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ARTICLE

The Evolution of Tunisian Salafism after the Revolution: From *La Maddhabiyya* to Salafi-Malikism

Fabio Merone[1], Théo Blanc[2] and Ester Sigillò[3]*

[1]Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherche sur l'Afrique et le Moyen-Orient, Universite Laval, Quebec, Canada, [2]Department of Social and Political Sciences, European University, Florence, Italy and [3]Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, Italy
*Corresponding author. Email: ester.sigillo@eui.eu

Abstract
What shape does Salafism take in Tunisia after the ban of the Salafi-Jihadi group Ansar al-Shari'a and the wave of securitization carried out by national authorities? This article argues that a constraining legal context put Salafism's doctrinal rigidity in tension with its survival and ultimately prompted a residual current of Salafi actors to accommodate their stance toward Malikism, the prevalent school (*madhhab*) in the country. This adaptation is at odds with contemporary Salafism, which traditionally dismisses all four law schools (*lā madhabiyya*), rejects their blind imitation (*taqlīd*), and claims the superiority of the Qur'an, hadith, and consensus of the *salaf* (pious predecessors) over jurisprudence (*fiqh*). To account for this puzzle, this article scrutinizes the historical development of Salafism and the evolution of its stance toward Malikism across three generational waves. It notably shows how religious securitization associated with the promotion of a "moderate" Islam pushed Salafi actors to redefine their ideology to preserve their preaching and teaching activities. We call Salafi-Malikism the outcome of this adaptive strategy. Drawing on the Tunisian case, we argue that, despite its purist claims, Salafism is not an immutable religious current, but can take different trajectories to survive in constraining environments.

Keywords: Islam; Malikism; Salafism; Tunisia

The Arab uprisings have led to the resurgence of religious parties and movements after several decades of repression. In Tunisia, immediately after the fall of the Ben Ali regime in January 2011, the religious field witnessed the rise of new grassroots entrepreneurs, often "self-made imams" leaning toward Salafism, not appointed by the state.[1] By 2012, the ideological spectrum of the Islamic landscape had crystallized into four main trends: Islamists akin to the Muslim Brothers (represented by Ennahda [Renaissance]), Salafi political parties (the most prominent being Jabhat al-Islah [Reform Front]), religious associations of various ideological affiliations, and revolutionary Salafi-Jihadis (mainly Ansar al-Shari'a [Shari'a Partisans]). This scenario lasted until 2013, when the assassination of two leftist political leaders by a Jihadi commando triggered a severe political crisis which ultimately led the Islamist party in power, Ennahda, to formally cut its relationships with Salafi actors and to relinquish power in favor of a technocratic government. Consequently, the Salafi sociopolitical landscape was reshuffled: the Salafi-Jihadi group Ansar al-Shari'a was banned, and Salafi associations suspected to have links with terrorist groups were shut down.

After these events, the success of the political transition hinged on the ability of the two main contenders on the political scene, the Islamist Ennahda and the modernist Nidaa Tounès, to reach an agreement over the adoption of a new constitution and the creation of a "government of national unity,"

[1]Georges Fahmi and Hamza Meddeb, "Market for Jihad: Radicalization in Tunisia," Carnegie Middle East Center, 15 October 2015, https://carnegie-mec.org/2015/10/15/market-for-jihad-radicalization-in-tunisia-pub-61629.

respectively in January and October 2014.[2] These deals meant the acceptance of Ennahda in the institutional field as a legitimate political force but also the redefinition of Tunisian religious space. Mosques and several religious associations were brought under the state's control and regulated under a more stringent legal framework.[3] In 2015, as a reaction to the double attacks at the Bardo Museum in Tunis and the resort in Soussa, the government officially announced a new campaign of securitization under the label of the "war against terrorism," aimed at curtailing all the "extremisms" present in the country.[4]

Government security policies came hand in hand with official discourses of the institutional and political actors that promoted a moderate and local Islam and excluded those religious expressions perceived as radical.[5] These discourses also have fostered a nationalist religious canon that emphasizes the role of the Zaytuna, the historical Tunisian university-mosque that distinguished itself over decades for its teaching approach based on the predominant *madhhab* in the country, the Maliki school.[6] The security campaign backed by the above-mentioned discourses has actually echoed the prerevolutionary regime's policies aimed at promoting a "controlled" domestic Islam in contrast to the "radical" Islam usually associated with religious actors who are deemed strangers to the Tunisian context. Since independence in 1956, the Bourguiba (1956–87) and Ben Ali (1987–2011) regimes had in fact rooted their modernist, nationalist ideology in the claim of a "Tunisian specificity" linked to the Zaytuni tradition.[7] The post-2013 governments reactivated this frame: Zaytuni teachings, as also reported by local media and political actors, embodied a traditional Tunisian Islam considered incompatible with religious "extremisms" imported from the Gulf, namely Salafism.[8] The securitization campaign and the institutional discourses have been backed by a large stratum of society, such as secular associations, but also by religious organizations that have increasingly regarded Salafism as a form of religiosity linked to extremism and violence and alien to Tunisian religious traditions. The label "Salafi" was indeed routinely associated with intolerance and terrorism by local media and in several official speeches of secular political parties, which pushed many Salafis to dissimulate or drop the label altogether from 2015 onward.[9]

The reconfiguration of the Salafi movement that followed this new security-centered scenario is the focus of this article. How have Salafis coped in the last seven years with an increasingly constrained environment? Although, after the ban of Ansar al-Shari'a, Jihadi Salafism has become largely radicalized and political Salafism has almost disappeared, we argue that a scholastic Salafi trend managed to survive the harsh constraints set by national authorities by conforming to the Maliki school, the prevalent doctrine in the country.[10] In other words, we demonstrate how Malikization constituted a survival strategy on the

[2]Duncan Pickard, "Prospects for Implementing Democracy in Tunisia," *Mediterranean Politics* 19, no. 2 (2014): 259–64, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2014.917796.

[3]Ester Sigillò, "Islamism and the Rise of Islamic Charities in Post-Authoritarian Tunisia: Claiming Political Islam through Other Means?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2020): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2020.1861926.

[4]David Gartenstein-Ross and Bridget Moreng, "Tunisian Jihadism after the Sousse Massacre," *CTC Sentinel* 8 (2015): 13–18; Fatemah al-Zubairi, "The Role of Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism in Shaping Anti-Terrorism: Law in Comparative and International Perspectives; Case Studies of Egypt and Tunisia" (PhD diss., York University, 2017).

[5]"Mounir Tlili: Promouvoir un discours religieux modéré et rationnel," Directinfo, 3 May 2014, https://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2014/05/03/mounir-tlili-promouvoir-un-discours-religieux-modere-et-rationnel.

[6]Interview with the person responsible for religious associations at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, July 2019, Tunis. See also, "La Tunisie renforce l'enseignement de l'islam modéré," Kapitalis, 28 June 2014, http://www.kapitalis.com/politique/23153-la-tunisie-renforce-l-enseignement-de-l-islam-modere-video.html.

[7]Edward Webb, "The 'Church' of Bourguiba: Nationalizing Islam in Tunisia," *Sociology of Islam* 1 (2013): 17–40, https://doi.org/10.1163/22131418-00101002; Rory McCarthy, "Re-Thinking Secularism in Post-Independence Tunisia," *Journal of North African Studies* 19, no. 5 (2014): 733–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2014.917585.

[8]"La Tunisie renforce l'enseignement de l'islam modéré," http://www.kapitalis.com/politique/23153-la-tunisie-renforce-l-enseignement-de-l-islam-modere-video.html.

[9]Théo Blanc, "La politisation du salafisme après les révolutions arabes; Le cas tunisien" (MA diss., Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Grenoble, 2018), 55–63; Théo Blanc, "Être 'islamiste' ou 'salafiste' en 2018," *La Lettre de l'IRMC* 22 (April–October 2018).

