# CHAPTER III
# ARAB SPRING IN TUNISIA

Things began quietly on December 17, 2010, when Mohamed Bouazizi, a twenty-six-year old Tunisian fruit seller from the impoverished city of Sidi Bouzid, set himself on fire. Like many young people in the region, Bouazizi had received a university education, but was forced into the informal jobs sector after failing to find proper employment.

A.   Protest in Tunisia as the Beginning of the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring began in Tunisia, where on December 17, 2010, Muhammad Bouazizi lit himself on fire in an expression of frustration at government repression and his economic plight. A wave of anti-regimeprotests followed and quickly spread to other Arab countries. Tunisia's presidentand dictator for twenty-three years, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, fled thecountry on January 14, 2011, leaving his ruling Dustouri Party to try to pickup the pieces. By March, however, further protests had forced the party todisband and its members from their ministerial posts, paving the way forBeji Caid Essebsi's interim government to take charge. This governmentruled the country until elections in October 2011 brought the National ConstituentAssembly (NCA) to power.Ben Ali had seized the presidency from his predecessor, Habib Bourguiba,in a bloodless coup in 1987.

Bourguiba was himself an authoritarianand had ruled Tunisia since it gained its independence from France in1956. While Bourguiba especially played a major role in making Tunisiaone of the most sociallyrogressive countries in the Middle East and NorthAfrica, both men were extremely repressive. They left behind legacies ofimprisonments, torture, censorship, and brutal crackdowns on their opponents.

While Tunisians managed to topple Ben Ali in a matter of weeks, itwill take them many years to rebuild and fully transition from more thanfie decades of dictatorship to

sustainable peace and stability. Additionally,the removal of Ben Ali created deep divisions within Tunisian society, especiallybetween supporters of the former regimes, including groups likeNedaa Tunis and al-Mubadara (The Initiative), and those who participatedin the uprising, like Islamists, Ettakatol, and the Congress for the Republic (CPR) party. Indeed, these tensions have led to several severe political crisesin the years since Ben Ali's fall.

Despite these challenges, Tunisia's political transition has gone relativelywell in the five years since the revolution, and the country has become theArab Spring's beacon of hope. Since its revolution, it has held not one buttwo national dialogues that have helped Tunisia's leading political partiesforge compromises on its constitution and transitional justice law in spite ofsignificant polarization. Tunisia's new constitution, ratified in January 2014,was hailed as the most progressive in the Arab world. Tunisia's inclusiveand pragmatic approach to its transition has allowed it to pursue each ofthe essential national reconciliation processes.

Truth-seeking committeesare starting to function, and in the meantime, former regime members suspectedof past violations are being held for trial in humane conditions andwith protection from torture. Various methods of reparations are being debatedand applied, and a number of judges have been dismissed. Nonetheless,the vast majority of the work on each of these national reconciliationprocesses is yet to be done, and Tunisia must faithfully carry it out to bestsituate itself for long-term stability and success. Tunisia seems to be grappling with fewer problematic issues than Libyaor Yemen in its post-dictatorship transition to civil peace. Nevertheless, thecountry still has significant concerns that are hindering its pursuit of nationalreconciliation and a stable peace. Two examples of these issues areProtection of the Revolution Committees and Salafi-Liberal polarization.

Protection of Revolution Committees

On January 14, 2011, Ben Ali escaped Tunisia. Without his iron first controllingthe country, a security vacuum developed. Fears of anarchy and disorderinspired individuals in many Tunisian neighborhoods to respond by formingwhat later became known as Protection of the Revolution Committees(PRCs). After an interim government headed by Essebsi was formed andrestored order, security became less of a concern. The role of the committeesthus became less significant, but many adapted to the new reality andregistered with the Ministry of the Interior as NGOs, though they continue to call themselves PRCs. As of mid-2014 there were approximately fifteenregistered PRCs in Tunisia, each containing a few dozen members.

The PRCs became a source of serious political controversy when manyof their members were accused by the opposition of affiliation with the thenrulingIslamist political party, Ennahda. In fact, some Tunisians describedthe PRCs as "the armed wing of Ennahda." The role of PRCs in Tunisia'spost-revolution period became even more controversial when some of theirmembers were accused of being part of a group that attacked and causedthe death of Lutfi Nageth, a Tunisian politician afficiliated with the thenoppositionparty Nedaa Tunis, in the city of Tatwain in October 2012.

