

# **Conditional Inclusion**

*Resource Distribution and Islamist Moderation During  
the Arab Uprisings*

By

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Conditional Inclusion: Resource Distribution and Islamist Moderation  
During the Arab Uprisings

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## Declaration

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# Foreword

The Islamist movements played a socio-political role in many Arab and Middle Eastern countries. They provided social services and a resistance ideology, either for the West or local political regimes. They mobilized their supporters in a large social movement that crystallized the Islamic Ummah's relative deprivation and common grievances. In some cases, Islamism was used as a justification ideology to legitimize the ruling regime. Also, it has been used as an ideology to justify the use of radical and jihadist violence. The Islamism involvement in the Arab Spring raised the classic dilemma in a new shape, either to integrate the Islamists in an open political process; however, this integration may undermine democracy and individual rights in the long term, or to exclude the Islamists from the political life in a way that may encourage more Islamists to resort to violence to achieve their goals.

In this study, we examine the concentration levels of cultural, organizational, political, and economic resources within Islamist movements across four cases: Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt. Our goal is to measure the impact of resource concentration as an independent variable on the degree of moderation or radicalization exhibited by these movements.

Our argument posits that when Islamist movements effectively mobilize and concentrate these resources, they tend to radicalize their positions and discourse. Conversely, if these resources are distributed more evenly between Islamist movements and non-Islamist actors, it leads to a more moderate stance in their position and discourse.

## Chapter 1

# Theoretical Foundations: Exploring the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis

### 1.1 Introduction

This book is a comprehensive comparative study that delves into the intricate dynamics of Islamist political movements during the transformative period known as the Arab Spring. It critically examines the validity of Social Movements Theory, Resource Mobilization, and Political Process approaches as analytical tools to explore the “inclusion-moderation hypothesis” of these movements.

The Arab Spring, which began in Tunisia in late 2010, unveiled a wealth of empirical data regarding the interactions between Islamist movements, secular groups, religious minorities, totalitarian and military regimes, and the international community. This book aims to understand these interactions and their impact on the political transformation processes that unfolded during the uprisings.

Focusing on four key case studies—Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt—this book provides a detailed lens through which to examine the causal relationships between the resource concentration of Islamist movements (as an independent variable) and the degree of their moderation or radicalization (as a dependent variable).

In Sudan, the interplay between Islamist movements and secular forces has been particularly complex, influenced by the country’s unique socio-political landscape and history of conflict. In Morocco, the electoral defeat of Islamist parties in 2021 highlights the shifting political tides and the challenges faced by these movements in maintaining influence. Tunisia, formerly seen as the Arab Spring’s beacon of success, exemplifies the delicate balance Islamist movements maintained between ideological and pragmatic politics until President Qais Saied’s authoritarian measures changed the trajectory. Egypt, on the other

hand, offers a stark contrast with its repressive measures against Islamist groups, leading to significant political and social repercussions.

By analyzing these cases, the book sheds light on how resource distribution and external pressures shape the strategies and discourses of Islamist movements. It also explores the broader implications for democratic transitions and political stability in the region. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the conditions under which Islamist movements may adopt moderate stances or revert to radicalism, providing valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in the future of political Islam in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Arab Spring exposed significant discrepancies in the political inclusion of Islamist movements, which played a pivotal role in shaping the trajectories of the uprisings across different countries. These movements experienced varied outcomes: from being outlawed in Egypt to sharing power with secular parties in Tunisia and Morocco. The role of Islamist movements has been diverse and impactful, influencing the political landscape in profound ways.

This book addresses the classic dilemma of integrating Islamists into an open political process. It questions whether such integration might undermine democracy and individual rights in the long term, or whether excluding Islamists from political life might push more of them towards violence to achieve their goals.

We assess the political and social interactions of Islamist groups with state institutions, civil society organizations, and non-Islamist actors during the Arab Spring. We also explore the impacts of these interactions on the level of radicalization among Islamists and their influence on the democratization process during the uprisings.

In many instances, Islamist groups leveraged their social influence and electoral gains to alter the power distribution within society. The responses of the old regimes, including military elites, the deep state in various Arab countries, and secular elites, to the Islamist challenge



varied significantly. This chain of actions and reactions has been instrumental in shaping the trajectory of the Arab uprisings.

By examining these dynamics, this book provides a comprehensive analysis of the complex interplay between Islamist movements and other political forces during the Arab Spring. It offers insights into the conditions under which Islamist movements may adopt moderate stances or revert to radicalism, and the broader implications for democratic transitions and political stability in the region.

This book aims to fill a significant gap in the literature by establishing comparative case studies of Islamist movements in Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt. It tests the causal relationships between the concentration levels of cultural, organizational, political, and economic resources and the degree of moderation or radicalization within these movements.