[10]Salafi movements in the Arab world have for the most part refrained from political participation. The issue of Salafi political participation gained academic and political attention in North Africa after the Arab uprisings, with the Salafist al-Nour party in Egypt as the most emblematic example. See Stefano Torelli, Fabio Merone, and Francesco Cavatorta, "Salafism in Tunisia: Challenges and Opportunities for Democratization," *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 4 (2012): 140–54; Georges Fahmi, "The Future of Political Salafism in Egypt and Tunisia," Carnegie Middle East Center, 16 November 2015, https://carnegie-mec.org/2015/11/16/future-of-political-salafism-in-egypt-and-tunisia-pub-61871; Fabio Merone, "Between Social Contention and

part of Salafis to preserve their religious and teaching activities in the face of the securitization and domestication of the religious field. We label the outcome of this adaptive strategy "Salafi-Malikism." This evolution constitutes a puzzling situation with regard to the academic literature, which argues that Salafism rejects the imitation of the four traditional juridical schools in line with the writings of the first Salafi scholars, Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), Ibn al-Qayyim (1292–1350), and al-Shawkani (1759–1839).[11] In legal matters, Salafis indeed "usually deny that the four Sunni schools of Islamic law have any authority apart from the canonical primary sources on which each body of jurisprudence is supposed to be based."[12] Ultimately, we show that like the Islamist party Ennahda that turned into a conservative party in a time of acute legitimization crisis, Salafis are not immutable actors; on the contrary, they may prioritize survival over doctrinal rigidity in repressive contexts.[13] This echoes a body of literature that, although tackling the political rather than the legal and cultural dimensions of Salafi adaptation, highlights trends of nationalization.[14]

In the first part of the article, we provide a historical overview of the Salafis' first generation (1970s–80s) and second generation (1980s–90s) and their relationship with Malikism, and we clarify the reasons for the latter's rejection of *taqlīd*. We then describe and situate the transformations of the Salafi actors after the 2010–11 revolution in the broader political context. We highlight how the political crisis in 2013, the following securitization campaign, and Ennahdha's pragmatic turn in 2014 have all contributed to a strategic adaption of residual Salafis vis-à-vis the prevailing Maliki school, which is identified with "authentic" Tunisian Islam. We dedicate a final part to the discursive adaptation by Salafis to this new context, before discussing to what extent it also encompasses a theological transformation.[15]

The research is based on a corpus of twenty-six semi-structured and open-ended interviews conducted by the authors between 2013 and 2020 with Salafi shaykhs, rank-and-file followers, and representatives of the most relevant organizations specialized in religious studies still active in the country: the University Imam Malik for Shari'a Sciences (hereafter Imam Malik University), the Association Imam Malik for Shari'a Sciences (hereafter Imam Malik Association), the Tunisian section of the International Association of Muslim Scholars (IAMS), and the Rabita Qur'aniyya (Qur'anic League). The authors also have interviewed members of Islamist associations, Ennahdha leaders, state officials, and officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Interview data are cross-checked as well as triangulated with participant observations, document analysis of public speeches, and immersive fieldwork.

Takfirism: The Evolution of the Salafi-Jihadi Movement in Tunisia," *Mediterranean Politics* 22, no. 1 (2017): 71–90, https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2015.973188; and Blanc, "La politisation du salafisme."

[11]Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The New Global Threat: Transnational Salafis and Jihad," *Middle East Policy* 8, no. 4 (2001): 21, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.2001.tb00006.x; Rougier Bernard, *Qu'est-ce que le salafisme?* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008), 19; Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 44; Henri Lauzière, "The Construction of Salafiyya: Reconsidering Salafism from the Perspective of Conceptual History," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 3 (2010): 309, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743810000401; Frederic Wehrey and Anouar Boukhars, *Salafism in the Maghreb. Politics, Piety, and Militancy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020), 6.

[12]Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 8.

[13]Ester Sigillò, "Ennahdha et l'essor des associations islamiques en Tunisie: revendiquer l'islam politique au-delà de la dimension partisane?" *L'Année du Maghreb*, no. 22 (2020): 113–29.

[14]See for instance Terje Ostebo, "Growth and Fragmentation: The Salafi Movement in Bale, Ethiopia," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 344–65; and Shpend Kursani, "Salafi Pluralism in National Contexts: The Secular State, Nation and Militant Islamism in Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 18, no. 2 (2018): 301–17. In Egypt, for example, Salafi political parties obtained representation in the People's Assembly in 2011 (127 of 498 seats) and the Consultative Council (45 of 180) and proved particularly skillful at co-opting local elites and tribe chieftains; see Clément Steuer, "Les salafistes dans le champ politique égyptien," *Politique étrangère*, no. 4 (2013): 133–43.

[15]The entire article is the by-product of a joint writing effort. The three authors jointly wrote the introduction, "Malikism and Salafism in Tunisia before 2011," and the conclusion. Fabio Merone led the work for "Salafism and Malikism in Tunisia after 2011"; Ester Sigillò led the work for the third section, "The 2013–2014 Turning Point: Securitization and Domestication of the Religious Field," and Théo Blanc led the work for the section entitled "Salafi-Malikism: The Discourse of Theological Compromise."

Malikism and Salafism in Tunisia Before 2011

Malikism is one of Sunni Islam's four schools of religious law (*maḍāhib*) found broadly in North Africa, especially in Tunisia.[16] In Tunisia Malikism is often cited as a key foundation of the country's religious tolerance, contrasting starkly with radical *takfiri* ideology that, for example, brands nonpracticing Muslims as infidels.[17] Malikism was introduced in the Maghrib alongside Hanafism by the jurist ʻAssad ibn al-Furat (758–828), a student of Malik ibn Anas (711–95) in Madina. Maliki jurists particularly asserted themselves in Kairouan, in Tunisia, which was the old capital of the independent Aghlabid emirate of Ifriqiyya (800–909).[18] The Great Mosque of Kairouan founded in 670 was then the most important center of Maliki teaching.[19] The most famous among these Kairouan-based jurists was Abu Muhammad ʻAbd Allah ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani (922–96), whose book *al-Risala* (The Message) is considered to be the third reference of Malikism.[20] Today, Malik, Sahnun, Ibn Sahnun, and al-Qayrawani remain the central references of Maliki jurists and 'ulama'.

Although Kairouan constituted the first focal point of Malikism in Tunisia, the Zaytuna mosque and university in Tunis (founded in 698 and 737, respectively) progressively became the main center of Maliki religious teaching, beginning in the second half of the 11th century.[21] The centralization of power in Tunis from 1159 onward by the Almohad caliph ʻAbd al-Mu'min (r. 1094–1163) further contributed to the establishment of Zaytuna's hegemony as the epicenter of Malikism in the Maghrib.[22]

Tunisian Maliki 'ulama' continued to have an important role under the French protectorate (1888–1956), although religious associations had to face several restrictions.[23] After independence, the rise to power of Habib Bourguiba marked the full marginalization of the Maliki 'ulama' of the Zaytuna. In May 1956, a presidential decree transferred the direct supervision of religious institutions from the *awqāf* (religious endowments) to the state. In this way, Bourguiba initiated the religious and financial demise of the Zaytuna 'ulama' embodying the traditional Maliki religiosity, who he saw as an obstacle to his modernization policies.[24] In 1958, Bourguiba closed the Zaytuna education system, which he integrated into public secondary education through a faculty of theology (at the University of Tunis).[25] In 1961, the head imam of the Zaytuna mosque was discharged, and the imam of the Grand Mosque in Kairouan was transferred to another mosque. The state's absorption of the Zaytuna "provoked increasing animosity in society" and, according to some authors, contributed to the politicization of Islam.[26] The first expression of a political religious movement that sought the support of the few Zaytuni 'ulama' came from the al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group) created in 1969 by Rached Ghannouchi, ʻAbd al-Fattah Mourou, and H'mida Ennaifer, three leaders who were inspired by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.[27]

[16]Malikism's foundational book is Malik's *Muwatta* (Well-Trodden Path), a compendium of *fiqh* composed in the second half of the 8th century, which also constitutes the oldest source of hadith (the Prophet's deeds and sayings). The second reference for Malikism is the book *al-Mudawwana* (corpus, code) elaborated by Sahnun ibn Habib al-Tanukhi (776–854); Abdel-Magid Turki, "Le Muwatta' de Mâlik, ouvrage de fiqh, entre le hadîth et le ra'y, ou Comment aborder l'étude du mâlikisme kairouanais au IV/Xe siècle," *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997): 5–35.

[17]Pietro Longo, "Salafism and Takfirism in Tunisia between al-Nahda's Discourses and Local Peculiarities," (working paper MESC/2016/01, Middle East Studies Center, American University of Cairo, 2016).

[18]Mathias von Bredow, *Der heilige Krieg (gihad) aus der Sicht der malikitischen Rechtsschule* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994); Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006): 109.

[19]Roland Anthony Oliver and Anthony Atmore, *Medieval Africa: 1250–1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 36.

[20]Russell Hopley, "Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani," in *Dictionary of African Biography*, ed. Henry Louis Gates et al. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 100.

[21]Mahmud Abd al-Mawla, *L'université zaytounienne et la société tunisienne* (Tunis: Maison Tiers-Monde, 1984), 33.

[22]Mary Dewhurst Lewis, *Divided Rule: Sovereignty and Empire in French Tunisia, 1881–1938* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013).

[23]Major families of Zaytuni Maliki 'ulama' include the Ennaifer family, the Djait family, and the Ben Achour family.

[24]Marion Boulby, "The Islamic Challenge: Tunisia since Independence," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988): 593.

[25]Ibid., 592.

[26]Hostrup R. Haugbolle and Francesco Cavatorta, "Beyond Ghannouchi: Islamism and Social Change in Tunisia," *Middle East Report* 262 (2012): 20–25; Anne Wolf, *Political Islam in Tunisia: The History of Ennahda* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[27]Mohamed Hamdi, *The Politicisation of Islam: A Case Study of Tunisia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 13–14.