The cause of death is hotly disputed as the medical report stated that Nagethdied of a heart attack, while the courts charged ten people with his death.Two of the ten were allegedly Ennahda affi liates, which reinforced the accusationthat the PRCs represent the armed wing of Ennahda.The Tunisian government, which until January 2014 was headed by anEnnahda-led troika coalition, refused to dissolve the PRCs. Ennahda arguedfor maintaining the PRCs as they were registered with the Ministryof the Interior, had well-defined structures, and were acting in accordancewith the law. According to Ennahda politician Said Ferjani, "The executivebranch should never dissolve a registered organization simply because thiswill become a precedent for

the government to arbitrarily dissolve otherregistered organizations. The judiciary, not political decisions, is the authorityto terminate the work of a specific organization when violations happen.

Who knows who will be in power next! Allowing such a precedent could bemanipulated by upcoming governments to silence opposition."Despite his opposition to dissolving PRCs except through the judicialsystem, Ferjani conceded that the name of these groups, "Protection ofthe Revolution," has an exclusionary tone. He agreed that the name infersthat the committees have a monopoly on the protection of the Tunisianrevolution. Ferjani said, "Revolution is a continuous and cumulative project.It started decades ago and many people contributed to the revolution.

There were those who died before they saw freedom. It is therefore notvery accurate that some groups today monopolize the cause of revolutionprotection."An important dimension of understanding the politics of PRCs is thecontext of mistrust that engulfs Tunisia's transitional phase. This mistrustexplains the opposition's concerns about the exact operations and goals ofthe PRCs. Suspicion of them was exacerbated by the Nageth killing. Additionally,PRCs clashed with the powerful Tunisian General Labor Union(UGTT), contributing to the buildup of tensions between that organizationand Ennahda, and the deterioration of trust between the groups.

The concerns of the opposition about the existence of PRCs are totallyunderstandable. The opposition, however, should assess whether dissolvingthe PRCs through a political decision would genuinely serve the long-termdemocratic transition in Tunisia. In fact, it is in the opposition's intereststo channel efforts to dissolve the PRCs not through parliament but strictlythrough the judicial system. Dissolving organizations through the NCA orthe executive will confuse the democratic process and prevent the separation of powers.

Instead of lobbying the NCA and protesting in the streets,the opposition should focus on collecting solid evidence of illegal PRCbehavior to present in court. This

would make the PRCs more carefulabout behaving according to the law, lessening concerns that they wouldact as intimidators. Holding PRCs accountable to legal standards will only act as intimidators. Holding PRCs accountable to legal standards will onlystrengthen the democratic transition and rule of law, and contribute to creatingcommon ground where all parties can work together.

Amongst the most visible political and social actors at play, from the January 14 revolution and the consequent transition period, four stand out in imposing themselves in the virtual and actual political arena: the cyber-activists, the unemployed graduates, the basic trade union activists, and the lawyers. It is mainly these four new groups who have played a role in the uprising that led to the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of a new era. While the outcome is still uncertain, Tunisia seems engaged in a historical process of democratic transition that will probably be long and full of tensions and political struggles.

The choice of these four new actors might fi nd justifi cation in the founding scene of the revolution, namely the act of immolation, in the city of Sidi Bouzid, Mohamed Bouazizi's hometown. Bouazizi was a young street vendor with an average level of education, and whose support came from the people close to him—trade unionists and unemployed graduates in particular, as well as lawyers—both at the local and regional level. Subsequently, the movement spread nationwide, in the form of a display of solidarity, aimed at the recovery of dignity and freedom,it involves thinking about what actors do, and how they do it. More precisely, it is important to study the 'forms of rationality' that organize the ways of these actors. For Foucault, actors interact and organize their way of action according to three main registers: the control of things, the relation to others and the relation to themselves. Ultimately, the interaction between actors brings about issues of individual bodies and political and symbolical society issues.

A new political public sphere has progressively emerged these past years, with the advent of new actors that became visible because of changes in local and global society, and particularly through new communication and information technologies. Th us, the new public sphere has become increasingly focused on the new media (Internet, mobile phone networks, satellite chains, and so forth) and their means of expression, organized into digital images and social networks.

This new public and media sphere is inconsistent with the old public sphere, based on the submission of the governors to the party-state rule and to the cult of personality used to extend infi nite presidential terms and to cover the abuses and embezzlements of Ben Ali and his family. It is true that the game of old actors, such as trade unionists, feminists and human rights advocates, as well as political parties of the opposition, such as Islamists, liberals, and the left, might intersect with that of the new actors of the revolution and the transition.

