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Voting Islamist or Voting Secular? An empirical analysis of election outcomes in Tunisia's democratic transition 2011-2014.

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Contents

Abstract

This paper analyses Islamist and secular vote share in Tunisia's elections in 2011 and 2014. Compiling an original data set, it regresses socioeconomic and ideological variables against election outcomes at the delegation level. The method used is ordinary least squares regression. This is complimented by

qualitative evidence and interview material. We find that the socioeconomic characteristics of and religious institutional density within a constituency are statistically significant determinants of the Islamist-Secular political party divide.

Introduction

Tunisia's democratic transition began on 14 January 14, 2011 following the deposition of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Catalysed by the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi in Sizi Bouzid - a governorate located in Tunisia's central interior - protestors demanded Ben Ali's ouster, a just economy and an end to authoritarian control (Ayeb, 2011; Mabrouk, 2011). In October 2011, Tunisia elected its National Constituent Assembly in its first democratic election since 1956. The Islamist party, Ennahda, won a plurality of the vote and the greatest number of seats. According to extensive polling data, Tunisia is the most secular Arab country.[1] Scholars have consequently pointed to the Tunisian democratic experience as evidence of an 'Islamist paradox' (McCarthy, 2013) in which a comparatively less observant country embraced a religious political alternative.

In the election for the Legislative Assembly in October 2014, however, Ennahda lost its plurality to a secular opposition party, Nidaa Tounes, which explicitly framed the election as a referendum on Tunisia's Islamist trajectory. This paper studies empirically the voting outcomes of these two elections. Specifically, it seeks to compare the main demographic characteristics of Islamist and secular party vote share. It tries to answer this question by examining a unique dataset of voting outcomes at the constituency level. Merging the voting data with Tunisia's most recent Population and Housing Census data (2014), our results show that the socioeconomic structure *of* and religious institutional density *within* a constituency plays a significant role in mediating the political divide. We use multivariate linear regression to test the chosen variables. This is complemented with qualitative evidence and interview material from a research trip to the region in July 2017. If the first election in 2011 can be analysed in procedural terms as the pathway to ensuring democratic competition, then the second election in 2014 can be understood as the occasion on which party policy acquired greater importance. This is the first study to directly compare the results of the 2011 and 2014 elections in their demographic context.

While there is extensive literature on political Islam as an ideological phenomenon (Ayubi, 1991; Roy, 1994; Zubaida, 2004), there is surprisingly little focus on the demographic profiles of voters for Islamist parties. This contrasts with the abundant scholarship on the leadership and activist structures of Islamist movements (Wicktorowitz, 2004; Kandil, 2015; Ketchley & Biggs, 2015). Within the participatory context, those examining the praxis of Islamist parties tend to focus on their electoral strategies and

[1] World Values Survey (2013): http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp

institutional infrastructure (Masoud, 2014; Ocakli, 2015; Yildirim & Lancaster, 2015). Indeed, the gap in scholarly understanding is best reflected by the unsubstantiated assumptions which permeate popular notions of political Islam. According to the precepts of modernisation theory, middle class voters are secular in political outlook (Lipset, 1959). As a corollary, it is common for political scientists to assume the voter base of Islamist parties is composed of the more religious, disenfranchised poor (Huber and Stanig, 2011; Chen and Lind, 2015).

Against this background, this paper will address three questions:

1. What are the salient demographic determinants of Islamist voting and do these remain consistent across the 2011 and 2014 elections?
2. To what extent do these variables differ from the characteristics of secular party vote share?
3. What are the implications of these patterns for modelling Islamist voting behaviour?

The absence of a scholarly consensus over the constituencies of Islamist politics is what drives this enquiry. This paper thus complements the emerging literature on Islamist voters in transitional democracies. While cross-country comparisons are not a focus of this study, this paper will also briefly situate the findings within the scholarship on the regional patterns in Islamist voter behaviour. As the only Arab country to have made a nominally successful democratic transition (the completeness of which remains contested)[2], Tunisia is a unique case study to assess Islamist voting patterns across multiple elections in conditions of meaningful democratic competition. In turn, this has implications for assessing the political viability of Islamist party performance in the wake of the 'Arab Spring'.

The paper is organised as follows: after identifying the political parties in question and the main features of the transitional period, we review the existing literature on Islamist voting. This section formulates a novel dual axis typology (socioeconomic and ideological) of Islamist voter profiles based on previous findings. In the next section, the methodology, regression variables and results are presented. We include a discussion of the robustness of our regression estimates. In the conclusion, we situate our findings within our typology and discuss avenues for future research.

Ennahda: a brief survey

The foundations of the Ennahda party, also known as the Renaissance Movement, lie in the religious activism of *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* (the Islamic Group) during the 1960s and 1970s. Rejecting the

[2] According to Wave 4 of the Arab Barometer (2017), the mean score for perceived 'level of democracy' on a scale of 1-10 was 5.0.

'secular' authoritarianism and 'Western modernisation' of Habib Bourguiba (McCarthy, 2013), the Islamist coalition sought to restore Islam to a dominant public role through mosques, civil society organisations and education groups (Wolf, 2017). Using Olivier Roy's typology of political Islam, the history of the group best reflects a 'neo-traditionalist' orientation (Roy, 1994). More recently, at its 10th Congress in May 2016, however, Ennahda members decided to 'separate' politics from preaching (Marks, 2016). This has prompted academic discussion of whether Ennahda has entered a 'post-Islamist' or 'neo-Islamist' phase (Cavatorta, 2015).

After a factional split with the 'Progressive Islamists', in July 1979 the group renamed itself the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) and established a new formal organisational structure. Rachid Ghannouhci was first elected leader of the movement and still holds the Presidency. Significantly, the MTI had a large following among university students (Wolf, 2017).[3] The 1980s witnessed a period of intense confrontation between the MTI and state authorities. In 1988, the new President Ben Ali criminalised all mosque activism by citizens except that of figures appointed by the newly created Ministry of Religious Affairs. This squeezed the MTI's recruitment space. A new political parties law also banned the formation of parties on religious, racial, ethnic and territorial/geographic grounds. This prompted the MTI to rename itself *Harakat Ennahda*.

Under rigidly circumscribed conditions, Ennahda-backed candidates participated in the 1989 elections on independent lists. Despite officially winning 14.5% of the national vote and up to 30% in some urban provinces, Ben Ali's Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD) was allocated all the seats (Wolf, 2017 pp.71). The 'Bab Souika Affair' in February 1991 triggered a new wave of repression and Ennahda's political activities were banned, demolishing the movement's infrastructure. Senior leaders of the movement including Ghannouchi were rendered political refugees. Until the revolution in 2010, Ennahda had no substantial political network on the ground (Wolf, 2017). It was legalised as a political party in March 2011. In only a few months before the NCA elections, Ennahda set up 2064 offices throughout the country, reflecting its campaigning strength and institutional reach (Wolf, 2017, pp.2).

Overview of the Transitional Period & Institutional Set Up of the 2011 and 2014 elections

Following the flight of Ben Ali, an interim government led by the former Bourghiba minister, Béji Caïd Essebsi, was established to work with a Higher Commission for Political Reform (*Haute Instance*). This was composed of representatives of the main political parties and was tasked with preparing for the elections for the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). The commission was chaired by legal and Islamic scholar Yadh Ben Achour. In May 2011, the 'Ben Achour Commission' declared its election mechanism for the NCA ballot in October: a closed list proportional representation (PR) system with universal suffrage using the Hare quota with largest remainders (POMED, 2014).

The NCA was a 217-member transitional institution with the authority to appoint the first President and to write a new constitution within a year. The 2011 election was a crowded affair with eighty-one parties participating and twenty-seven parties winning at least one seat. Voter turnout was 51% of registered voters.[4] With a highly activist campaign, Ennahda won 37.04% of the vote and was allocated 89 seats. Five secular centre-left parties - Congress for the Republic (CPR), Popular Petition (al-Aridha), Ettakatol, the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) and the Democratic Modernist Pole (PDM) – had the largest vote shares respectively. Descriptive statistics are available in Table 1. Overall, these parties achieved 63.5% of the votes at the national level. Looking beyond the mean vote share, the distribution of votes varies quite significantly between the parties at the constituency level. A strong urban/rural and interior/coastal division was prevalent (Gana et al. 2016). Ennahda eventually formed a coalition with CPR and Ettakatol, known as the "Troika" government. The government was headed by Hemadi Jebali, secretary general of Ennahda. It was composed of 25 ministers, of which 11 were from Ennahda, 5 from Ettakatol (whose leader Mustapha Ben Jaafar was President of the Constituent Assembly), 4 from the CPR (whose leader Moncef Marzouki was elected President of the Republic) and 5 independents, whose departments include the defence and finance ministries (Guazzone, 2013).

