

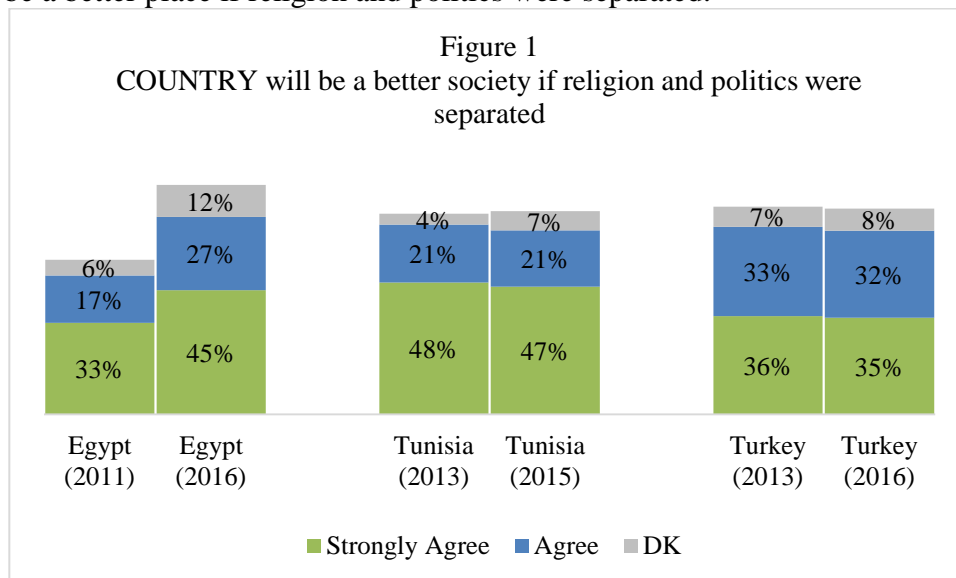
Shifts in Values toward Religious Tolerance and Secular Politics: Findings from Panel Surveys in Egypt, Tunisia, and Turkey

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Contrary to the impression provided by the popular media concerning the rise of Muslim terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa, findings from two waves of panel survey in Egypt, Tunisia, and Turkey display remarkable shifts in respondents' value orientations toward greater religious tolerance and a stronger support for secular politics and Western-type government, suggesting that (1) the liberal values underpinning their Arab Spring movements in Egypt and Tunisia have gained a greater support among the publics, (2) despite Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's move toward Islamic authoritarianism, the values change among Turkish citizens is in the opposite direction, and (3) these changes may signal the ushering in of a new cultural episodes in the three countries.

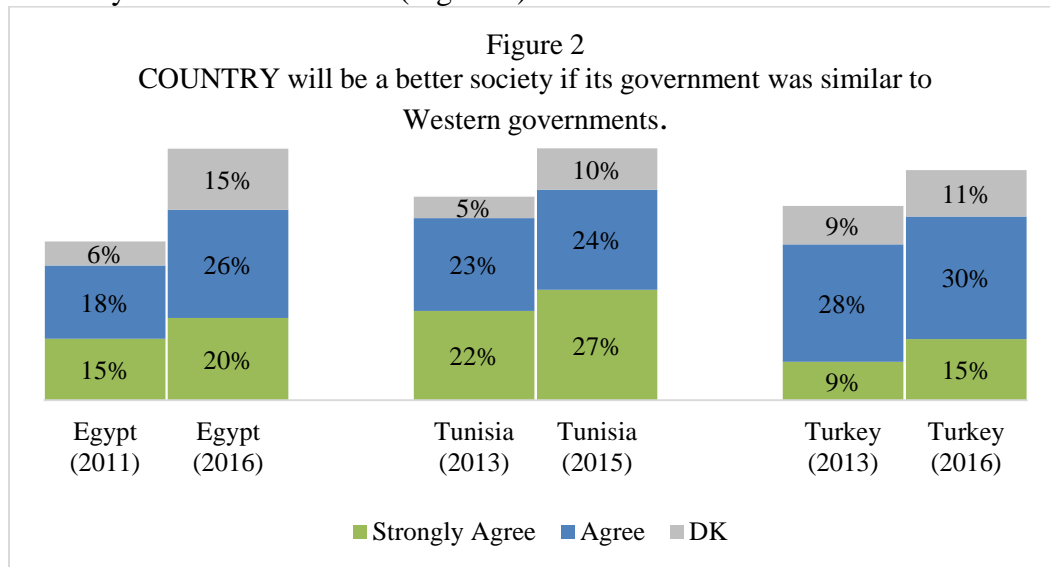
The second wave of the panel survey re-interviewed 2,430 people from the nationally representative sample of 3,498 Egyptians first interviewed in 2011, 2400 Tunisians from the nationally representative sample of 3,000 first interviewed in 2013, and 1682 Turkish from the nationally representative sample of 3,019 first interviewed in 2013. These surveys explored the value orientations and political engagements of the citizens of the three countries.

