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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE IMPACT OF DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED ISLAMIST GOVERNMENTS
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREIGN POLICY: CASES OF EGYPT,
MOROCCO, AND TUNISIA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to examine the foreign policy of elected Islamist parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia while in power and compare their foreign policy with non-Islamist parties from their respective countries. It seeks to answer the following questions: What is the role of democratically elected Islamist parties on the implementation of foreign policy? Does the foreign policy of Islamist parties differ from that of non-Islamist parties? Do Islamist parties apply their Islamist ideology to foreign policy? Finally, do Islamist parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia share similar foreign policy approaches? The study concludes that the difference in foreign policy between Islamist and non-Islamist parties while in power was not significantly high. It also claims that while some Islamist parties do implement foreign policies that are consistent with their Islamist ideology, their foreign policy was more impacted by their respective political system and national context than their shared ideology. Additionally, the study shows that Islamist parties also are not monolithic regarding their foreign policy. Islamist parties not only have different national policies as other studies have shown but also have distinct foreign policies that are highly influenced by their national context.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In January 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood won parliamentary elections in the first free and fair elections in Egyptian history. Later that year, the Brotherhood's candidate, Mohammed Morsi, was elected president. These victories shocked the Western world, and the principal post-election fear was that the 1979 Camp David Peace Accords with Israel would be amended due to the Muslim Brotherhood's pro-Palestinian position (Wittes and Hamid, 2013). Historically, Islamists have opposed any peace with Israel and refused to recognize it as a legitimate state. Morsi, in his first speech as president, tried to minimize that fear by declaring, "We will maintain international charters and conventions and the commitments and agreements Egypt has signed with the world" (BBC News, 2012). Although he did not specifically mention the Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty, did Morsi's commitment to maintaining the Camp David Peace Accords reflect a political shift within the Muslim Brotherhood? Do Islamist parties, in general, become more moderate when they are in power? Or was this all simply lip service?

Following the eruption of the Arab Spring, many scholars have engaged in studies centered on the causes of the uprisings and how they spread across the Arab world. Others focused on the democratization process in the region, and in particular the compatibility of Islam and democracy. A great deal of research has also addressed the domestic challenges and the attempts of democratization that have taken place since the uprisings. While this phenomenon does not only impact the countries that have experienced these uprisings, few studies have

examined how the Arab Spring influenced surrounding countries and helped to establish new regimes. In other words, what implications would the Arab Spring have on these countries' international relations and foreign policy? Would domestic policy changes in the countries that were affected by the Arab Spring lead to a change in their foreign policy as well? And most importantly, would the rise of Islamist parties to power in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia have any impact on each country's foreign policy? Such questions have not received much attention despite their importance not only to their respective countries but also to the world as a whole. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the foreign policy of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, tracing their foreign policies from 2006-2018, covering three governmental periods, and comparing the foreign policies of both Islamist and non-Islamist parties.

The Arab Spring and the Rise of Islamist Parties

Prior to the Arab Spring, the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) suffered from a lack of political freedom, corruption, a high level of unemployment, and economic crises. Most countries had been controlled by a single party for decades. All these factors contributed to the eruption of what is called the Arab Spring, which refers to the uprisings that spread over the MENA region at the end of 2010. The spark that ignited these uprisings started when Muhammad Bouazizi, a Tunisian man, set himself on fire to protest the oppression and corruption in his country. His act inspired many people throughout the MENA region to protest the status quo, with protests spreading from Tunisia to Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Libya, Morocco, and Yemen. The protests led to the ousting of several dictators, including Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the president of Tunisia, and Muhammad Hosni Mubarak, the president of Egypt. Other

protests transformed into civil wars, for example in Syria and Libya, whereas other governments, such as Morocco, applied political reforms.

One of the main aims of these protests was to establish democratic regimes where citizens would be able to participate in free and fair elections, access political freedom, and improve equality. Thus, some of the uprisings, such as those of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, succeeded in holding their first-ever free and fair elections. By 2012, more than 50 Islamist parties and movements were able to mobilize millions of supporters and form governments in Arab countries (Wright, 2012, 1).

These elections were also remarkable for bringing Islamist parties to power. After decades of expulsion, exclusion, and oppression, the Arab Spring enhanced Islamist party positions, allowing them to run for office and gain a majority of seats in several countries. For example, in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, Islamist parties won the first elections following the Arab Spring and became the ruling party. The Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) led Egypt for only one year (2012-2013) until the military coup; the Ennahda Party ruled Tunisia from 2011 until 2014; and the Justice and Development Party (PJD), which is the longest elected Islamist party in power in the Arab world, led Morocco from 2011 to 2021, winning a legislative majority in both the 2011 and 2016 elections. Each of the parties governed for distinct periods, with some contributing to the formation of new constitutions.

The world reacted differently in response to the Islamist parties' rise to power. The United States under the Obama administration sought cooperation with the Muslim Brotherhood to aid the democratization process, including sending messages to and holding meetings with Muslim Brotherhood leaders. Saudi Arabia and the Arab Emirates were threatened by the rise of

Islamist parties and supported the military coup that overthrew the Islamist government in Egypt. In contrast, Qatar and Turkey supported these Islamist parties and stood against the coup.

The confusing reaction to the rise of Islamist parties to power raises many questions. Do Islamist parties differ from non-Islamist parties? Do they have different foreign policies and trends in their international relations? Why would the rise of Islamist parties be considered a threat to countries like Saudi Arabia? Why do other countries support these parties? Is it the Islamists' ideology that has driven these contradicting reactions? And most importantly, do Islamist parties implement their Islamist ideology while in power? Despite the massive amount of literature on the subject of the Arab Spring and Islamism, these questions have not been addressed. Most research has been conducted on the domestic front, such as how and why Islamist parties won elections after the Arab Spring, why they succeeded in Tunisia and failed in Egypt, and addressing the Islamist parties' views on democracy. Yet, there remain crucial questions about Islamists' foreign policy. What are the distinctive ways in which Islamist parties approach international relations? Is their foreign policy impacted by their ideology? Are Islamist parties uniform in their development and application of foreign policy? If they are not uniform, what causes Islamist parties to act differently despite their shared ideology? These questions are key to understanding Islamist parties' foreign policy and their impact on international relations.

It is important to note that while Islamist parties share an ideology and many preferences, they are not monolithic. Even though each party won their respective elections and had the opportunity to lead the government, domestic agendas were implemented very differently. One of the major distinctions between Islamist parties in their approach to domestic politics was the reaction to the formation of a new constitution following the uprisings. The Ennahda party, for

instance, compromised on many of its core Islamist beliefs, including freedom of conscience and the lack of references to *Sharia* (Netterstrom, 2015). In addition, Ennahda did not refuse to relinquish power, stepping down when it saw it as necessary, following the assassination of two secular politicians, a notable response by Ennahda to a domestic crisis.

On the other hand, the Islamist Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt appointed a great number of its members to the constituent panel to draft the new constitution, which alarmed secularists and minorities in Egypt. This among many other factors led to the military coup against Islamist party control and the removal and detention of the elected president and many members of the Islamist party. Meanwhile, in Morocco, the Islamist Justice and Development Party had only a small role in amending the constitution due to the king's control (Gallala-Arndt, 2012, 142 & 144). These are examples of some of the differences between Islamist parties at the domestic level. Despite sharing the same ideology, Islamist parties appear to have distinct domestic policies. However, can the same be said about their foreign policies?

Islamist Parties: Moving from Society to Politics

Islamism, as Asef Bayat explains, refers to “those ideologies and movements that seek to establish some kind of an Islamic order – a religious state, Sharia law, and moral codes in Muslim societies and communities” (2013, 592). The Muslim Brotherhood is one of the main Islamist movements and has inspired many other movements and parties. It was established by Hassan al-Banna in 1928 as a social movement and primarily focuses on preaching, education, healthcare, and recruitment (Al Sayyid, 1997, 93-112). The Brotherhood also concentrates on providing social services and goods to people, especially those of lower socio-economic classes. The main message the Brotherhood seeks to spread is that Islam is the answer and the solution

for everything (Berman, 2003, 260). In an interview with the Harvard International Review, the Deputy Chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammad Ma'mun El-Hudaibi, declared that their main principles are introducing *Sharia* as the basis for the state and society, and working to unify Islamic countries by liberating them from foreign imperialism (Jones and Cullinane, 2017).

Although the Muslim Brotherhood started as a social movement, it evolved into a political organization in 1948 following the Arab-Israeli war and the establishment of the state of Israel. Following the conflict, the Brotherhood spread to Arab countries such as Palestine, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria (Osman, 2016, 4). Mohammed Sudan, a senior official in the Muslim Brotherhood, said in an Aljazeera report that the Muslim Brotherhood is present in as many as 85 countries around the world. This number includes countries where movements and institutions are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood organizationally or ideologically. It is worth mentioning that Sudan's count also encompasses movements such as Ennahda in Tunisia and the PJD in Morocco that do not formally belong to the Muslim Brotherhood ("Muslim Brotherhood," 2016).

Tarek Osman, in his book *Islamism*, traces the relationship between Islamist parties in the Arab world and their regimes. He shows that Islamist parties have suffered in both republics such as Egypt and Tunisia and monarchies such as Morocco and Jordan. They faced oppression and persecution or were forced into exile such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood during the administration of President Gamal Abdel-Nasser, Ennahda under President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and the Islamist group in Morocco during the rule of King Hassan II. Later, some of these parties accepted the status quo and were co-opted by the regime. For example, they concentrated less on winning elections to gain the trust of certain regimes to be able to operate. Thus, the

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt cooperated with President Anwar Al-Sadat, who offered them a small amount of political access as he needed their support against the Nasser nationalists. Also, the Islamist PJD in Morocco realized the need to respect the palace's legitimacy and operate like any other political party. In Tunisia, however, Ennahda rejected both accepting the status quo and regime co-optation.

Despite this, the weakness that Arab regimes and leaders experienced during the 2000s, including the illness of Mubarak and Bin Ali and the high level of corruption and unemployment, led to turmoil in the region. The Arab uprisings spread from Tunisia to Egypt and reached other countries including Morocco. Regimes in Egypt and Tunisia were overthrown and some reforms in Morocco were made. Three countries, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia witnessed a new phase in which they all by 2011-2012 had their first-ever free and fair elections. More surprisingly, Islamist parties won the elections and became the ruling party in these three countries. Accordingly, the Arab Spring opens new queries about what led to these uprisings. What causes Islamist parties to win most elections? Was it an "Islamist spring" as some have claimed? This dissertation focuses on how Islamists address international relations following their rise to power: was their foreign policy driven by an Islamist ideology or pragmatism?

Methodology

This study seeks to answer the following questions: what is the role of democratically elected Islamist parties in the implementation of foreign policy? Do Islamist parties have foreign policies that differ from non-Islamist parties? Do Islamist parties apply their Islamist ideology to foreign policy? Finally, do Islamist parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia share similar foreign policy approaches? To answer the main questions of this study, the study will focus on two

hypotheses: one main hypothesis and a sub-hypothesis. The main hypothesis assesses the tendency of Islamist parties to favor Muslim-majority countries. The sub-hypothesis examines the Islamist party's relationship with the Middle East and North Africa region.

This study uses a qualitative, comparative case study method to address the above questions. It compares the foreign policy of non-Islamist parties to that of Islamist parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, three countries that all experienced the rise of elected Islamist parties after the Arab Spring. These countries are also all located in North Africa and have similar social and political cultures. This allows for an illustration of similar policies or to explain differences between foreign policies despite similar Islamic references. The study uses content analysis for data collection. Data include government officials' visits, meetings, and analysis of the statements, and agreements that were signed during each party's tenure. This study covers the period between 2006 and 2018, which includes the periods preceding, during, and following the period of Islamist party control.

Purpose of the Study

The impact of this study will be twofold. First, many aspects of Islamist parties remain understudied, especially regarding foreign policy, primarily as the rise of Islamist parties to power is a considerably new phenomenon. Hence, this study will enrich the small amount of available literature on Islamist parties' foreign policy. Countries including the United States are often wary of Islamist parties' control of the government. Therefore, this study will also illustrate how countries with elected Islamist parties handle international relations in such a precarious atmosphere. In addition to illustrating Islamist foreign policy, this dissertation aims to demonstrate Islamists' diversity. Islamist parties vary and should not be viewed as a single entity

that all share the same exact views. Accordingly, treating Islamist parties as a monolith leads to misunderstandings and incorrect policy.

Second, since there has been an increase in the number of Islamist parties in power, this study will assist policymakers on what to expect from governing Islamist parties. This study will show whether Islamist parties have distinct foreign policies from non-Islamist parties or whether their policies would be Islamized. Recent studies of Islamist parties have examined their domestic policies and have shown that Islamist parties tend to implement their ideology domestically. Yet it is still unknown if Islamist parties utilize their ideology in international relations. Thus, this dissertation will contribute to the literature on Islamism by investigating the foreign policies of Islamist parties to assist global policymakers in their approach to countries that are controlled by Islamist parties.

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. Chapters One and Two explore the literature on how Islamist parties influence foreign policy, which includes the emergence of Islamist parties, their relationship to democracy, and their impact on foreign policy. Chapter Three discuss the methodology of the study and outlines the hypotheses, as well as how they are tested. Chapter Four describes the Islamist and non-Islamist parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia in terms of their history, type, and role in foreign policy-making. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven test the hypotheses in which Islamist and non-Islamist foreign policies are compared and discusses the results. These hypotheses test the relationship between Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia during Islamist and non-Islamist party control in relation to Muslim-majority countries with a focus on the MENA region countries. Chapter Eight compares the Islamist parties' foreign policy and discusses the implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamist parties have been studied from many angles. In this chapter, I review prior studies that discuss their emergence and history, as well as differences between their approaches to domestic politics, democracy, and foreign policy.

The Emergence of Islamist Parties

Mozaffari traces the evolution of the concept of Islamism. He claims that Islamism as a concept was first used by the French writer Le Petit Robert at the end of the seventeenth century to refer to Islam as a religion. In the nineteenth century, scholars like Caussin de Perceval, Comte de Gobineau, and Ernest Renan continued to use the concept of Islamism to refer to the religion of Islam (Mozaffari, 2007, 18-19). Later, the concept of Islamism almost disappeared as it was replaced by the terms “Islam” and “Islamic.” However, the Islamic revolution in Iran led to new terms with increasing political significance, such as “political Islam,” “Islamic fundamentalism,” “radical Islam,” and “Islamic revival.” Mozaffari states that the use of the term “Islamism” increased after the events of September 11, 2001 (often referred to as 9/11). Yet, “Islamism” is no longer used to refer to the religion of Islam, and became an independent political concept, though its exact meaning remains ambiguous and there is little consensus on the definition.

The ambiguity of this concept has led to its misuse and a high state of polyvalence. “Islamism” or “political Islam” (in Arabic *Islamy, Islamiyyun*), which are more or less

interchangeable, have now come to refer to several concepts related to Islam, such as an Islamic state or Islamic behavior, Islamist movements or parties, or religious individuals. As a result, it has become very difficult to reach a consensus on how to define Islamism.

Denoeux defines Islamism as “a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups, and organizations that pursue political objectives” (2002, 61). He claims that Islamists believe that Islam is the solution for all economic, political, social, and cultural challenges that Muslim societies face. Similarly, Roy refers to Islamism as a political and social movement that uses Islam as its primary source for guidance (1996). Additionally, Berman defines Islamism as “the belief that Islam should guide social and political as well as personal life” (2003, 257), whereas the Committee of Foreign Affairs for the House of Commons (2017) holds that there is no single definition to fit all movements or ideologies referred to as political Islam. They state that “political Islam comprises a broad spectrum of movements and ideologies,” and that “a ‘one size fits all policy’ is inappropriate” (3).

Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the most prominent Islamist scholars and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, criticizes the use of the term “political Islam.” He argues that Islam is all encompassing and cannot be divided into different entities such as political Islam, radical Islam, moderate Islam, and so on. He writes that Islam is an inclusive religion that involves all aspects of life, whether religious, political, social, or economic. By the same token, Hasan al Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, believes that Islam is an inclusive order that pertains to all aspects of life; Islam is not merely a religion, but also a political ideology (1982). Al-Banna claimed that Islam – unlike the spiritual belief that many Muslims consider it – is an inclusive system that organizes social, political, and economic life.

Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist organization that began in present-day Pakistan and is mostly present throughout the Indian subcontinent, agrees with al-Banna and asserts that Muslims should believe that there is no law, but the law of God that He reveals through His prophets (Maududi, 1980, 12). Nevertheless, the heterogeneous nature of political Islam has been an obstacle to a generalized understanding of the phenomenon. Each Islamist movement or party has had its unique history and practices based on the social and geographical nature of the territory in which it operates. In other words, Islamist parties are not monolithic and evolve over time.

Several studies, including those of Abu-Rabi' (1996), Hamid (2011), and Lapidus (1997) focus on the establishment, origins, and history of Islamist movements. These scholars have found that many Islamist movements were established as a response to the collapse of the Ottoman Islamic empire, mainly as a reaction to colonialism and European states' involvement in the Middle East. These studies also claim that the main goal of early Islamist movements was to counter the secular movements that arose after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, which focused on maintaining religious principles and societal values against the coercive secularization adopted by newborn states.

Accordingly, Islamist movements rose as an awakening that aimed to return to the golden age of Islam and create a pious society. Thus, while these parties shared the main goal of Islamizing society, they disagreed on how to achieve that aim. They agreed on the importance of controlling the state but disagreed on the means of accomplishing this. Moderate Islamists, Roy has claimed, work to Islamize society from the bottom by establishing social and cultural movements and work within the system by establishing political alliances within the current

system. On the other hand, radical Islamists lean toward rupture and call for revolt against the current system (Roy, 1996, 46).

Maududi states that we could not have an Islamic government in a country that is controlled by nonbelievers and whose society is corrupt. To have an Islamic government, work needs to be first done to Islamize and purify the society through the education system, media, and all other means (1983, 16). Thus, Nasr claims that “the Jama’at’s efforts have always aimed at winning over the society’s leaders, conquering the state, and Islamizing the government” (1994, 9). Islamizing the system, for Maududi, requires first Islamizing the leadership, a top-down process. On the other hand, Ayooob (2008) notes that al-Banna’s process of Islamization process was instead bottom-up, first Islamizing society, and then the state.

Kepel illustrates the similarities and differences between the main Sunni and Shi’i Islamist figures: Maududi, Sayyid Qutb, a prominent Islamist and one of the main ideologues of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Ruhollah Khomeini, a Shi’i cleric who led the Iranian revolution in 1979. He argues that they saw Islam as a political movement, rejected secularism, called for the establishment of an Islamic state, and rejected the traditional practice of Islam that considered the political struggle a secondary issue. On the other hand, Kepel states, that they differed in their approaches to achieving the Islamic state. “Qutb advocates a clean break with the established order,” which attracted educated and working-class youth, but alienated most clerics and the middle class. Maududi’s approach to establishing an Islamic state was gradual, “a task to be undertaken slowly, step by step.” Unlike that of Qutb, this method was supported by the middle class and rejected by the masses. Khomeini, on the other hand, “was able to create a

coalition of all interested parties: the disinherited, the middle class, radical intellectuals, and clerics,” which resulted in the establishment of the Islamic state in Iran (Kepel, 2000, 23-24).

Moreover, Ayoob notes that despite the similarities between Islamists, no two are alike, rather each group operates according to its context (2008, 15). He claims that even the Muslim Brotherhood, which has many branches around the world, is radically diverse and responds differently based on varying domestic challenges (16). According to Ayoob, Islamists use the same language because they consult the same Islamic sources, including the Quran, the Islamic holy book, and the Hadith corpus, or the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. However, their agendas are distinct. Islamists “are prisoners of their own national contexts and, consequently, their policies and actions are shaped by the discrete settings in which they operate” (18).

Correspondingly, Cavdar mentions two factors that could be generalized across Islamist political parties (2006). First, they engage in socioeconomic activities and rely on elections to strengthen their political and social bases, and even accept changes if the situation requires them to do so. Secondly, Islamist parties moderate their positions according to international and domestic events or structural changes.

Therefore, Islamist parties are not all alike, and they change over time. Al-Anani, for instance, notes that some Islamist parties changed their agenda after the Arab Spring. After focusing on Islamizing both state and society and applying *Sharia* law, Islamist parties focused on “three different goals: good governance, improving the economy, and achieving stability” (Al-Anani, 2012, 469). Similarly, in another analysis of Islamist parties’ evolution, the International Crisis Group observes that Islamist parties gave up one of their main goals, the Islamic state, and turned their focus to democracy. It states that “abandoning the revolutionary

utopian project of *dawla islamiyya* has led them [Islamist parties] to emphasize other themes, most notably the demand for justice (*al-adala*) and freedom (*al-hurriyya*)” (International Crisis Group, 2005, 7).

The International Crisis Group (2005) report also categorizes Islamism into three different general types: political, missionary, and jihadi. Political Islamists include the Muslim Brotherhood and their offshoots – AKP, PJD, and Ennahda – that accept the nation-state, work within the system, and renounce violence. Missionary Islamism cares more about society and less about politics. Its main mission is Islamic conversion and maintaining the Islamic identity and faith. The main example of these Islamists is the Tablighi movement and the Salafis. Its main actors are missionaries (*du’ah*) and the *’ulama*, Islamically-trained scholars. Meanwhile, Jihadi Islamists believe and often are engaged in armed struggle against impious Muslim regimes, the occupation of Muslim land by non-Muslims, and the West.

Wright also discusses three different categories of Islamist groups. First, he identifies classical Islamists, including clerics in Shi’i and Sunni Islam, religious scholars who provide guidance for a pious society, and Salafists. Clerics, religious scholars, and most Salafists do not involve themselves in politics and focus on improving society. The second category is neo-Islamism, which the author describes as “more flexible, informed, and more mature in their political outlook” (2012, 9). Neo-Islamists use *Sharia* law and believe that Islamic rules are dynamic. The Muslim Brotherhood is an example. The third and final category is post-Islamism. These Islamists distinguish themselves by separating religious and political discourses; they neither embrace secularism nor advocate *Sharia*. They also believe in endowing people with power and the ability to choose their own paths.

Bayat, who hypothesizes the development of post-Islamism, argues that it is simply the evolution of Islamism. He believes that Islamism should not be studied as a fixed movement, but as a movement that evolves and changes over time, noting that some Islamist movements have shifted to post-Islamism due to changes in the domestic dynamic or international influence. Post-Islamism, Bayat states, “is an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on [their] head by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in place of singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scripture, and the future instead of the past” (1996, 11).

Despite their differences, all Islamists share religious tendencies and apply Islam or its teachings to the public sphere and political arena. However, as seen above, Islamists differ regarding their political involvement. Roy (1996) shows that not all Islamists participate in politics, form political parties, or participate in their country’s political system. He argues that Islamists have three strategies, which do not necessarily contradict each other. The first strategy is to involve in politics, such as participating in elections and working within their governments. The second strategy is working at the societal level, both in terms of customs and practices, or in the economy, to control it as opposed to the government. The third category is the formation of small blocs of movements that are either excessive in their doctrine or terrorist groups.

Wright (2012) agrees with Roy’s categorization of Islamists. She also claims that not all Islamists aim to participate in politics. Instead, some form radical groups and use violence to promote an Islamic state, such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as ISIS. Others like the Muslim Brotherhood work within the system to “Islamize” society and infuse their country with more Islamic elements while supporting the call for *Sharia* to be or remain the main form of governance. The Brotherhood and its affiliates also support the idea of

an Islamic state. The third category of Islamists functions primarily as political parties. These groups, such as Ennahda, the PJD, and the Turkish *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) – despite the argument that AKP is not an Islamist party but only has Islamic roots – are similar to any other political party that participates in elections to gain majority power or seats in parliaments and legislatures. Such groups do not call for an Islamic state and can work within a secular government and form political coalitions with non-Islamists.

Since the rise of Islamist movements, scholars such as Donker (2013) and Chamkhi (2014) have attempted to investigate the impact of Islamists on domestic affairs. They have argued that Islamists' goal is to Islamize society. Roy (1996) also engages with such arguments, stating that the Islamist movement is a “bottom-up” movement looking to Islamize society before Islamizing the state. Hamid explores why certain Islamists such as the current leaders of FJP, Ennahda, and PJD participate in politics, while others such as the former Brotherhood leader Abdel Moneim Abul Fotouh do not support such involvement. Hamid states that some Islamists believe that Islam is a lifestyle, not a political ideology. Those proponents believe that the ideal Islamic movement should be concerned only with social issues and should never participate in government (Hamid, 2014, 9).

In a recent study, Abdel Ghafar and Hess (2018) examine three political Islamist parties that rose to power after the Arab Spring – the Moroccan PJD, Ennahda in Tunisia, and FJP in Egypt – focusing on their ideology, pluralism, and minority rights. They conclude that when Islamist parties rise to power, they tend to be more flexible and pragmatic: they do not declare the establishment of an Islamic state, nor do they strictly apply *Sharia* law. Instead, they try to integrate into their respective country's political systems. The study also emphasizes the role of

the local political context in which Islamist parties operate and their relationship with other political parties. Some, like Ennahda, are willing to work with non-Islamist parties by forming coalitions with secularists. On the contrary, FJP decided to only work with another Islamist party, Al-Nour (a Salafist party) and neglected others.

Additionally, Abdel Ghafar and Hess (2018) discuss how Islamist parties view women and minorities. Notably, Islamist parties tend to be more conservative when it comes to women's issues and minority rights. A report by the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee in the United Kingdom (2017) identifies that Islamist parties are not liberal regarding social rights and policies. The report states that Islamist parties have conservative agendas toward issues related to rights for women and minorities, as well as human rights issues – including homosexuality and the death penalty. Stilt (2010), in her discussion on the Muslim Brotherhood constitution, demonstrates how the Muslim Brotherhood excluded women and Christians from the positions of president and prime minister (86). However, the FJP members running for the government ran on a platform of equal rights and political participation for all men and women – a position inconsistent with the Muslim Brotherhood's 2007 platform.

Despite the equal rights advocated within the FJP's new platform, Shehata (2012) notes that the party declared that it would not nominate a female presidential candidate, arguing that even within the organization women do not have roles equal to their male counterparts. For example, they may not serve as members of the Shura Council or the Guidance Bureau of the organization. However, Shehata also illustrates that although the FJP only nominated a single woman in previous elections in 2000 and 2005, they had the largest number of women in parliament in 2012. Unlike the FJP's conservative attitude toward women's rights, Ennahda has

tended to be more progressive. Alexander (2012) points out that Ennahda vowed that it would maintain the Personal Status Code and all women's rights that were instated under Ben Ali. He argues that women have played an active role within Ennahda, and the party has been supportive of their rights. Also, Ennahda was one of the first parties to request that all parties run an equal number of men and women as candidates.

Furthermore, there are contradictory results when the inclusion-moderation theory is applied to Islamist parties. This theory refers to the "idea that political groups and individuals may become more moderate as a result of their inclusion in pluralist political processes" (Schwedler, 2011, 348). Ashour (2007) and Taşpınar (2012) believe that the inclusion of Islamists in government would indeed lead to their eventual moderation. El-Ghobashy argued that the political openness that allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to participate and engage in politics led them to transform their behavior and ideology. They have evolved over time and have become more moderate (2005, 374).

Conversely, Cavatorta and Merone (2013) state that inclusion does not always lead Islamists to become more moderate, claiming that, rather than inclusion, it was Ennahda's exclusion that led it to develop a more moderate platform. The main contributing factors leading to the Ennahda party's moderation, they argue, were repression and marginalization. Similarly, Hamid (2014) also believes that Islamists would not become more moderate through government involvement and notes that oppression leads Islamists towards moderation. Kalyvas (2000) also maintains that the inclusion of Islamist groups in government will not lead them to moderation because Islamism lacks the central authority in the papacy that defines Catholicism.

The International Crisis Group report (2005) states that many Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, have evolved into political parties. By doing so, they adopted three characteristics. First, they focused on politics and invested more attention in it than any other domain, including the religious sphere. Second, they accepted their nation-state as legitimate. Finally, they gave up on the utopia of creating an Islamic state and overthrowing the existing regime while proposing constitutional reforms or accepting constitutions as written, offering a legal framework and rules for political activity.

Islamists and Democracy

This section discusses Islamists and democracy from three points of view: compatibility between the religion of Islam or Muslims and democracy; Islamist scholars' opinions on democracy; and other scholars' views on Islamism and democracy. There is a vast amount of literature that centers on the relationship between Islam and democracy. Questions such as whether Islam is incompatible with democracy or what *Sharia* says about democracy have been addressed by many scholars. Yet, there is still no shared view on these topics. Some claim that Islam and democracy cannot coexist (Lipset, 1994; Pipes, 2002; Lewis, 1994). One of the main arguments for the incompatibility between democracy and Islam, by Lewis (2001), is that Islam does not allow for the separation of state and religion, without which democracy cannot exist. Others such as Abou El Fadl (2004) believe that democracy shares many concepts with Islamic law, including individual rights, justice, and freedom. Abou El Fadl also addresses those who believe that Islam rejects democracy because democracy is predicated on the rule of the people. He argues that in Islam people are the successors of God on earth. His view is based on the

Quranic verse that states, “your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority,’” a reference to mankind.

Several scholars have discussed Muslims’ opinions on democracy and its relationship to their religion. Roy (2012) categorizes Muslim religious scholars and intellectuals’ views on democracy into three different camps. The first camp rejects democracy and any participation in politics; this includes Wahabi clerics in Saudi Arabia and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The second camp claims that the true tenets of Islam are comparable to democracy and that the *Shura* system of consultation that is found in Islam resembles a parliament. The third camp uses *ijtihad*, the reinterpretation of Islam, to claim that Islam is compatible with the universal concept of democracy. Similarly, Esposito divides Muslims’ views on democracy into three groups that correspond to the above: secularists, rejectionists, and accommodationists. Secularists support democratic regimes that observe the separation of religion and the state, while rejectionists – moderate and militant Muslims – not only disagree with secularists but also believe that Islam and democracy are incompatible and that Islam has its forms of governance. On the other hand, accommodationists argue that Islam offers some traditional concepts such as consultation (*Shura*), consensus (*ijma*), and reinterpretation (*ijtihad*) – forms of Islamically acceptable popular participation and democratization (Esposito, 2000, 53). Finally, Nasr (2005) distinguishes between Islamists and Muslim democrats. For him, “Islamists view democracy not as something deeply legitimate, but at best as a tool or tactic that may be useful in gaining the power to build an Islamic state,” whereas Muslim democrats “do not seek to enshrine Islam in politics, though they do wish to harness its potential to help them win votes” (13-14).

However, the focus of this dissertation is not on Islam or the entire Muslim world's views on democracy, but instead on Islamist political parties and their leaders' views on democracy. The topic of democracy has been controversial in Islamist circles: scholars disagree on whether Islam is compatible with democracy and whether they should participate in such a system. Maududi (1960) and Qutb (1964), for example, reject democracy because democracy means the rule of people, whereas in Islam rule and sovereignty should be solely the provenance of God. Instead, Maududi suggests that an Islamic state should be a theo-democracy where God and the Muslim community hold the power to rule. Additionally, Rayyis (1953) claims that Islam's *Shura* system is different than democracy. Islam and democracy differ in three main principles: the notion of nation or *Umma*, goals, and the absolute sovereignty of the people that democracy offers. The *Shura* system is controlled by *Sharia*, whereas democracy is controlled by the people. Therefore, Rayyis argues that the Islamic *Shura* system is unique and does not resemble a democracy.

On the other hand, some Islamists, notably Moussalli (2003), refer to *Shura* as a democracy and see no difference between the two systems. Abou El Fadl (2004) also discusses *Sharia* as a law of governance and claims that it does not offer clear teachings or rules of God; instead, people rely on the interpretation of *Sharia* by the people, who are the successors of God, to form and implement it. Accordingly, democracy, which is the rule of people, can coexist with Islam. Al-Banna (1982) also believes that Islam and democracy can coexist. He argues that there is nothing in the Islamic rules of government that is incompatible with the parliamentary system. Huwaidi (1993) and al-Qaradawi (2017), moderate Islamists, have maintained that the essence of democracy corresponds with the essence of Islam. Huwaidi states that both Islam and democracy

have freedom, liberty, and justice as their core principles. Therefore, he believes that without Islam, Muslims would not be able to establish a state, nor would one perform well without democracy.

Ghannouchi (2012), the leader of the Ennahda Party, claims that Islam is in accordance with many aspects of democracy and there is nothing within the *Sharia* fundamentally incompatible with it. Ghannouchi rejects the notion that Islam and democracy are incompatible and illustrates how Islam promotes freedom and liberty and supports rights and equality. He also discusses the Medina constitution, which was drafted by the Prophet Muhammed. This constitution ensures that humans are free and equal no matter their beliefs and contains many modern notions of democracy still in use today. Ghannouchi also employs certain Quranic references to demonstrate that Islam supports democracy and, therefore, Islamists should support democracy as well.

The disagreement on the topic of Islamists and democracy has not only appeared in Islamists' writings but also in those that explain Islamists' views on democracy. Robinson has furthered the idea that Islamism and democracy are compatible by arguing that Islamist parties support democratic transitions in the Middle East because democracy serves Islamist parties' interests. In his study, Robinson focuses on the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and interviews many of its leaders. He argues that "[i]n cases like the Muslim Brothers in Jordan, where organizational interests support political liberalization, Islamist movements can not only tolerate democratization but genuinely champion it" (Robinson, 1997, 380). Similarly, Hamid also discusses Islamists and democracy, suggesting that Islamists began to support democracy in

1990. He notes that being democratic, for Islamists, does not mean being *liberal*. Islamists can support democracy only if it is illiberal (Hamid, 2011, 41).

Other scholars have also attempted to categorize Islamists into various types to distinguish between their views on democracy. Haynes classifies Islamists into three groups concerning their views of liberal democracy. He claims that traditional Islamists reject liberal democracy since they believe that it is incompatible with Islamic teachings. On the other hand, modernist Islamists are willing to accept democracy as long as its aspects are compatible with *Sharia* law. Muslim secularists are willing to adopt all the aspects of liberal democracy while being aware of some of the cultural characteristics of the Muslim society that may impact their policies (Haynes, 2013, 171). In his division of Islamist groups, Bayat (2007) argues that Islamists and post-Islamists do not share the same opinion about the compatibility of Islam and democracy. He believes that Islamism and post-Islamism have different views of the political system: Islamists seek to maintain Islam and an Islamic state, whereas post-Islamists attempt to establish a pious society in a civil state – not a religious one. Where Islamists focus on citizens' duties, post-Islamists insist on integrating freedom and rights with faith and religiosity. Ashour also (2007) distinguishes between radical and moderate Islamist views of democracy. He claims that moderate Islamists are those who accept the basic tenets of democracy and aspire to work with state institutions against the use of violence. On the contrary, radicals and extremists oppose these notions.

Islamists are also diverse in their views on government participation. Before the Arab Spring, Roy (1996) illustrates, Islamists in the MENA region faced different fates. Some of them were repressed, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and others were forced into exile,

such as the leaders of the Ennahda Party in Tunisia, while Islamist parties in Morocco, Kuwait, and Jordan maintain good relationships with their governments and ruling families. Despite cases of suppression, Islamist parties have tried to participate in government whenever it has been possible since the 1980s and have won seats in parliamentary elections as the opposition party. The Algerian Islamist party, the Islamic Salvation Front, participated in local government elections and won in 1990. On the other hand, some Islamists have worked within the system but have a marginal role in the government, such as Islamist parties in Morocco, Kuwait, and Jordan.

Islamist Foreign Policy

Recently, scholars have begun to explore Islamist parties' foreign policies, a still understudied topic about which serious, varied investigation is lacking. For instance, Mecham (2018) has examined whether Islamist parties have distinct foreign policies. He argues that there is no single "Islamist party foreign policy," but instead Islamist parties practice identical foreign policies to those of non-Islamist parties. Furthermore, Islamist parties appear to behave similarly to other religious parties, such as Christian and Jewish parties, all of whom "sought to challenge the political status quo from a minority position" (Mecham and Hwang, 2014, 4).

Additionally, Adraoui (2018) illustrates that the foreign policy of Islamist parties cannot be defined by a single ideological model. Instead, Islamists tend to be pragmatic once in office, promoting national interests and justifying their actions with religious rhetoric. Adraoui argues that Islamist parties use religion only to justify and legitimize a shift in foreign policy. Thus, they have varying foreign policies based on national interests. In other words, Islamist parties' foreign policy cannot be defined by their ideology, but by the diplomatic practice, they all share. As Roy states, "it is not an Islamist diplomacy, but a diplomacy of Islamists" (Roy, 2012, 15). Although

these studies are based on comparisons between Islamist parties' foreign policies while in power, they lack the systematic empirical evidence that would enhance these arguments.

Similarly, Nasr (1999) examines the foreign policy of the Pakistani Islamist party Jama'at-I Islami. He illustrates that Islamist parties do not share the same view of foreign policy. Although one of the main factors that drive Jama'at-I Islami's foreign policy is their ideology, it is not the sole factor. He demonstrates that some national constraints and international events have guided most Islamists' foreign policy approaches. Nasr writes, "the party's view of the possibilities before it in the domestic political arena, the impact of state policies, [and] watershed events such as the Afghan war have coalesced to shape its perspective on international relations" (55). Yet the Pakistani Islamist party has never been in power, their role has so far been limited despite holding seats in parliament. It is unclear how they would view and react to the international community if they were to have more power in formulating foreign policy.

In addition, Karabell (1996) outlines an Islamic fundamentalist foreign policy, referring to governments such as Iran and Sudan and groups such as Ennahda in Tunisia, Hizballah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Palestine. He claims that fundamentalists practice distinct foreign policies toward the Islamic world and the non-Islamic world. Fundamentalists' main goal is to have a unified Islamic community, *Umma* – thus they do not respect the borders of Islamic states which they view as lines drawn by colonial powers to divide the Islamic community. In addition, a fundamentalist foreign policy tends to reject Western hegemony within the Muslim world and oppose the state of Israel. Karabell also notes that although fundamentalists tend to have similar foreign policies, they differ in terms of strategy and implementation.