This first mobilization, mainly led by Islamist actors (inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology), also included what we could call the "first generation of Salafis," who were not in opposition to Maliki *fiqh*.[28] According to H'mida Ennaifer, one of the leaders of the al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, "although Salafis affirm[ed] that they should think outside the juridical schools," they considered *fiqh* "a matter for specialists," and some of them accepted it insofar as they also were concerned with acquiring a holistic understanding of Islam.[29] In 1981 the al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya became a party, the Harakat al-Ittijah al-Islami (Islamic Tendency Movement, the precursor of the Ennahdha party). This transformation was marked by a number of militants refusing the political institutionalization of the movement, as they were against any form of compromise with the authoritarian regime. Thus, in 1986 this first generation of purists created the Tunisian Islamic Front, al-Jabha al-Islamiyya. As acknowledged by its members, this group has maintained a positive attitude toward Malikism to the present.[30] As Rafiq al-'Ouni, an historic leader of al-Jabha al-Islamiyya and founder of the Salafi party Jabhat al-Islah in 2011, reports, "all *ijtiḥād* [interpretative effort] in the framework of Islam and Islamic culture is acceptable and beneficial. As far as Imam Malik is concerned, we respect this *madhhab* and we take from it all that is beneficial for the Islamic community [*al-Umma al-Islāmiyya*]."[31] Moreover, Muhammad 'Ali Harrath, another al-Jabha al-Islamiyya leader, said that Salafis considered the *madhhab* of Imam Malik their principal reference.[32] Some scholars designated this current as Maliki Salafis.[33] According to Abdelmajid Charfi, president of the Bayt al-Hikma Foundation (the Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts), this current of Tunisian Salafism is very specific, "insofar as it inscribes its discourse into Malikism."[34] This current, which exists in Tunisia to this day, was however to be sidelined in the 1990s–2000s by a new generation of Salafis opposed to Malikism and law schools in general.

In the 1990s–2000s, a new generation of Salafis more in line with Levantine Salafism and Saudi Wahhabism emerged in Tunisia and established some distance from the Islamist movement, Ennahda.[35] The appeal of these Salafis stemmed largely from the monopoly exerted by the state on religion and the perceived religious void this created, which Salafi sympathizers were able to take advantage of.[36] As Kamel Marzouqi, a rising Salafi figure at the time, explains, the Zaytuna Theology University, the center and symbol of Maliki Tunisian Islam, "was completely monopolized by the 'RCDists' [members of the Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique, the former party in power]."[37] There was in practice no religious instruction outside of it, with the exception of the state-controlled Rabita Qur'anyyia and the Associations for the Safeguard of the Qur'an, respectively created in the 1960s and 1970s under Bourguiba's regime. Consequently, the domestication of Islam by the authoritarian state, the so-called Islam of State, favored, as a reaction, the birth of a new Salafi generation drawing its references from scholars located in Egypt, Syria, and the Arabian Peninsula. As Muhammad Khouja, former president of Hizb Jabhat al-Islah (the Reform Front Party) and an historic Salafi figure who observed the emergence of this new Salafi generation puts it, "the youth did not find good references in Tunisia, so they looked toward the Orient [the Middle East]."[38] According to Kamel Marzouqi "many young people were thirsty

[28]Wolf, *Political Islam in Tunisia*, 122. Interview with H'mida Ennaifer, 1 August 2020, Bardo. On the ideological divide between the Islamists and Salafists, see Annette Ranko and Justyna Nedza, "Crossing the Ideological Divide? Egypt's Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39, no. 6 (2016): 519–41.

[29]Interview with H'mida Ennaifer, 1 August 2020, Bardo.

[30]Interview with Rafiq al-'Ouni, historic leader of al-Jabha al-Islamiyya, 30 June 2019, Tunis.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Longo, "Salafism and Takfirism in Tunisia."

[33]Ibid., 9.

[34]Interview with Abdelmajid Charfi, president of the Bayt al-Hikma Foundation, 21 February 2018, Carthage.

[35]Fabio Merone and Francesco Cavatorta, "Salafist Mouvance and Sheikh-ism in the Tunisian Democratic Transition," (Working Papers in International Studies, Centre for International Studies, Dublin City University, 2012), 4.

[36]Alaya Allani, "Islamism and Salafism in Tunisia after the Arab Spring," Right to Nonviolence, Tunisia Constitutional e-Forum, 2012; Fahmi and Meddeb, "Market for Jihad."

[37]Interview with Kamel Marzouqi, 21 November 2019, Soussa.

[38]Thierry Brésillon, "Tunisie: un parti 'salafiste' pour quoi faire?," L'OBS, 7 July 2012, https://www.nouvelobs.com/rue89/rue89-tunisie-libre/20120710.RUE1156/tunisie-un-parti-salafiste-pour-quoi-faire.html.

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for religious instruction and started to look for any source available."[39] Salafi satellite channels broadcasting from Saudi Arabia and Egypt were the only available source of religious education and played a major role in the socialization of Salafi norms among youth.[40] In parallel, new religious seekers organized themselves in small communities of people gathering in private houses, reflecting on religious topics and seeking to further their religious knowledge.[41] Private teaching associations also emerged to respond to the new demand, often led by self-taught religious teachers who contributed to the coalescence of a marginal religious community by the end of the 2000s.[42] One case in point was the online portal launched in 2002 by Kamel Marzouqi, among the very first Salafi scholars to propose private religious instruction, which was followed by 500 students.[43] Another Salafi institute was the Ibn Massoud school, which mostly taught the Qur'an and *tajwīd* (Qur'anic recitation) before the revolution and was reopened in September 2012 as the Imam Malik Association.[44] Consequently, by the turn of the new millennium, Salafism had already become infused within Tunisian society, albeit forced to remain discreet and not clearly distinguished among different trends.[45]

In contrast with the previous Salafi generation that had been socialized in the Tunisian context, this new generation drew its doctrinal positions mainly from Salafi and Wahhabi shaykhs in Egypt and the Gulf who condemned religious practices that were pervasive in Tunisia, such as Sufism, saint worship and, in the realm of jurisprudence, Malikism. The Salafi rejection of law schools has a long intellectual history. In the Middle Ages, the institutionalization of the four Sunni schools of law (Malikism, Shafi`ism, Hanafism, and Hanbalism) had solidified the consensus of the Sunni community around a closed corpus of interpretations of the sacred texts. This effectively meant the closure of the door of *ijtihād* (interpretation) outside of these established schools in about 900 A.D.[46] As Joseph Schacht explains, "This closing of the door of ijtihad, as it was called, amounted to the demand for *taqlid*."[47] In other words, one had to choose one school of law or at least locate one's religious practice within the limits of this quadrilateral jurisprudential space. Although the closure of the doors of *ijtihād* and the obligation of *taqlīd* is an "unsupported historical claim" according to Khaled Abou El Fadl,[48] what interests us here—beyond historical accuracy, which is for specialists to determine—is that Ibn Taymiyya and the Salafis relied on this narrative. Three centuries later, indeed, the jurist and theologian Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) forcefully "rejected this consensus of jurists and relocated it to the Prophet's Companions, *al-Salaf al-salih* [the pious Ancestors]."[49] By doing so, Ibn Taymiyya reopened the door of *ijtihād*, which he argued should be performed based on the example of the *salaf*, and on that basis only. In his view, this would remedy the dissent on matters of religion, law, and government that resulted from the multiplication of juridical schools. With this unprecedented argument, Ibn Taymiyya "initiated what has become the hallmark among adherents of the modern *salafiyya*, namely to refuse to identify with a school of law and to insist on following only al-Salaf."[50] His student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350) similarly rejected both the *maḍāhib* and their *taqlīd*.[51]

[39]Marzouqi interview, 21 November 2019.

[40]Théo Blanc, "Salafisme(s) postrévolutionnaire(s) en Tunisie: un 'paradoxe tunisien'?" *Moyen-Orient* 44 (2019): 33. For Salafi-Jihadis, the main resource was the website Platform for Unification and Jihad (*minbar al-tawhid wa-l-jihad*), http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/d.html.

[41]Interview with Sami Brahem, Islamic intellectual and researcher, 12 March 2013, La Marsa.

[42]Interview with Kamel Marzouqi, 20 February 2013, Tunis.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Interview with Muhammad Amin, director of the Imam Malik Association, 19 March 2018, El Manar 1, Tunis.

[45]Marzouqi interview, 20 February 2013. Marzouqi also taught shari'a sciences at the Ibn Massoud Association from 2008–9 onward, before creating the University Imam Malik in 2012.

[46]David S. Powers, *Law, Society and Culture in the Maghrib: 1300–1500* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

[47]Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1964), 1.

[48]Khaled Abou El Fadl, "The Shari'ah," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, ed. John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

[49]Ulrika Martensson, "The Quran, the Constitution, 'the Natural': Divisive Concepts within Scholarly Islam," in *Fundamentalism in the Modern World*, vol. 1, ed. Ulrika Martensson, Jennifer Bailey, Priscilla Ringrose, and Asbjorn Dyrendal (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 39; see also, Henri Laoust, *La profession de foi d'Ibn Taymiyya* (Paris: Geuthner, 1986), 84.