[4] Turnout statistics were published by the Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE) - Tunisia Election Data: http://tunisiaelectiondata.com/#/stories/par

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for NCA Elections 2011 – Top 6 Performing Parties

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
PDM	263	21.47	.29	21.76	1.9525	2.16816	4.692	.150
PDP	263	12.63	.24	12.87	3.5579	2.06880	1.248	.150
Ettakatol	263	23.40	.21	23.62	4.9459	4.98522	1.688	.150
CPR	263	42.20	.62	42.81	6.6335	5.25903	2.455	.150
Al Aridha	263	51.24	.24	51.48	7.9313	8.17536	2.480	.150
Ennahda	263	56.56	8.33	64.89	33.2607	10.69662	.288	.150
Valid N (listwise)	263							

The transitional period was characterised by considerable antagonism between the Ennahda-led Troika government and opposition parties. Firstly, they extended beyond the one-year deadline for drafting a new constitution. On top of questions concerning institutional representation, the role of Islam in public life stood out as the most fractious issue, highlighting a salient political cleavage within Tunisia's national fabric (Hamid, 2014). Inciting the ire of much of its party base, in March 2012 Ennahda conceded that it would not push to include a clause proclaiming sharia as "the sole source of legislation" in the constitution (Guazzone, 2013). It similarly abandoned efforts to implement a blasphemy law. The delays in the constitutional procedure resulted in mass public anger and a series of both pro and anti-government demonstrations in the summer of 2013 massively disrupted political and economic life in the country. Later that year, a second political assassination in a six-month period by a Salafist-Jihadist group forced the government and opposition parties into a 'national dialogue', which arguably saved Tunisia's democratic transition. Under much pressure, in December 2013 Ennahda agreed to form a new interim government. In January 2014, Prime Minister Laarayedh resigned and was replaced by Mehdi Jomaa who headed a technocratic caretaker government. The new constitution was ratified on January 26, 2014.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Legislative Assembly Elections 2014 – Top 6 Performing Parties

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
CPR	264	33.95	.00	33.95	1.9874	3.17785	6.696	.150
Afek Tounes	264	37.35	.00	37.35	2.3658	3.40977	5.957	.150
UPL	264	15.43	.00	15.43	3.8338	3.01555	.926	.150
Front Populaire	264	34.51	.11	34.61	3.9249	3.76521	3.406	.150
Ennahda	264	58.92	8.86	67.78	27.9334	12.05095	1.493	.150
Nidaa Tounes	264	67.70	3.23	70.93	34.5249	14.52250	-.018	.150
Valid N (listwise)	264							

In May 2014, the NCA passed a Basic Law on Elections and Referenda shaping the Parliamentary and Presidential election system. The former was held on October 26, using a party-list proportional representation mechanism to elect 217 members, as in 2011. Polling took place in one round and each voter chose a single list. Descriptive statistics are available in Table 2.

While many of the same parties contested the 2014 election, many others rebranded or changed their internal composition. Ennahda remained consistent in its image and possessed an unmatched level of activist discipline (Marks, 2016). Winning 69 seats, Ennahda's vote share dropped to 28%, however, and its plurality was assumed by Nidaa Tounes which garnered 86 seats. Kernel density graphs for Islamist and secular vote shares are available in the Appendix.

Nidaa Tounes which ran a highly professional and well-resourced campaign, was a heterogeneous coalition of former RCD members, UGTT officials, secular leftists and members of the national employers' union (UTICA). The party was established by Béji Caïd Essebsi in June 2012. Lacking a coherent policy agenda, these factions were united by their anti-Islamism and campaigned on an anti-Ennahda platform (Marks, 2016). The Free Patriotic Union (UPL), which came third, advocated a free-market and anti-Islamist stance. In fourth place came a leftist coalition, Front Populaire, formed initially in 2012. In fifth place came the pro-business, centre-right faction, Afek Tounes. CPR, which came in sixth place, and Ettakatol lost significantly. On average, these parties achieved 74.5% votes cast at the national level. Voter turnout stood at 68.9% of registered voters with considerable regional variation.[5] A diagram mapping the political stances of the main parties in both 2011 and 2014 can be viewed in Tables 3 and 4. Party stances were derived from the online voting questionnaire Ikhtiar Tounes.[6]

As in 2011, Tunisian citizens voted in one of 33 electoral districts: 27 in Tunisia (199 seats), and six for Tunisians living abroad (18 seats). Each of Tunisia's 24 governorates served as one district, with Nabeul, Sfax, and Tunis each divided into two. This paper examines the vote share of the top six performing parties in each election in the domestic constituencies. To assess the demographic divide, we group the top five secular parties into a conceptual category called 'secular vote share'. This is then compared with Ennahda's vote share, which as categorised as 'Islamist vote share'. There are two main factors justifying this approach. Firstly, among the top performing parties Ennahda is distinguished by its ideology of advancing sharia-compliant political principles. Its main competitors meanwhile have either explicitly anti-Islamist or liberal, secular ideologies. Secondly, by making this conceptual distinction we can test the influence of our ideological variables (discussed below) on vote share. Importantly, however, we

[5] Tunisia Election Data: http://tunisiaelectiondata.com/#/stories/par (Accessed on 10th August, 2017)
[6] Ikhtiar Tounes: http://www.ikhtiartounes.org/ - 1=Yes, -1=No, 0=Neutral (Accessed on 10th August, 2017)

emphasise that we do not seek to reduce the Tunisian political divide to an ideological binary. Therefore we test for a variety or variables which reflect a number of possible voting determinants.

Political Issue (2011)	Ennahda	CPR	Popular Petition	Ettakatol	Progressive Democratic Party
A free market economy + state regulation	1	-1	1	1	1
Redistribution from rich to poor areas	-1	0	1	1	1
Public services should be open to competition	1	-1	-1	1	1
Public services can be privatised	1	-1	-1	-1	1
A tax on the super wealthy	1	1	1	-1	-1
Private schools should be abolished	-1	0	0	-1	-1
Public schools should not be financed by private sector	-1	0	1	1	-1
Equality between men and women in inheritance law	-1	0	1	1	0
State and Religion should be separate	-1	-1	1	1	0
The state should renationalise all privatised enterprises.	1	0	1	1	-1
Independent Constitutional High Court	1	1	1	1	1

Table 3

Table 4

Political Issue (2014)	Ennahda	Nidaa Tounes	UPL	Popular Front	Afek Tounes	CPR
Redistribution from rich to poor regions	1	1	1	1	1	0
Public services should be privatised	-1	-1	0	-1	0	-1
A tax on the super wealthy should be imposed	1	1	-1	1	-1	1
Equality between men and women in inheritance law	-1	-1	1	1	0	0
State should nationalise privatised enterprises	-1	-1	-1	1	-1	0
Public schools should not be financed by private sector	-1	-1	-1	1	-1	0
High Islamic Council	1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
Parental authority shared equally between men and women	1	1	1	1	1	1
Private sector pay cap	-1	-1	-1	1	-1	0
Public enterprises should be privatised	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	-1
Right to an abortion should be maintained.	-1	1	1	1	1	1
Unemployment Allocation System	1	1	0	1	0	1

Literature Review

The literature on Arab Islamist voting patterns is at a nascent phase with single case studies dominating the field mainly because of limited comparable election data. Importantly, in absence of individual level data, the studies discussed below all analyse voting patterns at the constituency level, setting a scholarly precedent for the methodology employed in this paper.

Looking at the authoritarian elections in Morocco in 2002 and 2007, Pellicer and Wegner (2014) have analysed the socio-economic voter profile and motives for support of the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD). They find no evidence for the 'clientelist' *homo Islamicus*, but they do identify a shift from a typological 'grievance' profile in 2002 to a more 'horizontal network' profile in 2007. Significantly, they find a positive relationship between PJD vote share and average levels of wealth (measured in number of satellite dishes) at the district level. Education levels, moreover, were positively correlated with Islamist voting, with university graduates almost twice as likely to vote for the PJD than individuals with no education in both elections. These findings run contrary to studies of Egyptian election data.

Dissecting Egypt's first parliamentary elections after the 'Arab Spring', which took place between November 2011 and January 2012, Elsayyad and Hanafy show that education levels are negatively associated with Islamist voting (Freedom and Justice Party and the Salafist *al-Nour* party). They suggest that lower levels of education leave individuals more vulnerable to propaganda in religious settings. Challenging the clientelist assumption which connects support for the Muslim Brotherhood with welfare provision, they also provide evidence indicating higher poverty levels (proxied by access to public sanitation) are associated with a lower vote share for Islamist parties. Thus, they conclude Islamist vote share is more attributable to religious than social outreach. Looking further to Egypt's first free Presidential elections in 2012, Al-Ississ and Atallah (2015) analyse the effects of patronage (measured by public employment) and ideology (proxied by candidate choice in the first round of the election) on voter behaviour. They use Weingrod's (1968) definition of patronage as an exchange of employment in the public sector in return for political support. They find that patronage has a stronger effect on voter behaviour than secularist ideology but a weaker effect than 'pro-change' ideology. Specifically, patronage is strongly correlated with votes for the candidate associated with the ruling regime.

In the Tunisian context, Reith (2013) uses the Generalised Spatial Two-Stage Least Squares Regression to test the effect of three theoretical hypotheses on the causes of the revolution and Ennahda's electoral success: 'youth bulge' (Hvistendahl, 2011), 'demographic disparities' (LaGraffe, 2012; Korotayev and

Zinkina, 2011) and the role of digital media or technological diffusion (Khondker, 2011), as was popularised by early theories of the 'Arab Spring'. He finds that none of the theories have statistical significance in explaining the occurrence and duration of protest or Ennahda's vote share. Individual variables such as relative age cohort size, however, were marginally positive determinants of Islamist vote share. This study is limited by its omission of the spatial dimension of the National Constituent Assembly election.

