Chapter 7
Political Islam in the Arab MENA Countries: The Evidence from the Arab Barometer (5) Data About the “Unword” of Middle East Research?

Abstract  Political Islam has been a major force across the MENA for much of the twentieth century. Reaching the zenith of their political ascendancy in the immediately aftermath of the 2011 Arab Uprisings, it is clear that Islamism is on the wane across the region. Opinion polls demonstrated that the Arab street, in particular the youth, are becoming more secular, less conservative in their attitudes and more suspicious of the role of religion in the public sphere. What is driving this disenchantment with Islamist parties relates to their aligning themselves with anti-democratic forces, the endemic corruption and nepotism they have demonstrated once in office, their inability to govern and their internal divisions.

Our multivariate empirics of the support rates for Political Islam in the region relied on data from the Arab Barometer survey (5). If the people of the entire Arab world had a free vote in a referendum, the following rules and regulations still would gain an absolute majority:

- Against a marriage of a female with a man who does not pray.
- Terrorism against the USA is a logical consequence of US interference in the region.
- Males are better political leaders.
- The USA, the UK and Israel pose the greatest threat to the stability and well-being of the region.
- Banks should not be allowed to charge interest.

More than a third of Arab opinion still supports, among others, the following contentions:

- In favour of Shari’a using physical punishments.
- A woman cannot be prime minister/president.
- In society, non-Muslims’ rights should be inferior.
- Rejecting neighbours – people of a different religion.
- Shari’a should restrict women’s role.

From the Arab Barometer data, we constructed parametric and non-parametric indices of Overcoming Islamism and of Political Islam. The indices show a very high
correlation with each other. The country values of the Index components are found in Table 7.2. Islamism is defined as high values along our 24 indicators across the board. Table 7.3 reports our UNDP-type Index “Overcoming Islamism” based on the valid country-level Arab Barometer results with 24 variables, aggregated with equal weights. Tunisia, according to Table 7.3, is the country whose population is rendering least support for Islamist worldviews, followed by Lebanon and Iraq. Yemen, Sudan and Algeria are the three Arab nations, whose population still lends biggest across-the-board support for the 24 Islamist positions under consideration here. We could show the close relationship between support of the most salient global Islamist leader today, Turkish President Erdogan, and Political Islam among the interviewed Arab publics. Support for Political Islam is also still very clearly connected to Anti-Westernism in the region. Political Islamist hatred against the West now also features the United Arab Emirates with its close cooperation with Western countries and its world class Universities as a victim of this prejudice. As a rule, the advancement of education reduces the extent of support for Political Islam.

A post-Islamist future beckons the region and those Islamist parties who make the successful adaptation to this new reality will thrive. Those who do not will be confined to the dustbin of history.

Keywords Political Islam · Turkey · Qatar · Muslim brotherhood · Arab barometer · Multivarlate analysis

7.1 Introduction

There is a body of scholarship that would suggest that in Muslim majority countries and in the Arab world in particular, there is a severe problem with the advancement of democratization and secular politics. The esteemed scholar of the Middle East, Bernard Lewis, has stated that there is no distinction between religion and state in Muslim countries since there is no equivalent in the Qur’an of Jesus who “…enjoined his followers to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s and to God that which is God’s” (Hashemi 2009). Political Islam or Islamism would certainly subscribe to such a position. Islamists strive to arrive at an ideal Muslim state re-creating the first Islamic state in seventh century Medina. There is a belief that such a state drawing inspiration from the Qur’an and the life of the Prophet Muhammed is essential for the attainment of a complete Muslim life (Kuru and Kuru 2008).

Despite their tactical (proselytization, political activism, or militant jihadism) and ideological – Shia or Sunni – differences, all these groups have one thing in common. They share a rejection that any separation can exist between religion and faith and a rejection of democracy. For Islamists, Islam transcends the confines of a religion and also constitutes a political, economic and social system (Osman 2017). This certainly reinforces the position of Bernard Lewis. This God-given system of governance takes precedence over any man-made creation, such as democracy. Democracy, with its inherent popular sovereignty, in their estimation is a sin since
God is supposed to be the source of all authority (hakimiyya) – not the people (Kazmi 2017). The government exists to fulfil God’s edicts and not to govern on the basis of any social contract.

There has certainly been a resurgence of Islamism since the twentieth century with the establishment of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, the Iranian revolution of 1979, the establishment of the Shi’a militant Hezbollah in Lebanon in 1985, Hamas in the Palestinian territories in 1987, the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Al Qaeda, Islamic State and various regional groupings like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shabaab in Somalia. Political Islam in the MENA region was fuelled by the failure of secular politics (think here of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and the Assads’ rule in Syria), Arab nationalism (Nasr’s Egypt), government repression (the Shah’s brutal Savak in Iran) which together made democratic governance impossible. The absence of responsive governance, especially in the economic sphere, resulted in popular alienation from political regimes. The penchant of Islamists with their attendant charities – from support to orphanages and the aged, providing start-up capital to small business or free medical assistance – resulted in huge support for Islamist parties. Small wonder then, that Islamists were the major beneficiaries of the 2011 Arab Spring protest movements sweeping across the Arab World.

Almost a decade later, however, Islamists seem to be on the retreat as a result of their governance failures, their inability to open up political processes, as well as a huge values change sweeping across youth in the MENA region especially as it relates to the place of religion in society and Arab youth’s increasing hostility to more conservative and traditional values. The chapter raises the prospect of whether a post-Islamist or civil Islamic future beckons the inhabitants of this region.

7.2 Background: Challenges Confronting Political Islam

One of the major changes confronting Islamists is the sea change in values – especially amongst urban youth. The Arab Barometer in conjunction with the British Broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) survey of over 25,000 Arabs covering ten countries and the Palestinian territories prove without doubt that secularism is on the rise across the MENA region. Whilst 14 percent of Tunisians regarded themselves as having no religious affiliation in 2013, the figure in 2019 more than doubled to 31 percent. In Libya, the percentage of non-religious people increased from 11 percent to 25 percent over the same period. The number of those who identified themselves as having no religious affiliation increased in Morocco from 4 percent to 13 percent between 2014 and 2019, whilst in Algeria, the equivalent figures are 8 percent and 13 percent. In Lebanon, ironically the country most wracked with religious strife, less than 25 percent of the population identify themselves as being religious (Zuckerman 2019). Perhaps this calamitous drop in religiosity in Lebanon is not unprecedented. The Arab Youth Survey of 2019 which conducted thousands of interviews with 18–24-year-olds found that the majority blamed religion and its
attendant sectarianism for the conflicts in their region. Another two-thirds of youth believed that religion was playing too big a role in Middle East whilst half believed that “the Arab world’s religious values are holding the Arab world back” (Sanderson 2019).

The rise of this secularism is remarkable if one considers that in much of the MENA region, there are robust anti-atheist laws in place and a pervasive anti-secular culture. In Egypt, for instance, publicly espousing an anti-religious perspective can result in your being incarcerated for 5 years (Zuckerman 2019). Beyond secularization, even amongst the religiously observant, there are differences between those subscribing to more orthodox Islamist views as well as others opting for a more modernist, reformist interpretation of the place in Islam in the modern world (Ciftci et al. 2019). Given processes of urbanization, modernization and globalization facilitated by modern technology data from the World Values Survey and Arab Barometer suggest that Arab society is becoming more secular and more liberal in their orientation (Abduljaber 2018).

This values change holds profound consequences for the future of Political Islam. The BBC News Arabic conducted a poll in 2012–2013 and again in 2018–2019 which involved 25,000 people from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, West Bank + Gaza, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen. The survey demonstrated that trust in Islamist groups and organizations fell calamitously across the MENA region. In Jordan and Morocco, trust in the Muslim Brotherhood declined by 20 percent since 2012–2013, whilst in Sudan, support for the Brotherhood dropped further by 25 percent – from 49 percent to a mere 24 percent. Support for Ennahda in Tunisia also declined by 24 percent whilst Palestinian support for Hamas declined to 22 percent from 48 percent over the 2012–2019 period (The National 2019).

First, Islamist political parties have made political choices which were perceived to be either supporting reactionary incumbents or actively frustrating the democratic aspirations of citizens in their countries. Such was the case in Sudan where Islamists twice supported the men in uniform – first General Nimeiri in 1969 and then General Bashir in 1989 – to come to power via coups. Whilst drawing economic largesse and enjoying the patronage from the military, Islamists lent political legitimacy to the armed forces. With the overthrow of Omar al-Bashir on the 11 April 2019, Islamists under the umbrella of the Popular Congress Party has little support on the Sudanese streets. Hafiz Ismail has argued that Political Islam’s support for the Bashir regime has become toxic for the future of Political Islam in the country. He states: “Before the coup in 1989, the slogan was ’Islam is the solution’. But after 30 years of power, after 30 years of corruption and killing, they can’t claim the moral high ground any more” (Beaumont and Salih 2019). A similar dynamic is at play in Algeria. The country’s largest political party, the Movement of Society for Peace did not initially participate in the demonstrations wracking the country through 2019 against President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. As such they were viewed as supportive of the existing regime. When it appeared that the regime was losing control, the Islamists joined the protests so late that their participation was viewed as both insincere and extremely opportunistic. Bouteflika did resign in April 2019. Given the public antipathy
towards the Movement of Society for Peace, they chose not to field a candidate for the 12 December 2019 presidential elections (Wilson Centre 2019).

Second, the disenchantment with Political Islam is greater among in those states or territories which is governed by Islamist parties such is the case in Hamas-controlled Gaza and Erdogan’s Turkey. Hamas, an offshoot of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood, took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007. Throughout 2019, Gazans protested against Hamas’ misrule, the imposition of taxes on basic goods like bread and beans. These taxes were resented since Gazans accused of Hamas politicians of enriching themselves (Akram 2019). Indeed, corruption is rife amongst the Hamas leadership. Whilst the average wage in Gaza is US$ 360 per month, luxury villas and five-star hotels flourish by the sea and Mercedes Benz and BMW dealerships all cater for the senior Hamas leadership (Rehov 2019). This corruption has been exposed in depth by Suheib Yousef, a son of the co-founder of Hamas – Sheikh Hassan Yousef (Staff 2019). Such corruption stands in direct opposition of such normative values like justice and service to society that a nominally Islamic party is supposed to represent. Popular disenchantment with Hamas was the logical conclusion. As protestors challenged Hamas’ authority throughout 2019 under the slogan: “We want to live!”, Hamas responded violently. According to Amnesty International, hundreds of protesters were beaten, arbitrarily arrested and tortured. Journalists were attacked as freedom of expression was curtailed (Akram 2019).

Turkey’s Islamists in the form of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) first came to occupy the national stage in 2002 securing an impressive 66 percent of the seats in parliament. Promising clean government, its leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan came across as a pious conservative Muslim. The impressive economic record and democratic gains the AKP produced in its first years of governance resulted in some suggesting that in the AKP model, Islamism and liberal democracy can be reconciled. But this was not to last. The AKP’s mismanagement of the economy resulted in the Turkish lira losing almost three-quarters of its value between 2011 and 2019. Erdogan’s large ego together with the personality cult he created around himself resulted in fall-outs with erstwhile allies like Fethullah Gulen and AKP “heavyweights” such as Abdullah Gul. The political space in Turkey drastically contracted as democratization was jettisoned in favour of the neo-Ottomanism with Erdogan seeing himself as a new Sultan or even Caliph.