[50]Laoust, *La profession de foi*, 23–24; Martensson, "The Quran, the Constitution, 'the Natural,'" 39.

[51]Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," 44; Brynjar Lia, "'Destructive Doctrinarians': Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's Critique of the Salafis in the Jihadi Current," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (New York:

Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim's position has had a major influence on contemporary Salafism, including Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia and the Ahl-e Hadith in India.[52] In particular, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim laid the basis for a current that would later came to be known as *lā madhabiyya* (no school).[53] One major proponent of this current was the Yemeni Muhammad al-Shawkani (1759–1839), one of the founders of Ahl-e Hadith, who "argued that all four existing schools of Sunni jurisprudence had deviated from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad."[54] Other thinkers such as Khayr al-Din Nuʿman al-Alusi (1836–99) also combined *lā maḏhabiyya* with Taymiyyan theology.[55] The most recent and perhaps most influential Salafi scholar of the *lā madhabiyya* trend was, however, Muhammad Nasr al-Din al-Albani (1914–99), a famous Albanian *muḥadīṯh* (traditionist, expert of the hadith) who taught in Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Jordan. As Frank Griffel explains, "Al-Albānī's position within the contemporary *salafiyya* movement is so strong and his decisions so revered that the *lā madhabiyya* attitude which he initially represented almost turned into a fifth legal *madhab* in Sunni Islam,"[56] in continuity with the *madhab al-salaf* proposed by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim.[57] Al-Albani severely criticized Saudi Wahhabism for being too embedded in Hanbali *fiqh* and blindly imitating this legal school, although in theory Wahhabis advocate *ijtihād*.[58] Accordingly, contemporary Salafism may correspond to one of three attitudes: the *lā madhabiyya* approach (al-Albani), the Hanbali Wahhabis, or a combination of the two.[59] Overall, Salafis contend that law schools did not exist at the time of the Prophet, and therefore that the Qur'an, the hadith, and the consensus of the *salaf* have precedence over all other sources of religious normativity.[60]

In Tunisia, the *lā madhabiyya* tradition translated into a rejection of the official school of Malikism by the second generation of Salafis. The absence of free religious curriculum in Tunisia, which escaped the direct monitoring of the state, coupled with oriental Salafism's rejection of *taqlīd* created the conditions for Salafi hostility toward the state-monitored Maliki 'ulama' of the Zaytuna. In Tunisia, the rejection of *taqlīd* was both an ideological and a political stance in times of authoritarian secularism.

Today, however, we put forth the hypothesis that a fourth trend is emerging, namely an abutment of Salafism on Malikism, similar to the way Wahhabi Salafism developed primarily on Hanbali foundations. As shown in the following pages, Tunisian Salafism is reassessing its *lā madhabiyya* position and moderating its rejection of *taqlīd*, moving toward an acceptance of the Maliki juridical school. This evolution is contingent on the turbulent postrevolutionary Tunisian context.

Salafism and Malikism in Tunisia After 2011

After the 2010–11 revolution, a third generation of Salafi actors entered the public space in Tunisia, following a new wave of Islamic revivalism that was reminiscent of the 1970s. This new Salafi *sahwa* (revival) first appeared as a broad, spontaneous, and unstructured phenomenon in the aftermath of regime change and the liberalization of the religious space, left largely uncontrolled by the state during the first two years of the revolution.[61]

Columbia University Press, 2009), 285. There is some disagreement on whether the rejection of *taqlīd* originated with Ibn Taymiyya (Martensson's argument) or his disciple Ibn Qayyim (Haykel's argument).

[52]Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," 38; Mariam Abou Zahab, "Salafism in Pakistan: The Ahl-e Hadith Movement," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 129.

[53]Lauzière, "Construction of Salafiyya," 209.

[54]Franck Griffel, "What Do We Mean by 'Salafi'? Connecting Muhammad ʿAbduh with Egypt's Nur Party in Islam's Contemporary Intellectual History," *Die Welt Des Islams* 55 (2015): 204–5.

[55]Griffel, "What Do We Mean by 'Salafi'?" 207.

[56]Ibid, 209. Italics and transliteration added by the authors.

[57]Lauzière, *Making of Salafism,* 8.

[58]Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Revolution and Apoliticism: Nasir al-Din al-Albani and his Impact on the Shaping of Contemporary Salafism," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 58–80; Stéphane Lacroix, *Les islamistes saoudiens: Une insurrection manquée* (Paris: Proche-Orient, 2010), 13.

[59]Griffel, "What Do We Mean by 'Salafi'?" 210; see also Frank E. Vogel, *Islamic Law and Legal System: Studies of Saudi Arabia* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 125–26.

[60]Lauzière, *Making of Salafism,* 8.

[61]Aaron Y. Zelin, *Your Sons Are at Your Service*: *Tunisia's Missionaries of Jihad* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

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With the fall of Ben Ali's authoritarian regime, the dimension and characteristics of the religious sphere changed dramatically. Evolving from a quietist religiosity solely concerned with individual behavior, Salafism became active and open to social and political activism. It took the shape of a semi-institutionalized system of scholar-leaders and Salafi figures who acted in different arenas, ranging from the radical (social contestation) to the scholastic (religious teaching associations) to the political (parties).[62] If Islamist activists enjoyed a hegemony on party politics through the Ennahdha party, Salafis mainly occupied the space of radical contention and religious teaching (formal and informal), especially among the newly Islamized revolutionary youth.[63] New Salafi religious teachers came from abroad (particularly Egypt, Syria, Mauritania, and Saudi Arabia), whereas the improvised "homemade" transmitters of religious knowledge of the previous period became activist shaykhs.[64] Between 2011 and 2013, at the peak of Salafi militancy, a league of religious scholars and preachers called Rabita Tunisiyya li-l-Jami'iyat al-Islamiyya (the Tunisian League of Islamic Associations) was created under the leadership of Mokhtar Jibeli (president), Bechir Ben Hassen (vice president), and Kamel Marzouqi (spiritual mentor).[65] For a while, this league became the formal institution of a religious public, oscillating between quietist and activist poles. Although this association is now inactive, we see its leading figures appearing regularly on the Tunisian Islamic channel al-Insan TV, which invites both Salafi scholars and 'ulama' with a more traditional Maliki formation such as Farid El Beji and 'Umar ibn 'Umar.[66]

Stemming from this renewed Salafi milieu, the Salafi-Jihadi current emerged in postrevolutionary Tunisia. At first Salafi-Jihadis often shared teaching spaces with other Salafis, as was the case at the Imam Malik University where, according to its secretary general, many students had Jihadi sympathies and a separate Salafi-Jihadi current came into being following the creation of Ansar al-Shari'a in April 2011.[67] The latter was a radical social movement opposed to the regime and the democratization process. In addition to relying on an ideologically distinct literature (of the Salafi-Jihadi theoreticians Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and Abu Qutada al-Filastini), Salafi-Jihadis structured a new trend characterized by its stark opposition to any form of institutional participation that would lead to compromise with the emerging liberal-democratic political system. This explains why they could not rely on any shaykh or charismatic figure except those who directly participated in or supported previous armed jihads (in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, or Iraq), such as Abu Iyad al-Tunisi, a Jihadi veteran who participated in the assassination of Ahmad Shah Massoud in 2011 before being jailed in Tunisia in 2003.[68] Salafi-Jihadis also rejected official Maliki 'ulama', whom they viewed as both religiously deviant and politically subservient to the impious regime in place. In 2012, a specific council of shaykhs was created to channel this "revolutionary enthusiasm."[69] These shaykhs—Khatib al-Idrissi, Abu Zubahir, Muhammad al-Khalif, Muhammad Abu Bakr, Khamis al-Majri, Abu 'Abdallah, and Abu Iyad—constituted the main religious references of the Salafi-Jihadi public. Among them, Abu Iyad was the initiator of the Salafi-Jihadi organization Ansar al-Shari'a (AST), which by 2013 had

[62]Fabio Merone and Francesco Cavatorta, "Salafist movement and Sheikh-ism in the Tunisian Democratic Transition," *Middle East Law and Governance* 5, no. 3 (2013): 308–30, https://doi.org/10.1163/18763375-00503004.

[63]Fabio Merone, "Enduring Class Struggle in Tunisia: The Fight for Identity beyond Political Islam," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 1 (2014): 74–87, https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2015.973188.

[64]Interview with Shaykh Houcem al-Ajmi, teacher of *Usul al-Fiqh*, Imam Malik Association, 28 September 2019, El Manar 1, Tunis.

[65]The official name is al-Jabha al-Tunisiyya li-l-Jama'iat al-Islamiyya, commonly known simply as Rabita, which means "league," not to be confused with the Rabita Qur'aniyya, created at the end of the 1960s under Bourguiba.