The findings display a remarkable pattern of change away from Islamic extremism and toward liberal values of religious tolerance and secular politics. As shown in Figure 1, a majority of the respondent strongly agreed or agreed that their country would be a better place if religion and politics were separated.

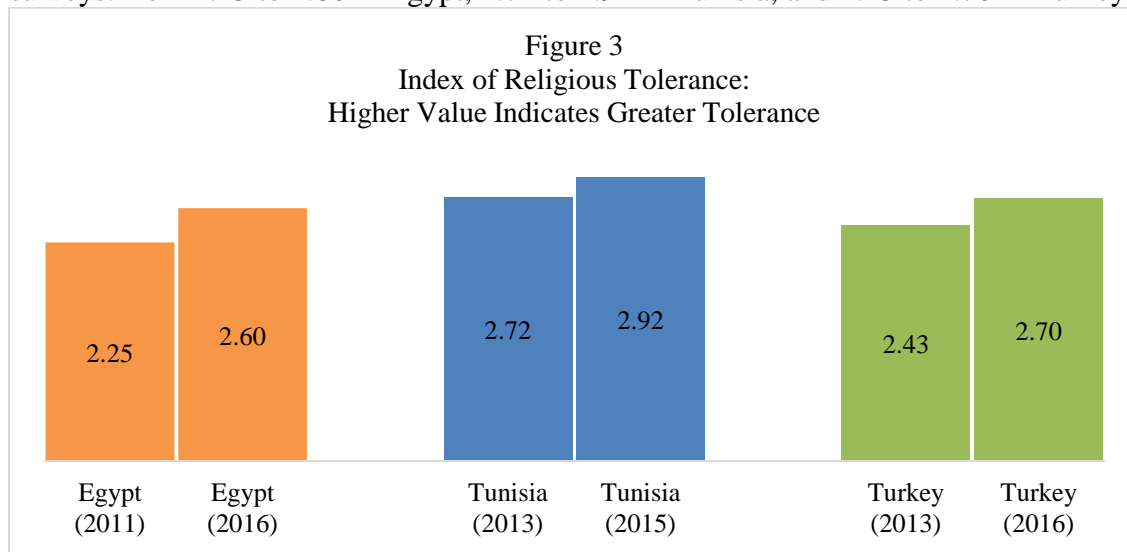


A more noteworthy finding is that significantly more Egyptian, Tunisian, and Turkish respondents strongly agreed or agreed in the second wave of the survey that their

country would be a better place if its government was similar to Western government than they did in the first wave (Figure 2).



Finally, a religious tolerance index is made by averaging responses to four questions: do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree that (1) “Our children should not be allowed to learn about other religions,” (2) “the followers of other religions should not have the same rights as mine,” (4) “Criticism of Islam should not be tolerated,” and (5) “criticism of Muslim religious leaders should not be tolerated” (ranging from 1, low level of tolerance, to 4, high level). According to Figure 3, this index has significantly increased across the three countries between the two waves of the panel surveys: from 2.25 to 2.60 in Egypt, 2.72 to 2.92 in Tunisia, and 2.43 to 2.70 in Turkey.



The increase in religious tolerance shown across the three countries is a welcome development for the institutionalization of liberal democracy, a finding consistent with the research in other national context concerning the relation of religious tolerance to democratic stability.

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