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THE BOSTON COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE MIDDLE EASTERN AND ISLAMIC STUDIES JOURNAL



# Islam in Modern Turkey

Government Transitions | Charles Glass | History of Salafism



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*Al-Noor*, The Boston College Undergraduate Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Journal, aims to: ◆ Facilitate a nonpartisan, unbiased conversation within the Boston College community and beyond about the Middle East. ◆ Provide a medium for students to publish research on the Middle East and Islam. ◆ Promote diverse opinions and present a comprehensive view of the myriad of cultures, histories, and perspectives that comprise the Middle East. ◆ Be considerate of the complexity of the region while pursuing the utmost objectivity.

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#### LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear all,

Given recent events, the need to deepen our cultural, social, political, and religious understandings of the Middle East and North Africa has become increasingly apparent. With each semester's call for submissions, we have been delighted and impressed to see the amount and quality of such work being done by students across the world. The fact that we are able to consistently produce two issues of Al-Noor a year speaks greatly to the hard work and passion of our writers as they pursue research in these areas, and we are extremely grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm. In this issue, we would especially like to thank our writers—Dana Saraco, Kristen Swarts, and Fatima Mohie-Eldin—for their superb articles.

Dana Saraco's *Institutional Power Vacuum* compares two cases of democratic transition, Libya and Tunisia, in North Africa since the Arab Spring, one failing and the other fledgling. Saraco discusses the domestic factors that laid the framework for transition after these countries' leaders were forced to leave office. In particular, she examines the presence, or lack thereof, of three key civil society institutions: political parties, labor unions, and an independent military.

In *The Battle against HIV/AIDS*, Kristen Swarts looks specifically at Morocco as an emblem of progressive public policies that address the social and healthcare issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. Morocco has transformed from a history of minimal recognition of this public health issue, which is too often the case among Middle Eastern governments, to an example of how to control the spread of the virus while also fighting the stigmatization of it.

Fatima Mohie-Eldin addresses a nuanced topic as more and more groups and political parties identify as *salafiyya*. What does it mean to be Salafi? In *The Evolution of Salafism*, Mohie-Eldin speaks about the various beliefs and branches of Salafism, exploring

how they have diverged and converged in interesting ways throughout history and the present.

Additionally, please enjoy this semester's photo essay, which was taken by one of the Editors-in-Chief of Al-Noor, Tate Krasner. Krasner captured these moments in May during a visit to Istanbul. There, he witnessed large protests campaigning to reconvert the Hagia Sophia to a working mosque.

In October, we sat down with reporter Charles Glass to discuss what he had seen on his most recent trip to Syria. Glass offers thought-provoking insights into the current conflicts in the region, and his direct experience helps clear up misconceptions and misunderstandings of the ongoing civil war.

In closing, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all who made our time with Al-Noor as rewarding and enjoyable as it has been. We have developed great friendships during our four years working on the journal, ones that we plan to keep for years to come. We cannot express enough how grateful we are for our support from those in the Center for Centers, the Institute for Liberal Arts, and the Islamic Civilizations and Societies Program, without whom Al-Noor would not be possible.

Lastly, in much the same way that our good friend and mentor Paul Davey led us to take the helm of Al-Noor last year, we cannot wait to see the innovation that the next Editors-in-Chief, Catherine Cole and Hagop Toghramadjian, will surely bring as they take the lead at the journal for the upcoming year.

As always, comments, questions, and suggestions are welcome at eic@alnoorjournal.org.

Tate Krasner '16 Sean Sudol '16

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

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# Reporting from Syria AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES GLASS

*Al-Noor Staff* 

espite holding citizenship

in both the US and the UK, Charles Glass is more than willing to criticize the governments of these countries in what he sees as extreme failures in their Middle East policy. With years of reporting from the region, he has gained significant expertise about the Middle East and the forces that move it, and he, therefore, feels more than confident to make this assessment. Given that Glass has been on the ground in the Middle East during some of the most dangerous periods of its contemporary history, we, and Western policymakers, can gain valuable insight by giving him the space to describe the region as he sees it today. The interview that follows does just that.

Charles Glass was born in Los Angeles, California in 1951. He earned his bachelor of arts degree in philosophy from the University of Southern California in 1972 and proceeded to graduate studies at the American University of Beirut. He began

his journalistic career there in the ABC News Bureau with Peter Jennings. He was the ABC News Chief for the Middle East from 1983 to 1993.

During this time, Glass conducted what would become his most famous news story, an interview with the hostage crew of TWA flight 847 at Beirut Airport. He broke the news that the hijackers had moved the hostages, which caused the Reagan administration to abort a rescue attempt. In the following year, Glass was held hostage in Lebanon for two months. The experience is recorded in one of his books, Tribes with Flags.

He has served under numerous media outlets, including CNN, Harper's magazine, The Independent, the London Review of Books, Newsweek, and the Observer. His freelance pieces have appeared in these and additionally, The Guardian, TIME magazine, The Daily, Rolling Stone, and the London Magazine. He has two books published on World War II, and his other works on the Middle East include The Tribes Triumphant, The Northern Front, and most recently Syria Burning.

At the time of this interview in October 2015, Glass had just returned from reporting in Syria and had published "In the Syrian Deadlands" with the New York Review of Books.

With the emulation effects of the Arab Spring and the momentum that seems to have been building towards civil war, how much influence could the United States have had during these early stages of the civil war in Syria?

Glass: Many people took hope from the successful revolution in Tunisia, but it wasn't violent. The revolution that brought Mubarak down, though it turned into a bit of a fiasco later, was also not violent. You talk to the activists in Damascus, they were begging their comrades not to bring weapons to the demonstrations, and someone was supplying them with weapons. Somebody helped turn that violent. I say that some Syrians wanted to, but they were a very small minority because they'd already seen what violence did to Iraq and Lebanon. They felt that the regime couldn't deal with general strikes and massive demonstrations and that it would have to give because it didn't have mechanisms for dealing with that. They had mechanisms for dealing with violence. They dealt with the Muslim Brotherhood uprising in 1982 by destroying half the city of Hama. They knew how to deal with attempted military coups because throughout the 1950s and 60s, they made themselves coup proof. What they didn't know how to deal with, because they had never had it before, was the sort of street demonstrations in Cairo and Tunis, and that's why most of the activists in Damascus, almost all of whom have now been put in prison or have fled the country because there is no place for them and they're not welcome amongst the jihadists, were arguing for something else. They were arguing for democracy and free speech. The jihadists are not arguing for democracy and free speech. They're arguing for another totalitarian system now, but a non-secular one. So I think the Arab Spring did inspire those people originally. The US and those who wanted to get rid of the Syrian regime, even at the risk of violence and destroying the country, helped to turn that uprising into a violent civil war. That's my view, and I could be wrong, but that's how it seems to me.

In Iraq, did you find that there is a willingness to contemplate partition?

Glass: People talk about it, but no one's got a plan and drawing new borders would cause another war. Between the Kurdish regional government and the Baghdad government area there's a thick line called "the disputed territories," which will be left for future

You talk to the activists in Damascus, they were begging their comrades not to bring weapons to the demonstrations, and someone was supplying them with weapons."

negotiation if there's going to be a referendum on independence for Kurdistan. The Kurds control most of those areas down, but the Baghdad government does not want them to, and as a result of many of the Kurdish activities – partly taking Kirkuk, partly doing oil deals with international oil companies over the head of Baghdad - Baghdad has now cut the seventeen percent of its oil wealth that it was sending to Kurdistan to pay its civil servants completely. The Kurds now have not been paid since July. And the Peshmergas, who were the strongest force fighting ISIS, have also not been paid since July. Because of this morale is very low in Kurdistan and the once buoyant economy is now suffering greatly. It's not a good time to discuss the formalization of partition because no one's going to be able to cope with it. No one's ready for it now. In the distant future, perhaps.

How much support does Assad maintain in Damascus and greater Syria?

Glass: Sixty-five percent of Syrians are Sunni Arabs. If they had all opposed Assad, he would have been out in twenty-four hours. They didn't. They didn't necessarily love him, but the system was never meant to elevate the Alawis to a ruling class. A few people from their immediate family benefited enormously. If you go to the Alawi areas now, they're the poorest areas in the country. People don't have running water in their houses. They're mostly farmers with two acres. They themselves have not been elevated. The Sunni middle class in Damascus and Aleppo benefited enormously from the Assad regime, so they were intelligent enough to spread the wealth. Those people still feel they would get a better deal from him than the Islamic State because they want their daughters to go to school. They want to have a normal life. It is true that they want to have more freedom. They'd love to read a newspaper that doesn't have Assad's picture on the front page everyday. They'd love the sort of normal things that the rest of the world has, but even without those, they don't want what they see in Raqqa. People flee Raqqa to Damascus when they can, and they tell horror stories about what is going on there. So even if those Sunnis aren't fully supporting Assad, they're not fighting against him and that's enough for him.

When you were in Damascus, did you sense any tension from the Syrian regime in regards to outside actors, such as the Iranian Quds Forces and Hezbollah, being able to dictate course?

Glass: Not from the regime so much as ordinary people. A lot of Sunnis in Damascus and Aleppo resent the Iranian-ization of the country. They see it as Shi'a-ization. There was a time when some of the Iranians tried to convert Sunnis, which was a huge mistake, like the Christian missionaries of came in the 19th century who also tried to convert. It doesn't work, but it created a lot of resentment, and that resentment is increasing. A lot of the Iraqi Shi'a fighters and Hazaras who have come with their families have been put in flats in Damascus. And this has led to some resentment as well; Sunnis feel that they're being displaced. And these Sunnis, who live in Damascus by the way, they haven't deposed the regime. They don't like the regime but they haven't fought against it. In a way, they welcome the Russian intervention as a counterbalance to this Iranian-ization because the Russians don't have any religious agenda. And they think that if the Russians are running things, they're not going to try and drive Sunnis out. So in a way it's helping the regime with its Sunnis who have not opposed it yet.