Since 2011, Islamists have seized the uprisings as an opportunity to disseminate their messages among revolutionary movements. They have been key actors in creating the conditions that led to widespread protests among the Arab masses. This study focuses on the level of moderation among Islamists operating within competitive but not fully established democratic systems in the four case countries.

In Sudan, the complex socio-political landscape has influenced the strategies and outcomes of Islamist movements. In Morocco, the political inclusion of Islamists has led to unique power-sharing arrangements with secular parties. Tunisia, initially a success story of the Arab Spring, has seen Islamist movements navigate a delicate balance between ideological commitments and pragmatic political participation. Egypt, with its repressive measures against Islamists, presents a stark contrast, highlighting the challenges and setbacks faced by these movements.

By analyzing these cases, the book sheds light on how resource distribution and external pressures shape the strategies and discourses of Islamist movements. It explores the broader implications for democratic transitions and political stability in the region, providing valuable

insights for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in the future of political Islam in the Middle East and North Africa.

In conclusion, this study offers a comprehensive examination of the role and impact of Islamist movements during the Arab Spring. It provides valuable insights for scholars, students, and anyone interested in understanding the complex dynamics of political Islam in the contemporary Middle East and North Africa.

The chapters in this book will be arranged as follows:

1. **Chapter One: Theoretical Foundations** This chapter will outline the main argument of the thesis, providing a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework, aims, methodology, definitions, and key concepts. It sets the stage for the detailed analysis that follows.
2. **Chapter Two: The Historical Development of Islamism** This chapter will delve into the historical evolution of Islamist movements, examining the democracy/Islamism debate. It will also explore the historical dispute between Islamic Modernism and Salafism, providing a nuanced understanding of the ideological foundations and transformations within Islamist thought.
3. **Chapter Three: Sudan – The Ruling Islamism; Inclusion without Moderation** This chapter will discuss how the ruling regime in Sudan has adopted Islamist rhetoric and the impact of this adoption on democracy and civil rights in the country. It will explore the assumption that the Islamization of the Sudanese regime has influenced the level of radicalization, providing an in-depth analysis of this dynamic.
4. **Chapter Four: Morocco – Post-Islamism as a Reaction to Resource Fragmentation** In a more open political atmosphere, this chapter will focus on the historical development of Islamist movements in Morocco and the monarchy's reaction to these movements. It will explain the 'selective inclusion' tactics adopted by King Mohammed VI and his regime, analyzing their

impact on the level of radicalization and the broader implications for democracy.

5. **Chapter Five: Tunisia – Moderation Due to Division** This chapter will assess the balanced distribution of power among Islamist and non-Islamist political forces in Tunisia and its impact on the democratization process. It will explore whether the compromises made by Islamists were tactical or ideological. Additionally, it will examine if the separation between political activities and preaching helped secularize Islamist movements, turning them into more policy-oriented entities, or if this separation was merely superficial.
6. **Chapter Six: Egypt – The Trap of Superiority** This chapter will highlight the literature of Egyptian Islamists and their tactics for spreading their message. It will show how the perceived cultural and political superiority of Islamists radicalized their choices and positions, ultimately undermining the democratic transition.
7. **Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Main Findings** The final chapter will summarize the main findings of the book, drawing together the insights from the previous chapters. It will provide a comprehensive conclusion, highlighting the implications of the study for understanding the future of Islamist movements and their role in the political landscapes of the Middle East and North Africa.

## 1.2 Literature Review

The existing literature has attempted to answer numerous questions, such as: What constitutes Islamist moderation? What factors drive Islamists to adopt either ideological moderation or radicalism? What is the causal relationship between state repression and Islamist radicalization? How does integrating Islamists into the political process affect gradual democratization? Is there a relationship between Islamist moderation and democratic transition in the MENA region?

However, this book argues that the literature still lacks coherent theoretical hypotheses to explain why some Islamist movements, in specific contexts, choose ideological moderation. This moderation involves accepting political competition, making concessions with secular groups, embracing the peaceful transition of power, and abandoning the strict application of sharia and the pursuit of a transnational caliphate. Conversely, in other contexts, Islamist movements opt for ideological extremism, excluding non-Islamist rivals, adhering strictly to sharia, and seeking a caliphate.

The book posits that the literature has not adequately analyzed the relationship between the actual resources of Islamist movements and their ability to mobilize cultural, organizational, political, and economic capacities, and how these factors influence their tendencies towards moderation or radicalization. By analyzing the resource concentration levels of social movements, we can gain a clearer understanding of the choices Islamists make between moderation and radicalization.