Then there is the endemic nepotism and corruption such as Erdogan appointing his son-in-law as Minister of Finance (Pipes 2019). Examples of corruption are legion in Erdogan’s Turkey. A 2019 internal report leaked to the press demonstrated how Istanbul municipality provided a total of US $146 million to AKP-affiliated foundations. One of the largest beneficiaries of this was an educational foundation where Bilal Erdogan, President Erdogan’s son, sits on the committee. This foundation received US$ 13.2 million. Another foundation where the president’s daughter sits on the executive board received US$ 9.1 million. Selcuk Bayraktar, Erdogan’s son-in-law, also received US$ 7 million of council funding for his NGO (Ahval 2019). Such mis-governance stands in sharp contrast to the Islamic values the AKP promised to uphold. Under the circumstances, Turks are losing faith in Political Islam. This is best reflected in a recent poll conducted by PEW which demonstrated
that only 12 percent of Turks support making Shari’a the official law of their country (Lipka 2017).

The issue of poor governance leads us to the third factor accounting for the decline of Islamists’ popularity. It proved the undoing of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood during the disastrous year they were in power. Proponents of Political Islam have no real solutions for the grave economic challenges confronting the region’s youth. Appeals to religiosity grow increasingly thin when there is no food in one’s cupboard, no roof over one’s head and no prospects of formal employment. In the 2017–2018 Arab Opinion Index that surveyed 18,830 respondents across 11 Arab countries, a paltry 1.39 percent of respondents viewed the economic conditions in their respective countries positively. This was hardly surprising given the fact that 30 percent of citizens also live in need – meaning that their household’s income does not cover their recurrent monthly expenditure. Moreover, 33 percent of respondents regard unemployment, poverty and price inflation as their most pressing challenges confronted (Doha Institute 2018). As discussed earlier in this volume, it is the youth who are most affected by this economic malaise. Small wonder, then, that they are the most disenchanted with Political Islam.

Fourth, divisions amongst Islamists have also soured public opinion towards them. In Jordan, after a 7-year hiatus on contact between Islamists and the monarchy, King Abdullah met with members of Al Islah in April 2019. The discussions were hailed by the group as positive despite the thorny issues raised pertaining to the status of Jerusalem and the Trump Administration’s Middle East peace plan. However, other Islamists in the Islamic Action Front protested any normalization of relations with Israel, rejecting Washington’s peace plan. The resultant tensions resulted in greater polarization amongst Jordan’s Islamists (Wilson Centre 2019).

Such divisions also bedevil Egypt’s Islamists. There are inter-generational tensions that Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood has failed to breach in the aftermath of the coup which toppled them from power. Whilst the older generation seeks to topple El-Sisi peacefully through an alliance with other secular and nationalist parties, the younger generation has increasingly embraced jihadist ideologies which have sought to overthrow the current incumbent through violence (Counter Extremism Project 2017). Whilst the older generation seeks to gradually Islamize society, the younger generation seeks to do this through revolutionary means. These tensions were already apparent in February 2014 during the Brotherhood’s internal elections when 65 percent of the old guard were placed by a younger generation. Whilst the old guard recognize Mahmoud Ezzat as Supreme Guide, the younger generation first put their faith in Mohamed Taha Wahdan who ran the Brotherhood’s Crisis Management Committee which served to have de facto control over events on the ground. Following his arrest in 2015, these “young Turks” have coalesced around Ahmed Abel Rahman who has established the Office for Egyptians Abroad whilst in exile in Turkey (Counter Extremism Project 2017).

Taken together, these four variables have contributed to the waning of Political Islam across the MENA region. This begs the question of what the future holds for Islamism?
7.3 A Contested Terrain? Arab Barometer Research on Political Islam

The Arab Barometer, our chosen survey instrument (https://www.arabbarometer.org/), measures the opinion profiles of over three-quarters of the entire global Arab population of the world and surveys opinion in 11 of the 22 Arab countries at regular intervals.

As any user of such scientific documentation services as “Scopus” will know,1 the Arab Barometer has long been known to readers of such scientific journals as “The Lancet” and “Political Research Quarterly” as an important source for public health research and social science analysis. It recently has made its last survey wave available free of charge to the global scientific community these days (Wave 5, 2018-2019). Its weight for opinion polling in the Arab world is best shown by over 50 widely cited studies.

So, the Arab Barometer offers its data on the real existing opinion profiles of the Arab world to every person on the globe. Statistical programmes such as IBM-SPSS or SAS can even be used to analyse whether Arabs who would like to emigrate to Western countries differ significantly in their opinions from the overall population, and how the overall political and religious opinions recorded differ from those Arab respondents who identify themselves with the victims of domestic violence.

The research team, which is responsible for the Arab Barometer, which complies with all the rules of modern representative opinion research, includes: Professor Mark Tessler from the University of Michigan as well as research figures from the Arab world who can hardly be accused of “Islamophobia” such as Amaney Jamal, Professor of Political Science in Princeton; Khalil Shikaki, Director of the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research; Darwish Al-Emadi, Chief Strategy and Development Officer, Qatar University; Musa Shteiwi, professor at the University of Jordan; etc.

Since the term “Political Islam” is not free from controversies nowadays, especially among some Western academics (see below), who seem to follow what Lewin (2019) and Fishman (2019) call the “Red-Green Alliance” between the radical Left and Islamism, which makes itself felt on many campuses of the Western world, we mention here that questions fielded by the team about “Political Islam” (question batteries 605 and 606 of the Arab Barometer project), clearly and explicitly identified in the Arab Barometer, include attitudes on the desired or rejected interference of religious leaders in elections; the desirability of religious leaders in political offices; the desirability of the influence of religious leaders in making political decisions; the question of the private nature of religious practice; and finally whether religious leaders are more corrupt or less corrupt than non-religious political leaders.

These results on the interpretation of Islam in the region, which can be downloaded from https://www.arabbarometer.org/, are particularly exciting: if

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1 https://www.scopus.com/home.uri. The authors express thanks to the Department of Development Studies, Vienna University, https://ie.univie.ac.at/en/ for the opportunity to be able to use Scopus.
Muslims are to have more rights than non-Muslims, is it necessary to wear the Hijab or not; may banks charge interest; has Sharia priority over the will of the sovereign, should the enforcement of Islamic law be associated with corporal punishment; must Sharia restrict women’s rights or not; etc.

Now, to write an empirical scientific essay about “Political Islam” is also to enter into the midst of a political controversy that now is raging in Europe and in the West in general. Thus, we arrive at the contested terrains of political science research on “Political Islam”.

In the apparent wave of “political correctness” sweeping across campuses and the media in the West, leading University professors and liberal media commentators now extol themselves in “warning” against using the term “Political Islam” altogether (Biskamp 2018; Müller-Uri and Opratko 2016; Opratko 2017, 2019). In his major analysis of this “Red-Green” de-facto alliance between the radical academic left and the Islamists, Eyal Lewin, assistant professor at the Political Science Department at Ariel University and a research fellow at the National Security Studies Center at the University of Haifa in Israel, aptly describes (Lewin 2019), how according to Gramsci,

intellectuals do not necessarily have to remain the permanent proponents of the ruling class; they could also become its opponents. Artists and engineers, who are naturally close to industrial labor, alongside journalists and academics, can become the new autonomous intellectuals who will combat the hegemonic culture. In order to prevail and take power, the lower class, according to Gramsci, must break the hegemony of the established elites, undermine traditional loyalties, and assume full control of civil society.

Lewin is correct in insisting that Gramsci’s followers were well aware of this process and of the time and effort that it demanded. Lewin quotes the example of Rudi Dutschke, the prominent leader of the leftist German protest movement of the 1960s and a forerunner of the Green movement in the 1970s, who asserted that demonstrations were not sufficient to prevail over the Western capitalist system. Rather, Lewin (2019) emphasizes, he called for a long march through the state’s institutions where power was concentrated. Evoking the 1934–1935 Long March of the communist Chinese People’s Liberation Army, Dutschke

called for penetrating the establishment and conquering it from within. Interpreting Gramsci, he believed that in order to achieve radical change and overthrow the hegemonic culture, activists should become an integral part of the social system and its machinery. Moreover, they should produce working-class intellectuals who would reshape the dominant culture and replace it. (Lewin 2019)

Lewin also highlights that the use of Gramscian strategies by the Red-Green Alliance between the radical left and the Islamists is now widespread in the West. “Londonistan” is a good example for this (Phillips 2007). Melanie Phillips describes the capture of social institutions – the school system, the universities, the churches, the media and the legal system and describes how the intellectual elite was persuaded to sing from the same subversive song-sheet, so that the moral beliefs of the majority would be replaced by the values of those on the margins of society, the perfect ambience in which the Muslim grievance culture could be fanned into the flames of extremism. (Phillips 2007)
As an example of this “song-sheet”, Florian Große recently wrote in Germany’s flagship liberal weekly paper “Die Zeit” that even “Islamism” is “an unword”:

Islamism is a concept of struggle and bad propaganda. Evil because it is accepted across society. And it is an unforgivable insult to those who live their faith peacefully. When we use the word “Islamism”, we make it clear that we are not interested in peaceful coexistence in the world, but that we need enemies to distract us from our own mistakes. (Florian https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2011-11/leserartikel-unwort-islamismus, translated by the authors)

Since 2017, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan seems to be at the forefront of those politicians who vehemently oppose using terms such as “Islamism” or “Political Islam” altogether. Ahead of the EU summit in Malta on 3 February 2017, German Chancellor Angela Merkel paid a visit to Turkey, where President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan lectured her not to use the expression “Islamist terror”. Answering questions at a press conference in Ankara on 2 February 2017, Erdoğan objected to his guest’s use of the expression. He said, as quoted by the website of the Turkish presidency:

The ‘Islamist terror’ expression gravely saddens us as Muslims. Such an expression cannot be used; it is not right because Islam and terror don’t go side by side. Islam literally means peace; it cannot be associated with terror. Therefore, mentioning it side by side [with] terror saddens adherents of this religion³.

Merkel, for her part, underlined the importance Germany attaches to the freedom of religion as a necessity of democracy. She said:

We are making every effort in our power in order to enable Muslims in Germany to live their faith freely. And Islamic associations in Germany have stood against every kind of terror. Thus, there is a difference between the terms of ‘Islamic’ and ‘Islamist.’ I am of the belief that our people greatly appreciate Muslims and we need to join forces against this terror⁴.

To correctly capture the atmosphere of this debate, which you will nowadays encounter not only in Europe but in other Western countries as well, we further report here that Ümit Vural, the President of the official Islamic Community in Austria (IGGÖ), recently said: “Political Islam has become a pure concept of struggle”. The star guest of an event that took place in Vienna, Austria, at the end of March 2019 which should problematize this term was Professor John Esposito from Washington, who previously published studies with this title himself (see below). Vienna’s influential Daily, Die Presse, reported on 25 March 2019⁵:

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²https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/erdogan-tells-merkel-to-abandon-expression-islamist-terror/
³https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/erdogan-tells-merkel-to-abandon-expression-islamist-terror/
⁴https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/erdogan-tells-merkel-to-abandon-expression-islamist-terror/
⁵https://www.diepresse.com/5601347/iggo-chef-vural-politischer-islam-zum-reinen-kampfbegriff-verkommen
“Political Islam has become a mere concept of struggle. Empty of content and used populistically to attack Muslims”, says Ümit Vural. The President of the Islamic Community in Austria (IGGÖ) is heavily criticizing politics, which he believes is misusing the topic for political games. Especially if political leaders “describe Muslims without foundation as supporters of Political Islam”, one has to take this seriously. Vural opened a conference at the Hilton Hotel in Vienna on Monday morning, which should precisely define the term and scientifically process it. Several scientists were invited, including John L. Esposito from Georgetown University in Washington D.C., who was invited to the keynote speech. (…) Vural mentions that, in the past few days, the FPÖ (i.e. the main right-wing populist party in Austria) and its sympathizers in particular have not grown tired of calling him and the IGGÖ Islamist. “Free of factual substrate, hostile – such comments have only encouraged us to organize this conference.” The instrumentalization of the term is an occasion to “help those circles to get off the wrong path,” said Vural. He demands that the term “Political Islam” should not remain in the hands of politics, but “in the careful hands of scientists and experts”.