Karabell's study (1996) offers an overview of the foreign policy of fundamentalist countries and groups, but it has some flaws. First of all, the term "fundamentalism" does not fit all countries and groups he mentions in the article. It seems that the author at times equates fundamentalism to political Islam, which is a different concept. Second, Karabell categorizes entire countries and groups in one group when he talks about their foreign policy approaches, which could be misleading. States have more power to impact foreign policy, whereas groups have limited possibilities. His claim that fundamentalists focus on the Islamic world is reasonable when talking about states, but when he refers to groups it is not. Fundamentalist groups that have been oppressed in non-democratic countries would care more about domestic policy and less about foreign policy. Thus, I believe that it is unrealistic to equate fundamentalist states and groups when discussing foreign policy.

Furthermore, most studies that focus on Islamist foreign policy have typically focused only on one case study, which makes their results ungeneralizable. For example, Seniguer (2018) contends that Islamist parties not only take actions that differ from their rhetoric but also change their rhetoric once they hold power. In comparing the Moroccan PJD's rhetoric on Israel before and during their rule, Seniguer noticed a dramatic shift. However, the PJD is constrained by the king's role in government, which means their discourse must match with official royal policy. Since Morocco has maintained a steady trade relationship with Israel, the PJD had to respect that and alter their rhetoric accordingly. Therefore, PJD rhetoric does not necessarily represent the party's future actions and is most definitely not always fixed. One significant critique of Seniguer's study is that not all Islamist parties are constrained by a monarchy. That being said, the findings regarding the PJD should not be directly applied to other Islamist parties without

systematic empirical evidence. Therefore, a comparative study that compares an array of Islamist parties' foreign policies is necessary in order to have more valid results and achieve greater insight.

Another group of studies focuses on the case of Turkey since it has the oldest pro-Islamist party in power. Çandar provides examples of Turkey reaching out to neighboring Islamic countries. His studies illustrate how the AKP was supportive of Islamists outside Turkey. For example, Çandar writes that “the government of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been vocal in refusing to recognize the legitimacy of Egypt’s new power configuration” (2014). In addition to Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey also improved its relationship with Omar Al-Bashir, the Sudanese president. Al-Bashir is the leader of the National Congress Party, an Islamist Sudanese Party, and “[d]espite the fact that Al-Basher was accused by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and the rejection of the EU, Turkey hosted him three times” (Kaya and Warner, 2012, 8). However, it is still unknown whether all Islamist parties would have acted similarly.

Another study by Habibi and Walker (2011) traces Turkish economic and diplomatic relationships with the Arab world by focusing on the flow of trade and bilateral visits by officials. Their study shows that since the AKP rose to power Turkish economic and diplomatic relationships with the Arab world have increased. In their analysis of this increase in relationships with the Arab world, Habibi and Walker argue that different reasons explain this change. First, the AKP shift toward the Middle East has been driven not merely by ideology, other factors have played a major role. This shift serves Turkish national interests by creating new investments and expanding its economy. In addition, the shift toward the Arab world was

also related to Turkish democratization. Turkish public sentiment supports a closer relationship with the Arab world, which the Turkish government could not ignore. Also, some Turkish businesses, such as those in Anatolia, have supported the shift toward the Arab world because it serves their interests: members of the Arab world have been major importers of their goods.

Moreover, the authors note that the AKP's Islamic orientation is one of the factors that lead to increasing relationships with the Arab world. The AKP desires to regain the legacy of the Ottoman Empire by reclaiming its role in the region. They state that "based on its Islamic roots and values, the AKP has focused on the unifying character of the Ottoman Empire, and of the Muslim values inherited by the Turkish Republic" (Habibi and Walker, 2011, 7). Another two factors that explain the shift toward the Arab countries are the Turkish failure to gain EU membership and the US invasion of Iraq, which increased the Kurdish threat.

Moreover, Bilgin (2008) has discussed the foreign policy of the pro-Islamist parties in Turkey – the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Welfare Party (RP) – and whether their policies deviate from traditional republican foreign policy. He shows that despite the pro-Islamic orientation and background these parties share, they have different foreign policies. For instance, their view on the relationship with the EU is different. The RP challenged the traditional pro-Western element of foreign policy, which was represented by the lack of foreign visits to the West during the RP period, whereas the AKP has maintained a good relationship – especially with the EU.

Relationships with Israel are another example of the distinct foreign policy positions that pro-Islamist parties practice. The RP has been clear and open about its hostility toward Israel whereas the AKP has had a mixed attitude. The AKP was accused of supporting Israel's policies

and improving relationships with it, while at the same time inviting a Hamas leader and accusing Israel of terrorism. Furthermore, the Turkey-US relationship did not experience any challenges during that time despite the RP's anti-Western attitude. During both periods, the US-Turkey relationship depended on specific developments. Bilgin also claims that both the RP and the AKP drew more attention to the relationship with the Muslim world and visits to the Muslim world increased during their time in power. Bilgin concludes that the AKP and RP are not monolithic. Despite the Islamist ideology of both parties, when in power, political interests have suppressed religious values. Koprulu also notes a shift in Turkish foreign policy during the AKP period. At that time, Turkey shifted its attention to its neighboring countries. The AKP tried to build a good relationship with the Arab world and "made gaining the trust and admiration of the Arab street a priority" (2009, 190). Turkey not only focused on Arab countries, but it also aimed to foster a good relationship with Russia and Iran, former regional enemies. Despite its major shift in foreign policy, Turkey attempted to maintain a steady relationship with the West.

One significant critique of the literature on Islamist foreign policy in Turkey is that the legitimacy of the Turkish Islamists is disputed. Not all scholars consider the AKP an Islamist party, and there are questions as to whether the party views itself as one. Thus, it is critical to understand their foreign policy, whether they are impacted by an Islamist ideology or other national factors. Second, since its establishment as a republic, Turkey has been a secular state in which religious ideologies could not be practiced. Therefore, the AKP and RP foreign policy approaches have been limited by this national context. Moreover, since the rule of the AKP Turkey has taken a new path in foreign policy. As explained by the former prime minister and minister of foreign affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu (2010) in his book *Strategic Depth*, Turkey tries to

benefit from its geographical depth and build good relationships with its neighbors whether they are Arabs such as the Gulf countries, Muslims such as Iran and the Caucasian countries, or non-Muslim countries such as Russia. As a result, it is not the ideology of the AKP that drives Turkish foreign policy, but other factors linked to the Turkish context. Accordingly, the case of Turkish Islamists cannot simply be applied to other Arab Islamist parties.

Three major topics have been discussed regarding Islamists' foreign policy approaches: relationships with the Islamic world, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the West and the US. One main factor is the tendency to favor Muslims and the Arab world. Jebel (2014) examines the foreign policy of Tunisia pre- and post-Arab Spring. She argues that Tunisia's foreign policy shifted from focusing only on the West to be more open to its relationships with oil-rich Arab countries. Jebel claims that Ennahda leaders are more concerned about the Middle East and the Gulf countries, but also seek to balance foreign relations between the West and the East. Similarly, Londoño (2012) notes Islamist parties' "affinity" for the Muslim world. As an example, Londoño uses Egyptian President Morsi's visit to Iran as proof of a major change in Egyptian foreign policy. Egypt severed ties with Iran in the 1980s and Morsi became the first president to visit Iran since that time. Despite Iran's isolation from the international community, Morsi's visit displayed an effort to improve ties with and built relations with other Islamic nations.

Although the studies of Jebel (2014) and Londoño (2012) reveal Islamist parties' tendency to reach out to Muslim and Arab countries, they rely only on anecdotal events of Islamist parties while they hold power. They lack systemic empirical evidence that would record the pattern of Islamist parties' tendencies and are each limited to a single country. Thus, these

studies could not be generalized as fitting or indicative of other Islamist parties' actions. There is still a need for a study based on tangible evidence such as visits, meetings, and official documents which will allow us to provide a more reliable comparison of all Islamist parties' foreign policies while in power. More studies are also needed that examine whether this shift in foreign policy toward Muslim and Arab countries is limited to Islamist parties or if other non-Islamist parties in the region have the same tendency.

Furthermore, in his letters, Al-Banna (1982) discusses the Islamic view of the relationship with the West and non-Muslim countries. He states that Islam requires maintaining and respecting international treaties and pledges. He also believes that Islam encourages good relationships with neighboring countries and respect for those with whom they have treaties. Al-Banna further writes about the importance of maintaining the rights of non-Muslims whether they live inside or outside Muslim countries. In addition, Shehata (2012) notes that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt supports a relationship with the US that is based on mutual interests. However, they criticize US support for Israel and authoritarian regimes. They are also against the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan.

If there is one identifiable unifying opinion within Islamist foreign policy, the rejection of the state of Israel would serve as one. All Islamists reject any recognition of the state of Israel and oppose the normalization of relations with the country. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has regularly been discussed by the founders and leaders of Islamist parties. For instance, after the US recognition of Israel as a state in 1948, al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, sent a letter to Harry Truman, the then President of the United States, threatening that the recognition of Israel meant a war on the Islamic and the Arab world. Al-Banna also wrote that

this action was considered a violation of the UN accord regarding human rights and would lead to hostility toward the US (Eisam Alshaafi, 2014, 85).

However, in practice, Islamist parties may vary when they deal with the Israeli–Palestinian conflict while in power and their practice may not resemble their rhetoric. Historically, Shehata (2012) mentions, that the MB have been anti-Israel and supported Hamas and Palestinian rights, including the right to resist. Additionally, they believe that the Camp David Treaty should be put to a national referendum. However, their position on the Camp David Treaty changed after coming to power. They claimed that they will uphold all international treaties, including the Camp David Treaty, but also suggested that it could be modified and reiterate their support for Hamas and Palestinians. Similar to the MB, Alexander (2012) notes, that Ennahda have criticized US policy, especially its support for Tunisian dictator Ben Ali. Nonetheless, they changed their discourse after coming to power. Despite the fact that Ennahda disagree with many of the US’s policies in the Middle East – particularly in Palestine – they maintain a good relationship with the US to gain their support for the democratic transition and to receive developmental assistance.

Morsi’s foreign policy toward Israel was impacted by both Islamist ideology and the need for military and monetary aid from the United States. These two factors were portrayed in Egyptian reactions to certain events during the Freedom and Justice Party’s control. On the one hand, the party continued to support Palestinians and Hamas. For example, during the Israeli attack on Gaza, Egypt opened the Rafah border crossing to aid Palestinians and played a key role in the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel in 2012. Also, Egypt’s withdrawal of their ambassador to Israel and the Egyptian prime minister’s visit to Gaza reflected its support for Palestinians. In

addition, Morsi demanded the UN grant Palestine membership despite the peace agreement with Israel. These actions, Ardovini (2017) claims, fit the Islamist ideology and narrative. On the other hand, the party announced that it will continue the Camp David Accord, which the party opposed before coming to power, to maintain the Egypt-US and Israel relationships and continue receiving US military and monetary aid, as Ardovini (2017) and Meringolo (2015) have explained.

Moreover, al-Aydi (2019) compares Egyptian foreign policy before and during Islamist control. She claims that under the MB, Egyptian foreign policy experienced a new dimension, moving toward the religious and sectarian dimensions, an entirely new approach. Morsi, for the first time in Egyptian history, referred to Egypt as an Islamic Sunni country during his visit to Saudi Arabia. Al-Aydi notes that Egypt's relationship with the United States, Europe, and Israel have not changed despite the Muslim Brotherhood's critiques of these relationships before their electoral victory. Yet, Egypt increased its relationships with Asian countries – especially Iran, Pakistan, India, and China. Furthermore, despite the historically hostile and sectarian differences between Egypt and Iran, the Freedom and Justice party tried to maintain a good relationship with Iran.

However, Al-Aydi states that these relationships are based on economic interests alone. Additionally, Al-Aydi argues that Egypt's relationship with African countries also increased during the Freedom and Justice Party's control. However, she links this to popular forces, which gained more power than before. Another key change in Egypt's foreign policy is the relationship with Arab countries. Egypt suffered a decline in relations with Saudi Arabia, but an improvement

in relations with Qatar and Hamas in Palestine. The Egypt-Russia relationship also weakened during Morsi's administration because of the Syrian war.

Hence, Islamist parties have been investigated in numerous studies, but little attention has been given to their foreign policy while in power. The reviewed literature shows that Islamists are diverse and many factors impact their policies, including national context and ideology. Still, there is no consensus on whether Islamists share the same view on foreign policy and whether their policy is driven by ideology. This dissertation argues that although Islamist parties are different, they all share ideological tendencies and thus develop a foreign policy that embraces Islamic principles. Even more scarce is the comparison between Islamist parties and non-Islamists in terms of foreign policy, especially concerning their relationship with the Middle East and Muslim countries. Research is lacking on whether Islamist parties have any immediate impact on their respective countries' foreign policy when they are elected to the government.

Furthermore, an empirical examination of how Islamist parties carry out their foreign policy when they assume power is missing. Therefore, this study examines the elected Islamist parties' roles in the implementation of foreign policy by providing a comparison between Islamist and non-Islamist parties. It also uses extensive systemic empirical evidence of Islamist and non-Islamist parties while in power in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, which has not previously been used in studies of Islamist parties' foreign policy approaches. Thus, I develop two hypotheses about the tendencies of Islamist parties' foreign policy that will be tested systematically in a comparative setting. The next chapter illustrates how these hypotheses will be operationalized and the method and cases utilized in this study

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, it discusses the theoretical framework and outlines the hypotheses. Second, it discusses the methodology, outlining the cases examined and the study's analytical approach. Third, it presents the study's impact. Hypotheses are drawn from original Islamic resources and Islamist literature.

This study answers three questions: (1) What role do elected Islamist parties play in implementing foreign policy? (2) Do Islamist parties adopt different foreign policies from non-Islamist parties? and (3) Does Islamist ideology impact the foreign policy of Islamist parties while in power? To answer these questions, I develop two hypotheses, which are analyzed using a qualitative method, and focus on three North African Arab countries: Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. The purpose of this dissertation is to compare the foreign policy of Islamist parties and non-Islamist parties with respect to their relationships with Islamic countries and countries located in the Middle East and North Africa.

Theoretical Framework and Operationalization

The majority of Islamist parties' domestic and foreign policies should be expected to be compatible with the Islamic faith, as Islamist parties form their domestic policies based on religious doctrine. Yet, little focus is given to the question of whether Islamist parties continue to promote their ideology while in power and implement an *Islamized* foreign policy. Therefore,

this dissertation presents two hypotheses to test whether Islamist parties promote their religious principles in their foreign policies, and therefore pursue foreign policies that differ from non-Islamist domestic parties.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority and Middle Eastern Countries

The expected result of this research is that Islamist parties in power shift their foreign policy focus to predominantly Muslim countries, especially towards Middle Eastern nations, as these parties are unified by Islam, which they generally view as the core of their identity. Islamist parties share a sense of belonging with their co-religionists, as indicated by agendas and speeches that refer to other Muslims as *brothers*. One of the primary principles of Islam is the concept of the Islamic community/nation (*Ummah Islamiyah*). This notion refers to a collective community that shares the same religious beliefs. The term is first mentioned in the Qu'ran with the meaning of the Muslim nation in this verse, "indeed, this nation of yours is one nation, and I am Your Lord, therefore worship Me." (*The Qur'an*, Al-Anbiya' 21:92). Another very similar verse reads, "your *Ummah* is but one *Ummah*, and I am your Lord, therefore fear Me." (*The Qur'an*, Al-Mu'minun 23:52). The concept that all Muslims are bound by this nation means a degree of commitment and supposed unity in cause and principle and cooperation between the different segments of the one nation in the end (Ahmed). Similarly, the concept of brotherhood where believers are referred to as *brothers* indicates cooperation and relationship like that of real brothers. In the Quran, "The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy." (*The Qur'an*, Al-Hujurat 49:10).

According to these concepts of *Ummah* and brotherhood, Muslim individuals and parties are more familiar with these concepts and supposedly more influenced by them. Therefore, the relationship with other parts of this Muslim *Ummah* should be prioritized and helping or supporting other parts of the Muslim world during hardship takes precedence over other parts of the world. In a hadith attributed to Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), “The believers, in their mutual love, compassion, and sympathy are like a single body; if one of its organs suffers, the whole body will respond to it with sleeplessness and fever.” (Sahih al-Bukhari 8:10; Sahih Muslim 4:1999).

A third concept is a neighbor in Islam as it has been established in the Quran, “do good to... neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, [and] the companion by your side....” (*The Qur'an*, An-Nisa’ 4:36). In a hadith, 'A'isha said, "I said, 'Messenger of Allah, I have two neighbors. To whom should I give my gifts?' He replied, 'To the one whose door is nearer to you.'" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6:107). Leading Muslim theorists, therefore, used the concept of neighbor to refer to neighboring countries and neighboring people and tribes. For example, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and leading Islamic politician and thinker Hasan Al-Banna in his letters (1982) applies this concept of respecting neighbors in Islam to the political realm and emphasizes the importance of maintaining good relations with neighboring countries. Thus, it would be expected for Islamist parties to improve their relationship with neighboring countries in the MENA region that also share the same religion and basic values.

Thus, Islamist parties share many of their values, identity, religion, and sense of brotherhood across borders. In their agenda, Islamist parties – including Ennahda, Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), and Justice and Development Party (PJD) – emphasize the importance of

maintaining good relations with Arab (and predominantly Muslim) countries. They refer to these countries as *brotherly countries* (*al-dawal al-shaqiqah*) and as parts of the Islamic nation (*Ummah Islamiyah*). This demonstrates the closeness that these parties feel towards other predominantly Muslim and Middle Eastern countries. Accordingly, we would expect Islamist parties' foreign policies to favor Muslim-majority and Middle Eastern countries. This does not necessarily indicate that non-Islamist parties cannot maintain good relations with predominantly non-Muslim countries, but that Islamist parties maintain closer relationships with Muslim and MENA region countries more than that of non-Islamist parties.

Salem (2018) supports this idea by demonstrating that when Islamist parties hold power, they tend to shift their foreign policy focus to Islamic countries, especially those in the Middle East. Salem discusses how Tunisia's foreign policy shifted toward Arab Muslim countries when the Ennahda Party took power. Ennahda changed the language of the Ministry's dossiers from French to Arabic and English, thereby demonstrating a closer relationship with the Middle East and Arab countries. Additionally, Ennahda, unlike the previous government, had a good relationship with Qatar and supported Hamas and the Syrian rebels (Salem, 2018). These changes indicate a shift in foreign policy toward the Middle East during Islamist party rule.

Egypt's foreign policy demonstrated similar traits toward Islamic and Middle Eastern countries during the FJP's rule. Mohamed Morsi's first visit as the President of Egypt was to Saudi Arabia, and he was the first Egyptian president to visit Iran since the two nations broke off diplomatic relations in the 1980s. Aclimandos (2018) argues that the FJP also sought to further their economic relationships with the most successful Islamic countries, such as Turkey,

Malaysia, and Indonesia (90). These factors illustrate a change in Egyptian foreign policy toward Islamic and Middle Eastern countries.

Moreover, despite the domestic restrictions imposed by the governmental structure on Morocco's PJD, relationships with Islamic and Middle Eastern countries were strengthened during the party's time in power. Mecham (2018) examines the PJD's improved relationship with Morocco's longstanding rival, Algeria, to demonstrate that Islamist parties tend to maintain close relationships with Islamic countries. The Islamist foreign minister of Morocco made the first official visit to Algeria to rectify the Morocco-Algeria relationship. Although the king is the main source of political power in Morocco, the country's Islamist party was still able to create ties with the Islamic world through foreign policy.

However, the degree to which Islamist parties pursue strengthened ties with Muslim-majority and Middle Eastern countries has not been measured, such that it is unknown whether all Islamist political parties share these tendencies. Also, it is still unclear whether these tendencies are limited solely to Islamist parties in power or if other parties in these countries would also seek to promote relations with the Middle East and Muslim countries. It is also doubtful whether all Islamist parties, despite their differences, would have the same tendencies toward Muslim and MENA region countries. Consequently, to answer these questions, this study presents the following hypotheses:

H1: Islamist parties that are in power are more likely than non-Islamist parties to improve their country's relationships with Muslim-majority countries.

H1a: Islamist parties that are in power are more likely than non-Islamist parties to improve their country's relationships with the MENA region countries.

To test the hypotheses, I investigate the frequency with which Islamist parties' and non-Islamist parties' government officials visited Middle Eastern and Muslim-majority countries during their period in office, as well as the country of their first official visit. The number of visits to Middle Eastern and predominantly Muslim countries is taken as a proxy for both Islamist and non-Islamist parties' foreign policy priorities. Only visits by presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers are documented, as these offices are the primary foreign policymakers. Visits by other officials are excluded from the study as they may imply a relationship's lack of prioritization.

I also analyze the main visits by discussing the nature and the context of these visits and their significance, for instance, if the visit included any agreements or any unique actions or speeches that could signal anything related to the countries' relationship. Thus, the study will not only focus on the frequency of the foreign visits but also on the main highlights of these visits and what they meant for their country's foreign policy.

Data is collected from each country's ministry of foreign affairs official website, the government's official website, prominent local news websites, and major international news websites. I also review international news websites – including Aljazeera, Al-Arabiya, the BBC, and the New York Times – to collect data for all three cases. These news websites offer extensive information about Egyptian, Moroccan, and Tunisian officials' foreign visits and contacts. Using different local and international sources for data collection both augments and deepens the dataset. For instance, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs only documents visits during President Sisi's period in office, whereas Al-Jazeera's website provides information about

the visits of each Egyptian president since Mubarak. Therefore, these official websites are complementary in terms of data collection.

Methodology

To examine the above hypotheses, this study uses a comparative case study method that compares Islamist political parties with non-Islamist parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. The comparisons include the foreign policies of both Islamist parties and non-Islamist parties. In each of the three countries, non-Islamist parties were in power before the Arab Spring of 2011. Yet, Islamist parties came into power following the uprisings and were then followed by either Islamist or non-Islamist parties. Therefore, the comparisons focus on these three phases to illustrate the differences between Islamist and non-Islamist parties' foreign policies.

This research uses empirical data and relies mainly on official foreign visits. Foreign visits by official leaders, such as the prime ministers or foreign ministers and more importantly, the head of states, are significantly important in international relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy. These visits carry heavy indications, including signaling the support of foreign leaders/governments and showing the importance the government gives to the visited country, which improves the countries' relationship. The frequency of foreign visits signals that the state gives particular importance to that country and improving relations with it. Also, the first visit, especially by the head of states, indicates that the government is looking to give that state special attention and maintain a stable relationship. Thus, due to the importance of foreign visits, this study relies on the foreign visits paid by the heads of state, prime ministers, and foreign ministers. It will mainly focus on the frequency of their visits while they are in government. It will also illustrate their first foreign visits when the data is available.

Thus, the data includes numbers of state, official, and working visits by the President, the Prime Minister, and the foreign minister of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia from 2006 to 2018 to be reviewed using a content analysis method. The total number of foreign visits I collect for this study is 901 visits. Data is collected from each country's official ministry of foreign affairs, and official governments' websites. Yet, due to the lack of extensive data on governmental websites, I supplement these with local and international news websites.

In all three cases, it was difficult to collect all the foreign visits from the government's websites as their archives offer either few or no visits for some of the official leaders. For instance, the Moroccan government's website shows visits by the king only from the year 2010. Similarly, the Egyptian government's official website deleted the year of President Morsi's office from 2012 to 2013. Thus, I was forced to rely on local and international news websites for an extensive amount of data.

For the case of Egypt, I collect 344 visits by main officials during both the Islamist and non-Islamist parties from 2006 to 2018 except for the year 2011 because the government was controlled by a transitional government, which this study excludes. The main websites that I rely on for collecting Egyptian officials' visits are the Egyptian government website State Information Service and Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egyptian daily newspapers youm7 and Al-Masry Al-Youm, and international official news websites such as Al-Jazeera and CNN. News websites such as Al-Jazeera are an important source for collecting information, especially during the period of President Morsi as government websites have deleted all information from this period. Thus, most of Morsi's government visits I have collected here are from either Al-Jazeera or Al-Masry Al-Youm.

The total number of visits I collect for the case of Morocco from 2006 to 2018 is 283 official foreign visits. These visits include foreign visits of the king, Prime Ministers, and foreign ministers of both periods, the Islamist and the non-Islamist parties. I collect these visits from the Moroccan government websites "the National Portal of the Kingdom of Morocco" and Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website, Morocco local news website Maghreb Arab Press (MAP), and Maghress news website, which are both official Moroccan news agencies. The Al-Jazeera news website was also a significant source for collecting visits for Moroccan officials.

For the case of Tunisia, I collect 274 foreign official visits between the years 2006 to 2018, excluding the year 2011 when a transitional government was in control. I gather visits by the President, Prime Ministers, and Foreign Ministers during the Islamist and non-Islamist parties' periods from the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website and the Presidency of the Republic of Tunisia (Carthage) official website. Also, I collect extensive data about Tunisian officials' foreign visits from the Tunisian local news website Turess news. Alongside these websites, the Al-Jazeera news website offers much data about the foreign visits of Tunisian officials and their relevant information, which this study has also utilized.

I also rely on some foreign countries' ministry of foreign affairs websites such as the ministry of foreign affairs/ Department of State of the USA, France, Japan, and a few other countries. These websites offer visits of states leaders and other main officials, where I found some visits by Egyptian, Moroccan, and Tunisian leaders, on whom I focus in this study. Moreover, the study also uses secondary resources, including books, academic journals, newspapers, and news channels, such as Reuters, CNN, the BBC, and other Arabic newspapers.

The languages I use for collecting data were Arabic and English. Since the three countries are Arab countries, most of the data were in Arabic. Yet, I also use other countries' foreign ministry websites which are solely in English. However, I used both the Arabic and English news websites from Al-Jazeera, in addition to other English resources. In a few cases, I translated from the French language, such as in the case of Morocco. The Moroccan Ministry of foreign affairs offers their data either in Arabic or French and for some countries, they use only French. Yet, most of the information is either in Arabic or English.

The summary tables below illustrate all collected visits by all political leaders who are included in this study. The table shows the total number of visits of each type of leader, divided by president, prime minister, and foreign minister, for each of the three cases, and for each year of the focus of the study.

Summary Tables

Table 1. Numbers of Official Foreign Visits by Egyptian Officials from 2006-2018

COUNTRY	YEAR	PRESIDENT	PRIME MINISTER	FOREIGN MINISTER	TOTAL VISITS
EGYPT	2006	14	7	4	25(7.2%)
	2007	3	2	5	10(2.9%)
	2008	6	3	3	12(3.4%)
	2009	16	1	16	33(9.5%)
	2010	6	4	18	28(8.1%)
	2011	/	/	/	/
	2012	9	4	11	24(6.9%)
	2013	10	7	10	27(7.8%)
	2014	13	4	18	35(10.1%)
	2015	25	12	24	61(17.7%)
	2016	9	2	16	27(7.8%)
	2017	13	4	32	49(14.2%)
	2018	3	5	5	13(3.7%)
Total		127(36.91%)	55(15.98%)	162(47.09%)	344 (100%)

*The year of 2011 in Egypt was ruled by a transitional government, which this study excludes.

Table 2. Numbers of Official Foreign Visits by Moroccan Officials from 2006-2018

COUNTRY	YEAR	KING	PRIME MINISTER	FOREIGN MINISTER	TOTAL VISITS
MOROCCO	2006	0	1	3	4(1.4%)
	2007	0	4	5	9(3.1%)
	2008	0	6	2	8(2.8%)
	2009	0	11	3	14(4.9%)
	2010	1	6	6	13(4.5%)
	2011	0	3	11	14(4.9%)
	2012	7	7	15	29(10.2%)
	2013	6	6	15	27(9.5%)
	2014	9	4	24	37(13%)
	2015	12	3	23	38(13.4%)
	2016	19	2	19	40(14.1%)
	2017	12	1	19	32(11.3%)
	2018	3	6	9	18(6.3%)
Total		69(24.3%)	60(21.2%)	154(54.4%)	283 (100%)

Table 3. Numbers of Official Foreign Visits by Tunisian Officials from 2006-2018

COUNTRY	YEAR	PRESIDENT	PRIME MINISTER	FOREIGN MINISTER	TOTAL VISITS
TUNISIA	2006	0	1	7	8(2.91%)
	2007	0	1	6	7(2.55%)
	2008	1	2	2	5(1.82%)
	2009	4	1	6	11(4.01%)
	2010	2	1	5	8(2.5%)
	2011*	/	/	/	/
	2012	21	14	23	58(21.16%)
	2013	10	9	5	24(8.75%)
	2014*	/	/	/	/
	2015	12	14	16	42(15.32%)
	2016	8	10	18	36(13.13%)
	2017	9	10	22	41(14.96%)
	2018	6	6	22	34(12.40%)
Total		73 (26.64%)	69 (25.18%)	132 (48.17%)	274 (100%)

*The years of 2011 and 2014 in Tunisia was ruled by transitional governments, which this study excludes.

I select as case studies countries that experienced a rise of Islamist parties to power after the Arab Spring: Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. These three countries share the same region,

language, and identity. They were also controlled by firmly established authoritarian regimes that held similar attitudes toward Islamist parties.

In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak, whose National Democratic Party had been in power for around thirty years, held regular elections, but these were consistently manipulated. Islamist parties were regularly excluded (with the notable exception of the 2005 election). Similar to Egypt, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali ruled Tunisia for 23 years, and while he allowed elections, these could not be described as free and fair. The Democratic Constitutional Rally ruled Tunisia from independence in 1956 until 2011. Morocco, by contrast, was governed under a monarchical structure, under which King Mohammed VI acceded to the throne after the death of his father in 1999. The monarch serves as the head of state and appoints the prime minister from the largest political party. The king's relationship with the Islamist party was not as hostile as in other countries, as the Moroccan royal family is a part of the Alaouite dynasty, which consists of descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, thereby according with the PJD's Islamic identity.

Islamist parties were previously oppressed by authoritarian regimes and excluded from participating in governance activities. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, with which the FJP is affiliated, was oppressed and generally excluded from elections. Many of their leaders were detained and some were executed. Moroccan Islamists were ostracized and barred from political life. In Tunisia, Ennahda was banned and many of its leaders, including its founder, Rached Ghanouchi, were forced into exile.

However, following the Arab uprisings, Islamist parties participated in and triumphed in free and fair elections in their countries. They became the ruling parties in Egypt, Morocco, and

Tunisia, as Middle Eastern and North African Islamist parties all began to come to power through elections at approximately the same time. Some won majorities, while others formed coalitions. Despite sharing the same ideology, studies have shown that they differ in their approaches to national policy, which has provided each nation with a unique political fate. The FJP faced a military coup d'état a year after their election, Ennahda was unable to repeat its success after stepping down and losing the next election, but remained part of the ruling coalition, while the PJD were re-elected. Thus, these countries offer a strong base for comparison, especially when compared to their nation's non-Islamist parties.

In each case, Islamist parties' length of time in power varied. Egypt's Islamist party experienced the shortest time in government, ruling briefly from 2012 until 2013 when they were ousted by a military coup d'état. Ennahda, the Tunisian Islamist party, ruled for just over two years, from 2011 until 2014 when it stepped down after protests erupted over the assassination of two secular politicians. It then became the second-largest party in the 2014 elections. In Morocco, the PJD was in power from 2011 to 2021.

The timeframe of the study is from 2006 – five years before Islamist parties came into power – to 2018. I compare this non-Islamist period to the period after the uprising (from 2011), when Islamist parties rose to power. As well as comparing these periods to the governments that succeeded the Islamists' rule, the selected time frame allows us to compare the foreign policies of each Islamist party with the parties that came before and after it.

The key independent variable in this study is whether an Islamist party is holding power. Being *in power* refers to an Islamist party winning control of the executive branch for a minimum of one year and holding the largest number of seats in the nation's parliament.

This was the case for all three of our focus countries. In Egypt, Mohammad Morsi won the election and became the first elected president following the 2011 uprising. Morsi was a member of the FJP, which won 47.2% of the vote, and formed a coalition with the Salafi Al-Nour Party, which received 24.3%.

During the Arab Spring in Morocco, King Mohammed VI implemented various reforms, including some concerning parliamentary elections. The king appointed Abdelilah Benkirane, the leader of the PJD, as the Prime Minister because the PJD became the largest party in the parliamentary election of 2011. The PJD won 107 out of the 395 available seats, such that the king invited Benkirane to form a coalition with the Independence Party, the Popular Movement, and the Party of Progress and Socialism. In the 2016 elections, the PJD won 32% of the vote and secured 125 seats.

In the October 2011 elections in Tunisia, Ennahda also became the largest party, winning 37% of the vote. Hamadi Jabali, an Ennahda member, was appointed as Prime Minister and served from 2011 to 2013 when he resigned from office. Jabali was succeeded by Ali Laarayedh, also one of Ennahda's members, who served until the January 2014 election. Ennahda then formed a coalition with two center-left secular parties – Congress for the Republic (CPR) and Ettakatol – as it became the second-largest party in the government.

Since Islamist parties in these countries operate in different national contexts and are involved in different coalitions, this study uses a cross-country comparison, discussing the similarities and differences between the FJP, the PJD, and Ennahda. The study, therefore, explores how Islamists impact foreign policy when in coalitions with another Islamist party or

secular party, as well as assessing how Islamist parties' foreign policy is impacted when restricted by another power, such as in Morocco.

The next chapter details the focus countries' backgrounds and identifies the different types of Islamist and non-Islamists parties, but also considers the constraints that they face while in power and how these constraints impact their foreign policies.

The Impact of Research

The main contribution of this study is its analysis of the foreign policies of three North African countries – Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia – that have recently experienced democratization and the rise of Islamist parties. Although these countries have been studied from many different perspectives, the foreign policies of governing Islamist parties have received little attention. Islamist parties winning elections and governing in North Africa is a new phenomenon that still requires in-depth examination. More importantly, Islamist parties' impact on foreign policy requires special attention as it not only affects the domestic politics of North African countries but also their relationships with the international community. Therefore, this dissertation provides insight about Islamist parties' foreign policies and how they might differ or coincide with non-Islamist parties.

Furthermore, this dissertation provides detailed case studies of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, which are analyzed between 2006 and 2018. The in-depth study of each allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the foreign policy of each party and each country. The study uses a comparative method to illustrate the differences between Islamist and non-Islamist parties, as well as differences among Islamist parties across the three countries. No other study provides such a comprehensive analysis of these countries. Therefore, this study is the first to

conduct an in-depth analysis of the foreign policies of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. This includes an explanation of the countries' political systems before and after the Arab Spring, the background of Islamist parties, and the main focuses of their foreign policies.

Moreover, this study will assist policymakers and those who are concerned about stability in the Middle East by providing an understanding of the foreign policy of Islamist parties. These parties have been portrayed as threats to regional neighbors, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, but allies to others, such as Qatar, Palestine (Gaza in particular), and Turkey. The United States and other Western powers have been wary of Islamist parties in power and suspicious of their impact on regional stability. This study provides answers on how Islamist parties should approach their foreign policy while in power and how others should view the rule of Islamist parties. It can assist other countries when they are deciding upon their approach toward Islamist parties in power.

Additionally, the study provides an understanding of the dividing lines between Islamism/Islamists, as this misunderstanding has been a factor contributing to Islamophobia. Islamist parties have been considered, and therefore treated, as a collective. Thus, this study offers an overview of Islamism/ Islamists, which are controversial terms that have been misunderstood by many Western authors, academics, and news channels, where Islamists have been viewed as equivalent to terrorists. Thus, this study focuses on explaining Islamism, its history, and verities since there is a lack or misunderstanding of this topic in English literature. This lack of understanding has negatively impacted the foreign policy of the US and Western countries. Therefore, this study presents a better understanding of Islamism and the differences between Islamists, which will improve the literature on Islamism and political Islam.

As a result, this dissertation makes a significant contribution to the literature on foreign policy analysis, Islamic studies, and North African and Middle Eastern studies. It explores and compares the foreign policies of Islamist and non-Islamist parties and investigates whether Islamist parties' foreign policies are driven by Islamic ideology. Focus is given to the North African and Middle Eastern countries as the region of the Arab Spring and the rise of Islamist parties.

The dissertation proceeds as follows: Chapter Four provides a brief background of the political systems and parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. It also outlines Islamist and non-Islamist party types and the constraints they face while in government. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven test the study's two hypotheses. These chapters include a comparison of the data on each country's Islamist and non-Islamist foreign policies toward Islamic countries and Middle Eastern countries. Chapter Eight includes a comparison of the Islamist parties in the countries under consideration, discusses the impact of the study, and offers concluding remarks.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISLAMIST PARTIES: HISTORY, TYPES, AND ROLES WITHIN FOREIGN POLICY

It is important to recognize each party's particular history and national context to understand Islamist parties' foreign policies, and whether their foreign policies are driven by their Islamic ideology. It is also necessary to understand the differences between Islamist and non-Islamist parties, given that all three of the countries analyzed are Muslim-majority states. Another major factor to be clarified is the constraints that Islamist parties have faced while in power, which may have hindered the degree to which they could implement foreign policy. Therefore, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first provides a brief historical background of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the Justice and Development Party (PJD), and the Ennahda Party. The second illustrates the difference between Islamist and secular parties. The final section explains the national constraints that each party has faced while in power, which could impact their role in foreign policy development.

Historical Background

The FJP

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I created the need to build an Islamic entity that could fill the vacuum left behind and counteract the secularism and nationalism created by colonization. The main goals of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) were to replace the Egyptian nationalism that arose after the fall of the Ottoman Empire with Islamic

nationalism and liberate the Arab world from foreign control by establishing an Islamic state ruled under Islamic law (Dalloul, 2017).