Do you think that the Iran nuclear deal has had any effect on Syria, on Iraq, or any part of situation in the Middle East?

Glass: Well, so far, no. In theory, there was a prospect for the US to say, 'We and the Iranians have a common enemy, we can coordinate.' Instead, they have coordination with the Iraqi army, which coordinates with Iran. So there's an indirect coordination. IS is a very serious military force, it's not a joke. They fight better than the Iraqi army. They fight better than the Syrian army. To defeat ISIS, all these nations should coordinate but they're not. And that didn't come out of the nuclear deal—they've always said that nuclear negotiations are a separate issue, other things can be discussed or not. But the deal doesn't lead to a good relationship; it just means that that problem is solved, or put aside at least.

What has the Syrian civil war done for not only the political position of Hezbollah in Lebanon, but also its strategic and military ambitions in the region?

Glass: Well, they've lost a lot of men. I know that. It's also made them very unpopular with the other sects in Lebanon. It's helped Amal, another Lebanese Shi'ite party, to come back and achieve a little bit of independence from Hezbollah because many feel feel that Amal represents more Shiites, although they're corrupt. But Hezbollah is still a powerful force. They're still the kingmakers in Lebanon. They're still preventing a president from being chosen. They've paralyzed the Lebanese state.

How do you assess Putin's intentions to play a role not only in Syria but possibly in Iraq as well? What might the ramifications of that be for the US position, both in Iraq and Syria?

Glass: Well, while I was in Baghdad, there was a Russian military delegation meeting with the Ministry of Defense. They're already coordinating their confrontation with IS. They feel that the American policy in confronting IS has failed. Clearly, it has. They have not supplied, for example, the Peshmergas with any weapons at all. The Peshmergas are down to very few bullets. They have no tanks. They have no heavy artillery. They are completely abandoned on American airstrikes, which are rather difficult to predict. The Americans are doing very little close-air support for the Peshmerga infantry. They're doing some with the popular militias in the South. They seem to be giving more support to the popular missions in the South than they are to the Kurds. I think that shows a slight incoherence in Washington's policy on whether they're really serious about defeating IS. If Washington were serious, they would be doing more like what the Russians are doing: a lot of close air support for the Syrian army, the Iranian forces, the Hezbollah forces, the Iraqi Shiites who've come to Syria to take back the countryside around Aleppo and Hama. This is just in the last two weeks. Russia has become more involved because it is committed to its only client state in the Middle East. If you look at the map of the Middle East, from Morocco and Mauritania all the way to the borders of Iran, every country is an American client state except one, Syria. So there's no way that Putin was going to dump his only ally in the region, lose all credibility in the region, give up his only naval base outside the old Soviet Union, just to please the United States. Because he's committed to Assad, and Assad was losing two months ago - Assad had lost all of Idlib province, he'd lost Palmyra, things were getting very bad in Daraa again, and the countryside around Homs was narrowing around the city. If Putin didn't do what he's doing now, he could have lost him, and he doesn't want to lose him. Moving into Iraq, if he can have good relations with Iraq and pick up on this anti-American sentiment amongst Iraqis, he could conceivably have two client states, Iraq and Syria. Both are impressive and corrupt, but so are all of America's client states, so the Middle East is used to it.

Can you speak more to the current role of Turkey in the Syrian civil war?

Glass: The Turks have kept the border open for IS and Jabhat al-Nusra. The Turks still permit weapons and men to come in and wounded fighters to come out. They have done nothing to close it while saying they're fighting a war against ISIS with the United States. But they're not. In fact, they haven't done anything against ISIS. They've been enabling ISIS. And one of the many reasons is that they fear Kurdish nationalism, and they don't want to see a Kurdish autonomous zone in Syria like the Kurdish autonomous zone in Iraq. That would be a second example of a successful autonomous Kurdish area, which is what they don't want in Turkey. Look, the reason they killed all the Armenians was that they were afraid of an Armenian partition in 1915 in the six provinces where there were lots of Armenians. And Turkey has good historical reasons to fear partition. Because minorities on the fringes of the country, with European connivance and help, seized their independence in the 19th century, they have a strong sense that they don't want to lose any more of their country. I understand that.

Can you speak about the reported human rights abuses by Kurdish forces in Iraq and Syria?

Glass: It's a mixed picture, both in Rojava and in the Kurdish regional government of Iraq. The Kurds have

taken in Arab refugees from other parts of Iraq and other parts of Syria. And they have also destroyed Arab villages, because those, in the Iraqi part, are villages in the disputed territories, and they are also people that were put there by Saddam, 30 to 40 years ago. The Kurds feel the Arabs have no right to be there and so they're not letting them live there. So there has been ethnic cleansing of that kind, but there are also camps in Kurdish Iraq where Arabs are living because they're afraid to live under IS. In Syria, it's an equally mixed picture, some Arabs are with the Kurds and some are against them. The Kurds were not originally setting out to drive Arabs out. They were glad to have them stay. Also a place like Qamishli was a Christian town before the Kurds were there. But the Christians

Charles Glass. Christian Solidarity International USA.

have now left because they're afraid of ISIS, and the Kurds are going to have some kind of independence no matter what the outcome of the war, I suspect that Kurdish autonomy will stay. But whether it will be an ethnically cleansed region or not, I don't know.

What are the prospects that, if a political solution were achieved, refugees would be willing to return to their country and its rebuilding effort?

Glass: Well, I would think that most of those in camps - in Jordan and Turkey - will want to come back, or will be forced back, and the ones in Lebanon will probably come back as well. The ones who've gone to Europe and made good lives probably won't come back. They're obviously the most educated and the ones who could make the most contribution, but if they've made lives in Europe, why would they go back? The same thing happened after the Lebanese Civil War. Some of the best people never returned.

Do you think that Syrian refugees who are religious minorities will be able to or will want to return to Syria?

Glass: I can't say. I would hope that a kind of Syria would emerge from this that would allow them to return and would want them to return. There is one example I can think of. There's a village in northern Syria called Kessab, which is an Armenian village. It's the only all-Armenian village in Syria. It's a beautiful place in the mountains and very alpine. In March of last year, Turkey opened the border to Jabhat al-Nusra and other Islamist organizations coming to occupy Kessab, so the inhabitants fled to Latakia. The Armenian lobby in the United States went full throttle, accusing the jihadists of massacring Armenians, destroying the village, and so forth, which got members of Congress galvanized. There are a lot of Armenian votes in certain key states. The US then put some pressure on the Turks to get them out, and they did. The Turks reopened the border, allowed the Islamists to leave, and the Syrian Army came back. By the way, there was no massacre at Kessab. That was all propaganda, but 80 percent of the people came back and rebuilt their houses, so that shows that it can be done. They are right now living in a very precarious state because they're only a mile

from the Turkish border. The Islamists could in theory come back any day. I think the Turks won't want that problem with the US and the Armenian lobby again, so they might not allow them. There is a willingness among minorities to come back where they were born, where their ancestors were buried, where their churches are, where their schools are, where their communities are. Ideally, they would go back, and, before this war, they weren't leaving in great numbers anyway, but what there will be to go back to in the long run I don't know. If it becomes a Wahhabi state, no one's going to go back. No minorities will go back.

How has reporting become more challenging in the Middle East since you began?

Glass: It's always been a challenge. It's always a challenge to get to know people and understand what's happening and to determine what's worth reporting and what's worth ignoring. I don't think that's changed very much. We make the same mistakes that we always did, and try to recover. You know, it's always been a troubled region. It's been a troubled region throughout history, but particularly in the history since the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and the imposition of artificial boundaries that were never acceptable to the local populations.

Have changing political conditions in the last two decades, such as the proliferation of terrorism, made reporting more challenging than it was?

Glass: Well, it can be physically more threatening because of the kidnappings, but remember that we had kidnappings in Lebanon in the 80's. I'm a victim of one of them, so I know. But now, if you're kidnapped, your chances of survival are much less than they were when Hezbollah took me. Hezbollah let most of its hostages go, or they escaped, but they did not behead them. Now, the Islamic State beheads people or drowns them or burns them alive or any number of things. So it's more frightening. In Lebanon during the civil war, many journalists were still able to go almost everywhere, even at the risk of kidnappings, and cover the story. Now, it's almost impossible to cover both sides of the war in Syria and Iraq. You can cover the Syrian government side, the Iraqi government

side, the Kurdish side, but it's almost impossible to go there as a Westerner and cover the Islamic State and get their point of view, which one should do to have comprehensive reporting, but not at the risk of ninety-nine percent certainty that you'll have your head cut off. There was a German journalist who spent ten days with the Islamic State, and he did some very good reports - very enlightening. VICE News had a Palestinian cameraman who went there for a month and made a brilliant film called "Islamic State." It's worth seeing and gives a great insight into what they're doing in Raqqa and how they behave and what they think. That's a very important part of the story, but getting that is too much a risk for me to take anymore.

How is the media, particularly from the West, influencing Western governments' policies in Syria?