Addressing this gap, Gana et al. (2012) have explored the socio-territorial electoral base of political parties in the aftermath of the Jasmine Revolution. They principally highlight the regional characteristics of 2011 party performance, differentiating between 'peripheral' and 'core' voting in the context of Tunisia's political geography. Metropolitan areas predominantly voted for the main national parties, while underdeveloped, rural regions voted more (at least in relative terms) for 'anti-elite' alternatives such as left-populist *al-Aridha* which transcended the modernist/Islamist binary. The Ennahda vote, moreover, was concentrated in urban districts and the underprivileged interior. Zooming in on the Greater Tunis region, they find relative wealth matters: modernist secular parties scored higher in more affluent neighbourhoods and the Islamist party won more among the relatively deprived. Though in the poorest neighbourhoods, Ennahda faced a challenged from competitors such as *al-Aridha*.

Also examining the spatial dynamics of the 2011 election, Amara et al. (2016) analyse how spatial proximity affected party choice. They find that social interactions (neighbourhood effects) and geographical proximity matters in Tunisia's voting behaviour, with the spatial Durbin model possessing the greatest explanatory power. Using LeSage and Pace's (2009) econometric approach, they show the largest direct and indirect 'spillover' effects of spatial dependence can be seen in the association with age cohort and level of educational attainment.

Both Gana and Amara's papers are limited, however, by their use of the 2004 census data which is necessarily less accurate than the 2014 data used here. This paper, moreover, goes beyond identifying macro-level, spatial patterns and seeks to build a more detailed socioeconomic profile (exploring a wider range of variables) of electoral constituencies across the two elections.

A Typology of Islamist Voting

To theoretically differentiate the Islamist and secular party voting demographics in Tunisia, it is necessary to outline a conceptual infrastructure. The literature on Islamic activism has advanced several theoretical vote profile-types and explanations for Islamist voting. Extant typologies are distinguished by their focus on either materialist or ideological factors. Following Max Weber (2005), ideal-types should be viewed as a heuristic tool and not as objective claims. In their study of the PJD in Morocco, Pellicer and Wegner

(2014) formulate a three-fold socioeconomic model for voting patterns. This paper adds an ideological axis to their model to analyse the Tunisian experience.

Firstly, there is *clientelist* voting. Using evidence mainly from Egypt (Toth, 2003; Fuller, 2003), it is argued that Islamist social service provision generates a 'patron-client relationship' (Zubaida, 1992) between a religious movement and its voter base. Importantly, by creating a service-vote exchange mechanism, voters are thought to prioritise continued distribution of goods over substantive political change (Wegner and Pellicer, 2014). Such voters are typically under-educated, poor and socially marginalised (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996; Kepel, 2002; Cammett and Luong, 2014). In the Tunisian context, the de facto ban on Ennahda activism from 1991 until 2010 meant the organisation had highly restricted opportunities for social campaigns (Meyersson, 2014). The party was prevented from developing the 'parallel Islamic sector' (Wickham, 2007) that its counterpart in the Muslim Brotherhood cultivated in Egypt, for example. That said, in the wake of the revolution, Ennahda developed close ties with national Islamic charities such as the *Association Tunisienne de Coopération et de Communication Sociale* (Attawyn) - established in 2010.[7]

Secondly, there is *grievance*-driven voting. In response to the failures of Nasserism, Ba'thism and Bourguibism to sustain a process of comprehensive independent development, Islamist parties are believed to have been successful in constructing a political coalition amongst the *relatively* deprived (Zubaida, 1992) and economically disempowered. This sector is committed to establishing a new social contract compatible with *al-maslahat al-'umumiyah*. Such voters typically possess above-average levels of education and have been unable to achieve their expected economic status due to systemic blockages. In a recent paper, Binzel and Carvalho (2015) develop a model using evidence from Egypt to show how the Islamic revival in the Arab world might be connected to voters' unfulfilled aspirations. Related to this model is the 'petit bourgeois' voting hypothesis. Much has been written about the entrepreneurial constituency of Islamist parties, especially in Turkey (Balkir, 2007; Delibas, 2015; Kalin, 2013). The theory stipulates that marginalisation from state-led development policies (especially during the *infitah* period) motivates this constituency to seek market opportunities and anti-corruption initiatives. Given the economic stagnation, voters demand radical change to correct the structural flaw. Islamist voting is a vessel of social and economic protest.

Thirdly, there is *horizontal* voting which is a category derived from social movement theory (Wiktorowitz, 2004; Baylouny, 2004). For example, Carrie Wickham's *Mobilizing Islam* (2002) argues

[7] Tunisie. L'inquiétante opacité du milieu associatif islamique: http://www.lecourrierdelatlas.com/tunisie-l-inquietante-opacite-du-milieu-associatif-islamique--1757 (Accessed 20th August, 2017)

that Islamic social institutions in Egypt "changed the preferences of educated youth" by spreading an activist reading of Islam that made them more likely to participate in high-risk political mobilisation. Janine Clark (2004) contends that Islamic clinics embedded middle class individuals in religious networks, building a political community united by social messaging. Tarek Masoud (2014) adopts a functionalist perspective, arguing that integration within said networks creates Islamist supporters programmatically rather than ideologically. In contrast to the clientelist profile which assumes that material dissatisfaction translates directly into collective political action in a pattern of *vertical* recruitment, this theory says Islamists build support across horizontal networks. The support base is consequently similar in demographic composition to the activist centre. This means middle class, upwardly-mobile and educated voters. Unlike the grievance model of socioeconomic exclusion, these voters inhabit a hybrid position, neither totally included nor totally precluded from state-led economic distribution. These people would benefit from technocratic adjustment and anti-corruption efforts rather than systemic change (Pellicer and Wegner, 2014).

Ideological factors are also central indices of Islamist support. Core voters are likely to believe political and social strife are attributable to deviation from Islamic jurisprudence and religious observance (Jamal and Tessler, 2008; Robbins, 2009). Secular governance is considered inauthentic because of its Western pedigree. These voters agitate for a 'return' to religion - *hakimiyyet allah* – to restore moral authenticity and achieve social justice (Zubaida, 1989: 57). Only by implementing the sharia will it be possible to achieve a new 'golden age' (Eposito, 1999). In absence of individual-level data, however, it is not possible to assess the extent of ideological fervour among the voting public. In this paper, we instead look to the density of religious networks as the closest approximation for levels of exposure to religious political activism. Another important ideational source of Islamist support is social conservatism, specifically traditional attitudes towards gender roles (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996). Such voters are likely to prefer women to stay at home. The Islamist promise to safeguard the dynamic of the Muslim family is likely to resonate with them (Pahwa, 2013). Again, in absence of individual-level data it is not possible to derive a statistical index of gender conservatism. To proxy for this, we look to rates of female participation in the labour force. The assumption underpinning the choice of this variable is that, controlling for socioeconomic motivations, higher employment rates reflect more liberal-secular attitudes towards gender roles and social inequalities (Togeby, 1994; Manza-Brooks, 1998). Significantly, Tunisia is religiously very homogenous with 99% of the population identifying as Sunni Muslim (Arab Barometer Wave III). On this basis, we can assume voting patterns are generally unaffected by factors such as ethnicity or religious denomination.

Situating Islamist voting within this comparative framework is theoretically compelling because it helps normalise Islamism in the comparative politics literature. Perceived 'Islamic exceptionalism' (Hamid, 2014) has often been used to characterise Islamist politics as analytically distinct. By comparing Islamist voter demographics with their ostensibly secular counterparts, however, we can explore the extent to which electoral cleavages are mediated by generalisable voter logics.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is the *percentage of total valid votes* accrued by each party according to the proportional representative voting system in the 264 delegations. The focus of this paper is the top six performing parties in each election. As discussed in the previous section, we conceptually distinguish between the main Islamist party, Ennahda, and its secular party competitors across the political spectrum. We use 'secular vote share' not as an intrinsic ideological category (given the political-economic differences between the secular parties), but as a theoretical point of reference for identifying the social, economic and religious institutional continuities in Islamist voting. This dependent variable thus serves as a heuristic within the explanatory model. The data on voting outcomes was collected from the Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE) which published election results at the delegation level. It was verified by the Tunisian civil society election monitor, *Mourakiboun*, and the non-governmental organisation, *Democracy International*.[8]

For the covariates, we use the most recent Population and Housing Census data for the year 2014. The census is conducted by the National Statistics Institute, Tunisia's official statistics agency.[9] Using the 2014 census data, we construct an original dataset on the socioeconomic backgrounds of the 264 electoral constituencies (within Tunisia's 27 governorates) to match the level of aggregation of data on election outcomes at the delegation level. The socioeconomic data is kept constant across the two elections.

Independent Variables and Hypotheses

Our main independent variable is the socioeconomic background of a delegation. As Pippa Norris (2004) has shown, proportional representative systems generate a unique variety of party competition because parties typically represent different groups of voters rather than competing for the median voter. Thus, in addition to economic outcomes – as per the economic voting hypothesis (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007) – socioeconomic variables are likely to affect election outcomes (Swank and Eisinga, 1999). We look at a multiplicity of factors: levels of education, the youth ratio, the employment structure, female labour force participation and mean household wealth. Elsayyad et al. (2014) take a similar approach in

[8] Tunisia Election Data: http://tunisiaelectiondata.com/#/stories/par (Accessed 20th August, 2017)
[9] National Statistics Institute: http://www.ins.tn/en/front (Accessed 20th August, 2017)

their election model in Egypt albeit with fewer variables. We also take the log of the delegation population to control for population density (with higher density associated with higher levels of urbanisation).

Like Amara et al. (2016) who assess the effects of spatial proximity on the NCA elections, this paper uses education levels as an important dimension of a constituency's socioeconomic profile. We look at levels of university education and no formal education. These are calculated as proportional percentages of a constituency's population above 10 years of age. Data for calculating the education of the voting age population in isolation was unavailable.