The IGGÖ President also received support from one of Europe’s leading former Christian Democratic politicians, Erhard Busek, who was invited as the second speaker for the opening. According to the former Christian Democratic ÖVP Vice Chancellor, more rationality should be brought into the discussion, because it is “currently highly irrational”.

Already back in 2009, the Guardian remarked in a similar vein:

Moreover, rightwing, xenophobic political ideologues, especially in the United States and Europe, recklessly connect all versions of Political Islam with al-Qaida (…) Also, if all “Political Islam” is defined as those who use the democratic system to exalt a polarising and violent version of Islam inspired by Sharia law, then how do we explain Turkey’s successful AKP: a pro-western, democratic party that won the popular vote due to its adherence to conservative, Islamic values. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/jan/23/religion-islam-doha-debates

Recently, the internationally recognized Catholic theologian and social researcher Paul Zulehner joined this debate and declared that the discourse on “Political Islam” is an “unword” (see his comments in the Austrian liberal daily “Standard” of 16 January 2020 (https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000113337139/die-kopftuchkraenkung-und-ihre-fatalen-folgen).

He said that, after all, one speaks about “political theology” also in the Catholic world. But the “Political Theology” proposed by Johann Baptist Metz (1928–2019) just as later liberation theologies were an attempt to introduce elements of the “critical theory” of Horkheimer and Adorno and numerous elements of the political economy of underdevelopment (“dependencia”) into Catholic thought.

The point is that such theological thinking has absolutely nothing to do with today’s “Political Islam”, which goes back to the anti-Semitic ideology of Hasan al-Bannā (1906–1949) and the Muslim Brotherhood he founded. Gustavo Gutierrez and all the other theologians of the Catholic South wanted no Sharia with corporal punishment and a rule of the Mullahs. Among other things, this is what distinguishes these political theologies from Political Islam. Gustavo Gutierrez and the theologies of the global Catholic South also have nothing to do with Millî Görüş, Necmettin Erbakan (1926–2011) and Turkish Islamism, all of which were able to undermine
the foundations of the secular Turkish Republic based on the erosion of the headscarf ban under Erdogan (see above).

As the profound and widespread social science work by Angel Rabasa (on the rise of Political Islam in Turkey; Rabasa and Larrabee 2008), Gilles Kepel (on Political Islam and jihad, Kepel 2002), Joel Beinin (Beinin and Stork 1997) and others have sufficiently demonstrated that research and also political strategies against Political Islam are not only necessary, but a question of survival among the countries that are still classified as “free” in the world today.

Professor John Esposito, Professor of Religion and International Affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and Founding Director of the Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim–Christian Understanding at Georgetown, and certainly an academic figure who does not enjoy the universal acceptance of members of the discipline of Middle East studies, himself was crystal clear in saying in Esposito 2012:

The phenomenon known as Political Islam is rooted in a contemporary religious resurgence in private and public life. On one hand, many Muslims have become more observant with regard to the practice of their faith (prayer, fasting, dress, and family). On the other, Islam has re-emerged as an alternative to the perceived failure of secular ideologies such as nationalism, capitalism, and socialism. Islamic symbols, rhetoric, actors, and organizations have become sources of legitimacy and mobilization, informing political and social activism. The governments of Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan have made appeals to Islam in order to enhance their legitimacy and to mobilize popular support for programs and policies. Islamic movements span the religious and political spectrum from moderate to extremist. Among the more prominent have been Muslim brotherhoods of Egypt, Sudan, and Jordan, Jamaat-i-Islami in South Asia, the Refah party in Turkey, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, al Nahda in Tunisia, Hizballah in Lebanon, Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine, and Gamaa Islamiyya and Jihad in Egypt. (Esposito 2012)

Esposito (2012) added that the causes of resurgence have been religio-cultural, political and socioeconomic. Issues of faith, politics and social justice – authoritarianism, repression, unemployment, housing, social services, distribution of wealth and corruption – intertwine as catalysts.

Muslim brotherhoods in Egypt and Jordan, Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan, the Refah Party in Turkey, al-Nahda in Tunisia, and Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria eschew violence and participate in electoral politics. At the same time, Gamaa Islamiyya in Egypt, Armed Islamic Group in Algeria, and Jihad organizations in many countries have engaged in acts of violence and terrorism. (Esposito 2012)

Global Middle East research simply cannot do without the term “Political Islam”. At every good university in the world, a 100-introductory course on Middle East research will point out that the world’s largest magazine database, Scopus, contains 816 studies on the subject of “Political Islam”. Not a few of these articles were written by leading global Muslim researchers.
The respected Eminences of this contemporary Holy Inquisition, the Cardinals of politically correct political science, might decide that Grinin et al. (2018), Solomon and Tausch (2020) as well as the other empirical literature, quoted in this chapter, should be burnt immediately on the stacks of prohibited books.

It would border on racism and xenophobia not to admit that outstanding Arab researchers who teach in Princeton, Qatar and Amman such as Amaney Jamal, Darwish Al-Emadi and Musa Shteiwi respectively use the term “Political Islam” as outlined and measured it in the “Arab Barometer”. According to the “Arab Barometer” team, “Political Islam” occurs whenever the following opinions are held in the region:

1. It is better if religious leaders hold public offices.
2. Religious leaders should influence government decisions.
3. Religious leaders are less corrupt than civil ones.
4. Religious leaders should influence elections.
5. Religious practice is not a private matter.

Image 7.1 is a direct screenshot from the SPSS file, which is globally distributed by the Arab Barometer consortium. The five variables, which are absolutely necessary for Middle East research, are denominated as measuring “Political Islam”.

Images 7.2 and 7.3 are screenshots from the library union catalogue of the Turkish Republic, the Toplu Kat, showing that in Turkish research libraries,

Image 7.1  “Political Islam” in the Arab Barometer SPSS data file

7 http://www.toplukatalog.gov.tr/index.php?f=1&the_page=1&cwid=2&keyword=%22political+islam%22&tokat_search_field=2&order=0&command=Tara#ult
certainly not to be accused of "Islamophobia", there are none the less than 285 titles on the subject of "Political Islam", including 10 titles in the scientific library of President Erdogan’s AKP Party. In addition, the Arab Barometer, co-financed by Qatar, certainly not a country to be accused of "Islamophobia" in the sense of Biskamp (2018), Müller-Uri and...
Opratko (2016) and Opratko (2017, 2019) also includes dimensions of *Political Islam* in the areas of:

- Economy
- Hatred of the West
- Patriarchy
- Rejection of liberal democracy and the rule of law
- Religious intolerance

In one of the most promising international studies using *Arab Barometer* data, Dilshod Achilove (Achilov 2016) uses the following *Arab Barometer* items to distinguish between politically moderate and politically radical Islam:

1. **Support for political pluralism**
   - (Q246.1) – Parliamentary system in which all political parties (left, right, Islamic) can compete.
   - (Q225.1) – Competition and disagreement among political groups is not bad.
   - (Q255.2) – National leaders should be open to diverse political ideas.

2. **Support for individual civil liberties and political rights**
   - (Q245.1) – Support for democratic political system (public freedom, equal political rights, balance of power, accountability and transparency).
   - (Q402.1) – Government and parliament should make laws according to the wishes of the people.

3. **Accommodative (inclusive) support for both Shari’a and secular law**
   - (Q402.3) – Government and parliament should make laws according to the wishes of people in some areas and implement Shari’a law in others.

4. **(In)tolerance toward political pluralism**
   - (Q246.2) – A parliamentary system in which only Islamic political parties and factions compete in elections.

   Politically radical Islam is defined by

1. **Neglect for democratic elections and competition**
   - (Q246.4) – A system governed by Islamic law in which there are no political parties or elections.

2. **Exclusive support for rule of the Shari’a law and political influence of clerics**
   - (Q402.2) – Government should implement only the laws of the Shari’a.
   - (Q401.1) – Men of religion should have influence over how people vote in elections.
   - (Q401.3) – Men of religion should have influence over government decisions.

Achilov (2016) conducted a principal component analysis to empirically explore the multifactor distinction of *Political Islam*. In order to control for the “Islamist” aspect of conceptualization (i.e., to distinguish it from more general support for
pluralist democracy), only respondents who (1) practice Islam (pray and read the Qur’an) and (2) believe that “religious practice is not a private matter and should not be separated from socio-political life” were included in the factor analysis. While four survey items loaded at or above 0.44 for a factor of PM Islam, five items loaded highly for a factor of PR Islam. Achilov (2016) conceptualized two distinct forms of support for Political Islamic ideology: politically moderate and politically radical Islam.

On the basis of a multivariate regression analysis, Achilov (2016) arrived at the conclusion that religiosity matters, but that its substantive effects on collective political action are small and highly context dependent. Religiosity’s effect on political activism varies from state to state. Nevertheless, personal piety remains an important contributing factor in explaining collective protests in the MENA.

Second, Muslims with higher levels of ideological support for politically moderate Islam appear more likely to join in nonviolent, collective political protests. Moderate Islamism is operating under “a model for pragmatic change” and the collective voice of politically moderate Muslims will be central.

Third, Muslims with higher levels of ideological support for politically radical Islam seem less likely to participate in elite-challenging collective protests. Political moderates may persist on working within existing structures to challenge the elites such as in Algeria and Yemen. In the Kingdom of Jordan, by contrast, political radicals emerge as a potent oppositional force with a much louder collective voice than political moderates.

Fourth, memberships in civil society organizations, Internet usage and the levels of education reveal significant substantive effects on protest behaviour. The Internet has become an inseparable component of online social networking as a key organizational resource.

Fox et al. (2016) analysed the Arab Barometer data to find out the relationship between gender attitudes and general political attitudes. Using available data from consecutive rounds of the Arab Barometer survey, Fox et al. (2016) examined changes in attitudes in nine countries with two rounds of Arab Barometer during and post Arab Spring (Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Sudan, Jordan, Iraq, West Bank and Gaza). The authors found that support for “Muslim feminism” (an interpretation of gender equality grounded in Islam) has increased over the period and particularly in Arab Spring countries, while support for “secular feminism” has declined. In most countries examined, relatively high degrees of support for gender equality co-existed with a preference for Islamic interpretations of personal status codes pertaining to women (Fox et al. 2016).

In this analysis, the dependent variables included the Arab Barometer items.

A. The government and parliament should enact inheritance laws in accordance with Islamic law.
B. The government and parliament should enact personal status laws (marriage, divorce) in accordance with Islamic law.
C. Gender-mixed education should be allowed in universities.
D. Women should wear modest clothes without needing to wear a hijab.
The independent variables of the analysis were:

- Support for political secularism
- Support for secular democracy
- Support for legal secularism
- Anti-Westernism
- Religiosity and religion
- Age
- Marital status

The multivariate analysis of the data showed that support for Islamic interpretations of policies pertaining to women’s rights increased over the Arab Spring period particularly in Arab Spring countries. Relatively high degrees of support for gender equality seem to co-exist with a preference for Islamic interpretations of personal status codes pertaining to women. With large majorities of individuals endorsing preferences for “mixed” political and legal systems that allow for a greater incorporation of religion into public life, gender equality is not being viewed as inimical to Islam. The region over this time period was characterized by relatively low support for secular interpretation of women’s status.