The MB was established in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. The movement has since spread across the Islamic world, with some branches even being opened in European countries. The MB has also inspired other movements. While the MB requires official membership and allegiance to the Supreme Guide of the MB, some movements have adopted the MB's ideology, or a close equivalent, without being officially attached to the organization. This is the case for both the PJD in Morocco and Ennahda in Tunisia.

The MB transitioned from a social movement to a political movement in the 1940s through their participation in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War following the declaration of Israel's establishment. In the 1950s, the MB joined nationalist leaders, referred to as Free Officers, in a coup against the monarch, King Farouk, who was receiving support from Great Britain. Following the successful coup, Officer Gamal Abdel-Nasser became the President of the Republic of Egypt. Although the MB initially backed the Free Officers, they eventually rejected their socialist and secularist pan-Arabist ideology. As a result, the MB became opponents of Abdel-Nasser's regime, which promptly initiated a crackdown on the movement, detaining many of its members. Consequently, the repression faced by the MB during Abdel-Nasser's reign forced the movement underground (Laub, 2019). However, restrictions were then lifted by President Abdel-Nasser's successor in the 1970s, President Anwar al-Sadat, who allowed them the freedom to operate and released MB prisoners to gain their support. During this time, the MB adopted a more progressive agenda including renouncing violence.

The political scientists Amr Hamzawy and Nathan Brown analyzed the MB's participation in the Egyptian Parliament before the uprising in 2011 and claim that the Egyptian regime moved from authoritarianism to 'semi-authoritarianism' in the 1970s following Nasser's death. This 'semi-authoritarianism' was characterized by three main features: centralization, whereby the president accumulated power; controlled the opposition so that only certain people and parties were allowed to participate in politics; and a mentality in which the government considered any action undertaken by the opposition which threatened the ruling party as a security threat (Hamzawy and Brown, 2010, 3-4). During this time, the MB's members stood in Parliament as independents, and although the MB attempted to participate in parliamentary elections, it was required to assure the ruling government that it would not compete for a majority. The MB presented only a small number of candidates in elections and did not run against the most prominent National Democratic Party (NDP) candidates. The MB became more liberal when resuming its political activities in the late 1970s, but this liberalization was limited to the political sphere.

Hamzawy and Brown claim that the MB parliamentarians used religion in internal policymaking, but that the strength of their religious and moral platform in parliament decreased over time. For example, the MB supported political and public freedoms alongside human rights, as well as drafting amendments and laws that allowed for open elections and political freedoms. For instance, the MB parliamentarians positioned themselves against the state of emergency that had been in effect since 1981 and allowed the Government to repress citizens and interrogate them without charge. However, the NDP blocked most of the MB's initiatives, thus limiting their role within the Parliament.

Furthermore, the MB's participation in elections was intermittent. In the late 1980s, the MB competed in parliamentary elections for the first time despite the party being barred by running its members as independents. Similarly, they also participated in the 2000 and 2005 elections. However, they boycotted the elections in the 1990s and 2008 to protest electoral restrictions. In 2010, President Mubarak also applied more restrictions on the MB, arresting many of their members, and banning voting in areas that supported the MB, which led the MB to again boycott the elections (Osman, 2016; "Muslim Brotherhood"). Yet, despite its lack of legal status, the MB remains the most effective social and political movement in the Arab world.

Despite the MB's attempts to establish a political party in 1996 and 2007, it was not until 2011 that they were able to establish the FJP. Although the regime banned the registration of parties with a religious identity at the time, the MB was able to register the FJP as a civil party following the revolution. However, there was disagreement over whether the FJP was directly under the control of the MB or if the party was structurally separate from the Guidance Council, the highest administrative body of the MB. Despite the attempt made by the MB's members to distinguish the FJP from the Muslim Brotherhood, it was clear that the Guidance Council had a major influence over the FJP. In addition to the MB's Guidance Council, the MB's Shura Council also influenced the FJP as the entity that selects the FJP's members (9 Bedford Row, 2015, 7-8).

The 2011 national Egyptian election was a turning point for the MB. For the first time, the party presented candidates as a legal entity, becoming the largest party in parliament. During this election, the FJP promised to not run for the presidency and to not run for more than half of the parliament's seats, to guarantee a coalition government. Yet, the party broke its promises,

with Mohamed Morsi being voted in as the first freely elected MB president. Furthermore, the party contested more than 70% of the seats available and entered a coalition with other Islamists, namely the party representing the Salafi movement, the Al-Nour party. These broken promises prompted fear of FJP control among secularists and minorities.

When in power, the FJP attempted to consolidate power in the parliament and in the Constituent Assembly that was established to draft a new Egyptian Constitution. Furthermore, a disagreement arose between the FJP and the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) about the Constituent Assembly. The SCC dissolved the Constituent Assembly because many of its members were MPs that were against Article 60 of the Constitutional Declaration. Thus, the Parliament voted in a new Constituent Assembly that was dominated by Islamists. In an Assembly that was not approved by the Judiciary, President Morsi granted himself sweeping powers and revoked the SCC's right to dissolve parliament through constitutional declaration. All these factors increased the threat posed by the FJP and led to widespread discontent against their governance, resulting in the 2013 coup d'état and the overthrow of President Morsi (Abdel Ghafear and Hess, 2018, 21; Brown, 2013, 1-2). Therefore, the FJP held power for only one year – the shortest length of time that an Islamist party was in power following the Arab uprisings.

The PJD

The MB inspired many parties and movements in North Africa, including the Moroccan Islamists (now called the Justice and Development Party (PJD)) and the Ennahda Party in Tunisia, which both came to power after the Arab Spring. The PJD, which was initially named the Popular Democratic and Constitutional Movement (MPDC), was founded by Abdelkrim al-

Khatib in 1967 following the splitting of the Popular Movement Party that al-Khatib co-founded in 1959. Over time it developed from a movement into a political party, the PJD.

To understand the PJD, we need to consider its development. Seniguer (2018, 30) divides the Islamists' views on monarchy and their involvement in politics into four main periods: from 1969 to 1981, in which the Islamist youth's position dominated the movement and sought to overthrow the monarchy, establish a Caliphate, and apply Sharia law; from 1981 to 1996, in which the organization aimed to become recognized as a legal party, therefore sacrificing the idea of a Caliphate and hostility toward the monarchy; from 1997 to 2011, in which they took their place in Parliament as an opposition party; and their control of the government since 2011.

Thus, these periods illustrate the PJD's evolution from their revolutionary roots toward pragmatism. They were initially against involvement in politics, yet eventually came to compete in parliamentary elections and hold executive office.

Unlike the FJP and Ennahda, the PJD was a legal party and participated in parliamentary elections before the uprisings, winning significant numbers of seats. For example, in the 2002 parliamentary election, the PJD was the third largest party and became the second largest in the 2007 election. Yet, unlike the MB, the PJD intentionally avoided winning a majority to gain the trust of the Palace and the electorate (Abdel Ghafar and Hess, 2018, 8). However, after political reform in 2011, the PJD were elected to govern Morocco and succeeded in two subsequent parliamentary elections in 2011 and 2016. The PJD spent the longest time in power of any Islamist party in the Arab world.

Yet, unlike the FJP and Ennahda, the PJD held limited power because of the structure of Moroccan politics. Although the 2011 uprising brought about a change in Morocco's

constitution, especially in the extent of the king's power, the king is still the main political figure in Morocco, retaining considerable power. The new constitution allows a prime minister to be appointed from the largest winning party, whereas this officeholder was previously appointed by the king. Additionally, the new constitution gives the Prime Minister the right to choose government officials and the authority to dissolve Parliament, which were both previously the legal preserve of the king. Despite these reforms, the king still controls public security, the military, and religious affairs (European Forum, 2018, 2).

In addition, unlike the MB and Ennahda, which have been challenged by secular regimes, the PJD was challenged by a religious regime. The Royal Family of Morocco derives its legitimacy from being Sharifian, that is, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad as members of the Alaouite dynasty. Thus, the king and his family in Morocco have always been respected by the public, with the king holding the title of "Commander of the Believers." Therefore, the Islam-based legitimacy that enhances the position of Islamist parties in Egypt and Tunisia was not as powerful in the PJD's case, as the religious rooting of the Royal Family guarantees the king's power and allows the retention of public support. Osman (2016, 88) notes that "Morocco's long tradition of mixing Islamism with politics, the monarchy's religious legitimacy, and the existence of various powerful Islamist movements in the country all served to lessen the impact of the PJD's ascent to power on the country's secularists." Thus, the king's rule prevailed even after the 2011 reforms.

However, the PJD was always considered a threat to the monarchy, especially so after its victory in the 2011 elections, because of its use of religion, the preservation of the monarchy, and because of the party's popularity among the Moroccan people. Yet, the PJD realizes that to

maintain its power in parliament, it must sustain a good relationship with the king and demonstrate its support for the monarchy. Thus, on many occasions, the leader of the PJD and Prime Minister Abdulilah Benkiran demonstrated support for the king in political discourse.

Despite the PJD's stated support of the monarchy, the Palace still considered the party a threat and tried to limit their power in parliament. Maghraoui (2018) claims that the palace controls the major ministries, including the Foreign Ministry, the Sovereignty Ministry, and the Ministry of the Interior. All these ministries are controlled by parties that maintain close relationships with the Palace. One such example is Foreign Minister Salaheddine Mezouar, who is the leader of the National Rally of Independents (RNI) (4). Therefore, the PJD's role in government remains limited and the palace still dominates the Moroccan political system.

Ennahda

Another MB-inspired party in North Africa is Ennahda. The Ennahda Party is a Tunisian Islamist party that rose to power after the Arab Spring and was the largest party from 2011 to 2014. Ennahda developed from an organization that was originally called the Islamic Group, created in 1973 by religious leaders and other members who wanted a return to Islam, which they believed had been destroyed by Bourguiba's regime in the 1960s. The movement started as a religious and cultural movement that focused on preaching in mosques and schools and political commentary. In the beginning, the movement operated openly, and the regime did not devote much attention to its development. In its early stages, the Islamic Group affiliated itself with the Egyptian MB, which they later abandoned when they changed their name to the Islamic Tendency (MTI) in 1979, and later became Ennahda in 1989 (Al-Jurashi, 2010, 17-74).

During this period, the MTI applied to form their political party, but the rejection of their application increased the tensions between the movement and the government. As a result, the authorities cracked down on some of the movement's powerful religious leaders and prominent figures, imprisoning leaders such as Hamadi Jebali, and exiling others, including Rached Ghannouchi, the party's founder (Wolf, 2017, 51).

Ghannouchi, who fled to London, began to work on a strategy to confront the regime's persecution. In 1996, Ennahda's exiled members held their first congress, voting to move from a confrontational strategy to a moderate one, which still characterizes Ennahda's approach today (El Kyak, 2017, 82).

In the 1970s, the movement's vision was that of an Islamic state that applies Sharia law. By the 1980s, the movement had started to abandon this vision and adopted a more progressive view of the role of religion in politics. It started to support a civil state and did not refer to religion as a basis for creating public policy. During this time, Ennahda became more supportive of fundamental human rights, especially women's rights and social equality. It also became more supportive of neoliberalist globalization (Cavatorta and Merone, 2013, 860-861).

In a 2016 Al Jazeera interview, Abdelkarim Harouni, a Minister of the Shura Council of Ennahda, claimed that the term "political Islam" had been enforced upon the party. He stated that Ennahda is a political, civil, democratic, and national party with Islamic references based upon Islamic values and teachings. He also claimed that Tunisia is not a secular country but is an Islamic country with a constitution that begins with a reference to God, adding that the Tunisian constitution is consistent with Islam, and stating that Ennahda would not have signed the document otherwise.

Ennahda was accused of shunning Islamic fundamentals and leaning toward Western-style liberalization by Hizb ut-Tahrir (the Party of Liberation), a Tunisian Salafist party. They also accused the party of accepting homosexuality and adopting a belief that sexual orientation is a personal choice. Ennahda responded by claiming that they distinguish between individual and public rights and freedoms, affirming that what people do in their homes is their own business, but that public behavior should be ruled by Islamic teachings because Tunisia is an Islamic country (Al-Jazeera Arabic, 2016).

Cavatorta and Merone (2015, 31-32) explain the Ennahda Party's moderate stance on some issues. Ennahda accepted liberal democracy, committed to coalition-based politics, and accepted the notion of the civil state and religious freedoms. Not only did Ennahda respect religious freedom, but it also accepted that the freedom of conscience should be included in the constitution and that any reference to *Sharia* should be omitted. In a 2012 interview, Ghannouchi affirmed that the lack of reference to *Sharia* in the Constitution does not signify a shunning of Islam, but that the party was protecting *Sharia*'s main objectives: justice and liberty. According to Ghannouchi, a country with justice and liberty as the main core of its constitution should be considered more Islamic than those that include *Sharia* law but do not implement it, like much of the Arab world (31-32).

Despite Ennahda's moderation, it has always existed in a state of confrontation. Being faced with repression and persecution by the old regime or competition from the old regime's allies. When Ennahda tried to form a political party to be able to participate in elections during Ben Ali's regime, the authorities suppressed the party's membership and hindered its political participation. After the 2011 revolution, when Ennahda was legalized as a political party and

won the election, Ennahda faced opposition from parties allied to Ben Ali's regime, such as *Nidaa Tounes*.

This confrontation between the regime and Islamist parties has not been limited to Ennahda but also exists in other countries, such as Egypt and Morocco, whose Islamist parties have employed similar responses. Wolf (2017, 53) explains how the king in Morocco and President Ben Ali in Tunisia responded to the threat posed by Islamist parties, which also parallels the situation in Egypt. Wolf (53) states that:

[...] both the monarchy in Morocco and Ben Ali in Tunisia attempted to counter Islamists through a threefold strategy: (1) denouncing them as 'extremists' by linking them to violent groups; (2) reinforcing their religious underpinnings; [and] (3) committing to 'modernity' and western values.

Thus, Wolf (2017, 53) claims that these regimes created parties such as the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) in Morocco and Nidaa Tounes in Tunisia "to defend the countries' long-term powerbrokers from their Islamist adversaries."

Hence, Islamist parties' histories and experiences are similar despite their geographical separation or the differences in their political systems. Roy (2017, 128) describes mainstream Islamist parties (including the MB, the PJD, and Ennahda) in the following manner:

They seek accommodation with existing institutions and build support by setting up charities that fill the gap left by poor governance in much of the Muslim world. With the goodwill this generates, they try to persuade people to "return" to Islam through piety: attending mosque, praying openly in public spaces, and, for women, wearing the veil. They do not overtly contest the legitimacy of secular governments but instead try to influence them; they enter into the electoral arena when allowed to do so and are open to joining political coalitions. They reject the practice of takfir (accusing other Muslims of apostasy) and do not promote armed insurrections – except against Israel. They take up arms rarely, only when under attack. And, although they accuse Western powers of neocolonialism and "cultural aggression," they always keep the door open to contacts and negotiation.

Although Islamist parties operate in similar environments, they face different national challenges, which have each contributed to shaping individual parties. Islamist parties in Egypt and Morocco have been partially included within political structures throughout their history, which has made them more moderate, as Cavatort and Merone illustrate. However, with regards to Ennahda, it is their exclusion that led them to become more moderate (859). Therefore, national contexts have shaped the internal and external characteristics of each party.

Accordingly, the national context and the moderation of Islamist parties played a significant role in their survival following the Arab Spring. In Egypt, the FJP's strong military control, which was reminiscent of the old regime, and consolidation of power led to the overthrow of their government after only one year in power. In contrast, Ennahda's support for pluralism and liberal democracy ensured that it played a prominent role in rewriting the Tunisian constitution and remained in government until it resigned. In Morocco, the PJD have remained in power because of their popularity among the Moroccan public and their ability to build consensus with the king, who is still the most powerful political actor.

Islamists vs. Non-Islamist Parties

Historically, Islamist and non-Islamist parties within the Muslim world have been rivals. Whether their differences relate to policy or whether ideology plays a role in their rivalry is still unproven. For instance, Gerges (2018) argues that it is not ideology that divides nationalists and Islamists, but it is "the state, its power, and its position as custodian of the public sphere" (11). Gerges claims that the problem is that Islamists and nationalists share too many values to be rivals. They both fight colonialism and see themselves as guardians of both Islamic and Arab societies. Wolf (2017) notes some examples of the similarities between Islamist and secular

parties in Tunisia and Morocco (51). He notes that “Nidaa Tounes and PAM activists see themselves as the guardians of their countries’ ‘true’ Islamic heritage, promote their own brand of Islam, and increasingly resort to religious speech to further their political aims.”

Similarly, Roy (2017) identifies similarities between Islamist and secular parties (129). He claims that secularist parties use religion to gain public support, arguing that “even secularist parties, such as Tunisia’s Nidaa Tounes, often promoted some Islamic norms to reinforce their cultural authenticity” (129). Thus, Islamists share much of their Islamic ideology and practices with secular parties, meaning that they do not monopolize religious politics.

However, scholars still classify Islamist and secular parties based on their view of democracy and the integration of religion into politics. Haynes (2013) characterizes the FJP, the PJD, and Ennahda as modernist Islamists, stating that they “believe that politics should be authentically ‘Islamic’ – that is, it must not contradict *sharia* law – but this does not preclude adoption of democratic mechanisms if they are compatible with core tenets of Islam” (175). Modernist Islamists believe in the place of religion within politics and the coexistence of Islam and democracy.

On the other hand, secular/non-Islamist parties accept the liberal Western form of democracy. They believe that “neither Qur’an nor shariah law offers a blueprint for governance in today’s complex world, although they are seen as valuable sources of ethical and moral guidance” (Haynes, 2013, 175). Thus, secular and non-Islamist parties believe in the separation of religion and politics. Egypt and Tunisia were secular countries controlled by secular parties, while Morocco has been a religious country since its independence, but with secular political institutions. Current examples of secular and non-Islamist parties include: the Congress for the

Republic and *Ettakatol* in Tunisia, *Al Wasat* (the Center Party) in Egypt, and the eight-party Coalition for Democracy, which includes the PAM, in Morocco.

Scholars have also attempted to classify Islamist parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia based on their beliefs and their view of liberal democracy. Tarek Chamkhi (2014) categorizes the Islamist parties that rose to power after the Arab Spring as neo-Islamist, even despite noting the differences between, for instance, Ennahda and FJP with respect to pluralism (26). Chamkhi's definition of neo-Islamism, which he believes incorporates all these Islamist parties, states that (26):

Neo-Islamism is a tendency that emerged within the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood movement and its pro-democracy affiliates in the Muslim World, which uses liberal sets of concepts for tactical or strategic purposes, while pursuing the same traditional goals of the Islamic movement.

Although Chamkhi (2014) claims that Islamists are diverse and that their future is uncertain, he believes that all the Islamist parties that rose to power in the post-Arab Spring period employ moderation and accept all aspects of democracy solely for strategic benefits. As Chamkhi asserts, Islamist parties' moderation is a means to achieve a goal that they share with traditional Islamic movements: an Islamic state ruled by *Sharia* law.

Conversely, both Bayat (1996, 45) and Wright (2012, 9) believe that Islamist parties differ despite their shared Islamic tendencies. According to Wright, the FJD and the PJD are neo-Islamist parties, whereas Ennahda is a post-Islamist party. She categorizes neo-Islamist parties as those that pursue *Sharia* law and believe that Islamic rules are dynamic, while post-Islamist parties separate religious and political discourses, believe in people's authority and power, and do not limit human rights to those specified in a religious text.

According to Bayat (1996), post-Islamism “[is] expressed [by] the idea of fusion between Islam (as a personalized faith) and individual freedom and choice” and is “associated with values of democracy and aspects of modernity” (45). Both Bayat (1996, 45) and Crowder, Griffiths, and Hasan (2014, 123) characterize Ennahda as a post-Islamist party, comparing it to the Turkish post-Islamist Justice and Development Party, AKP. For instance, Crowder, Griffiths, and Hasan note that Ennahda worked with secular and leftist political groups while employing a tolerant discourse. Ennahda, unlike the FJP and the PJD, claimed that they would not interfere in people’s personal lives, and have worked to improve women’s rights.

Although Islamist, Muslim secularist, and non-Islamist parties all use religion as part of their discourse, the latter do not consider Islam as a guiding principle in their politics. They also do not seek to adopt *Sharia* law or attempt to Islamize society. On the other hand, the integration of Islam into politics forms a core of Islamist ideology. Yet, Islamist parties vary in the appropriate degree of integration. Among all the Islamist parties, Ennahda appears to use Islam as a reference in their policymaking the least. In 2016, Ennahda ceased referring to themselves as an Islamist party, instead using the word “democratic.” They also separate the Ennahda Party from the Ennahda movement and assert that the movement concentrates on promoting piety within society, while the party concentrates on politics. Moreover, the PJD in Morocco appears to be more tolerant than the FJP in Egypt. The PJD formed coalitions with secular parties and made compromises that helped the party to claim victories in two elections.

As a result, Islamist and non-Islamist parties differ in their view of the incorporation of Islam into politics. Thus, based on the differences between Islamist parties and non-Islamist

parties in the national context, they should also be expected to adopt different foreign policies, with Islamist parties implementing more Islamized foreign policies.

The Varied Foreign Policies of Islamist Parties

Even after winning power, Islamist parties' foreign policies have been constrained by national contexts. These constraints include the Islamist parties' limited control of parliament and their relationships with other political actors. In Egypt, the FJP won 47.2% of the vote and, as expected, formed a coalition with another Islamist party, albeit Salafist, the Al-Nour Party, giving the coalition an Islamic majority. However, the FJP's power was limited by two factors. First, the FJP ruled for only one year, an insufficient time to effectively develop or implement foreign policy. Thus, identifying whether the party's foreign policy reflected their ideology is difficult. Yet, this year in power provides some opportunity for analysis and consideration of whether their policies were Islamic in nature.

Moreover, although the FJP controlled the executive and legislative branches, their control was constrained by the SCC's right to dissolve Parliament whenever unconstitutional activity occurred. The SCC dissolved Parliament days before the presidential election in 2012 when the majority of the parliament represented the MB. The SSC also dissolved the Constituent Assembly. Both dissolutions were claimed to be based on the unconstitutionality of the parliamentary election and MPs' election as members of the Constituent Assembly (Khazbak, 2012; Leyne, 2012). Therefore, the power that the SCC held over the Parliament prevented the FJP from freely implementing its ideology through domestic and foreign policies.

Secondly, the reality that most of the SCC's members were appointed by President Mubarak, as remnants of the old regime, constrained the FJP's authority. Indeed, Brown (2013,

2) notes that “[t]he SCC is [...] a body that has been routinely described as staffed entirely by ‘Mubarak appointed judges’ in an era after Mubarak had been overthrown” (2). Therefore, the FJP were aware of the SCC’s power and the challenges they would face if they pursued their preferences in domestic and foreign policy.

In Morocco, one of the constraints of the Moroccan political system is the multi-party structure that has preserved the monarchy by ensuring that no party in Parliament will be strong enough to challenge the king. As Maghraoui (2018) claims, “[...] parties exist as instruments of the palace,” adding that “[v]ia formal and informal institutions and practices, the monarchy keeps political parties under its control, especially when it perceives that one has gained more strength or popularity” (1). Therefore, when the PJD won the largest vote share in 2011 (27%) and 2016 (32%), they were required to form coalitions with other parties, not only because the party did not win a majority, but also because the system requires a coalition government. Their coalition partners included many members that were loyal to the Palace. These coalitions were expected to hinder the PJD’s ability to implement policies, especially Islamist policies.

The second main constraint on the PJD was the king’s power itself. In Morocco, the king holds ultimate executive power and can make final policy decisions. Therefore, the PJD’s policies must be consistent with the kings’ intentions, otherwise, they could face confrontation with the Palace. The Palace’s parliamentary allies, such as the PAM and the RNI, stand ready to challenge the PJD if the PJD does not satisfy the Palace’s wishes. For instance, when the Palace was not satisfied with Benkirane’s role in the Parliament, they worked to stop him from forming a government. Parties that are allied with the Palace refused to join the coalition that Benkirane

proposed. Therefore, the king replaced Benkiran with Othmani, who has since been more receptive to the Palace's interests (Maghraoui, 2018, 2).

In addition, the king directly influences foreign policy because the king appoints the Foreign Minister, meaning that the PJD, despite being the ruling government, does not control the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Minister was an RNI member from 2013 until 2017 when an independent became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Thus, the PJD held control of the Foreign Ministry for less than two years at the beginning of their period in power. Also, as Osman (2016, 89) notes:

[t]he PJD has been compelled by the political agreement upon which it formed its coalition government to accept a convoluted decision-making structure in the ministries, in which a minister would belong to one party, his deputy to another, and a senior adviser to a third.

This reality hindered the PJD from practicing its executive authority. Therefore, the PJD's impact on foreign policy was lessened by its limited control of the Foreign Ministry.

In Tunisia, Ennahda won the largest share of the vote (37%), but not a majority. Thus, Ennahda was required to form a coalition with secular parties of opposite ideologies – the Congress for the Republic (CPR) and Ettakatol, which are both secular center-left parties. Despite this, the coalition remained stable until the assassination of two politicians – Chokri Belaid, the secular opposition leader, and Mohamed Brahmi, from the nationalist Movement of the People Party – in 2013, which led to disputes between Islamists and secularists. Ennahda was accused of being responsible for the assassinations, which prompted Ennahda to step down from power after two years in government. Therefore, Ennahda's control was limited, which should be expected to have impacted Ennahda's role in foreign policy.

In addition, much like in Morocco, the parties sharing a coalition with Ennahda were loyal to the old regime. Thus, another constraint that faced Ennahda was that it shared power with the old regime's allies even after the overthrow of Ben Ali's regime. The old regime's allies controlled "high offices of state, the secret services, and the police" (Netterstrøm, 2015, 117). According to Abou Yaareb Marzouki, an advisor to Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali of the first Ennahda-led Government, "[...] the security services, the ministries, the media – all these people from the former regime were still there" (Netterstrøm, 2015, 117-118). He adds that "[n]ominally we had the power, but in reality, they were in control." This was because the interim national unity government was formed before the ban on Ennahda was removed, which resulted in many of the old regime's allies retaking their positions as ministers in the new cabinet (El Kyak, 2017, 83).

Therefore, Ennahda's control was limited. During its two years in power, Ennahda faced many problems, including assassinations and a constitutional process that led to outrage from secularists and other groups who were threatened by Islamist control. Thus, it would be reasonable to expect that Ennahda's ability to implement their preferred foreign policy was impacted.

In illustrating each party's historical background and Islamist tendencies, and the constraints that the FJP, the PJD, and Ennahda faced, it should be clear that each party has an individual history, particular experiences of the regime, and political structures that have contributed to shaping the party and its degree of moderation. These factors have also led these Islamist parties to implement different domestic policies from non-Islamist parties.

Consequently, it should be expected that Islamist parties will enforce an Islamized foreign policy more than non-Islamist parties. Thus, it should be expected that Islamist parties, compared to the non-Islamist parties, will have better relationships with predominantly Muslim countries and countries in the Middle East. I test these hypotheses in the following chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

EGYPT

The Muslims are brothers to each other, therefore make peace between your two brothers.

- The Qur'an (Al-Hijr 49:10)

The following chapters look at the relationship between Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia with Muslim-majority countries and focus on the MENA region countries in three different periods. These three countries are Arab and Islamic countries that have been ruled by either Muslim secularist or Islamist parties. As explained in the previous chapter, Muslims and Islamists are not interchangeable. Islamists view Islam as the primary guiding framework for their political practices and beliefs, while Muslim secularists believe in the separation between religion and politics. Individual Islamists also vary in their use of religion in politics.

Accordingly, by focusing on these countries' foreign policies, I expect to find variations depending on the parties' views of the inclusion of Islam in politics. I predict that: While in power, Islamist parties are more likely than non-Islamist parties to improve their country's relationships with Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Since Islamists use *Sharia* for guidance in all life aspects, it is expected that Islamist parties use it in matters of foreign policy, as well. The *Sharia* urges Muslims to maintain positive relationships with other Muslims and regard fellow Muslims as brothers and sisters. It refers to the large Muslim community as one nation (*Ummah*). It also urges people to have a good relationship with their neighbors. Therefore, Islamists in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia are

expected to grow their relationships with Muslim-majority and MENA countries more than non-Islamist parties.

Few studies have discussed the impact of Islamist ideology on foreign policy. They primarily discuss whether and how Islamist parties that have risen to power use Islamist ideology when developing or implementing foreign policy. Al-Anani explains how Islamists integrate their ideology into politics, stating that “despite its importance, it is problematic to assume that the MB’s ideology directly shapes its actions and behavior. Ideology can inform behavior, but political reality forges and guides it” (2012, 41). Al-Anani illustrates that Islamist policies are driven more by political context than ideology. However, some scholars have noted changes in foreign policy during Islamist control that were motivated by ideology. *9 Bedford Row Report* observes that several foreign policy changes in the FJP were driven by Islamist ideology, including Morsi’s support of Syrian opposition forces (*9 Bedford Row*, 2015, 106). The report also emphasizes Morsi’s historic visit to Iran and his role in the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel in 2012, which demonstrates the impact of ideology on foreign policy.

Meringolo nonetheless claims that the FJP displays a continuation of its former foreign policy with no revolutionary changes, with two exceptions—its relationship with Hamas and its relationship with Iran. FJP demonstrated an openness toward relations with Iran and a desire to improve Egypt’s relationship with Hamas, changes which were remarkable and contradicted traditional Egyptian foreign policy. Risking Egypt’s relationship with its US and Gulf allies, Morsi visited Iran, which was a historical visit with implications for the future of the Egypt-Iran relationship. However, Meringolo views Morsi’s visit to Iran not as a result of his Islamist ideology or an attempt to approach the Islamic world, but rather as an attempt to earn more

domestic support, a strategy that Egyptian presidents have traditionally practiced. This strategy involves displaying anti-American sentiment to gain more support from the Egyptian people (2015, 2-3). Thus, as Al-Anani claims, “The MB has always calculated its moves and decisions based on interests rather than its ideological or ontological views” (2012, 41).

Similarly, Cavatorta and Merone argue that Ennahda shows pragmatism in its foreign policy matters. It seeks to reassure the United States and the European Union about its intentions. Thus, Cavatorta and Merone believe that Ennahda’s foreign policy is consistent with that of Ben Ali (2013, 861). However, Salem notes some changes in Tunisian foreign policy that have occurred throughout Ennahda’s government. Its decision to break diplomatic relations with Syria as well as its opposition to Iranian interests and Shiite groups that support the Al-Assad regime are all indicators of a changing Tunisian foreign policy. Salem also highlights its shift toward the Gulf countries, specifically Qatar. According to Salem, before the Arab Spring, Tunisia was not on good terms with Qatar due to Al Jazeera’s criticism of Ben Ali. After the Arab Spring, however, Ennahda began to develop its relationships with the Gulf countries, especially Qatar (2018, 59).

Seniguer further elucidates the Moroccan Islamists’ use of ideology in foreign policy. He notes the PJD’s hostility toward Israel, the US, and the West, which colors its rhetoric, did not show in the party’s policies when they first came to power. The PJD is constrained by the power of the king and is, therefore, unable to oppose the king’s will. Accordingly, Seniguer claims that the PJD’s foreign policies, including their relationships with Israel, the US, and the West, are consistent with those of previous governments. Thus, the PJD implemented a foreign policy different from the one they advocated for before coming to power, and their foreign policy rather

matched the foreign policy of the king and the ruling party that preceded their government (2018, 41).

Previous attempts to study whether Islamist parties that rose to power after the Arab Spring have different foreign policies that are driven by Islamist ideology lacked the empirical data and systematic review necessary to support their arguments. Therefore, this study aims to provide systematic, empirical, and tangible data that will allow us to better compare the foreign policies of Islamist and non-Islamist parties and demonstrate whether Islamist parties' foreign policies have been impacted by their ideology.

In this chapter, I intend to test a hypothesis and a sub-hypothesis: the first hypothesis states that, **H1**: Islamist parties that are in power are more likely than non-Islamist parties to improve their country's relationships with predominantly Muslim countries. The sub hypothesis is **H1a**: Islamist parties that are in power are more likely than non-Islamist parties to improve their country's relationships with the MENA region countries. To test the hypothesis, I focus primarily on the frequency of international visits by the presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers to Muslim-majority countries and the MENA region. Official visits by state officials are one of the main indicators of international relationships. I studied the period from 2006 to 2018, which covers three governments in each country. The total number of official visits by the president, prime minister, and foreign minister of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia is 901. Data on these visits were collected from each country's official government websites, local news websites, and international news websites including Al Jazeera's Arabic and English and BBC websites.

Since 2006, Egypt has experienced three different governments: the government before the Arab Spring in which President Mubarak ruled, the government after the uprising in which President Morsi became the first elected president, and the government after the military coup in which President Sisi came to power. The collected total number of foreign visits in these three periods is 344. I start with President Mubarak's tenure, covering the last four years of his government, which were from 2006 until 2010. I then examine President Mohammed Morsi's government, the shortest period in this study, which lasted from July 2012 to June 2013. Lastly, I present President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's tenure, which lasted from 2014 until 2018. It is important to note that this study does not include foreign visits that occurred during transitional governments that were in place between these governments.

I divided the visits into categories: visits to Muslim-majority countries, and non-Muslim majority countries. I also divided these visits by regions to identify the most important regions and countries based on the number of visits. So, I divide this section into three parts to cover each period individually. Most importantly, at the end of this section, I compare these periods as well as uncover the differences between Islamist and non-Islamist parties' relationships with the Muslim world and the MENA region.

Mubarak Government

During Mubarak's tenure, the ruling party was the National Democratic Party (NDP), the party to which President Mubarak and Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif belong. However, the foreign minister, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, was independent. I collected information on their visits during the period from 2006 to 2010. The total collected number of foreign visits from 2006 to

2010 is 108. The table below displays the percentages of their visits that were to Muslim-majority countries and non-Muslim-majority countries.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 4. Number of Foreign Visits by Egyptian Officials to Muslim-majority Countries and Non-Muslim Majority Countries from 2006-2010

Non-Islamist 2006-2010	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim Majority Countries	Total
Mubarak Government	57 (52.77%)	51 (47.22%)	108 (100%)

This table shows that during the time of President Mubarak's government, leading government officials made more total visits to predominantly Muslim countries than to non-Muslim countries. However, President Mubarak himself made more visits to non-Muslim countries than Muslim-majority countries, while it was Prime Minister Nazif and Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit's total number of foreign visits consisted of more visits to Muslim countries.

Forty-eight percent of President Mubarak's foreign visits were to predominantly Muslim countries. Furthermore, 95% of his visits to the Muslim world were to MENA region countries. More precisely, 90% of these visits were to Arab countries. Similarly, all the prime minister's visits to the Muslim world were to Arab MENA region countries. Furthermore, out of the total number of the foreign minister's visits to Muslim majority countries, 73% were to Arab-MENA region countries. Only 23% of the foreign minister's visits to Muslim-majority countries were to non-MENA region countries, and out of these countries, only 19% were non-Arab countries.

Regarding relations with non-Muslim majority countries, the data illustrates that 47% of President Mubarak period's total number of visits were to non-Muslim countries. While 51% of President Mubarak's visits were to non-Muslim majority countries, only 47% of Prime Minister Nazif and 43% of Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit's total number of visits were to non-Muslim majority countries.

Visits Divided by Regions

During President Mubarak's governance from 2006 to 2010, the frequency of official foreign visits shows that although the MENA region consisted of less than half of their foreign visits, it was the top-visited region during the period. Forty-seven percent of foreign official visits were to MENA region countries compared to 30% to Europe, the second top visited region. Other regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, North America, and Latin America were less than 10% of the foreign visits during President Mubarak's period.

Table 5. Egyptian Officials' Foreign Visits from 2006-2010 Divided by Regions

Non-Islamist 2006-2010	Name	MENA	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
President	Muhammad Hosni Mubarak	21	1	17	3	3	0	45 (41.66%)
Prime Minister	Ahmed Nazif	9	3	5	0	0	0	17 (15.74%)
Foreign Minister	Ahmed Aboul Gheit	21	3	11	6	2	3	46 (42.59%)
% Total Visits		51 (47.22%)	7 (6.48%)	33 (30.55%)	9 (8.33%)	5 (4.62%)	3 (2.77%)	108 (100%)

It is important to note that President Mubarak was reported as being ill at the end of his presidency and underwent surgery in Germany in 2010. Thus, his old age and illness impacted his foreign visits. Yet, despite these factors, it is notable that his highest traveled year was the year of 2009 thanks to the escalation of the Israeli war on Gaza. Most of President Mubarak's visits to the Arab world, Europe, and the USA were to discuss peace and rebuilding Gaza.

Visits by President Mubarak, Prime Minister Nazif and foreign minister Aboul Gheit show that the MENA region was the top-visited region, and Europe was the second. Forty-six of President Mubarak's foreign visits were to the MENA region. Among his visits to the MENA region, 57% were to Gulf countries, of which he visited Saudi Arabia the most. One of the main reasons for President Mubarak's high number of visits to Saudi Arabia was the Syrian-Lebanese crisis after the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, with the UN accusing the president of Syria Bashar Al-Assad of culpability in his assassination. This crisis only furthered the divisions between Arab countries, with Saudi Arabia and Egypt in opposition to Syria. Thus, President Mubarak ended up visiting Saudi Arabia more frequently to discuss the crises ("Mubarak Mawjud"; "Mubarak wa almalik"; "Qimah thulathiat"). The Syrian Lebanese crisis added to the regional problems with Iran and Israel that both Saudi Arabia and Egypt have stood against ("Iran wa"; "Mubarak wa almalik Abdullah yadeuan li waqf altaseid al Israeli"). All these factors made Saudi Arabia President Mubarak's most frequently visited destination.