The employment structure is captured by examining the percentage share of individuals in the following economic sectors: public services and commerce. Public sector employment (mainly administrative services) can operate as a proxy for relative inclusion/exclusion within the state patronage system (Al-Ississ and Atallah, 2015). Indeed, tens of thousands of workers have joined the public sector since 2010, raising the total number of employed to 600,000.[10] Trade union pressure from the UGTT pushed the Troika government to increase salaries, raising wages to 13% of Tunisia's GDP, which renders it one of the highest shares in the world. [11] Commerce, which consists mainly of trading jobs, can illuminate the validity of the 'petit bourgeois' Islamist voter hypothesis (Delibas, 2015). We use the percentage of the working population employed in agriculture as a variable in our robustness check. Unemployment rates (among workers aged 15-59) could reflect political dissatisfaction (Akarca and Tansel, 2006; Genc et al. 2005; Baslevent et al. 2005) with the status quo. Given that Islamist parties have conservative positions on gender roles, we might expect female labour force participation to correlate with greater support for secular parties. Finally, we examine the age structure of the delegation and specifically we control for the percentage of the population aged between 15-29 (Swank and Eisinga 1999). We call this variable 'youth ratio'. This will facilitate analysis of a potential generational gap in voting patterns. Considering the low youth turnout in both 2011 and 2014 (IRI, 2014), we are apprehensive about advancing any hypothesis.

Average wealth was calculated from the sum of household assets. It may be objected that average income is a more practicable socio-economic characteristic. Income, however, is seasonal and volatile, especially in developing countries. This explains why the World Bank Living Standard Measurement Survey, for example, avoids analysis thereof.[12] To capture this economic variable, we instead look to asset ownership

[10] The Economist: https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21689616-unemployment-undermining-tunisias-transition-dying-work-government (Accessed 23rd August, 2017)
[11] Ibid.
[12] World Bank: http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTLSMS/0,,contentMDK:21610833~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:3358997,00 html (Accessed 20th August 2017)

as recorded in the census data. Filmer and Pritchett (2012) have argued that an asset index is equivalent in [13]utility to conventionally measured expenditures. We employ previous methods (Case, Paxson and Ableidinger, 2004; Labonne and Chase, 2011) and derive an asset index from the following variables: television, car, radio cassette, internet access, computer, possession of at least one mobile phone and landline telephone. Mobile phone and landline telephone ownership, for example, were merged and proportionally weighted to control for exogenous factors as per the findings of Wittenberg and Leibbrandt (2017). Using the voter typology outlined above, we hypothesise that Islamist voting – as a potential expression of clientelism (or expected largesse) and grievance – will negatively correlate with average wealth.

In absence of data on public *religiosity* and religious *politicisation*, this paper explores the density of religious networks as a potential explanatory variable for exposure to Islamic political activism. Assessing the relationship between religious activism and vote share faces several methodological hurdles. Firstly, the activity is problematic to quantify. Secondly, in absence of ethnographic field work, it is difficult to decipher the mechanism by which said activism affects political choices. That said, in his study of Egypt's election in 2011-2013, Tarek Masoud developed an innovative method for the assessment thereof. He calculates the number of religious institutions in a locality. In a local context, a mosque is likely to be the main provider of 'religious goods' (Scheve and Stasavage, 2006): prayer services, charitable distribution and proselytization. Employing Masoud's method, we measured the number of mosques per 10k of the delegation population. Mosque data was provided by the Tunisian Ministry of Religious Affairs. If Islamist voting is associated with the institutional reach of political religious activism, we should expect Islamist vote share to be positively correlated with the density of Islamic institutions.

Data Limitations and Theoretical Caveats

Our estimations of religious-secular voting patterns are necessarily based on average differences between delegations, not individuals. As the data used in this study is taken at the aggregate level, there is the risk of ecological fallacy if we treat aggregated results as holding for individuals (King, 1997). Spatial inequalities in Tunisia, however, are sufficiently large such that there is adequate heterogeneity across delegations in our key socioeconomic variables to make meaningful inferences. University education, for example, ranges from as low as 2.5% to nearly 50% across delegations. Indeed, the risk of ecological

[13] Mosques are divided into two types: masājid (sing. masjid), which connotes smaller mosques akin to the Egyptian zawāya and jawāmiʿ (sing. jāmiʿ), which are large mosques in which Friday prayers are offered (Masoud, 2014).

fallacy decreases with greater internal homogeneity within delegations and greater heterogeneity across delegations. Nevertheless, as discussed previously, the methodology used here is tried and tested and we limit our inferences from the results to aggregate level relations at the delegation level.

Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Log_Total_Population	264	125398.00	4295.00	129693.00	41600.2879	25918.49136	1.096	.150
Youth_Ratio	264	13.38	19.05	32.43	24.8605	2.17162	.392	.150
Public Employment	264	59.76	9.78	69.54	25.3493	9.95471	.897	.150
Commerce	264	27.95	3.26	31.21	12.1640	4.44674	.852	.150
Pct_Unemployment	264	36.59	5.81	42.40	16.3118	6.68872	.934	.150
Female_Labour_Force	264	45.90	8.43	54.33	26.9206	10.37851	.465	.150
University	264	46.65	2.52	49.17	10.4062	6.46126	2.374	.150
No Education	264	52.47	3.41	55.88	21.7836	10.57265	.429	.150
Wealth	264	6.00	2.41	8.41	5.1897	.81591	.642	.150
Mosques_per_10K	264	29.25	.00	29.25	5.0548	3.87813	2.291	.150
Valid N (listwise)	264							

Estimation and results: Who is voting Islamist? Who is voting Secular?

We estimate the determinants of voting outcomes using cross-sectional regressions at the delegation level: one for Islamist vote share and one for the secular party vote share among the top six performing parties in 2011 and 2014. The estimation method is ordinary least squares (OLS). Due to a lack of space, we are unable to consider the effects of the variables on each individual party.[14] We do, however, include a direct comparison between Ennahda and Nidaa Tounes for 2014. The regression tables are presented below. I estimate two multilinear regression equations for each election in the form:

$$\text{Islamist Vote Share} = a + a1(LogTotal_{Population} + a2(Youth_{Ratio}) + a3(Public_{Employment}) + a4(Commerce) + a5(Pct_{unemployment}) + a6(Female_{Labour_{Force}}) + a7(University) + a8(No_{Education}) + a9(Wealth) + a10(Mosques_{Per_{10k}})$$

[14] Our analysis of the individual secular parties yields similar statistics to those presented here. Data available upon request.

Secular Vote Share $= a + a1(LogTotal_{Population} + a2(Youth_{Ratio}) + a3(Public_{Employment}) + a4(Commerce) + a5(Pct_{unemployment}) + a6(Female_{Labour_{Force}}) + a7(University) + a8(No_{Education}) + a9(Wealth) + a10(Mosques_{Per_{10k}})$

Coefficients[a] – Islamist Vote Share 2011

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	47.134	13.583		3.470	.001
	Log Total Population	8.505E-005	.000	.206	3.583	.000
	Youth Ratio	.260	.244	.053	1.066	.288
	Public Employment	.154	.081	.143	1.899	.059
	Commerce	.315	.135	.131	2.332	.020
	Pct Unemployment	.026	.117	.016	.223	.824
	Female Labour Force	-.362	.081	-.351	-4.453	.000
	University	-.802	.191	-.485	-4.209	.000
	No Education	-.869	.112	-.860	-7.791	.000
	Wealth	.671	1.829	.051	.367	.714
	Mosques per 10K	.296	.151	.107	1.969	.050

a. Dependent Variable: Pct_Islamist_2011

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13309.319	10	1330.932	20.122	.000[b]
	Residual	16668.139	252	66.143		
	Total	29977.459	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Pct_Islamist_2011

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques_per_10K, Commerce, Youth_Ratio, Public_Employment, Female_Labour_Force, Log_Total_Population, Pct_Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.666[a]	.444	.422	8.132859898516

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques_per_10K, Commerce, Youth Ratio, Public Employment, Female Labour Force, Log Total Population, Pct Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Coefficients[a] – Secular Vote Share 2011

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	30.887	12.976		2.380	.018
	Log Total Population	1.511E-005	.000	.041	.666	.506
	Youth Ratio	-.532	.233	-.120	-2.283	.023
	Public Employment	-.077	.077	-.080	-1.000	.318
	Commerce	.031	.129	.014	.240	.810
	Pct Unemployment	-.070	.111	-.049	-.629	.530
	Female Labour Force	-.044	.078	-.047	-.567	.572
	University	1.391	.182	.938	7.642	.000
	No Education	.332	.107	.366	3.115	.002
	Wealth	-2.172	1.747	-.185	-1.244	.215
	Mosques per 10K	.039	.144	.016	.273	.785

a. Dependent Variable: Pct_Secular_2011

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8968.566	10	896.857	14.859	.000[b]
	Residual	15209.954	252	60.357		
	Total	24178.520	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Pct Secular 2011

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques per 10K, Commerce, Youth Ratio, Public Employment, Female Labour Force, Log Total Population, Pct Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.609[a]	.371	.346	7.768974223893

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques_per_10K, Commerce, Youth_Ratio, Public_Employment, Female_Labour_Force, Log_Total_Population, Pct_Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Coefficients[a] - Islamist Vote Share 2014