As the last study, we mention Robbins (2015) building on the evidence and methodology accumulated in Jamal and Tessler (2008), Robbins (2009), Tessler (2010) and Tessler et al. (2012).

Robbins (2015) found out that as a consequence of the Arab Spring, Tunisians became far more concerned about democracy’s potential downsides and worried increasingly that, even if generally preferable, it might not be right for their country. Egyptian attitudes toward democracy, by contrast, changed little. Egyptian support for democracy held steady, and Egyptians were no more worried about democracy’s possible shortcomings after the uprising than they had been before. Meanwhile, despite the transition, early 2013 found Egyptians to be among the least likely people in the Arab world to say that their country was democratic, or to find democracy suitable for their country. Robbins (2015) also found that Egyptians blamed problems associated with their country’s transition not on democracy itself but on Political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood.

### 7.4 Methodology and Data for the Study of Political Islam

Our methodology, which used the Arab Barometer (5) data file\(^8\) and the IBM-SPSS version 24 statistical programmes,\(^9\) closely follows the index construction methodology, amply described in Tausch et al. (2014). We will first present results from an

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\(^{8}\)https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-downloads/

\(^{9}\)https://www.ibm.com/analytics/spss-statistics-software. The authors express thanks to the Department of Political Science, Innsbruck University, https://www.uibk.ac.at/politikwissenschaft/index.html.en for the opportunity to be able to use the software.
UNDP Human Development Index type of indicator (non-parametric indicator), which projects every variable, used in the analysis, onto a scale, ranging from 0 (lowest value) to 1 (highest value). The simple, very down-to-earth methodology, disseminated by the UNDP across the globe always can be explained to the general readership of this book in a very simple way, and the readers, familiar with social science statistics, are recommended to skip over the following lines.

One first looks at the given indicator value of a given country, say the access of the population to safe drinking water. Let us assume that in country x, only 50 percent of the population has access to safe drinking water. If our analysis then reveals, that in the best country under scrutiny, country y, say, 95 percent of the population have access to safe drinking water, while in the lamentable country z with the worst record of providing its population with safe drinking water, the provision rate is only 30 percent, the UNDP type “Index of the Provision of Drinking Water” would be:

(1) Country x Index value = (country x under observation value minus value of the worst performing country)/(value of the best performing country minus value of the worst performing country)
(2) Country x score Index of the Provision of Drinking Water = (50–30 percent)/(95–30 percent)
(3) Country x score Index of the Provision of Drinking Water = 0.308

The UNDP Index methodology has become more sophisticated over the years and uses mathematical variations of the original idea, now applied for decades since the publication of the first UNDP Human Development Report in 1990.

Much to the detriment of inter-temporal comparability, the variables used in the computation of the Human Development Index changed over the years, and the same can be said about the now startling variety of other UNDP Human Development Report Indices: the Human Development Index (HDI), the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), the Gender Development Index (GDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). These indices are available not only at the country-to-country world level but also for an immense variety of regions of our globe, contained in the macro-regional reports like Africa or Latin America and the Caribbean and the country reports.

In the vast literature, surveyed in Tausch et al. (2014), there are two ways to add together the results from the different components, making up an UNDP-type of performance Index indicator: simply adding the results together, or first grouping them together to various subcomponents, and only from there to arrive at the final results. In our essay, we present the results from both methodologies. We eliminated the missing or refused responses and base our results on the vast majority of the valid responses. Our non-parametric indicators thus rely on the aggregate valid country results of the latest wave of the Arab Barometer.

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10 http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi
11 http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries
12 http://hdr.undp.org/en/global-reports
Parametric indicators usually rely on advanced statistical methods, such as principal component analysis (see Tausch et al. 2014). In plain everyday languages, such an analysis extracts an overriding indicator, mathematically best representing the component variables and their correlation matrix. We again eliminated the missing or refused responses and base our results on the vast majority of the valid responses. Our parametric index thus relies on the original survey respondents of the survey, and calculates the country results, based on principal component factor scores.

The *Arab Barometer* list of the 24 variables, on which our indicators are based, are in alphabetical order. These 24 indicators all measure Islamism, while the 5 indicators number 13 to number 17 measure Political Islam proper:

1. Against marriage of a female relative: one who does not pray.
2. Against neighbours: different denomination in Islam.
3. Against neighbours: different religion.
4. Banks should not be allowed to charge interest.
5. Economic relations: preference: Iran.
6. Economic relations: preference: Qatar.
7. Economic relations: preference: Turkey.
8. Greatest threat: stability: USA, UK, ISR.
9. Greatest threat: well-being: USA, UK, ISR.
10. Islam requires hijab.
11. Men better at political leadership.
12. Non-Muslims’ rights should be inferior.
13. Political islam: agreement: country better off with religious leaders in office.
14. Political islam: agreement: religious leaders should influence government decisions.
15. Political islam: Religious leaders not as corrupt as non-religious leaders.
16. Political islam: Religious leaders should interfere in elections.
17. Political islam: Religious practice is not a private matter.
18. President Erdogan (very) good.
19. Sharia: government restricting women’s role.
20. Sharia: government using physical punishment.
21. University education more important for males
22. Violence against US logical consequence of interference in region.
23. Woman cannot be prime minister/president.
24. Women have no equal rights to make the decision to divorce.

We present the valid country values, the population-weighted results for the entire region and our aggregate non-parametric and parametric indicators. The population data used in our work relied on the following sources:
### 7.5 Results of a Non-parametric Index of Overcoming Islamism, Based on 24 Variables, Weighted Equally

Table 7.1 lists the support rates for Islamism and Political Islam in the region on a population-weighted basis. Such a weighting is very much necessary, since, for example, opinion in Egypt with its huge population has much more weight for the entire Arab world than, say, Lebanon or the West Bank and Gaza.

If the people of the entire Arab world had a free vote in a referendum, the following rules and regulations would handsomely still gain an absolute majority:

- Against marriage of a female relative: one who does not pray
- Violence against us logical consequence of interference in region
- Men better at political leadership
- Greatest threat: stability USA, UK, ISR
- Banks should not be allowed to charge interest
- Greatest threat: wellbeing USA, UK, ISR

More than a third of Arab opinion supports the following contentions:

- President erdogan (very) good
- Islam requires hijab
- Economic relations: preference: Turkey
- Political islam: agreement: country better off with religious leaders in office
- Sharia: government using physical punishment
- Political islam: religious practice is not a private matter
- Economic relations: preference: qatar
- Woman cannot be prime minister/president
- Non-Muslims’ rights should be inferior
- Against neighbours: different religion
- Political islam: agreement: religious leaders should influence government decisions
- Sharia: government restricting women’s role
- Against neighbours: different denomination in islam

Only the following positions are real minority positions, having the support of less than 1/3 of the entire surveyed Arab population:
Table 7.1  Islamism and Political Islam in the Arab MENA countries

| Economic relations: preference: IRAN | 22.1 |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| University education more important for males | 23.7 |
| Political islam: religious leaders should interfere in elections | 23.8 |
| Women have no equal rights to make the decision to divorce | 31.5 |
| Political islam: religious leaders not as corrupt as nonreligious leaders | 33.1 |
| Against neighbours: different denomination in Islam | 33.6 |
| Sharia: government restricting women’s role | 34.9 |
| Political Islam: agreement: religious leaders should influence government decisions | 35.8 |
| Against neighbours: different religion | 35.8 |
| Non-Muslims’ rights should be inferior | 37.3 |
| Woman cannot be prime minister/president | 38.8 |
| Economic relations: preference: Qatar | 40.6 |
| Political Islam: religious practice is not a private matter | 41.4 |
| Sharia: government using physical punishment | 44.2 |
| Political Islam: agreement: country better off with religious leaders in office | 45.0 |
| Economic relations: preference: Turkey | 46.8 |
| Islam requires hijab | 47.4 |
| President Erdogan (very) good | 49.5 |
| Greatest threat: wellbeing US, UK, ISR | 52.7 |
| Banks should not be allowed to charge interest | 53.8 |
| Greatest threat: stability US, UK, ISR | 53.9 |
| Men better at political leadership | 69.3 |
| Violence against US logical consequence of interference in region | 70.1 |
| Against marriage of a female relative: one who does not pray | 76.2 |

- Political islam: religious leaders not as corrupt as nonreligious leaders
- Women have no equal rights to make the decision to divorce
- Political islam: religious leaders should interfere in elections
- University education more important for males
- Economic relations: preference: Iran

In Table 7.2, we report the country results. We mark each result above 1/3 support rates for Islamism/Political Islam:
Table 7.2 Country scores: Political Islam and Islamism. Percentages of the total population (valid answers only)

|                        | Algeria | Egypt  | Iraq   | Jordan | Lebanon | Libya  | Morocco | Westbank + Gaza | Sudan   | Tunisia | Yemen  |
|------------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|--------|
| **Political Islam:**   |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |
| religious leaders      |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |
| should interfere in    | 37.3    | 8.8    | 24.4   | 27.0   | 27.6    | 28.5   | 26.1    | 23.2           | 29.0    | 24.7    | 40.4   |
| elections             |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |
| agreement              |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |
| country better         | 48.7    | 46.6   | 33.3   | 39.3   | 16.9    | 27.4   | 46.3    | 35.4           | 67.0    | 27.5    | 38.6   |
| off with religious     |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |
| leaders in office      |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |
| agreement              |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |
| religious leaders      |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |
| should influence       | 45.7    | 22.0   | 49.3   | 35.1   | 20.8    | 33.0   | 26.6    | 33.7           | 55.1    | 25.1    | 43.6   |
| government decisions   |         |        |        |        |         |        |         |                |         |         |        |

