sentiments if they hope to win (Hamid 2011 37).

The central roles played by the Brotherhood and Ennahda in their respective societies following the removal of the authoritarian powers demonstrates that citizens of the region do identify with Islamist politics. In some cases, this means a more conservative program, while in others it simply means a commitment to reform through an Islamic frame of reference. As it did in Tunisia, stoking fears of a pending theocracy or assuming an explicitly anti-Islamist program would likely backfire in a country like Egypt. Nearly sixty-seven percent of Egyptians claim that laws should follow Quranic teachings and another twenty-seven percent say laws should in some way follow Islamic principles (Hamid 2012). The most recent election results suggest that the alternative to moderate Islamists may well be more radical Islamists. The Salafis in Egypt outnumber the Muslim Brothers five to one, and Tunisia has faced increasing challenges from the Salafis during their rule (Hamid 2012). Though many espoused fears of an impending “Islamist takeover” the groups were extremely cognizant of these international concerns and actively held back in their Islamist
nature during and after the uprisings. Ghannouchi once claimed before the election that even if Ennahda were to claim an absolute majority, they would choose to partake in a coalition government. He stated, “We don’t want people to perceive that they have moved form a single party dominant in the political life to another single party dominating political life” (Lynch 2012).

In the wake of the post-Arab spring elections, the opportunity for reform appears great. Two very different Islamist political entities have very similar social problems to address now that they have assumed the leadership roles within their respective state. Whether these reforms are truly democratic or not remain to be seen with an analysis of the government’s actions within the past year. However, a close review of political strategy in the lead up to the elections may prove to be a useful tool in determining democratic outlooks. The Brotherhood, for example, has been called to the carpet on its shifting platform during its campaign. It was observed in the previous chapter, that throughout its historical development the Muslim Brotherhood was very pragmatic in its political strategy, adopting whatever positions necessary to ensure its survival under each regime. Its campaign strategy for national leadership is no different.

Contrary to their initial claims, the FJP decided to field a candidate for presidency in March 2012. The original choice, Khairat al Shater, was disqualified by the Presidential Electoral Commission on grounds that he had been convicted of fraud during the Mubarak era. A clear shift in Brotherhood ideology can be observed from the beginning of the campaign season through the elections. The Brothers, being
pragmatic as they are, have learned to adapt their political rhetoric so to best suit its targeted audience and constituency. The Brotherhood began their campaign from a more conservative program, appealing to the mass amounts of conservative nature of Egyptian society. In the first round of elections, Morsi emphasized regular Islamist themes such as the implementation of sharia, the Quran as a constitutional foundation, and opposition to women or Copts running for head of state. This decisive action was arguably an attempt to noticeably distinguish himself from the popular and moderate Abd Al Monam Abu al Fatuh, as well as to gain Salafi support following their success in the parliamentary elections. In the second round though, Morsi shifted gears and toned down his campaign strategy. Morsi once again stressed the moderate themes of the FJP platform to gain support form Abu al Fatuh’s moderate supporters (Rutherford 2013).

Overall, the Brotherhood’s political policies remained exceedingly ambiguous in order to appeal to the broadest spectrum of voters possible. They noticeably avoided talking about their long-term goal for an Islamic society and instead emphasized pressing issues like Egypt’s failing economy (Nelson 2011). The constantly shifting programs and the trials of the election process has brought to light that there is not necessarily a consensus within the Brotherhood movement as to its political plan, as well as fluctuating stances of the Brotherhood with the SCAF and other Islamists. Morsi was careful to form a conciliatory relationship with the SCAF, but has since criticized the military’s authoritarian ruling style. At the same time, the Brotherhood has refused to join in protests that call for the removal of the military government. The
internal cohesion of the Brotherhood movement has also been called in to question, as there appears to be conflicting ideas between a more conservative Morsi and a seemingly moderate FJP. In December 2011, the FJP actually rescinded a statement Morsi made saying the party had earned the right to form a new government--- a power, which currently resides with the SCAF (Schapiro 2011).

True to its political development, Ennahda had much less visibility and had to work much harder to establish its political credentials and assert itself as a political front-runner. Ennahda’s biggest advantage has also been its greatest detriment. The extensive and complete removal of any Islamist presence within Tunisia has allowed the movement to assert itself as an anti-regime organization with no ties to the old regime whatsoever. One of the greatest fears of any pro-democracy movement is arguably that those efforts will recede into the hands of the former regime, or worse, another dictator.

Rikke Haugbolle and Francesco Cavatorta cite three primary reasons for Ennahda’s shocking sweep of the elections. The movement was quick to reorganize itself in spite of the fact that it had been absent for several decades. As one Ennahda member put it,

“Given that we are an old party, we have been able to revive our structures immediately after the revolution in January. Militants who were in prison for a long time started working for the party again, together with those who had operated underground.”

In addition, even in the throes of its repression, Ennahda has held a reputation as an uncompromising opponent to the Ben Ali regime. This characteristic would reassure those who are wary of a slip back into authoritarian hands. Thirdly, the secular parties
did not meet the needs of the voters and would not indulge the undecided rural voters by meeting them outside of the cities (Haugbolle 2012 21). The authors also claim that private Islamic activism has been on the rise in Tunisia, leading the development of dozens of Islamic social and charitable organizations that have renewed the Islamic character of Tunisian society (Haugbolle 2012 24). Ennahda has been able to capitalize on this Islamic re-awakening while also revitalizing its initial political goals.