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	21.293	15.414		1.381	.168
	Log Total Population	2.744E-005	.000	.059	1.021	.308
	Youth Ratio	1.112	.276	.200	4.026	.000
	Public Employment	-.091	.092	-.075	-.992	.322
	Commerce	.439	.153	.162	2.862	.005
	Pct Unemployment	.249	.132	.138	1.888	.060
	Female Labour Force	-.663	.092	-.571	-7.194	.000
	University	-.585	.216	-.314	-2.707	.007
	No Education	-.785	.127	-.689	-6.202	.000
	Wealth	1.666	2.075	.113	.803	.423
	Mosques per 10K	.623	.170	.200	3.656	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Pct_Islamist_2014

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16644.553	10	1664.455	19.541	.000[b]
	Residual	21549.711	253	85.177		
	Total	38194.264	263			

a. Dependent Variable: Pct Islamist 2014

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques per 10K, Commerce, Youth_Ratio, Public_Employment, Female_Labour_Force, Log Total Population, Pct Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.660[a]	.436	.413	9.22912372 1784

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques_per_10K, Commerce, Youth_Ratio, Public_Employment, Female_Labour_Force, Log_Total_Population, Pct_Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Coefficients[a] – Secular Vote Share 2014

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	57.223	16.756		3.415	.001
	Log_Total_Population	-7.404E-005	.000	-.129	-2.534	.012
	Youth_Ratio	-1.609	.300	-.235	-5.356	.000
	Public_Employment	-.370	.100	-.248	-3.710	.000
	Commerce	-.081	.167	-.024	-.488	.626
	Pct_Unemployment	-.206	.144	-.093	-1.435	.152
	Female_Labour_Force	.626	.100	.437	6.244	.000
	University	.638	.235	.277	2.713	.007
	No_Education	.412	.138	.294	2.998	.003
	Wealth	3.408	2.256	.187	1.511	.132
	Mosques_per_10K	-.775	.185	-.202	-4.185	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Pct_Secular_2014

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32552.540	10	3255.254	32.341	.000[b]
	Residual	25465.509	253	100.654		
	Total	58018.049	263			

a. Dependent Variable: Pct Secular 2014

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques per 10K, Commerce, Youth Ratio, Public Employment, Female Labour Force, Log Total Population, Pct Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.749[a]	.561	.544	10.03265592400

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques_per_10K, Commerce, Youth_Ratio, Public_Employment, Female_Labour_Force, Log_Total_Population, Pct_Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Coefficients[a] – Nidaa Tounes Vote Share 2014

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.246	15.831		1.279	.202
	Log_Total_Population	-8.759E-005	.000	-.156	-3.172	.002
	Youth_Ratio	-1.091	.284	-.163	-3.843	.000
	Public_Employment	-.365	.094	-.250	-3.868	.000
	Commerce	-.049	.158	-.015	-.308	.758
	Pct_Unemployment	-.368	.136	-.169	-2.711	.007
	Female_Labour_Force	.656	.095	.469	6.932	.000
	University	.438	.222	.195	1.974	.049
	No_Education	.575	.130	.419	4.428	.000
	Wealth	5.739	2.131	.322	2.693	.008
	Mosques_per_10K	-.728	.175	-.194	-4.161	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Pct_Nidaa_Tounes

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32735.467	10	3273.547	36.434	.000[b]
	Residual	22732.017	253	89.850		
	Total	55467.483	263			

a. Dependent Variable: Pct Nidaa Tounes

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques per 10K, Commerce, Youth Ratio, Public Employment, Female Labour Force, Log Total Population, Pct Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.768[a]	.590	.574	9.478917088047039

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mosques per 10K, Commerce, Youth Ratio, Public Employment, Female Labour Force, Log Total Population, Pct Unemployment, University, No_Education, Wealth

Data Analysis

Employment Structure

The association between Tunisia's employment structure and voting outcomes helps illuminate the economic constituencies of the Islamist voting bloc. This in turn has implications for assessing whether a sectoral or class cleavage mediates the political divide with the secular parties.

In the 2011 election, we find that commerce is positively and significantly associated with Ennahda's vote share: a 1% increase in commerce is associated with a 0.315% increase in Islamist voting. This is significant at the 5% significance level. There is a marginal positive correlation for secular vote share, but it is statistically insignificant. The strength of the association between commerce and Ennahda's vote share increases in the 2014 election with the coefficient rising to 0.439 at the 1% level. In the same election, commerce is not significantly associated with the percentage of secular party votes. The results suggest the 'petit bourgeois' demographic is an important constituency of Ennahda's vote share. This matches the party's policy platform of trade and financial liberalisation. The 2011 manifesto pledged to reduce the tax burden for medium and low-income groups and advocated a reduction in private sector regulation[15]. The party also declared its intention to diversify the financial market with a mixture of traditional and Islamic banks. These policies stem from the party's desire to reform the market from the bottom up with an Islamic ethic of microeconomic virtue (Anani, 2012). Not having delivered on its Sharia finance promise, Ennahda's 2014 platform retained a commitment to promoting trade competition and reducing public-sector corruption. In an interview with the author, Rached Ghannouchi stated: 'We believe in a social free market: a free market with social guarantees. The state is a bad manager.'[16] The contrast with Nidaa Tounes' vote share is particularly interesting because the party also ran on a 'pro-business' platform, emphasising its alleged technocratic competence. Space limitations mean we cannot elaborate on the precise reasons for the difference, though it is possible the party's association with RCD cronyism dissuaded the commercial constituency in relative terms.

We do not find any significant association between Islamist vote share and public employment in either the 2011 or 2014 elections. Informed by Weingrod's (1968) logic on how patronage increases support for the incumbent leadership, it is not surprising that administrative workers and state employees were not significantly attracted to the Islamist alternative. What is intriguing, however, is that public sector employment was negatively associated (-0.365) with Nidaa Tounes' vote share at the 1% level of significance in 2014.

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[15] Economic Agenda of the Islamist Parties (Carnegie, 2012: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/islamist_econ.pdf) (Accessed 24th August, 2017)

[16] Interview with Sheikh Rached Ghannouchi, July 6th 2017 at Ennahda headquarters in Tunis.

According to a poll of 1200 Tunisians conducted by Arab Barometer in advance of the NCA elections, the status of the economy was the overwhelming concern of voters.[17] Deep-seated pessimism about the government's failure to address this structural problem is also reflected in polling data from 2013 and 2016.[18] Levels of unemployment, however, are not significantly associated with Islamist voting in either the 2011 or 2014 election. For the secular parties in 2011, there was also no significant association. This suggests the level of unemployment was not electorally important in determining party choice. In the 2014 election, however, percentage unemployment was negatively associated with secular vote share (-0.368) at the 1% level of significance. This is interesting because polling data from the Arab Barometer reveals that public perceptions of the national economic situation worsened under the Ennahda-led Troika government (Berman, 2016). Despite having a detailed economic programme, the Jebali and Laarayedh governments essentially continued the previous government's agenda without success (Guazzone, 2013).

Education

The relationship between secular education and electoral behaviour is important to consider because levels of education can affect political preferences and the propensity to vote for Islamic parties (Cesur and Mocan, 2013). Modernist scholars from Durkeim to Weber contended that a decline in religiosity would accompany a rise in the level of general education and economic development. Testing this formulation, Norris and Inglehart (2004) found that while there was an observable trend away from religion in developed countries, the same pattern did not manifest in the developing world. According to studies of developed countries, education levels are also the most important factor affecting individual turnout with the better educated more likely to vote (Milligan et al. 2004; Pelkonen, 2012). The generalisability of this argument, however, has been questioned by findings from Turkey (Cesur and Mocan, 2013). Possessing some of the highest literacy and educational attainment rates in the Arab world (88% for men and 72% for women[19]), Tunisia is an intriguing case to measure the association between average levels of education and voter distribution along the Islamist-Secular spectrum.

We find that in both the 2011 and 2014 elections, the coefficients for university education are negatively correlated with Ennahda's vote share. Specifically, in 2011 a 1% increase in university education is associated with a 0.802% decrease in the Islamist vote. In 2014, the coefficient is -0.585. Both associations are significant at the 1% level. By contrast, the association is positive for the secular parties in 2011 (1.391) and in 2014 (0.638). Again, the associations are significant at the 1% level.

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[17] Michael Robbins and Mark Tessler: http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/12/07/tunisians-voted-for-jobs-not-islam/ (Accessed 24th August 2017)
[18] Arab Barometer: Waves II, III, IV.
[19] UNESCO 2011: https://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/EPDC%20NEP_Tunisia.pdf (Accessed 20th August 2017)

The relationship between 'no education' and Islamist vote share is very intriguing. We find that in 2011 a 1% increase in this variable is associated with a 0.869% decrease in Ennahda's vote fraction. The association is significant at the 1% level. The pattern is reproduced in 2014 (-0.785) and remains significant (1%). The association is reversed for the secular parties. In 2011, we derive a positive coefficient of 0.332 (1% significance) and in 2014 the coefficient is 0.412 (1% significance). This suggests that secular vote increased among the uneducated in 2014.

The data shows educational attainment, particularly at the higher and lower echelon, is a significant index of Tunisia's electoral cleavage. Delegations with disproportionately high or low levels of education have a lower probability of voting Islamist. It seems Ennahda's voter support is proportionally higher among those with primary and secondary levels of education. This finding is particularly interesting when contrasted with the Islamist experiences in Morocco and Egypt as described in the literature review. The proportionally higher support from among those with secondary education bears resemblance with the AKP in Turkey (Debali, 2015). Challenging the horizontal voting thesis, the lower proportion of support from among the university educated also contrasts with the high education levels of Ennahda's MPs. Indeed, the party has the most educated parliamentary constituency (Labadi, 2014).