Glass: I think it's the other way around. I think that most of the media have followed Western policy, and have regurgitated the American, British, French, Saudi narrative of what is happening in Syria. That narrative is that there was a brutal dictator. The people rose up, fought against them. He suppressed them, they got stronger, and the war is going back and forth. And now there are some elements in the opposition that look a little disagreeable, but the overall priority is to get rid of this brutal dictator. But if you back up a little bit and look across the Middle East, all the countries have brutal dictators. Why this one? Why was it so important to get rid of this one? Well, the reasons are obvious. He had a strategic alliance with Iran. He's close to the Russians. For those reasons, he had to go. The Saudis were much more brutal than Assad. They tortured far more people, beheaded people, crucified people, but nobody is talking about getting rid of the government. There is not even a civil society movement in Saudi Arabia that is able to contemplate staging a demonstration against them. So, we have to understand that from the very beginning, the Western narrative was false, and that the media followed the government on this. Assad was a problem because he was close to Iran and he supported Hezbollah, which gave Israel a hell of a beating in 2006 and which drove Israel out of south Lebanon in 2000. They were too big for themselves, and the way of diminishing them was to cut their bridge to Iran through Syria. It has

nothing to do with democracy or belief in democracy.

In terms of covering the refugee crisis that has stemmed from this conflict, how have the European and Middle Eastern government responses differed? And what are the discrepancies, if any, in the media coverage for these responses?

Glass: Well what's fascinating is that the countries that are doing the least to take in these people are the ones who did the most to displace them. The Saudis have not taken in a single Syrian refugee. The British are talking about taking in 10,000 over so many years. The French won't take in any. The Americans won't take in any. The Germans who had nothing to do with this policy are going to take in 300,000. There's something very strange here. The Saudis armed this revolution, which allowed the war to take place, but they won't help the people. They're not even giving money to the refugees in the camps. The Kuwaitis were, but again, they weren't involved. This is really brutal hypocrisy and realpolitik, and I don't see this reflected in much of the mainstream reporting. The focus on the refugee crisis should be on Lebanon, which has taken in one and a half million, and Turkey, which has taken in the same number, or Jordan, which has taken in over one million. That's where the needs are, and many people are leaving those camps because the UN can't get enough donations to feed them. And again, that's disgraceful. Saudi Arabia has plenty of money they could give to these people, but they don't. And we have another refugee crisis that has been in place since 1948, the Palestinian refugee crisis, about which no one does anything.

Where do you think the average American should turn to get reliable news about the Middle East?

Glass: Some of the best reporting I've seen has been in The Independent by Patrick Cockburn. Patrick's reporting has been really good, and he wrote an excellent book about ISIS. I would turn to him. There have been some very good reports on Vice News, some very excellent reports on the strategic balance in the region by The Intercept. There was some really great reporting from Syria and Iraq from Anthony Shadid in The New York Times when he was alive. His loss

will be very greatly felt. I'm sad for him but also for his readers that they don't have the benefit of his eye.

Taking a step back, what are the most critical trends you've witnessed while covering the Middle East? What are your biggest takeaways for how the region is developing?

Glass: The failure of Arab nationalism and socialism to achieve any of their goals and the ideological vacuum that left for political Islam to fill—I think that's been the major development of the last forty years in the region. There is the continuing struggle of the Palestinians for independence, which doesn't seem to be going anywhere since its beginnings. With the ghettoization of the Middle East into sectarian enclaves, many of these enclaves have disappeared, since the late nineteenth century, but this has certainly been accelerated in my lifetime. I think in Iran there are only ninety thousand Zoroastrians left. So few Christians left in Palestine because they were driven out by the Israelis, partly because it's easier for them to get visas and their lives are intolerable and also not encouraged to stay by the Islamists. Many Yazidis are now facing extinction. This loss of a cultural mosaic for a region that was wonderful because of that mosaic, because of these differences and the different types of people you could encounter very short distances from each other and who benefitted from the mix of their cultures and outlooks and the tolerance that they once had for their beliefs—that's all being lost.

Where do you see the region going in the future?

Glass: Down.

## Institutional Power Vacuum

PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRATIC RULE IN TUNISIA AND LIBYA

## Dana Saraco

Dana Saraco, of Elkins Park, PA, graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude from Saint Joseph's University in 2015 with a B.A. in English and Political Science. Her research interests include the role of domestic institutions in Libya and Tunisia, focusing specifically on labor unions, political parties, and the military in each country. Throughout her time at St. Joseph's, Dana had several internships at both domestic and international nonprofits. Currently, Dana works for a market research and consulting firm in Philadelphia.

eginning in Tunisia in December of 2010, the Arab world experienced uprisings and protests against authoritarian regimes during the Arab Spring. As a result of these protests, Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was forced to flee to Saudi Arabia in January of 2011 after over twenty years in power. Similarly, in August of 2011, the dictator Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown after over forty years of rule in Libya. Libyans and Tunisians, along with the rest of the world, celebrated these downfalls and hoped for a peaceful transition to a democratic system. Yet, today, Libya is far from a functioning liberal democracy; the country has been plagued by violence, and a stable government has failed to take hold. Tunisia, on the other hand, emerged from the Arab Spring with promising steps towards a peaceful democracy. Why has democracy failed in Libya thus far, in contrast to Tunisia's success? How has Gaddafi's legacy continued to

affect Libyan politics and civil society today, hindering the transition to democracy? And lastly, how can policymakers work to assist Libya in achieving this transition to democracy and ending the violence?

Scholars have long debated the conditions that allow a country to transition to democracy after a revolution. These answers can be broken down into four major schools of thought. The first school of thought argues that strong economies naturally lead to democracy. A second area of research asserts that cultural factors are most relevant to assuring the success of democracy. A third group of scholars, who focus on the role of international forces, emphasizes the effects that these actors can have on promoting or hindering democracy. Finally, a fourth school of thought claims that strong domestic institutions are the most important factor for a successful transition to democracy. This fourth school of thought is the most compelling argument in the cases of Libya and Tunisia: Tunisia's crucial institutions are strong whereas Libya's are practically nonexistent and thus impeded its transition.

To test the idea that domestic institutions are most important to democratic success, Libya and Tunisia will be used in a comparative case study. In this way, Gaddafi's legacy of creating an institutional power vacuum in Libya will be analyzed in comparison to Libya's neighbor, Tunisia, which came out of the uprisings with more societal building blocks for democracy, despite the two countries having a similar economic and cultural makeup. The main domestic institutions of each country will be analyzed, in particular the roles of political parties, labor unions, and the military.

Ultimately, this research indicates that Tunisia outperformed Libya in the strength of domestic institutions: political parties, labor unions, and the military. Additionally, Tunisia exhibited a slightly higher level of democracy than Libya, though Tunisia is still struggling to create a democratic system. Cultural disunity was a major contributing factor to the failure of these institutions and the consequent failure to achieve democracy in Libya. Therefore, while weak domestic institutions have certainly been a major factor in Libya's difficult transition to democracy, they also reflect problems of cultural disunity in Libya. Policymakers will need to

consider both of these issues moving forward in Libya, Tunisia, and other former authoritarian states as they continue to work towards democracy.

## The Effects of Institutions on Transitioning to Democracy

The transition to democracy is mostly dependent upon the influence of certain types of domestic institutions. If a country lacks strong institutions due to the domination of a single leader, it will have a more difficult time in transitioning to democracy because there is no institutional base to use as a foundation for the new government after revolution. In the case of Libya, Gaddafi controlled every aspect of society and ruled the country for over forty years. There was no space for civil institutions to operate, which hindered the country's transition to democracy. Tunisia, on the other hand, had stronger domestic institutions before the revolution.

The type of existing domestic institutions in a country affects its ability of democratic transition after a revolution. If a country does not have certain types of domestic institutions, including political parties, labor unions, and a functioning military, then it is more difficult for a country to transition to democracy. In Libya, there were no domestic institutions to carry over into the new regime because of Gaddafi's consolidation of power and control. Therefore, in the struggle to create a new, democratic country, there are no in-place structures to aid this process. Tunisia, conversely, had structures in place for political parties and national labor unions.

### Evaluating the Impact of Domestic Institutions in Transitioning to Democracy in Libya and Tunisia

The presence of certain types of domestic institutions has been crucial in aiding the transition to democracy in Libya, as well as in neighboring Tunisia; in fact, it is the most pressing condition to assure the success of democracy. These countries provide variation on the dependent variable, as Tunisia has successfully transitioned to democracy after dictator Ben Ali was removed from power after over twenty years, though this process has not been ideal. Libya,



The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, which includes the Tunisian General Labor Union and other civil society leaders, was honored with the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize. © STR/epa/Corbis

on the other hand, has plunged into chaos. Of all of the countries that experienced protests during the Arab Spring and attempts to install a democratic government, Tunisia has been most successful and provides the strongest contrast to Libya. Culturally, the two countries are very comparable. Both Tunisia and Libya are relatively ethnically homogeneous, and Sunni Islam is the dominant religion in both countries. Some argue that the presence of various minority groups in Libya, especially the Berbers, has created more discord than in Tunisia. It is difficult, though, to find specific data on the presence of these groups because many Berbers identify as ethnically Arab and many Libyans are of mixed ancestry. While the oppression of the minority groups is certainly problematic, it is also reflective of a lack of institutions that protect minorities in Libya.

The causal factor in democratic transition, the presence of certain types of domestic institutions, is studied here using three indicators: the role of political parties, the role of labor unions, and the role of an independent military. In assessing the role of political parties, I will examine parliamentary elections held in Libya and Tunisia, paying special attention to the organization of oppositional parties and their success in elections. I will employ similar methods for identifying the other two factors, the role of labor unions and that of an independent military, by consulting media sources and secondary research related to these topics. To evaluate democracy, I will utilize ratings and analysis from well-respected democracy-monitoring organizations like Freedom House and Amnesty International.

Together, these three indicators discussed above will allow me to gauge the types and influence of important domestic institutions in Libya and Tunisia. If there are legitimate, oppositional political parties who are given a fair voice in elections, developed and active labor unions, and the utilization of the military independent of the regime, domestic

institutions functioned correctly and played a vital role in democratic transitions. If there are problems with the legitimacy of any of these indicators, there are overall problems with the role of domestic institutions in these nations.