Furthermore, 37% of President Mubarak's visits were to European countries. France and Italy were President Mubarak's top visited countries in the non-Muslim world. Each of these countries consisted of seventeen percent of President Mubarak's visits to Europe. The main purpose of these visits in 2006 was to discuss the Syrian-Lebanese crises after al-Hariri's

assassination, while his visits in 2009 were mainly to discuss the increased tensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the war on Gaza (“Mubarak yabhath”; “Mubarak yatawaaqae”). In addition, President Mubarak made his first visit to Slovenia since the beginning of diplomatic relationships between the two countries. Therefore, he was the first Egyptian president to travel to Slovenia. During this visit, President Mubarak addressed his Slovenian counterpart on bilateral relations and the main regional and international issues (“Slovenia-Mutual Visits”).

Additionally, although President Mubarak did not travel a lot to Asia during the time frame of the study, one of his major visits was to China, where he signed four agreements in 2006. One of these agreements was Egypt-China cooperation in nuclear energy, which Egypt had stopped for twenty years after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. Egypt has planned to resume its nuclear energy program with Russian and Chinese support (“Eitifaq sini”). Thus, his visit to China was a core visit regarding the agreements they signed and the Egyptian-Chinese relationship, in which they celebrated the fiftieth year of their diplomatic relationship.

Moreover, the MENA region also was the top-visited region by Prime Minister Nazif. Sixty-six percent of Prime Minister Nazif’s total number of visits to the MENA region consisted of visits to the Gulf countries (33%) and North African countries (thirty-three percent). Nazif’s visits to the Gulf countries mainly focused on improving economic relations and increasing Gulf investments in Egypt (“Nazif: alestithmar”; “Nazif yazur”). While his visits to North Africa and other Arab countries included attending the Arab summits in Libya and Sudan, as well as leading the Joint Higher Committees in Tunisia and Lebanon, in which they also discussed economic diplomacy (“Nazif yaetadhir”; “Eftitah alqimah”; “Nazif fi Tunis”; “Rais alwizara”). Sudan was at the top of Nazif’s visits to the MENA region. During his visit to Sudan, Egypt and Sudan

signed mutual economic agreements (“Alsodan wa misr”). It is important to note that the time of the visits was during the increase in commercial exchange between the two countries.

Like President Mubarak, the most frequently visited region among Prime Minister Nazif’s visits to non-Muslim-majority countries was Europe. Sixty-two percent of Prime Minister Nazif’s visits to the non-Muslim world were to European countries. Similar to his visits to the MENA region, most of Prime Minister Nazif’s visits were for economic purposes such as his visit to Switzerland to attend Davos and his visit to the United Kingdom to attend the Euromoney conference (“Muntada dafus”; “Tawajah rais”). His visits to Sub-Saharan Africa also focused on economic issues. In 2009, Nazif did a tour to the Nile Basin countries to improve relations and investments with these countries (“Nazif yastaid”). Nazif also visited Uganda in 2010 to attend the African Union Summit in which he also discussed with the President of Uganda the possibility of establishing a higher commission for investment (“Misr taarid”). Nonetheless, it is noticeable that Prime Minister Nazif did not visit Asia, North America, or Latin America.

Similar to the above officials, Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit’s visits prioritized the MENA region. Forty-five percent of his foreign visits were to countries located in the MENA region. Sudan was the top-visited country among his visits, making up nineteen percent of his total visits to the MENA region. Visits to Sudan increased due to the war in Darfur, in which the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir was accused of war crimes against civilians by the International Criminal Court in 2009. Thus, Aboul Gheit’s visits to Sudan were mainly to show Egyptian support for al-Bashir and encourage peaceful solutions to end the conflict in Sudan

(“Misr tadam tajmeed”; “Taharukat diblumasiah”; “Abu Alghit wa Sulayman”; “Wafd Misri yazur”).

In addition to visits to Sudan, one of the main visits by Aboul Gheit during the timeframe of 2006-2010 were his visits to Israel. Even though Egypt has been one of the main players in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, most negotiations and talks between Israel and Egypt have been held in Egypt and Egyptian officials have only rarely visited either Israel or Palestine. Yet in 2006, Aboul Gheit visited Israel and met with the Israeli president and foreign minister to discuss the peace process, especially after Hamas’ capture of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in 2006 and the Israeli attack on Gaza. He also discussed the failure of the Palestinian government to form a coalition government between Hamas and Fatah after Hamas won elections in 2006 (“Abu Alghit yudin alsawarikh”).

Another visit to Israel was conducted in 2007. Aboul Gheit joined the Arab League delegates to Israel which was the first time ever for the Arab League to send a delegation to Israel. The delegation’s mission was to discuss the Arab-Israeli peace proposal to trade land for recognition. The Arab countries were to recognize the state of Israel in exchange for Israel returning lands it captured in 1967 during the Arab-Israeli war and a Palestinian state would be established (“Arab League to Visit Israel”).

Moreover, the most frequently visited region among Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit’s visits to the non-Muslim-majority countries was Europe. While only 43% of Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit’s visits were to non-Muslim-majority countries, Europe was his top-visited region, making up 23% of his total visits. One of Aboul Gheit’s significant visits to Europe was his visit to the Czech Republic in 2008. He was the first Egyptian foreign minister to visit the Czech

Republic in the country's modern history, according to the official website of the Czech Republic's Embassy in Cairo. This visit came four years after the country joined the European Union. In his visit, Aboul Gheit met with his counterpart and the country's president to discuss political, economic, and commercial relationships between the two countries (Official Visits).

Accordingly, the Mubarak government showed a tendency towards the Muslim world, with 52% of their total visits from 2006-2010 to Muslim majority countries. It also focused on the MENA region, as 47% of their total visits were to countries in the MENA. These percentages were impacted by contemporary issues in the region, such as the Syria-Lebanon crises, the Darfur war, and the war on Gaza, as Egypt has historically been a regional power that maintains a major role in such crises.

Morsi Government

In 2012, Islamists rose to power, and the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in Egypt was the ruling party for a year. President Mohamed Morsi belongs to the FJP, but both the prime minister Hesham Qandil and the foreign minister Mohamed Kamel Amr were independents. The total number of foreign visits by President Morsi, Prime Minister Qandil, and Foreign Minister Amr collected for this period is fifty-one.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 6. Number of Foreign Visits by Egyptian Officials to Muslim-Majority Countries and Non-Muslim Majority Countries from 2012-2013

Islamist 2012-2013	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim Majority Countries	Total
Morsi Government	28 (54.90%)	23 (45.09%)	51 (100%)

It is important to keep in mind that this government ruled for only one year which could impact the results. Table 6 shows that during the FJP government, the frequency of official visits to Muslim-majority countries was higher compared to visits to non-Muslim countries. However, interestingly, compared to the prime minister and foreign minister, the Islamist president made the least number of visits to Muslim countries. President Morsi also made more visits to non-Muslim countries than he did to Muslim-majority countries. Forty-two percent of President Morsi's total number of visits were to Muslim countries. On the other hand, the non-Islamist prime minister and foreign minister under the Islamist government made more visits to Muslim countries than non-Muslim countries, which consisted of 63 and 61% of their foreign visits.

Visits to non-Muslim-majority countries during the FJP, as mentioned above, were less than those to Muslim-majority countries. Visits to the non-Muslim world made up forty-five percent of the total foreign visits during Morsi's government. President Morsi made the highest number of visits to the non-Muslim world, compared to his prime minister and the foreign minister, making up 58% of his total number of visits. On the other hand, only 37% of Prime Minister Qandil's and 39% of Foreign Minister Amr's total number of visits were to non-predominantly Muslim countries.

The majority of foreign visits to the Muslim world during the FJP government were to the MENA region, which made up 51% of their total visits. Seventy-seven percent of President Morsi's visits to the Muslim world were to countries located in the MENA region, whereas 55% of these visits were to Arab countries. Moreover, all the prime minister's visits to the Muslim world were to MENA region countries, whereas 71% of these visits were to Arab countries.

Likewise, of the foreign minister's total number of visits to the Muslim world, 92% of visits were to MENA region countries, and out of these visits, 91% were to Arab countries.

Visits Divided by Regions

Table 7. Egyptian Officials' Foreign Visits from 2012-2013 Divided by Regions

Islamist 2012-2013	Name	MENA	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
President	Mohamed Morsi	7	3	4	3	1	1	19 (37.25%)
Prime Minister	Hesham Qandil	7	2	1	1	0	0	11 (21.56%)
Foreign Minister	Mohamed Kamel Amr	13	3	3	1	1	0	21 (41.17%)
% Total Visits		27 (53.94%)	8 (15.68%)	8 (15.68%)	5 (9.80%)	2 (3.92%)	1 (1.96%)	51 (100%)

Comparing the foreign visits of each region, the FJP period contains more visits to the MENA region than any other region. While visits to the MENA region made up 53% of the President Morsi's government foreign visits, Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe were their second top visited regions, where each region comprised sixteen percent of their total foreign visits. Asia, on the other hand, contains 9% of their total visits, while North America and Latin America were the least visited regions.

The MENA was the highest visited region among President Morsi's foreign visits and made-up 37% of his visits. Europe was his second top visited region, making up 21% of the visits. Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia made up 16% of his visits, to each region, while North America and Latin America were at the bottom of the list.

Saudi Arabia was President Morsi's most visited country in the MENA region and received 42% of his visits to the MENA region. Saudi Arabia was also the first foreign country he visited after his election ("Qadaya tatasadar"). During that time, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Egypt was turbulent due to the Saudi imprisonment of an Egyptian lawyer, which led people to protest in front of the Saudi embassy in Egypt to release the lawyer and cause Saudi Arabia to close its embassy. Yet, President Morsi's enthusiasm to visit Saudi Arabia as his first foreign destination because he believes in the close, old relationship between the two countries and Saudi Arabia's importance as the land of the Islamic revelation. His visits to Saudi Arabia showed President Morsi's tendency towards the Arab-Muslim world and its priority in his foreign relations agenda.

Another main highlight of Egypt's foreign relations during President Morsi's government was its relationship with Iran. Morsi, during his presidential election campaign, declared that Iran was not a regional enemy, but a partner and claimed that it was Iran's right to possess nuclear energy (Fajri). The shift toward Iran was not only present in President Morsi's speeches but also demonstrated in his visit to the country. Thus, one of his major visits to the MENA region was his historical visit to Iran in 2012, which many have seen as a shift in Egypt's foreign policy. After decades of broken diplomatic relationships between Egypt and Iran due to Egypt's recognition of Israel, the Iranian revolution, and Egypt's hosting of the Shah of Iran, President Morsi accepted the Iranian invitation to attend the Non-Aligned Movement Summit that was hosted by Iran. He started his speech at the summit by declaring his support for the Syrian people and calling to help the people who were being oppressed by the Assad regime, which Iran fully supported and still does. Yet, he only stayed a few hours in Tehran and left right after the end of

the summit. However, this visit signaled an improvement in relations between Egypt and Iran (Fajri; Abu Shaer; Dabashi).

Following Morsi's visit to Iran, the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Egypt in 2013 to attend the Islamic Summit. His visit was also a historic occasion, as no Iranian president had visited Egypt since the Iranian revolution in 1979. President Morsi welcomed President Ahmadinejad at the airport, and Ahmadinejad later met with The Grand Imam of al-Azhar, a well-respected cleric in Egypt and among Sunnis all over the Muslim world ("Ahmadinejad Yasil"). In addition, during the visit, the two countries discussed proposals for economic cooperation, including tourism, oil shipment, and trade agreements. However, before his agreement, President Morsi passed these proposals to Saudi Arabia, hoping that Saudi Arabia would provide Egypt with a better deal (Badawi and Osama). Yet, Saudi Arabia passed the deal to Iran, which embarrassed President Morsi in front of the Iranians. Nonetheless, economic cooperation between Egypt and Iran continues, and in 2013 an Egyptian commercial flight landed in Iran, which was the first flight in 34 years (Abu Saleh). Nonetheless, this closeness between Egypt and Iran did not last due to the Syrian war, the Egyptian stance toward Israel, and later the Egyptian coup.

Additionally, Ethiopia also was one of the main foreign visits by President Morsi. He visited Ethiopia twice during his presidency to attend the African Union Summit which President Mubarak had abandoned since 1995 due to an assassination attempt that targeted him at the conference. The visit's importance lay in the fact that the previous Egyptian government had ignored Ethiopia and the Nile Basin countries in general. Thus, the Morsi government tried to regain Egypt's regional power and lean more towards Africa, with which it shares borders and

water. Morsi said about his visit to Ethiopia that Egypt would return to the arms of Africa and the countries of the headwaters of the Nile River, which was the lifeblood of Egypt (Zaki).

Interestingly, it is noticeable that President Morsi's foreign policy tended more toward the East than the west. One of his visits to Asia was to China where he signed eight economic agreements. This visit signals a tendency toward the East, a trend that was neglected by the previous government ("Morsi yataahad"). He also visited Pakistan and become the first Egyptian president to visit it since President Gamal Abdel Nasser ("Egypt's Morsi Arrives in Pakistan"). During his visit, they signed several memoranda of understanding for cooperation between the two sides in areas, most notably the promotion of investment, the development of small and medium enterprises, postal services, and commercial navigation (Aldakhkhni).

Similarly, President Morsi visited India and signed trade exchange agreements, agreements on the use of solar energy for power generation, as well as sales agreements (Othman). On the other hand, President Morsi visited the United States only once, and only to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the UN. He also visited Europe, where he invited European countries to invest in Egypt and help with Egyptian debts.

Another noticeable trend in President Morsi's international relations was his relationship with Israel. Although no Egyptian presidents have visited Israel, except for President Anwar Al-Sadat, Egyptian presidents used to welcome Israeli and Palestinian officials to Egypt since Egypt has been the main mediator between Israel and Palestine. Yet, it is remarkable that Morsi welcomed only Palestinian officials from both Hamas and Fatah, with whom he met many times during the one year of his presidency, while no meeting or visits were recorded between President Morsi and Israeli officials (Zaki; "Haniah yabda"). This was in contradistinction to

President Mubarak who met with the Israeli president, foreign minister, and internal ministers many times during the last four years of his presidency (“Olmert: Israel”; “Lifni tushid”; “Netanyahu in Egypt”).

On the other hand, most of Prime Minister Qandil’s foreign visits were to the MENA region. Sixty-three of the prime minister’s visits were to the MENA region countries, respectively. Sub-Saharan Africa was Prime Minister Qandil’s second top-visited region and Europe and Asia were the third, whereas none of his visits were to North America or Latin America.

His main visit to the MENA region was to Palestine. It is interesting that Prime Minister Qandil, during his one year in office, visited the Gaza Strip, something the previous government did not do due to Hamas’ control of the strip. Minister Qandil’s visit was to show Egypt’s support for Palestinians after the Israeli attack on Gaza. Qandil’s visit to Gaza was an attempt to calm the situation there and seek a ceasefire. He also visited a hospital in Gaza to visit the wounded and offer condolences to those who lost their lives during the Israeli attack. During his visit, Prime Minister Qandil declares that “Egypt will spare no effort ... to stop the aggression and to achieve a truce” (“Egypt PM”). Thus, the visit was historical and signaled a significant shift towards Palestine in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Also, it emphasized the relationship between the Islamist party in Egypt and Hamas, who share a similar Islamist ideology.

Prime Minister Qandil’s visits to Qatar and Turkey were also one of the main highlights of his visits, illustrating a tendency toward pro-Islamist countries. Both Turkey and Qatar supported the uprising in Egypt. They are also the main supporters of Islamist parties in the region. Turkey is ruled by an Islamist party/pro-Islamist party (the AKP) and Qatar has been a

supporter of main Islamist figures and a refuge for many of them. Thus, Prime Minister Qandil's visits to the MENA showed that he focused on pro-Islamist countries more than other countries in the region.

Prime Minister Qandil's second top visited region was Sub-Saharan Africa. One of his main visits to Sub-Saharan Africa was a visit to Ethiopia. Although his visit did not include any significant meetings or agreements, it was mainly to attend the funeral ceremony for the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi. Still, this visit was important as it was his first foreign visit since holding the office ("Qandil yasil"). Prime Minister Qandil also visited Kenya to attend the inauguration of the new president of Kenya. He also meets with some Kenyan officials to discuss relations ("Qandil yatawajah"). Hence, these visits to Sub-Saharan Africa signaled a tendency towards the region and its significance for the Islamist party in Egypt.

On the other hand, the only visit to Europe Prime Minister Qandil made was to Switzerland to attend the World Economic Forum, popularly known as Davos. Also, his only visit to Asia was to Japan to attend the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Meanwhile, he made no visits to either North America or Latin America.

Like the Prime minister, the MENA region, at 61%, made up the majority of Foreign Minister Amr's foreign visits. Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa were the second on his list, each consisting of 14% of his total visits. Asia and North America made up only four percent of his visits, while he made no visits to Latin America.

One of the main foreign destinations by Foreign Minister Amr was Palestine, which he visited twice that year. His visits included a visit to the Gaza Strip and a visit to Ramallah. Foreign Minister Amr, accompanied by the secretary-general of the Arab League and other Arab

countries' foreign ministers, visited Gaza in November 2012 during the Israeli attack on Gaza. The delegation's main purpose was to show Arab support to the Palestinian people and condemn the attacks on Gaza ("Alwafd alwizari"). A month later, Foreign Minister Amr, also as a part of the Arab League delegation visited Ramallah to congratulate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Palestine's obtaining of the status of "observer state" at the United Nations. They also discussed the possibility of a future visit by Arab foreign ministers to Palestine (Shmulovich; "kashaf alniqab").

Among his visits to the MENA region, the foreign minister visited Qatar and the UAE. The main purpose of both visits was to attend conferences in support of the Syrian opposition and the current situation of the Syrian war (Hamdallah; "Morsi yatalaqa taqrir"). It is noticeable that many of Foreign Minister Amr's visits during his time in office focused on the Syrian crisis and Egypt's support for the Syrian opposition. In addition to his visits to Qatar and the UAE, where he attended conferences on Syria, he discussed the Syrian case during his visits to Europe. For instance, his main agenda while visiting Russia and France was to try to reach a solution in Syria ("Wazir alkharijiah yughadir ela Mosko"; "Wazir alkharijiah: hunak tawafuq bayn Misr wa Faransa"). Thus, the Syrian crisis was one of the main topics that Foreign Minister Amr focused on during his visits.

Another major visit by Foreign Minister Amr was his visit to Ethiopia. The visit's main goal was to discuss the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam crisis. Ethiopia had planned to start constructions on the dam which is located on the Nile River to start its hydroelectric project. Yet, Ethiopia had signed an agreement with Egypt and Sudan that prohibited these countries from building dams the Nile River and not interfering in each country's portion of the Nile River, of

which Egypt possess the highest portion. The dam will impact Egypt and Sudan, the downstream states as Ethiopia holds the source of the Nile's water. The dam will limit Egypt's water and have negative impacts on the environment. Thus, Foreign Minister Amr's visits to Ethiopia were mainly to discuss the crisis and try to reach an agreement. He declared that Egypt was not against Ethiopia building dams, but Egypt's main concerns were that the dam would impact Egypt (Abdulsalam). After his visit to Ethiopia, Foreign Minister Amr also visited Sudan to discuss the result of his visit to Ethiopia as Sudan will also be impacted by the Ethiopian dam ("Wazir alkharijjah yasil").

Moreover, during his time in office, Foreign Minister Amr visited the United States only once. His visit was to attend a discussion during the UN General Assembly meeting on conflict resolution in Africa. He also participated in the Arab peace initiative committee at the ministerial level, where they discussed ways of reviving the peace process and restoring Arabs' legitimate rights ("Wazir alkharijjah yabda alarbiea"). Likewise, he visited the Asian region only once, which was to Japan, and did not visit Latin America at all.

Sisi Government

After the military coup in 2014 that ousted President Morsi, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi rose to power. President Sisi, Prime Minister Ibrahim Mahlab, Prime Minister Sherif Ismail, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, and Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry are all independents. The total number of foreign visits I collected for this four-year period is 185.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 8. Number of Foreign Visits by Egyptian Officials to Muslim-Majority Countries and Non-Muslim Majority Countries from 2014-2018

Non-Islamist 2014-2018	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim Majority Countries	Total
Sisi Government	92 (49.72%)	93 (50.27%)	185 (100%)

Under the rule of the non-Islamist government headed by President Sisi, the frequency of official visits to Muslim-majority countries is a little lower than the frequency of visits to non-Muslim countries. Forty-nine percent of the foreign visits during President Sisi's government were to the Muslim world, where the majority of these visits were to Muslim countries in the MENA region, which constitute 45% of the total number of foreign visits during President Sisi's government.

President Sisi also made the fewest number of visits to the Muslim world compared to his prime minister and foreign minister. Forty-six percent of his foreign visits were to the Muslim world, 93% of which were to Arab MENA region countries. Additionally, 48 of the prime ministers' total foreign visits were to the Muslim world, and 53% of these visits were to Arab MENA region countries.

Furthermore, the foreign minister during President Sisi's government made the greatest number of visits to the Muslim world out of the three officials, with 52% of his foreign visits being to the Muslim world. However, similar to President Sisi, ninety-six percent of the foreign minister's total number of visits to the Muslim world were to the Arab MENA region countries.

Moreover, 50% of the total number of visits during President Sisi's government were to non-Muslim-majority countries. The president made the highest number of visits to the non-

Muslim world, whereas the foreign minister made the least visits to the non-Muslim world. While 54% of President Sisi's visits were to the non-Muslim world, visits to Europe made up 47% of these visits, which made it the top-visited region of the president's visits to the non-Muslim world. Although the foreign minister made the least visits to the non-Muslim world (48%), similar to the president, Europe was his top-visited region, making up 68% of these visits.

On the other hand, the three prime ministers so far during Sisi's government made more visits to non-Muslim-majority countries, equaling 52% of their total number of foreign visits. Out of their total number of visits to the non-Muslim world, 64% of their visits were to Africa. Unlike the president and the foreign minister who focused more on European countries, the prime ministers visited Africa more than any other region. Nonetheless, the total period demonstrated more interest in Europe than in any other region outside the Muslim world. Out of 51% of their visits to the non-Muslim world, visits to Europe made up 54%.

Visits Divided by Regions

Table 9. Egyptian Officials' Foreign Visits from 2014-2018 Divided by Regions

NON-ISLAMIST 2014-2018	Name	MENA	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
President	Abdel Fattah el-Sisi	28	5	15	11	4	0	63 (34.05%)
Prime Minister	Ibrahim Mahlab, Sherif Ismail, and Mostafa Madbouly	4 3 1	6 4 3	3 1 0	1 0 1	0 0 0	0 0 0	27 (14.59%)
Foreign Minister	Sameh Shoukry	49	4	31	5	5	1	95 (51.35%)
% Total Visits		85 (45.94%)	22 (11.89%)	50 (27.02%)	18 (9.72%)	9 (4.86%)	1 (0.54%)	185 (100%)

President Sisi's government, unlike previous governments, made more visits to the non-Muslim world than the Muslim world countries. However, a more detailed breakdown of the visits demonstrated that the MENA region was President Sisi's government's top visited region. Out of the total number of collected foreign official visits from 2014 to 2018, 45% were to the MENA region. Less than half of President Sisi's visits were to the MENA region, and slightly more than half of Foreign Minister Shoukrey's visits were to the MENA region, whereas the prime ministers visited the MENA region the least.

The data demonstrate that President Sisi and the foreign minister visited the MENA region more than other regions. Forty-four percent of the president's visits were to the MENA region, while 23% were to Europe and 17% were to Asia. Only 7% of President Sisi's visits were to Sub-Saharan Africa, 6% were to North America, and none of his visits were to Latin America.

The main highlight of President Sisi's visits is that 71% of his visits to the MENA region were to Gulf countries, over half of which consisted of visits to Saudi Arabia. President Sisi visited Saudi Arabia ten times over four years. The UAE also constitutes a high number of his visits to the MENA region. These two countries are the main supporters of the Egyptian coup due to their mutual perception of the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat. Thus, President Sisi visited these countries, in addition to Bahrain, more frequently than other countries. He also welcomed many of their officials to Egypt, with the first foreign leader to visit Egypt being the Saudi king Abdullah Al-Saud. It was the Saudi King's first visit to Egypt since the ouster of President Mubarak ("Saudi King").

Another main visit to the MENA region was President Sisi's visit to Algeria. He chose Algeria to be his first foreign destination after assuming office. President Sisi believes that Egypt

and Algeria share a similar fate and are both faced with threats from Islamists and the Libyan crisis. Thus, his concerns about Egypt's national security drove him to travel to Algeria first to seek Algerian support in counterterrorism in North Africa and discuss their mutual interests on the matter. President Sisi also discussed a gas agreement with Algeria to replace the Qatari gas that Egypt already obtains ("Egypt's Sisi").

Additionally, Sudan was the president's most frequently visited African country, with him visiting the country twice in 2015. Among these visits, he attended the tripartite summit between Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia, where they met to discuss the Ethiopian Grand Dam crisis, which is still ongoing. In that meeting, they signed the declaration of the Renaissance Dam Principles Charter, which states that the dam should not be filled without the approval of Egypt and Sudan ("Egyptian-Ethiopian Negotiations"). President Sisi also was eager to attend the African Summits each year, which were held in Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, and Rwanda ("Leaders of Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan"). President Sisi also did an African tour in 2017 when he visited Gabon, making him the first Egyptian president to visit the country. During his visit, the two leaders discussed regional issues including security matters and counterterrorism and improving economic and educational cooperation.

Furthermore, 17% of President Sisi's foreign visits were made to Asia. China was at the top of his Asian countries' visits, as he visited the country four times over four years. President Sisi's first visit to China was in 2014 when the two countries discussed their mutual relationship and signed agreements on economic and technical cooperation ("China- Political Relations"). His visits to China also include his participating in the G20 Summit in 2016 and attending the BRICS Summit in 2017 ("Sisi arrives"; "Sisi visits").

Another notable improvement in Egyptian foreign policy during President Sisi's rule was the Egyptian-Russian relationship. The mutual visits between the two countries reached their peak after President Sisi's rise to power. In 2014, President Sisi visited Russia where he met with President Vladimir Putin. During the visit, President Putin promised to increase arms sales to Egypt, after the United States suspended arms deliveries to Egypt after President Sisi violently suppressed the supporters of the previous regime ("Putin vows"). This visit came after President Putin's visit to Egypt earlier that year which illustrated Russia's support for the current Egyptian regime and Sisi's presidency. In 2015, President Sisi visited Russia two times and received President Putin as well as the Russian foreign minister and defense minister ("Russia-Mutual Visits").

On the other hand, the prime ministers visited the MENA region the least compared to the President and the foreign minister. All three Prime Ministers visited Sub-Saharan Africa the most. Mauritania, South Africa, and Ivory Coast ranked at the top of the prime ministers' visits to Sub-Saharan Africa. Among these visits was a visit by Prime Minister Ismail to Mauritania in 2016 where he attended the Arab League Summit that was held in Mauritania (Abdulatti). Another visit to Mauritania was by Prime Minister Madbouly in 2018 to attend the African Union Summit ("Madbouly yughadir"). Both visits were on behalf of President Sisi who tasked the prime ministers with attending these summits and carrying his messages to Mauritania's president. Likewise, Prime Ministers Mahlab and Ismail visited South Africa to attend the African Union Summit in June 2015 and the China-Africa Forum in December 2015 ("South Africa-Mutual Visits"). While visits to Ivory Coast by Prime Ministers Mahlab in 2015 and Ismail in 2017 focused on discussing the countries' mutual relationship, mainly, their economic

and investment cooperation (“Côte d’Ivoire- Mutual Visits”; "Rais alwizara yazur"). During Prime Minister Mahlab’s visit to Ivory Coast, he participated in the inauguration of the "Jack Ville" bridge, which was built by an Egyptian Contractors Company.

However, the MENA region was the second most frequently visited region for Prime Ministers Mahlab and Ismail which comprised 28 and 37% of their visits, while Prime Minister Madbouly made an equal number of visits to the MENA and Asia region, which each made up 20% of his total number of foreign visits. Yet, 50% of the prime ministers’ total visits to the MENA region were to the Gulf countries. Fifty percent of the visits to the Gulf were to the UAE where the prime ministers participate in the World Summit of Government (“U.A.E- Mutual Visits”).

In addition to their visits to the MENA, Prime Minister Mahlab and Madbouly made one visit to an Asian country. Prime Minister Mahlab visited Indonesia to attend the Asian-African Summit on President Sisi’s behalf, who later that year visited Indonesia as well. Mahlab also met with the Indonesian prime minister to discuss future trade and investment cooperation and ways to improve their countries’ relationship ("Indonesia-Mutual Visits"). Another visit to Asia was Prime Minister Madbouly’s visit to China to attend the first Chinese International Import Expo. Madbouly also focused on discussing possible future economic and investment cooperation between Egypt and China (“Rais alwizara yaeud”). On the other hand, while only eleven percent of the prime ministers’ visits during President Sisi’s period were to Europe, it is notable that none of the prime ministers visited North America or Latin America.

Similar to the president, Foreign Minister Shoukry made 51% of his visits to the MENA region compared to 32% to Europe, while other regions consist of less than 10% of his visits. For

both the president and the foreign ministers, the MENA region was their most frequently visited region and Europe was the second most visited region. The foreign minister's visits to the Gulf countries, excluding Qatar, made up 48% of his total number of visits to the MENA region, where Saudi Arabia was at the top of these visits. In 2017, Foreign Minister Shoukry visited Saudi Arabia three times due to the Qatar and Yemen crisis. His first visit that year was in June right after the countries imposed a siege on Qatar. The Egyptian government explained that the meeting in Saudi Arabia was "to stop Qatar's support for terrorism" ("Saudi Arabia-Mutual Visits"). The same meeting also was held a few days later in Bahrain, which Foreign Minister Shoukry attended as well. The following visit the same year to Saudi Arabia was to attend the Arab alliance meeting, in which the Foreign Ministers and Chiefs of Staff met to discuss the current situation of the Yemen war, a meeting that was repeated in 2018 and attended by the Foreign Minister Shoukry ("Saudi Arabia-Mutual Visits").

Yet, one of the main highlights of Foreign Minister Shoukry's visits was his visit to Israel in 2016, which was a rare visit by an Egyptian official. It had been a decade since the Egyptian foreign minister last visited Israel. Foreign Minister Shoukry met with the Israeli Prime Minister. His visit was to discuss the peace process between Israel and Palestine and emphasize Egypt's role as a mediator between the two sides ("Wazir alkharijiah almisri yaltaqi Netanyahu"). The visit to Israel illustrated the improvement of relations between Egypt and Israel during President Sisi's government.

Interestingly, Italy was the most frequently visited country among the foreign minister's visits to Europe. Yet, most of his visits were to participate in international events such as participating in the international meeting on Libya that was organized by Italy in 2015 and the

ministerial meeting of the International Alliance against Daesh in 2016 (“Italy-Mutual Visits”). In addition, Foreign Minister Shoukry’s visits to the United States were also high in comparison to previous Egyptian foreign ministers. For four years, Foreign Minister Shoukry visited the United States five times.

Yet, one of his main visits to the US was in 2016, after the announcement of Donald Trump’s victory in the United States presidential elections. Foreign Minister Shoukry’s visits came after a phone call by President Sisi to congratulate President Trump on his winning the elections and to discuss their future relationship (Shaheen; “USA-Political Relations”). Foreign Minister Shoukry’s visits right after President Trump’s election signaled Egyptian support for the new administration in the White House. This improvement of Egypt-US relations was also demonstrated in President Trump’s invitation to President Sisi in 2017 and his praise of President Sisi’s government. Foreign Minister Shoukry’s visits focus on main topics which include the fight against terrorism, designating the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group, US military aid, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process (Shaheen).

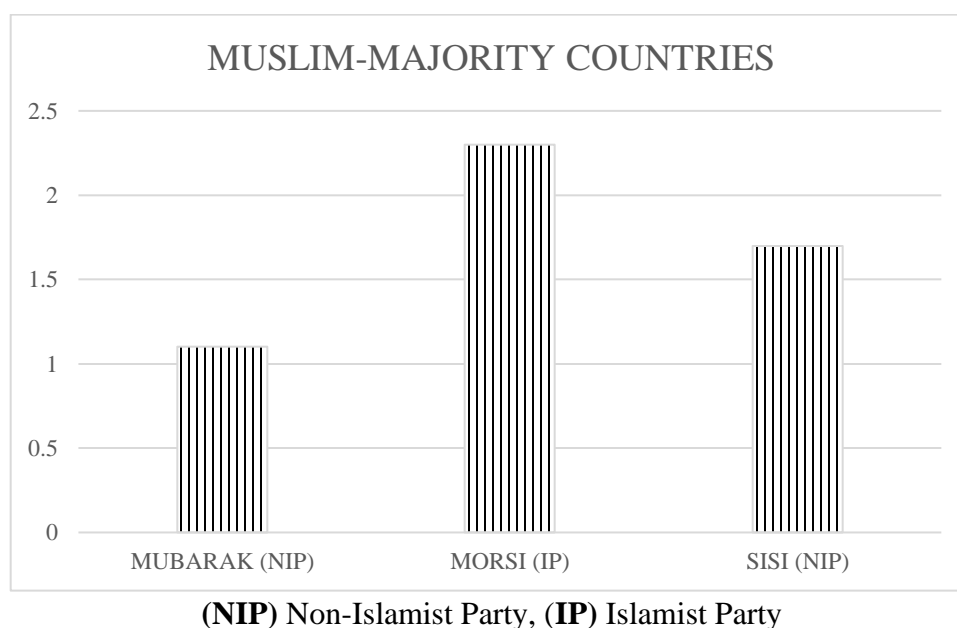
It is important to note that the Obama administration, unlike the Trump administration, was critical of President Sisi’s government. Obama never invited President Sisi to visit, and President Sisi indeed never made a state visit to the United States during the Obama administration. President Obama also criticized the state of human rights in Egypt and froze US military aid after the 2013 military coup, which was resumed in 2015 (Jackson). Thus, Foreign Minister Shoukry’s visits to the US demonstrated an improvement in Egyptian-US relations and a new US foreign policy towards the MENA region during the Trump administration.

Egypt's Islamist and Non-Islamist Governments' Foreign Policy in Comparison

This section will discuss the foreign policy of Islamist and non-Islamist parties and analyze their trends toward the Muslim-majority countries and the MENA region, concentrating on key MENA countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Iran, Palestine, and Israel.

The pattern of foreign visits exhibited by leading Egyptian officials between 2006 and 2018 demonstrates, that although the Islamist party had a higher percentage of visits to Muslim-majority countries and the MENA region, the difference was not significant. The Islamist party did not demonstrate a drastically different foreign policy.

Figure 1. Egypt's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Muslim-Majority countries from 2006-2018 per month



Egypt's Islamist government had the highest frequency of visits to Muslim-majority countries compared to the non-Islamist governments that were in power before and after the FJP. Fifty-five percent of foreign visits during the period of the Islamist FJP rule were to predominantly Muslim countries, compared to President Mubarak's government which had 52%,

and President Sisi's government which had only 49% to the Muslim world. Yet, the gap between the Islamist and the non-Islamist's visits is not high enough to be considered a shift in foreign policy toward the Muslim world. Also, when the visits are divided by months in office, while the gap in the difference between Islamist and non-Islamist in visits to the Muslim-majority world widens a little, as Figure 1 shows, it still does not demonstrate a significant shift.

Likewise, the FJP had the highest frequency of visits to Muslim countries in the MENA region compared to the non-Islamist governments. Yet, the difference in the number of visits between the Islamist and non-Islamist governments to the MENA region is not high. Fifty-one percent of the FJP's foreign visits were to Muslim countries in the MENA region, whereas the total visits by the President Mubarak government to Muslim countries in the MENA were 46%, and 45% of total visits by the Sisi government were to Muslim countries in the MENA region.

However, it is noteworthy that the Islamist president traveled to Muslim-majority countries less compared to non-Islamist presidents, although the difference is not high. Forty-five percent of President Morsi's foreign visits were to predominantly Muslim countries, compared to 48 and 46% of visits by President Mubarak and President Sisi, respectively. On the other hand, both the prime minister and the foreign minister during the Islamist party's control made more visits to Muslim-majority countries compared to their non-Islamist counterparts during President Mubarak and President Sisi eras. Sixty-three percent of Prime Minister Qandil's total number of foreign visits and 61% of Foreign Minister Amr's total number of foreign visits were to Muslim-majority countries. Thus, the prime minister and the foreign minister of an Islamist government, despite not being Islamists themselves, displayed the highest frequency of visits to Muslim countries.

Moreover, Egypt's relationship with Arab countries also appears to be highly significant for all parties. The data shows that out of the total number of visits to Muslim-majority countries, the Arab world was the most visited region during all three governments. Over ninety percent of President Mubarak and President Sisi's visits to the Muslim world were to Arab countries. Interestingly, however, the Islamist president made the fewest number of visits to the Muslim-Arab world compared to non-Islamist presidents. Fifty-five percent of President Morsi's total number of foreign visits were to the Muslim-Arab world. This also reveals another finding, which is that the Islamist FJP supports non-Arab Muslim countries more than non-Islamist parties. President Morsi's visits to non-Arab Muslim countries made up 45% of his visits. Particularly noteworthy here to highlight the support of President Morsi's government for non-Arab Muslim countries is their visits to Iran and Turkey.

Despite Egypt's historic hostility with Iran and the criticism he knew he would face from allies such as Saudi Arabia and the US, Morsi, accompanied by his foreign minister, still visited Iran. The visit to Iran was controversial because of its complications. President Morsi visited Iran to attend the Non-Aligned Movement Summit which Egypt was the last country to host. In this case, the country should hand over the presidency of the next summit to the next host country, which in this case was Iran. Thus, some analysts did not consider Morsi's visit as an improvement in Egyptian-Iranian relations, especially given that President Morsi did not meet with the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, which is against Iranian diplomatic tradition (Abu Saleh). On the other hand, Egypt would not previously send delegations at the presidential level to attend such a summit. Furthermore, Morsi's choice to attend was in the face of American pressure on some states to not attend the summit to isolate Iran. These factors

illustrate that President Morsi attending the summit himself did indeed signal that he was seeking to improve the relationship with Iran (“Misr wa siyasah”).