The Muslim Brotherhood and Ennahda played pivotal roles in the Arab Spring uprisings in very different ways. The Brotherhood carried the uprisings and is in part the reason that the Tahrir demonstrations succeeded while Ennahda took center stage by quickly filling the leadership role left vacant after Mubarak left power. Though Ennahda was absent for most of the demonstrations, the Islamic nature of the economically depressed Tunisian people made it a prime audience for the moderately Islamist Ghannouchi and Ennahda. A people long corrupted by the kleptocracy of Ben Ali left Tunisians longing for a clean start. In contrast, the Brotherhood played an essential role in the January 25 uprisings that positioned the Brothers to quickly assume a leadership role once Mubarak was ousted. The Brotherhood had to compete more heavily with the existing regime and even other Islamists as the Salafis threw their hat into the Egyptian political arena. As James Traub wrote, “the FJP and Ennahda are certainly not secular, but they are democratic. At the very least, they have earned their right to have their democratic bona fides tested in the real world of political practice (Traub 2012). How these groups exercise this newfound political
power remains to be seen in the year following the historic revolutions, and it certainly will be tested.

**Democracy, Islamists, and the Legacy of the Arab Spring**

It has now been over a year since the Arab Spring revolutions ignited across the Arab world, leaving doubt, tension, instability and opportunity in its wake. Egypt and Tunisia have receded into ongoing demonstrations as the once hopeful atmosphere has soured with the lack of observable and significant improvement. Though under new leadership, it is still too early to conjecture about the possible democratic trajectory of these states. The Islamists in both governments continue to grapple with reconciling competing national interests. Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and Tunisia’s Ennahda Movement have been vested with an electoral mandate to usher in a new era of democracy to their politically starved countries. However, after several months in office, both groups are struggling to maintain the optimism and the unity of their newly liberated countries as the steeping economic disparity and divergent political interests threaten to tear the countries apart amongst contested political aims.

The election of these two groups to power marks the culmination of their political development. The formative years of Ennahda and Muslim Brotherhood acted as the training ground for Islamist political participation to be applied real time once the authoritarian regimes that restricted these groups were removed. The period of time immediately following the Arab Spring elections up until this point have been the political experiment on which the overall efficacy of these groups as political agents will be analyzed. Taking into account the different cultural and social environments in
which the Islamists are ascending to power, the Arab Spring uprisings created the necessary democratic openings for which Ennahda’s and the Brotherhood’s true governing capabilities could be tested. The ability to organize and do well in polls is meaningless under an authoritarian regime in which the group poses no real political threat. Thus, a democratic transition will prove the ultimate litmus test as to how Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood will actually behave as a governing political entity and how they will choose to employ the political skills they have learned up until this point.

Many analysts would agree that Ennahda is more suited for democratic transition than its Egyptian counterpart. Society has been noticeably opened, there is a viable political arena for contestation, and most of all Ennahda has upheld the secular policies of the Bourguiba era. The greatest concern in both societies following each groups’ ascendance to power was the fear of an impending Islamist takeover combined with the forced imposition of sharia. In spite of all this, Ennahda now faces new obstacles to a peaceful and continued democratic transition, markedly the growing violence and confrontation of Tunisia’s Salafis. As the ideological battles continue, Ennahda must find a way to incorporate the more conservative Salafis within the secular framework of the Tunisian state, all the while progressing towards substantial economic improvement.

The Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party on the other hand has failed to create noticeable progress towards a democratic transition. Violence is continuous, government divisions are rife, and Egyptians and international observers
alike have seemed to lose all hope that Brotherhood can direct a politically open system through a democratic transition. President Morsi has given himself sweeping powers in the past few months seem to resemble an authoritarian power consolidation. If this is truly his intent, as I do not believe it is, then any liberal political gains acquired to this point could be for naught. This combined with Brotherhood’s exclusive and ambiguous rhetoric regarding minority rights and the role of Islam in politics has incited Egyptians back to the streets, angrier than ever. Only the test of time will prove the durability of the Islamist’s governing abilities, as the populace in both Egypt and Tunisia attempt to save their revolutionary ideals from being swept away with the new political currents.

Dealing with Democracy: Islamists in Power
Tunisia in Trouble? Engaging Opponents

Nearly a year and a half has passed since Ennahda received the electoral majority in Tunisia’s first open elections. The coalition government is often hailed as the model of post-Arab Spring governments, especially in comparison with its much more troubled Egyptian neighbors. Tunisians have witnessed a blossoming of Tunisian political and civil society through the rapid increase in the number of political parties, as well as the increased mobility of these groups in and around society. There are now over one hundred recognized political parties, a much more open press, and what appears to be a genuine commitment to eradicating corruption as former Ben Ali officials have been arrested and charged (Arieff 2011 1). In addition, a law was created that gave amnesty to over five hundred political prisoners and
existing restrictions on political activity were eliminated through decree. The media too has enjoyed a very deliberate reform policy. Tunisia’s media, up until recently, has been one of the most repressive in the Arab World. A new press code recently introduced removes prison sentences for speech offenses, except in the case of religious or racial hatred (El Issawi 2012 19).