Female Employment

Given the different socio-economic roles often ascribed to men and women in traditional Muslim societies, we can expect differences in Islamist and secular support among male and female voters (Fidrmuc and Börke Tunalı, 2016). In their study of the 2011 election in, Amara et al. use a blunt statistical instrument (male-female sex ratio) to control for gender distribution. As a result, their findings are limited to demonstrating that women were less likely than men to vote for Congress for the Republic. As gender distribution is nearly identical across the delegations, we instead test for an association between female labour force participation and vote share. As in other Muslim-majority countries, female employment in Tunisia is relatively low, with mean participation at 26.9%. Women's employment also varies widely between regions (8.43% to 54.33%) and the highest participation rates can be observed in towns in the coastal plane, especially among wealthier neighbourhoods.

Gender politics has been central to the transitional process. In the demonstrations from December 2010-January 2011, women played an important activist role in both the real and virtual political space (Khalil, 2014). The abandonment of rigid secularism rules also gave rise to a more plural, religious environment in which comportment of the veil noticeably heightened (Donker, 2013). The debates of the NCA, moreover, reflected many issues pertinent to women such as the future of the Code of Personal Status, which was introduced by Bourguiba in 1959. To address the systematic exclusion of women from formal politics, the transitional government passed a law in April 2011 mandating equal numbers of women and

men on electoral lists. In the NCA elections, however, a meagre 7% of lists were headed by women.[20] This increased to just over 11% in the 2014 election (ISIE, 2014) suggesting parties may have recognised the value of female leadership in attracting women's votes. Indeed, Ennahda specifically put the former UGTE executive committee member, Souad Abderrahim, as the head of its list in the Tunis 2 district in October 2011 to advance a gender progressive image (Abadi, 2014).

During the 2011 election campaign, parties such as the PDM and PDP frequently advocated that a victory for Ennahda would endanger women's rights (Aghrout, 2014). Indeed, in the pre-election period, Ennahda maintained an ambiguous stance on the constitutional future of the Code of Personal Status. Looking to the data, in the 2011 election we find that a 1% increase in female employment was associated with a 0.362% decrease in Islamist vote share. This was significant at the 1% level. There was no statistically significant relationship with secular party votes, however.

The debates of the NCA had significant implications for women. During the 2012-2013 period, Ennahda advocated a 'gender complementarity' clause be enshrined in the constitution. While this clause and another pertaining to *Sharia* were eventually withdrawn from the second draft of the constitution in April 2013 following massive pressure from the opposition parties and civil society groups, we might expect that a working woman's fear of marginalisation could induce a greater vote share for the secular parties in 2014. This is reflected in the data. In the 2014 election, female employment was associated with a 0.585% decrease in Ennahda vote share. By contrast, it was associated with a 0.676% increase in secular party vote share. Both associations were significant at the 1% level. We can specifically identify a positive swing in favour of Nidaa Tounes which had a positive coefficient of 0.656 at the 1% significance level. Importantly, however, in the 2014 election Ennahda and Nidaa Tounes had the fewest women heading lists with 3 each: a statistic which contradicts their rhetorical efforts to win women voters (Abadi, 2014).

According to a report from *Gender Concerns International*, 50.5% of registered voters in 2014 were women and observer missions recorded that female turnout was high.[21] Corroborating evidence for a gender divide is provided by the results from the presidential election in November 2014. Pool indications from the North African statistics agency *Sigma Conseil* suggest 1 million women voted for Béji Caid Essebsi in the second round of the presidential election. This contrasts dramatically with his challenger

[20]Electoral Practice of Tunisian Women (Wilson Centre, 2011) Accessed on 21st August 2017: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/electoral_practice_of_tunisian_women_in_the_context_of_a_democratic_transition.pdf

[21] Low Youth Turnout and Hight Female Turnout Observed in 2014 Vote (Tunisia Live, Accessed on 18th August 2017): http://www.tunisia-live net/2014/10/30/low-youth-high-female-voter-turnout-observed-in-2014-vote/

Monzef Marzouki who gained just over 300,000 women's votes (Sigma Conseil, 2014).[22] According to the director and statistician Hassen Zargouni, the overwhelming gender divide reflected concerns over the Code of Personal Status, the application of Article 45 and a desire to strengthen women's presence in the socio-economic arena. Indeed, he specifically describes Ennahda as the 'the party of men' (translation).[23] This supports the contention of Khedija Arfaoui (a leading member of the liberal feminist organisation, *Les Femmes Démocrates*) that 'urban women voted for Nidaa as a modernist party against Ennahda. They don't trust them [Ennahda].'[24]

Wealth

The data reveals no statistically significant correlation between average household wealth and Islamist vote share in either the 2011 or 2014 elections. This suggests the Islamist voter base is financially heterogenous in composition. In an interview, the Ennahda MP and former NCA Vice-President Meherzia Labidi said, 'We have the urban middle class, now we need to reach out to the rural poor.'[25] We do, however, observe a positive and strongly significant association (1% level) between wealth and Nidaa Tounes' vote share in the 2014 election. Specifically, a one-unit increase in wealth was associated with a 5.739% increase in vote share. This finding empirically supports the popular notion that Nidaa is a middle-class party also favoured by the Tunisian upper class. It performed best in wealthy coastal districts. Gana et al. (2016) noted the impact of relative wealth in the Tunis district in the 2011 election. Future research should perhaps analyse the association between vote share and local Gini coefficients.

Youth Ratio

Taking our cue from Reith (2013) who assessed the 'youth bulge' theory as a possible explanation for the 2010 revolution, we test for an association between the proportion of a population aged 15-29 and vote share. The theory suggests that an expansive youth sector with material grievances is connected to the growth of anti-status quo politics (Goldstone, 2002). In the 2011 election, we find no significant association between this variable and Ennahda's vote share. However, we do observe a significant negative association (-0.532) with secular vote share at the 5% significance level. The pattern is repeated in 2014 where youth ratio acquires a stronger (-1.609) and more significant (1% level) negative association with the secular fraction. In 2014, moreover, a 1% increase in youth ratio is associated with a 1.112% increase in Islamist voting at the 1% level.[1] We cannot be certain without individual level data but it seems Ennahda attracts a mixed age demographic. Secular voting, by contrast, is higher among

[22] Sigma Conseil: http://www.webmanagercenter.com/2014/12/26/158556/tunisie-elections-un-million-de-femmes-ont-vote-bce-c-est-le-plus-grand-parti-de-la-tunisie-hassen-zargouni/
[23] Ibid.
[24] Interview on 6th July, 2017 in Tunis.
[25] Interview on 4th July, 2017 at Ennahda HQ in Tunis.

elderly voters (60+) in both elections. This is confirmed in the robustness test described below. Furthermore, the trajectory of youth voting is currently unclear. In November 2015, the *Union Générale Tunisienne des Etudiants* (UGTE) - an Islamist student organisation loosely affiliated with Ennahda - defeated the *Union Générale des Etudiants de Tunisie* (UGET) – a leftist coalition – in the university elections (Tho Seeth, 2016). Considered an index of the national political divide, this result could possibly foreshadow an Islamist victory in the upcoming local elections scheduled for December 2017.

Mosque Density

We used mosque density as a proxy for exposure to religious political activism. In the 2011 election, a one-unit increase in mosque density was associated with a 0.296% increase in Ennahda's vote share. This was significant at the 5% significance level. Secular vote share in 2011 was not associated with mosque density to any significant degree. In 2014, a one-unit increase in mosque density was associated with a 0.623% increase in Islamist voting. The association was significant at the 1% level. By contrast, the coefficient for secular voting was negative (-0.775) and significant at the 1% level.

It could be suggested that mosque density is in fact a proxy for religiosity. Ennahda's success in constituencies with more mosques could thus be interpreted as reflecting its popularity among more devout population centres. In absence of individual-level data, however, this assumption cannot be confirmed. Indeed, Bourguiba and Ben Ali carefully monitored mosque construction as a means of restricting Islamist organisational space (McCarthy, 2013). For example, a 2008 report indicates that the state allocated mosque construction permits according to an arbitrary ratio of mosques to people.[26] This would suggest that since at least 2008 no linear connection can be inferred between mosque density and popular religiosity.