Another observer sees Morsi’s visit to Iran as an attempt to normalize bilateral relations between the countries. Abd Allah Ash‘al, Professor of International Law at the American University in Cairo, claims that President Morsi stated during his meeting that he was ready to resume diplomatic relations with Iran and open a new page with all countries around the world, including Iran. Thus, Ash‘al believes that President Morsi’s visit to Iran was to normalize the countries’ relationship (Fajri). Despite the controversy of the visit, an Egyptian president visiting Iran was considered a shift in Egyptian foreign policy toward Iran and even toward the Middle East.

Yet, whether this visit was driven by Islamist ideology or by interests is still unclear. The Sharia urges people not to differentiate between people based on their ethnicity or color but to treat all Muslims equally. Thus, Iran, although not an Arab country, is a Muslim country which Islamists, based on their ideology, should have a good relationship with. Accordingly, the Islamist FJP visited Iran and signed economic agreements with it. Nonetheless, ideology alone cannot explain the shift toward Iran. We should also look at the new events that led the FJP to improve its relationship with Iran. Egypt during the FJP lost its main regional supporter, Saudi Arabia, which felt threatened by Islamists controlling Egypt. Although President Morsi chose Saudi Arabia to be his first foreign visit and visited Saudi Arabia many times during his presidency, the relationship between the two countries was troubled. Egypt, during the FJP period, lost Saudi Arabia’s support, its main economic supporter.

Accordingly, the FJP's improvement of relations with Iran could be a result of this strained relationship with Saudi Arabia, which pushed them to turn to Saudi Arabia's main regional enemy, Iran. This move may have encouraged Saudi Arabia to rethink its relationship with Egypt. This explanation fits with what Egypt did with the Iranian proposal when it declined it in favor of a better deal from Saudi Arabia. Egypt still preferred Saudi Arabia over Iran but used the latter to show Saudi Arabia that Iran could be an option if Saudi Arabia did not help Egypt.

In addition to Iran, in their one year in office, the FJP's officials made three visits to Turkey, which is led by a pro-Islamist party, and welcomed the Turkish president and foreign minister in Egypt. One of these visits was President Morsi's visit to Turkey in 2012. During his visit, they discussed Turkish aid and investments in Egypt which are estimated at two billion dollars (Al-Ayadi). Also, the two countries increased their economic exchange to reach thirty percent more than the previous year and signed economic agreements including trade exchange and investments ("Wazir aleqtisad alturki"). Yet, the increase in economic exchange is not due to the improvement of the relationship between the two countries, but instead, because of their free trade agreement that they signed in 2005 and which entered into force in 2007 (Hosny).

However, the honeymoon of the Egyptian-Turkish relationship did not last long. A few months after the Egyptian military coup against the Islamist government, Turkey and Egypt cut ties. They withdrew their ambassadors and closed their embassies due to the Turkish government criticizing the coup and criminalizing the imprisonment of the Islamist president. Turkey also requested the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Sisi as a war criminal, and Egypt responded by pressuring against Turkey's candidacy for a seat on the Security Council (Atef).

Moreover, President Erdogan considered President Sisi's government as an illegitimate government. He also supported the Islamist parties in the region. He supported the FJP and was one of the main supporters of Hamas, which the Sisi government considered a terrorist group. President Erdogan also called President Sisi's overthrow of the Islamist president Morsi a military coup and referred to President Sisi as an "illegitimate tyrant" ("Egypt pays").

Additionally, Turkey served as a refuge for many of the Islamists who fled Egypt and allowed them to critique President Sisi in the media. Yet, it is noteworthy to mention that despite the tension between Egypt and Turkey, they still maintained trade relations which improved over the years. This is due to their free trade agreement that entered into force in 2007 (Atef). Nevertheless, these factors led to a tense relationship between the two countries, and no visits to Turkey were made by the main officials during President Sisi's government.

The tendency toward Turkey during the Islamist government could be explained as an impact of the FJP's Islamist ideology. Turkey is a Muslim country and is governed by a pro-Islamist government (AKP), which would encourage the FJP to build a closer relationship with the country. Yet, this is not the only reason that would lead to this improvement. The FJP needed Turkish support, especially political and economic support. They could not rely on some of Egypt's traditional regional allies such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who are anti-Islamist, to help improve their economy, so they turned to the pro-Islamist government of Turkey for support. Egypt experienced an economic downturn, especially after the uprising, therefore, the FJP had to improve Egypt's economy if they wanted to survive in office. As a result, the FJP increased their foreign visits to Turkey, because Turkey supported the uprising and the Islamists

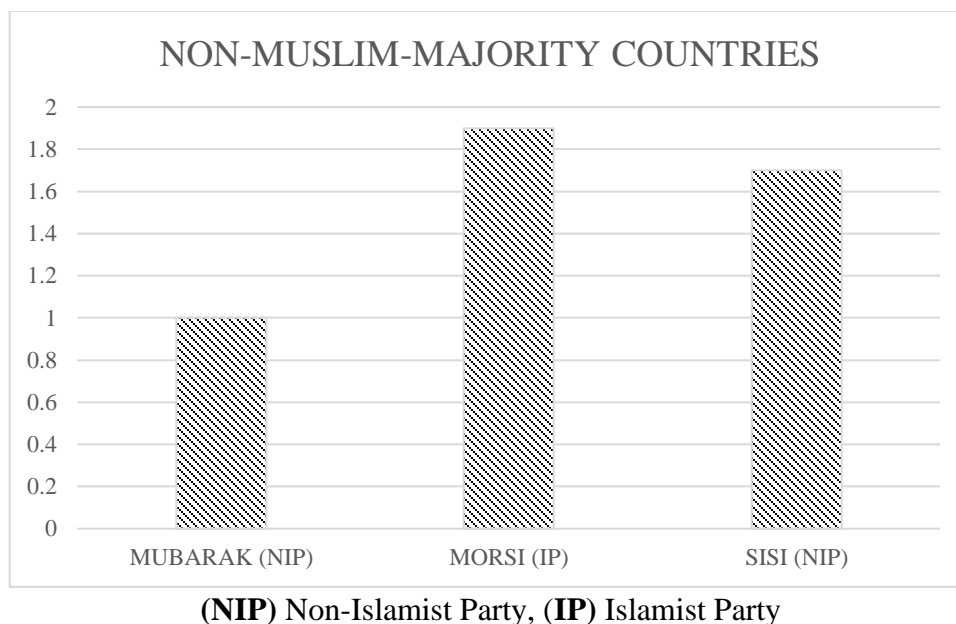
coming to power and helped Egypt economically. Thus, the FJP improved its relationship with Turkey, signed some economic agreements, and increased trade relations.

Accordingly, the data illustrates that Islamist governments care about the Muslim world as a whole, whereas non-Islamist governments' support of the Muslim world concentrates primarily on the Arab-Muslim world. Although visits to Iran and Turkey by the Islamist FJP illustrate a shift toward the non-Arab Muslim world, which is compatible with Islamist ideology, other interpretations could also explain this shift. The loss of regional support and economic needs drove the Islamist party to seek support outside the country's traditional Arab allies.

In addition, the relationship with non-Muslim majority countries did experience a decrease when the Islamist party came to power, although the decrease was not significant. The Egyptian government decreased its official visits to the non-Muslim world during the FJP compared to the previous government. While visits to the non-Muslim world made up 48% of the total foreign visits during the Mubarak government, these visits decreased to 45% when the FJP ruled, a percentage that increased again when a non-Islamist government came to power again after the FJP, rising back to 51% during President Sisi's government.

However, when the visits are divided by the government's months in office, interestingly, the Islamist government had the highest frequency of visits to the non-Muslim world compared to non-Islamist parties. Thus, this reality shows that the Islamist government not only improved its relationship with the Muslim world but also with the non-Muslim world as well. During its time in office, the FJP increased its foreign visits in general and different factors could explain this increase in foreign visits.

Figure 2. Egypt's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Non-Muslim-Majority countries from 2006-2018 per month



First, the FJP governed during a turbulent time; when the country was going into a serious transition, and during which the country suffered economically and politically. Thus, the FJP increased their foreign trips to seek support for economic recovery and, in turn, increase their domestic support. In addition, the FJP ruled during a time of regional unrest, where neighbors were still experiencing civil wars, uprisings, and Islamist parties winning their first elections, while some regional powers were unhappy with the Islamist control of these governments. Therefore, the Islamist party increased their number of foreign visits during their year in power to gain the trust and support of other countries.

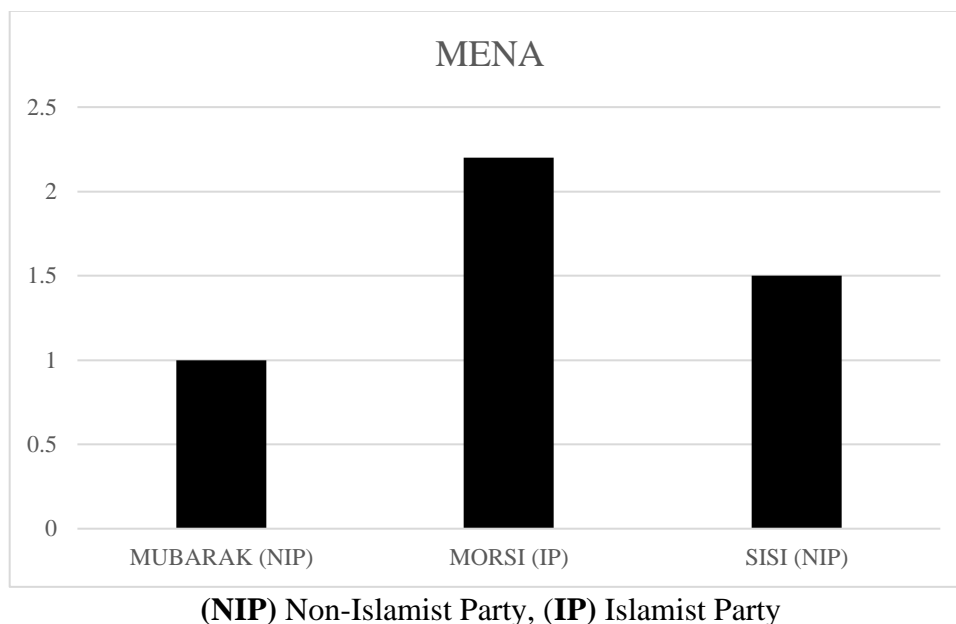
As a result, the Islamist government did improve Egypt's relationship with Muslim-majority countries after it came to power. Compared to the preceding Mubarak government and the succeeding Sisi government, the FJP increased its number of foreign visits to Muslim countries. Additionally, party affiliation notwithstanding, Arab countries were the main region of

concern for Egypt's foreign policy. As previously noted, the FJP was more concerned about non-Arab Muslim countries, compared to non-Islamists, which is consistent with Islamist ideology. The FJP increased its relationships with non-Arab Muslim countries, an unusual trend in Egyptian foreign policy. The FJP tried to maintain equal relationships with the entirety of the Muslim world regardless of language, color, or location. As the Prophet Muhammad said, "There is no favor of an Arab over a foreigner, nor a foreigner over an Arab, and neither white skin over black skin nor black skin over white skin, except by righteousness" (Musnad Ahmad, 22978).

Nevertheless, the FJP not only increased its foreign visits to the Muslim world but also to the non-Muslim world which illustrates that Islamist ideology alone cannot explain the FJP's foreign policy. Other domestic and regional factors impacted the implementation of their foreign policy. These factors included the need to gain domestic and international trust and the need for economic support.

Comparing the three period's orientations toward each region, the data illustrates that all three governments tended toward the MENA region more than any other region. Yet, the Islamist party was more likely to attempt to improve their relations with countries in the MENA region slightly more than the non-Islamist parties. The data shows that during the rule of the Islamist FJP, Egypt had the highest percentage of visits to the MENA region. Fifty-one percent of foreign visits by leading officials during Morsi's presidency were to the MENA region, while non-Islamist parties made less than half of their visits to the MENA region. Forty-seven percent of the Mubarak government's visits were to the MENA region, and 45% of visits during Sisi's presidency were to the MENA region.

Figure 3. Egypt's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to MENA region countries from 2006-2018 per month



Also, Figure 3 shows the number of visits to the MENA divided by months in government and illustrates that the Islamist FJP has the highest number of visits per month to the MENA region compared to non-Islamist parties. Yet, this difference in the number of visits does not illustrate an important shift in foreign policy toward the MENA region because it is still not high enough. However, it is also noteworthy that the Islamist president traveled to MENA region countries less compared to non-Islamist presidents. Only 35% of President Morsi's total foreign visits were to the MENA region, whereas 46% of President Mubarak's foreign visits and 44% of President Sisi's foreign visits were to the MENA region.

On the other hand, both the prime minister and the foreign minister during the Islamist party's control made more visits to the MENA region compared to their non-Islamist counterparts during the eras of President Mubarak and President Sisi. Out of their total number of foreign visits, 63% of Prime Minister Qandil's visits, and 61% of Foreign Minister Amr's

visits were to countries in the MENA region. Thus, the highest frequency of visits to MENA region countries came from the prime minister and foreign minister of an Islamist government, although non-Islamist themselves.

An additional finding the data illustrates is Egypt's prioritization of Gulf countries despite party affiliation. Most of the collected MENA region visits were to the Gulf countries, specifically Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia was the most visited country by all three presidents. Fifty-seven percent of President Mubarak's visits to the MENA region were to Gulf countries, of which visits to Saudi Arabia constituted 58%. Likewise, 57% of President Morsi's total visits to the MENA region were to Gulf countries. Visits to Saudi Arabia comprised 42% of President Morsi's total percentage of visits to the Gulf countries. Additionally, 71% of the total number of foreign visits to the MENA region by President Sisi were visits to Gulf countries, of which 50% were to Saudi Arabia.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia used to have the same stance on some regional issues. They both considered Israel and Iran their regional enemies. They also shared the same point of view regarding the Syrian-Lebanese crisis. Thus, during the government of President Mubarak, visits to Saudi Arabia were at the top of President Mubarak's foreign visits. Likewise, Saudi Arabia and President Sisi's government shared the same view on Islamists and felt threatened by them, bringing them closer. However, Saudi Arabia's enmity toward Islamists did not prevent President Morsi from visiting Saudi Arabia or having a good relationship with it. Saudi Arabia was the first foreign country President Morsi visited and the most frequently visited country during the FJP period. Although this is expected because Saudi Arabia is the land of the Two Holy mosques and the land where the Islamic revelation originated, this was not the only reason

that led President Morsi to try to improve Egypt's relationship with Saudi Arabia. President Morsi's government needed Saudi financial and political support. Saudi Arabia is the richest Arab country and has been one of the main supporters of the Egyptian economy. Therefore, losing the support of Saudi Arabia would worsen the Egyptian economy, which was already suffering following the overthrow of Mubarak.

Saudi Arabia had a good relationship with Egypt during the Mubarak era and supported the country economically and financially. Many Egyptian laborers work in Saudi Arabia and lots of Saudi tourists visit Egypt for vacation yearly, which helped enhance Egypt's economy. Therefore, the relationship was stable until the uprisings. Saudi Arabia backed President Mubarak to the end before he stepped down. However, the relationship deteriorated between the two countries after the FJP came to power. The king of Saudi Arabia did not visit Egypt during the FJP rule. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia offered Egypt five billion dollars in aid after the revolution, compared to 12 billion dollars in aid after the military coup to help the military to stabilize Egypt and its economy. They also wanted to make up for the dollars that the US and the West promised to cut as part of sanctions on Egypt due to human rights violations by the Egyptian military. Thus, Saudi Arabia strongly backed the military coup against the Islamist government due to feeling threatened by Islamist ideology and the spread of democracy in the region (Nordland).

On the other hand, the relationship with Qatar improved during the Islamist government. Qatar is a pro-Islamist country that has supported Islamists and supported the uprisings in the region. It also has been a refuge for many Islamist leaders. Qatar also provided an aid package of seven-billion-dollars to Egypt during the Islamist FJP control to help the Egyptian economy

("Egypt has paid"). Therefore, Egypt's relationship with Qatar improved during the FJP control. All the main FJP's political officials visited Qatar during their year in power.

On the other hand, President Sisi never visited Qatar, nor received any of their officials due to its known support for Islamist parties. Tensions in relations with Qatar reached their peak in 2017, when Egypt, along with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain, imposed a siege on Qatar and cut off diplomatic relationships due to its support for Islamists and Al-Jazeera's role in covering the Arab uprisings (Qiblawi, Tawfeeq, Roberts, and Alkhshali).

Despite being Islamist and backed by Qatar, the FJP tended more toward Saudi Arabia than Qatar. Morsi chose Saudi Arabia to be his first foreign destination and visited it more frequently than any other Arab country. This tendency toward Saudi Arabia could not be viewed as an impact of the Islamist ideology as Saudi Arabia's hostility towards Islamism is well-known. Rather, it was the need for financial and economic support that drove President Morsi's government to visit Saudi Arabia the most. This is a clear case of the Islamist FJP's foreign policy is driven not by their Islamist ideology, but instead by national interests.

Perhaps one of the major differences between Islamist and non-Islamist parties' foreign policy is demonstrated in their relationship with Palestine, especially Gaza, and Israel. Despite Egypt's important role as a mediator between Israel and Palestine, Egyptian officials have not visited Palestine or Israel often, rather the three mostly met in Egypt. Yet, when the FJP rose to power, Egyptian officials visited Palestine three times in a single year. Two of the visits were to Gaza, a rare incident due to the previously tense relationship between Hamas and the Egyptian government, with a similar visit to Israel recorded.

These visits showed Palestine's importance to the Islamist government. Although the previous government played the role of mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and hosted the main Palestinian and Israeli players to help in the negotiation process, the Islamist government held the same negotiations, while additionally increasing the number of visits to Palestine, and more importantly, visiting the Gaza Strip at the prime minister and foreign minister levels. Additionally, Morsi re-opened the Rafah crossing and extended its operation hours, allowing more travelers to pass each day, which signaled an improvement in the Egyptian-Hamas relationship. Accordingly, during FJP rule, Egypt improved its relationship with Palestine, especially the Gaza strip, which is controlled by Hamas, a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine.

On the contrary, the Israeli-Egyptian relationship during President Sisi's government has improved compared to previous governments. Segell states that "since Morsi's fall from rule and a re-convergence of military and political elites, Israel's relations with Egypt have improved" (Glen Segell). Unlike Morsi, Sisi has shown that he is in favor of peace with Israel. On many occasions, Sisi has declared that the relationship between Egypt and Israel has never been as good as it is under his watchful eye (*The Washington Post*). This is also shown in the non-Islamist governments' visits to Israel. The non-Islamist governments visited Israel twice during President Mubarak's government and once during President Sisi's government and had no visits to Gaza. In addition, the relationship between the Egyptian government and Hamas changed when the new Egyptian government took power. President Sisi closed the Rafah crossing and accused Hamas of interfering in Egypt's internal affairs and labeled it once more a terrorist group. On the other hand, the Egypt-Israel relationship improved during President Sisi's control

to the point that the Israeli government considered President Sisi a friend. The visit to Israel also illustrated the improvement of relations between Egypt and Israel. During President Sisi's government, the two countries shared similar interests such as the fight against Islamic militants in the Egyptian Sinai desert and enmity against Hamas, whom President Sisi's government links to the Muslim Brotherhood and considers a terrorist group (Al Tahhan).

The improvement of Egyptian-Israeli relations was not only demonstrated by the foreign minister's visit to Israel and their shared interests but was also manifested in other government actions during President Sisi's rule. For instance, Egypt returned its ambassador to Israel after he was recalled during Morsi's period as a reaction to the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2012. Egypt also reopened the Israeli embassy which had been closed for four years due to a protest in front of the embassy after the Israeli killing of an Egyptian police officer in the Sinai in 2011. More importantly, Egypt, for the first time voted for Israel to become a member of the United Nations committee (Al Tahhan). Thus, all these factors illustrate a new trend toward favoring a better relationship with Israel during President Sisi's government.

Hence, the improvement of ties with Palestine, especially Gaza, illustrates Islamism's impact on the FJP's foreign policy and the differing approaches to foreign policy between Islamist and non-Islamist parties. However, it is important to note that the domestic and regional events also led the relationship between Egypt and Hamas to improve. For instance, the Egyptian public support for Palestinians and the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip in 2012 impacted the FJP's foreign policy toward Palestine/Gaza. Egyptian public support and sympathy for Palestinians led the government to visit Gaza and show their support to gain Egyptian trust and support. Palestine is a very sensitive topic for Egyptians and most leaders used the "Palestine

card” to gain more public support. In a report about the grassroots Tamarod movement in Egypt, *The Jerusalem Post* stated that “Tamarod, who played a major role in the ousting of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, demand the Egyptian regime to hold a referendum on banning US aid, cancel the peace agreement with Israel, and reword security-related treaties to allow Egypt to revive its national sovereignty” (*The Jerusalem Post*). This shows the support and sympathy of the Egyptian people toward Palestine.

Therefore, the FJP improved their relationship with Palestine not only because of their ideology but also to gain public support as if it was due to ideology only, they would have amended Camp David Peace Accords. Yet, President Morsi promised to maintain all of Egypt’s agreements and treaties with the world. The FJP kept their promise because they needed US aid, which is another factor that influences Islamist foreign policy.

On the other hand, the development in the relations between Egypt and Israel during President Sisi’s government was not only due to their sharing of interests but also because Egypt needed US support. Therefore, having a good relationship with Israel will help to enhance the reputation of President Sisi and his government in the US, which ensure the continuation and possible increase of aid to Egypt. Abdullah Al-Arian, an assistant professor of history at Georgetown University, explains that “in the U.S., the pro-Israel lobby has devoted considerable energy to bolstering the Egyptian military even as it commits human rights abuses and erodes any chance at a representative government in Egypt” (Abdullah Al-Arian). Accordingly, both governments, Islamist and non-Islamist, seem to prioritize their interest over ideology.

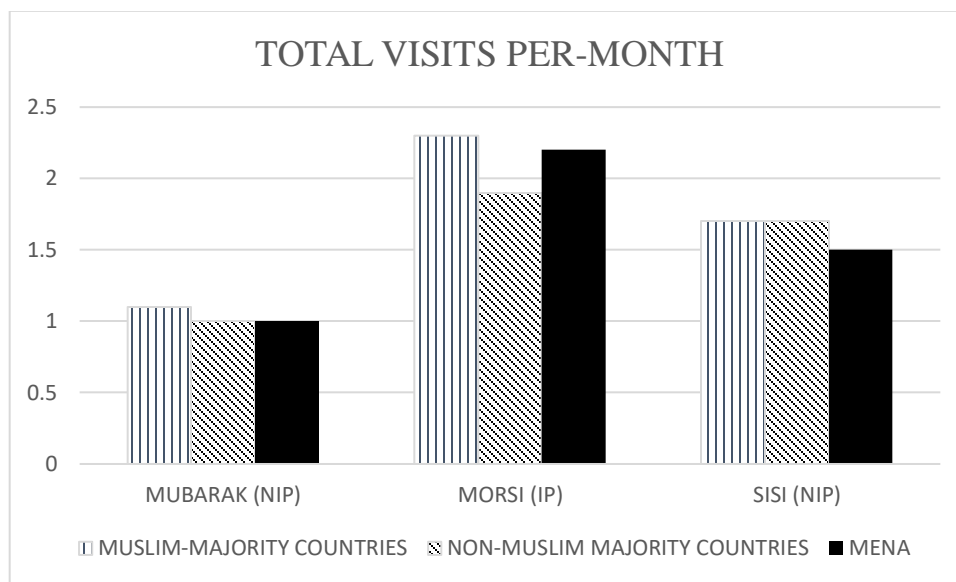
Furthermore, it is interesting to find that under all three of the presidencies, the MENA region was the top-visited region among their foreign visits. Yet, interestingly, Europe was the

second most visited region during both non-Islamist parties' governments, while Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe boasted an equal number of visits during the Islamist party's government, meaning a marked rise in visits to Sub-Saharan Africa and a decline in visits to Europe.

The period of President Mubarak's government consisted of more visits to Europe than the rest of the non-Muslim majority world. Visits to Europe made up thirty percent of the total number of foreign visits during President Mubarak's government, which made Europe the top-visited region after the MENA region. Like the President Mubarak government, Europe was also the second most frequently visited region during the Sisi government. The total number of visits to Europe made up 27% of President Sisi's government visits to non-Muslim countries.

Yet, the Islamist government gave equal attention to Sub-Saharan Africa as to Europe, with each region forming 15% of the total period's foreign visits. On the other hand, Sub-Saharan Africa made up only 6% of foreign visits by President Mubarak's government and 11% by President Sisi's government. Thus, the results show the FJP seems to have a stronger tendency toward Sub-Saharan Africa than the non-Islamist parties, a fact that is consistent with Islamist ideology, which urges people to maintain good relationships with their neighbors. Also, the Islamist party desires for an axis of resistance to "Western imperialism," and spreading a wider net of relations, whereas the previous regimes were more clearly dependent on America and Europe to ensure their external security.

Figure 4. Egypt's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Muslim-Majority Countries, Non-Muslim-Majority Countries, and the MENA region countries from 2006-2018 per month



(NIP) Non-Islamist Party, (IP) Islamist Party

Therefore, the study shows that the Islamist government had the highest frequency of visits to the MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa regions and the least number of visits to Europe, North America, and Latin America, compared to non-Islamist parties. The Islamist government improved Egypt's relationship with MENA region countries after it came to power. Compared to the previous Mubarak government and the succeeding Sisi government, the FJP increased its number of foreign visits to the MENA region. The FJP also increased its relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa and decreased its relationship with Europe and the rest of the world. Although the difference between Islamist and non-Islamist numbers of foreign visits was not high, these findings seem to be compatible with the Islamist ideology that emphasizes the Muslim community and the sense of brotherhood with those who share the same religion, identity, and respect for neighbors. Thus, the impact of Islamist ideology on their foreign policy is

demonstrated in their improvement of relations with the MENA region and Sub-Saharan Africa that share the same religion, similar identity, or are neighbors with Egypt.

Nonetheless, the FJP also increased its number of visits to the non-Muslim-majority world, a fact that demonstrates that ideology is not the only motive for the FJP's foreign policy. What was more significant to the FJP during their time in power was their national interests. The country was going through a very tough time economically and politically. The Egyptian economy experienced a downturn after the overthrow of President Mubarak. Also, the regional instability and the rise of Islamist parties to power after the Arab spring all impacted the FJP's foreign policy.

Yet, given the context in which the FJP was operated, it is not possible to draw a clear conclusion. The extent to which the Islamist FJP did or did not utilize their ideology when developing their foreign policy is not yet clear. Had the FJP ruled for longer or at least completed a full term, or ruled during a relatively stable time, these findings may have been different. This is why it is important to compare these results with those of other Islamist governments in the region to achieve a more comprehensive result. The following chapters apply this comparative lens to Morocco and Tunisia.

CHAPTER SIX

MOROCCO

The political structure of the Kingdom of Morocco is different from that of Egypt. The king of Morocco was and still is the country's leading political figure despite the political reforms implemented in 2011. As illustrated previously, even after the 2011 election, the king is still the head of the state. However, as of 2011, the prime minister is appointed by the king from the largest winning party. For the following decade, The Justice and Development Party (PJD) was the winning party. Thus, this study focuses on three main political actors in Morocco: the king, the prime minister, and the foreign minister.

However, the data will be divided differently than in the previous chapter. The king's visits will be presented in a separate table because there are no data available on his visits before 2010 and his position did not change within the period of the study. Additionally, the two periods of the PJD will be combined into a table, as the PJD won the elections twice in a row. Therefore, there will be three sections: the king, the non-Islamist government, and the Islamist government. Each section will include two tables: the first table will include visits to Muslim-majority countries and non-Muslim-majority countries. The second table will include these visits divided by regions. There will be a comparison between the Moroccan Islamist and non-Islamist parties' foreign policy at the end of the section.

The King

Although King Mohammed VI is from the Alaouite dynasty—the family of the Prophet Muhammad—and holds the title of “Commander of the Believers,” he is not considered an Islamist. Due to the lack of data available about his official visits, I was only able to find information on his visits from 2010 to 2018. The total number of collected official visits by the king is sixty-nine. In table 10, his visits are divided to visits to Muslim-Majority countries and non-Muslim-majority countries.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 10. Number of Foreign Visits by King Mohammed VI to Muslim-Majority Countries and Non-Muslim Majority Countries from 2010-2018

NON-ISLAMIST 2010-2018	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim Majority Countries	Total
King Mohammed VI Government	32 (46.37%)	37 (53.62%)	69 (100%)

The king’s collected foreign visits illustrate that he visited non-Muslim countries more frequently than Muslim countries. Fifty-four percent of the king’s foreign visits were to non-Muslim countries, whereas visits to Muslim-majority countries formed 46% of his visits. More specifically, 34% of his total visits were to Muslim countries located in the MENA region. Yet, visits to the Muslim world illustrate that the Arab world received most of the king’s visits to the Muslim world. Seventy-five percent of his visits to Muslim-majority countries were to Arab countries, while only 21% of these visits were to predominantly Muslim countries in Africa.

Visits Divided by Regions

Table 11. King Mohammed VI's Foreign Visits from 2010-2018 Divided by Regions

NON-ISLAMIST 2010-2018	Name	MENA	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
The KING	Mohammed VI	24 (34.78%)	29 (42.2%)	10 (14.49%)	4 (5.79%)	2 (2.89%)	0 (0%)	69 (100%)

King Mohammed VI has given Moroccan relations with Sub-Saharan African countries special attention since he took power. Thus, Sub-Saharan Africa was his top-visited region among his foreign visits. Forty-two percent of his visits were to countries located in Sub-Saharan Africa. During the time frame of the study, the king made many tours to Sub-Saharan African countries. Interestingly, Ivory Coast was the most frequently visited African country among his visits. The Moroccan-Ivory Coast relationship has improved as of late, as was clearly shown through the king's frequent visits and the mutual agreements signed between the two countries. For instance, the king visited Ivory Coast twice in 2017, during which he signed 14 agreements, including logistics, economic and political agreements ("Ziarat Sahib Aljalalah").

In addition to the king's visits to Africa, he reevaluated some of the previous policies toward Africa. For instance, in 2016, the king ordered for Morocco to rejoin the African Union after decades of withholding membership due to the union's recognition of the independence of Western Sahara ("Morocco asks"). In the same year, he also appointed nineteen new ambassadors to African countries (Guerraoui). Thus, Sub-Saharan Africa was an area of special focus for the king's foreign policy.

Yet, the MENA region was the second most visited region by the king. Thirty-four percent of the king's foreign visits were to the MENA region. Noticeably, 87% of his visits to

the MENA region consist of visits to the Gulf countries. However, unlike Egyptian official visits, the king's most visited Gulf country was not Saudi Arabia, but the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The king visited the UAE every year from 2012 to 2018. Thirty-three percent of his visits to the MENA region were to the UAE. Saudi Arabia, however, was the second most visited country on the kings' list of visits to the MENA region. It is also interesting to find that the UAE was the most frequently visited country among the king's entire foreign visits. Most of his visits to the UAE were among his tours to the Gulf, but the UAE gained more attention than its fellow Gulf countries.

The UAE fosters this attention due to its close relationship with the Kingdom ever since King Mohammed VI assumed office. The two countries have signed many political, security, and economic agreements. Their official mutual visits also have increased. Also, the UAE became the top Arab investor in Morocco (Bourchachene). Yet, the relationship soured after 2017 when the Kingdom decided to maintain its neutrality in the Gulf crises (when the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Egypt besieged and cut relations with Qatar), and in 2018 the UAE voted against Morocco's bid to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup (Jali). Despite the tensions between the two countries during that time, the king visited the UAE in 2018, after its loss of hosting the World Cup, to attend the 100th birth anniversary of Shaikh Zayed, during which he discussed their relationship and sought to improve it ("Jalalat Almalik Yahdur Majlis"). Thus, the king focused on the relationship with the UAE.

Europe, on the other hand, was the least visited region compared to the king's visits to MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa regions. France gained the highest number of visits by the king compared to the rest of the European countries. As a former colony of France, this is not

surprising. In addition to Arabic, French has been an official language in Morocco, which is highly influenced by the French language and culture. France also is the biggest foreign investor in Morocco. The two countries enjoy good economic relationships. The commercial exchange has increased since 2012. The two countries also have good trade, educational, and infrastructure relationships ("Faransa Wa AlMaghrib"). All these factors explain the importance of the relationship with France and the king's high frequency of visits to France.

While Europe claimed 10% of the king's foreign visits, Asia and the Americas were the least visited regions. Five percent of his visits were to Asia, while only 4% were to North America and no visits to Latin America have been documented. Hence, it is interesting to find that although the king is not an Islamist, despite being an Alawite, his foreign policy tends to be more Islamized regarding his relationship with his neighboring countries and Muslim countries. His foreign policy tilted toward Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East more than other regions, similar to what Islamist parties would apply if they used their ideology to formulate foreign policy.

Jettou and El Fassi Governments

The Moroccan government was controlled by independents after the 2002 election. Driss Jettou, an independent politician, served as the prime minister from 2002 to 2007 when the Socialist Union of Popular Forces party was the largest winning party. During that time, the foreign minister was Mohamed Benaissa, who is a member of the National Rally of Independents. In the 2007 election, the Independence Party (Istiqlal) was the winning party, and Abbas El Fassi, an Independence Party member, became the prime minister. Taieb Fassi Fihri is an independent and served as foreign minister from 2007 until the beginning of the year of 2012.

The total number of collected foreign visits by these officials from 2006 to 2011 is sixty-three. The table shows how many of these visits were to Muslim-majority countries and non-Muslim-majority countries.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 12. Number of Foreign Visits by Moroccan Officials to Muslim-Majority Countries, Muslim-Majority Countries in MENA, and Non-Muslim Majority Countries from 2006-2011

NON-ISLAMIST 2006-2011	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim Majority Countries	Total
Jettou and El Fassi Government	36 (57.14%)	27 (42.85%)	63 (100%)

The table shows that during the period of non-Islamist governance, the total number of visits to Muslim-majority countries was higher than the number of visits to non-Muslim countries. Most of the visits to the Muslim world were to countries located in the MENA region. Prime Minister Jettou made more visits to Muslim-majority countries than the foreign minister. Seventy-five percent of Jettou's total number of visits were to the Muslim world, whereas only 25% of foreign minister Benaissa's total number of visits were to predominantly Muslim countries. On the other hand, more than half of the prime minister's and foreign minister's total number of visits during El Fassi's government were to Muslim-majority countries.

Certainly, one of the most notable features of this period is the tendency to visit the Arab world. Although Prime Minister Jettou visited the Arab world the least out of all these officials, 66% of his total number of visits to Muslim countries were to Arab countries. However, Prime Minister El Fassi's total number of visits to the Muslim world exceeded 80%. Interestingly, 100% of both foreign ministers' visits to Muslim countries were to Arab countries. Thus, the non-Islamist Jettou and El Fassi governments show a tendency to visit the Muslim world more

than the non-Muslim world, and the Arab world specifically appears to be the main region of their concern based on the frequency of their visits.

Visits Divided by Regions

Table 13. Moroccan Officials' Foreign Visits from 2006-2011 Divided by Regions

NON-ISLAMIST 2006-2011	Name	MENA	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
Prime Minister	Driss Jettou and Abbas El Fassi	2 12	1 2	1 8	0 3	0 1	0 1	4 (6.34%) 27 (42.85)
Foreign Minister	Mohamed Benaissa and Taieb Fassi Fihri	1 17	0 0	2 5	1 1	0 5	0 0	4 (6.34%) 28 (44.44%)
% Total Visits		32 (50.79%)	3 (4.76%)	16 (25.39%)	5 (7.93%)	6 (9.52%)	1 (1.58%)	63 (100%)

The table above shows that the MENA region was the top-visited region by the non-Islamist government in Morocco. Fifty percent of the total number of visits by the prime ministers and the foreign ministers' official visits were to MENA region countries. Out of their visits to the MENA region, 48% were to Gulf countries, where Qatar was at the top of these visits.

Looking at the visits individually, the MENA region was the most visited region among all officials except for Foreign Minister Benaissa, who visited Europe the most. Fifty percent of Prime Minister Jettou's visits and 44% of Prime Minister El Fassi's visits were to MENA region countries. However, Foreign Minister Benaissa was the official that visited the MENA region the least during this government, as only 25% of his visits were to the region. In contrast, Foreign

Minister Fassi Fihri visited the MENA region more frequently than the other officials during this era, with his visits to the region comprising sixty percent of his total number of foreign visits.

Nevertheless, the primary highlight of this era's foreign policy is that the Moroccan non-Islamist party concentrated on North African countries more than Gulf countries in their visits to the MENA region. Fifty percent of the prime ministers' visits, 100% of Foreign Minister Benaissa's visits, and 33% of Foreign Minister Fassi Fihri's visits to the MENA region were to North African countries, with Tunisia the chief destination.

Morocco and Tunisia have had a good relationship since their independence. They both are members of the African Union (AU) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). They also share similar views on regional and international matters ("Aldawrah 19"). More importantly, Tunisia recognizes Morocco's right over the Western Sahara, which is one of the most important issues that Moroccans care about while forming their foreign policy. Morocco has cut off relations with countries that sided with the Polisario Front and withdrawn from regional organizations such as the AU and AMU over their stance on the Western Sahara conflict (Cropley).