Therefore, this book aims to bridge the gap in the literature by highlighting the causal relationships between the resource concentration levels of Islamist movements and their tendencies towards moderation or radicalization. It employs Comparative Historical Analysis (CHA) and social movement theories, particularly Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) and Political Process Theory (PPT), to provide a robust theoretical framework. This framework seeks to explain the factors that drive Islamist movements to moderate under certain interactions or radicalize under others.

### **1.2.1 Responding to the Question of Moderation**

Responding to the question of what moderation is, part of the literature confirms that moderation is a movement toward greater tolerance and acceptance of diversity. Schwedler defines moderation as a “movement from a relatively closed and rigid worldview to more open and tolerant of alternative perspectives” (Schwedler 2011, 359). Clark underlines the acceptance of democratic values, as she defines moderation as a “greater

acceptance and understanding of democracy, political liberties, and the rights of women and minorities” (Clark 2006, 541). Some moderation definitions focus on the fact that moderation is a process of moving from the periphery, i.e., ideas that do not enjoy broad popular support, to the center or mainstream, i.e., ideas that enjoy ample societal support. Here, moderation becomes a process linked to adopting mainstream values in society. These definitions argue, through what is known as the inclusion/moderation process, that the electoral process will force the radical parties to move toward the center to broaden their voter base (Tepe 2019).

Musil argues that there are two perceptions of moderation definition. The first perception defines moderation as accepting “pluralist ideas.” The second trend defines moderation as “a move toward the center” or society’s mainstream (Musil 2021, 4-5). Some scholars focus on moderation as a mix between these two perceptions: “the concept of ‘moderation’ broadly speaking refers to a trajectory in which parties renounce the idea of violence and accept the notion of political participation in mainstream politics” (Kraetzschmar, Ed. 2018, 139).

I argue that the moderation process does not necessarily mean a transition to the mainstream. The transition process in Arab countries has shown that Islamists’ superiority as a social movement brings their political and cultural discourse closer to the mainstream than their secular opponents, such as in Egypt and Sudan, but this has led to political instability, the overthrow of the political process, and the failure to achieve a democratic transition. Therefore, it can be said that the moderation meant in this thesis is the ability of Islamists to adopt a discourse and practices that preserve the stability of the competitive political process, accept the democratic competition rules, and accept political diversity. The moderation process also preserves the rights of political, ethnic, and religious minorities in a way that does not push these minorities to ally against Islamists and form broad minority alliances that undermine democratic transitions.

The study identifies several key indicators to determine the extent of an Islamist movement’s moderation or radicalization:

### **1. Legislative Commitment to Secular Laws vs. Adherence to Sharia:**

This measures the extent to which the Islamist movement is committed to secularizing the legislative process, meaning the acceptance of man-made laws, versus the degree of adherence to imposing Sharia law as a divine, immutable law. The movement's willingness to allow legislation to be drafted, amended, and enacted solely by elected secular legislatures is a key indicator of moderation. This can be assessed by observing the compromises made by the movement's representatives in parliament, constituent assemblies, or other legislative bodies regarding religious laws or the Sharia system.

### **2. The Role of Religious Bodies in Monitoring the Legislative and Political Process:**

This measures the extent to which Islamists accept a political process without the support of religious institutions, in contrast to their efforts to establish or utilize existing religious institutions to monitor laws and support Islamic political discourse. The more Islamists accept a political process free from the interference of religious institutions, the more inclined they are to moderation. Conversely, the more they seek to integrate religious institutions into the legislative process or to support their political discourse, the closer they are to radicalism.

### **3. Nature of Alliances:**

This indicator looks at the movement's ability to form alliances with secular and non-Islamist actors, which suggests an acceptance of diversity and moderation. Conversely, alliances with only Islamist actors and religious institutions indicate a tendency towards radicalization.

### **4. Commitment to Peaceful Power Transition:**

This examines the movement's dedication to the peaceful transi-

tion of power. A commitment to inclusive political competition and fair electoral laws is a sign of moderation, while efforts to exclude political rivals or manipulate electoral processes indicate radicalization.

5. **Separation of Missionary and Political Activities:** This measures the degree of separation between the movement's missionary (*Da'wa*) activities and its political operations. A clear distinction between religious preaching and political activity is an indicator of moderation. In contrast, an overlap between socio-religious movements and political parties suggests radicalization.
6. **Policy vs. Identity-Based Campaigns:** This indicator assesses whether the movement's political and electoral campaigns are based on policy-oriented programs or identity-based slogans. A focus on policy-oriented programs indicates moderation, while reliance on identity-based slogans points to radicalization.
7. **Use of Tactics:** This indicator examines whether the movement employs peaceful tactics to achieve its goals or resorts to violent methods. It also considers the movement's alliances with violent organizations or its public support for such groups. A commitment to peaceful tactics is a sign of moderation, while acceptance of violence indicates radicalization.