(continued)
|                                | Country 1 | Country 2 | Country 3 | Country 4 | Country 5 | Country 6 | Country 7 | Country 8 | Country 9
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------
| **Political Islam:**          |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| religious practice is not a  | 55.2      | 27.8      | 24.1      | 54.3      | 21.0      | 39.3      | 56.5      | 57.3      | 54.9      |
| private matter               |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| **Political Islam:**          | 40.4      | 33.7      | 28.2      | 26.9      | 34.2      | 30.7      | 28.7      | 28.0      | 32.9      |
| religious leaders not as      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| corrupt as nonreligious       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| leaders                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Non-Muslims’ rights should be | 41.8      | 33.0      | 22.5      | 23.6      | 20.7      | 36.9      | 29.1      | 26.8      | 51.5      |
| inferior                      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Islam requires hijab          | 37.3      | 62.3      | 52.2      | 52.7      | 26.2      | 47.0      | 42.5      | 61.1      | 26.0      |
| Sharia:                       | 74.3      | 31.8      | 67.0      | 81.7      | 60.4      | 79.7      | 46.1      | 73.3      | 50.2      |
| government using physical     | 44.3      | 42.7      | 21.8      | 43.9      | 31.4      | 33.8      | 44.1      | 33.0      | 58.5      |
| punishment                    |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Sharia: government restricting women’s role | Economic relations: preference: Qatar | Economic relations: preference: Turkey | Economic relations: preference: Iran | Woman cannot be prime minister/president | Men better at political leadership |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 30.9                                       | 38.8                                 | 22.3                                   | 61.5                                | 73.0                                     |
| 34.5                                       | 16.0                                 | 9.4                                    | 34.0                                | 73.1                                     |
| 27.4                                       | 30.9                                 | 27.5                                   | 32.1                                | 72.8                                     |
| 27.5                                       | 47.8                                 | 21.1                                   | 39.4                                | 74.7                                     |
| 35.4                                       | 31.4                                 | 19.8                                   | 44.7                                | 49.6                                     |
| 35.7                                       | 59.8                                 | 42.0                                   | 31.4                                | 57.1                                     |
| 37.7                                       | 44.0                                 | 64.3                                   | 34.6                                | 83.3                                     |
| 23.7                                       | 76.9                                 | 42.0                                   | 49.6                                | 66.3                                     |
| 23.6                                       | 51.9                                 | 71.3                                   | 71.3                                | 54.1                                     |
| 35.9                                       | 60.8                                 | 34.7                                   | 70.8                                | 35.4                                     |
| 48.2                                       | 61.9                                 | 34.4                                   | 47.2                                | 35.7                                     |
|                                                                 | 21.8 | 27.4 | 21.1 | 16.9 | 10.1 | 16.4 | 15.9 | 13.5 | 29.1 | 20.9 | 30.9 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| University education more important for males                   | 29.7 | 32.3 | 18.9 | 21.0 | 12.5 | 25.6 | 24.8 | 18.9 | 51.8 | 18.3 | 46.0 |
| Women Have No equal rights to make the decision to divorce       | 32.6 | 40.6 | 21.4 | 18.2 | 22.4 | 55.7 | 36.1 | 30.7 | 34.0 | 28.4 | 55.2 |
| Against neighbors: different religion                           | 34.4 | 46.0 | 16.3 | 35.7 | 3.2  | 46.7 | 39.9 | 31.3 | 23.9 | 23.8 | 26.7 |
| Against neighbors: different denomination in Islam              | 80.1 | 82.4 | 62.9 | 63.0 | 45.6 | 81.6 | 61.4 | 66.7 | 93.6 | 25.4 | 95.1 |
|                  | Violence against us | logical consequence of interference in region | President Erdogan (very good) | Greatest threat: stability US, UK, ISR | Greatest threat: well-being US, UK, ISR |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Results of a Non-parametric Index of Overcoming Islamism, Based on 24... | 84.1                | 55.3                                         | 39.6                         | 41.0                                 | 64.5                                 |
In the following, we will report on our efforts to construct an Index of Overcoming Islamism.

### 7.6 Towards a Non-parametric Index of Overcoming Islamism (1), Weighting 24 Components Equally

The results of Table 7.2 render themselves for a social scientific Index construction. Islamism is defined as high values along our 24 indicators (see above) across the board. The overcoming of Islamism implies low values along our 24 indicators (see above). Table 7.3 reports our UNDP-type Index “Overcoming Islamism” based on the valid country-level Arab Barometer results with 24 variables, aggregated with equal weights. Tunisia, according to Table 7.3, is the country whose population is rendering least support for Islamist worldviews, followed by Lebanon and Iraq. Yemen, Sudan and Algeria are the three Arab nations, whose population lends biggest across-the-board support for the 24 Islamist positions under consideration here.

### 7.7 Towards a Non-parametric Index of Overcoming Islamism (2), Built on Five Different Components, Weighted Equally

Our next results, which we report here, are based on the technique, commonly encountered in such major social scientific works as the current United Nations Human Development Reports, grouping the variables into subcategories. In our

| UNDP-type index Overcoming Islamism |
|------------------------------------|
| Tunisia                            | 0.688 |
| Lebanon                            | 0.675 |
| Iraq                               | 0.607 |
| Morocco                            | 0.599 |
| Egypt                              | 0.586 |
| Libya                              | 0.561 |
| Jordan                             | 0.463 |
| Westbank + Gaza                    | 0.438 |
| Algeria                            | 0.408 |
| Sudan                              | 0.271 |
| Yemen                              | 0.271 |

...
case, the overall performance on our *Index of Overcoming Islamism* is measured by the unweighted averages of the five subcomponents of the index:

- No Economic Islamism
- Accepting the West
- Overcoming Patriarchy
- Accepting Liberal Democracy and the State of Law
- Religious Tolerance

The original data for these calculations are again contained in Table 7.2. In the following, we list the results for the different sub-indices. Egypt, Libya and Morocco are relatively free from economic Islamism (Table 7.4), which is centred around the opinion that banks should not be allowed to charge interest and the desire to increase economic relations with Iran, Qatar and Turkey. The countries and territories most inclined to economic Islamism are Jordan, the Westbank and Gaza, and Sudan.

Table 7.5 lists the results for the sub-component “Accepting the West”, based on the rejection of the idea by Arab publics that the USA, the UK and Israel are the greatest threat to the stability and well-being of the region. Likewise, “Accepting the West” also will be linked to a negative assessment by Arab publics of the neo-Ottoman and Islamist strategy of the current Turkish President Erdogan, and finally, “Accepting the West” also is measured by the idea held by Arab publics that violence and terrorism against the United States of America is not the logical consequence of US interference in the region. The Arab publics in Libya, Tunisia

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**Table 7.4 A UNDP-type of Subindex “No Economic Islamism”**

| Country        | Banks should be allowed to charge interest | Economic relations: no preference for: Iran | No preference for: Qatar | No preference for: Turkey | Subindex No Economic Islamism |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Egypt          | 1.000                                      | 1.000                                      | 0.912                    | 1.000                    | 0.978                          |
| Libya          | 0.041                                      | 0.770                                      | 1.000                    | 0.769                    | 0.645                          |
| Morocco        | 0.715                                      | 0.641                                      | 0.342                    | 0.343                    | 0.510                          |
| Algeria        | 0.149                                      | 0.563                                      | 0.571                    | 0.421                    | 0.426                          |
| Iraq           | 0.296                                      | 0.139                                      | 0.689                    | 0.517                    | 0.410                          |
| Yemen          | 0.201                                      | 0.685                                      | 0.314                    | 0.327                    | 0.382                          |
| Lebanon        | 0.427                                      | 0.023                                      | 0.448                    | 0.580                    | 0.370                          |
| Tunisia        | 0.401                                      | 0.000                                      | 0.374                    | 0.273                    | 0.262                          |
| Sudan          | 0.632                                      | 0.151                                      | 0.004                    | 0.111                    | 0.225                          |
| Westbank + Gaza| 0.168                                      | 0.020                                      | 0.310                    | 0.132                    | 0.158                          |
| Jordan         | 0.000                                      | 0.385                                      | 0.000                    | 0.000                    | 0.096                          |
and Morocco are the most pro-Western publics in the region, while hatred against the USA, the UK and Israel is most widespread in the Westbank and Gaza, in Lebanon and in the Sudan.

The following tables, Tables 7.7, 7.8, list our sub-components “Overcoming Patriarchy” and “Accepting Liberal Democracy and the State of Law”. The sub-component “Overcoming Patriarchy” combines the opinions of Arab publics which accept the marriage of a female relative to someone who does not pray, reject the notion that Islam requires women wearing the Hijab, think that men are not better at political leadership, reject a Shari’a where the government restricts women’s role, accept the importance of University education for females, think that a woman can exercise the role of a Prime Minister or President and finally also favour the notion that women have equal rights to make the decision to divorce. The least patriarchy-oriented Arab societies are Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco, while patriarchy is most strongly supported by Arab publics in Yemen, Sudan and Egypt (see Table 7.6).

“Accepting Liberal Democracy and the State of Law” is a sub-component which in many ways would help to apply the validity of the legal thought of the Austrian-born scholar of the theory of law, Hans Kelsen (1881–1973) (Kelsen 1996; Dyzenhaus 1997; Matos 2013), and it is based on the combination of the rejection of the five dimensions of Political Islam (country not better off with religious leaders in office, religious leaders should not influence government decisions, religious leaders just as corrupt as non-religious leaders, they should not interfere in elections

| Subindex Accepting the West | Not greatest threat to stability: USA, UK, ISR | Not greatest threat to well-being: USA, UK, ISR | No positive opinion of TRK president Erdogan | Violence against the USA not logical consequence of interference in region |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Libya                       | 0.810                                         | 0.901                                         | 0.914                                         | 0.727                                                              | 0.838                                                              |
| Tunisia                     | 0.798                                         | 0.999                                         | 0.215                                         | 1.000                                                             | 0.753                                                              |
| Morocco                     | 0.892                                         | 0.943                                         | 0.273                                         | 0.857                                                             | 0.741                                                              |
| Iraq                        | 0.714                                         | 0.779                                         | 0.635                                         | 0.613                                                             | 0.685                                                              |
| Algeria                     | 1.000                                         | 1.000                                         | 0.175                                         | 0.432                                                             | 0.652                                                              |
| Egypt                       | 0.574                                         | 0.603                                         | 1.000                                         | 0.209                                                             | 0.596                                                              |
| Yemen                       | 0.985                                         | 0.964                                         | 0.428                                         | 0.000                                                             | 0.594                                                              |
| Jordan                      | 0.571                                         | 0.631                                         | 0.000                                         | 0.421                                                             | 0.406                                                              |
| Sudan                       | 0.473                                         | 0.512                                         | 0.032                                         | 0.187                                                             | 0.301                                                              |
| Lebanon                     | 0.090                                         | 0.149                                         | 0.797                                         | 0.110                                                             | 0.287                                                              |
| Westbank + Gaza             | 0.000                                         | 0.000                                         | 0.172                                         | 0.155                                                             | 0.082                                                              |
Table 7.6 A UNDP-type of Subindex “Overcoming Patriarchy”

|                        | For marriage of a female relative: one who does not pray | Islam does not require Hijab | Men not better at political leadership | Against sharia: government restricting women’s role | University education not more important for males | Woman can be prime minister/president | Women have equal rights to make the decision to divorce | Subindex Overcoming Patriarchy |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Lebanon                | 0.709                                                  | 0.693                         | 0.816                                 | 0.844                                            | 1.000                                  | 0.968                           | 1.000                                      | 0.861                         |
| Tunisia                | 1.000                                                  | 1.000                         | 0.634                                 | 1.000                                            | 0.480                                  | 0.720                           | 0.852                                      | 0.812                         |
| Morocco                | 0.483                                                  | 0.381                         | 1.000                                 | 0.428                                            | 0.725                                  | 1.000                           | 0.687                                      | 0.672                         |
| Westbank + Gaza       | 0.407                                                  | 0.023                         | 0.411                                 | 0.998                                            | 0.837                                  | 0.644                           | 0.839                                      | 0.594                         |
| Jordan                 | 0.460                                                  | 0.184                         | 0.207                                 | 0.842                                            | 0.675                                  | 0.529                           | 0.784                                      | 0.526                         |
| Iraq                   | 0.461                                                  | 0.193                         | 0.253                                 | 0.541                                            | 0.472                                  | 0.706                           | 0.837                                      | 0.495                         |
| Libya                  | 0.193                                                  | 0.293                         | 0.289                                 | 0.523                                            | 0.699                                  | 0.403                           | 0.666                                      | 0.438                         |
| Algeria                | 0.214                                                  | 0.480                         | 0.247                                 | 0.706                                            | 0.439                                  | 0.000                           | 0.563                                      | 0.379                         |
| Egypt                  | 0.181                                                  | 0.000                         | 0.246                                 | 0.559                                            | 0.171                                  | 0.659                           | 0.497                                      | 0.330                         |
| Sudan                  | 0.021                                                  | 0.697                         | 0.000                                 | 0.510                                            | 0.085                                  | 0.292                           | 0.000                                      | 0.229                         |
| Yemen                  | 0.000                                                  | 0.087                         | 0.302                                 | 0.000                                            | 0.000                                  | 0.342                           | 0.149                                      | 0.126                         |
Table 7.7  A UNDP-type of Subindex “Accepting Liberal Democracy and the State of Law”