Since Tunisia sided with Morocco over the conflict of Western Sahara, the two countries have increased their relations and bilateral cooperation. For instance, in 2007, the two countries signed a free trade agreement which led to an increase in the trade value of that year. During the same year, Prime Minister Jettou visited Tunisia, and the two countries signed two cooperation agreements in the domains of air and sea ("Raies wuzara almaghrib"). Additionally, Prime Minister El Fassi visited Tunisia in 2008 and 2010 to attend the fourteenth and sixteenth sessions of the Joint Higher Committee of Morocco and Tunisia, where they discussed ways to further

strengthen their cooperation (“Jarad le aham ziarat”). Thus, the Moroccan Tunisian relationship was significant to the Moroccan government during non-Islamist control.

However, the Gulf region still was among the top visited areas out of the total visits to the MENA region. Although none of Prime Minister Jettou or Foreign Minister Benaissa’s visits to the MENA region involved a visit to the Gulf countries, 25% of Prime Minister El Fassi’s and 75% of Foreign Minister Fihri’s visits to the MENA region were to Gulf countries.

The year of 2009 witnessed an improvement in relations between Morocco and Qatar, with a high number of exchanged visits. For instance, Foreign Minister Fassi Fihri visited Qatar twice in 2009. One of his visits was to attend the Gaza Summit that Qatar held to discuss the current Israeli-Palestinian crises (“Bide qimat Ghazah”). The rapprochement between the two countries during that year also resulted in the signing of a military cooperation agreement at the beginning of the following year.

Moreover, the total period of the non-Islamist government showed a greater orientation to Europe than to Sub-Saharan Africa. While visits to non-Muslim majority countries during this era only formed 43% of their total number of foreign visits, the visits to Europe were noticeably high. Visits to Europe made up 59% of the total number of visits to the non-Muslim world and 25% of the total number of visits. Although the prime ministers had a low number of visits to non-Muslim countries, 100% of Prime Minister Jettou’s visits and 66% of Prime Minister El Fassi’s visits to the non-Muslim world were to European countries. Similarly, Foreign Minister Benaissa’s visits also showed a prioritization of Europe. Out of his 75% of visits to the non-Muslim world, 66% were to Europe, forming 17% of his total foreign visits.

Like the king, the non-Islamist government officials visited France more frequently than other European countries as Morocco's closest European ally. As illustrated above, Morocco and France have economic, cultural, and historical relationships that have increased over time. Thus, mutual visits by both Moroccan and French are high, which enhanced their relationship.

Yet, visits by Foreign Minister Fassi Fihri showed interesting findings, in that his visits to the United States and his total visits to European countries were equal. His visits to the United States and European countries made up 45%, for each, out of his total visits to the non-Muslim world. However, the main purpose of his visits to the US was to negotiate with the Polisario Front over the Western Saharan issue. These negotiations were held in the US for years and led by Foreign Minister Fassi Fihri, but ultimately failed (“Rieayah omamiah”; “Eikhritam mufawadat”).

While the MENA region makes up 50% of the foreign visits by the non-Islamist government and 25% of their visits were to Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, despite being close to Morocco, only claimed 4% of their visits. Also, other regions such as Asia, North America, and Latin America claimed less than 10% of their foreign visits. Therefore, the non-Islamist government's foreign policy tilted toward the MENA region the most. Precisely, Morocco, during their government, maintained close relations with North African countries, especially Tunisia.

Benkiran and Orthmani Governments

Following the Moroccan political reform in 2011, the Islamist party PJD won the election and became the largest party in the parliament. The PJD won two elections in a row, the 2011 and the 2016 elections. PJD member Abdel-Ilah Benkiran was the prime minister for both

periods until he stepped down when he could not form a new government. Subsequently, Saadeddine Othmani, another PJD member, became the prime minister. The total number of collected visits during these periods of PJD's governance is 151 visits, and the total percentages of these visits that were to Muslim-majority countries and non- Muslim-majority countries are displayed in the table below.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 14. Number of Foreign Visits by Moroccan Officials to Muslim-Majority Countries and Non-Muslim-Majority Countries from 2011-2018

ISLAMIST 2011-2018	Muslim-majority countries	Non-Muslim-majority countries	Total
Benkiran and Othmani Governments	70 (46.35%)	81 (53.64%)	151(100%)

The data show that during the PJD's governments, visits to Muslim-majority countries were less frequent than visits to non-Muslim-majority countries. Forty-six percent of the total number of official foreign visits from 2011 to 2018 were to Muslim countries. Forty-five percent of Prime Minister Benkiran's total visits were to Muslim countries, whereas only 28% of Prime Minister Othmani's total visits were to Muslim countries. However, Othmani made more visits to Muslim countries when he was a foreign minister during Benkiran's government, as sixty-one percent of his total visits as a foreign minister were to Muslim countries. Similarly, Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita made more visits to the Muslim world than to the non-Muslim world, comprising 55% of his total visits, while 42% of Foreign Minister Salaheddine Mezouar's visits were to Muslim countries.

One interesting finding is that although both prime ministers during Islamist control were members of the PJD, they displayed different tendencies toward the Arab world. While one

hundred percent of Prime Minister Benkiran's total visits to the Muslim world were to Arab countries, none of Prime Minister Othmani's visits to the Muslim world were to an Arab country. Fifty percent of Othmani's visits to the Muslim world were to African countries, whereas the other half were to Asian countries. The foreign ministers' visits during the PJD governments have also trended toward the Arab world. Seventy-two percent of Foreign Ministers Othmani and Mezouar's visits and 90% of Bourita's visits to the Muslim world were to Arab countries.

In addition, the periods of the PJD showed a higher focus on the non-Muslim world based on their frequency of visits. Fifty-three percent of their total foreign visits were to the non-Muslim-majority countries. The total visits to non-Muslim world illustrated a tendency by the PJD toward Europe, which claimed 53% of these visits. Yet, when we calculate the total number of visits during each government individually, it is interesting to see that although Prime Ministers Benkiran and Othmani belong to the same Islamist party, they showed different tendencies toward the non-Muslim world. Fifty-eight percent of the total number of foreign visits to the non-Muslim world by Benkiran's government were to European countries. Sixty-six percent of Prime Minister Benkiran's visits to the non-Muslim world were to European countries. Similar to Prime Minister Benkiran, 57% of Foreign Minister Othmani's and 56% of Foreign Minister Mezouar's visits to non-Muslim countries were to the European continent.

Yet, the second government of the PJD showed different tendencies regarding the non-Muslim world. The government of Prime Minister Othmani's total number of visits to the non-Muslim world displayed equal attention to Europe, Africa, and America. These regions had an equal percentage of visits during Prime Minister Othmani's government, that is, each claiming 28% of the total number of visits to the non-Muslim world. Prime Minister Othmani's visits

displayed an orientation toward Africa. Forty percent of his foreign visits to the non-Muslim world were to African countries, while 20% were to Europe. On the other hand, the foreign minister during Othmani's government showed a greater focus on America, which claimed 44% of his visits to non-Muslim countries. Hence, it is interesting to find that although these governments belong to the same Islamist party, the PJD, they had starkly different foreign policies towards the non-Muslim world.

Visits Divided by Regions

Table 15. Moroccan Officials' Foreign Visits from 2011-2018 Divided by Regions

ISLAMIST 2011-2018	Name	MENA	Sub- Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
Prime Minister	Abdel-Ilah	8	5	8	0	1	0	22
	Benkiran and Saadeddine Othmani	0	3	1	3	0	0	(14.56%) 7 (4.63%)
Foreign Minister	Saadeddine	7	5	4	2	0	0	18
	Othmani,	24	23	27	3	3	4	(11.92%)
	Salaheddine Mezouar, and Nasser Bourita	9	4	3	0	4	0	84 (55.62%) 20 (13.24%)
% Total Visits		48 (31.78%)	40 (26.49%)	43 (28.47%)	8 (5.29%)	8 (5.29%)	4 (2.64%)	151 (100%)

The official visits of the two Islamist-led governments are also combined and divided into visits to different regions: the MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Asia, North America, and Latin America. The table shows that the frequency of visits to the MENA region was as low as 31% of their total foreign visits. Yet, it is still the highest visited region among the PJD's foreign visits. Like the non-Islamist government, Europe was the second most-visited region and consisted of 28% of their visits. Yet, the Islamist governments gave more attention to Sub-

Saharan Africa, which contained 26% of the total foreign visits. While they gave equal attention to Asia and North America, which both gained 6% of their foreign visits, they also traveled to Latin America, despite it only taking 3% of their visits.

Notably, all of the studied officials under the Islamist governments maintain a low frequency of visits to the MENA region. While only 36% of Prime Minister Benkiran's visits were to the MENA region, none of Prime Minister Othmani's visits were to MENA region countries. Although only part of Othmani's tenure was included in the study, it is surprising to find that he visited solely non-MENA region countries as prime minister, especially given that he is a member of the Islamist PJD.

However, Othmani, as a foreign minister during the Benkiran era, did visit the MENA region. Out of his total number of foreign visits, 38% of his visits were to the MENA region. Additionally, Foreign Minister Mezouar made a small number of visits to the MENA region, which constituted 28% of his total number of foreign visits. Foreign Minister Bourita, although an independent, visited the MENA region the most compared to other officials during the Islamist government control. Forty-five percent of Bourita's official foreign visits were to the MENA region.

In addition, Prime Minister Benkiran made an equal number of visits to the MENA and Europe regions, while Sub-Saharan Africa was the least visited region compared to these regions. On the other hand, Othmani, as a prime minister, visited Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia more frequently than other regions. Each region constituted 42% of his total visits. The MENA region, nonetheless, remained his top visited region as foreign minister. Additionally, Foreign Minister Mezouar visited Europe the most, then the MENA region, while Foreign Minister

Bourita visited the MENA region the most, then Sub-Saharan Africa, while Europe was the third most frequently visited region. North America and Latin America, however, are the least visited region among the total visits of all officials.

One of the main highlights of this era is that North African countries gained special attention from the Islamist government. Forty-seven percent of their total visits to the MENA region were to North Africa, in which Egypt claimed 56% of these visits. A big chunk of these visits was done by Foreign Minister Mezouar. Surprisingly, the year 2014, the year following the Egyptian military coup against the Islamist party and the appointment of President Sisi, was the year Foreign Minister Mezouar logged the highest number of visits to Egypt ("Ziarat wazir").

Although the government was controlled by the Islamist PJD, Morocco not only kept its relationship with Egypt but also became closer after the coup. For instance, one of Foreign Minister Mezouar's visits to Egypt in 2014 was to attend President Sisi's inauguration ("Wusul Salah Aldiyn Mizwar"). Also, Prime Minister Benkiran visited Egypt in 2015 and met with President Sisi. While other Islamist governments such as Tunisia and Turkey denounced the *coup d'etat* against President Morsi and did not recognize President Sisi as the legitimate president, the PJD improved its relationship with Egypt and increased their number of visits to the country. Although the PJD condemned the coup against President Morsi and was against the Sisi government and its aggression against the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, they dealt with President Sisi's government according to the king's orders. Prime Minister Benkiran justified his visit to Egypt by saying that the foreign policy and diplomacy are under the king's control, not the governed party, and he could not go against the king's diplomatic approaches ("Rais Alhukumah Almaghribiah Yatahawal").

Another remarkable visit to the MENA region was Foreign Minister Othmani's visit to Algeria in 2012. After a long time of tense relations between the two countries, the visit offered a glimmer of hope the two countries could break the ice and improve their relationship. Interestingly, the two officials met in Algeria and discussed possible future cooperation. However, they ignored the main issues that have intensified the situation between the two countries, that is the Western Saharan issue that led to the Algerian-Moroccan border being closed in 1994, negatively impacting the economy of both countries. ("Aljazayir tatajih"). Nevertheless, Othmani's visit to Algeria was his first foreign visit as a foreign minister. More importantly, his visit was the first official visit by a Moroccan foreign minister to Algeria since 1989 (Alsilimi). Although not many visits to Algeria have been made after Othmani's visit, his visit shows the PJD's orientation toward neighboring countries that share their identity, culture, religion, and region. On the other hand, visits to the Gulf countries only formed 37% of the PJD's MENA region visits, where 39% of these visits were to Qatar. Qatar was the most visited country of Prime Minister Benkirane's foreign visits, claiming 50% of his visits to the MENA region.

Other notable visits during the Islamist party control were the two visits to Palestine by Foreign Minister Mezouar in 2014 and Foreign Minister Bourita in 2018. Foreign Minister Mezouar visited the West Bank following the Israeli war on Gaza that started in July 2014. The main purpose of his visit was to show Moroccan support for Palestine and condemn the Israeli attack. He met with the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and handed him a letter from the king in which he expressed his support for Palestine. Foreign Minister Mezouar also visited Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque to signal Moroccan support for the Palestinians ("Wazir

Kharijat Almaghrib”). In 2018, Foreign Minister Bourita also started his visit to Palestine by visiting Jerusalem and praying and touring the Al-Aqsa Mosque. He visited Jerusalem first as the king’s request that he start his trip from Jerusalem as a sign of Moroccan support for Palestinians, especially those in Jerusalem who suffered from Israeli attacks (“Wazir Alkharijiah Almaghribi Yazur”).

In addition, Europe was the second top visited region by the Islamist PJD. It claimed 28% of their total number of foreign visits. Europe was not only among the highest traveled regions by Prime Minister Benkiran, but he also made his first foreign visit to a European country. Switzerland was Benkiran’s first destination where he attended the World Economic Forum (WEF) (“Binkiran yahil”). Also, Europe was the top-visited region by Foreign Minister Mezouar. France was the most frequently visited European country, despite the diplomatic problems between the two countries during this period. In 2014, the French police summoned the director of internal Moroccan intelligence because he was accused of torturing a Moroccan boxer who lives in France. This incident led Morocco to freeze its judicial and security cooperation with France, which was resumed the following year (“Alalaqat Almaghribiah-Alfaransiah”). Yet, Foreign Minister Mezouar traveled to France several times a year. For instance, he visited France four times in 2016, which is less than two years after the diplomatic crisis.

Morocco’s Islamist and Non-Islamist Governments’ Foreign Policy in Comparison

This section will compare the foreign policy of the Islamist government with that of the king and non-Islamist government regarding Muslim-majority countries, non-Muslim-majority countries, and the MENA region, focusing on Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Palestine, and Israel. As illustrated previously, three factors should be kept in mind while discussing the

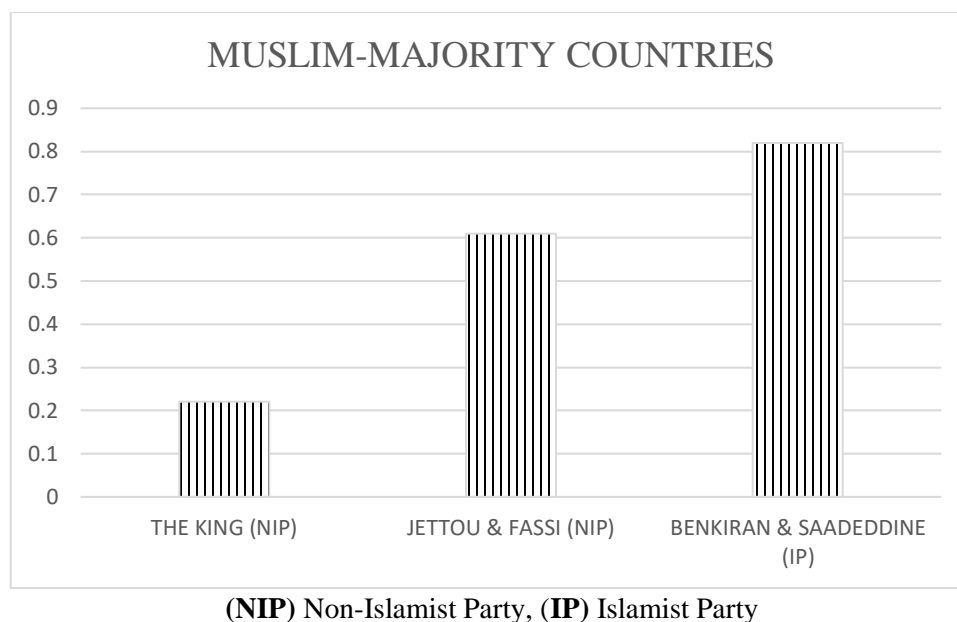
findings and comparisons of the Moroccan case. First is the fact that the king still has jurisdiction over the government. Secondly, it should be kept in mind that due to the multi-party system, the PJD did not rule alone but with other parties that were loyal to the palace. Third, the Islamist PJD had been in power from the reforms in 2011 until 2021. However, the collected data and comparisons of visits by the king, non-Islamist government, and Islamist government are important for understanding the differences between Islamist and non-Islamist parties' foreign policies and the use of Islamist ideology in foreign policy.

Accordingly, the total number of collected official visits from 2006 to 2018 shows that, contrary to the study's expectations, the non-Islamist government maintained the highest number of visits to Muslim-majority countries compared to the king and the Islamist PJD's period. Visits to Muslim-majority countries constituted 57% of the total number of official visits made during the non-Islamist party's government, compared to only 46% of the king's and the PJD's total visits to the Muslim world. Thus, the Islamist PJD visited the Muslim world less in comparison to the non-Islamist party.

What is also astonishing is that among the Moroccan officials presented in this study, the Islamist prime ministers visited the Muslim world the least. Forty-five percent of Benkiran's and only 28% of Othmani's visits were to Muslim-majority countries, while 46% of the king's foreign visits and 75 and 55% of the non-Islamist prime ministers' visits were to Muslim-majority countries. Yet, the difference in the number of visits to Muslim-majority countries between the Islamist and non-Islamist governments is not high enough to say that the Islamists are less concerned about the Muslim world than the non-Islamists. When the foreign visits of the king, the Islamist, and the non-Islamist parties are divided by their months in office, the result

shows that the Islamist PJD had the highest number of visits to Muslim-majority countries compared to the king and the non-Islamist party.

Figure 5. Morocco's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Muslim-Majority countries from 2006-2018 per month



Moreover, the tendency to visit the Arab world was apparent during both periods regardless of party affiliation. Both Islamist and non-Islamist parties visited Arab countries more frequently than other countries in the Muslim world. This is to be expected from the Islamist party members as it is part of their ideology. However, it was remarkable to observe that the non-Islamist party displayed no difference in their tendencies toward the Arab world, especially considering the heavy impact of French colonization on Morocco's culture and language. Interestingly, the non-Islamist party also visited the Arab world more frequently than the Islamist party did. Yet, again, the difference in tendencies toward the Arab world between Islamist and non-Islamist governments is not significant. Out of the non-Islamist governments' total visits to the Muslim world, 88% were to Arab countries, compared to 75% of visits to the Arab world by

the Islamist PJD. Also, the king traveled to the Arab world more than the Islamist party, as 77% of his visits were to Muslim-majority countries.

Accordingly, the non-Arab Muslim world gained fewer visits by all parties. Twenty-one percent of the king's visits and 20% of the Islamist party's visits to the Muslim world were to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to only 8% of the non-Islamist party's visits. Additionally, the Muslim non-Arab MENA countries also gained little attention from all governments. For instance, Turkey received few visits by all parties. Nevertheless, it gained more visits by the Islamist party than the king and the non-Islamist party. A visit by the non-Islamist Prime Minister visit to Turkey was to attend an international event (World Water Forum) in 2009, while the Islamist foreign minister's visit in 2012 was to discuss the countries' cooperation in all fields and exchange views on international events ("Jarad bi aham"; "Turkia wa almaghrib"). Another visit to Turkey by an Islamist foreign minister was in 2016 to attend the 13th Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on behalf of the king ("Jalalat almalik yuajih"). Yet, the difference is only by one visit, which does not imply a major shift in foreign policy.

The Morocco-Turkey relationship is good and stable. In 2004, they signed a free trade agreement that entered into force in 2006 and enhanced their relationship. But this agreement was later viewed as being in favor of Turkey and many Moroccans asked to rectify it to be more equally beneficial for both parties. In addition, Turkey recognized Morocco's territorial unity and sovereignty over Western Sahara, another factor that led to a good relationship between the two countries (El Taidi).

In addition, Turkey and Morocco share the same view on some regional matters. For example, the two countries are involved in Libya and support the Libyan Government of National Accord that was established during the mediation in Morocco in 2015. Additionally, in 2017, Morocco closed a school affiliated with the Muhammed Fethullah Gülen group. Later, they detained some of them and planned to hand over others to Turkey as the Turkish government accused them of terrorism (Stitou).

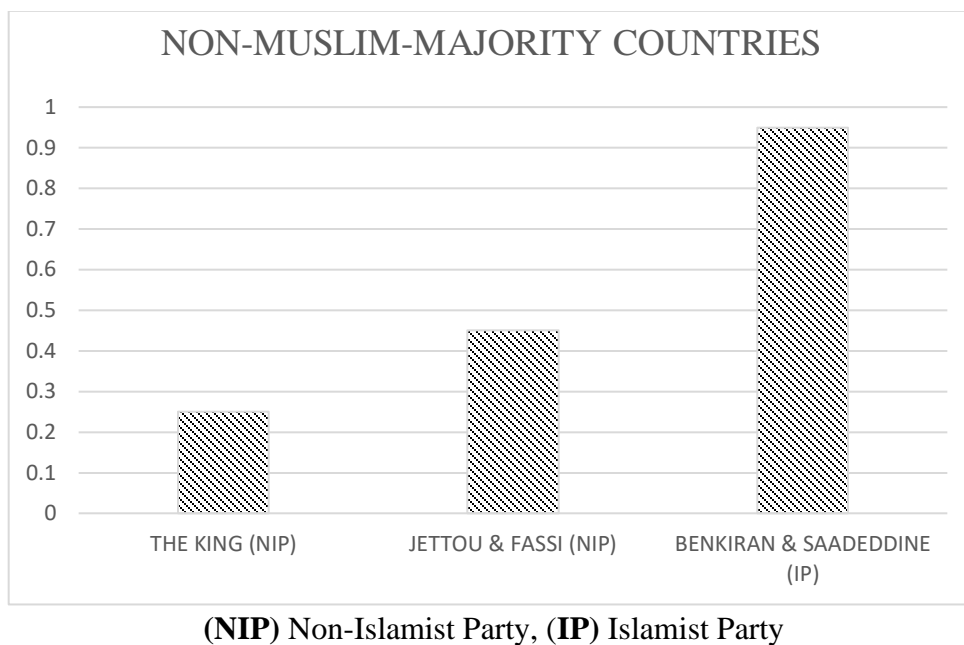
Although these examples show that Morocco and Turkey have a good relationship, despite the low number of mutual visits. This low number of visits to Turkey was consistent across both governments. Accordingly, the relationship with Turkey did not improve during the Islamist PJD rule despite having a similar ideology to the ruling government of Turkey. Their relationship focused mostly on the economy and has been constant during both periods.

In comparison to Turkey's small number of visits, Iran saw only one visit, with no information available about the visit ("Iran wa Almaghrib"). Morocco and Iran have a fragile relationship. Unlike its relationship with Turkey, Morocco has weak or non-existent economic relations with Iran. Morocco and Iran have severed diplomatic ties on three occasions: after the Iranian revolution in 1979, in 2009, and 2018. Morocco supported the Shah of Iran and welcomed him to Morocco after the revolution which led to the severing of ties with Iran. In 1991, the two countries resumed their diplomatic relationship, but this ended again in 2009. The Moroccan Foreign Ministry explained that Morocco cut its ties with Iran due to Iran's comment on Bahrain that considered it a part of Iran, which Morocco claimed illustrated Iran's imperial approach. They also noted that Iran has tried to spread Shi'ism in Sunni Morocco ("Iran wa Almaghrib").

Thus, the relationship between the two countries remained cut until 2016, when the Islamist PJD were in control. Morocco and Iran reopened their embassies and resumed diplomatic relations. Yet, the improvement in the relationship between Iran and Morocco could not be explained as an Islamist influence on Moroccan foreign policy. Rather, the change in regional events played a role in the Morocco-Iran relationship, as Iran's relations with the West and the Gulf countries impact the Moroccan relationship with Iran (AlQusayr). When the former has good relations with Iran, then Morocco improves their relationship with it as well. Therefore, when Iran signed the nuclear agreement with the US, in 2015, Morocco resumed its diplomacy with Iran in the same year. However, after the nuclear agreement ended, the Gulf countries pressured Morocco to cut ties with Iran again in 2018. That year Morocco, despite being ruled by an Islamist government, cut ties with Iran ("Iran wa Almaghrib"). As a result, both parties have the same foreign policy toward Iran, with an unstable relationship and only one visit to Iran documented for both governments.

However, despite the fact that the PJD was the ruling party for two periods, the foreign ministry was not under their control. Additionally, throughout most of their governance, the foreign minister belonged to the non-Islamist RNI party. When the foreign ministry was controlled by an Islamist party member at the beginning of PJD rule from 2012 to 2013, the foreign minister maintained the highest percentage of visits to the Muslim world, sixty-one percent of his total number of visits.

Figure 6. Morocco's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Non-Muslim-Majority countries from 2006-2018 per month



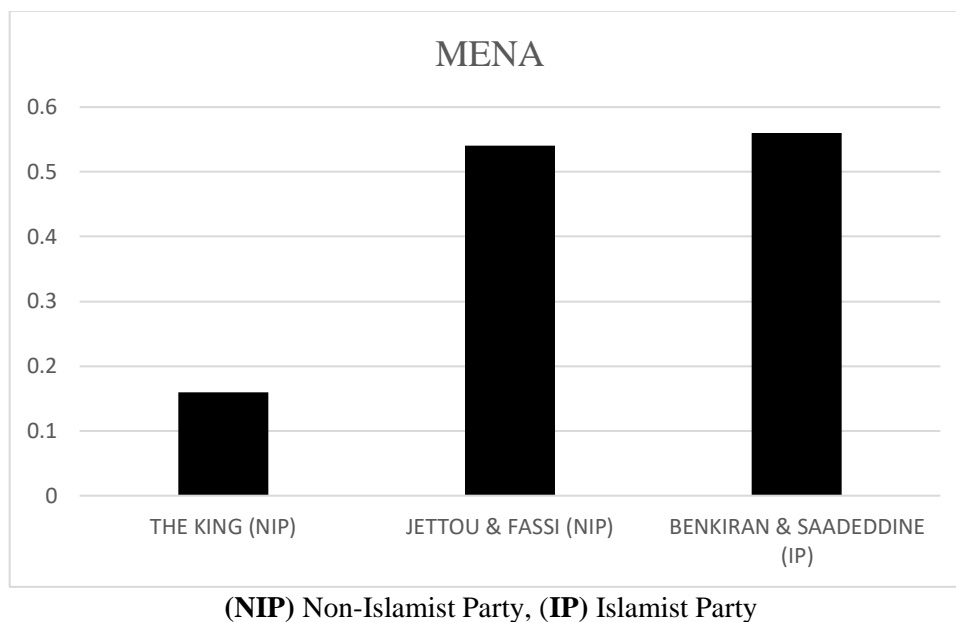
In addition, the Islamist PJD government and the king have the same percentage of visits to the non-Muslim world compared to the percentage of visits by the non-Islamist party. Out of their total foreign visits, 53% were to non-Muslim countries compared to only 43% of visits by the non-Islamist government. Yet, when visits are divided by their months in the government, the Islamist PJD has the highest number of visits to the non-Muslim-majority world, compared to both the king and the non-Islamist government.

Yet, the PJD governments share with the non-Islamist government the same tendency toward Europe. Europe was the top-visited region among their visits to the non-Muslim world, while Sub-Saharan Africa was the top-visited region by the king. Visits to Europe made up 53% of the PJD's combined visits to the non-Muslim world and 59% of the non-Islamist government's visits.

Moreover, the collected visits also illustrate that, unlike expectations, the Islamist PJD did not improve its relationship with the MENA region when they came to power. On the contrary, the Islamist PJD's foreign policy was consistent with the king's. The PJD maintained a low percentage of visits to the MENA region, which only claimed thirty-one percent of their total number of visits. Similarly, thirty-four percent of the king's visits were to the MENA region. On the other hand, MENA was the top-visited region by the non-Islamist party containing 50% of their foreign visits. Thus, not only did the Islamist party maintain a low number of visits to the MENA region, but the percentage of visits to the MENA region was also the least compared to the visits by the king and the non-Islamist party.

Likewise, the Islamist prime ministers had the lowest frequency of visits to the MENA region compared to the non-Islamist prime ministers. Only 36% of Benkiran's visits and none of Othmani's visits were to the MENA region, while 50% and 44% of non-Islamist prime ministers' visits were to the MENA region. Similarly, the Islamist foreign minister was still not the official with the most visits to the MENA region among the Moroccan foreign ministers studied here. Foreign Minister Fassi Fihri, who worked under the non-Islamist government, had the highest frequency of visits to the MENA region compared to his counterparts during the Islamist periods. Sixty percent of his visits were to the MENA region. Furthermore, even among the foreign ministers who worked under the Islamist government, the non-Islamist Foreign Minister Bourita had the highest number of visits to the MENA region, which claimed 45% of his visits, compared to only 38% of Islamist Foreign Minister Othmani's visits.

Figure 7. Morocco's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to the MENA region countries from 2006-2018 per month



Nevertheless, the figure above illustrates that the PJD's visits to the MENA region were slightly higher than the king's and the non-Islamist party's visits when visits were divided by the government's months in office. The PJD had the highest number of visits per month to the MENA region, compared to the king and the non-Islamist party. Yet, the difference is not significant and does not show a tendency of the PJD toward the MENA region.

Another interesting finding about visits to the MENA region is that the king and the non-Islamist party both demonstrate a tendency toward Gulf countries, while the Islamist party leaned more toward North African countries. Out of the total number of visits to the MENA region by the non-Islamist party, 48% were to Gulf countries. Similarly, 87% of the total number of the king's visits to the MENA region were to Gulf countries. On the other hand, the Islamist PJD's most visited countries were in North Africa, comprising 47% of their visits to the MENA region, while only 37% of their visits were to Gulf countries.

Nevertheless, unlike the case of Egypt, Saudi Arabia was not the most visited country among visits to the Gulf region. Qatar was the top-visited Gulf country for both parties, while the UAE was the king's most visited country among his visits to the MENA region. Although Morocco was not pleased with how Al-Jazeera covered some topics, including the Western Sahara issue, and closed their office in Morocco in 2010, this did not jeopardize the Morocco-Qatar relationship. Instead, Qatar continued its investments in Morocco and become its fifth top foreign investor in 2016 (Fakir). Qatar was not only the most visited country among the non-Islamist government's visits to the Gulf countries but also their most visited country among their visits to the MENA region. What is fascinating about this finding is that Qatar is seen as a champion of Islamism, yet it was not at the top of the Islamist PJD's list of visited countries, but rather was the most visited country during the non-Islamist party's control.

Interestingly, the Islamist and non-Islamist parties have an equal number of visits to Qatar. This illustrates that the two parties have similar views toward Qatar. However, during PJD control, it seems that Morocco was closer to Qatar than ever before as Morocco chose to remain neutral during the Gulf crisis. It sent food aid to Qatar, encouraged the countries to hold talks, and offered to work as a mediator to solve the conflict. Although Moroccan neutrality toward the crisis would damage its relationship with Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain, it adhered to its position ("Morocco Says"). Also, during the same period, the two countries signed eleven agreements in different sectors like economy, agriculture, and education sectors, and agreed on cooperation to increase Qatari investment in Morocco ("Aldawrah Alsabieah").

Although the number of visits to Qatar surpassed the number of visits to Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia was still a "more valuable strategic ally than Qatar" for Morocco (Fakir). Morocco

and Saudi Arabia have strong political and economic relations. They are both Sunni Arab monarchies ruled by a single royal family. Moreover, Morocco and Saudi Arabia share similar opinions on regional issues. For example, Morocco supported Saudi Arabia and participated in the Yemen war and have similar views toward Iran as Saudi Arabia, while Saudi Arabia recognized Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.

The collected visits showed that the king and the Islamist party had an equal number of visits to Saudi Arabia, while the non-Islamist party had fewer visits than the king. Interestingly, the king's first visit to Saudi Arabia since he took power in 1999 was in 2012, which was after the Arab uprisings and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) agreement with Morocco, which he discussed during his visit. In 2011 after the Arab uprisings, the GCC, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar, signed a strategic partnership with Morocco, providing it with 5 billion dollars as a support fund for Morocco in different fields, including military, investment, and development projects for the period between 2012 to 2016 ("Signing of an agreement"). In 2015, Morocco and Saudi Arabia additionally signed an agreement regarding the Moroccan military industry. Saudi Arabia promised to provide Morocco with 22 billion dollars to improve its military and its military intelligence ("Saudi Arabia to Provide").

Another main visit to Saudi Arabia was by the non-Islamist foreign minister in 2011. During that visit, the foreign minister discussed the Saudi invitation for the Arab monarchies mainly, Morocco and Jordan, to join the GCC ("Al-Khaliji"). Saudi Arabia felt threatened that if one of the monarchies was heavily impacted by the Arab uprisings that it would negatively impact Saudi Arabia as well. However, the proposal did not work. Instead, the GCC offered five

billion dollars to help improve the Moroccan economy to avoid instability in the country (“The Moroccan-Saudi Rift”).

Furthermore, among the major visits to Saudi Arabia during the Islamist party’s control were Foreign Minister Bourita’s visits during the Gulf crisis in 2017 (Al-Bayari). The foreign minister traveled to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries more than once to mediate between the countries and try to reach a solution. Morocco chose to be neutral regarding the Gulf crises and maintain good relations with all countries. The same year, the foreign ministry released a statement "affirming the country’s strong relations with all Gulf states, based on 'the strong personal bonds, sincere brotherhood, and the mutual appreciation between His Majesty Mohammed VI and his brothers the kings and princes of the Gulf Cooperation Council ...'" (Fakir).

Nonetheless, after 2017 and Moroccan neutrality toward the Gulf crises, the Saudi Moroccan relationship experienced tension. In 2018, like the UAE, Saudi Arabia voted against Morocco hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Additionally, Morocco refused to host Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who planned to do a tour of Arab countries. Also, the king rejected an invitation to meet with the prince due to the latter’s involvement in the killing of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul and the international pressure on him (Abdel Ghafar and Jacobs; Jali). All these factors increased tensions between the two countries during this period. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia remained one of the main investors in Morocco.

Although the Moroccan reform in 2011 brought the Islamist PJD to power, Saudi Arabia became even closer to Morocco and increased its investments in the country. Yet, the

improvement in the relationship between the two countries was not due to the impact of Islamism. Instead, it is more likely that Saudi Arabia feared the spread of the uprising to Morocco, which is also an Arab monarchy. Thus, Saudi Arabia increased its investments to help stabilize the country (Abdel Ghafar and Jacobs).

Therefore, Morocco's foreign policy toward the MENA region during the Islamist party government does not show Islamism's influence. On the other hand, Morocco's national interests surpass the impact of parties' ideology on foreign policy. Morocco's relationship with the MENA region remained the same under the Islamist and non-Islamist governments. Although Morocco improved its relationship with Qatar during Islamist control, Islamist ideology does not sufficiently explain that improvement. Morocco also had a good relationship with Qatar during the non-Islamist party control, which also had the highest frequency of visits to Qatar. In addition, the Moroccan decision to remain neutral toward the Gulf crisis in 2017 was likely influenced by its national interest in maintaining relations with Qatar. Qatar was the fifth main investor in Morocco the year before the crisis, so Morocco chose not to ruin its relationship with Qatar.

Similarly, while it would be expected for the relationship between Morocco and Saudi Arabia to be negatively impacted because of Islamist control of the government, it improved. Saudi Arabia, despite its anti-Islamist approach, increased its investments in Morocco and supported its military during the beginning of Islamist control. Yet, this could be because Saudi Arabia was threatened by the Arab uprisings and knew that the king, not the Islamist party, headed the political system in Morocco. However, the relationship between the two countries was strained for the first time in 2017, not because of Islamist ideology, but instead because of

Moroccan national interests. Morocco felt betrayed by Saudi Arabia's vote against it to host the World Cup, which would have helped its economy and reputation. Therefore, it is the national interests, rather than Islamism, that drove Moroccan foreign policy during Islamist control.

In addition, Morocco's relationship with Palestine and Israel has remained steady since King Mohammed VI took power. Both the Islamist and the non-Islamist parties followed the king's lead and supported Palestine. After the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2009, Morocco sent aid to Gaza to help rebuild the strip ("Jarad bi aham"). Similarly, after the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2014, the Islamist foreign minister visited Palestine to show Morocco's support and sympathy for Palestinians ("Wazir Kharijat Almaghrib"). Also, none of the main officials of both governments visited Israel, nor received Israeli officials in Morocco.

Moreover, PJD opposed normalization with Israel. In 2013, they submitted a bill that prohibited any relationship with Israel, yet the bill did not pass (Levi). Additionally, in 2017, the king as the head of the Al-Quds Committee, a committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation which focuses on issues related to Jerusalem, sent a letter to President Trump about the decision to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. He expressed his concerns and warned that this could worsen the situation. He stated that "The current step is likely to negatively impact the prospects of a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict" ("Morocco's king warns").