By analyzing these indicators, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors that drive Islamist movements towards either moderation or radicalization. This framework helps to clarify the conditions under which Islamist movements may adopt more moderate stances or revert to radical ideologies.

### 1.2.2 Understanding Islamist Moderation/Radicalization Motives

Another part of the literature explores why the Islamist movements are motivated to moderate or radicalize. Therefore, scholars explore the causal relations between moderation/radicalization and democrati-

zation/authoritarianism. The links between authoritarianism and radicalization were a kind of chicken or egg causality dilemma. Some Arab regimes justify the lack of human rights and the harsh security measures as a reaction to radical Islamists. Gerard Alexander's argument supported the same approach. According to this argument, authoritarianism is not a sufficient reason to explain the Middle East's radicalization phenomenon. "Totalitarian regimes do not seem to generate popular radicalism over the long term. Marxist-Leninist states and, ironically, Ba'athi rule in Iraq, may leave citizens ideologically exhausted and cynical rather than motivated and ripe for recruitment" (Alexander 2004, 81).

However, many scholars underlined Middle Eastern authoritarianism as one of many reasons that laid the ground for the radical Jihadi groups. One of the significant arguments clarified that the radicalization was a reaction to Arab authoritarianism. The political repression and socioeconomic injustice have pushed extremist groups to resort to radical means, including violent Jihad (Niglia et al. 2017, 22). According to this approach, the Arab authoritarian, repressive regimes breed the seeds for radicalization and anti-western sentiments in MENA, and consequently, it leaves many young people vulnerable to the recruitment of radical groups. This argument was developed by many other scholars, for example, (Fukuyama and McFaul 2008), (Roy 2005) (Dalcoura 2002), and (Storm 2009).

This argument has been developed among political Islam studies to create what is known as "the inclusion/moderation argument," which argues that inclusion in the democratic process will result in Islamists' moderation. So, political inclusion will force the Islamists to mitigate their rhetoric, accept compromises, and cooperate with other political forces (Schwedler 2007), (Esposito 1997), (Hafez 2003). According to this argument, the democratization process can also moderate Islamists' ideological level, not only the tactical instrumental level (Wickham 2004). According to Mandeville, the open political system will allow the Islamists to adopt a more pluralistic approach (Mandaville 2007, 144).

Some other scholars argued that the Islamists' inclusion into the polit-



ical system might undermine the democratic process, as the elections will be an instrumental tool for the Islamists to destroy democracy from within and establish an authoritarian Islamic state (Hadar 1993). In the same line of argument, Cavatorta & Merone argue that the exclusion and state repression caused the moderation of the Tunisian Islamists (Cavatorta & Merone 2013). Some have also argued that moderation can occur due to a combination of state repression and inclusion in the political process (Larkin & Nasasra 2021).

Scholars argue that incorporating Islamists into the political process does not necessarily lead to their moderation, nor does it inevitably result in democratization. On the contrary, in some cases, integrating Islamists into the official political process or tolerating their cultural discourse can lead to increased authoritarian tendencies or the predominance of illiberal social values, which can negatively impact the rights of minorities and other political actors. (Wegner & Pellicer 2009). (Storm 2020).

### **1.2.3 Islamist Moderation and Democratic Transition Question**

The studies of democratic transitions in the 1970s and 1980s have focused on the transformation process as successive stages or what is known as a “dynamic model.” In this model, the democratic transition proceeds in stages or preconditions for moving from one stage to another (Rustow 1970). The stages or the path to democracy have been emphasized in many transitology studies (Diamond et al.1989; Collier 1999; Diamond 1999; Eikert & Kubik 1999; Esposito & Voll 1996; Higley & Burton 1989; Linz & Stepan 1996; Mainwaring et al.1993; Schmitter & Karl 1994; Snyder 1998).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, a significant shift has occurred in the literature on democratic transition. The transition paradigm in which the political regimes transform from authoritarianism to democracy in specific phases has lost momentum. Scholars argue that the democratization process has revealed significant variations from one experience to another, making it difficult to make generalizations about a specific path to democratization (Geddes 1999; Teorell 2010).

The focus has shifted to studying what is known as the “gray zone” countries. A distinction was made between democratization as a linear process, on the one hand, and democracy promotion programs in non-democratic regimes that help develop political actors toward accepting democratic values and moderation, on the other hand (Cammack 1997; Gendzier 1985; Tilly 2001). “Here, we use the term transition not to imply that countries undergoing political change tend to follow a set, linear pattern but rather to indicate our concern for the democratization process—the ways it can be influenced and the possibilities of how it can unfold.” (Miller et al. 2012, 16).