| Subindex | Rejecting Political Islam: Country not better off with religious leaders in office | Rejecting Political Islam: religious leaders should not influence government decisions | Rejecting Political Islam: religious leaders as corrupt as non-religious leaders | Rejecting Political Islam: religious leaders should not interfere in elections | Rejecting Political Islam: religious practice is a private matter | Against Sharia: government using physical punishment | Subindex Accepting Liberal Democracy and the State of Law |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lebanon  | 1.000                                                                             | 1.000                                                                            | 0.461                                                                            | 0.406                                                                            | 1.000                                                                            | 0.797                                                                            | 0.777                                                                            |
| Tunisia  | 0.788                                                                             | 0.873                                                                            | 0.695                                                                            | 0.498                                                                            | 0.782                                                                            | 1.000                                                                            | 0.773                                                                            |
| Egypt    | 0.407                                                                             | 0.965                                                                            | 0.498                                                                            | 1.000                                                                            | 0.813                                                                            | 0.594                                                                            | 0.713                                                                            |
| Iraq     | 0.672                                                                             | 0.172                                                                            | 0.905                                                                            | 0.507                                                                            | 0.915                                                                            | 0.968                                                                            | 0.690                                                                            |
| Libya    | 0.791                                                                             | 0.643                                                                            | 0.720                                                                            | 0.378                                                                            | 0.497                                                                            | 0.753                                                                            | 0.630                                                                            |
| Westbank + Gaza | 0.631                        | 0.623                                                                            | 0.918                                                                            | 0.546                                                                            | 0.000                                                                            | 0.767                                                                            | 0.581                                                                            |
| Jordan   | 0.554                                                                             | 0.583                                                                            | 1.000                                                                            | 0.424                                                                            | 0.082                                                                            | 0.573                                                                            | 0.536                                                                            |
| Morocco  | 0.413                                                                             | 0.829                                                                            | 0.870                                                                            | 0.452                                                                            | 0.022                                                                            | 0.570                                                                            | 0.526                                                                            |
| Algeria  | 0.366                                                                             | 0.274                                                                            | 0.000                                                                            | 0.098                                                                            | 0.058                                                                            | 0.566                                                                            | 0.227                                                                            |
| Sudan    | 0.000                                                                             | 0.000                                                                            | 0.558                                                                            | 0.360                                                                            | 0.067                                                                            | 0.312                                                                            | 0.216                                                                            |
| Yemen    | 0.567                                                                             | 0.336                                                                            | 0.249                                                                            | 0.000                                                                            | 0.082                                                                            | 0.000                                                                            | 0.206                                                                            |
and religious practice is a private matter) and opposition to a Shari’a which applies physical punishment.

The Arab nations, whose publics most consistently accept liberal democracy and the state of law are according to the Arab Barometer data, analysed here Lebanon, Tunisia and Egypt, and, according to our data analysis, liberal democracy and the state of law are least supported in Yemen, Sudan and Algeria (see Table 7.7).

Table 7.8 presents the sub-component “Religious Tolerance”, which combines the acceptancy of neighbours of a different denomination in Islam, and neighbours of a different religion by Arab publics with the support by these publics for the rights of non-Muslims in society. Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan, according to this data analysis, are the Arab societies with the highest degree of religious tolerance, while Yemen, Libya and Egypt are the least religiously tolerant societies in the Arab world.

Table 7.9 now lists the results of the combination of our five sub-components (No Economic Islamism; Accepting the West; Overcoming Patriarchy; Accepting Liberal Democracy and the State of Law; Religious Tolerance) for the construction of our final overall index “Overcoming Islamism” by the Arab publics, surveyed in the Arab Barometer. Not surprisingly, Tunisia again heads the list, followed by Lebanon and Iraq, while Yemen, Sudan and Algeria are the countries where Arab publics still most consistently support Islamism, as defined by the 24 indicators of our study.

Table 7.10 finally compares the results of our two attempts to construct a non-parametric index of overcoming Islamism – one based on the averages of the results of the 24 indicators, simply added together, and one based on the prior calculation of five subcomponent indices which are only then added together in Table 7.9. But the two methods of indicator construction yield very similar results, and without presenting the scatterplot, it suffices to say here that the two results have 98.27 percent of the variance in common.
### Table 7.9 A UNDP-type of index “Overcoming Islamism”, based on its five subcomponents

| Country     | No Economic Islamism | Accepting the West | Overcoming Patriarchy | Accepting Liberal Democracy and the State of Law | Religious Tolerance | Overall Index, “Overcoming Islamism”, based on its five components |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tunisia     | 0.262                | 0.753              | 0.812                 | 0.773                                           | 0.707               | 0.661                                                         |
| Lebanon     | 0.370                | 0.287              | 0.861                 | 0.777                                           | 0.963               | 0.652                                                         |
| Iraq        | 0.410                | 0.685              | 0.495                 | 0.690                                           | 0.860               | 0.628                                                         |
| Morocco     | 0.510                | 0.741              | 0.672                 | 0.526                                           | 0.504               | 0.591                                                         |
| Egypt       | 0.978                | 0.596              | 0.330                 | 0.713                                           | 0.392               | 0.602                                                         |
| Libya       | 0.645                | 0.838              | 0.438                 | 0.630                                           | 0.225               | 0.555                                                         |
| Jordan      | 0.096                | 0.406              | 0.526                 | 0.536                                           | 0.733               | 0.459                                                         |
| Westbank + Gaza | 0.158            | 0.082              | 0.594                 | 0.581                                           | 0.633               | 0.409                                                         |
| Algeria     | 0.426                | 0.652              | 0.379                 | 0.227                                           | 0.493               | 0.435                                                         |
| Sudan       | 0.225                | 0.301              | 0.229                 | 0.216                                           | 0.497               | 0.294                                                         |
| Yemen       | 0.382                | 0.594              | 0.126                 | 0.206                                           | 0.159               | 0.293                                                         |
In the following paragraphs, we will compare these results based on a non-parametric index construction with results from a parametric index.

### Table 7.10 Comparing the UNDP-type Index “Overcoming Islamism”, based on aggregated 24 variables and the UNDP-type Index “Overcoming Islamism”, based on 5 sub-components

|                | UNDP-type Index “Overcoming Islamism”, aggregating 24 variables | UNDP-type Index “Overcoming Islamism”, based on 5 sub-components |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tunisia        | 0.688                                                         | 0.661                                                         |
| Lebanon        | 0.675                                                         | 0.652                                                         |
| Iraq           | 0.607                                                         | 0.628                                                         |
| Morocco        | 0.599                                                         | 0.591                                                         |
| Egypt          | 0.586                                                         | 0.602                                                         |
| Libya          | 0.561                                                         | 0.555                                                         |
| Jordan         | 0.463                                                         | 0.459                                                         |
| Westbank + Gaza| 0.438                                                         | 0.409                                                         |
| Algeria        | 0.408                                                         | 0.435                                                         |
| Sudan          | 0.271                                                         | 0.294                                                         |
| Yemen          | 0.271                                                         | 0.293                                                         |

In the following paragraphs, we will compare these results based on a non-parametric index construction with results from a parametric index.

### 7.8 Towards a Parametric Index of Political Islam, Built on a Principal Component Analysis of the Individual Level Survey Data Results from the Arab Barometer Survey on the Five Survey Items on Political Islam

Our parametric index of Political Islam relies on a straightforward principal component analysis of the Arab Barometer (5) data, specifically designated as such in the data file (see also, above, Image 7.1). Principal component analysis is described at length, among others, in Tausch et al. (2014). The analysis specified that only one component is extracted, which explained 39,586 of variance. Table 7.11 lists the “factor loadings”.

The highest factor loading is achieved by the variable, which measures the support of (or opposition to) Arab publics for (against) religious leaders in office.

Table 7.12 lists the country values of our calculations, the number of observations (respondents) with valid answers per country and the standard deviations of our dimension “Political Islam”. The strongest opposition to political by Arab publics was voiced in Lebanon, Tunisia and Iraq, and Arab publics were lending the strongest support for “Political Islam” in Sudan, Algeria and Yemen.

Table 7.12 listed the country results, while Table 7.13 disaggregates our support for Political Islam figures (N > 30) down to the level of the Governorates of the Arab world. The data show the considerable differences both between and within the countries of the Arab Barometer.
For the readership of this analysis, Table 7.13 can have manifold practical benefits. For the academics, studying Political Islam, follow-up studies might be considered, concentrating on the most and the least radical Governorates. For international business leaders and investors, government officials and security planners, Table 7.13 offers a hitherto unknown microscopic view of radicalism in the Arab World at the regional level. A scientific very worthwhile enterprise for future studies would be to correlate the data from Table 7.13 with the regional human development data available from the UNDP country human development reports.  

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### Table 7.11
The factor loadings (principal component analysis) of “Political Islam”

| **Political Islam**: disagreement: religious leaders should not interfere in elections | 0.517 |
| ----------------------------- | ------ |
| **Political Islam**: disagreement: country better off with religious leaders in office | −0.712 |
| **Political Islam**: disagreement: religious leaders should influence government decisions | −0.673 |
| **Political Islam**: disagreement: religious practice is private matter | 0.678 |
| **Political Islam**: disagreement: religious leaders as corrupt as non-religious leaders | 0.541 |

### Table 7.12
Country values for the principal component: Political Islam

| Country                  | Political Islam | N    | Standard deviation |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------|--------------------|
| Lebanon                  | −0.441          | 2263 | 0.985              |
| Tunisia                  | −0.268          | 1986 | 0.916              |
| Iraq                     | −0.247          | 2281 | 1.049              |
| Egypt                    | −0.229          | 1946 | 0.943              |
| Morocco                  | −0.035          | 1520 | 1.318              |
| Libya                    | 0.018           | 1739 | 0.733              |
| Jordan                   | 0.109           | 2141 | 0.842              |
| West Bank and Gaza       | 0.138           | 2239 | 0.932              |
| Yemen                    | 0.244           | 2190 | 1.144              |
| Algeria                  | 0.408           | 1792 | 0.769              |
| Sudan                    | 0.491           | 1530 | 0.757              |

For the readership of this analysis, Table 7.13 can have manifold practical benefits. For the academics, studying Political Islam, follow-up studies might be considered, concentrating on the most and the least radical Governorates. For international business leaders and investors, government officials and security planners, Table 7.13 offers a hitherto unknown microscopic view of radicalism in the Arab World at the regional level. A scientific very worthwhile enterprise for future studies would be to correlate the data from Table 7.13 with the regional human development data available from the UNDP country human development reports.  