The potential democratic trajectory for Tunisia seems attainable when looking at the constitutionalist commitments of the Tunisian government and people. When Ben Ali first left, Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi made a public announcement that he would assume the role of President in accordance with article fifty-six as Ben Ali was no longer able to handle his duties. This spurned outcries from lawyers, who challenged that since Ben Ali actually left, the duties of President should actually be turned over to the Speaker of the House Fouad Mebazaa. Ghannouchi ceded the position to Mebazaa the following day, resorting to constitutionalism over coups or further revolutionary chaos (Murphy 2013 232). Ennahda has also been committed to a democratic government from the start. They have repeatedly declared their support for the principle of power separation between the branches, commitment to freedom of expression, democracy, political pluralism and power rotation. It was an advocate for limiting the power of the president and vesting more authority in the government. Ennahda even supported using a proportional representation system even though it was advantageous to much smaller groups (Noueihed 2012 82).

Holding true to the promises made during their campaign, the group has also maintained the secular freedoms guaranteed to Tunisian citizens, particularly women,
within the already established Personal Status Code of Bourguiba. This was a crucial step in allaying secular fears and upholding the Islamist’s legitimacy. Ennahda leaders have stated that the movement will hold to the gains of the modern state and the rules previously established by the code (El Issawi 2012 22). All changes to the code have been rejected and Ennahda continues to espouse the role of gender equality within the movement, politics and the state more generally. In fact, forty-two of the forty-nine female members of Tunisian Constituent Assembly are members of Ennahda. The group has also made public commitments to the rights of Jewish and Christian minorities within the state (Al Anani 2012 470).

Despite the marked improvements to the civil state, the underlying causes of the revolutionary protests of 2011 remain, causing the fruits of Ennahda’s labor to be overshadowed by the stewing discontent of an impoverished nation. The greatest issue cited by Arab voters was and remains the economy (Hamid 2011 34). In this regard, Ennahda has fallen short of the noble expectations set by protestors in 2011. Almost thirty-three percent, or 170,000 of 400,000 college graduates remain unemployed. Every year since 1980, 70,000 college graduates compete for only 33,000 positions (Zelin 2013). These students also comprise the core constituency of Ennahda, as they are conservative, educated, and religious (Usher 2012 48). In the eyes of the Tunisian people, economic prosperity has become synonymous with democratic transition. Therefore, stagnant economic progress signals a lack of improvement in the political realm as well.
Citizens in both Tunisia and Egypt feel that a primary objective of the government should be to provide people with basic necessities while reducing economic inequality (Benstead, Lust, Malouche, Soltan and Wichmann 2013). Ennahda has sought to rectify the situation through targeted financial aid packages, which has also received much criticism as an ineffective means of solving the underlying problems. Labor unions and secularists alike continue to take to the streets in protest, often causing in more challenges by blocking critical access roads that lead in and out of Tunisia’s interior cities (El Issawi 2012 22). Furthermore, the tourism industry, which employs over 400,000 Tunisians has suffered a great deal from Tunisia’s crippled security apparatus. The Tunisian security service is currently divided amongst three factions: one that remains loyal to Ben Ali, one loyal to Ennahda, and another that claims no loyalties whatsoever (Zelin 2013). Tourism numbers are down by about two million from 2011 (El Issawi 2012 22) and in an industry that relies on foreign visitors “security is the first condition for real and sustained economic and political progress” (Zelin 2013). The recent assassination of popular opposition leader Chokri Belaid has begun a cry among some for the dissolution of the government (Benstead, Lust, Malouche, Soltan and Wichmann 2013). Protestors began attacking Ennahda headquarters around the country in response (BBC 2013).

These represent the greatest concerns of the Tunisian public. Security and economic development will require increased attention on the part of the ruling coalition, but for Ennahda, it is actually the enduring ideological battle with the Salafis
that are proving to be the greatest detriment to a peaceful progress. Ennahda has been accused time and again by the conservative Salafis of being too moderate and betraying their Islamic commitments. The Salafis were outraged by Ennahda’s decision to not impose sharia law on the state, and continually provoke violent outbursts in clashes with secularists, particularly over the rights of women. The issue of veiling has been an ongoing debate in Tunisian society for several months. Manouba University experienced an attack by Salafis who thought that women should be allowed to wear the niqaab on a university campus. Studies were suspended, faculty attacked, and the deans office was even occupied for nearly a month (Maddy-Weitzman 2012 203).

The challenge the Salafis pose to Ennahda’s legitimacy began early on. In the run up to the 2011 elections, a private television station aired the movie Persepolis, which has a scene where God is depicted in human form. Thousands of Salafis organized for a Day of Rage when police entered mosques and began arresting those who were organizing the protests. The owner of the station’s house was later attacked by the angry mob, inciting secularists to also take to the streets in protection of freedom of speech. As Ennahda was often painted with the Salafi brush, they were quick to denounce the demonstrations and distance themselves from them (Zelin 2013).

Ennahda has proceeded to take a conciliatory approach to the Salafis, offering them a framework for incorporation into state norms instead of having to criticize the group directly. Ennahda wants to appease all parties by allowing Muslims to express
their faith freely, while also not appearing too close to the Salafis for the sake of their national and international credibility as a moderate representation of Islam (Al Jazeera 2011). Ghannouchi characterizes the violence of the group as a direct result of the oppression the suffered under the former regime, though the Salafis were tolerated a greater deal than Ennahda. Why does Ennahda tolerate such a blatant challenge to its authority? Based on the results of the previous election, it is unclear how many of the Salafis voted given their ambiguous relationship with Ennahda and thus their support in the proceeding elections may prove decisive (El Issawi 2012 21). Now, there are an estimated two hundred mosques under Salafi control that Ennahda has tried to downplay (Maddy-Weitzman 2012 204). The tolerant attitude Ennahda continues to take towards the increasingly radicalized Salafi attacks grows concerns for seculars and moderates.