Mosque density can, however, be construed as an index of religious institutionalisation. A deep and extensive religious network can be used by religious parties (or their supporters) for political campaigning and organisation. This is a plausible assumption in the case of a transitional democracy because as Desai (2002: 624) points out, political parties in new democracies "are presented with structurally defined possibilities" that include "prior forms of association [and] pre-existing networks of social action." Indeed, the transition witnessed an intensification of religious activism. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, applications for mosque construction rose from approximately 100 per month to 200-300 per month after the revolution (Donker, 2013). The 'parallel Islamic sector' (Wickham, 2012) affords Islamist political organisations greater opportunities, relative to secular competitors, to engage with voters. There is qualitative evidence to support this interpretation. A leaked internal Ennahda

[26] "Tunisia imposes new conditions on building mosques, including demonstrating need," al-Fajr News (Tunis), April 6, 2008; available at: http://www.turess.com/alfajrnews/3680

memorandum from 2014 encouraged activists to take an 'interest' in mosques for propagating the Ennahda message.[27] The document acknowledges the constitutional prohibition on political campaigning within religious establishments. Nonetheless, it recommends that members adopt creative strategies for electoral engagement.[28] The only secular network which could plausibly compete with Tunisia's religious infrastructure is the UGTT. Membership, however, stands at a mere 3% of the country's workforce.[29]

A second index of religious institutionalisation is the growth of Islamic civil society activism in the wake of the 2010 revolution. In the Bourguiba and Ben Ali eras, mosques sought to address the material inequalities generated by economic liberalisation and the diminution of state welfare provision.[30] Reviving this tradition, Islamic philanthropy – as a specific type of civic organisation - has arguably emerged as an independent social structure in the post-revolutionary context.[31] For example, charitable organisations with "religious reference" such as *Sanabil al-Khair* and *Mouazara* quickly established themselves among the marginalised peripheries of Tunis (Ettadhamen or Douar Hicher) and Sfax. Thousands of these charities have been recognised since 2011 and they operate at the level of nearly every neighbourhood – often using mosques as mobilising vessels (Donker, 2013). As their institutional embeddedness has deepened, moreover, they have widened their coalitions. In Sfax, for example, *Mouazara* has developed formal partnerships with thirty associations including *da'wa*, Qur'anic studies and social welfare groups.[32] It is important to note that most post-revolution Islamic charities are not explicitly politicised. However, that is not to say they lack a political agenda. Deprived neighbourhoods of Tunis and Sfax, for example, have become polarised between the leftist-secular associations and their new, religious competitors.[33]

In the 2011 election, Ennahda won strong majorities in the neighbourhoods of Sfax and the poorer suburbs of Tunis. Importantly, the fact that these were lost in 2014 despite the growth of these organisations would suggest Ennahda's political support base is not reducible to clientelist politicking by Islamic charities. Alternatively, it is possible that disappointment at the failure of Ennahda to provide said services – as was widely desired[34] - motivated the shift in vote. Nonetheless, that mosque density became more strongly associated with Ennahda voting in 2014 could point towards a consolidation of the 'core',

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[27] http://www.businessnews.com.tn/Le-plan-dEnnahdha-pour-gagner-les-%C3%A9lections,519,48757,3 (
[28] http://www.businessnews.com.tn/Le-plan-dEnnahdha-pour-gagner-les-%C3%A9lections,519,48757,3
[29] Arab Barometer, Wave II (2011)
[30] Tunisia's Evolving Islamic Charitable Sector and Its Model of Social Mobilization: http://www.mei.edu/content/map/which-civil-society-post-revolutionary-tunisia#_ftn15
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Interview with Ennahda member and Islamic charity president cited in: http://www mei.edu/content/map/which-civil-society-post-revolutionary-tunisia#_ftn15

politically conscious and religiously observant electorate. The founder of the secular party Machroua Tounes, Mohsen Marzouk, has suggested that when it comes to the relationship between politics and Islam, the Ennahda electorate is split into three sectors: an ideological core of 7-8% of the population, a second layer of voters animated by the *rhetoric* of political religion and a third sector of swing voters.[35] Empirically investigating the validity of this model is beyond the scope of this study. However, his estimation lends weight to our inferences from the data that, compared with their secular party competitors, Ennahda's voter demographic is significantly more enmeshed in religious networks.

Robustness Check

We have observed that the socioeconomic character of a delegation has a significant effect upon vote share. Specifically, our variables pertaining to education and rates female employment exhibit high statistical significance. While we controlled for population density by taking the log of the population, it may still be contended that our variables were affected by a confounder such as relative urbanisation. To assess this, we introduced a proxy for urbanisation: percentage employment in agriculture. Thus, we included the interaction terms (Female Employment*Agriculture) and (No Education*Agriculture) in our regression models and still found our chosen variables to have the same statistical significance at the 1% level in both 2011 and 2014. By testing for agriculture, we also account for the relatively high ratio of female-male workers in the agricultural sector. The inclusion of percentage secondary education also had non-distortionary effects. To check the robustness of the youth ratio variable, we used the percentage of voters over sixty and found that this was negatively associated with Islamist voting (-1.199) in both 2011 and 2014 at the 1% level. To test the religious institutional significance and levels of religious politicisation, future studies could try regressing individual religiosity and religious political membership with Islamist vote share.

[35] Interview with the author, 9th July 2017.

Conclusion

The research questions presented in the introduction can be answered as follows:

1. There are salient and consistent demographic characteristics of Islamist voting across the two elections.
2. These characteristics differ from secular party vote share with respect to employment type, levels of education, levels of female labour force participation and religious institutional density.
3. The patterns point towards a grievance-horizontal model of Islamist voter behaviour, qualified by gender and religious conservatism.

This paper has contributed to the literature on voting in transitional democracies and the literature on political Islam. We find that Islamist and secular party voting is not reducible to any single factor or pre-conceived theoretical binary. Thus, we counter reductionist efforts which frame Tunisia's electoral cleavage as an exclusively ideological battle. The explanatory significance of a combination of socioeconomic variables and proxied ideology variables advance our understanding of who votes for Islamists in two main ways. Firstly, it shows Islamist and secular electorates are elastic and subject to shifts in their political and economic environments. Secondly, it shows ideological factors intersect with material developments. This finding in turn suggests the voter logics governing election outcomes for Islamist parties ought not to be analysed in monolithic terms of a regional Islamist voting bloc. Local dynamics are salient.

Firstly, we found that a relationship exists between Tunisia's employment structure and Islamist vote share but that it is limited to the commercial sector. That employment in commerce was significantly associated with voting for Ennahda in both 2011 and 2014 lends weight to the petit bourgeois Islamist voter hypothesis. Public sector employment and levels of unemployment, by contrast, appear unimportant in mediating Tunisia's electoral divide. This suggests patronage – proxied by levels of public employment – is not a relevant variable in Tunisia's electoral context. This finding can be situated at the intersection of the grievance-horizontal model. On the one hand, petit bourgeois voters are structurally marginalised by cronyism and anti-competitive markets. On the other, by virtue of their economic position, they are not fully excluded from the system either.

Secondly, we found that levels of education were statistically significant. The best and the worst educated are the least likely to vote Islamist and the most likely to vote for the secular parties. From this we infer that Islamist voters are found predominantly among those with median levels of education (primary or secondary). Our robustness check confirmed the validity of this inference. These findings enable us to overlook, if not reject, the clientelist model which predicts an association between a lack of education and

Islamist voting. The contrast between this finding and those of Wegner and Pellicer (Morocco) and Elsayyad and Hanafy (Egypt) are intriguing and merit further enquiry in a cross—country study.

Thirdly, we found that average household wealth was not significantly associated with Ennahda's vote share. This suggests the party has a financially wide-ranging support base. The same can be said of the secular parties except for Nidaa Tounes in 2014. For them we found a strong positive correlation with average wealth. With our data set it was difficult to conduct a robustness test for this finding because there was no reliable poverty indicator in the census data. We recommend that future studies look at the association between local Gini coefficients and election outcomes.

Fourthly, we find that while the youth ratio was not positively associated with Islamist vote share (as the grievance model would suggest) in 2011, it became significant in 2014 albeit with a small positive coefficient. Our robustness check used the percentage of elderly voters and found a positive and statistically significant correlation with secular vote share. This points towards a generational gap in Tunisia's electoral arena. Overall, our socioeconomic findings challenge the qualitative observation of Zeghal (2013) that "the secularist parties' and al-Nahdha's constituencies are not necessarily that different in terms of their socioeconomic characteristics."

Looking to our ideological axis, we proxied for gender conservatism by examining levels of female labour force participation. We find that this variable is negatively associated with Islamist voting in both elections (more strongly in 2014). The inverse inference is also verified, showing a positive association with secular vote share, also to a highly significant level. The level of female employment remained statistically significant when controlling for wealth and urbanisation.

In absence of a reliable measure on public religiosity, we examined levels of exposure to religious political activism using mosque density as a proxy. The results show that religious institutional density was positively associated with Islamist voting in both 2011 and 2014. The association became significantly stronger in the latter election, which suggests Ennahda consolidated the religiously conservative electorate. By contrast, we found a strong negative association between secular vote share and the variable in question in 2014. Ethnographic research is required to identify the precise mechanism by which religious institutional density engenders the Islamist vote.