[66]We distinguish between autodidact Salafi scholars, who often have a learning experience in Salafi circles or universities abroad (Marzouqi, Bechir Ben Hassan), and 'ulama' who have acquired a religious diploma from a major religious school anchored in a school of law (Mokhtar Jibeli and Farid El Beji, who both studied at the Zaytuna). These 'ulama' are distinguishable by the white and red turban (*'amama*) they wear, which symbolize the rank of a religious shaykh. They usually have a solid foundation in Maliki *fiqh* and do not reject legal schools. Jibeli obtained a doctorate in 2014, writing a dissertation entitled "Renewal in Maliki Jurisprudence between 1300 and 1431," and El Beji published several books on Maliki *fiqh*, which he teaches at the association Dar al-Hadith al-Zaytuniyya that he founded in Tunis in 2011. Moreover, El Beji has criticized Salafis harshly, including Bechir Ben Hassan in 2012.

[67]Interview with Muhammad al-Kharraf, secretary general of Imam Malik University, 20 February 2013, Tunis.

[68]Stefano Maria Torelli, "A Portrait of Tunisia's Ansar al-Shari 'a Leader Abu Iyad al-Tunisi: His Strategy on Jihad," *Militant Leadership Monitor* 4, no. 8 (2013).

[69]Interview with Abu Abdallah al-Tounsi, one of the members of this council, winter 2012, Sidi Bouzid.

attracted the sympathy (or the direct militancy) of most of the Salafi public.[70] Shaykh Khatib al-Idrissi, considered to be the "shaykh of the Jihadis," however, opposed any form of organization and later distanced himself from AST with a small group of dissident Salafi-Jihadis.[71] After August 2013, when Ansar al-Shariʿa was outlawed as a terrorist organization, the group imploded.[72] Although some leaders such as Seif Eddine al-Rais, Sami Essid, and Hassen el-Brik maintained a nonviolent approach, repression led to the radicalization of large swaths of the Salafi-Jihadi movement, who either joined jihadi fronts abroad (such as Abu Iyad in Libya and Kamel Zarrouk in Syria) or the Tunisia-based fighting group Uqba ibn Nafiʿ.[73] Violence in the country was tamped down for two years but resurfaced forcefully with the Bardo National Museum attack in March 2015, the Sousse beach attack in June 2015, the attack on presidential guard personnel in Tunis in November 2015, and an attempt to take over the town of Ben Gardane on the Libyan border in March 2016. Simultaneously, the state arrested hundreds of Jihadis, and 16,000 individuals were prevented from leaving the country for jihad between 2014–16, according to government sources.[74] Today, Salafi-Jihadis have lost their popular appeal and remain at the margin.

Those who have renounced violence constitute a pool of possible recruits for non-Jihadi Salafis, and in particular for two tendencies: the scientific or scripturalist (*ʿilmī*) and the political (*siyasī*).[75] Scientific Salafism can in turn be split into two subcategories: scholastic and quietist. The above-mentioned shaykhs, Bechir Ben Hassen, Kamel Marzouqi, and Mokhtar Jibeli, are the most recognizable scholastic Salafis in the Tunisian public sphere. They focus on religious teaching and learning, although they are not opposed to social activism and can join or create networks of associations to achieve their objectives (such as the aforementioned league). However, some tension with the most activist orientation of this trend, embodied by Jibeli, may appear. This was the case, for instance, on the issue of the radical Salafi youths Jibeli wanted to integrate into a large Salafi front alongside scholastic and political Salafis, which Marzouqi and Ben Hassan refused.[76] In contrast with this scholastic-activist current, the so-called *madkhalī* current (that is, the followers of Saudi shaykh Rabiʿ al-Madkhali) embodies a quietist trend that refuses any form of organization, activism, or opposition to the state. For this reason, and because they remain a marginal group with little coordination and no leading shaykh at present, it is more difficult to identify them. They are found in some mosques in al-Mourouj (the southeast suburbs of Tunis), such as the al-Fawz mosque in Mourouj 5.[77] They usually claim to operate outside law schools, although in practice they tend to follow the Hanbali *maddhab* favored by official Wahhabi shaykhs.[78]

Finally, we find the proper political Salafis, those who formally legalized Salafist political engagement after the fall of the regime. Although several Salafi parties tried their electoral chances after 2011,[79] the main representative of this trend was Jabhat al-Islah, stemming from the al-Jabha al-Islamiyya, which did not refuse Malikism.[80] Less concerned with religious learning and matters of law schools than scholastic

[70]At its peak, the group claimed a membership 70,000 strong. Interview with Bilal Chawachi, former Ansar al-Shariʿa leader, 5 November 2012, Tunis.

[71]Ibid.

[72]The state cracked down on the group as early as May 10–11, when security services rounded up Ansar al-Shariʿa members who were delivering public lectures or distributing their literature on the street. See Aaron Y. Zelin, "Standoff between the Tunisian Government and Ansar al-Sharia," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 14 May 2013, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/standoff-between-the-tunisian-government-and-ansar-al-sharia.

[73]"Les Brigades Okba Ben Nafii ont pris la place des Ansar Chariaa," African Manager, 26 March 2015, https://africanmanager.com/les-brigades-okba-ben-nafii-ont-pris-la-place-des-ansar-chariaa; Fabio Merone, "Between Social Contention and Takfirism," 14–15.

[74]Aaron Y. Zelin, "Tunisian Jihadism Five Years after Ansar al-Sharia," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 16 September 2018, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/tunisian-jihadism-five-years-after-ansar-al-sharia.

[75]Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (2016): 207–39, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500497004.

[76]Marzouqi interview, 21 November 2019.

[77]Personal observation by Théo Blanc, summer 2019. According to Muhammad, secretary general of the Tunisian section of the International Association of Muslim Scholars (interview, 18 November 2019, Tunis), they assist the police by giving information on "suspicious" people attending the prayers in the mosques.

[78]Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Revolution and Apoliticism."

[79]At the beginning of 2012, three small Salafist parties, Jabhat al-Islah, Hizb al-Asala, and Hizb al-Rahma, were able to register with the Ministry of the Interior.

[80]Torelli et al., "Salafism in Tunisia," 142.

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Salafis, they nevertheless played an important role in mediating between the nonpolitical Salafis and the official Islamist political establishment (Ennahdha). In the period between 2011 and 2013 they endeavored to channel the mass of radical Salafis into their party.[81] Ennahdha also exploited this party to maintain a channel of communication with the radical Salafis, until mid-2013. The party finally grew distant from Ennahdha and converged toward new, oppositional political experiences during the 2019 elections.[82] Their electoral failures in 2011 and 2014, their low appeal in the Salafi community, the dislocation of their Salafi base following the repressive turn, as well as their inability to get out of Ennahdha's shadow caused the near disappearance of this political Salafi trend after the 2014 elections.[83]

The 2013–2014 Turning Point: Securitization and Domestication of the Religious Field

In 2013, the assassination of two prominent Tunisian politicians (Chokri Belaid and Muhammad Brahmi) by a Jihadi commando allegedly linked to Ansar al-Shari'a triggered a severe political crisis that brought criticism of Ennahda's leniency vis-à-vis Salafis to a climax.[84] On 27 August 2013, Prime Minister `Ali Larayedh listed Ansar al-Shari'a as a terrorist organization, before Ennahdha was forced to relinquish power to a technocratic government to preserve the stability of the country and secure its survival in the precarious political situation.[85]

Once the new constitution was adopted in January 2014 and Ennahdha stepped down from power, the newly established technocratic government led by Mehdi Jomaa (January 2014–February 2015) launched a large security campaign targeting Salafi teaching and preaching activities (e.g., *da'wa* tents of Ansar al-Shari'a in marginalized neighborhoods, but also charitable activities with a religious orientation).[86] In June 2014, the Ministry of Religious Affairs declared that 90 out of 5,100 mosques still escaped control of the government and later dismissed "radical" imams such as Bechir Ben Hassan in July 2015 and Ridha Jawadi in September 2015. The Jomaa government, followed by the Habib Essid government (February 2015–August 2016), also clamped down on Salafi associations and schools for charges of illicit foreign funding or terrorism in the framework of a "normalization" campaign.[87]

The aim of this repressive turn was twofold: one, the eradication of dubious Salafi activists who challenged the state and, second, the (re-)regulation of the religious field.[88] New legal measures undertaken by the Jomaa government established transparency and control over religious associations to overcome the deficiencies and loopholes of the 2011 decree.[89] According to 'Ali Amira, the General Director of Associations and Political Parties at the Presidency of the Government between 2014 and 2017, "the

[81]Interviews with Muhammad Khouja, 24 October 2013 and 17 April 2018, Tunis.

[82]Théo Blanc and Ester Sigillò, "Beyond the 'Islamists vs. Secularists' Cleavage: The Rise of New Challengers after the 2019 Tunisian Elections," Policy Brief, European University Institute, 2019, https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/65592/PB_2019_27_MED.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.

[83]Blanc, "La politisation du salafisme," 159–71.