Ennahda faces fragmentation not only amongst the Islamists but also within its own coalition government. The drafting of the new constitution has sparked public unrest in addition to the slow collapse of the seemingly capable coalition. The original draft of the constitution was scheduled to be finished by October 2012, and had since been delayed to February 2013. Arguments began over the type of government Tunisia would adopt, with Ennahda pushing for a parliamentary system that would benefit its existing electoral strength and the secular partners advocated for a mixed presidential-parliamentary system. The partners have also had trouble respecting the limits of each other’s ascribed responsibilities. In July, several key government officials resigned over disregarding political boundaries. President Marzouki began pushing for
enhanced presidential powers at one point in response to Prime Minister Jebali’s decision to extradite a former Libyan official without his notification (the president has total powers of extradition) (Maddy-Weitzman 2012 202). This was the beginning of several ministers’ resignations and debates that culminated most recently with the resignation of Prime Minister Jebali when Ennahda prevented him from installing a technocratic government (Zelin 2013). In addition, debates continue over legislative and constitutional matters such as women’s rights, and freedom of religion (Maddy-Weitzman 2012 202).

A young Tunisian man has once again set himself on fire as Adel Khedri chose to self-immolate as an act of desperation at the despairing rate of unemployment and lack of improvement since the Arab Spring. Just hours later, parliament approved the new government which made Ali Larayedhy the new Prime Minister in Jebali's place (BBC 2013). This is merely the latest in an ongoing cycle of protests and violence in Tunisia that express the discontent at the government’s lack of economic reform.

When President Marzouki when to Sidi Bou Zid rally to mark two years since the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, he was met with stone and tomato throwing and had to be evacuated by security personnel. The protesters biggest accusation was that the government had failed to improve the lives of Tunisians (BBC 2012).

Flawed as they may be, the fact that Tunisia’s institutions are established and functioning put it one step ahead of Egypt and provide and institutional forum for the expression of dissenting ideas. However, if Ennahda hopes to remain successful, it must address the foremost concern of Tunisian citizens, which is the economy and
unemployment. A policy package will not be enough as Tunisians expect to see results. The catalyst of the Arab Spring revolutions could very well be the demise of the Tunisian democratic experiment and Ennahda’s survival is dependent on marked improvement in this area.

**Falling Apart at the Seams: The Brotherhood’s Egypt**

In the months since the Egyptian elections, Egypt has fallen into a regular series of protests and chaos as the violence continues in Tahrir and adjunct areas. Egyptians are questioning the Morsi and the Brotherhood’s true intentions as a sequence of questionable actions by the ruling government has left many filled with doubt and worry. On the positive side, the new Islamist government has not fulfilled the commonly espoused prophecy of an Islamist takeover in the form of an Iranian style theocracy. Rather, Morsi, the Brotherhood and the FJP regularly avoid taking definitive positions on polarizing issues such as bans on alcohol, bikinis, and changing the role of sharia within the constitution (Kenney 2013 96).

Based solely on the words of the new President, the future for Egypt looked bright. Morsi cited five areas of problems that he pledged his administration would work to improve, including lack of security, inadequate sanitation infrastructure, traffic congestion, and shortages of bread and fuel (Kenney 2013 96). The Brotherhood platform stresses gender equality while the FJP promoted female candidates for parliamentary elections and four of the nine female members are from the FJP. The FJP leaders have also sought dialogue with foreign governments in the
hopes of improved relationships between the Brotherhood and the West (Al Anani 2012 471).

However, much like Tunisian voters, the economy weighs heavy on Egyptian minds and the lack of noticeable improvement in job creation or economic disparity leaves the masses displeased. The FJP has at least released a detailed and liberal market economic program, a surprise for Islamist parties who do not usually focus on the economy. It advocates a series of changes including cutting the deficit, adjusting subsidies, and fostering a friendly business environment for foreign investors (Hamid 2011 34). The success of the Brotherhood at the polls is not from a keen public interest in Islamist ideology but rather their perception as soldiers fighting for the ordinary Egyptian and their exclusion from regime corruption. The Brotherhood recognizes this fact and has tried to focus its efforts on the two things Egyptians care most about—good governance and economic development (Kenney 98). Also like Tunisia, Egypt relies on tourism as a main source of income and the FJP has made stated commitments to both capitalism and tourism, rejecting the notion that they might begin imposing strict social regulations that would scare away foreign visitors (Tavana 2011 565).

Yet despite all this, Egyptians remain in the streets, calling for Morsi’s removal and challenging the Brotherhood. The first move by Morsi that angered and frightened many was his declaration of total authority that was not checked by other government bodies. He declared that he was “empowered to take the necessary actions and measures to protect the country and goals of the revolution”. Institutional checks
would usually be in place to prevent such usurping of power, but Egypt’s Supreme Constitutional Court dissolved the body when it was clear that Morsi would become the new Egyptian president. They worried that an Islamist president combined with an Islamist majority in Parliament would equal an Iranian style theocracy. After being refused by the judiciaries from returning the Parliament, Morsi has conceded to uphold the dissolution decision, which only furthers the image that he is aggressively trying to expand his presidential powers. In reality, Morsi may just find that giving himself latitude to act in Egypt’s best interest is the best and only way to avoid the political infighting of a divided legislature (Masoud 2012). The dissolution of the lower house is arguably one of the greatest obstacles to Egypt’s democracy. It not only led to a rather extreme expansion of presidential powers but also removes any venue in which the various political forces can debate and work out their competing interests. Forces that should remain on the sidelines, such as the judiciary and the armed forces, have also refused to refrain from politics, obscuring the limits of executive authority (Brown 2012).