This shift has made a significant impact on Middle East politics scholars as they paid more attention to the incentives and the opportunities created by the regimes in this region to moderate the political actors and make changes in the political environment (Crystal 1994; Esposito 1997; Ghadbian 1997; Niblock & Murphy 1993; Quandt 1998; Salamé 1994; Bellin, 2003). In this context, Schwedler (2007, 6) argues that “even limited openings may produce a considerable dynamic change in the public political space.” While the democratic transition literature was divided in determining the dynamics and method of the transition, literature appeared in Middle East politics focusing on the non-linear transition or the long transition that achieves changes in a democratic culture but does not require a rapid transition toward democracy. Lust explores the relationship between authoritarian elections and democratization, arguing that authoritarian elections in MENA create a “competitive clientelism” that fosters a slow democratization process (Lust 2009).

Literature has emerged examining the hypothesis of integration and moderation in a non-democratic environment. Various scholars have discussed the integration moderation hypothesis in non-democratic regimes in the Middle East to study the impact of political incentives and opportunities created by the governments in the Middle East (even in a non-democratic political environment) and the impact of integrating Islamists into a state-controlled competitive political process.

The inclusion of the Islamists and the level of their moderation have

been tested in several undemocratic cases in Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Tunisia, and many other cases in the Middle East (Freer 2018; Monroe 2012; Pahwa 2017; Ranko 2014; Schwedler 2007b; Schwedler 2011; Wegner & Pellicer 2009; Kaya, 2019). Part of the literature tended to study the impact of Islamist parties on democratization after the Arab Spring uprisings. Gumuscu argues that the Islamist parties' view of democracy is not homogeneous. Despite the centrality of elections to Islamist movements, Islamists differ about what democracy means, affecting the democratic transition in general (Gumuscu 2023).

#### **1.2.4 Social Movements: Theoretical Perspectives**

The social movements and the New Social Movement theories (NSMs) may give a useful theoretical framework to analyze and understand the Islamist movement's role during and before the uprisings. The Islamist movements in the Arab world established solidified networks that provide their members with a shared identity, or what is known as a system of beliefs that fosters solidarity and awareness. The shared beliefs and identity help construct a collective revisionist vision and identity different from the status quo values and vision (Mazzoleni et al. 2015, 1497).

Based on the constructivist approach, the theoretical concept of the collective identity and its role in cementing the social movement is an explanatory concept explaining how the Islamist identity was employed to mobilize the protesters against the ruling authoritarian regimes. Alberto Melucci stressed that the collective identity is created by a collective action that strengthens the sense of belonging to a particular group (Melucci 1995). The Islamic values of equality and justice were employed to provoke the relative deprivation sentiments among more segments of Arab societies, especially the youths. The 'relative deprivation' concept emphasizes that the perceived feeling of deprivation is subjective. It could be motivated by religious groups (Gurr 1970).

Also, the symbolic interactionism literature has contributed to developing the theoretical concept of collective behavior. The collective behav-

ior concept also discussed the symbols, communication networks, emotions, and social meanings created in an extended interaction between the Islamist movements and many other social segments and sow the seeds of revolution in this region.

The conceptual perspective of the RMT (McCarthy and Zald, 1977) will help analyze the Islamist movement's ability to mobilize resources and actors to oppose the regimes and how the counterrevolutions responded to the Islamist mobilization. Speaking about the RMT, Jenkins argues that:

"These new perspectives emphasized the continuities between movement and institutionalized actions, the rationality of movement actors, the strategic problems confronted by movements, and the role of movements as agencies for social change. In specific, these analysts argued that: (a) movement actions are rational, adaptive responses to the costs and rewards of different lines of action; (b) the basic goals of movements are defined by conflicts of interest built into institutionalized power relations; (c) the grievances generated by such conflicts are sufficiently ubiquitous that the formation and mobilization of movements depend on changes in resources, group organization, and opportunities for collective action; (d) centralized, formally structured movement organizations are more typical of modern social movements and more effective at mobilizing resources and mounting sustained challenges than decentralized, informal movement structures; and (e) the success of movements is largely determined by strategic factors and the political processes in which they become enmeshed." (Jenkins 1983, 528).

In the 1960s, theories of the study of social movements began to change, especially after the emergence of movements in Europe and the United States, calling for social change and challenging the status quo. In the meantime, theories began to develop, discussing the social movement as an institutional movement and not just a passing crowd of angry people. In the meanwhile, a debate between the traditional theories,

especially the theory of collective behavior, on the one hand, and the new theories, such as the RMT and the PPT, also known as “the Political Opportunity theory’ on the other hand.

The dispute revolved around the definition of the social movement itself. The traditional approaches see the social movement as a group of collective actions trying to create or resist social change. They may have a minimum level of organization but remain mostly non-institutional (Wilkinson 1971, 27); (Turner & Killian 1972, 246). The traditional approach sees social movements as the development of collective behavior. It includes movements for personal change (such as religious sects, sects, and communes) and those focused on institutional changes (such as legal reforms and political power).