## Institutions in Libya and Tunisia

In an examination of the role of the three most important domestic institutions, Tunisia has outperformed Libya in every area for several reasons. Tunisia has clearly defined political parties, which achieve majority and minority roles in parliamentary elections, while Libya has no history of political parties and most candidates run as independents. The Tunisian General Labor Union is a large organization with major political clout in Tunisia since its inception, while there are no functioning labor unions in Libya. Finally, in Tunisia the military saw itself as an independent institution. It did not take control of the transition to democracy nor did it inhibit this process. In Libya the military, deeply fragmented since Gaddafi's removal, has made no meaningful contributions towards democracy and instead has contributed to the country's disintegration.

The first indicator of the strength of domestic institutions is the role of political parties. Libya has several major political parties, including Al-Watan Party, Justice and Construction Party, National Front, National Forces Alliance, and Union for the Homeland. However, during Libya's most recent parliamentary election in June of 2014, "candidates contested parliamentary seats as individuals a decision taken to reduce tensions" and ran independent of their political parties, signifying the weakened role of political parties in Libya. Additionally, the election saw low voter turnout and was undermined by various security issues.<sup>2</sup> The previous election in 2012, the first after Gaddafi's removal, featured more than 100 parties. Because political parties were banned under Gaddafi, many of these formed only months before the election. In this election, only 80 seats out of 200 were reserved for political parties, leaving the rest for independents.<sup>3</sup> These proportions indicate not only a weak system of oppositional political parties, but also a diminished role for political parties in general.

In Tunisia political parties are much better defined. Tunisia's secularist party, Nidaa Tounes, won 85 seats in the country's 217-seat parliament in October of 2014, while the Islamist party Ennahda won 69 seats.4 These clearly defined oppositional political parties were able to form a functioning parliamentary government without significant public unrest or security concerns. Furthermore, the 2014 election was a peaceful transition from the previous 2011 elections, in which Ennahda won 90 seats.<sup>5</sup> Tunisia's history of active political parties dates back decades. For example, the Ennahda party was founded in 1981, banned by former-President Ben Ali in 1992, and regained legal status in March of 2011.6 Nidaa Tounes, which formed in 2013, retains "strong support among the public administration and the Tunisian elites." Ultimately, there is more trust and popular support of political parties in Tunisia than in Libya.

The strength of labor unions is a second important indicator of the role of domestic institutions. While "in the mid-1980s, there were some 275,000 members belonging to 18 trade unions, which together formed the Tripoli-based National Trade Union Federation," these "groups did not have a real political role similar to that such groups play in the Western tradition," largely because Gaddafi firmly opposed labor unions.8 There is no evidence that Libyan labor unions have ever played a significant role, and it is very unlikely that they will gain political power during the current period of civil unrest.

Founded in 1946, the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) has been an influential organization in Tunisia since its beginning and continues to be a prominent political pressure group today. The UGTT is composed of over 600,000 members, nearly 75% more members than Libya's National Trade Union Federation, and is seen as "one of the most powerful political and economic forces in Tunisia."<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the UGTT has acted as a strong mediator between political parties during Tunisia's ongoing transition to democracy. In 2013, it played a large role in pressuring the majority Ennahda party to reach a deal in creating a new government. While the UGTT is seen as more aligned with the secular opposition, it has played an important role in pressuring both sides to work together.

The final indicator of the strength of domestic

# "In Tunisia the military recognized its role in the new regime and eased the transition to democracy."

institutions is the role of the military. Libya's military is "in transition" with the "government attempting to staff a new national army with anti-Gaddafi militia fighters and former members of Gaddafi's military."11 Conversely, in Tunisia, the military is well structured with a clearly defined composition between the Tunisian Army, Tunisian Navy, and Tunisian Air Force. 12 The Libyan military, no longer under the direct control of Gaddafi, was too fragmented to serve as a legitimate institution. As Gause writes, "In both Libya and Yemen, units led by the rulers' families have supported the regimes, while other units have defected to the opposition, stayed on the sidelines, or just gone home."13 Anderson echoes this sentiment, stating: "Libyan society has been fractured, and every national institution, including the military, is divided by the cleavages of kinship and region."14 This fragmentation of the military reflects the disintegration of society as a whole in Libya and the inability of the military to play any role in the country's democratic transition.

In Tunisia the military recognized its role in the new regime and eased the transition to democracy. The military was not an extension of the regime, viewing itself as an independent institution. As Gause states, "Both the Egyptian and the Tunisian armies are relatively professional, with neither serving as the personal instrument of the ruler. Army leaders in both nations realized that their institutions could play an important role under new regimes and thus were willing to risk ushering out the old guard." Anderson, while agreeing that the military did not stand in the way, sees virtually no role for the Tunisian military at all. She states, "the military has not participated meaningfully in managing the transition period and is unlikely to shape the ultimate outcome in any significant way."16 The military, then, while unified, has not taken an active role in the transition to democracy in either Libya or Tunisia. The difference between these cases is that the Tunisian military has not stood in the way of democracy, while the Libyan military has hindered the movement towards democracy by

contributing to the ongoing fragmentation of society, thus hindering movement towards democracy.

## Democracy in Libya and Tunisia: A Comparison

Tunisia clearly ranks much higher than Libya in regards to the three main domestic institutions: political parties, labor unions, and the military. However, the data collected from different sources do not indicate a completely direct correlation between these domestic institutions and successful transition to democracy.

Freedom House offers both a quantitative value of democracy and an analysis of various aspects of liberal democracies. The table shows the "freedom rating" for both Libya and Tunisia from 2010 to 2014. The "freedom rating" is ranked on a scale of one to seven, with one being "most free" and seven being "least free."

Democracy in Libya and Tunisia, 2010-2014		
Year	Libya	Tunisia
2010	7	6
2011	7	6
2012	6.5	3.5
2013	4.5	3.5
2014	4.5	3
Freedom House, Libya and Tunisia, 2014.		

As shown, there is a noticeable difference in democracy levels in Libya and Tunisia. The greatest difference comes in 2012, the year following the revolutions, when Libya only dropped 0.5 points and Tunisia dropped 2.5 points. Interestingly, both Libya and Tunisia have progressively trended towards democracy since the revolutions. Tunisia's total drop was 3 points, while Libya's was 2.5. The two countries have progressed relatively similar towards democracy.

There were a number of positive developments in Libya's politics in 2014 that contributed to its surprising progress. In particular, the rise of citizen journalism, the creation of new print outlets, and the dramatic increase in the freedom of assembly were major contributors to Libya's middleground freedom rating. Though Freedom House has acknowledged that both journalists and protesters have been targets of violence, the organization sees their expansion and involvement in spite of the violence as a very positive sign. Additionally, Freedom House characterized the 2012 parliamentary election as "generally free and fair." Thus, while repeatedly pointing out continued problems of violence and corruption, Freedom House has also identified areas in which Libya is succeeding, thus contributing to their higher-than-expected freedom rating.

In contrast to Freedom House, Amnesty International is much more critical of Libya. This is because the organization focuses on different areas than Freedom House; rather than political and civil liberties, Amnesty International focuses on specific human rights violations. In Libya, these include arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, armed confrontations, poor treatment of migrants, problems with impunity, the use of the death penalty, and extrajudicial killings. In areas of overlap with Freedom House, such as freedoms of expression and assembly, Amnesty International sees the violence against these groups and the press as a much greater issue that prohibits progress. Many of these individuals "faced threats, intimidation, harassment and detention, leading to self-censorship."18

Amnesty International is also critical of Tunisia. The organization lists transitional justice, torture, limits on freedom of expression, and the use of the death penalty in Tunisia as problematic. However, Libya and Tunisia's analyses differ in that Amnesty International is more critical of oppressive laws than of the amount of violence in the country. Though there are mentions of violent incidents in Tunisia, much more emphasis is placed on restrictive government actions. They write, "despite their stated commitment to respect freedom of expression, the authorities took action against journalists, artists, bloggers and critics using articles 121(3) and 226 of the Penal Code, which criminalize expression

deemed to threaten public order, public morals or sacred values." Several violators of this code were imprisoned. While imprisonment might be an improvement over the brutal violence seen in Libya, it indicates that Tunisia has not yet fully transitioned to democracy, therefore, performing only marginally better than Libya.

The sources utilized above do indicate that Tunisia is more democratic than Libya. However, this difference in performance is not as great as the hypothesis would expect. Both countries have greatly struggled in their respective transitions to democracy, and while Tunisia may have a more promising future, there does not exist a definite or significant positive difference in the country's transition.

## A New Perspective on Libya's and Tunisia's Transitions

Since Ben Ali's removal from Tunisia in 2011, Tunisia has shown promising steps towards democracy, though it has struggled. Since Gaddafi's removal from power in Libya in 2011, Libya has faced a challenging transition to a democratic system, plagued by violence and inadequate governance. Scholars and policymakers have struggled to understand what has gone wrong in Libya and what must be done to put the country back on a path towards democracy. The importance of strong domestic institutions offers a valubale explanations as to why Libya has failed to transition to democracy thus far.

In a comparative case study of Libya and Tunisia, Tunisia outperformed Libya in three major indicators of the role of domestic institutions: political parties, labor unions, and the military. This performance correlates with the widespread belief that Tunisia has witnessed the more successful transition to democracy out of all of the Arab Spring countries, greatly outperforming neighboring Libya. However, an analysis of democracy in practice in both countries showed that Tunisia is only marginally outperforming Libya, which has made great strides since 2011. While groups like Freedom House and Amnesty International differ on the level of democracy in each country, both are in agreement that the two countries still face serious obstacles in their transitions to

democracy.