The relationship of the Brotherhood with the military has caused skepticism amongst observers from the start. The Brotherhood and the armed forces experience a mutually beneficial relationship in which the military accepts Morsi as a legitimate ruler in exchange for autonomy. So far the Brotherhood has granted the military several concessions. There is no parliamentary oversight for defense budget, the new National Defense Council is stacked with generals, and civilians can now be tried in military tribunals to name just a few. The Muslim Brothers have shown they are
willing to engage in a working relationship with the armed forces where the revolutionary forces will not. In addition, the military truly believes that FJP and the Brotherhood will continue to be electorally successful as they are the most organized and diffuse movement in the country. Even still, the military has remained outwardly neutral in the face of the recent demonstrations. This leaves the military with the option of switching its support elsewhere should a new power come to the fore (Stacher 2012).

In the most recent months, Morsi has aggressively pushed forth a constitution draft that fails to meet a national and political consensus. In March of 2011, the small committee of legal figures endowed with the responsibility of forming a system for the creation of the constitution hastily designed it in such a way that allowed any parliamentary majority to have rights over drafting its permanent version. This makes many of the smaller voices within the political system feel excluded, a group that very much needs to be included at the beginning of the transition process. While the proposed final draft does include a long list of freedoms that have less ambiguous wording in which loopholes are more difficult to find, there are still some contentions that cause concern. A primary one is lack of any decision regarding civilian oversight of the military (Brown 2012). Islamists perceive themselves as the guardians of the revolution and are therefore quick to shepherd democratic processes, primarily because they know they can win. Secularists are fragmented amongst them and much less organized, making them quick to stall any attempts that would finalize democratic procedures or new elections. As a result, secularists have taken to the streets
denouncing the proposed constitution along with Morsi, all the while threatening civil disobedience in mass quantities (Ottaway 2012). The proposed parliamentary elections, to begin April 22, have been postponed by the Supreme Administrative Court who will make its decision on March 24 (Ahram Online 2013).

On January 25 2012, Egyptians took Tahrir again to commemorate the January 25 uprisings. Police fired tear gas, birdshot, and live ammunition into the crowds killing several and injuring many. President Morsi declared martial law in response and imposed a curfew on all Egyptian citizens along with threats to do more if the opportunity called for such. The Ministry of the Interior, now known as Egypt’s Homeland Security Agency, houses all security forces and remains Egypt’s most despised institution. They have proven to be violent towards protestors, ramping up the level of suppression methods as the security establishment worries that Egyptians no longer fear it. Within Morsi’s first one hundred days in office, there were eighty-eight people tortured and thirty-four others killed in police stations. At the same time, no person connected with the new government in any way has yet been convicted (Stacher 2013).

These are just some of numerous problems currently facing the new Egyptian state. In the past few weeks, the Brotherhood has been attacked at its headquarters by youth who believe Morsi takes orders from Supreme Guide Badie, the head of the Brotherhood (Maher 2013). While the relationship between the Brothers, the FJP and Morsi remain contested, the Brotherhood has actually made strident efforts to distinguish between its religious and political activities in fear of a reaction of this
sort. The Brotherhood understands that under the watchful eye of Egyptians and international observers, former acceptable practices under authoritarian rule are no longer applicable. Former policies are interpreted as antidemocratic behaviors that challenge the espoused democratic orientation of both the Brotherhood and the FJP. Secrecy and clandestine meetings are translated as fear of public scrutiny. Absolute loyalty pledges by members are inconsistent with freedom of thought and political engagement. Management of the group by the old guard is in contradiction with the activism of its youth membership (Kenney 2013 99).

Despite all of this, according to Joshua Stacher, Egypt is not on the verge of collapse, nor is an outcome like this likely even in the face of continued violence (Stacher 2013). Egypt actually owes much of democratizing efforts to the Brotherhood. Their legacy of challenging the very authoritarian system they now appear to resemble in addition to regular election cycles might just be enough to prevent the Brothers from exploiting their current position for political gain (Kenney 2013 102). Egyptians will not tolerate Mubarakist behavior (Benstead, Lust, Malouche, Soltan and Wichmann 2013). Should the Brotherhood fail to live up to its widely used language of democracy, pluralism and open civil society, the Brotherhood will lose all legitimacy in the eyes of the very people whom they want as constituents and Islamist followers (Kenney 2013 102). In other words, the Brotherhood has a lot to lose from pursuing a rather authoritarian program and they are keenly aware of it.
The Meaning of Progress: Where does this leave Egypt and Tunisia?

The jury is still out on what exactly each of these scenarios means for the future of Egypt and Tunisia, as well as the future of its Islamists. At first glance, it is easy to claim that Tunisia is on the road to democracy while Egypt lags far behind. In fact, some argue that Egypt is simply authoritarianism in another form. “Both countries are unsatisfied with the slow pace of change, discouraged by the unmet expectations of more jobs and increase wages, and wary of lingering authoritarian political practices” according to Benstead, Lust, Malouche, Soltan and Wichmann (Benstead, Lust, Malouche, Soltan and Wichmann 2013). In fact, forty-seven percent of Tunisians and thirty-eight percent of Egyptians feel that their countries are worse than before. This, however, is not necessarily a sign of lacking faith in the Islamists. Of the 1201 Tunisians and 4080 Egyptians polled, eighty-six percent of Ennahda and eighty-four percent of Brotherhood supporters would vote for them again. No other parties even come close to retaining this level of support. The data supports the idea that perhaps in the end, it is not the ideology or religiosity of the government that truly matters, but actually the strength of state institutions (Benstead, Lust, Malouche, Soltan and Wichmann 2013).