In contrast, RMT theorists of social movements argue that the social movement has institutional capabilities and goals for institutional change in the social structure or the process of resource distributions (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1218) or organizing social segments against institutional elites (Gamson 1975, 16 -18), or to represent the interests of groups on the fringes of the political system (Jenkins & Perrow 1977); (Tilly 1978, 349) (Tilly, 1979).

In her study of the Islamist movement in Turkey, Eligür employs the Social movement theory and the PPT approach to explain the Turkish Islamism tactics to mobilize supporters and achieve electoral success. She argues that the Islamist movement exploited the political opportunity opened in the 1990s to strengthen its political presence (Eligür 2010).

This study argues that the Islamist movements in the Arab countries are movements that have high institutional and organizational capabilities and can mobilize cultural, organizational, political, and economic resources. They have centralized organizational control over resources and clearly defined outcomes that can be evaluated in terms of actual success or failure. However, the level of resource concentration varies from one case to another in the four cases included in this book in a way that determines the level of the Islamist movement moderation in particular and their acceptance of the democratic terms of the political

competition, which is reflected in the process of democratic transition in general.

Also, PPT gives another conceptual perspective that reveals the social religious movement's role as rational actors interacting in a socio-political context and stressing particular sentiments of injustice and grievance. According to this theoretical approach, the Islamist movement developed organizational capabilities and used a political vulnerability within the old regime to achieve socio-political change (Meyer 2004). Neal Caren argues that five key factors determine a social movement's success or failure: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, framing processes, protest cycles, and contentious repertoires (Caren 2007). This book will employ the RMT and the PPT as a shared theoretical approach to studying the interactions of Islamist movements with state institutions, civil society organizations, and non-Islamist political actors during significant periods of change in the MENA countries.

Overall, the literature provides a robust theoretical framework that elucidates how Islamist movements utilize shared beliefs, collective identity, and resources to foster solidarity, incite feelings of relative deprivation, and challenge the existing order. The review underscores the evolution of social movement theories, contrasting traditional perspectives that view social movements as non-institutional collective actions with contemporary theories such as RMT and PPT. These modern theories perceive social movements as institutional entities with explicit objectives for social change.

The review concludes by positing that Islamist movements in the Arab world are highly institutionalized and capable of mobilizing a diverse array of resources to attain their objectives. The concentration level of these resources significantly influences their acceptance of democratic competition and impacts the democratic transition process. The review suggests that the success of these movements hinges on several factors, including political opportunities, mobilizing structures, framing processes, protest cycles, and contentious repertoires.

However, further exploration is necessary to explain the potential cor-

relation between the concentration of cultural, political, organizational, and economic resources and the degree of moderation or radicalization of political movements, especially during periods of transition. This deeper analysis could provide valuable insights into the conditions under which Islamist movements may adopt more moderate stances or revert to radical ideologies, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of their role in the political landscapes of the Middle East and North Africa.

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

The book will primarily rely on qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of Islamist movements and their opponents during the Arab uprisings. This includes examining critical texts from both Islamists and their adversaries, as well as statements and media testimonies from Islamist activists and leaders. Additionally, the study will analyze archives of Arabic newspapers to gain insights into the period.

Primary sources will play a crucial role in this research. These include official statements from activists and officials, electoral campaign materials, content from Islamist websites, judicial documents, and public opinion surveys conducted after the uprisings. Observations of the interactions between secular and Islamist groups during and after the uprisings will also be integral to the study.

Secondary sources will complement this analysis by providing context and background. These sources include writings that document key events, testimonies, and narratives from sub-organizations within the Islamist movement, as well as accounts of the social and political interactions involving Islamist groups.

By utilizing these diverse qualitative methods, the book aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play during the Arab uprisings and the subsequent impact on Islamist movements and their political strategies.

The study employs the Comparative Historical Analysis (CHA) of four cases. Skocpol argues that “The overriding intent [of CHA] is to develop, test, and refine causal, explanatory hypotheses about events or structures integral to macro-units such as nation-states” (Skocpol 1979, 36). Mahoney and Rueschemeyer argue that the CHA explores “historically grounded explanations of large-scale and substantively important outcomes” (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, Eds. 2003, 4). Mahoney & Thelen also argue that CHA focuses on “macro configurational explanation” and “problem-driven case-based research” (Mahoney & Thelen, Eds. 2015, 1-2). The study tries to trace the causal relations between the independent variable (resources of the Islamist movement) and the dependent variable (level of moderation/radicalization) in the four cases and compare the impact of these variables in each case.