However, the underlying logic of the actors diff ers radically, as does the content of their relationships and political views. Hence, it is important to study the individuality of the new actors and to question the depth and duration of their actions. What is the social and political status of the new actors and how are they diff erent from the old actors? Is it about isolated individuals that provoke spontaneous acts or individuals capable of triggering structured collective behavior within real social movements? In either case, the study of new actors falls, by the nature of their actions, into the category of civil society's public sphere that comprises, a sphere of debate and change, organized around the usage of public reason and the organic link to the national state. Such a conception as it applied to Europe throughout the eighteenth and twentieth centuries deserves to be extended to a transnational public sphere that competes against the national public sphere.

Through the concept of the transnational public sphere, one should re-think democracy theory within the present post-

national constellation, marked by the emergence of discursive arenas based on new technologies of information and communication that go beyond the frontiers of nation-states. Keeping in mind the transformations of the public sphere that tend increasingly towards trans-nationalization, the problematic nature of the current research is articulated around dynamics, interactions and issues that led the actors to project the local into the national and international levels, so as to take mobilizing collective action in favor of requirements based on the rejection of injustice and of the former political regime characterized by corruption and social and regional inequalities.

In short, the question is whether the political dynamics propelled by the new actors are interdependent social movements with a specifi c identity and forms of organization, capable of following through with the conflicts and transforming the actions of protest in the shape of proposals contributing to the process of transition and democratic construction.

Tunisia also faces at least one kind of polarization that is more extreme than in other Arab cases: the vast and growing divide between secular liberals and ultraconservative Salafi Islamists. In fact, polarization between Islamism and secularism in Tunisia manifests itself in many ways including between Islamist Ennahda and several secular left parties. However, what makes this polarization signifi cantly sharper and a threat to the transition process in Tunisia is the involvement of Salafi sts who take it to a new level that includes the use of violence.

Another layer of polarization also exists within the Islamists themselves, in particular between ultraconservative Salafi sts and the moderate Ennahda party.Tunisian secularism is vibrant and unparalleled in the Arab world. Under Bourguiba and Ben Ali, Tunisia was, for example, the only Arab country to ban the hijab in state institutions. Its jihadi Salafi s, meanwhile, demand a purely religious state and have shown their willingness to attack cultural activities they deem

un-Islamic.Thus, the two parties are both at extremes, one banning the hijab and the other attacking cultural activities. This is not to suggest that either one of them is right, but the sheer distance between these two cultural extremes makes the likelihood that they will coalesce around one vision for the state rather slim, while a confrontation, possiblyeven a violent one, is certainly a possibility and may very well be in the making.

Moreover, Salafi s, who were imprisoned or driven underground before the revolution, have been growing in strength. Jailed Salafi leaders, including Abu Ayadh, the leader of Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia, were released as part of the country's post-revolution amnesty. Ansar al-Sharia's annual conference in 2012 attracted roughly fi ve thousand attendees, and an estimated fifty thousand were expected to participate in the 2013 conference in Kairouan before the government decided to prevent the conference by force and blocked the roads leading to the city.(Saidani t.thn.) This huge ideological gap between liberals and Salafi s has left the moderate Islamist Ennahda party, almost by default, to occupy the Tunisian middle. The upshot is that one can witness Ennahda fi gures being described—often simultaneously—as closet fundamentalists by liberals and as infidels and tyrants by Salafi s. Rafi k Abdul Salam, a former foreign minister of Tunisia and Ennahda leader, explained, "Salafi s accuse us of being infi dels (for not representing Islam well) and the Tunisian left accuses us of allying with the radicals (for not being tough enough on Salafis)" (Salam, 2013).