On the other hand, despite the official support for Palestine and the rejection of normalization with Israel by both the government and the public, Morocco still maintained limited cooperation with Israel in some areas, including tourism and trade. Morocco has welcomed more than 25,000 Israeli tourists yearly since the 1990s and has increased its trade

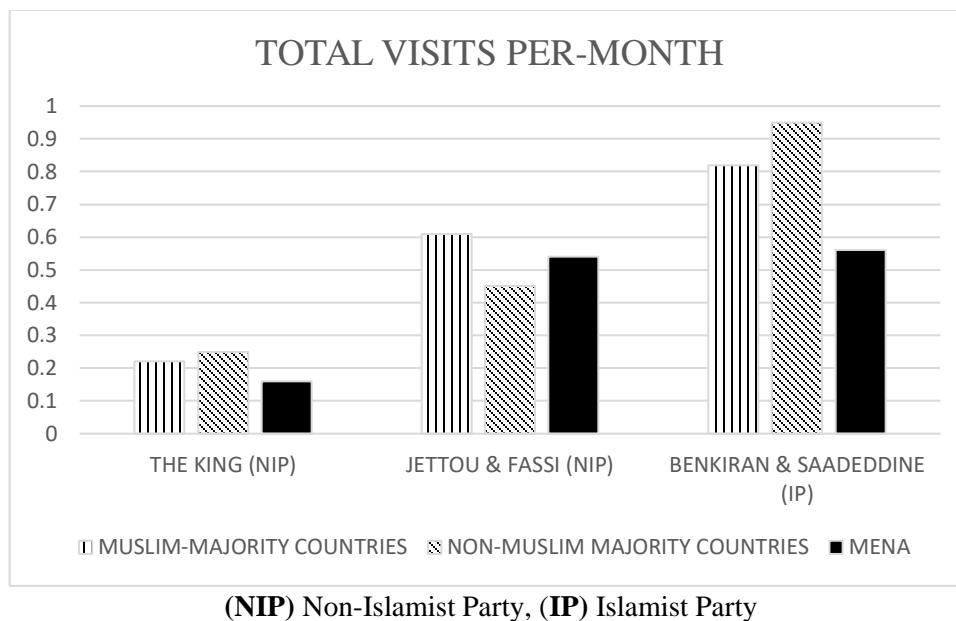
volume over the years. The total volume of imports from and exports to Israel has been increasing since 2000. For example, the total imports from Israel rose from 5.2 in 2010 to 15.6 in 2015. Similarly, the total exports to Israel increased from 0.02 in 2010 to 0.04 in 2015 (Levi).

Nonetheless, it is obvious that the main driver behind the relationship with Palestine and Israel is not the ruling government, but the king. The relationship between Morocco on the one hand and Palestine and Israel on the other has been constant since the king took power. Despite the change in ruling governments between Islamist and non-Islamist parties, Moroccan foreign policy toward Palestine and Israel has remained the same. Both governments helped Gaza during the Israeli attack, did not visit Israel, and did not welcome Israeli officials to Morocco. Also, both governments allowed limited trade and Israeli tourists. Although the rare visits to Palestine happened during the Islamist government's control, these visits were requested by the king. The king was involved in these visits' details, including where they would start their trip and with whom they would meet. Accordingly, the Islamist PJD coming to power did not impact Moroccan foreign policy toward Palestine or Israel. However, the king, as the one who controls the foreign ministry, was the main driver of the relationship with Palestine and Israel.

Furthermore, it is expected that an Islamist party would improve relations with neighboring countries. Interestingly, the most prominent change in policy after the Islamist party came to power was the improvement in relations with Sub-Saharan Africa. Twenty-eight percent of the PJD's foreign visits were to countries located in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to only 4% of visits by their counterpart non-Islamist party who ruled before them. Yet, the king also visited Sub-Saharan Africa the most, making up to 42% of his foreign visits. This makes it critical to

conclude whether the trend toward Sub-Saharan Africa was impacted by the PJD Islamist ideology or was a result of the king's influence in their foreign policy.

Figure 8. Morocco's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Muslim-Majority Countries, Non-Muslim-Majority Countries, and the MENA region countries from 2006-2018 per month



Thus, the case of Morocco demonstrates unpredictable results regarding Islamist tendencies toward Muslim-majority countries and the MENA region. Contrary to the expectations, the non-Islamist party's foreign policy tilted more toward the Muslim world and mainly the MENA region than the Islamist party. The non-Islamist party also demonstrated a greater tendency toward the Gulf countries and the Arab countries compared to the Islamist PJD. Also, to the contrary of expectations, the Islamist party improved its relationship with the non-Muslim world more than the non-Islamist party did. They also shared the same trend towards Europe as the non-Islamist party. However, the PJD demonstrates consistency with the king's foreign policy. They tilted more toward Sub-Saharan Africa and North African countries. As a

result, Islamist ideology was not apparent in the PJD's foreign policy toward the Muslim world and the MENA region. Rather, the king's influence and control had more influence on their foreign policy than their ideology. The PJD shows similar tendencies as the king toward the Muslim world, the MENA region, and Sub-Saharan Africa. This finding is also understandable with the fact that the king still has control over Morocco's foreign policy.

Nevertheless, when visits are divided by the governments' months in power, the Islamist party shows different tendencies. It illustrates that the PJD traveled more frequently than the king and the non-Islamist government. As Figure 8 shows, the Islamist government has the highest number of monthly visits to Muslim-Majority countries and the MENA region compared to the king and the non-Islamist government. Yet, the Islamist government also had the highest frequency of visits to the non-Muslim majority countries per month compared to the king and the non-Islamist government. The result shows that Islamist ideology cannot explain the PJD's foreign policy tendencies as their visits to both Muslim and non-Muslim countries were high. Instead, the need to improve the Moroccan economy and for international support could be the main driver of the PJD's foreign policy. The PJD controlled the government during a time of domestic and regional political and economic instability. Thus, to survive, they need to gain the trust of other countries and invite them to invest in Morocco to revive its economy. Accordingly, the PJD's monthly visits were high compared to the king and the non-Islamist government and could be driven by their need to survive rather than their ideology.

Hence, Islamists in Morocco have ruled for two periods, which could provide us with a clear picture of their attitudes toward the Muslim-majority countries, the non-Muslim world, and the MENA region. Tracking and comparing the foreign policy of the PJD illustrates that their

foreign policy was not impacted by their ideology. However, these results may be influenced by the fact that the king of Morocco controls the foreign ministry and the multiparty system in Morocco. As illustrated previously, the foreign ministry in Morocco is held by three different parties, as the foreign minister, his deputy, and the senior adviser are all from different parties. This reality illustrates that even though the Islamist PJD was the largest party in parliament for two periods, their role in foreign policy was still limited, which, as a result, limited them from utilizing their ideology in foreign policy. Yet, with more comparison of the Islamist parties in the region such as parties in Egypt and Tunisia, we could have a better understanding of how Islamism impacts foreign policy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TUNISIA

Tunisia resembles Egypt in that the Islamist party Ennahda was the first party to win after the uprising and ruled for only two years. It is also like the Moroccan case, in that Islamists did not rule alone, but instead had to form a coalition with secular parties that were loyal to the *ancien régime*. Additionally, the Tunisian case is significant for comparing Islamist and non-Islamist foreign policy as it shares experiences with Egypt and Morocco of Islamists' rise to power after the 2011 uprisings and is located in the same region.

Thus, like the previous chapters, this chapter will provide a comparison of the Islamist and non-Islamist parties that controlled the Tunisian government from 2006 to 2018. It will focus on official foreign visits by the president, prime minister, and foreign minister. The total number of collected official visits is 274 visits. This study begins with President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's period, in which the ruling party was the Democratic Constitutional Rally. It will then illustrate the era of Islamist control in which Ennahda was the largest party in the government, from 2011 to 2014. Lastly, the study will examine the government of Nidaa Tounes, the non-Islamist party that succeeded the Ennahda party after it stepped down, which ruled from 2014 until 2018. This part is divided into four sections. The first three sections discuss each government's foreign policy toward the Muslim majority countries and the MENA region. The last section compares the foreign policies of Islamist and non-Islamist parties as well as their attitudes toward the Muslim and non-Muslim world and each region.

Ben Ali Government

During the time of President Ben Ali, the non-Islamist Democratic Constitutional Rally party was the leading government party. Mohamed Ghannouchi was the prime minister for the period between 2006 and 2011. Abdelwahab Abdallah was the foreign minister from the beginning of 2010, and Kemal Mourjan was appointed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until January 2011. All these officials belong to the Democratic Constitutional Rally party. I divided their collected visits into two categories: visits to Muslim-majority countries and visits to non-Muslim countries. The table below shows the percentages of their total official visits to each region.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 16. Number of Foreign Visits by Tunisian Officials to Muslim-Majority Countries and Non-Muslim Majority Countries from 2006-2010

Non-Islamist 2006-2010	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim Majority Countries	Total
Ben Ali Government	18 (46.15%)	21 (53.84%)	39 (100%)

The data show that the period of President Ben Ali contained more visits to non-Muslim countries than to Muslim-majority countries. Only forty-six percent of the total number of official foreign visits during the rule of the Democratic Constitutional Rally party were to predominantly Muslim countries. President Ben Ali visited Muslim countries the most frequently compared to the prime minister and the foreign ministers during his period. His visits to the Muslim world constituted 85% of his total number of foreign visits. Similarly, the prime minister also had a high number of visits to the Muslim world. Out of the total number of Ghannouchi's official visits, 66% were to Muslim countries. It is also worth noting that 100% of the visits of

the president and the prime minister to the Muslim world were to Muslim majority countries in the MENA region. Yet only 19% of Foreign Minister Abdallah's and none of Foreign Minister Mourjan's visits to the Muslim world were to countries in the MENA region. However, the foreign ministers' visits were mostly to non-Muslim countries. Only 33% of Abdallah's foreign visits and 20% of Mourjan's foreign visits were to Muslim-majority countries.

The visits to the Muslim world during President Ben Ali's era demonstrated a tendency toward the Arab world. One hundred percent of the president, prime minister, and Foreign Minister Mourjan's visits to the Muslim world were to Arab countries. Likewise, 71% of Foreign Minister Abdallah's visits to the Muslim world were to Arab countries. Thus, the period of President Ben Ali contained more visits to Arab Muslim countries than non-Arab Muslim countries.

Although visits to the non-Muslim world made up 54% of the total number of foreign visits during President Ben Ali's government, only 15% of President Ben Ali's foreign visits were to non-Muslim countries. Furthermore, only 34% of Prime Minister Ghannouchi's visits were to non-Muslim-majority countries. Yet, the foreign ministers made most of their visits to the non-Muslim world. Sixty-seven percent of Foreign Minister Abdallah and 80% of Foreign Minister Mourjan's foreign visits were to non-Muslim majority countries.

Dividing the foreign visits by regions during the period of President Ben Ali shows interesting findings. Although only 35% of the total visits were to the MENA region, it was still the most visited region. Europe came in second place in the list of top visited regions with a total of 25%, while Asia was third with 17%. What is notable here is that visits to Latin America were

higher than visits to Sub-Saharan Africa and North America, making up ten percent of the total number of visits.

Visits Divided by Regions

Table 17. Tunisian Officials' Foreign Visits from 2006-2010 Divided by Regions

Non-Islamist 2006-2010	Name	MENA	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
President	Zine El Abidine Ben Ali	6	0	1	0	0	0	7 (17.94%)
Prime Minister	Mohamed Ghannouchi	4	0	1	1	0	0	6 (15.38%)
Foreign Minister	Abdelwahab Abdallah	4	1	6	6	0	4	21 (53.84%)
	and Kemal Mourjan	0	1	2	0	2	0	5 (12.82%)
% Total Visits		14 (35.89%)	2 (5.12%)	10 (25.64%)	7 (17.94%)	2 (5.12%)	4 (10.25%)	39 (100%)

Out of these officials, the president had the highest frequency of visits to the MENA region, which consisted of 85% of his total number of foreign visits. Europe constituted 15% of his visits, while he did not travel to other regions during the time frame of the study. Like the president, the prime minister visited the MENA region the most, constituting 66% of his total foreign visits. Although only 17% of the prime minister's visits were to Europe and the same percentage were to Asia, no visits were made to Sub-Saharan Africa, North America, or Latin America.

However, the foreign ministers' frequencies of visits to the MENA region were significantly low. Only 19% of Foreign Minister Abdallah's and none of Foreign Minister Mourjan's visits were to the MENA region. Among Foreign Minister Abdallah's visits, Europe and Asia claimed the highest percentage of his visits at 28% each. Interestingly, Latin America

formed 19% of Foreign Minister Abdallah's total visits, while Sub-Saharan Africa gained 5% and no visits were made to North America. Contrary to Foreign Minister Abdallah, 40% of Foreign Minister Mourjan's visits were to North America, which is the highest percentage of his visits. Europe also constitutes 40% of his visits, while 20% of his visits were to Sub-Saharan Africa. Notably, there were no documented visits by Foreign Minister Mourjan to the MENA region, nor Asia or Latin America.

The remarkable feature of this era is the high frequency of visits to Libya. Fifty percent of visits to the MENA region consisted of visits to Libya. Sixty-six percent of the president's total number of visits to the MENA region were visits to Libya. Additionally, 50% of the prime minister's visits to the MENA region were to Libya. However, only 25% of Foreign Minister Abdallah's visits to the MENA region were to Libya, while Gulf countries constituted 75% of his total visits to the MENA region.

Among the main visits to Libya was President Ben Ali's visit in 2008 when he attended the Mini-Summit president Gadhafi hosted on the Mediterranean Union that France proposed. Ben Ali had supported the Union and renewed his support once more during the summit in Libya ("Qimah Musagharah"). While his other visits to Libya were to attend the African Union in 2009 and participate in the Arab League summit in October 2010 and the Africa-EU Union Summit in November 2010. Also, most of the prime minister's visits to Libya were to lead the Tunisian delegation for the Tunisian-Libyan high joint executive committee meeting. During the committee meetings, the two countries always discussed their cooperation and possible future cooperation to improve their relationship in different domains ("Ifitah Aldawrah"; "Ineiqad Alijtimae").

In addition to Libya, Kuwait was among the most visited MENA countries during the Ben Ali era. Despite the historical conflict between the two countries due to the Tunisian stance on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the two countries resumed their diplomatic relationship in 2008 after Foreign Minister Abdullah visited to Kuwait. Abdullah attended the first joint committee between Tunisia and Kuwait. During his visit, they resumed direct air flights between the two countries and signed seven agreements for cooperation in different domains, including tourism, technology, higher education, and sport (“Tunis Wa Alkuayt”).

Moreover, one of the main highlights of this period’s foreign visits was the foreign minister’s visits to Latin America. While this region was neglected by other officials included in this study, Foreign Minister Abdullah’s visits showed an interest in Latin America. In 2006, he traveled three times to Latin American countries. He visited Brazil and Argentina and both visits were to attend the commission that Tunisia has with these countries and discuss their economic and other field cooperation (“Relations Bilatérales Tunisie/Brésil”; “La République Avec”). Meanwhile, his third visit to Latin America was to Cuba where he attended the 14th Summit of the Non-Aligned Countries Movement (“Les Relations Tuniso-Cubaines”) Additionally, Foreign minister Abdullah visited Venezuela to attend the second Africa-South America Summit in 2009 (“Hawsalat”). All these visits illustrate Tunisia’s care to cultivate relations with Latin American countries.

Marzouki Government

In 2011, Tunisia held its first free and fair election, and the Islamist Ennahda party was the winning party. Although Ennahda won the election, it only won the plurality, meaning that it had to form a coalition with other parties to form a government. Ennahda thus formed a coalition

with secular parties and shared many official offices with them. The president during Ennahda's government, Moncef Marzouki, is not an Islamist, but instead a member of the Congress for the Republic. Additionally, not all of the foreign ministers who served during Ennahda's government belonged to Ennahda. All the foreign ministers of this period are independents, except for Rafik Abdessalem, who belonged to the Ennahda party.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 18. Number of Foreign Visits by Tunisian Officials to Muslim-Majority Countries and Non-Muslim-Majority Countries from 2011-2014

Islamist 2011-2014	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim- Majority Countries	Total
Marzouki Government	47 (57.31%)	35 (42.68%)	82 (100%)

As expected, the frequency of foreign visits during Ennahda party control demonstrated a tendency toward Muslim-majority countries. Out of the total number of collected visits made by main officials, 57% were visits to the Muslim world. All officials—excluding the president, visited the Muslim world more than the non-Muslim world. More precisely, 51% of Ennahda's foreign visits were to Muslim countries located in the MENA region, which formed 88% of their total visits to the Muslim world.

Although the president visited the Muslim world the least among these government officials, 43% of his total foreign visits were to Muslim countries. Among the prime ministers, Ennahda members Jebali and Laarayedh made the greatest number of visits to the Muslim world, which formed 80 and 71% of their total number of visits, respectively. The opposite is true when we compare the visits of foreign ministers to the Muslim world during the Ennahda government.

The non-Ennahda foreign minister Jerandi made more visits to the Muslim world than the Ennahda foreign minister Abdessalem. Fifty-seven percent of Abdessalem's total foreign visits, compared to 80% of Jerandi's visits, were to the Muslim world.

A significant finding of this period is the propensity of these officials to visit the Arab world. Most of the collected visits to Muslim-majority countries were to Arab countries which contain eighty percent of their visits to the Muslim-majority countries. Eighty percent of the president's visits to the Muslim world were to Arab countries. Although all prime ministers and foreign ministers visited the Arab world the most frequently among their visits to Muslim countries, it is interesting to find that non-Islamists and non-Ennahda members visited Arab countries more than Ennahda members during Ennahda control. One hundred percent of the non-Islamist foreign minister Jerandi's visits to the Muslim world were to Arab countries, compared to 80% by Ennahda prime ministers Jebali and Laarayedh and 76% by the Islamist/Ennahda foreign minister Abdessalem.

Dividing the foreign visits by region during Ennahda control demonstrates an orientation toward the MENA region. The MENA region was the most visited region among the total foreign visits during the entire period. It made up 51% of their total number of visits. Like the previous/non-Islamist government, Europe also was the second most visited region, forming thirty percent of their total number of visits. While Sub-Saharan Africa constituted ten percent and North America only constituted 2% of the total number of their foreign visits, only 3% and 1% of visits were to Asia and Latin America.

Visits Divided by Regions

Table 19. Tunisian Officials' Foreign Visits from 2011-2014 Divided by Regions

ISLAMIST 2011-2014	Name	MENA	Sub- Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
President	Moncef Marzouki	12	7	8	1	2	1	31 (37.80%)
Prime Minister	Hamadi Jebali,	9	1	6	0	0	0	16 (19.51%)
	Ali Laarayedh	5	0	2	0	0	0	7 (8.53%)
Foreign Minister	Rafik Abdessalem,	12	1	9	1	0	0	23 (28.04%)
	Othman Jerandi	4	0	0	1	0	0	5 (6.09%)
% Total Visits		42 (51.21%)	9 (10.97%)	25 (30.48%)	3 (3.65%)	2 (2.43%)	1 (1.21%)	82 (100%)

The MENA region gained a lot of attention from all officials during the Ennahda government. However, the president has the lowest frequency of visits to the MENA region. Only 31% of his visits were to the MENA region. Ennahda prime ministers, on the other hand, made a high number of visits to MENA region countries, claiming 53% of Jebali's visits and 71% of Laarayedh's visits.

It is worth noting that the official who visited the MENA region the least among the prime ministers and foreign ministers during Ennahda control was Foreign Minister Abdessalem, who belongs to the Ennahda party, while the non-Ennahda Foreign Minister Jerandi visited the MENA region more frequently compared to other officials during Ennahda control. Yet, still, the MENA region was the top-visited region amongst Foreign Minister Abdessalem's visits,

constituting 52% of his foreign visits. Nevertheless, Foreign Minister Jerandi made the highest percentage of visits to the MENA region at 80%.

Tunisian officials' visits to the MENA region during the Ennahda government display a focus on Gulf countries, especially Qatar. Nineteen percent of visits to the MENA region during the Ennahda period were to Qatar. The year 2012, the year following the uprising and the first year of Ennahda control, witnessed the highest number of visits between Tunisian and Qatari government officials. Six visits to Qatar were made by the president, the prime minister, and the foreign minister of Tunisia in 2012 ("Wazir alkharijjah alqatari"; "Wazir alshoon alkharijjah yaltaqi"; Wishkah; Boghlab; Afzaz; "Rais alhukumah altonisiah"). Moreover, Qatar increased its investment in Tunisia and provided more financial support to help Tunisia overcome its economic problems (Jacobs). Thus, it is notable that the two countries improved their relationship after the Tunisian uprising due to Qatar's support for the revolution and the Islamist Ennahda.

Similarly, Egypt's numbers of visits were high in 2012, during the Islamist control of both countries. The president, although not Islamist, met with President Morsi and discussed their shared views on democracy and freedom, support for Palestinians, and the Syrian rebels. They also discussed future cooperation and work to strengthen their relationship ("Qimat Morsi Almarzuqi"). The foreign minister also made three visits to Egypt in 2012. One of these visits was to participate in a tripartite meeting in Cairo which was led by the foreign ministers of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya to examine the North African countries' common issues of the Arab Spring. Another visit to Egypt was to gather with other Arab delegates to go to Gaza. Foreign

Minister Abdessalem's visit to Gaza in 2012 was also among the main highlights of the Ennahda government's foreign visits.

Not only did Tunisia improve its relationship with the MENA region during Ennahda's control, but also increased its relationship with Europe. Europe constituted 30% of Ennahda's foreign visits and was the second top visited region among all Ennahda's officials' visits, except for Foreign Minister Jerandi. Twenty-eight percent of the president's visits were to Europe. What is interesting is to find that both Ennahda Prime Ministers Jebali and Laarayedh's visits concentrated only on European countries in their visits to non-Muslim countries. Similarly, Foreign Minister Abdessalem also prioritized Europe. Visits to Europe made up 88% of Abdessalem's visits to the non-Muslim majority world. Unlike Foreign Ministers Abdessalem, Foreign Minister Jerandi did not visit Europe, yet his visits to the non-Muslim world concentrated on Asia. However, this percentage shows that Tunisia gave a lot of attention to Europe compared to the rest of non-Muslim majority world.

Yet, it is notable that the Tunisian-France relationship decreased during the beginning of Ennahda control. Although France is Tunisia's foremost commercial, economic, and financial partner, their relationship strained after Ennahda came to power. This was due to the support of former President Nicolas Sarkozy's government for the *ancien régime* in Tunisia (Tunis: La Alaqaḥ"). Yet, the Tunisian French relationship quickly recovered in mid-2012 and many mutual visits have been made since then. The relationship was rocked again in 2013 after the French Interior Minister commented on the assassination of opposition leader Chokri Belaid and accused Ennahda of his assassination. Yet, tensions were resolved after President François Hollande visited Tunisia in July 2013 (Binbrik).

While the relationship with France was not stable during Ennahda's control, Tunisia's relationship with the United States experienced an improvement. Unlike France who feared the rise of Islamists in Tunisia, the United States was more supportive of the democratic transition and Islamist Ennahda's control of the government. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that the United States was ready to deal with the Islamists in Tunisia. The American interest in Tunisia and their political and military support increased following the revolution. The US supported the Tunisian democratization process in the hope it could be a model for future democracies in the region (Liealali).

Ennahda was also interested in Sub-Saharan Africa and tried to improve its relationship by making more visits to the region compared to the previous government. Most of these visits were high-level visits made by President Marzouki. He made an African tour, where he also discussed future economic cooperation in 2014 ("Raies aljumhuriah"). He also attended the African Union Summit every year while he was in power. During his visits, he stressed the importance of bringing Tunisia back to its African roots and improving its role in the region. He encouraged more cooperation between Tunisia and Africa (Alhadad).

Essebsi Government

The following election in Tunisia was held in 2014. Ennahda stepped down, and Nidaa Tounes became the winning party. Beji Caid Essebsi, a member of Nidaa Tounes, became the president. Additionally, many of the government officials of this era come from the Nidaa Tounes party, including Prime Minister Youssef Chahed and Foreign Ministers Taïeb Baccouche and Khemaies Jhinaoui. The table below shows the percentages of the visits by the president,

prime ministers, and foreign ministers during the Nidaa Tounes rule to Muslim-majority countries and non-Muslim majority countries.

Relationship with Muslim-Majority Countries

Table 20. Number of Foreign Visits by Tunisian Officials to Muslim-Majority Countries and Non-Muslim-Majority Countries from 2014-2018

Non-Islamist 2014-2018	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim- Majority Countries	Total
Essebsi Government	67 (43.79%)	86 (56.20%)	153 (100%)

The collected visits demonstrate that during the period of Nidaa Tounes, government officials made fewer visits to Muslim-majority countries than non-Muslim countries. Only 44% of the total number of official visits during the period were to Muslim countries. The president made more visits to non-Muslim countries, and only 46% of his visits were to predominantly Muslim countries. While Prime Minister Essid traveled the least to the Muslim world compared to other officials during this period, Prime Minister Chahed visited the Muslim countries the most. Fifty-three percent of Chahed's visits were to predominantly Muslim countries. Additionally, the foreign ministers had either an equal or lower number of visits to Muslim-majority countries than non-Muslim countries. Fifty percent of the total number of Baccouche's foreign visits were to predominantly Muslim countries, and only 42% of Jhinaoui's visits were to the Muslim world.

As in previous periods, government officials of this period demonstrated two trends: a tendency toward the Arab world among their visits to the Muslim world and a tendency toward Europe among their visits to the non-Muslim world. Thirty-nine percent of the president's visits and 100% of Prime Minister Essid's visits to the predominantly Muslim world were to Arab

countries. Similarly, out of their total number of visits to predominantly Muslim countries, 80% of Prime Minister Chahed's visits, and Foreign Minister Jhinaoui's visits were to Arab countries. Eighty-seven percent of Foreign Minister Baccouche's visits to predominantly Muslim countries were to the Arab world.

In addition, the Nidaa Tounes government had more frequent visits to non-Muslim countries, which made up 56% of their total number of official foreign visits. Europe was the highest frequently visited region among the visits to the non-Muslim world, consisting of seventy percent of these visits. Eighty-four percent of President Essebsi's visits and 85% of Prime Minister Essid's visits to the non-Muslim world were to European countries. Similarly, 41% of Prime Minister Chahed's visits to non-Muslim countries were to Europe. Europe was also the most visited region among the foreign ministers during Essebsi's government. Visits to Europe are 77% of Foreign Minister Baccouche's visits and 52 of Foreign Minister Jhinaoui's visits to the non-Muslim majority World. Therefore, a prioritization of Europe was a trend of the government during Nidaa Tounes' control.

Unlike previous governments, Tunisia during the government of Nidaa Tounes tilted a little more toward Europe than the MENA region. Thirty-nine percent of the total number of foreign visits by main officials were to Europe, compared to thirty-eight percent to the MENA region. Yet, President Essebsi's government was more interested in the MENA region than Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, North America, and Latin America, which each gained less than ten percent of their foreign visits.

Visits Divided by Regions

Table 21. Tunisian Officials' Foreign Visits from 2014-2018 Divided by Regions

NON-ISLAMIST 2014-2018	Name	MENA	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
President	Beji Caid Essebsi	16	1	16	0	2	0	35 (22.87%)
Prime Minister	Habib Essid and Youssef Chahed	7	1	12	0	1	0	21 (13.72%)
		7	5	5	1	1	0	19 (12.41%)
Foreign Minister	Taïeb Baccouche and Khemaies Jhinaoui	7	0	7	2	0	0	16 (10.45%)
		22	6	21	6	5	2	62 (40.52%)
% Total Visits		59 (38.56%)	13 (8.49%)	61 (39.86%)	9 (5.88%)	9 (5.88%)	2 (1.30%)	153 (100%)

Although most of President Essebsi's government's visits were to non-MENA region countries, President Essebsi had the highest frequency of visits to the MENA region compared to other government officials during his period. His visits to the MENA region contain forty-five percent of his total visits. Interestingly, his visits to the MENA region were equal to his visits to Europe, which made up 45% of his visits, while Africa only formed seventeen percent of his visits. While Prime Minister Essid gave special attention to Europe, his most frequently visited region at 57% of his foreign visits, nonetheless, the MENA region was his second most visited region at 33%. Only 5% of Prime Minister Essid's visits were to Sub-Saharan Africa and North America and none of his visits were to Latin America. However, Prime Minister Chahed displayed a high percentage of visits to the MENA region compared to his visits to other regions. The MENA visits made up 37% of Prime Minister Chahed's visits, whereas only Sub-Saharan

Africa and Europe contained 26% of his total number of visits. Yet only 5% of his visits were to countries located in Asia and North America and zero visits were made to Latin America.

Like the president, Foreign Minister Baccouche maintained an equal number of visits to the MENA region, while Europe was 44% of his total foreign visits, and Asia was only 12% of his visits. Interestingly, Foreign Minister Baccouche did not travel to Sub-Saharan Africa, North America, or Latin America. Foreign Minister Jhinaoui, on the other hand, visited the MENA region countries more frequently than other regions. Thirty-five percent of his visits were to MENA region countries and 34% were to Europe. Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia formed ten percent each of his total number of visits. Eight percent of Foreign Minister Jhinaoui's visits were to North America and only 3% were to Latin America.

The tendency toward North African countries among the Nidaa Tounes's official visits was notable. Visits to Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria, which were at the top of their MENA region visits, formed 52% of visits to the MENA region. Particularly, Algeria gained much attention during the control of Nidaa Tounes. Surprisingly, the president, both prime ministers, and Foreign Minister Baccouche chose Algeria to be the first foreign destination. The prime ministers followed the Tunisian political and diplomatic tradition that the prime ministers assigned their first foreign travel to Algeria ("Alshahid Fi"). Nonetheless, visits to Algeria have increased, especially during 2015, due to both countries' concerns about the events in Libya and attempts to solve the crisis. During the visits, the Libyan crisis and counterterrorism were the focal points of their meetings' discussions. Tunisia and Algeria have been impacted by Libyan instability since they share borders. Thus, they also discussed future security cooperation (Bodahan). During the same year, Tunisia and Algeria also signed ten agreements and

memoranda of understanding related to industry, trade, air transport, training, environment, and health (“Alhabib Alsayd”).

Besides Algeria, Saudi Arabia also garnered much attention during Nidaa Tounes’ government. Saudi Arabia was the most frequently visited Gulf country during the period of President Essebsi. Although the tendency toward North Africa is a remarkable feature of the foreign policy of Nidaa Tounes, President Essebsi tends more toward Gulf countries. Half of his visits to the MENA region were to Gulf countries, with Saudi Arabia at the head of these visits. This improvement of relations was due to Saudi support for President Essebsi, especially against Ennahda due to Saudi Arabia’s dislike of Ennahda due to its moderate Islamist views.

Furthermore, the relationship with the UAE was strained after Ennahda came to office. These tensions also persisted during Nidaa Tounes’s control. The UAE did not want the Islamist Ennahda to control the government in Tunisia. Youssef Cherif, a Tunisian commentator, and a consultant on North African politics, explains the causes of the tension between the UAE and Tunisia after Ennahda came to power. He claims that the UAE was unhappy with the Qatari-Tunisian relationship, which improved since the uprising, and sought to win Tunisia over to its block. The UAE was among the major investors in Tunisia, yet it froze its investment until Tunisia responded to its demands. They also wanted the Tunisian government to side with the UAE regarding the Libyan crisis and support Khalifa Haftar, the Libyan military leader and the UAE’s ally (Cherif).

In 2015, tensions increased when the UAE blocked visas and work permits for Tunisians in UAE. More significantly, when President Essebsi visited the UAE to attend the funeral of Sheikh Rashid bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, son of the Emir of Dubai, he could not

meet with Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. When he tried to again visit the UAE and schedule a visit during the same year, the UAE government postponed his visit. Despite all the pressure the UAE placed on the Tunisian government, Tunisia maintained its good relations with Qatar (Cherif).

In addition, the data illustrated that the Nidaa Tounes prioritized Europe. Unlike the previous Tunisian government, Europe was the top-visited region among Nidaa Tounes' official foreign visits. Particularly, France and Germany were the top-visited European countries. While the high numbers of visits to French were to be expected, interestingly Germany also hosted many visits during this period. The Tunisian-German relationship increased after 2011, especially regarding the financial support that Germany offered to Tunisia. The president's visits to Germany include attending international conferences, such as the Partnership with Africa conference organized by the German Presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20) and participating as a guest of honor in the G7 ("Liqaat Raies"; "Musharakat"; "Madha"). On the other hand, the prime ministers, and the foreign ministers' visits to Germany included discussions on investment, financial aid, security, and immigration, especially in light of the terrorist attacks and flow of illegal immigration coming from North Africa that Germany suffered from. Thus, these meetings worked to address these issues. They also sought to strengthen Tunisian-German cooperation and enhance their strategic partnership ("Alhijrah"; "Wazir Alshoon"; "Fi Ziarah").

Tunisia's Islamist and Non-Islamist Governments' Foreign Policy in Comparison

The data demonstrate that the case of Tunisia supports the expectation of the study. The Islamist party Ennahda displayed the highest frequency of visits to Muslim-majority countries compared to the non-Islamist parties that governed before and after it. During Ennahda's rule,

visits to Muslim countries comprised 57% of the total number of foreign visits. However, only 46% of the Democratic Constitutional Rally's total number of foreign visits and 43% of the Nidaa Tounes party's foreign visits were to predominantly Muslim countries. Thus, Ennahda improved Tunisia's relationship with the Muslim world. More precisely, the Ennahda party also manifested a greater tendency towards the MENA region. Fifty percent of Ennahda's foreign visits were to Muslim countries located in the MENA region. On the other hand, only 36% of Democratic Constitutional Rally's and 38% of Nidaa Tounes' foreign visits were to Muslim countries in the MENA region.

Comparing the visits by each party's head of government reveals interesting findings. The president during the Ennahda government, although not Islamist himself, visited the Muslim world the least compared to the two presidents during non-Islamist control. Only 43% of President Marzouki's foreign visits were to the Muslim world, while that percentage was 85% for President Ben Ali and 46% for President Essebsi. Yet, it is notable that Presidents Ben Ali and Essebsi were exclusively concerned about Muslim countries in the MENA region, while President Marzouki demonstrated greater concern for the larger Muslim world. The data shows that 100% of Ben Ali and Essebsi's visits to the Muslim world were to countries located in the MENA region, whereas 70% of President Marzouki's visits to the Muslim world were to countries located in the MENA region and 30% were to Muslim countries outside the MENA region.

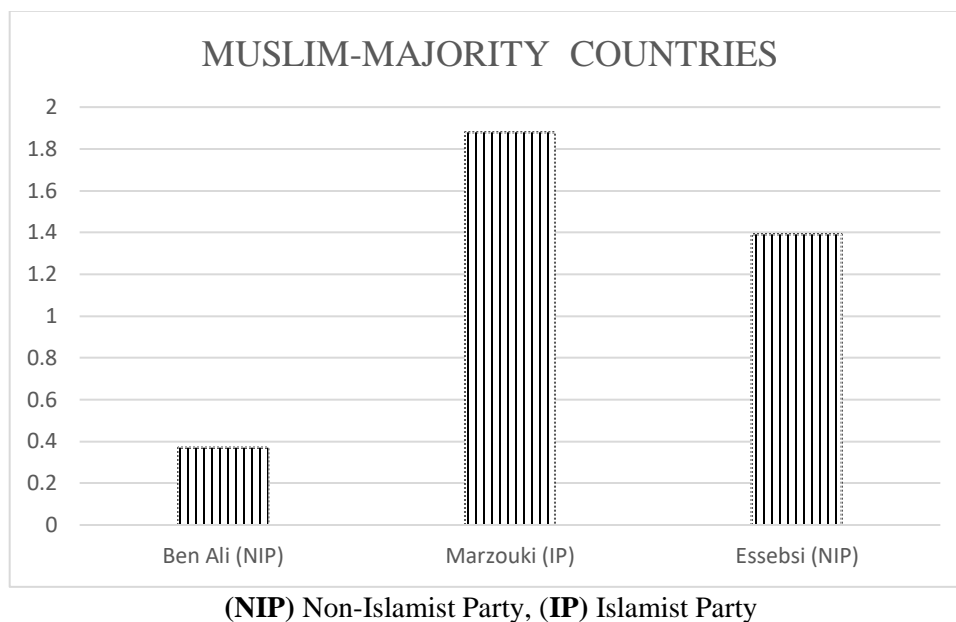
Comparing the prime ministers and foreign ministers during Ennahda control with their counterparts regarding their visits to Muslim countries shows that these officials were more concerned about the Muslim world than officials during non-Islamist parties' control. Prime

ministers Jebali and Laarayedh, and foreign ministers Abdessalem and Jerandi, who governed under the Islamist party made the highest frequency of visits to Muslim-majority countries compared to their counterparts from the non-Islamist Democratic Constitutional Rally and Nidaa Tounes governments. Yet, there were no significant differences in their visits to Muslim countries in the MENA region, the prime ministers and foreign ministers concentrated on Muslim-majority countries in the MENA region under all three governments.

In addition, the Ennahda government also demonstrated the highest monthly number of visits to Muslim-majority countries. Nonetheless, the tendency toward the Arab world is a trend demonstrated by all three governments, regardless of party affiliation. Most of the collected foreign visits to Muslim-majority countries were to Arab-Muslim countries. Visits to Arab countries gained more than 80% of all governments' visits to Muslim-majority countries. Yet, it is notable that Ennahda had the highest number of visits to non-Arab Muslim countries, although the difference is not high. 19% of the Ennahda government's visits were to non-Arab Muslim countries, compared to 11% and 13% by the Democratic Constitutional Rally and Nidaa Tounes governments.

Notably, Turkey gained the majority of Ennahda's visits to the non-Arab Muslim world. However, the data demonstrate that, unlike Ennahda, the Democratic Constitutional Rally did not visit Turkey during the time frame of the study, while the Nidaa Tounes government's visits to the non-Arab Muslim world comprised 44% of their total visits. Historically, Tunisia and Turkey have maintained a good relationship, though it experienced an improvement during Ennahda party control.

Figure 9. Tunisia's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Muslim-Majority Countries from 2006-2018 per month



There were high mutual numbers of visits to Turkey by main political officials during Ennahda control. Ennahda president, prime ministers, and the foreign minister made visits to Turkey, and Ennahda also received the Turkish president and prime minister in Tunisia during their time in power ("Ijraat"; "Ali"; "Wazir alkharijjah fi"). Furthermore, Turkey supported the Tunisian revolution in 2011 and helped it after the revolution, providing Tunisia with financial aid, including a five hundred-million-dollar loan, and technical aid ("New Tunisia").

In 2012, Ennahda prime minister visited Turkey and announced the establishment of a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council with Turkey. It included agreement on bilateral cooperation in many different fields including security, military, political, and trade cooperation. The following year, Tunisia under the Ennahda government, signed 21 agreements, action plans, and sister city protocols during the first Tunisia-Turkey HLSCC meeting that was held in Tunisia in 2013 ("Relations between").