The comparative case studies adopt what is called the process-oriented approach that “tend to see the world in terms of people, situations, events, and the processes that connect these; explanation is based on an analysis of how some situations and events influence others”. In other words, “tend to ask how x plays a role in causing y, what the process is that connects x any” (Maxwell 2013, 29). The multiple case studies aim to trace the impact of the Islamist movement in different milieus and different interactive factors.

The book has chosen four cases to study the impacts of various radicalization and democratization processes. These cases have been selected to illustrate the independent variable (the Islamist movements’ resource mobilization) in different contexts with varying distributions of power within the system to test the impact of resource concentration on the moderation of Islamists. The four cases are arranged as follows:

1. **Sudan:** The first case examines Sudan, where Islamists have been in power for an extended period. The Islamists, particularly the former ruling National Congress Party (NCP), have acted as a dominant force with authoritarian orientations and limited tendencies to compromise. Since 1989, the NCP adopted Sharia and other Islamist rhetoric in its political platform. However, the Islamist government has faced significant challenges from



long-lasting protests since 2011. The Sudanese case may provide insights into how Islamists in power react to public uprisings.

2. **Morocco:** The second case focuses on Morocco, where the monarchy acts as the dominant power and sets the rules for the political system. The regime adopted a 'selective inclusion' approach for the Islamists, based on the hypothesis that Islamists radicalize due to repression and exclusion from political life. Including Islamists in political life is believed to mitigate radical narratives and reduce violence (Ashour 2009, 17-18). The monarchy encouraged moderate Islamists to participate in the political process and even form the government, provided they accepted the legitimacy of the state and majority rule. Simultaneously, the regime employed harsh security tactics against radical Islamists, forcing them to deradicalize or face severe consequences.
3. **Tunisia:** The third case examines Tunisia, where Islamists were well integrated into the political system with balanced power-sharing with non-Islamist political forces. This integration aimed to win a broader electorate beyond their hardcore supporters. The mainstream Islamist party, Ennahda, abandoned radical rhetoric and made electoral and ideological concessions. Some argue that Ennahda has shifted from "Islamists to Muslim Democrats." However, the Tunisian experience, which initially facilitated the integration of Islamists into the democratization process, now faces setbacks due to the authoritarian attitude of the regime and economic challenges following the 2010-2011 uprising.
4. **Egypt:** The final case explores Egypt, characterized by a highly polarized political environment with a semi-dominant Islamist movement countered by a praetorian military. After the 2011 uprising, Islamists were integrated into the post-Mubarak political transition but were soon overthrown by the military in 2013. The regime launched a crackdown on Islamists, including the main bloc of the Islamist political movement, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), amid counter-revolutionary measures.

This approach is based on the argument that moderate Islamists share the same values as radicals; both aim to overthrow the modern state to establish an extremist theological regime based on a strict interpretation of Islam. However, moderates are more pragmatic and patient, seeking to impose their agenda gradually (Denoeux 2002, 71).

The four cases chosen for this study are from African Arab countries with cultural similarities and significant roles for Islamist movements. However, these cases also exhibit differences in the distribution of power within their political systems, with varying roles for non-Islamist actors and state institutions in shaping the system. The book identifies the following conditions that must be met in these cases to trace the variables:

- e) **Islamist Movements in Power:** The four countries selected are those where Islamist movements have come to power, either solely or in partnership with other groups.
- f) **Impact of the Arab Spring:** All four cases were significantly affected by the Arab Spring, either during its first wave in 2011 or the second wave in 2018. In Tunisia and Egypt, the uprisings successfully overthrew the presidents. In Morocco, protests led the monarch to make concessions, amend the constitution, and relinquish some powers to elected governments. In Sudan, while protests began in 2011, the main wave occurred in 2018-2019, resulting in the overthrow of the regime that Islamists had led since 1989.
- g) **Competitive Political Systems:** The political systems in these countries were competitive at the time of Islamist integration.
- h) **Consensus Among Political Elites:** There was a consensus among political elites and system makers to include Islamists in the political process.
- i) **Availability of Resources:** Islamists had access to necessary resources—cultural, political, organizational, and economic—to

mobilize support and influence the political system.

- j) **Freedom to Spread Ideology:** The political system allowed Islamists to disseminate their ideological and political rhetoric among the electorate for relatively long periods.
- k) **Participation Through Elections:** Islamists gained power or participated in governance through competitive elections. In Sudan, Islamists shared power with the Ummah party following their parliamentary gains in the 1986 elections but excluded their rivals through a military takeover in 1989. In Morocco, Islamists led a coalition government after winning consecutive elections in 2011 and 2016. Tunisian Islamists participated in governance from the Tunisian revolution until President Kais Saied suspended parliament in 2021. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood participated in government during Mohamed Morsi's presidency from 2012 to 2013 and, along with the Salafists, formed a parliamentary majority that enabled them to draft the 2012 constitution.