13http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national
### Table 7.13 Regional support for Political Islam in the Governorates of the Arab World

| GOVERNORATE                  | Average support for Political Islam | N   | Standard deviation | Country/Territory   |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sa’dah                       | 1.128                               | 60  | 0.965              | Yemen              |
| Amran                        | 1.065                               | 55  | 0.988              | Yemen              |
| Red Sea                      | 1.029                               | 50  | 0.771              | Sudan              |
| West Darfur                  | 0.827                               | 35  | 0.736              | Sudan              |
| Blue Nile                    | 0.806                               | 44  | 0.564              | Sudan              |
| Deir al Balah                | 0.781                               | 115 | 0.971              | West Bank and Gaza|
| Al Mahwit                    | 0.703                               | 44  | 1.010              | Yemen              |
| Mascara                      | 0.682                               | 51  | 0.588              | Alegria            |
| Sennar                       | 0.681                               | 73  | 0.631              | Sudan              |
| B.B. Arreridj                | 0.671                               | 56  | 0.502              | Alegria            |
| Constantine                  | 0.645                               | 53  | 0.673              | Alegria            |
| Medea                        | 0.644                               | 51  | 0.743              | Alegria            |
| Guelmim-Oued Noun            | 0.634                               | 55  | 1.122              | Morocco            |
| South Darfur                 | 0.620                               | 152 | 0.544              | Sudan              |
| Amanat Al Asimah             | 0.606                               | 201 | 1.211              | Yemen              |
| Setif                        | 0.596                               | 121 | 0.780              | Alegria            |
| Dhamar                       | 0.578                               | 144 | 1.053              | Yemen              |
| Abyan                        | 0.562                               | 46  | 1.033              | Yemen              |
| Gedaref                      | 0.556                               | 72  | 0.971              | Sudan              |
| Hadramaut                    | 0.551                               | 117 | 1.069              | Yemen              |
| Central Darfur               | 0.523                               | 30  | 0.656              | Sudan              |
| Batna                        | 0.520                               | 73  | 0.800              | Alegria            |
| Mila                         | 0.518                               | 86  | 0.578              | Alegria            |
| Skikda                       | 0.489                               | 50  | 0.672              | Alegria            |
| Djelfa                       | 0.485                               | 75  | 0.552              | Alegria            |
| Kassala                      | 0.479                               | 93  | 0.848              | Sudan              |

(continued)
| Location   | Score | Population | Muslim Life Expectancy | Country |
|------------|-------|------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Biskara    | 0.478 | 59         | 0.716                   | Alegria |
| Khartoum   | 0.477 | 292        | 0.810                   | Sudan   |
| The Island | 0.459 | 205        | 0.687                   | Sudan   |
| Al Hudaydah| 0.459 | 230        | 0.882                   | Yemen   |
| Bejaia     | 0.459 | 54         | 0.719                   | Alegria |
| Annaba     | 0.456 | 55         | 0.792                   | Alegria |
| Hajjah     | 0.447 | 139        | 1.111                   | Yemen   |
| Mostaganem | 0.445 | 53         | 0.856                   | Alegria |
| East Darfur| 0.444 | 51         | 0.817                   | Sudan   |
| Jijel      | 0.436 | 49         | 0.805                   | Alegria |
| Messilia   | 0.432 | 52         | 0.617                   | Alegria |
| Madaba     | 0.395 | 49         | 0.744                   | Jordan  |
| Blida      | 0.394 | 59         | 0.749                   | Alegria |
| Ad Dali    | 0.393 | 60         | 0.890                   | Yemen   |
| Bouira     | 0.392 | 44         | 0.645                   | Alegria |
| Almarj     | 0.388 | 46         | 0.629                   | Libya   |
| Tiaret     | 0.387 | 49         | 0.703                   | Alegria |
| 'Adan      | 0.384 | 77         | 0.946                   | Yemen   |
| Nile River | 0.379 | 57         | 0.493                   | Sudan   |
| West Kordofan | 0.377 | 56 | 0.690 | Sudan |
| North Kordofan | 0.362 | 96 | 0.740 | Sudan |
| Gaza       | 0.359 | 258        | 0.916                   | West Bank and Gaza |
| Khan Yunis | 0.338 | 150        | 1.102                   | West Bank and Gaza |
| Sana’a     | 0.336 | 91         | 1.211                   | Yemen   |
| Maysan     | 0.307 | 73         | 0.866                   | Iraq    |
| Ajioun     | 0.288 | 49         | 0.814                   | Jordan  |
| Misrata    | 0.287 | 202        | 0.650                   | Libya   |
| Hebron     | 0.286 | 275        | 0.726                   | West Bank and Gaza |
| Jerash     | 0.269 | 58         | 0.889                   | Jordan  |
| North Darfur | 0.266 | 76 | 0.805 | Sudan |
| Rafah      | 0.254 | 99         | 1.173                   | West Bank and Gaza |

(continued)
### Table 7.13 (continued)

| Location                      | Parameter | Value | Value^2 | Region     |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|---------|------------|
| South Kordofan                | 0.250     | 44    | 0.821   | Sudan      |
| Sousse-Massa                  | 0.249     | 147   | 1.211   | Morocco    |
| Qalqilya                      | 0.248     | 57    | 0.746   | West Bank and Gaza |
| Oriental                      | 0.246     | 110   | 1.366   | Morocco    |
| Algiers                       | 0.224     | 148   | 0.828   | Alegria    |
| Oran                          | 0.219     | 111   | 0.830   | Alegria    |
| Menoufia                      | 0.217     | 87    | 1.009   | Egypt      |
| Al Jabal AL Gharbi            | 0.212     | 112   | 0.850   | Libya      |
| Irbid                         | 0.197     | 428   | 0.850   | Jordan     |
| South                         | 0.181     | 243   | 0.704   | Lebanon    |
| Jabalia                       | 0.175     | 132   | 1.205   | West Bank and Gaza |
| Tlemcen                       | 0.163     | 52    | 0.822   | Alegria    |
| Nabulus                       | 0.162     | 143   | 0.679   | West Bank and Gaza |
| Karak                         | 0.156     | 97    | 0.770   | Jordan     |
| White Nile                    | 0.148     | 77    | 0.848   | Sudan      |
| Tafila                        | 0.144     | 36    | 0.809   | Jordan     |
| Tubas                         | 0.139     | 56    | 0.693   | West Bank and Gaza |
| Jenin                         | 0.128     | 143   | 0.749   | West Bank and Gaza |
| Laayoune-Sakia El Hamra       | 0.119     | 38    | 1.031   | Morocco    |
| Al Mafraq                      | 0.115     | 107   | 0.884   | Jordan     |
| Murzuq                        | 0.114     | 36    | 0.604   | Libya      |
| Tobruq                        | 0.102     | 56    | 0.554   | Libya      |
| Najaf                         | 0.099     | 98    | 0.877   | Iraq       |
| Derna                         | 0.098     | 56    | 0.474   | Libya      |
| Nabatieh                      | 0.090     | 133   | 0.808   | Lebanon    |
| Marrakech-Safi                | 0.071     | 223   | 1.311   | Morocco    |
| Amman                         | 0.070     | 821   | 0.854   | Jordan     |
| Dhi War                       | 0.065     | 149   | 1.020   | Iraq       |
| Fès-Meknès                    | 0.064     | 187   | 1.402   | Morocco    |

(continued)
| Location       | Value | Population | Index | Region                      |
|---------------|-------|------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| Raymah        | 0.062 | 57         | 1.083 | Yemen                       |
| Salfit        | 0.038 | 59         | 0.880 | West Bank and Gaza          |
| Al Balqa      | 0.035 | 118        | 0.744 | Jordan                      |
| Ma’an         | 0.031 | 44         | 0.817 | Jordan                      |
| Jerusalem     | 0.026 | 226        | 0.970 | West Bank and Gaza          |
| Azurqa        | 0.021 | 295        | 0.844 | Jordan                      |
| Benghazî      | 0.009 | 94         | 0.642 | Libya                       |
| Karbala       | 0.009 | 78         | 1.090 | Iraq                        |
| Nalut         | 0.006 | 40         | 0.699 | Libya                       |
| Ma’rib        | 0.005 | 40         | 1.242 | Yemen                       |
| Al Murqub     | 0.005 | 189        | 0.572 | Libya                       |
| Manouba       | 0.004 | 63         | 0.760 | Tunisia                     |
| Monastir      | 0.003 | 103        | 0.602 | Tunisia                     |
| Al Jawf       | -0.001| 59         | 1.016 | Yemen                       |
| Tripoli       | -0.004| 348        | 0.777 | Libya                       |
| Tulkarem      | -0.005| 90         | 0.667 | West Bank and Gaza          |
| Jerico        | -0.006| 53         | 0.632 | West Bank and Gaza          |
| Al Mahrah     | -0.017| 40         | 1.010 | Yemen                       |
| Tipaza        | -0.022| 58         | 0.774 | Alegria                     |
| Wasit         | -0.024| 92         | 1.124 | Iraq                        |
| Ibb           | -0.031| 240        | 1.213 | Yemen                       |
| Kairouan      | -0.033| 115        | 1.006 | Tunisia                     |
| The Lake      | -0.040| 148        | 0.789 | Egypt                       |
| Drâa-Tafilalet| -0.044| 83         | 1.373 | Morocco                     |
| Aqaba         | -0.065| 39         | 0.830 | Jordan                      |
| Dakahlia      | -0.074| 131        | 0.969 | Egypt                       |
| Nabeul        | -0.084| 124        | 0.740 | Tunisia                     |
| Sebha         | -0.087| 40         | 0.676 | Libya                       |
| Tiz-Ouzou     | -0.089| 58         | 0.672 | Alegria                     |
| Sirt          | -0.095| 39         | 0.491 | Libya                       |
| Al Jabal Al Akhdar | -0.097| 84         | 0.559 | Libya                       |
Table 7.13 (continued)

| City                | Score | Population | Index | Country       |
|---------------------|-------|------------|-------|---------------|
| Al Zawia            | -0.114 | 121        | 0.911 | Libya         |
| Jendouba            | -0.121 | 76         | 0.772 | Tunisia       |
| Basra               | -0.131 | 180        | 0.833 | Iraq          |
| Eastern             | -0.133 | 129        | 0.880 | Egypt         |
| Zaghouan            | -0.134 | 32         | 0.896 | Tunisia       |
| Ramallah            | -0.137 | 182        | 0.706 | West Bank and Gaza |
| Beja                | -0.138 | 62         | 0.775 | Tunisia       |
| Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima | -0.140 | 166        | 1.297 | Morocco       |
| Sfax                | -0.141 | 177        | 0.893 | Tunisia       |
| Rabat-Salé-Kénitra  | -0.149 | 187        | 1.261 | Morocco       |
| Assiut              | -0.149 | 90         | 0.830 | Egypt         |
| Bizerte             | -0.150 | 82         | 0.859 | Tunisia       |
| Giza                | -0.159 | 175        | 0.982 | Egypt         |
| Sousse              | -0.169 | 122        | 0.865 | Tunisia       |
| Lahij               | -0.174 | 100        | 1.046 | Yemen         |
| Ben Arous           | -0.177 | 120        | 0.808 | Tunisia       |
| Shabwah             | -0.190 | 60         | 1.388 | Yemen         |
| Sulaymaniya         | -0.196 | 120        | 0.920 | Iraq          |
| Sidi Bouzid         | -0.199 | 78         | 0.834 | Tunisia       |
| Western             | -0.211 | 99         | 1.064 | Egypt         |
| Nuqat Al Khams      | -0.212 | 102        | 0.928 | Libya         |
| Sohag               | -0.216 | 102        | 0.823 | Egypt         |
| Tunis               | -0.242 | 191        | 0.859 | Tunisia       |
| Damietta            | -0.242 | 33         | 0.992 | Egypt         |
| Bekaa               | -0.252 | 115        | 0.705 | Lebanon       |
| Al Bayda            | -0.264 | 70         | 0.964 | Yemen         |
| Babylon             | -0.267 | 125        | 1.279 | Iraq          |
| Erbil               | -0.268 | 96         | 0.904 | Iraq          |
| Aswan               | -0.282 | 30         | 0.898 | Egypt         |
| Siliana             | -0.282 | 43         | 1.089 | Tunisia       |
| Kafr El Sheik       | -0.287 | 72         | 0.617 | Egypt         |
| Baghdad             | -0.290 | 540        | 1.066 | Iraq          |