Further research into these two countries' transitions should take into account two aspects: the cultural disunity that affected Libya's transition and a more nuanced investigation democracy and civil society in each country. In Libya, disunity has stymied progress for key democratic institutions; thus, these two issues go hand-in-hand. Tunisia is less culturally fragmented, and it is less impacted by extreme Islamic groups. Additionally, further analysis is needed to determine exactly how well democracy is functioning in the two countries. Though the future of each country remains very uncertain, one thing is clear: the transformation of an institutional power vacuum to a democracy is not an easy task.

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## A Tale of Two Countries

PROTESTS AT THE HAGIA SOPHIA—A PHOTO ESSAY

## Tate Krasner

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In May 2015, protesters descended upon Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, calling for the UNESCO World Heritage site to be opened for Muslim worship. Constructed in the sixth century, the Hagia Sophia served as a Byzantine cathedral until the Ottoman takeover in 1453, at which point it became a mosque. Following the creation of the Republic of Turkey, secular leaders converted the mosque into its current state as a public museum. This contrasts with the other famous place of worship in Istanbul, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, which is featured on the cover of this issue and is more commonly known as the Blue Mosque. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque has remained a functioning place of Muslim worship since its construction. The protest over the future of the Hagia Sophia was representative of a larger divide in Turkey between the country's secularists and Islamists, a divide which has been growing in recent years and which is just one part of the larger debate occurring today among Muslims throughout the world on the role of Islam in society.



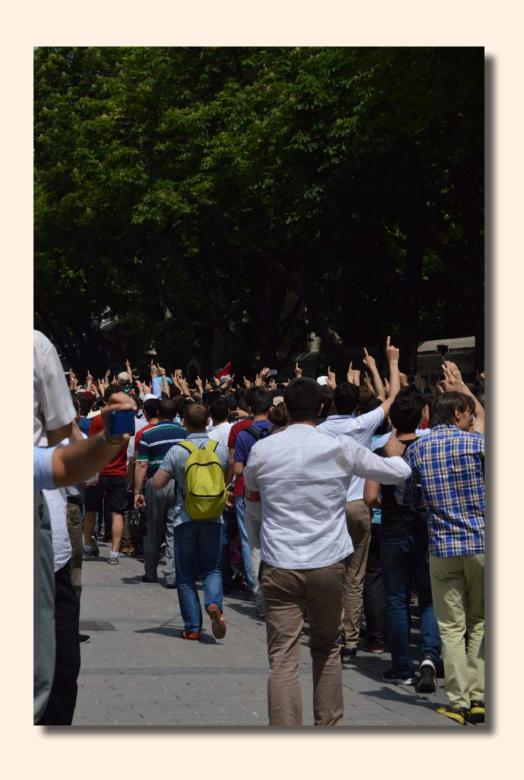












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# The Battle against HIV/AIDS

STIGMATIZATION AND GOVERNMENT POLICY IN MOROCCO

## Kristine Swarts

Kristine Swarts was a member of the Class of 2015 in the Dietrich College at Carnegie Mellon University, where she majored in Global Studies and History. Currently Kristine is studying at Leiden University in the Netherlands for her masters in Middle Eastern Studies. She hopes to continue for her doctorate in the United States after graduation. Her research interests include Arab-American identity, American and Middle Eastern relations, American history, and Arabic.

ith the first identified case in

1981 in the United States of America, the human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV) and the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) became an increasing problem because of denial, stigmatization, and inaction. In the 1980s, HIV/AIDS was a death sentence for any who had it. Today, while treatments have improved, HIV/AIDS remains a serious social epidemic. Misconceptions, particularly that homosexuals or prostitutes are the only groups affected, have contributed to an increase of HIV/AIDS cases throughout the world. Many forgo testing because they do not fit into these stigmatized categories and they do not believe it is possible for them to have HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, people with HIV/AIDS are discriminated against in the workplace, education system, and government services.

NGOs and governments alike have battled these social problems by expanding HIV/AIDS education and improving the lives of affected populations. Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries, however, have approached HIV/AIDS differently. Even though these countries, which comprise 5% of the world's population, represent only 1% of the world cases, the region has experienced an increase of HIV/AIDS cases. Governments in these countries have not acknowledged the issue or monitored high-risk groups. Public discourse in the Middle East rarely addresses sexual health issues, exempting governments from taking action.

Compared to other MENA countries, Morocco has taken a promising approach. Since the 1990s, the Moroccan government, in conjunction with NGOs, has worked to battle the stigmatization of HIV/AIDS. This is largely due to political, cultural, and economic changes during this decade, such as improved relations with the West and the role of a new monarch. Morocco is an example of a MENA country that has reduced the stigmatizations of people with HIV/AIDS.

While many reports focus on the spread of HIV/AIDS in Morocco, none emphasize the social context of the disease. Furthermore, none explain why Morocco implemented changes in the early 1990s, or why it was one of the first countries in the MENA region to do so. This paper will provide an integrated approach of detailing Morocco's history, political systems, and culture in regards to HIV/AIDS, detailing when, how, and why Morocco changed.

# HIV/AIDS and Stigmatization

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a retrovirus that can infect humans and is responsible for causing the condition known as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). HIV attacks T-cells and CD4 cells in a body, destroying them and replacing them with copies of itself. Eventually, HIV destroys so many of the CD4 cells that the body can no longer fight infections. This leads to AIDS, the final stage of HIV infection. People at this stage have damaged immune systems, putting

them at a higher risk of opportunist infections. Such infections normally have a minor effect on the human body, but are deadly in a person with such a low CD4 cell count. Because HIV is found in bodily fluids, it is most often transferred through sexual contact, childbirth/breastfeeding, injected drug use, and blood transfusions. Of the two variations of the virus, HIV-2 evolves more slowly than HIV-1 and is less transmissible. This is the kind prevalent in most countries of the world, though HIV-1 is more common in Morocco.2

HIV/AIDS is less prevalent in the MENA region than in the rest of the world with only 480,000 cases. This is compared to the most affected regions, sub-Saharan Africa at 25 million cases and South-Southeast Asia at 6.5 million cases.3 Scholars have linked the low prevalence to behaviors associated with Islamic culture. Middle Eastern society condemns high-risk behaviors, such as injected drug use, prostitution, multiple sexual partners, and male-to-male sex.4 In 2009, Moroccan women reported low levels of risky behavior, with only 20% reporting to have had more than one sexual partner and only 3% more than three partners. Of this, only 2% have reported having non-spousal relations.5 Moreover, studies have linked male circumcision, which is practices in Islamic culture, to low HIV/AIDS rates.6

Although HIV/AIDS is not an epidemic in the MENA region, the spread of the virus has the potential to accelerate and should not be ignored. In 2004, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS estimated that there were 200,000 to 1.4 million actual cases in the MENA region. The uncertainty comes from a lack of testing practices and HIV/AIDS studies in the countries.7 Yet HIV/ AIDS continues to be a debilitating health risk, with 24,000 to 46,000 infected in 2008 alone.8 In the early phases of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, many in this region denied the magnitude of HIV/AIDS, considering it a low priority compared to other crises in housing, employment, and education.9 Other countries continue to show a substantial inability to identify high-risk groups and to debate HIV/AIDS policy.<sup>10</sup>

Changing cultural practices and population

movement may also contribute to the rise of an epidemic of HIV/AIDS in the MENA region. Premarital sex among youth has become more prevalent, which may have adverse effects because of a lack of HIV/AIDS education.<sup>11</sup> There has also been an increase in drug use, which presents another means of transmission. Studies have shown that sexually transmitted infections (STI) are also at a high, meaning practices have been changing while education has not. War, migration, and displacement have also caused a significant population movement in MENA, which may increase exposure of populations throughout the region to HIV/AIDS.<sup>12</sup>

One of the biggest hindrances to battling the global HIV/AIDS situation is stigmatization. Stigmatization is the severe stereotyping of a group or individual person on social characteristics that distinguish them from other members of society. In Erving Goffman's highly influential *Stigma*: *Notes* of the Management of Social Identity, Goffman analyzes the idea of stigmatization and provides an understanding of what it means to be "normal" and the "other." 13 He elaborates on how people conceal their true identities to remain in the category of "normal." Additionally, Goffman argues that stigma pertains to the shame one may feel when belonging to the "other." He asserts, "Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories."14 A person who is stigmatized is reduced in the mind of the "other."15

HIV/AIDS stigmatization comes from preexisting fears of disease. Early HIV/AIDS metaphors—death, horror, and punishment—have exacerbated these fears and contributed to their perceived legitimacy. 16 People also link HIV/AIDS to sexual stigmas because a sexual minority—namely gay men—was initially affected. HIV/AIDS is also associated with gender, race, and class. 17 Further, different cultures extend their existing stigmas to incorporate HIV/AIDS. Such examples include HIV/AIDS being perceived as a women's disease in some places and as a "gay" disease in others. 18 Stigmatization and discrimination also affect

populations in a legal context. In some countries, affected persons have no right to anonymity and are subject to compulsory testing. In schools and workplaces, those who are HIV positive can be victims of harassment and even undeserved unemployment. More often than not, society blames the victim for contracting the disease.<sup>19</sup>

HIV/AIDS stigmatization is much more pronounced in the MENA region because of traditional cultural, societal, and religious beliefs. Since illicit sexual activity is already socially castigated, contracting the disease from such acts is highly detrimental to one's reputation.<sup>20</sup> Some contemporary theological texts even label HIV as a divine punishment, only expediting stigmatization.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, certain behaviors associated with the contraction of HIV/AIDS are illegal. Homosexual intercourse, for example, is illegal in all MENA countries except Jordan, and in many countries, such activities are punishable by the death penalty.