Ennahda and its coalition government have made good on many of their campaign promises including the promise to maintain the secular policies of the Bourguiba era, protect women’s rights and include a plurality of voices in the new government. In fact, their inclusion of all voices and providing a seat at the table to even the minorities is arguably the most defining feature of their success. At this
critical stage in the transition, it is important that no groups in society are excluded, or the tension that arises from this isolation will eventually rip the fledgling democracy apart. Ennahda is struggling as it is continuously restructuring the government to maintain its coalition, but has so far maintained democratic elements. Egypt on the other hand has chosen to forego the inclusion of minority groups and will not take definitive stands on its political positions on critical issues such as minority rights. Then again, Egypt has never been called to deliver a specific policy or program because it has spent nearly eighty years learning how to appease the broadest swath of society possible without posing a legitimate challenge to the regime.

The strength of the democratic commitment in each of these states varies dramatically from one to the next. Tunisia has proved on multiple occasions that it will choose to refer to democratic and constitutional principles when administrative or policy decisions arise. The constitutional draft is still being negotiated in Tunisia and in this matter it may be that no draft is better than a forced draft, as is the case in Egypt. Egypt is another story. The executive is constantly in battle with both the SCAF and the judiciary, which greatly diminishes the executive’s legitimacy as an institution and Morsi’s legitimacy as a leader. Morsi also granted himself sweeping powers, which stirred up much protest and concern amongst domestic and international communities alike. While this move may be a strategic decision to bypass the conflicting views of the judiciary and the SCAF, his lack of clarification and a defined time period initiate anger and doubt in Egypt.
Both groups face increased contestation from the countrymen who remain dissatisfied with the state of their economies and the lack of progress. This is not a problem easily solved and may take several years before showing marked improvement. However, each group is also facing challenges to their authority. In Tunisia, Ennahda is facing the most violence from the Salafis who feel that Ennahda is too moderate in its political program and are providing security challenges by attacking Tunisian citizens and Ennahda supporters. The Salafis in Egypt are also challenging the Brotherhood’s capabilities. The difference between the Salafis in Egypt and Tunisia though, are that the Salafis in Egypt pose a much greater political option than those in Tunisia. The Salafis in Egypt came in second in the parliamentary elections and exceed the Brotherhood in numbers. The Egyptian Salafis also have a much more extensive sphere of influence in the rural areas of Egypt. Lately, the Salafis have asserted that the Brotherhood is too focused on politics at the expense of religion (Jones 2011).

It is easy to classify the ongoing chaos and instability in each of the states as a failure on the part of the newly elected Islamist governments. As Sheri Berman observes, critics are quick to interpret post transition violence, corruption, confusion and incompetence as signs that countries are not ready or incapable of democracy. This implies that other historical democratic transitions have been a smooth, direct and stable process. Looking at history, this is not so. Berman writes,

“Stable liberal democracy usually emerges only at the end of long violent struggles with many twists, turns, false starts and detours…These troubles are evidence of the difficult messy process of political development through which societies purge themselves of dictatorship and create new democratic
orders…Failed democratic experiments are usually critical positive stages in the political development of countries,” (Berman 2012).

Thus, in order for things to get better they often times, and sometimes necessarily so, get worse first. In this light, Egypt and Tunisia may very well be on their way to functioning democracies under Islamist governance. As most authoritarian regimes suppressed dissidence and prevented institutions that would create atmospheres for political discourse, it is normal that citizens in new democracies express their dissatisfactions in violent and disorganized ways (Berman 2012). The size and influence of Islamists as political forces cannot be ignored and even if they underperform in elections or in government, they will continue to play integrated roles in their respective societies. Islamists in Egypt and Tunisia will either be leading governments, or comprise a significant part of them. If they are not actively involved in the government, they will most certainly influence the course governments take (Hamid 2011 37).

Islamists have been invariably shaped by their active role in these new governments. The Brotherhood and Ennahda, as political entities, will face a new phase of development that capitalizes on their current experiences in power, just as they have learned and evolved from their years under authoritarian rule. From now on, the narrative of being the oppressed as a means of justifying political positions will no longer work. The ordeal is over, and the emerging political organizations will undergo trial by fire. The Brothers and Ennahda will be held accountable for their decisions and will quickly learn to compromise, bargain and negotiate in order to maintain support. This will inevitably lead to further change and transformation. Khalil Al
Anani notes that, “the Arab Spring is proof that Islamists, as well as Muslims more generally, are eager to build eager and accountable demonstrations, “ (Al Anani 2012 467). Islamist movements have been actively informing the public culture of the Middle East for decades and have long been, and continue to be, the best organized and most popular political movements in most Arab countries (Lynch 2012 67). Though not perfect, as rarely political transitions are, Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood are forging ahead with their political duties in the way each best knows how. Their strategies for dealing with crises and discontent will differ as much as their organizations differ.