Salafi-liberal polarization is occasionally exacerbated by violent incidents, which raise serious concerns about the possibility of coexistence between the two groups amid the deterioration of security in the country. In the fi ve years after the revolution, NCA members Chokri Belaid and Mohamed al-Brahmi were assassinated, tourists were targeted in bombings in the cities of Sousse and Monstir, the Bardo museum in Tunis was attacked in March 2015 leaving twenty-one tourists dead, and a number of violent clashes took place

between the Tunisian Army and extremist groups in the Sha'anbi Mountains. Especially after the government labeled Ansar al- Sharia a terrorist organization, fears of an impending security crisis have become more pronounced. In February 2014, Interior Minister Lotfi Ben Jeddou announced that Tunisia's National Guard had killed Kamel Gadhgadhi, the Islamist extremist who was the chief suspect in Belaid's assassination. the increased level of individual freedoms and openness in post Arab Spring Tunisia, it is unlikely that either the radical Salafi s or the liberal left will be able to marginalize or eliminate the other. Tunisians will have to learn that peaceful coexistence between different viewpoints is the best way to deal with this polarization. To replace polarization with sustainable coexistence on the one hand, and to effectively respond to violence on the other, Tunisians need to embrace a strategy built on three pillars: rule of law, socioeconomic development, and enlightenment.

*Rule of Law*: Tunisia's liberals must understand that Salafi s, fi rst and foremost, are Tunisian citizens. Like all other Tunisians, they have the full rights associated with their citizenship. They are free to assemble and advocate for their beliefs, and the state should protect them as long as they remain committed to non-violence. Ennahda leader Said Ferjani argued that "the state must deal with the Salafi violence fi rmly and all within the rule of law. This is necessary fi rst for the state to establish and maintain order, and second to ensure the rights of the non-violent Salafi s—the Scientific Salafis to practice their beliefs" (Ferjani, -)

*Socioeconomic Development*: A major cause of the revolution and the subsequent radicalization and violence is underdevelopment. It is no surprise that the violence and clashes that occurred with the police in May 2013 took place in Tadamun, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Tunis. The state must face these realities and implement economic development policies in these areas.

*Enlightenment*: "Counter Salafism by Malekism," said Ferjani. While Salafism leans toward conservatism and

extremism, Malekism focuses on knowledge, reason, and enlightenment. The majority of Tunisia's Sunni Muslims follow the Maleki school of Fiqh, or Islamic jurisprudence. Kairouan, about one hundred miles south of Tunis, is the capital of Malekism, and Al-Zaytouna in Tunis is one of the Muslim world's fi rst universities (FRAIHAT, 2016). Ferjani pointed out that "Tunisia defeated Fatemism and rejected Wahhabism by Malekism. Our Maleki ancestors would not accept their teaching being hijacked by Salafi sm today.

Our ancestors taught us how to fi ght with knowledge and that is how we can face Salafi sm today."10 Alia Alani, an historian at Manouba University and specialist in Islamic movements, explained that in 1803, the founder of Wahhabism sent a strong letter to the governor of Tunisia, Hamouda Basha, asking him to follow the conservative Wahhabist school of thought. It was said that the governor consulted the Maleki scholars at Al Zaytouna and twenty of them drafted a response rebutting from a religious point of view the principles of Wahhabism. Tunisia's long history of moderate Islam should be highlighted in order to combat extremism.

## B.   Economic Condition while Tunisia Revolution

Tunisia's unemployment had been persistently high for more than two decades preceding the 2010 revolution and remains high today. Until 2010 the rate was often above 14 percent, and between January 2011 and May 2012, about 200,000 additional jobs were lost and the unemployment rate reached its highest level at 19 percent. By 2014 the economy had recovered partially and this rate diminished but remained high at around 15 percent. Youth, between fifteen and thirty years old, make up about onethird of the labor force and three-quarters of the unemployed.

On average, but with important disparities, their unemployment rate is above 30 percent. This rate is higher for young women and in poorer regions, especially in the west of the country. There is a wide consensus that angry unemployed

youth, in a context of regional disparity and increasing corruption and poverty, triggered the popular revolts and led to the fall of the previous dictatorial regime in Tunisia (as in the other Arab Spring countries). This structural unemployment is the outcome of both supply and demand effects, including the inefficient functioning of the labor market.(Boughzala 2016)

Tunisia little has been done to respond to youth expectations and regional imbalance and to institute strategic reforms. For a long time, decisionmakers and political bodies have concentrated more on political and electoral issues than economic challenges. Yet a pattern emerges and allows for some reasonable predictions. There is still hope for consolidating democracy and engaging in inclusive development projects with more transparency, rule of law, political competition, and accountability. Although Tunisia faces a number of challenges in its current political and economic context, it has a unique opportunity to free the economy from the bottlenecks and red tape that previously impeded its development. It can establish major reforms that tackle the issues raised in this chapter in order to create a climate conducive to more private initiative and rapid and inclusive economic development. Youth, especially angry and unemployed youth and those who have been ignored and least integrated, remain a powerful driving force and a source of hope.