Stigmatization leads to complications and misinformation. For conservatives and fundamentalists, the only acceptable solution to HIV/AIDS is abstinence.<sup>22</sup> Testing only comes from screening for migration or for blood transfusions.<sup>23</sup> Some governments, including Morocco's, have tried to increase condom usage as a tool for preventing an epidemic; however, conservative groups have criticized the government for allegedly applying Western practices and ignoring that they are a country of Islamic values.<sup>24</sup> In their belief, because contraception is not explicitly addressed in the Qur'an, Islam prohibits it. However, the substantial decline of the fertility rate in Morocco since the 1970s contradicts this assumption that Islam is incompatible with reproductive healthcare.<sup>25</sup> Even then, condom usage is still low because of a lack of education on the prevention and contraction of HIV/AIDS.

# Why Morocco Changed

Morocco, as noted earlier, went through a series of changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including a push for more human rights and a campaign against the spread and stigmatization

of HIV/AIDS. By 1994, Morocco's government discussed HIV/AIDS publically for the first time, making Morocco one of the earliest Islamic countries to begin this conversation.<sup>26</sup> Morocco's shift came about because of major changes in the country's politics and society. Furthermore, Morocco was and continues to be a leader in the battle against HIV/AIDS in the MENA region because of access to substantial foreign funding.

Morocco's government is an authoritarian constitutional monarchy tightly linked to Islam. The king, as the commander of the people because of his prophetic lineage, has a monopoly on the state. Most importantly, he can mobilize Islamic communities.<sup>27</sup> Moroccan politics, as well, have a tradition of both exclusion and inclusion.<sup>28</sup> In the 1980s, Morocco's government was very repressive. This repression resulted in the formation of numerous political parties and movements. Namely, political Islam gained prevalence during this period and continued to rise into the 1990s.<sup>29</sup>

By the 1990s, many Moroccans began to view this repression as ineffective. During this time, King Hassan II accepted that Morocco needed urgent reform, as Morocco's economy was in shambles, there was a lack of human rights, and the 1990 December riots in Fes were the third violent mobilization in a short period.<sup>30</sup> In 1992, King Hassan opened up the political system to more political parties. The constitutional reform of 1992 also gave a vote of confidence by parliament that the government had to be held accountable and answer for its actions.31 During 1996-1997, he also legalized the Islamic party, Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD, Party of Justice and Development)—a party arguably similar to the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>32</sup>

In 1999, with the election of the new king, King Mohammed VI, King Hassan's changes were accelerated even admitting to problems persisting despite all of the work for human rights. As a representative of a new generation, King Mohammed, the "King of the Poor," introduced many changes in Morocco.<sup>33</sup> King Mohammed focused heavily on fixing human rights and even supported a socialist prime minister. King Mohammed worked

to limit the monarchy, giving more democracy to the people. He even reinvigorated the Conseil de la Jeunesse and the Conseil Consultatif de Droits de l'homme (Council of the Youth and the Council for Human Rights).<sup>34</sup> By 2002, the first relatively free elections were held in Morocco, though there were many absentee ballots and no mainstream parties won a majority.35

Social changes are another reason Morocco moved towards battling HIV/AIDS much earlier than other MENA nations. Morocco's identity is a mixture of Islam, Arab, Berber, Jew, and European culture.36 Furthermore, Moroccans view their country to be far more Western than other Muslim nations as it continues to have major French and Spanish influences. However, because of its connection to the West, Morocco also received considerable pressure to improve human rights in the country. Morocco's record for human rights from 1970 to the 1990s was very poor due to problems including political prisoners and prolonged detention.<sup>37</sup> Morocco faced criticism when the United Nations and France began chastising the country and withholding some financial aid because of its human rights violations.<sup>38</sup> In 1990, "Temps du Maroc" (Time of Morocco), was published promoting French-Moroccan relations. It became a rallying point for human rights organizations in Morocco, as many Moroccans viewed this connection with France as a means to push for more Western human rights in Morocco.<sup>39</sup> Morocco found itself in a huge human rights scandal in 1990. Gallimard, a major French publishing house, published Giller Perrault's expose on the Moroccan government causing a crisis for France and Morocco. Notre Ami: Le Roi (Our Love: The King) criticized France heavily for turning a blind eye to the human rights violations in Morocco.<sup>40</sup> Because of these scandals, Morocco improved its human rights along with its political changes. Though there is little to suggest that Morocco made these changes in the early 1990s voluntarily, these changes began the process of Morocco's improved response to HIV/AIDS.

Overall, Morocco changed earlier than most MENA countries to battle HIV/AIDS for a few

reasons. For one, Morocco went through major political shifts during this period. The government opened in 1992 after a period of repression. A new, more modern king came to power in 1999. Both of these resulted in improving human rights in Morocco. Furthermore, Morocco went through a scandal with France resulting in many countries pushing Morocco to improve human rights there. Morocco also had the ability to change because of foreign aid from many nations. With its connection to the West, Morocco has been one of the few countries to receive financial aid from the United Nation and United States to battle HIV/AIDS. Because of these three things, Morocco is a unique country in the MENA region in its campaign to fight HIV/AIDS during the twenty-first century.

### Moroccan Plans, 2000s

Morocco was one of the earliest MENA countries to have a national strategy to combat the spread and stigmatization of HIV/AIDS. Much of the success and innovativeness of the policy comes from the work of civil society and the government.

By 2002, the Moroccan government developed a national plan to control HIV/AIDS in the general population.<sup>41</sup> The 2002-2004 National Strategy Plan for Morocco implemented through GFATM (The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria) with \$4.74 million in support of this

plan. This plan facilitated the development of Morocco's national response to HIV/AIDS from 2005 onwards. <sup>42</sup> Some of this came from UNAIDS announcing in 2001 that ART should be given to all in need. <sup>43</sup> Morocco has also led the MENA region by holding two substantial HIV/AIDS awareness conferences, one as early as 1999: International Symposium on HIV, Leukemia, and Opportunistic Cancers and the 5th French-Speaking Conference about AIDS in 2010. <sup>44</sup>

As of 2010, the Moroccan government developed a new plan with a new communication strategy with HIV/AIDS information in television and radio commercials,

at summer festivals, and through art and movie projects. The government has placed HIV/AIDS awareness in the religious sphere by training imams and continues to reach youth through sports and education programs. The government in particular focused on IDU use and worked with high risk communities. 45 They conducted an assessment of IDU use in Morocco and developed harm-reduction policies and integrated them into the national strategic plan, such as with its safe drop centers for used needles. 46 Furthermore, the government has updated hospitals, particularly CHU Hassan II in Fes, to improve conditions for Moroccans and has placed information systems for managements of ART in the best hospitals. Moreover, the government has developed programs to improve the mental well being of people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>47</sup> The government also worked to combat HIV/AIDS at some of its major sources by helping to end violence against women and fighting against poverty and gender inequality. It has created a day of awareness to battle stigmatization and discrimination as a means to protect people living with HIV/ AIDS. 48 Lastly, there have been outreach programs for MSM as of 2010, giving them condoms, information about prevention services, and accompanying them to VCTs.49

Morocco's current national strategic plan, created in 2012 and to be implemented through 2016, shows even more progress to combating HIV/



Family planning brochures in El Kelaa des M'Gouna. © John & Lisa Merrill/Corbis

AIDS. The plan's goal is to "educate [the] general population, use [the] Internet so people know where to get tested, promote testing areas, supply rapid tests, [and] make more places to get tested."50 This plan is of high priority because the government recognizes that there may be an extremely high rate of undiagnosed HIV/AIDS cases.<sup>51</sup> It calls to develop programs for youth and women in vulnerable situations, a plan for social marketing of condoms, and the creation of thirty new testing centers. The goal is to reach 80% of those needing treatment and reduce HIV/AIDS cases 50% by 2016.52 UNAIDS considers Morocco's plan as a model for the MENA region in terms of progress for treatment and prevention in the fight against HIV/AIDS.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, in 2012, Morocco took part in the World Day Against AIDS with the "Aim: Zero" goal of having no new infections.

In 2014, the Moroccan government reaffirmed "solemnly its strong commitment to promoting the rule of law, respect for human rights and is committed to work for their consolidation, both nationally and internationally" as well as its commitment to multilateralism in being "respectful of the rules and principles of international law in the context of the United Nations." Furthermore, Morocco improved human rights by reforming the Family Code of 2001 to empower women, creating a new constitution giving citizens more rights, and launching a National Initiative for Human Development in 2005.54 In 2014 Morocco updated its strategic plan in accordance with recommendations from UNAIDS. By the end of 2015 the plan hopes to reduce the modes of transmission by 50% to youth and women, reduce the modes of transmission to IDU by 50%, end mother-tochild transmission, and fight stigmatization and discrimination.55

#### Conclusion

Morocco is a leader in the Middle East and North Africa region in the battle against the stigmatization and spread of HIV/AIDS. Morocco was one of the earliest countries in the MENA region to begin combating HIV/AIDS. Many of

the reasons why Morocco did this were a result of major changes in Morocco's politics and society. Also, Morocco had the ability to change because of economic help from foreign nations. Morocco has made major strides in improving the HIV/ AIDS situation in hopes that it will not become an epidemic. While Morocco still has a long way to go, the national strategic plans show promise of a better life in Morocco for people living with HIV/ AIDS and promise of improved education programs for the general population.