(continued)
Table 7.13 (continued)

| City                  | Parameter 1 | Parameter 2 | Parameter 3 | Country       |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Beni Suef             | -0.292      | 65          | 0.946       | Egypt         |
| Jafara                | -0.302      | 96          | 0.812       | Libya         |
| Kasserine             | -0.312      | 80          | 0.949       | Tunisia       |
| Kirkuk                | -0.313      | 88          | 0.931       | Iraq          |
| Fayoum                | -0.313      | 82          | 0.897       | Egypt         |
| Gafsa                 | -0.345      | 67          | 0.887       | Tunisia       |
| Minya                 | -0.370      | 114         | 1.082       | Egypt         |
| Béni Mellal-Khénifra  | -0.370      | 104         | 1.548       | Morocco       |
| Cairo                 | -0.371      | 207         | 0.969       | Egypt         |
| Baalbek               | -0.374      | 102         | 1.194       | Lebanon       |
| Kef                   | -0.382      | 45          | 0.996       | Tunisia       |
| Kaliobeya             | -0.391      | 113         | 1.108       | Egypt         |
| Alexandria            | -0.399      | 112         | 0.951       | Egypt         |
| Salahaddin            | -0.418      | 101         | 0.934       | Iraq          |
| Diyala                | -0.423      | 92          | 1.204       | Iraq          |
| Qadisiyah             | -0.444      | 76          | 1.214       | Iraq          |
| Ta’izz                | -0.449      | 260         | 0.980       | Yemen         |
| Grand Casablanca-Settat | -0.454   | 206         | 1.150       | Morocco       |
| Qena                  | -0.462      | 71          | 0.816       | Egypt         |
| Bethlehem             | -0.482      | 201         | 0.970       | West Bank and Gaza |
| North                 | -0.522      | 328         | 0.820       | Lebanon       |
| Anbar                 | -0.524      | 114         | 1.038       | Iraq          |
| Nineveh               | -0.537      | 259         | 1.027       | Iraq          |
| Medenine              | -0.544      | 91          | 0.894       | Tunisia       |
| Ariana                | -0.559      | 98          | 1.135       | Tunisia       |
| Mt Lebanon            | -0.587      | 944         | 1.042       | Lebanon       |
| Tatouine              | -0.590      | 30          | 1.114       | Tunisia       |
| Akkar                 | -0.632      | 157         | 0.592       | Lebanon       |
| Mahdia                | -0.633      | 74          | 0.984       | Tunisia       |
| Beirut                | -0.669      | 241         | 1.137       | Lebanon       |
| Gabes                 | -0.954      | 62          | 1.014       | Tunisia       |
7.9 A Note on the Drivers of Political Islam

At the end of our journey into the worlds of Political Islam, we show some salient relationships which emerge from our empirical data. Graph 7.1 shows the close relationship between overall Islamism and Political Islam proper. None the less than 82.53 percent of the variance of Political Islam is explained by the overall Index of Overcoming Islamism.

Graph 7.2 looks at the relationship between self-professed religiosity and Political Islam, and Graph 7.3 analyses the relationship between the frequency of prayer and Political Islam.

The lamentable conclusion from these data is that up to now, there is a great vacuum for those Arab publics looking for a modern Muslim spirituality disconnected from Political Islam with its calls for religious leaders interfering in elections, occupying leadership positions of the country and overseeing the concrete, day-to-day tasks of government. Sooner or later, Arab publics will discover that their Muslim spirituality is indeed a “private matter” and that religious leaders can be as decent or corrupt as non-religious leaders.

Graph 7.4 shows the relationship between support or critique of the most salient global Islamist leader today, Turkish President Erdogan, and Political Islam among the interviewed Arab publics.

Support for Erdogan and his neo-Ottoman project is clearly connected to the extent of support for Political Islam.
Support for Political Islam is also very clearly connected to Anti-Westernism in the region. Political Islamist hatred against the West now also features the United Arab Emirates with its close cooperation with Western countries (and its world class Universities!) as a victim of this prejudice (Graph 7.5).
Graph 7.4 Opinions on Turkish President Erdogan and Political Islam

Graph 7.5 World political perceptions and Political Islam
Our final graph analyses the connection between educational level and support for Political Islam: as a rule, the advancement of education reduces the extent of support for Political Islam (Graph 7.6).

7.10 Prospects and Conclusions

We began this chapter with a quote from Bernard Lewis putting forth an argument that has been regarded as part of established doctrine on Middle East studies – that Islam cannot be democratized, that Muslims and Arabs cannot view themselves as independent from the divine. Such a perspective, however, ignores the scepticism, rationalism and humanism in Arab history as Phil Zuckerman alludes to in his work. Zuckerman quotes numerous Arab scholars who reflected on this tradition. There was the ninth century sceptic Ibn al-Rawandi who negated Islam as he advocated free thought. Also of the ninth century, there was the critical rationalism of Muhammad Al-Warraq who doubted the existence of a god and the veracity of divine revelation. Muhammad al-Razi, meanwhile, advanced the study of the natural sciences as he questioned the divinity of the Qur’an. Then there was the secular humanism of Omar Khayyam of the eleventh century and the twelfth century towering intellect of the founding father of secular philosophy – Averroes (Zuckerman 2019).

Tapping into this secular, humanist and critical rationalist tradition, Muslim scholars are increasingly examining a post-Islamist future. Asef Bayat describes a
present where Islamism increasingly loses legitimacy on account of their system’s contradictions and failures. Compelled by a combination of these anomalies and societal pressure, these have to reinvent themselves. This reinvention is revolutionary in that it entails a qualitative shift in their ideological position. Whilst Islamism is characterized by universalism, exclusivism, obligation and a monopoly of religious truth, post-Islamist movements stress ambiguity and multiplicity, inclusion and compromise in principles and practice, and responsibility. It is important to acknowledge that this post-Islamism does not represent the jettisoning of religion in the public sphere as in France. Rather, post-Islamism refers to an inclusive religiosity – one which is compatible to liberal democratic norms (Bayat 2006). Ali Eteraz (2007) notes that post-Islamism recognizes that politics rather than religion provides for the welfare of this life.

These changes already started appearing in the mid-1990s when the Al-Wasat Party in Egypt was formed as an alternative to both militant Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood. Whilst Wasat regarded itself as an Islamic party, it welcomed secularists and Christians into it fold, rejects religious or gender discrimination, is opposed to an extra-constitutional body of clerics, as in Iran, which can veto laws, and supports the separation of powers (Eteraz 2007). Tunisia’s Islamists in the form of Ennahda has increasingly distanced itself from its Muslim Brotherhood origins and is recasting itself as a Muslim Democratic Party in the vein of Germany’s Christian Democratic Union. In the November 2019 elections, Ennahda’s candidate for prime minister, Habib Jemli, made it clear that the selection criteria for any cabinet members would be efficiency and integrity not party or religious affiliation (The Wilson Centre 2019).

Another dimension of a post-Islamist MENA region is highlighted by the emergence of civil Islam. Contrary to Islamism which is state-centric and a political ideology, civil Islam focuses on the individual Muslim’s spiritual development and the promotion of the general conditions necessary for human society to flourish. These include religious freedom, human rights, economic development, rule of law, communal harmony and social justice. Whilst not involved in party political activities, those Muslims subscribing to civil Islam do not endorse adopting a hermit stance to the world. Their participation, however, takes the form of civic activism – from child welfare to educational foundations (Komecoglu 2020). There is an inherent danger here on the nature of this civil Islam since critics might well argue that this is precisely how Islamist organizations have made inroads into local population – with their civic activism. It is always difficult, however, to assess the true intentions of such organizations.

Our empirics of the support rates for Political Islam in the region relied on data from the Arab Barometer survey (5). In the main table of this chapter, Table 7.1 listed the support rates for Islamism and Political Islam in the region on a population-weighted basis. If the people of the entire Arab world had a free vote in a referendum, the following rules and regulations would handsomely still gain an absolute majority:
• Against a marriage of a female with a man who does not pray.
• Terrorism against the USA is a logical consequence of US interference in the region.
• Males are better political leaders.
• The USA, the UK and Israel pose the greatest threat to the stability and well-being of the region.
• Banks should not be allowed to charge interest.

More than a third of Arab opinion supports, among others, the following contentions:

• In favour of Shari’a using physical punishments.
• A woman cannot be prime minister/president.
• In society, non-Muslims’ rights should be inferior.
• Rejecting neighbours – people of a different religion.
• Shari’a should restrict women’s role.

From the Arab Barometer data, we constructed parametric and non-parametric indices of Overcoming Islamism and of Political Islam. The indices show a very high correlation with each other. The country values of the Index components are found in Table 7.2. Islamism is defined as high values along our 24 indicators across the board. Table 7.3 reported our UNDP-type Index “Overcoming Islamism” based on the valid country-level Arab Barometer results with 24 variables, aggregated with equal weights. Tunisia, according to Table 7.3, is the country whose population is rendering least support for Islamist worldviews, followed by Lebanon and Iraq. Yemen, Sudan and Algeria are the 3 Arab nations whose population lends biggest across-the-board support for the 24 Islamist positions under consideration here. The results based on our Index of Overcoming Islamism measured by the unweighted averages of five subcomponents:

• No Economic Islamism
• Accepting the West
• Overcoming Patriarchy
• Accepting Liberal Democracy and the State of Law
• Religious Tolerance

Not surprisingly, Tunisia again heads the list, followed by Lebanon and Iraq, while Yemen, Sudan and Algeria are the countries where Arab publics still most consistently support Islamism, as defined by the 24 indicators of our study.

Our parametric index of Political Islam relies on a straightforward principal component analysis of the Arab Barometer (5) data, specifically designated as such in the data file. The strongest opposition to Political Islam by Arab publics was voiced in Lebanon, Tunisia and Iraq, and Arab publics were lending the strongest support for “Political Islam” in Sudan, Algeria and Yemen.

Table 7.12 listed the country results, while Table 7.13 disaggregates our support for Political Islam figures (N > 30) down to the level of the Governorates of the Arab
world. The data show the considerable differences both between and within the countries of the Arab Barometer.

None the less than 82.53 percent of the variance of Political Islam is explained by the overall Index of Overcoming Islamism. One of the lamentable conclusions from our data is that up to now, there is a great vacuum for those Arab publics looking for a modern Muslim spirituality disconnected from Political Islam with its calls for religious leaders interfering in elections, occupying leadership positions of the country and overseeing the concrete, day-to-day tasks of government. Sooner or later, Arab publics will discover that their Muslim spirituality is indeed a “private matter” and that religious leaders can be as decent or corrupt as non-religious leaders. We also could show the close relationship between support of the most salient global Islamist leader today, Turkish President Erdogan, and Political Islam among the interviewed Arab publics. Support for Political Islam is also very clearly connected to Anti-Westernism in the region. Political Islamist hatred against the West now also features the United Arab Emirates with its close cooperation with Western countries (and its world class Universities!) as a victim of this prejudice. As a rule, the advancement of education reduces the extent of support for Political Islam.

Despite the challenges and hidden dangers on the basis of the tremendous values change across the MENA region, the demise of Political Islam in the long term is occurring. This might well herald the beginning of more stable, prosperous and open polities for the long-suffering inhabitants of this blighted region.

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