However, the improvement in the Tunisia-Turkey relationship continued even after the Islamist Ennahda stepped down and the non-Islamist Nidaa Tounes government came to power. The mutual visits and the HLSCC meetings continued. The two countries signed four agreements concerning security, economy, and environment. Also, Turkey offered more funds in addition to the previous one that it provided during Ennahda control, which was an approximately three hundred-million-dollar fund. Additionally, the volume of trade has steadily increased since the time of Ennahda and continued increasing during the Nidaa Tounes government, reaching one billion dollars in 2016 (“Tunisia, Turkey sign”).

In addition to Turkey, Iran is also another non-Arab MENA Muslim country that received the same treatment under the Islamist and non-Islamist governments. Tunisia has maintained a stable relationship with Iran and has stayed neutral toward the Saudi-Irani conflict, in which many Arab countries have chosen to side with Saudi Arabia. Although no visit to Iran by high-level Tunisian officials during the time frame of the study was documented, Tunisia maintains a good relationship with Iran. For instance, Tunisia during the time of the Democratic Constitutional Rally supported Iran on its nuclear program. President Ben Ali states that “Iran has the right to peaceful nuclear technology” (Wellman). Moreover, in 2012, during the time of Ennahda control, President Marzouki told an Iranian TV channel that he would visit Iran if he received an invitation from the Iranian leadership. He also met with the Iranian ambassador to Tunisia many times and discussed future possible cooperation. He encouraged cooperation with Iran in different fields, especially in the field of energy and tourism (“Iran mostaidah”).

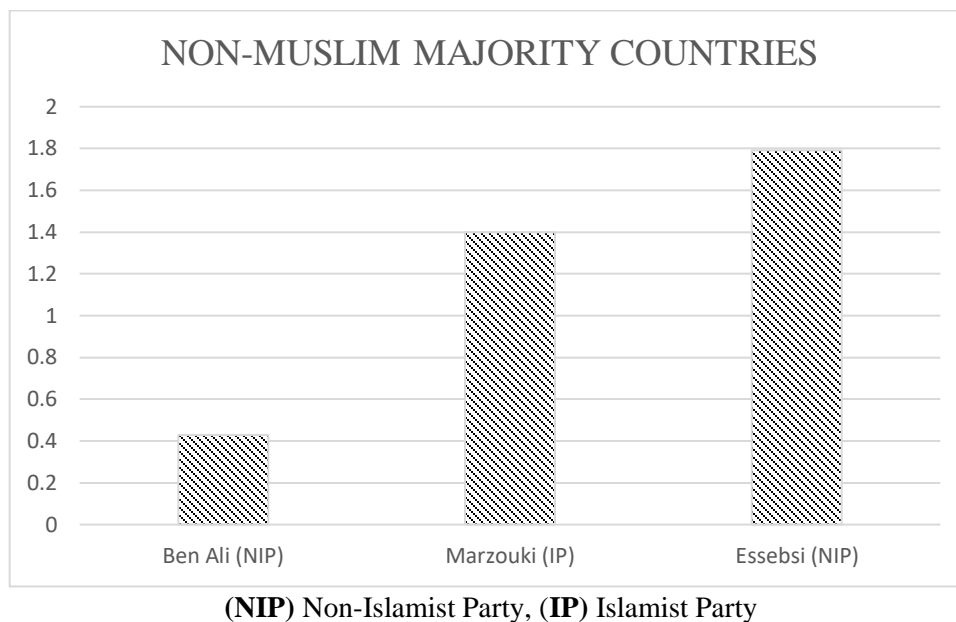
Furthermore, Tunisia also continued this good relationship with Iran during the period of Nidaa Tounes. In 2017, Tunisia accepted the role of mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia at

Iran's request. Iran asked if Tunisia could ask Saudi Arabia to hold secret talks to reach an agreement on their differences. Therefore, Foreign minister Jhinaoui notified his Saudi counterpart about the Iranian desire for mediation (Toumi). Also, in the same year, the Iranian foreign minister was welcomed in Tunisia by President Essebsi. They discussed the possibility of improving mutual relations and cooperation between the two countries in different fields. President Essebsi also congratulated Iranian President Hassan Rouhani upon his reelection ("No Limit"). In addition, Tunisia and Iran also have joint committees for cooperation in different fields, including joint committees on tourism, art, science and technology, and the economy. These committees continued to operate under all three governments, as Tunisian and Iranian officials met in these committees in 2009, 2014, 2015, and 2018 (Wellman; "Alalaqat altonisiah").

In addition, visits to the non-Muslim-majority countries show that Ennahda has the lowest number of visits compared to non-Islamist governments. Forty-two percent of Ennahda's visits were to non-Muslim countries, compared to 53% of visits by the Democratic Constitutional Rally and 56% by Nidaa Tounes.

However, when visits are divided by months in government, the data shows that the Democratic Constitutional Rally government has the lowest number of monthly visits to the non-Muslim world, with no big difference in the numbers of visits by Ennahda and Nidaa Tounes. Nevertheless, the prioritization of Europe among visits to the non-Muslim world is present across all three governments.

Figure 10. Tunisia's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Non-Muslim-Majority Countries from 2006-2018 per month



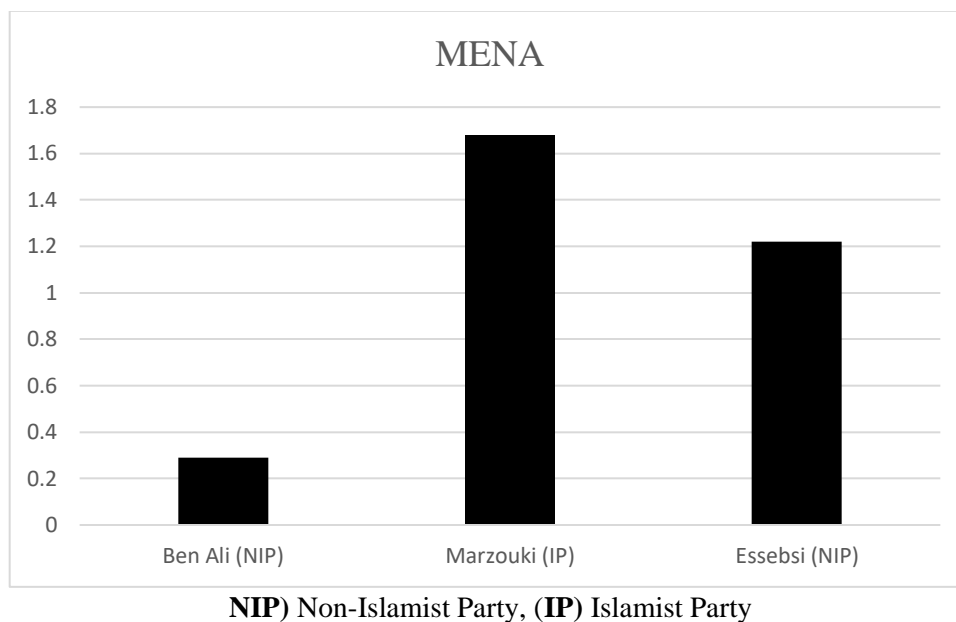
Therefore, by looking at the number of visits, Tunisia did improve its relationship with Muslim majority countries under Ennahda control, compared to the non-Islamist parties that governed before and after Ennahda. Ennahda also improved Tunisia's relationship with non-Arab Muslim countries. Thus, Ennahda, despite sharing government offices with other secular parties, enacted foreign policies that were consistent with Islamist ideology. Mainly, their improvement in relations with the Muslim world was also a reflection of their view of the *Umma*, in which they sought to improve their relationship with the whole Muslim world regardless of language and ethnicity.

Yet, it is still unclear whether this tendency was impacted by their Islamist ideology. Although Ennahda has the highest number of visits to the Muslim world, it has the same trends as the non-Islamist governments, as all prefer the Arab Muslim world. In addition, despite

Ennahda having the highest number of visits to the non-Arab Muslim world, Tunisia still maintained good relations with non-Arab Muslim countries, namely Turkey and Iran, under all three governments. Under all three governments, Tunisia had mutual visits, signed agreements, and welcomed officials from these two non-Arab Muslim countries. Also, the difference in the number of visits by the Islamist and the non-Islamist governments to Turkey and Iran is not high enough to conclude that Ennahda had a closer relationship with the non-Arab Muslim world and that their foreign policy was driven by their Islamist ideology.

Moreover, the data also supports the hypothesis that Islamist governments do improve their relationship with the MENA region more than non-Islamist parties. It shows that the number of Ennahda's visits to the MENA region was higher than that of other governments. Visits to MENA region countries during the Ennahda period constituted 50% of the total number of foreign visits, compared to only 36% by the Democratic Constitutional Rally and 38% by Nidaa Tounes. Even when visits were divided by the government's months in office, as the above chart shows, Ennahda has the highest frequency of monthly visits to the MENA region compared to the Democratic Constitutional Rally and Nidaa Tounes governments.

Figure 11. Tunisia's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to the MENA region countries from 2006-2018 per month



In addition, visits to MENA region countries reveal a distinction between Islamist and non-Islamist governments in Tunisia. The non-Islamist parties focused more on North African countries, whereas the Islamist Ennahda party focused more on Gulf countries. Government officials during the rule of the parties that came before and after Ennahda visited North African countries more frequently than the rest of the region, whereas, during Ennahda's control, the Gulf countries were among their most visited countries. Specifically, Libya was the most visited country during the government of the Democratic Constitutional Rally, having received fifty percent of their visits to the MENA region. Similarly, Algeria was the most visited country in the MENA region by Nidaa Tounes.

The Islamist and non-Islamist governments also differ in their preference for Gulf countries. Even though the Islamist Ennahda government visited Saudi Arabia, their number of visits to Qatar surpass their number of visits to Saudi Arabia and any other MENA region

countries. Nineteen percent of their visits to the MENA region countries were to Qatar, compared to 7% by the Democratic Constitutional Rally and five percent by Nidaa Tounes. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia was the top-visited Gulf country by Nidaa Tounes, constituting 13% of its visits to the MENA region, compared to 11% by the Ennahda government and no documented visits by the Democratic Constitutional Rally.

Even though the difference in the number of visits to Qatar by the Islamist and the non-Islamist governments could be considered high, most of these visits did not reflect a significant improvement in the Tunisian-Qatari relationships. Most of these visits were to attend events held in Qatar that were unrelated to their mutual relations, such as the International Initiative for Stolen Asset Recovery, Al Jazeera International Documentary Film Festival, The International Conference on Jerusalem, and the Doha Forum (Wishkah; Boghlab; Afzaz; "Rais alhukumah altonisiah"). Although these visits show that Ennahda gave special attention to Qatar, they do not demonstrate a shift in Tunisia's foreign policy. However, Qatar became the main financial and political supporter of Ennahda. Qatar and Tunisia signed ten agreements on investment, construction, and other humanitarian services (Cherif). In 2012, Qatar provided Tunisia with a 1 billion loan and opportunities for 20,000 Tunisian graduates. It also invested 3 billion dollars in the fields of tourism, banking, and telecommunication (Jacobs).

Although the Tunisia-Qatar relationship improved during Ennahda's control, Tunisia continued to be on good terms with Qatar even under the non-Islamist government. Since the uprising, Qatar has become and has continued to be the first Arab and the second international investor in Tunisia ("Alaqat tunis"). Also, Tunisia and Qatar established a Tunisia-Qatar Joint Higher Committee in 1994 which has been effective under all three governments. The Joint

Higher Committee's main goal is to improve the countries' relationships in various fields, including economy, commerce, media, and technology, and work to develop them ("Etifaqiat insha"). More importantly, Tunisia during the Nidaa Tounes government decided to be neutral toward the Gulf crises. Even though it became closer to Saudi Arabia due to support from Saudi Arabia, Nidaa Tounes did not side against Qatar (Jacobs).

Likewise, there is no significant difference in the number of visits to Saudi Arabia between the Islamist and non-Islamist governments. Despite being anti-Islamist, Saudi Arabia was the second most visited Gulf country by the Islamist Ennahda government. Also, the data shows that Ennahda, despite only governing for two years, had a higher percentage of visits to Saudi Arabia than that of the Democratic Constitutional Rally and only 2% less than the Nidaa Tounes government. Not only are the numbers of visits to Saudi Arabia by Ennahda and Nidaa Tounes close, but the reasons for these visits are also similar. Most of Ennahda and Nidaa Tounes' visits to Saudi Arabia were to attend Arab League summits, Islamic summits or to prepare for these summits (Al-Daridi; "Mutalabat"; "Aljihinawi"; "Wusul rais").

However, two distinct visits that illustrate an improvement in the Tunisian-Saudi relationship during the Nidaa Tounes government: President Essebsi's visit to Saudi Arabia in 2015 and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Tunisia in 2018. During President Essebsi's visit to Saudi Arabia, they signed agreements on cooperation in defense and agreed on a loan to be provided by the kingdom. Tunisia also agreed to participate in the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC), the Saudi-led Islamic military coalition to combat terrorism (Aljurashi).

Another major event that showed Tunisian interest in Saudi Arabia during President Essebsi's rule was the reception of the Saudi crown prince in Tunisia. This visit came after the killing of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, whose assassination the prince has been accused of. Despite Tunisian popular anger and rejection of his visit, especially among the Tunisian Journalists Syndicate, President Essebsi welcomed the prince ("Tunisian Activists"). During the visit, Prince bin Salman said that he considered President Essebsi like a father, with President Essebsi conveying his honor upon hearing the statement ("Saudi, Tunisia"; "Alsibsi Aan Muhamad"). Yet, protesters surrounded the presidential palace as the Crown Prince was welcomed by the government, which led him to only stay for a few hours. These two visits illustrated the importance that the Nidaa Tounes government gave to its relationship with Saudi Arabia.

Yet, the difference between the Islamist and non-Islamist governments' views on Qatar and Saudi Arabia is understandable. Qatar and Saudi Arabia are regional rivals especially when it comes to supporting Islamism in the region. Qatar was and remains one of the main supporters of Islamism and supported Islamist governments that rose to power after the Arab Spring. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia was threatened by the uprising and the rise of the Islamist government and thus supported anti-Islamist parties and governments.

Therefore, Tunisia has been a battleground for the Gulf states' rivalry. Saudi Arabia was one of the lead Tunisian investors during the Democratic Constitutional Rally government and signed agreements and cooperation during the Nidaa Tounes government. When Ennahda came to power, Qatar become the top Arab investor. As Anna L. Jacobs, a senior Gulf analyst at International Crisis Group, states, "Gulf Arab states have offered investment and support to

varying degrees since 2011, often funneling diplomatic and financial support to specific political parties and actors with which they share strategic interests" (Jacobs). Accordingly, both Saudi Arabia and Qatar provided financial and economic aid to Tunisia and have higher committees that aim to improve their relationship with Tunisia, but the prioritization between these two varies based on the party ruling Tunisia.

Hence, Tunisia's relationship with Qatar and Saudi Arabia was not driven by the ideology of Tunisian political parties, but by the preferences of Saudi Arabia and Qatar themselves. In other words, Islamism and its spread in the region are what drove Qatar and Saudi Arabia to support Islamist or non-Islamist parties in Tunisia, but it was in the parties' interest to maintain a close relationship with their supporter. Accordingly, Ennahda improved Tunisia's relationship with Qatar, while Nidaa Tounes improved Tunisia's relationship with Saudi Arabia.

In addition to Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Tunisia had a similar foreign policy toward Palestine and Israel under the Islamist and non-Islamist governments. All three governments supported Palestinian rights and the liberation of the Palestinian people from Israeli occupation. They also supported the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital ("Alalaqat altonisiah"). In addition, Tunisia welcomed Palestinian officials to Tunisia and sent aid to Palestine under all three governments. For instance, Tunisia sent medical aid to Palestine to help those who were impacted by Israeli aggression during the non-Islamist government control in 2009 and during the Islamist government control in 2012 ("Hawsalat"; "wizarat alsihah"). Additionally, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was welcomed in Tunisia by President Ben Ali in 2007, by President Marzouki in 2013, and by President Essebsi twice in 2015. (Ben Younis; "Ehtifalat"; "Alalaqat altonisiah").

Despite all these similarities in the relationship with Palestine, Ennahda additionally made an official visit to Palestine, welcoming Hamas officials and asking people to demonstrate support for the cause of Palestine. Foreign Minister Abdessalem, alongside a Tunisian delegation, made a solidarity visit to Gaza in 2012 to show Tunisian support for Palestinians during the Israeli attack (“Wazir Alkharijiah Altunisi”). He also participated with the Arab ministers’ delegation to Gaza, which was headed by the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Nabil Elaraby. During his visit to Gaza, Abdessalem stated that what was permissible for Israel before the changes that took place in the Arab world was no longer permissible. He asked the Arab League to act and support the Palestinian cause. He also demanded Israel to end aggression against Gaza and respect international laws and covenants (“Wafd Tunusi”). In addition, Tunisian Prime Minister Jebali invited Ismail Haniyeh, a senior political leader in Hamas, to Tunisia and welcomed him in 2012. During his visit, Haniyeh claimed that Gaza had suffered since Hamas won the election in 2006 from the previous Arab leaders who implemented an economic and political blockade against the strip. He also warned Israel that the situation had changed as Israel had lost its Arab leader’s allies in Egypt and Tunisia (“Haniah: Alrabie”; “Haniah: Israel”).

Moreover, during the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2014, President Marzouki called on people to demonstrate in the streets to express their support for Palestinians and denounce Israeli aggression. The president announced he would support the Palestinian resistance until it gained its demands, including the lifting of the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip. Tunisia also sought a ceasefire and sent humanitarian aid, including doctors and medication to help the injured in Gaza (“Tabayan Bishan”).

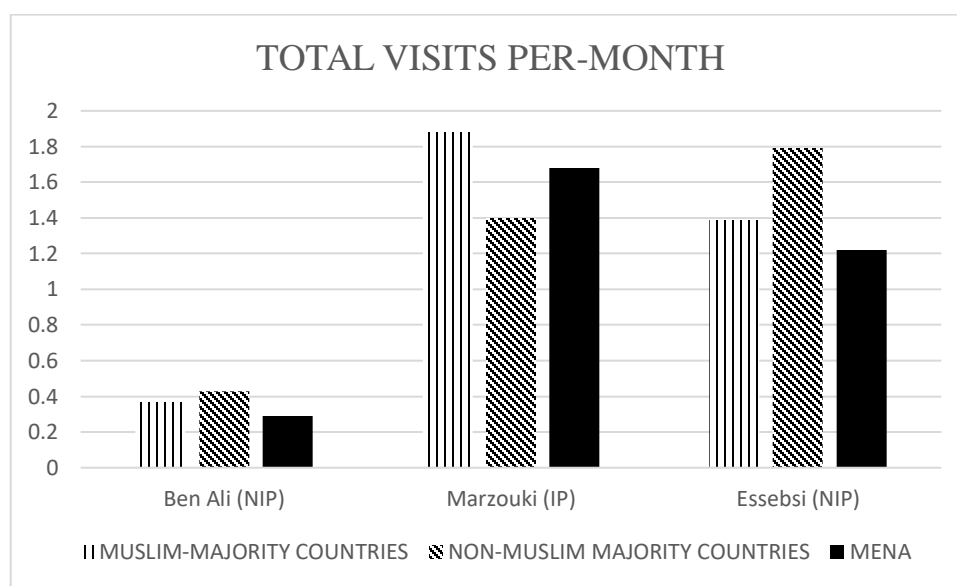
Although Ennahda harshly censured Israel, they rejected adding an article to the Tunisian constitution to criminalize normalization with Israel. Foreign Minister Abdessalem confirmed that Tunisia would not have a relationship with Israel but did not support including such an article in the constitution (“Tunis: La Alaqah”). The push for adding an article to criminalize normalization with Israel continued even during the Nidaa Tounes government in 2015 and 2018. However, the parliament postponed discussing the matter and the article still has not been added to the Tunisian constitution (Okkez).

Moreover, Tunisia has unofficial trade relations with Israel and there has been a trading exchange since 1995, according to the World Trade Organization (Okkez). Surprisingly, the trade exchange between Tunisia and Israel reached its peak during Ennahda’s control. In 2012, Israeli imports to Tunisia reached 15 million dollars, compared to 2.2 million dollars in 2007 during the Democratic Constitutional Rally government and less than 2 million dollars in 2017 during the Nidaa Tounes government. On the other hand, Tunisian exports to Israel were at their lowest compared to the year before and the year after their control. In 2012, Tunisian imports to Israel were less than a million dollars, compared to 2 million dollars in 2010 and 5.5 million dollars in 2015 (Okkez). Although Tunisia under all three governments declined formal relations with Israel and criminalized Israel’s aggression against the Palestinians, Tunisia maintained its trade relations with Israel under all three governments.

Accordingly, Ennahda had the highest number of visits to Palestine, invited both Fatah and Hamas leaders, sent aid, and publicly supported the Palestinian cause, all of which show the Islamist ideological impact on their foreign policy. They supported their brothers, trying to protect a sacred Mosque (Al-Aqsa), and called for justice, all of which are consistent with their

ideology. Nonetheless, Ennahda's foreign policy was not significantly different than that of non-Islamist governments. All Tunisian governments, whether Islamist or non-Islamist, claim to support Palestine and have good relations with the Palestinian Authority, criminalize Israel and send aid to Palestine. Moreover, they all have trade relations with Israel even if unofficial. As a result, the Islamist ideology may play a role in the Tunisia-Palestine relationship as demonstrated by their visit and their relationship with Hamas, yet the Tunisia-Palestine relationship was largely the same under the Islamist and the non-Islamist governments. In other words, Islamist and non-Islamist governments' foreign policy toward Palestine and Israeli from 2006-2018 have been almost consistent. Thus, Islamist ideology had only a limited impact on Ennahda's foreign policy toward Palestine and Israel.

Figure 12. Tunisia's Islamist and Non-Islamist governments' visits to Muslim-Majority Countries, Non-Muslim-Majority Countries, and the MENA region countries from 2006-2018 per month



(NIP) Non-Islamist Party, (IP) Islamist Party

As a result, Tunisia experienced an improvement in its relationships with Muslim-majority countries after the Ennahda party came to power in free and fair elections. Ennahda has

the highest frequency of visits to the Muslim world and the MENA region, compared to the non-Islamist parties that governed before and after their control. Ennahda specifically improved Tunisia's relationships with Turkey and Qatar, which have both supported Islamism in the region. More importantly, Ennahda developed a good relationship with Hamas and was the only government whose foreign minister visited Palestine. Thus, Ennahda, despite governing with secular parties, demonstrated foreign policy trends that are consistent with their Islamist ideology.

However, Ennahda's ideology alone could not explain the tendencies of Ennahda's foreign policy. Other considerations should be kept in mind to understand what drove Ennahda to improve Tunisia's relationship with the Muslim world and especially with the MENA region. First, Ennahda's coming to power as the first democratically elected party in Tunisia threatened some of Tunisia's traditional allies, leading the country to lose some of its main investors, such as the UAE. Therefore, Ennahda turned to countries in the region that supported them and their ideology such as Turkey and Qatar. Therefore, it was in Ennahda's interest to develop its relationship with countries that would help them to improve the Tunisian economy which had suffered after the uprising.

Despite Ennahda having the highest number of visits to the Muslim world and MENA countries, it maintained similar foreign policies as the non-Islamist Democratic Constitutional Rally and Nidaa Tounes. For instance, although it improved the Tunisian relationship with Turkey, Qatar, and Palestine by visiting and receiving these countries and their officials more frequently than the non-Islamist governments, Tunisia's foreign policy toward these countries remained good even under the non-Islamist governments. Ennahda also maintained a good

relationship with Saudi Arabia, which was the top-visited country by the Nidaa Tounes governments, despite Saudi Arabia's support for their rivals. Additionally, the relationship with Iran and Israel during Ennahda control was consistent with the policies of the Democratic Constitutional Rally and the Nidaa Tounes governments.

Hence, it is difficult to conclude whether or not Islamist ideology impacted Ennahda's foreign policy. Had they ruled for more than two years or controlled the government alone, their foreign policy trends would have been easier to assess.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

FJP, PJD, and Ennahda Foreign Policy in Comparison

This section examines the differences between the Islamist parties elected in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, focusing primarily on how Islamist ideology played a role in shaping the foreign policies of the FJP, PJD, and Ennahda regarding countries in the MENA region and the larger Muslim world.

As predicted, while the difference between Islamist and non-Islamist parties' foreign policy was not significantly high, the data suggests that Islamist parties do attempt to improve their relationship with predominantly Muslim countries and the MENA region more than non-Islamists. The case of Egypt and Tunisia illustrate that when the elected Islamist FJP and Ennahda parties came to power, Egypt and Tunisia improved their relations with Muslim-majority countries and showed greater interest in the MENA region. However, the case of Morocco shows an interesting finding. The Islamist PJD demonstrated a declining interest in predominantly Muslim countries and the MENA region compared to their non-Islamist counterparts. Yet, Islamists in Morocco, unlike those in Egypt and Tunisia, rules in a monarchy where the king maintains control over the foreign ministry. Thus, the lack of control of the foreign ministry, also contributed to by the multiple parties within the foreign ministry, limited the PJD from implementing their foreign policy. Therefore, this lack of control over foreign

policy could account for why the case of Morocco was not in line with the research's expectations for Islamist foreign policy.

Ennahda had the highest percentage of visits to Muslim-majority countries, compared to the FJP and the PJD. The FJP demonstrated a higher frequency of visits to predominantly Muslim countries than the PJD, whereas the PJD claimed the smallest number of visits to predominantly Muslim countries compared to Ennahda and the FJP. Visits to Muslim-majority countries constituted 54% of the total number of the FJP and fifty-seven percent of Ennahda's official foreign visits, in contrast to 46% of the PJD's visits.

Table 22. Number of Foreign Visits by Islamist Governments to Muslim-Majority Countries and Non-Muslim Majority Countries

Islamist Parties	Muslim-Majority Countries	Non-Muslim Majority Countries	Total
FJP	28 (54.90%)	23 (45.09%)	51 (100%)
PJD	70 (46.35%)	81 (53.64%)	151 (100%)
Ennahda	47 (57.31%)	35 (42.68%)	82 (100%)

Additionally, visits to the MENA region during the FJP government surpassed those of Ennahda and the PJD. The FJP's visits to the MENA region made up 53% of their total number of foreign visits. Ennahda also had a higher percentage of visits to the MENA region than the PJD. Fifty-one percent of the Ennahda's visits were to the MENA region, whereas only 31% of the PJD's visits were to the MENA region.

Table 23. Official Foreign Visits by Islamist Governments Divided by Regions

Islamist Parties	MENA	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Total
FJP	27	8	8	5	2	1	51 (100%)
PJD	48	40	43	8	8	4	151 (100%)
Ennahda	42	9	25	3	2	1	82 (100%)

While all the Islamist parties shared an inclination toward the Arab world, they differed in their preferred countries in the MENA region. During the FJP's rule, Saudi Arabia was the most visited country, while Qatar was the most visited by Ennahda and Egypt was the most visited by the PJD. Although the FJP and Ennahda both leaned more toward Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia and Qatar belong to different axes of the region. Qatar is the only Gulf country that supports Islamism and the Arab Spring. Thus, Ennahda's visits are in line with expectations. Improvements in the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the FJP were also to be expected, as Saudi Arabia is the main Islamic country in the Gulf region, despite it considering Islamism as its main adversary. Surprisingly, the PJD's tendency to Egypt was not limited to Egypt during the period governed by the Islamist FJP, but also extended to the Sisi government, which is also known for its opposition to Islamists.

In addition to their orientation to the MENA region, the FJP, PJD, and Ennahda show similar trends toward other regions. All three parties have European and Sub-Saharan African countries at the top of their visits. Similarly, the Islamist parties were not highly interested in Asia, North America, and Latin America, as each region gained less than ten percent of their total number of foreign visits. Hence, these tendencies are consistent with their Islamist ideology that gives special attention to relationships with Muslims and neighbors.

The foreign policy of the FJP seems to be impacted by Islamism. The result of the FJP's foreign policy was expected due to its control of the government with a conservative Salafist party. Yet, it is surprising to find that Ennahda was able to Islamize its foreign policy more than the FJP did despite sharing government with secular parties. Although Ennahda did not win the majority of parliament, like the FJP, and was forced to form a coalition government with the secularists and loyalists of the previous regime, like the PJD, it was still able to improve its relations with Muslim-majority countries much more than the FJP and the PJD. In contrast, the foreign policy of the PJD was the least impacted by Islamism, even though Morocco is a conservative country ruled by a king who is referred to as the Commander of the Believers. Similar to non-Islamist parties in Morocco, the PJD visited Muslim-majority and MENA countries the least compared to the Islamist parties in Egypt and Tunisia.

It is extremely important to understand that these countries' national contexts played a role in the outcomes of the study. The fact that the FJP ruled for only one year gives us a mere glance into their foreign policy. These findings may have diverged in interesting ways if the FJP had a chance to govern for longer. Moreover, the PJD's national constraints impacted their ability to freely implement their foreign policy. The king's power, the multi-party system, and the shared system of the foreign ministry all limited the PJD's control over foreign policy. Similarly, Ennahda's short rule and its sharing of government with secularists and regime-loyalists impacted their foreign policy as well.

More importantly, the fact that all these Islamist parties came to power right after the uprisings also impacted their foreign policy. Countries that go through such political and economic instability suffer domestically as well as internationally. Therefore, instead of trying to

implement their ideology, after the Arab uprisings, Islamist parties needed national and international support that would help them to survive. Accordingly, Islamist parties did not prefer to visit countries solely based on religion or ideology, but also those countries that could provide political and economic support. Therefore, in some cases, Islamists improve their relationship with their adversary and non-Muslim countries. Hence, all these factors had more of an impact on Islamist parties' foreign policies than their Islamist ideology. Thus, national contexts contribute more to Islamist parties' foreign policies than their ideology does.

The coming of Islamist political parties to power through free and fair elections in the Arab MENA region was an unexpected event that shook the world. After decades of being excluded, imprisoned, or exiled, Islamists suddenly became the ruling parties of their countries. While many studies focus on their national politics and behavior, few studies have examined their foreign policy.

Thus, this dissertation aims to examine the foreign policy of elected Islamist parties while in power and compare their foreign policy with non-Islamist parties from their respective countries. The study concludes that Islamist parties and non-Islamist parties do not have very distinct foreign policies. The difference in foreign policy between the Islamist and the non-Islamist parties was not high enough to be considered a major shift in foreign policy. Likewise, the results also show that Islamist ideology had a limited impact on the Islamist governments' foreign policy. The ideological impact of Islamism on Islamist foreign policy was not present in all their foreign policy trends. Accordingly, for elected Islamist parties to implement their foreign policy while in power, they have to perform in a free democratic system in a stable

country. The study concludes that it is not Islamist ideology that primarily contributes to shaping Islamist foreign policy, but instead the national context.

The study differentiates between Muslim/non-Islamist parties and Islamist political parties. It also studies the differences between Islamist groups and parties. It argues that Islamist political parties use the same Islamic references. Yet, they vary in the degree of religious integration into politics. Accordingly, the study hypothesizes that Islamist parties, more than non-Islamist parties, will improve their relationship with Muslim-majority countries and MENA region countries while in power.

The results indicate that the FJP in Egypt and Ennahda in Tunisia had different foreign policies than their non-Islamist counterparts when they governed in a democratic system. Even though the FJP ruled with another Islamist party, while Ennahda ruled with secular parties, both parties were able, to some degree, to implement foreign policies that were consistent with their Islamist ideology. When the FJP and Ennahda came to power, Egypt and Tunisia maintained closer relations, compared to non-Islamist parties, with the predominantly Muslim world. They also focused more on countries located in the MENA region. Additionally, the FJP and Ennahda periods also showed tendencies toward countries and groups that supported Islamism such as Qatar, Iran, and Hamas.

On the other hand, the PJD in Morocco, although governed in a conservative country, could not implement their foreign policy as it remained out of their control. The PJD's foreign policy was consistent with the king's foreign policy. The PJD performs in a kingdom where the king controls the foreign ministry, and foreign policy remains in the hands of the palace regardless of who wins elections or controls the government.

Further findings show that the national context affects the foreign policy of Islamist parties. The freer the government system controlled by Islamist parties, the more likely it is they will be able to implement their Islamist foreign policies. The findings show that Ennahda had the highest percentage of visits to the Muslim-majority world, compared to the FJP and the PJD. It also demonstrated that the FJP had the highest percentage of visits to the MENA region, compared to Ennahda and the PJD. More importantly, the results show that the PJD had the lowest percentage of visits to Muslim-majority countries and the MENA region not only compared to the FJP and Ennahda but also compared to their non-Islamist counterparts.

The national context also impacts the degree to which the foreign policy of Islamist parties differs from non-Islamist parties' foreign policy. The Islamist parties' foreign policy trends were not significantly different than the foreign policy of non-Islamist parties in quantity, nor quality. There was not a wide variation in the percentages of visits by Islamist and non-Islamist parties to Muslim-majority countries and the MENA region. In most cases, their visits were also made for similar purposes and agreements. Although Egypt and Tunisia improved their relationship with the Muslim world, mainly with the MENA region, their foreign policy did not experience a significant shift, which was a result of their domestic context.

Limitations

This study has two limitations: the issue of generalization and the difficulty of data collection. The study focuses on three countries that are located in the same region and share the same culture and language. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the findings of this study to other Islamist parties around the world, such as those in Turkey, Malaysia, and Pakistan. The findings could be limited to these parties or impacted by some factors related to, for example,

their region, culture, or language. Also, the rise of Islamist parties to power is recent and most did not govern for very long. Had they governed for longer, there would have been further findings on their foreign policy. Consequently, more studies on Islamist parties' foreign policy are required to be able to generalize the findings to all Islamist parties.

Moreover, the study focuses on three countries that were or have been controlled by authoritarian regimes that control everything, including the government's official websites and media. As a result, it was difficult to find extensive information on some of the government websites. For instance, the Egyptian official government website deleted all the information from the year of President Morsi's government, including official visits. Also, the Tunisian Foreign Ministry website was hijacked by protesters after the uprisings in 2010. Likewise, the official Moroccan government websites mainly focus on the king's activity, offering less information about other government officials. Additionally, the official government websites also have limited archives, which mostly only offer recent data and lack details on the visits of the political officials and the agreements they signed. Thus, these factors make data collection difficult. Hence, the study relies on national and international news websites to collect more extensive data.

Contribution

There are two main contributions of this study to the field of Islamism, the MENA region, political parties, and foreign policy. First of all, the study provides an extensive analysis of the concept of Islamism. The term Islamism/Islamist has been used to explain different ideologies and groups in the literature, which leads to unreliable conclusions. Thus, this study

offers an extensive analysis of Islamism, differentiates between Islamist groups and parties, and explains the difference between Muslim and Islamist parties.

It traces the term Islamism since it was first used and how it has developed over time. It also shows that Islamist groups/parties are not one monolithic entity, but differ in many aspects, including participation in politics and their views on democracy and the implementation of Sharia. The study also illustrates the distinction between Islamists and non-Islamist Muslims. Being Muslim does not mean being Islamist. While all Muslims believe in the *Sharia*, not all involve it in politics, while Islamists believe that *Sharia* and politics should not be separated. Accordingly, due to the misuse of Islamism and Islamist in the literature, this study relies on original resources to clarify the meaning of Islamism and Islamist.

The second and main contribution of the study is that it provides significant empirical observations on the impact of Islamist parties in the Middle East on their countries' foreign policy, namely the Islamist parties that assumed power in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. This is an understudied topic in Comparative Politics, International Relations, Foreign Policy Analysis, and especially foreign policy and international relations in Middle Eastern studies. The study also contributes to a growing global research agenda on the impact on foreign policy by religiously based political parties in all regions of the world.

The study does not only compare Islamist parties but also compares their policies with non-Islamist parties in their countries. The study uses first-hand data to provide an in-depth study of Islamist and non-Islamist parties' foreign policy. It also covers twelve years for three countries and three different governments for each country. Accordingly, this study fills the gap

in the literature by presenting a comprehensive empirical study on the foreign policy of Islamist political parties in the MENA region.

Recommendations

With the increasing number of Islamist political parties coming to power, more studies are important to understand their international relations and foreign policy. Their rise to power not only affects their respective countries, but also other countries around the world. It is important to understand their actual tendencies in dealing with international relations. Such studies would help policymakers to know how to deal with countries ruled by Islamist parties, ultimately contributing to bringing more peace to the world.

In addition, more comparative studies on the foreign policy of Islamist political parties are needed to be able to generalize results on more Islamist parties. Due to the study's small sample, we could not apply the findings to other Islamist parties outside the Arab MENA region countries. After the Arab Spring, the popularity of Islamist parties increased, and they won elections in different countries. Furthermore, an Islamist party has governed Turkey since 2002, and Malaysia has also been intermittently governed by Islamist parties for some time. Other countries such as Yemen, Libya, and Pakistan have prominent Islamist parties that could come to power in the future. Therefore, understanding the foreign policy tendencies of Islamist parties and how they deal in the international realm is a topic that deserves study, and future studies on Islamist political parties' foreign policy are needed.

Potential future projects could focus on whether Islamist parties are unique, or if they behave like religiously-based parties of other faith traditions. It will be interesting to compare, for example, the foreign policy of Islamist political parties to those of Christian political parties

in Europe and Jewish political parties in Israel, and whether they implement religiously-influenced policies. Comparing these parties will provide a better understanding of parties with religious ideologies and their ability to affect their countries' foreign relations once they are in power.

In conclusion, Islamist and non-Islamist parties have different foreign policies. Islamist parties also are not monolithic regarding their foreign policy. Islamists not only have different national policies as other studies have shown but also have distinct foreign policies that are impacted by their national context. Moreover, Islamist parties do use their ideology when formulating their foreign policy. Yet, the integration of their ideology in their foreign policy is impacted by their national context and political system.

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