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# The Evolution of Salafism

A HISTORY OF SALAFI DOCTRINE

# Fatima Mohie-Eldin

Fatima Mohie-Eldin recently graduated from Boston University's Pardee School of Global Studies in its inaugural year. She received her Bachelor's degree in International Relations with a regional focus on the Middle East. Spurred by family ties, she has long held special interests in understanding the political and social structures of Egypt and Turkey in particular and, resultingly, wrote her bachelor's thesis on the politicization of Salafist organizations in Egypt during her final year at BU. Fatima hopes to continue her research in graduate school next year and pursue her interests in identity, religion, politics, and human rights.

has existed for centuries, varying doctrinal and dogmatic contributions from different scholars have produced diverse interpretations over time. It is therefore important to distinguish where this term originates and who can rightfully be referred to as Salafis. "For decades, a majority of Scholars in the West…and self-proclaimed Salafi activists in the Muslim world, conceived of *salafiyya* as an enlightened reform movement aimed at the revival and progress of Islam." This view emanated from the modernist reform movement initiated by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who sought to bolster Muslim societies through Pan-Islamic unity in response to European colonialism. To achieve this end, Afghani advocated that Muslims engage in personal re-interpretation (*ijtihad*) rather than rely on the interpretations of Islamic jurists (*fuqaha*).

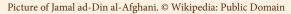
Today, however, Salafism is understood by many as "a strict and puritanical branch of Islam...developed as an outgrowth of the ideas of Muhammad Bin 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792)"<sup>2</sup> that adheres to a strict understanding of God's oneness (tawhid) that is of central importance and a rigid scope of acceptable Islamic practices. However, only considering these two branches truncates and divides the true history of Salafism, which includes the contributions of Afghani, the modernists, and the Wahhabis, but traces its origins even further back.

## Salafiyya: Terminology and Creed

At its root the term salafiyya derives from the Arabic word salaf, literally meaning "past" and is understood in Islam in its Qur'anic context. "This term initially signified the pious forefathers (al-salaf al-salih) who represented the first three generations of Muslims," who not only witnessed "the rise of Islam but also applied the Prophetic model as the correct way of life." This period begins with the Prophet Muhammad's first revelation and is believed to end around 855 C.E., the time of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal's death. Ibn Hanbal was a Muslim theologian after whom the rigorist Hanbali School of jurisprudence (figh) is named. Salaf therefore came to connote the earliest and most accurate version of Islam.

Some of the first uses of the term al-Salafiyya date to the writings of the late 13th and early 14th century Islamic jurist Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328 C.E.). Taymiyya's writings are considered seminal to the development of the Salafi movement, with much inspiration taken from Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. Having witnessed the conquests of both the Mongols and the Mamluks in the Muslim world, Ibn Taymiyya became concerned with "purging Islamic beliefs of what he consider[ed] heresies [and] also protecting the unity of the ummah."4 He even went so far as to suggest that it was within the power of the ummah to revolt if the ruler went against a command of God or the prophet.<sup>5</sup> He therefore used his writings as a medium for establishing what he believed to be the proper path of Islam and the correct method for Muslims to declare and practice their faith. For instance a *fatwa* issued by Ibn Taymiyya, entitled al-Fatawa al-kubra, stated that "the way of the Salaf is to interpret literally the Qur'anic verses and hadiths that relate to the Divine attributes...without indicating modality and without attributing to Him [God] anthropomorphic qualities."6

However, Henri Lauzière marks a division in historical and contemporary understandings of the term al-Salafiyya in this context, noting that Ibn Taymiyya likely used this expression to refer to a group of Salafis rather than an ideological perspective encompassing both law and theology.<sup>7</sup> In this way, one could both follow the *salaf* in creed and still adhere to the jurisprudence of





any *madhab*, or school of law; this is evidenced by several Shafi'i jurists, contemporaries of Ibn Taymiyya, who "conformed to the *salaf* in creed."<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, Ibn Taymiyya and several of his most prominent students, including Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, al-Dhahabi, and Ibn Kathir, "were [distinctly] loyal to the Hanbali law school."9 As theologians, Ibn Taymiyya and his students exercised their personal reinterpretation when they felt it was necessary, so as not to blindly accept another's reasoning without personal understanding, though they still practiced a strict reading of the Qur'an and hadith.10 As Islamic scholars and theologians, these men held deep and complex understandings of Islamic texts and were thus better equipped than the majority of the Muslim population to engage in *ijtihad*, particularly at a time when religious texts were not easily accessible to the masses. This tension between choosing to practice ijtihad or blind imitation (taglid) remains a somewhat vague topic among Salafis today due to conflicting appeals made among Salafi scholars that were never resolved.

In addition to the aforementioned belief that Muslims must return to the authentic practices and beliefs of the pious ancestors, Ibn Taymiyya's writings on creed ('aqida) aided the development of basic tenets that would come to form the foundation of a global Salafi movement. Later doctrines included a particular conception of tawhid that is divided into three categories: the Oneness of Lordship (tawhid al-rububiyya), the Oneness of Godship (tawhid al-uluhiyya), and the Oneness of the Names and Attributes (tawhid alasma' wa-l-sifat). These terms, likely coined by Ibn Taymiyya, imply respectively that God's status as the Lord of all creation must be recognized and attributed only to God, that all worship must be directed only towards God, and that God's Names should be understood exactly as they are presented in the Qur'an without metaphorical interpretation.

Additionally, Salafism from the beginning sought to counter unbelief in all forms (*shirk*), to proclaim the Qur'an and Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad as the only valid sources of religious authority, to rid Islamic societies of all reprehensible innovations (*bida*'), and to advise only a strict and literal interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadith*. These core principles ultimately stemmed from Ibn Taymiyya's desire to purify Islam by ridding the faith of all heretical accretions and establishing guidelines for future generations to avoid the same acquisition of profane practices.

To this day, Salafis continue the purging efforts initiated by Ibn Taymiyya and remain alert to any heresies. "The strictness of the Salafi 'aqida can probably be seen at its clearest in the concept of al-wala' wa-l-bara (loyalty and disavowal)," referring "to the undivided loyalty (wala') Muslims should show to God, Islam and their co-religionists over all other things...and the disavowal (bara') they must show" to non-Muslim accretions, such as Judeo-Christian influences in religious practices.12 Over time this concept developed a broader meaning in Salafi rhetoric, imploring Muslims to reject anything deemed un-Islamic and thereby become a measure by which people are determined to be "true" Muslims. For instance, Salafis have denounced Shiites as infidels for rejecting the first three caliphs before Ali ibn Abi Talib, and have condemned Sufis for their practices of saint veneration and shrine worship, which is considered blasphemous by Salafis. This narrow interpretation of "proper" Islam has led some to criticize the Salafis for being too literal and anthropomorphizing God, but it more deeply reflects the yearning for doctrinal purity at the heart of Salafism.

In regards to law, Salafis have maintained different positions over the years stemming from Ibn Taymiyya's initial split between remaining loyal to the Hanbali School and applying ijtihad

"To this day, Salafis continue the purging efforts initiated by Ibn Taymiyya and remain alert to any heresies." when necessary. Similarly, modern Salafis remain divided between following the Hanbali madhab or rejecting taglid and promoting ijtihad. Ibn Taymiyya himself never argued "that taqlid was... unacceptable for the common man" and merely highlighted the necessity of the use of *ijtihad* for a qualified *mujtahid*, such as himself.<sup>13</sup> However, "his student and devoted follower, Ibn al-Qayvim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350), not only stressed the importance of ijtihad for a qualified scholar, but also argued that ordinary Muslims should be liberated from the taglid of the four schools of law."14

Later scholars would further argue this point in both directions such as Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabism, who promoted adherence to the exegesis of the Hanbali school, and Nasir al-Din al-Albani who challenged Abd al-Wahhab's position by rejecting taglid in favor of investigating the evidence for legal reasoning. The two positions created a balance between completely blind adherence and personal interpretation of Islamic sources without proper training. "Salafis are thus a heterogeneous group but they [still] share the desire to cleanse the Islamic creed ('aqida) as well as its strict method of application to the sacred texts, worship and everyday life (manhaj) of all forms of historical, cultural and non-Islamic influence, which they consider religious innovations (bida')."15

#### Evolution of the Salafi Movement: Branches and Manhaj

The Salafi movement further evolved into a lasting tradition under the auspices of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Born in 1703 in Najd, part of modern-day Saudi Arabia, Abd al-Wahhab was surrounded by deviant animistic and Sufi practices during his adolescence and therefore "set out to unify the population and purge the holy land of all reprehensible innovations," inspired by both Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya. 16 He utilized the categorizations of tawhid (the Oneness of Lordship, Godship, and the Names and Attributes) and designated the Oneness of Godship (tawhid al*uluhiyya*), or the oneness of the object of worship,

as the most central category of Oneness and therefore the most theologically significant.<sup>17</sup>

By establishing a protection pact with Muhammad Ibn Saud, chief of the Saud family and ruler of the city al-Dir'iya, Abd al-Wahhab started a campaign to unite the peoples of the Hejaz under his ideology. Mostly concerned with theological questions, Abd al-Wahhab viewed "figh (jurisprudence) [as] secondary to his doctrine," as evidenced by his continued reliance on the exegesis of Hanbalism, which ultimately bypassed ijtihad and extracted a very literal interpretation of the sacred texts.18 In effect, while vocally promoting ijtihad, the practice was an adherence to taglid of the Hanbali School. This created a struggle for Wahhabists who adopted the core dogma of Wahhabism but wanted to employ their own religious interpretations.