The situation has not stabilized, and the only conceivable pathway to a stable state and a sustained democratic and pluralistic transition is contingent on putting the country on an inclusive growth path. Otherwise, unrest will persist. Convergence toward such a stable state requires effective leadership, political cohesion, institutional development, and also a new and innovative participative and inclusive economic strategy focusing on the aspirations of youth and allowing for their participation.

*The Supply Side of the Labor Market*, On the supply side, the demographic pressure is high owing to the rapidlyincreasing size of the labor force, which is expected to

continue toincrease for the coming decade (2014–23), despite slowing population growth. The annual rate of population growth is nearing 1 percent (1.03 in 2014), while the labor force keeps growing at 2 percent or more, primarily owing to the likely increase of female participation in the labor market. Moreover, the Tunisian labor force is increasingly educated; the number of university graduates has been rising rapidly as a result of the open and free access to higher education. The proportion of the labor force with university degrees was less than 4 percent in 1984 and less than 7 percent in 1994 but jumped to 13 percent in 2004 and to more than 16 percent in 2010, and then to 17 percent in 2011. The proportion of the educated (those with at least secondary or vocational education attainment) in the total labor force was at 55 percent in 2011. While free and open access to education has led to a large stock of human capital, it has come at the expense of the quality of education and training, and this is certainly a major issue. The skills acquired by this growing labor force are not always adequate. Education has not been designed to impart appropriate skills enabling individuals to move up the value chain and to ensure the transition toward a more productive economy.(Boughzala 2016)

*The Demand Side*, On the demand side, the economy's capacity to create jobs, especiallygood jobs, and attractive opportunities has been weak, well below the expectations of job seekers. Economic growth has not been adequate, and the demand for skilled and educated labor is limited. Investment has been predominantly concentrated in low-value-added, low-wage, labor-intensive activities based on low-level technologies. Consequently, the demand for more-educated, less-experienced youth is the lowest in the labor pool. The demand is even lower for women and for those living in the poorer hinterland region located mainly in the western regions of the country.

These regions are poorer in terms of infrastructure, access to international harbors and ports, and human capital availability. Hence they have been the least attractive for

investments and entrepreneurial opportunities and have the least diversified productive activities. Skill mismatch is also an important factor underlying the low level of employment, and Tunisian employers often complain about the lack of employees with the right abilities. However, although skill mismatch is currently an issue, it has been less important as an explanatory factor of unemployment.

The weakness in the overall demand for skills is the main factor. Based on data from the Tunisian national employment agency, only a small share of vacancies are hard to fill. For example, 86.7 percent of the vacancies are filled in less than a month, and another 8.2 percent in less than three months. For no more than 5.1 percent of the vacancies, it takes longer than three months to identify the right match . It is also a fact that the majority of enterprises, including large firms, invest very little in training their staff, implying that they can find the skills they need at a lower cost in the marketplace.(Boughzala 2016)

*Private Sector Development*, Despite the relatively good ranking of Tunisia in the World Bank'sDoing Business report (40th of 183 countries in 2011) the domestic private sector development remains below expectations. Over the past two decades, Tunisia has undertaken important reforms, including administrative and fiscal changes, and provided incentives for enterprise creation (the investment incentives Law 93-120 passed in 1993), which attracted substantial amounts of foreign direct investment.

Despite all these performances, reforms, and actions, Tunisia's private investment remained relatively small—around 15 percent of GDP and less than 60 percent of total investments. The uncertainty and instability following the revolution has depressed private investments further. Moreover, there has been a significant gap between rules and facts, leaving room for deals, abuses, lack of transparency, and corruption. The business environment has been plagued by corruption and many other imperfections and uncertainties and has not been conducive to substantial investment and

enterprise creation, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs). A key economic challenge for Tunisia today is to improve the business environment to increase investments and to create more and better businesses able to create more attractive employment opportunities for youth.

Private investments remain modest quantitatively and at the bottom level of the technological scale. In most sectors, even the most competitive firms were clearly unable to move up the value chain or to improve their productivity fast enough. They have not succeeded in switching from labor-intensive, low-wage activities to more capitaland skill-intensive ones. The aim of this section is to analyze past trends in enterprise development in Tunisia in order to try to understand why private sector development has been below expectations. It is also a preliminary step toward designing a new strategy in favor of more rapid development and better opportunities for youth.