This study grapples with two central questions: First, does the possession of greater cultural, organizational, political, and economic resources lead to moderation or radicalization within Islamist movements? Second, why does inclusion sometimes fail to foster moderation?

To address the research questions, the book hypothesizes the following:

If Islamist movements can highly mobilize and concentrate cultural, organizational, political, and economic resources, their positions and discourse will tend to radicalize. Conversely, if these resources are distributed between Islamist movements and non-Islamist actors, the positions and discourse of the Islamist movements will moderate. This hypothesis is based on the following justification:

In a balanced political system, where power is evenly distributed between Islamists and non-Islamists, the inclusion of Islamist movements is likely to motivate them to adopt more moderate stances. This balance can also facilitate a gradual democratic transition. However,

the open inclusion of a dominant, uncontested Islamist movement into a weak political system may lead to increased radicalization and reduce the likelihood of achieving a democratic transition.

More specifically, the hypothesis argues that the overwhelming domination of Islamists over cultural, organizational, political, and economic resources, without a counterbalance from other forces, results in negative consequences for moderation. This domination provides more space for radicalizing the Islamist narrative, thereby undermining the democratic transition. On the other hand, the complete exclusion of Islamist movements leads to a surge in radicalization, and repressive measures further diminish the chances of establishing an open, competitive regime.

The managed inclusion of moderate Islamists in an environment where they are not the dominant power or where there is a balance of power between Islamists and other forces will reduce violence and facilitate the de-radicalization process. This balanced inclusion creates conditions that encourage Islamist movements to moderate their positions and participate constructively in the political process.

#### **1.4 List of Abbreviations**

AKP – Justice and Development Party (Turkey).

DUP: Democratic Unionist Party. (Sudan).

FJP: Freedom and Justice Party (Egypt).

ICF : Islamic Charter Front (Sudan).

IFC: Islamic Front for the Constitution (Sudan).

MB – Muslim Brotherhood.

NCP: National Congress Party (Sudan).

NIF: National Islamic Front (Sudan).

NSM – New Social Movement theory.

PJD : Parti de la Justice et du Développement– Justice and Development Party (Morocco)

PPT– Political Process Theory.

RMT– Resource Mobilization Theory.

SCAF: Supreme Council of the Military Forces (Egypt).

SSU– Sudanese Socialist Union.

UGTT : Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail– General Labour Union (Tunisia).

WB: *Al-Wala' wal Bara'*: A concept in Salafi and Wahhabi thought that signifies loyalty and disavowal. It involves both love and hatred for the sake of Allah, emphasizing alliance with believers while antagonizing non-believers.

## 1.5 Definitions and Concepts

To begin, it is essential to clarify several key concepts that will be frequently referenced throughout this book. The primary objective of this work is to examine the causal relationship between the resources available to Islamist movements and the subsequent effects of these resources on the processes of moderation and radicalization. Additionally, the book aims to explore how these dynamics have influenced the democratic transitions in the four case studies under consideration.

Firstly, it is necessary to define what is meant by social movements and to understand the political impact these movements can have. This foundational understanding will provide the context needed to analyze the specific case of Islamist movements.

Furthermore, we must establish a clear definition of Islamist ideology, or Islamism, and identify its main schools of thought, including Islamist

Modernism and Salafism. This will help in comprehending the diverse perspectives within Islamist movements.

The study also seeks to investigate how the resources of Islamist movements affect their tendencies towards moderation, radicalization, and democratization. Therefore, the following sections will aim to provide precise definitions for these concepts, setting the stage for a thorough analysis of their interrelations.

### **1.5.1 Social Movements**

The study of collective action began in the late nineteenth century when French psychologist Gustave Le Bon examined the social protests that swept across France. Le Bon's ideas were rooted in classical theories of collective action, which viewed participation in such actions as unconventional and irrational behavior. According to the classical model, factors such as relative disadvantage, shared grievances, and generalized beliefs were seen as determinants of participation, with protests being driven by irrational motives.

However, the late 1960s witnessed a significant increase in social movement activity. This period saw the rise of the student protest movement against the Vietnam War, as well as political and social crises in Europe. Additionally, movements such as the civil rights movement, the peace movement, the women's movement, and the environmental movement gained momentum. The explanations for the primary forms of collective action shifted from viewing them as "irrational" outbursts to recognizing them as rational efforts aimed at achieving concrete goals. These new explanations emphasized clear values, interests, calculations, and strategies.

The classical theory of collective action proved inadequate in explaining the proliferation of social movement activity during this time. The evolving nature of collective action necessitated new theoretical approaches. Consequently, many new theories emerged in the 1970s to better understand these changing forms of collective action.