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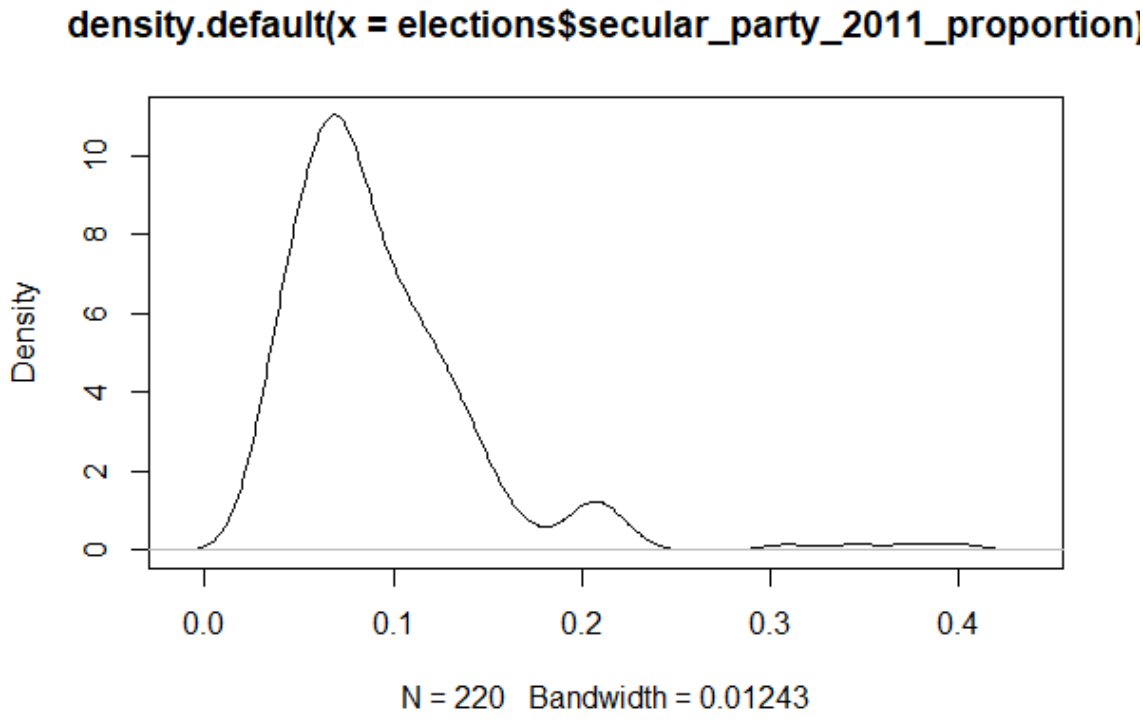
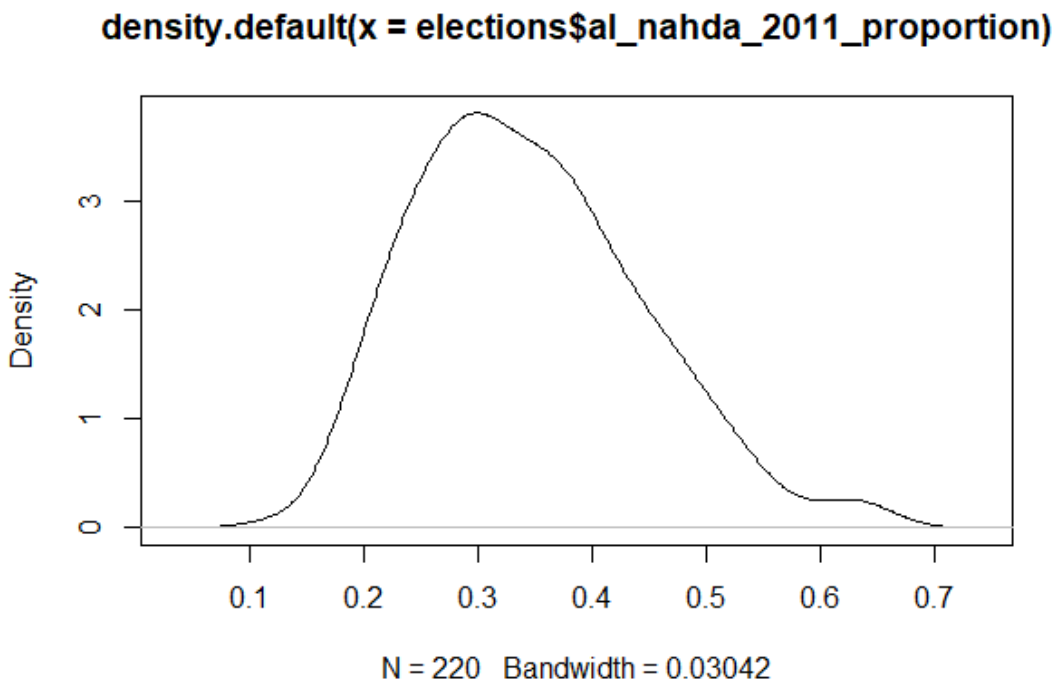
Appendix

Kernel Density Graphs for 2011 and 2014 elections.

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0.1
0.2
0.3
0.4
0.5
0.6
0.7
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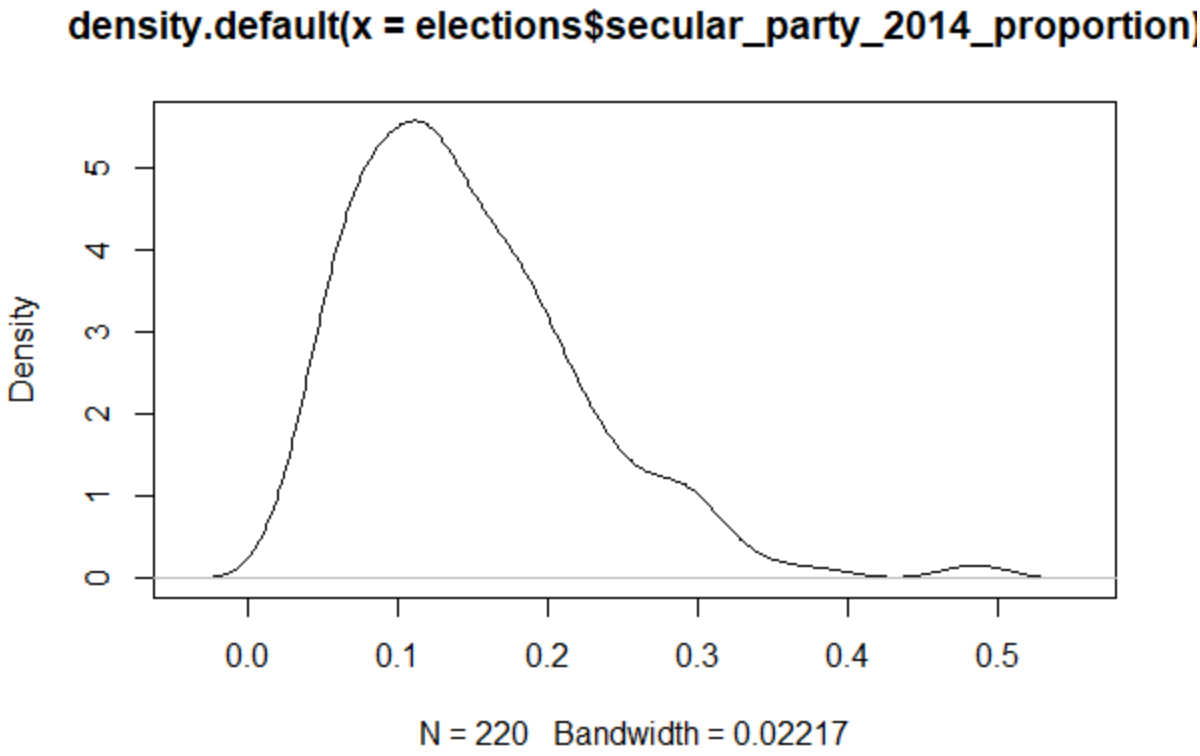
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3
4
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0.2
0.3
0.4
0.5
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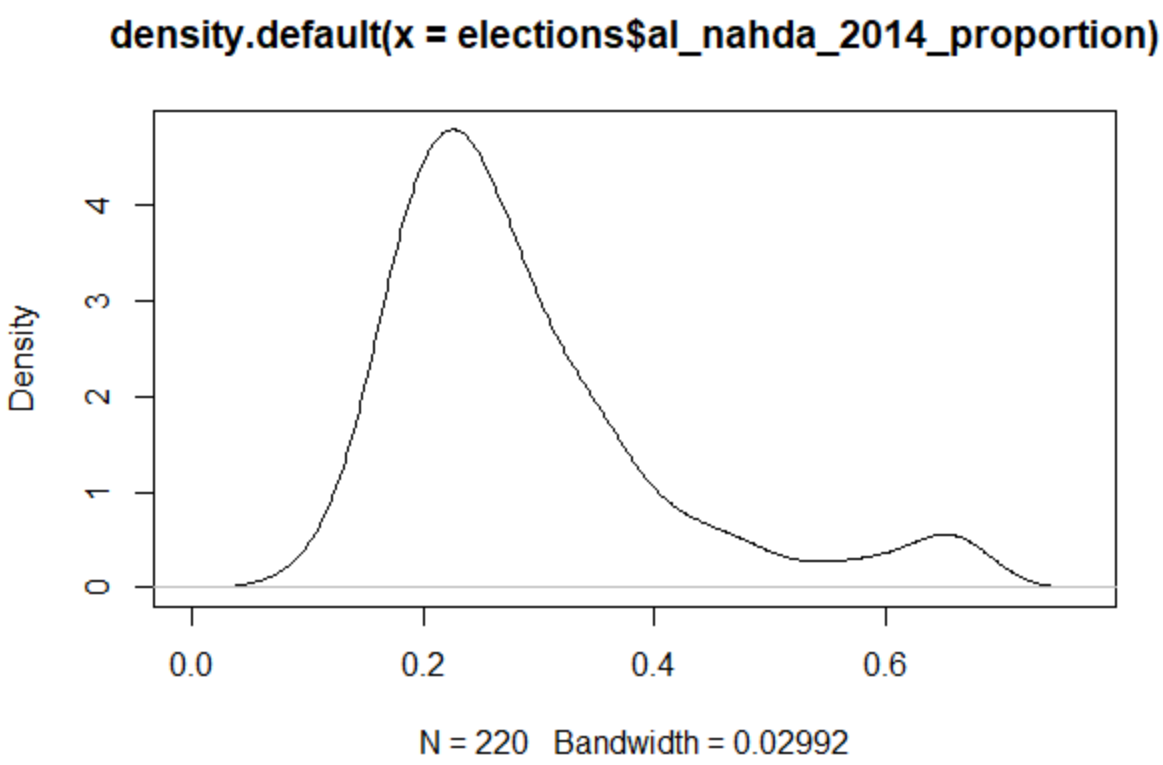
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3
4
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0.2
0.4
0.6
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