[84]Ansar al-Shari'a did not claim responsibility for the attack and most analysts agree that it was unlikely ordered by its leadership. The two assassinations were later claimed by ISIS and attributed to Abu Bakr al-Hakim, aka Abu Mouqatil, a French Tunisian who joined ISIS after the attack. See Christine Petré, "Tunisian Salafism: The Rise and Fall of Ansar al-Sharia," Policy Brief no. 209, Hivos/FRIDE, October 2015, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/194178/PB209_Tunisian_Salafism.pdf.

[85]Monica Marks, "Tunisia," in *Rethinking Political Islam*, ed. Shadi Hamid and William McCants (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 32–53.

[86]Sigillò, "Islamism and the Rise of Islamic Charities."

[87]Alaya Allani, "Radical Religious Movements during the Transition: The Example of Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia: Growth and Development; Prospects: 2011–2014," United Nations Development Programme, 2012, 8; Fabio Merone, Ester Sigillò, and Damiano De Facci, "Nahda and Tunisian Islamic Activism," in *New Opposition in the Middle East*, ed. Dara Conduit and Shahram Akbarzadeh (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 182.

[88]"Entretien avec Mounir Tlili, ministre des Affaires religieuses: 'des mosquées encore otages des radicaux,'" Réalités Online, 8 July 2014, https://www.realites.com.tn/2014/07/entretien-avec-mounir-tlili-ministre-des-affaires-religieuses-des-mosquees-encore-otages-des-radicaux; "La Tunisie renforce l'enseignement de l'islam modéré," http://www.kapitalis.com/politique/23153-la-tunisie-renforce-l-enseignement-de-l-islam-modere-video.html.

[89]After 2011, organisms regulating the control of associative activities were created under decree-law 88: the general directorate for political parties and associations, a body linked to the presidency of the republic, which has a more technical role, and the ministry for relations with civil society, which has a more political role. See Ester Sigillò, "Mobilizing for or through Development? Trajectories of Civic Activism in Post-Authoritarian Tunisia" (PhD diss., Scuola Normale Superiore, 2018), 158.

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decree-law on associations, enacted immediately after the revolution, is too vague, since it gave too much freedom to all Tunisians wishing to create an association. . . . We have to better clarify certain aspects concerning the associative life, otherwise, we are going to lose control, especially over Salafi associations, their illicit funding and their link with terrorist groups."[90] In 2014, 449 associations were sanctioned for failing to register the receipt of probable illicit foreign funding, 179 because their statute was not clear or breached the law (for example, charitable associations overstepped the legal statute by teaching the Qur'an), and 236 associations were closed due to their links with terrorist groups.[91] In accordance with these measures, three associative branches of the Imam Malik Association, respectively based in Nabeul, Soussa, and Bizerte, were closed, and the core association faced two closure attempts in 2015 and 2017, but won both hearings.[92]

Interestingly, this crackdown has been accompanied by a campaign promoting "a moderate and Tunisian Islam."[93] Indeed, parallel to the repressive campaign, a series of actions were taken to monitor the content of religious education. Governmental measures were instituted to check the educational background of teachers (who could no longer be recruited from abroad) and control the materials (such as books) used in support of religious studies.[94] In June 2014, Prime Minister Medhi Jomoa and Minister of Religious Affairs Mounir Tlili also announced the creation of a religious institute in Kairouan based on the Zaytuni teaching curriculum and supervised by the Zaytuna in coordination with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The two officials based this initiative on article 42 of the constitution, which promotes "values of tolerance [and the] rejection of violence."[95] They presented this as a way to contain the diffusion of Salafi ideology.[96] The Ministry of Religious Affairs also promoted the Rabita Qur'aniyya, the league of Qur'anic associations founded in Tunisia at the end of the 1960s, as the model of religious teaching for associations to emulate.[97] According to the vice director of the religious organization, "All our religious courses rely on the Zaytuni tradition, our source is a Tunisian Islam of Maliki inspiration."[98] Overall, the state endeavored to promote a "moderate Tunisian" Islam derived from both the spirit of the new constitution as well as the specificity of traditional Tunisian Islam rooted in Malikism.[99]

In fact, the Maliki rite is often cited by 'ulama', state officials, and outside observers as a key aspect of Tunisian religious tolerance, contrasting starkly with the Salafi version of Islam.[100] After 2011, the disconnect with the religious tradition of the country was often pointed out by scholars as the cause of the religious radicalization of the new generations. According to the researcher Raphaël Lefèvre, the rise of Salafism in the entire North African region following the Arab revolutions constituted "a symptom

[90]Interview with `Ali Amira, 3 July 2018, Tunis.

[91]Sigillò, "Islamism and the Rise of Islamic Charities."

[92]Interview with Muhammad Amin, director of the Imam Malik Association, 25 February 2020, El Manar 1, Tunis.

[93]Interview with an official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2 July 2018, Tunis.

[94]Amin interview, 19 March 2018.

[95]Tunisia's Constitution of 2014, article 42, 9, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tunisia_2014.pdf.

[96]"La Tunisie renforce l'enseignement de l'islam modéré," http://www.kapitalis.com/politique/23153-la-tunisie-renforce-l-enseignement-de-l-islam-modere-video.html; "Mounir Tlili: Promouvoir un discours religieux modéré et rationnel," https://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2014/05/03/mounir-tlili-promouvoir-un-discours-religieux-modere-et-rationnel; "Entretien avec Mounir Tlili, " https://www.realites.com.tn/2014/07/entretien-avec-mounir-tlili-ministre-des-affaires-religieuses-des-mosquees-encore-otages-des-radicaux.

[97]Interviews with the secretary general of the Rabita Qur'aniyya and an official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, July 2018, Tunis.

[98]Interview with vice director of the Rabita Qur'aniyya, 20 June 2018. The role played by the 9th-century scholar Sahnun ibn Sa'id ibn Habib at-Tanukhi, who systematized the Maliki school of law, is particularly emphasized in Tunisia. See also the discourse of Mounir Tlili, Minister of Religious Affairs: "تـرشـيد الـخـطـاب الـديـنـي والـاحـاصـة بـدور الـعـبـادة ودعـم الـتـعـلـيـم الـزيـتـونـي" (Orientation of the religious discourse, awareness of the role of worship and support to Zaytuni teaching), YouTube, 27 June 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vY5G9V2PgRw&feature=emb_title.

[99]Whereas Tunisian Maliki Islam is sponsored by the government as a moderate alternative, Maliki *fiqh* is not moderate in absolute terms. For instance, Malikism punishes homosexuality with death by stoning, whereas Shafiism and Hanbalism sanction it with whipping, and Hanafism does not recognize it as a *ḥadd* (breach of shari'a). Therefore, the process of Malikization we describe here is not tantamount to ideological moderation, as we do not address the substantive ideology of the actors.

[100]Raphaël Lefèvre, "North Africa's Maliki Crisis," *Journal of North African Studies* 20, no. 5 (2015): 683, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2015.1091162; Longo, "Salafism and Takfirism in Tunisia."

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of the failure of 'traditional' or 'official' Islam built on the Maliki school of religious law."[101] Consequently, addressing the postrevolutionary "Salafi surge" would entail addressing the "Maliki crisis" by "repositioning traditional Maliki teachings at the heart of North Africa's religious scene."[102] On the side of religious actors, we observe a similar discourse. For example, the secretary general of the Rabita Qur'aniyya stated: "The specificity of Tunisia is that our Islam has a Maliki reference, so it is moderate, in contrast with Salafism."[103] The emblematic status of the Zaytuna in this Tunisian Islam also is reasserted. According to an imam of the Association of Shariʿa Sciences in La Marsa, "our main reference is the Zaytuna university, as it represents the pillar of Tunisian Islam. This is for us inspirational, as a matter of fact its professors work with us."[104]

Interestingly, another actor contributed to the promotion of a moderate domestic Islam, namely the Islamist party Ennahdha. Although the old generation of Ennahda's militants had historically opposed the majority of Zaytuni 'ulama' (considered too passive regarding the secularist policies of the Bourguiba regime), after the revolution the Islamist party restored the Zaytuna mosque and university tradition as a positive heritage and proactively promoted the revival of its educational role as the guarantor of religious moderation.[105] The result of this reevaluation was the readoption of Tunisian custom prompted by the historical leaders, such as H'mida Ennaifer, one the most prominent figures linked to the Zaytuna mosque.[106] According to Ennaifer, "after the revolution, things evolved differently. There was this idea [among Islamists], following the rise of Wahhabism, . . . this willingness to promote [*valoriser*] this return to Malikism, because it seemed more tolerant, more open, more traditional."[107]

Reference to traditions ran parallel to the claim of a moderate Islam. As explicitly expressed in the conclusive statement of the 2012 Congress: "The Ennahda Party . . . believes it is a continuation of the Arab-Islamic reform movement of Khaireddine Ettounisi."[108] Ettounisi (1822/23–90), taking inspiration from Ibn Khaldun's theories, put forward the concepts of freedom, equality, democracy, and individual rights in an Islamic language. According to the secretary general of the Tunis section of Daʿwa wa Islah, an association founded by Ennahda's activists after the 2012 Congress: "Our aim is to reform (*islāḥ*) Islamic thought and action by applying Islamic values to modern life, yet in tune with the religious traditions of the country."[109]

This repositioning of Ennahdha vis-à-vis the Zaytuni heritage stemmed directly from its strategy of integration and normalization in postrevolutionary politics. Indeed, seeking legitimacy in the new democratic landscape, the party progressively positioned itself as the keeper of a "national Islam" that was in tune with the constitutional principles set out in the 2014 charter.[110] The preamble to the constitution states that the Tunisian people are committed to "the teachings of Islam" (*taʿlīm al-islām*), which is an open and moderate Islam "inspired by the heritage of our civilization, . . . of our history, from our enlightened reformist movements that are based on the foundations of our Arab-Islamic identity."[111] This formulation was preferred to the notion of shariʿa that Salafis wanted to enshrine in the constitution, but that Ennahdha had chosen to abandon as soon as March 2012.