Conclusion

Islamists have participated in authoritarian political systems for many years. However, post-Arab Spring Tunisia and Egypt represent the first time Islamist groups have been democratically elected to power in constitutionally Islamic states. It is clear from a review of Ennahda’s and the Brotherhood’s behaviors since the elections that Ennahda is more politically capable of managing the current democratic transition.

The atmosphere surrounding the Islamists ascension to power has increasingly soured as both Egyptians and Tunisians marked the first year anniversary of the uprisings without marked improvement to the economy. Yet, opening of the Tunisian public sphere has created an environment in which Tunisians no longer fear harsh reprimand for having a voice. The press and political parties have thrived in post-Ben Ali Tunisia while Ennahda has maintained its campaign promises. There were no changes to the Personal Status Code, guaranteeing women that they would continue to be protected
under the policy for the remainder of Ennahda’s term. The group refused to implement sharia, despite the fervent push of the Salafis and has struggled to preserve the fragile tri-party coalition through the drafting of the new constitution (Maddy-Weitzman 2012 200). The Brotherhood on the other hand, has faced ongoing violence and continued demonstrations in Tahrir that call for the end of the Brotherhood’s rule. Morsi and the Brotherhood government have not made a significant political opening, refuses to include pluralist voices in the critical transition process, and is facing constant challenges from all sides of the political spectrum (Shokr 2012). The Salafis now want to distinguish themselves from their moderate Brotherhood counterparts while secular opposition suspect Morsi of being under the direct influence of the Brotherhood’s most elite authorities. The judiciary and the military interject frequently into the national dialogue inhibiting an effective decision-making and implementation process at the executive level. It is based on these observations that Ennahda is deemed a success story.

Why have two ideologically similar Islamist groups chosen to manage the transition process so differently? The differentiation in political behavior stems from a long and varied development process in which each group matured in the context of very different political regimes. The Brotherhood, though faced with cycles of repression and tolerance, was ultimately allowed to participate for a majority of its existence within the confines of the authoritarian system. It learned to survive by checking its growth, so that its popularity was never allowed to get large enough to appear a threat to the regime. It also became trained in the art of ambiguity by
adopting general platforms and policies that could be adapted and molded by the ever-changing restrictions imposed by the regime. This experience bred a Brotherhood that is physically incapable of implementing specific policies, making effective decisions, and executing procedures based on a short-term time frame. They had always relied on their ambitions being “long-term goals”, which never forced them to actually put their plans into action. In stark contrast, Ennahda was forcibly excluded from the Tunisian public sphere before they ever truly had the opportunity to choose to participate or not. Their leaders continued to develop their political strategies and policies from abroad, as Ben Ali firmly controlled Tunisian political life with an iron fist. When Ennahda was able to return for the first time since the early 1990s, the quickly posited themselves to offer stability in a reeling post-Arab Spring Tunisia.

These two characteristics of each group’s history, the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood versus the political isolation of Ennahda, marks the defining features of each group’s respective political development. It is from this observation that this thesis concludes that Ennahda’s total isolation from Tunisian political life and the limits of the Ben Ali regime have allowed it to be a more effective guide of political transition, as well as overall political leader. Like the Brotherhood, Ennahda has moderated over its progression, but it has not been indoctrinated with the political survival strategy of ambiguity, appease all, and long-term planning (Brown 2012 546). Instead, Ennahda has thus far remained true to its democratic commitments, realized a pluralist cooperation and takes strategic steps in transitioning Tunisia from an authoritarian to democratic system. On the other hand, the Muslim Brothers and
Mohammed Morsi remain timid of venturing too boldly into decisive, committed action. Nathan Brown suggests,

“A movement schooled in semiauthoritarianism, one that invests in politics but does not commit may be too accustomed to caution and ambiguity to grasp any opportunity with alacrity...Such groups might also find the transition to operating in a democratic system a substantial challenge, particularly as it comes under pressure to make the kinds of ideological and organizational commitments it has long avoided” (Brown 2012 206).

The only instance the Brotherhood even attempted to “foray into specificity” it got politically burned through the accidental release of its political platform, inciting uproar across all spectrums of Egyptian citizens. This example, combined with its inclusion under semiauthoritarian politics, has created a Brotherhood fearful of commitment to any particular policy, position or legislation. Their political behavior is instead defined by broad reaching ideology that can be adapted and modified to mesh with a plurality of interests or demands.

Ennahda and the Brotherhood are simply products of the regimes in which they developed. Both faced similar rounds of tolerance and repression until Ennahda was compulsorily eradicated in all aspects of Tunisian public life. Ennahda has always positioned itself in opposition to the regime. When it saw from the Brotherhood that violent opposition led to repression, Ennahda under the leadership of Rashid Ghannouchi chose to adhere to peaceful engagement with the government for its brief existence. When Ben Ali came to power, he even allowed Ennahda to participate in elections for the first time, until they were then eradicated and forced into exile (Allani 2009 265). The Muslim Brotherhood began its extended history with its founding by a young teacher named Banna who sought to re-Islamize Egyptian society through
teaching. The group quickly took on the role as a political challenger and was summarily outlawed. For the next sixty years, the Brotherhood grew in popularity and significance as with each cycle of tolerance by the regime, it did increasingly well in elections. It emerged as the only opposition group able to pose a legitimate challenge to Mubarak’s regime.