The most reasonable view is that, for any given economy, the optimal enterprise structure should include and combine all sizes of businesses and that the proportion of SMEs will depend on many variables, mainly the country's endowment of land, labor, and capital, its technological capacities, and its trade policies.(Boughzala 2016)

So far in Tunisia little has been done to respond to youth expectations and regional imbalance and to institute strategic reforms. For a long time, decisionmakers and political bodies have concentrated more on political and electoral issues than economic challenges. Yet a pattern emerges and allows for some reasonable predictions. There is still hope for consolidating democracy and engaging in inclusive development projects with more transparency, rule of law, political competition, and accountability.

Although Tunisia faces a number of challenges in its current political and economic context, it has a unique opportunity to free the economy from the bottlenecks and red tape that previously impeded its development. It can establish major reforms that tackle the issues raised in this chapter in

order to create a climate conducive to more private initiative and rapid and inclusive economic development. Youth, especially angry and unemployed youth and those who have been ignored and least integrated, remain a powerful driving force and a source of hope.

The situation has not stabilized, and the only conceivable pathway to a stable state and a sustained democratic and pluralistic transition is contingent on putting the country on an inclusive growth path. Otherwise, unrest will persist. Convergence toward such a stable state requires effective leadership, political cohesion, institutional development, and also a new and innovative participative and inclusive economic strategy focusing on the aspirations of youth and allowing for their participation.

1. Economic transition

Tunisia's most faithful echo. The big structural difference concerns their respective private sectors and banking systems. Tunisia had generated a substantial, if politically subordinate private sector, from a restructured socialist economy had consigned theirs, either by design or lack of fi nancial capacity, to the shadows of the informal economy. While the IMF and World Bank had pressured most of these countries to engage in neo-liberal reform, private sector development varied signifi cantly. Tunisian businesses enjoyed considerably more commercial bank financing than the others.

Before 2011 Tunisia's "sweet little" rogue regime, positioned among the "Worst of the Worst," already seemed the ripest candidate in the region for political change the non-oil states its per capita income was second only to Lebanon's (Henry 2016). Prudent economic management had generated the highest average per capita wealth growth rate since 1987, the year General Zine El Abidine Ben Ali succeeded Habib Bourguiba as president. Th e regime boasted of home ownership for 80 percent of the population as a sign of growing middle and lower middle classes. Its carefully crafted policies of export-led growth had fostered a light

manufacturing base with as much value-added as neighboring Algeria's, with triple Tunisia's population.

Economic success indeed rendered Ben Ali's crude dictatorship a political anomaly. His police regime tortured dissidents,mugged investigative journalists, imprisoned youth for circumventing Internet fi lters, and destroyed any semblance of judicial autonomy but could not insulate its largely literate population from constant interaction with their European neighbors, the closest of which was only ninety miles across the Mediterranean.Tunisia since the 1990s can set off the sort of chain reaction on December 17, 2010 that sent Ben Ali packing 28 days later, on January 14. Nor does the profi le of a bully police state explain why one started off an Arab chain reaction and not the other.(Henry 2016) Tunisia was perhaps better positioned than Egypt because it was smaller, with an eighth of Egypt's 83 million people, wealthier, and had less geopolitical weight.

The Americans could be and were, at little cost, on the right side of history.Tunisia's greater wealth was also correlated with greater associational activity, Internet connectivity, and, proportionate to population, greater Facebook membership,in building up an export and services led economy may have led to the dictator's downfall.

The contrast between a relatively dynamic economy, blocked only by visible, top-heavy centralized corruption, became too great for Tunisia's marginalized elites. Yet Tunisia's economic growth could not keep pace with an ever expanding education system. Over 50 percent of its secondary and university educated were unemployed in 2005, a record in North Africa; and possibly the aftershocks of world recession, coupled with high food prices, more adversely affected Tunisia than its neighbors because trade constitutes a substantially larger proportion of its GDP.In Tunisia the armed forces have few economic interests apart from their own upkeep and have stayed out of politics.