The summer of 2013 actually marked a watershed for the transformation of the Islamist party, as Ennahda definitively divorced itself from the Salafist wing, abandoning the Islamic project of transformation of Tunisian society solicited in particular by the Salafi-Jihadi movement Ansar al-Shariʿa. Notably, Ennahda pushed forward its strategy of transformation into a post-Islamist party rooted in the Tunisian

[101]Lefèvre, "North Africa's Maliki Crisis," 684.

[102]Ibid., 687.

[103]Interview with the secretary general of the Rabita Qur'aniyya, 20 June 2018, Tunis.

[104]Interview with anonymous imam of the Association of Shariʿa Sciences, 3 July 2019, La Marsa.

[105]Wolf, *Political Islam in Tunisia*.

[106]Loretta Dell'Aguzzo and Ester Sigillò, "Political Legitimacy and Variations in State-Religion Relations in Tunisia," *Journal of North African Studies* 22, no. 4 (2017): 511–35.

[107]Interview with H'mida Ennaifer, 8 January 2020, Bardo.

[108]"Concluding Statement of the 9th Ennahdha Party Conference," 12–16 July 2012, https://www.facebook.com/Nahdha.International/posts/245449198891679.

[109]Interview with anonymous person, 2 July 2018, Tunis.

[110]Interview with Oussama Sghaier, Ennahda's spokesperson, 22 May 2016, Hammamet. Article 6 of the constitution enshrines the principle of state control and supervision of the partisan neutrality of mosques.

[111]Tunisia's Constitution of 2014, 3, http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/laws/4808.pdf.

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religious tradition to secure its acceptance by secular forces. This became particularly clear in 2016, when at its 10th congress Ennahdha announced its "specialization" (*takhaṣuṣ*) in politics, thus abandoning all religious activities as required by organic and constitutional law.[112] This measure eventually forged the Ennahda's moderation discourse during a legitimacy crisis. The Tunisian president himself, during the opening ceremony held in Radès, stated: "Ennahda has become a civil party and within our traditions Islam does not contradict democracy."[113] Overall, after the political crisis of 2013, and in tune with the new "constitutional spirit," Ennahdha contributed to rehabilitation of a domestic Islam, rooted in the Tunisian traditions, standing in opposition to Salafism.

With this broad contextual excursus as a background, in the following pages we will show how Salafi actors have recently adapted their religious categories to this context. Notably, we argue that the securitization campaign backed by the promotion of a moderate and domestic Islam in the official religious discourse created the conditions for the development of Salafi-Malikism. In a context in which the religious sphere became highly regulated and where this re-regulation saw the legitimization of broad strata of the political and civil society, including religious actors, residual Salafi actors increasingly adapted by reassessing their stance on Malikism. The adaptation to Malikism was the sine qua non condition for Salafis to be recognized as practicing an indigenous and moderate form of Islam and ultimately to preserve their preaching and teaching activities.

Salafi-Malikism: The Discourse of Jurisprudential Compromise

At first sight the adaptation of Salafism to Malikism and to a Tunisian nationalist identity may look paradoxical, first because the academic literature has pointed out that Salafis traditionally reject schools of law, and second because in Tunisia Salafis are routinely associated with Saudi Wahhabism. Critics of Salafism emphasize the latter point, contending that it brings to Tunisia a type of religious practice that is not suitable to the specific national traditions of the country.[114] By overcoming those obstacles and reacting to its religious nationalist critics, the shapers of Salafi-Malikism endeavor to demonstrate that Salafism and Malikism are not antagonistic. They frame a new discourse that allows Salafism to adapt to national circumstances and accept "Tunisification." This is both a response to the official discourse described above emphasizing a Tunisian Islam, and indication of a willingness to integrate a Tunisian religious specificity. Three core arguments feature in the Salafi-Maliki discourse: (a) Malikism and Salafism are not in contradiction with each other; (b) the Zaytuni learning tradition also is a Salafi one; and (c) Salafism is not to be equated with Saudi Wahhabism.

This evolution is particularly salient in the discourse of the two main associations of scholastic Salafism, the Imam Malik University and the Imam Malik Association, both of which managed to survive the 2014 crackdown. We also rely on the discourse of grassroots Salafi militants as well as independent Salafi shaykhs such as Bechir Ben Hassen, whose speech at the Carthage presidential palace played a pioneering role in demonstrating the compatibility of Salafism and Malikism and thus constitutes a good starting point for analysis:

> Unfortunately, some people think that the Salafi methodology is a new religion that is invading Tunisia. This is amazing! In the first place, this republic and these people are Muslim and those who brought Islam to them are the Prophet's companions. . . . Second, if we talk about the school of law, it is the school of the Imam Malik. Where is the Imam Malik coming from? From Madina; he doesn't come from Tunis or Kairouan but from the city of the Prophet. He . . . is among the pious ancestors and the Maliki school is at its origin a Salafi school. . . . We do not isolate the Salafi from the Maliki school, because Malik and the Malikis follow the Salafi method.[115]

[112]Sigillò, "Ennahdha et l'essor des associations islamiques."

[113]Ghannouchi keynote speech, Ennahda's 10th congress, 22 May 2016, Hammamet.

[114]Hamadi Redissi, *Une histoire du wahhabisme; Comment l'islam sectaire est devenu l'islam* (Paris: Points, 2016).

[115]Bechir Ben Hassen can be considered the pioneering intellectual in creating a Maliki-friendly Salafi discourse. This speech was given in November 2012 at the presidential palace in Carthage following an invitation from President Moncef Marzouki. Bechir Ben Hassan, "محاضرة الشيخ بشير بن حسن حول الظاهرة السلفية في تونس ج1" (Shaykh Bechir Ben Hassan

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According to Ben Hassen, then, Salafism and Malikism are not antagonistic. Malik ibn Anas (the founding father of Malikism) used a Salafi method and was himself a *salaf*, therefore there is no contradiction in being simultaneously Salafi and Maliki. This statement finds confirmation in the declarations of other Salafis. For example, Hassine, a student of the Imam Malik Association, says that "We should not look at Malikism as being in contradiction with Salafism. Malik was a Salafi. To bring the two into opposition is a mistake."[116]

The Salafi-Maliki discourse also focuses on a shared Zaytuni tradition. By appropriating its heritage, in fact, Tunisian Salafis call for recognition as a part of the Tunisian religious fabric. "We see people who want to separate the Salafi method from the Zaytuni education system. And this also is a mistake. Why? Because we have imams in the history of Zaytuna who followed the Salafi methodology."[117] In what way were they Salafis? In that "they fought the blameworthy practices of worshipping tombs and other practices contrary to the pure *ṭawḥīd* [Oneness of God]." Bechir Ben Hassen's statement is clear: There is no Zaytuni tradition that diverges from Salafism. Zaytuni shaykhs were Salafis and therefore contemporary Salafis should feel themselves to be legitimate repositories of their heritage.[118] Shaykh Kamel Marzouqi, president of Imam Malik University, reiterated the same point in a 2013 interview, asserting that "A Zaytuni tradition different from a Salafi one does not exist. The Zaytuni shaykhs, such as Tahar Ben Achour, were Salafis. We also adopt Malikism."[119] Maliki *fiqh* thus occupies a central place in the teaching curriculum of both the Imam Malik Association and the University Imam Malik led by Marzouqi. One student described this latter association as a "Salafi *ʿilmī* [scientific, scripturalist] school that embraces Malikism."[120]

This integration of Malikism and the Zaytuni tradition is not credible, however, without dissociation of Tunisian Salafism from Wahhabism. According to Bechir Ben Hassen, "associating so-called Wahhabism with Salafism is a mistake. . . . Salafism is not a *jamaʿa* [group], or a way of dressing, a trend or an ideology, but a methodology [*manhaj*]."[121] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab in the context of this speech is a "son of the Arabian peninsula" and his relationship with Tunisia is described as merely "emotional."[122] Salafis do not deny a natural link with Saudi Arabia, but they express it in terms of a natural relationship with the land where Islam originated; in so doing, they seek to downplay its implications for cultural and ideological influences. Shaykh Marzouqi told us: "We made an agreement with the University of Madina, where [the founding member] shaykh Shawat studied. . . . It is clear that we have 'emotional relations' with this country (our prophet was from there). . . . This is the country of all Muslims."[123] Nevertheless, Salafis interviewed in Tunisia were keen on distinguishing historical Salafism from its contemporary Wahhabi version. For example, Houcem al-Ajmi, a teacher at the Imam Malik Association, explains that historical Salafism "means a Salafism that refers to the *ʿaqīda* (creed) in the way of the *salaf al-ṣālīḥ* (pious predecessors) before the formation of the four schools; before the split between Asharism and the *muḥaddithūn* (hadith specialists) of the 9th century. The other [contemporary] Salafism is that of Saudi Arabia, which refers to Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab and Ibn Taymiyya."[124] This resonates with Lauzière's account that in medieval times the original Salafi creed simply amounted to a Hanbali theology (rejection of rationalism and fideism) that could be combined with

Conference on the Salafi phenomenon in Tunisia, part 1), YouTube, 26:00, November 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keMXSIj9VEE.