The Brotherhood played a central role in the Egyptian Arab Spring uprisings by lending its numbers, its organizational prowess, and its experience enduring regime repression to lend vital resources and people to the demonstrations. They were careful to avoid any overtly religious saying under agreement with the other groups in Tahrir in order to portray the Tahrir uprising as an Egyptian one. Once Mubarak left however, the Brotherhood promptly forgot its agreement with the secularists and the youth and opted to make the recent political opening their launching pad. They engaged with the former regime members and the SCAF to negotiate the structure of the new Egyptian government and slowly inspired growing resentment amongst their Tahrir cohorts. Their organizational strength combined with their strict loyalty amongst members and their massive campaign canvas brought the Brotherhood to victory in the polls. Mohammed Morsi of the Freedom and Justice Party became the first democratically elected President of Egypt. Ennahda was absent during the Arab Spring. It was not until Ben Ali fled in 2011 that Ghannouchi was able to return and initiate an extensive grassroots campaign that led to its electoral victory at the polls.

Since then, Ennahda and the Brotherhood government have struggled to pacify their citizens who are discontented with the shape of their economies. Demonstrations
have returned to Tahrir and Morsi is facing increasing pressure from all sides. The SCAF has give itself far-reaching powers that severely cripple the legitimacy and capability of his new position and the judiciary intervenes in matters that also diminishes the executive’s authority. These competing interests are arguably what motivated Morsi to grant himself comprehensive powers that appeared authoritarian in nature. In response, Egyptians, particularly secularists, have renewed their suspicions of the Brotherhood’s ultimate intentions by questioning who is truly running Morsi and the FJP. Salafists have also begun to disengage from their fellow Islamists by bolstering their political agency independently of the Brotherhood’s political legacy. Ennahda too suffers from renewed discontent from the state of the economy but seems to have impressed international observers as they continue with their coalition, protect personal freedoms, and keep a firm schedule regarding the transfer of power and upcoming elections.

These are just two of the most recent examples of Islamist political participation. Islamist political participation to varying degrees can be seen throughout the region, but Egypt and Tunisia are the only two cases in which Islamists have been elected as heads of state in a democratic atmosphere. Yet, despite the logical assumption that experience would produce ability, the Muslim Brotherhood appears to be incapacitated by its uncertainty. Ennahda has never had to negotiate its political interests with the limits of an authoritarian regime and therefore feel free to act as they see fit. The inclusion-moderation hypothesis, being the primary tool of analysis by which Islamist participation is measured, proves to be of little use in this analysis. The
inclusion-moderation hypothesis simply evaluates how and why Islamist groups moderate. It argues that through inclusion of Islamist groups in the existing political system, the groups will moderate either from a pragmatic motivation or out of opportunity. It fails to extend the model further in attempts at explaining how this moderation impacts or translates into actual political behavior. The claims in this thesis seek to further nuance the inclusion-moderation hypothesis by offering an analysis of the effects of moderation on political behavior. Both Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood are considered to be moderate Islamists, but they have developed into very different political bodies. The fact that Ennahda has moderated outside of political inclusion also presents an addendum to the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. Ennahda, a group that is arguably more moderate than the Brotherhood, regulated itself in response to the brutal repression faced by the Brotherhood under Nasser more so than its very limited exposure to Tunisian politics.

Therefore, in order to study what effects moderation has on Islamist political behavior, it is necessary to look at the context within which a particular group moderated. Based on the observations in this thesis, it is clear that in the case of Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood, the political agency is direct product of the environment in which they developed. The Brotherhood was included for a majority of its being while Ennahda barred from participation. In spite of this, it is Ennahda who became the most competent at supervising a political transition to democracy. Consequently, while inclusion of Islamist groups in political systems does indeed lead to moderation, as the theory suggests, it can be argued that the resulting moderation
impedes the political behavior of these groups in a democratic or transitioning system by training Islamists to avoid specificity and retain vague political platforms. This is how Islamist groups under authoritarian rule, like the Muslim Brotherhood, learned to survive for eighty years and it will be a hard habit to break. Ennahda has the advantage of never having to reconcile its own political actions with the interests of a despotic regime and therefore is free to act of its own accord without fearing repercussion.

**Closing Words: A Look Towards the Future**

What does all this mean for the future of Tunisia and Egypt? In spite of all their challenges, the continued chaos facing Ennahda and the Brotherhood does not yet signify failure. The current confusion, particularly in Egypt, is a necessary condition of transition that any scholar of democratic transition can corroborate. Nearly every case of democratic transition, particularly in the West, reiterates the fact that democracy is almost always accompanied by violence and disorganization (Berman 2013). Despite the role of Ennahda and the Brotherhood in the future, it is undeniable that any government to come will have to include Islamists in some capacity. Religious organizations were often one of the only channels for responding to popular grievances and will remain critical avenues of expressing dissent in the future. Though they suffer criticism now, it is reasonable to assume that the complaints have less to do with the Islamist nature of the ruling parties, but rather the lack of progress seen on the ground. Any party currently in charge, whether secular, liberal, Salafi, or other, would probably face similar grievances. For now, it can be taken as a step in the right
direction that these protests are even public debate. The absence of public contention is one of the first signs of a regress into authoritarian rule. As Sheri Berman points out, “failed democratic experiments are usually critical positive stage in the political development of countries” (Berman 2013). Ennahda and the Brotherhood are both forging new political frontiers. Their continued experimentation is just as good as any other governing bodies would do in their situation. They are the most capable organizations within their states and Ennahda and the Brotherhood might surprise yet again.

References


Http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43456/1/After%20the%20Arab%20Spring