Nasir al-Din al-Albani would address this tension in many of his writings while teaching in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s, prompting the formation of a new branch of Salafist thought. In the early 1950s, al-Albani, who was living in Syria at the time, became well-known for his extensive knowledge of the hadith and was offered a teaching position at the University of Medina. While there, al-Albani challenged the Wahhabi religious establishment, and by extension the foundational notion of Salafism, through his "call for an ijithad outside the framework of the established schools of law," which "compromised the authority of the Wahhabi 'ulama," the traditional clergy.<sup>19</sup>

However, since Ibn Taymiyya's writings also promoted the notion of ijtihad, al-Albani's position also established him as a thinker in line with Salafist theology. Although he was eventually forced to leave Saudi Arabia in 1963 as a result of his unorthodox views, he was later able to return as a member of the High Council of the Islamic University of Medina. His ideas made a lasting impact in the Kingdom, encouraging "a vast revival of interest in studying the *hadith* and its authenticity," which challenged the authority of the *ulama* by questioning the authenticity of *had*ith recited by members of the ulama as justifications for their legal reasoning.<sup>20</sup> Al-Albani even

claimed that "Abd al-Wahhab was salafi in creed ('aqida), but not in law (fiqh)" as he "did not know the hadith well." In the 1980s, the Sahwa opposition movement, which blended Wahhabi piety with the political activism of the Muslim Brothers, emerged in Saudi Arabia as a direct challenge to state authority. This not only made al-Albani's approach a much more appealing alternative for the regime to support, but also highlighted the divisive interpretations to Salafism.

These internal tensions have given rise to three branches or schools of Salafism: 1) the quietest, 2) the activist (haraki), and 3) the jihadist branches, which have adopted different approaches to the question of how to engage in politics, if at all. The quietest school stems from the teachings of al-Albani and is also known as the scientific school (al-Salafiyya al-Ilmiyya) for its focus on education, rather than political participation to promote a properly Islamic way of life. This is in contrast with the activist school, which encourages political activism to reform society "as a means to defend Islam and Muslims from secularization and Westernization."22 The third school, known as Salafi-jihadi, is the most extreme, advocating "violence as a means of change in Muslim society, in favor of reestablishing the Caliphate."23 These schools may be viewed as static and separate branches of thought, however it is important to note also that their foundational creed ('aqida) remains the same. They make clear that Salafi organizations may change or evolve over time in response to changing political landscapes.

Accordingly, each school also ascribes to a different path for maintaining theological views in daily life (manhaj). For al-Albani and the followers of the quietest school, the manhaj consists of rejecting any form of political participation and even affiliation with any group that can lead to division among Muslims and is therefore inexcusable. The Salafi activists (harakis) advocate nonviolent political activism as their manhaj, deriving from the belief that political participation is needed on the part of Islamists to protect God's Divine governance. Lastly, the manhaj for the jihadi-Salafis is the violent overthrow of existing

political establishments in order to pave the way for a new caliphate, in part arising from the writings of Sayyid Qutb.

### Salafi Doctrine

Within the multi-ethnic and multi-religious environment of the vast Islamic Empire, during both the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates, human reason came to shape intellectual life through exposure to Persian and Greco-Roman intellectual texts. Soon thereafter, "rationalist" schools of Islamic thought began to emerge, challenging the traditional approaches of the *ulama*. Worried that reliance on human reason to interpret the Qur'an could yield, rebellion or strife (fitna) among the Muslim community, members of the ulama denounced this rationalist approach. In reaction to this rising reliance on rationality the ulama then "asserted that a return to the pristine purity of Islam of...al-salaf al-salih, was paramount to salvage the Muslim community from the heretical intellectual vise of foreign influences."24

Among the religious scholars advocating this purification of Islam was Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (780-855 C.E.), a leading authority on the *hadith*. He pushed for Muslims to refrain from "speculative theology," and claimed that "there is nothing to be said [about God or Islam] other than what is in God's Book [Qur'an], traditions of His messenger or those of his companions and their followers," effectively elucidating a rough outline for what would later become more specifically elaborated upon as Salafism.25 The designation of Ahl al-Hadith became an expression of doctrinal significance, notably marking the Qur'an, Sunna (the customs and practices of the Prophet), and hadith (the collected sayings of the Prophet) as the only valid sources of Islamic instruction. This title also became a marker of distinction from the Islamic philosophers who came to be known as Ahl al-Ra'y (partisans of opinion).

Although there was a clear epistemological tension between these two groups, the main point of contention between jurists like Ibn Hanbal and the rationalist Islamic philosophers dealt with

issues of social regulation and by extension governance, centered around different understandings of the role of the intellect. For instance, according to the Islamic philosophers, *Ahl al-Ra'y*, the intellect is an essence bestowed from above, which translated to all of society implies that "authority [the ruler] is the 'aql (intellect) of society," whereas the *Ahl al-Hadith*, regard the intellect as an instinct, completely internal to both a person and a society, meaning that social authority in turn naturally comes from within the society.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the fact that the first written appearances of the term Salafiyya seen in the writings of Ibn Taymiyya implied a more general understanding of pure Islamic belief and practice, the term gradually gained a variety of doctrinal views between the late 18th century and continuing until the 20th century, by self-proclaimed Salafist thinkers ranging from the modernist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, to the militant Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, albeit within different contexts. It was around this time that the idea of Islamism more generally emerged as an ideology, and within this broader framework Salafism too adopted an ideological and doctrinal structure.

The general emergence of Islamism was mainly a "response to multiple crises in the vacuum created by the Ottoman Empire's collapse and as an alternative to the dominant ideologies of either East or West."27 Against the backdrop of European imperialism, emerging Islamist thinkers would argue that these Western powers were seeking to "exploit, control, or destroy Muslim lands. The only way to defend the faith was to fight back, politically, socially and physically."28 Afghani himself referred to European colonialism as the "yoke of servitude"29 restraining Muslims worldwide, and believed Muslims under imperial rule could only become free if they embraced the zeal and mentality of the first Islamic umma, who achieved "unbelievable progress...in a short period of time."

Nearly a century prior to Afghani, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, surrounded by chaos, violence, and a variance of practices and traditions all claiming to be Islamic, similarly felt

that Islam in the holy land was contaminated with non-Islamic innovations. The only proper path to restore the faith was "a return to the orthodox ways of the pious ancestors (al-salaf al-salih) and a strict obedience to the Qur'an and hadith," in line with the writings of Ibn Taymiyya and the Hanbali School.<sup>30</sup> Similar sentiments were resurrected in the 19th and 20th centuries across the Middle East, particularly the "urban centers of Iraq and Syria, where Hanbali theology had deeper historical roots,"31 and spread by students and scholars who interacted with one another across the region. It was against the backdrop of cultural, military, and political challenges posed to Muslim and Arab culture by the West that Salafism transformed into a multidimensional school of thought with a proposed methodology (manhaj).

The Islamic modernists Muhammad Abduh and to a larger extent his student Rashid Rida led a new generation of self-designated Salafi Muslim reformers who returned to the legacy of Ibn Taymiyya. They sought to abide by the Salafi madhab "in order to challenge the political framework of the Ottoman Empire as well as its religious institutions and patronage of traditional 'ulama.'"32 Further, this "broadening of Salafi epithets" gradually grew to "encompass the realm of the law" in the 1920s.<sup>33</sup> For example, Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi of Ottoman Syria and Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi of Ottoman Iraq, two of the most prominent Salafi scholars of the 20th century, both referred to themselves as Salafis in their correspondence with each other, proclaimed themselves adherents to a Salafi doctrine, and "conceived of the Salafis as a transnational community of past and present Muslims from all walks of life."34

Simultaneously, modern Islamism began budding into social and religious organizations, such as the Society of Muslim Brothers founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928 to offer services and support to poor and marginalized Egyptians in a society increasingly overcome with extreme decadence, greed, and materialism among the wealthy elites while the state offered little or no protections for Egyptians living in poverty. Islamism in this context was used as "a bulwark against the



Campaign rally for Salafist presidential candidate Hazem Abu Ismail in Egypt in 2012. © KHALED ELFIQI/epa/Corbis

encroachments of foreign power and the weakening of the *umma* from within."35 The Brotherhood would become the model for other Islamist organizations that would emerge, particularly in Egypt in the 1970s and Islam again became an alternative to the government, which was failing its citizens. It was in this atmosphere in Egypt that Salafism as a branch of Islamism became uniquely popular, with various groups emerging at universities, mostly in Alexandria. These groups attracted large numbers of students who felt disenfranchised from society and further felt that other Islamist alternatives, like the Muslim Brotherhood, were untrustworthy. It's important to note here that the Muslim Brotherhood can also be classified as a Salafi organization, in line with the writings and ideas of Afghani. It did however differ significantly in ideology from the Salafi organizations that arose in the 1970s, such as al-dawa al-Salafiyya, in line with Ibn Taymiyya's teachings.

From these doctrinal beginnings, Salafi thinkers' early intent to focus on rigorous reinterpretation of the *hadith* was for the purpose of purifying Islam of non-Muslim historical accretions. This fascination with purity became a defining characteristic of Salafi movements worldwide, and as a result, "Salafis are more concerned about 'purity' than almost anything else," as evidenced by their certainty that "an uncorrupted Islamic reality may be achieved through the correct education and training" and their determination to achieve this in society.<sup>36</sup> In fact, "in Salafi circles... there can be nothing more basic and vital to a Muslim's religious life than the study of tahara," or "ritual purity." 37 Although this yearning for purity exists across traditions and is by no means confined to the Salafi doctrine, it does maintain a prominent platform of importance for Salafis and their encounters with their surroundings. In focusing "specifically on Islam's ritual purity

(tahara) beliefs and practices" it therefore becomes possible to speak about attitudes that are definitively Salafi.<sup>38</sup>

#### Conclusion

Today, "Salafis represent a social and religious movement whose activities have longterm political effects that are not obvious at first glance." "In a contentious age, Salafism transforms the humiliated, the downtrodden, disgruntled young people, the discriminated migrant, or the politically repressed into a chosen sect (al-firga alnajiya)." This mindset affords adherents a moral superiority that does not challenge the statusquo, but rather claims to provide the path towards moral purity through direct engagement with religious texts, thereby challenging the ulama's claims to authority over religious interpretation and empowering segments of people who may be seeking religious fulfillment or others who feel marginalized by society."

#### **ENDNOTES**

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