[116]Interview with Hassine, 19 November 2019, El Manar 1, Tunis.

[117]Imams cited by Ben Hassen are Muhammad Mekki Ben Azuz, Shaykh Muhammad Hacine, and Othman Bin Mekki al-Tuzri Zubaidi.

[118]Shaykh Bechir Ben Hassan Conference, part 1, 27:26.

[119]Marzouqi interview, 20 February 2013.

[120]Interview with anonymous student of the association, 24 June 2019, Tunis.

[121]"الشيخ بشير بن حسن - عبد الفتاح مورو- السلفية في تونس" (Shaykh Bechir Ben Hassan and Abd al-Fatah Mourou: Salafism in Tunisia), Al Watania 2 TV, YouTube, 30:18–31:20, March 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGrZYiMd1tM.

[122]Bechir Ben Hassan, "محاضرة الشيخ بشير بن حسن حول الظاهرة السلفية في تونس ج2" (Shaykh Bechir Ben Hassan Conference on Salafism in Tunisia, part 2), YouTube, 26:17, November 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBje5d4983I&t=1632s.

[123]Marzouqi interview, 20 February 2013.

[124]Interview with Houcem al-Ajmi, 19 November 2019, El Manar 1, Tunis.

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any of the four legal schools as long as it remained faithful to the method of the forefathers (the *salaf*).[125] By distancing themselves from Wahhabi Salafism, Salafis are able to claim a historical form of Salafism that was neither embedded in any school of law nor opposed to the schools in principle.

Salafi-Malikis also describe the reconsideration of Malikism as the product of societal pressure on Salafism, understood as the public delegitimization of Salafi beliefs and practices. According to Houcem al-Ajmi, many Salafis began to embrace Malikism because people accused them of seeking to impose religious practices that people were not accustomed to. Malikism "became the way to be integrated and accepted by Tunisian society," he said.[126] This intervention occurred in a context in which the self-appellation "Salafi" had become a negative marker, eliciting high suspicion from both state and society, which many therefore chose to abandon or did not publicly disclose.[127] As a consequence, we observe a process of absorption of Malikism by Salafism, or a type of Salafism (partially) embedded in the Maliki school that claims to respect "Tunisian specificity."[128] Salafis felt the need to accommodate the society around them, as had happened previously with the Ennahdha.[129]

Bechir Ben Hassen's statements also are interesting because they are not addressed to non-Salafi critics only, but also to a Salafi public that is unconvinced about being Maliki and Salafi at the same time. "Many of the [Salafi] youth have a prejudice against Malikism because they saw how people [in the authoritarian regime] used it to deny the evidence of the [Qur'anic and prophetic] text [*dalīl qaṭʿay*]." Under certain conditions, however, it is acceptable to use Malikism, Ben Hassan contends: "Malik is a human like all humans. He can be wrong, so it is not necessary to imitate each of his *ḥukm* [judgments] in a blind way; each argument must be supported by a *dalīl* [textual proof] from the Qur'an and the sunna anyway."[130] A former student of the Imam Malik Association put it this way: "Salafis are not against any particular *madhab* in principle, but against any extremism in the application of the *madhhahīb* that should not be considered sacred untouchable sources. The Salafis may take from the four schools if there is a clear *dalīl* for that in the tradition [sunna] of the Prophet."[131] Salafi-Malikis formulate the conditions under which it is permissible to use Maliki sources; the latter cannot supersede the authority of the Qur'an and the hadith.

Convincing Salafis of this, however, was not an easy process. As Houcem al-Ajmi recalls, after the revolution "it was fashionable (à la mode) to be Salafi. . . . Once I was contacted by young people who came to me to obtain legal opinions; as soon as I referred to the Maliki school for a judgment they left after castigating my reference as a *biḍʿa* [innovation]. Over time however, they changed their minds. Today they are reconsidering Malikism without preconceptions."[132] This is confirmed by Muhammad Amin, director of the Imam Malik Association, for whom "the wave of scholars who wanted to take directly and exclusively from the *ṣaḥāba* [the Prophet's companions] has now passed. Those who still want to do it are not cultivated enough, whereas those who have knowledge of a specific school of law are more qualified. We however do not say that the *madhab* is one hundred percent right; only the Qur'an is one hundred percent right."[133]

Conclusion

In this article we have discussed the evolution of Tunisian Salafism according to the transformation of the political context. Notably, we investigated the adaptive strategies of the scholastic Salafi branch, the only

[125]Lauzière, *Making of Salafism*; Henri Lauzière, "L'histoire du salafisme: ses pièges et ses mythes," *Moyen-Orient* 33 (2017): 18–23.

[126]Al-Ajmi interview, 28 September 2019.

[127]Blanc, "Être 'islamiste' ou 'salafiste' en 2018."

[128]Bechir Ben Hassan: "When I was in the country of emigration, I used to teach Ibn Taymiyya and Abd al-Wahhab's books. I used to teach *fiqh* following the Hanbali school. When I came to stay here, I saw a Tunisian specificity and respected it." See "لبشير بن حسن حول الفكر الوهابي و تأثيره في تونس" (Bechir Ben Hassan on Wahhabi Thought and Influence in Tunisia), TNN TV, YouTube, 7:21–8:40, May 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIon_cxrusk.

[129]Francesco Cavatorta and Fabio Merone, "Post-Islamism, Ideological Evolution and 'La Tunisianité' of the Tunisian Islamist Party al-Nahda," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 20 (2015): 27–42, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2015.991508.

[130]Shaykh Bechir Ben Hassan and Abd al-Fatah Mourou: Salafism in Tunisia, 01:05:00–01:08:00.

[131]Interview with anonymous former student, 19 November 2019, El Manar 1, Tunis.

[132]Al-Ajmi interview, 28 September 2019.

[133]Amin interview, 25 February 2020.

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visible expression of Salafism nowadays. Our main argument is that Salafism in Tunisia has been undergoing a process of Malikization—or Islamic Tunisification—to avoid being targeted as a form of religious extremism imported from the Gulf and ultimately to be allowed to operate within the renewed legal framework established after the 2013–14 campaign of religious securitization.

This recent evolution is of particular importance since contemporary Salafism generally argues against the very principle of Islamic schools (although Wahhabi Salafism tends to be embedded in Hanbalism) and claims the right to perform *ijtiḥād* (free interpretation). In contrast, Tunisian Salafis conceive their Maliki evolution to be in continuity with the medieval Salafi creed theoretically compatible with all juridical schools. In this understanding, Salafi-Malikism appears more as a *manhaj* (methodology) of looking for Prophetic proofs than as a fixed doctrine (*ʿaqīda*) incompatible with *fiqh* codifications. Salafi-Malikism thus constitutes a genuine endeavor to anchor Salafism in the Tunisian soil; one that integrates the peculiarities of the Tunisian context (both in terms of state monitoring and religious tradition) while maintaining its specific method of establishing religious normativity through the example of the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-ṣālīḥ*).

The accommodation of Malikism by Salafis should not be interpreted as a total theological overhaul of Salafism. The strict conditions under which Maliki jurisprudence can be used allow Salafis to maintain their theological methodology, which favors direct interpretation over reliance on secondary interpretation by the schools of law. Salafis may take juridical opinions in any of the four *madhhahīb* if they are backed by evidence in the Qur'an or the sunna (whereas groundless elements should be left aside).[134] This entails that the absorption of Malikism does not fundamentally change the nature of Salafism, which remains a theological approach that checks the validity of religious sources against the primal source of Islam, the *salaf*. Restricting Islam to one *madhhab* is thus still proscribed.[135] In other words, Salafis have not turned into Malikis. What is new is the permission and even encouragement to use Maliki jurisprudence, in contrast to the radical interpretations of canonical Salafis, who claim the right to interpret the sacred texts without the mediation of law schools. This constitutes a major evolution toward the Tunisification of Salafism, and religious nationalization.

[134]Interview with anonymous Salafi, 29 January 2020, Tunis.
[135]Amin interview, 25 February 2020.

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