The contrast with Egypt could not be sharper.Th e business networks of the two bully regimes also displayed

significant diff erences. Corruption in Tunisia was highly centralized and top-heavy. Cut off the head and then the cancer, directly infecting some 113 individuals, is curable with further judicial surgery. Indeed, were Tunisia to continue its prudent export oriented economic policies, the new political climate could attract the substantial local as well as foreign investment that the kleptocracy had deterred. In Egypt, by contrast, the cancer was more widespread, and SCAF, committed to protecting its extensive interests, did not wish to probe too deeply. SCAF and the Tunisian transitional authorities might compete with one another in exposing the fi nancial misdemeanors of their former presidential families, but they faced diff erent problems.(Henry 2016)

Tunisian revolutionaries faced severe political obstacles of an erstwhile hegemonic single-party regime with deeper historical roots Distinguishing the revolutionary enemies was a daunting task in a country where many technically competent people had been obliged,Whatever the outcome of their respective transitions, the two bully regimes had relatively autonomous bureaucracies, grounded in centuries of state development. Th e other Arab regimes governed more problematic states with weaker administrative and civil infrastructures.

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*For a revolution to succeed, a number of factors have to come together. Th e government must appear so irremediably unjust or inept that it is widely viewed as a threat to the country's future; elites (especially in the military) must be alienated from the state and no longer willing to defend it; a broad-based section of the population, spanning ethnic and religious groups and socioeconomic classes, must mobilize; and international powers must either refuse to step in to defend the government or constrain it from using maximum force to defend itself.* (Goldstone 2011)

By 2010 the government's "irremediable" injustice was as apparent to rural folk as to upscale Tunis' chattering classes. Wikileaks confi rmed much of the gossip about Leila Trabelsi, Ben Ali's wife, and other members of her notorious family as well as other Ben Ali in-laws,After 2007 the invasion of the Ben Ali and Trabelsi clans into lucrative slices of the Tunisian economy accelerated. Credit to this web of some 114 individuals reached 3 billion dinars by 2011 ($2.2 billion) and even more serious.(WikiLeaks, New York Times 2011)

Tunisia's highly respected new governor of the Central Bank brought in to clean up the mess, was how it had doubled in 2009 and again in 2010, revealing how ravenous the appetites of the ruling thieves were becoming. Structural variables cannot off er tipping points or explain how one particular case of self-immolation of the many that had happened in Tunisia since the 1990s can set off the sort of chain reaction on December 17, 2010 that sent Ben Ali

packing 28 days later, on January 14. Nor does the profi le of a bully police state explain why one started off an Arab chain reaction and not the other.

Tunisia's greater wealth was also correlated with greater associationalactivity, Internet connectivity, and, proportionate to population, greaterFacebook membership,it's very success in building up an export and services led economy mayhave led to the dictator's downfall. The contrast between a relativelydynamic economy, blocked only by visible, top-heavy centralized corruption,became too great for Tunisia's marginalized elites. Yet Tunisia'seconomic growth could not keep pace with an ever expanding educationsystem.

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Tunisia had been a model of enlightenment, liberty and progress in the Arab world since its independence. Regime change brought a number of political, security and economic challenges that shook the stability of the civil state in Tunisia, after the engagement of political Islam in governance for the very first time. Ennahda's government faced a number of crises including the violent opposition of radical Islamist groups, drafting a new constitution and, in particular, the setbacks of the Arab Spring several factors and shifts that challenged the civil state.

C.   International Politics

During the early days of the Arab Spring, a euphoric wave overtook the region. After decades of economic, social, and political deterioration, people in the Arab world had rediscovered the power of their own voices and the force of their collective will. Not since the days of pan-Arab nationalism had populations in various regional countries been united by such a sense of transnational hope and optimism about the future. Events in the region were also an example to the rest of the world. Indeed, even in the United States, the Arab Spring's reverberations could be felt.But, as euphoria is wont to do, feelings of giddy optimism about the Arab Spring started to dissipate.

As a number of regional uprisings appeared to fizzle out or turn violent, anxiety and concern developed about the Arab Spring's trajectory. For numerous individuals inside and outside the region, growing doubts emerged as to whether the revolutions were capable of permanently changing the status quo. Some began to critique the lack of cohesive planning or strategy behind these events.These criticisms were leveled not only against the Arab Spring's more questionable "successes," but also against those revolutions that had managed to oust authoritarian rulers. In the words of Middle East expert, Asef Bayat, "Two years after the fall of the dictators in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen not a great deal has effectively changed in the states' institutions or the power bases of the old elites. Police, army and judiciary; state-controlled media; business elites and the clientelist networks of the old ruling parties all remained more or less intact" (Bayat 2013).

On top of these troubling developments across various Arab Spring states, some actors inside and outside the MENA region viewed the rise of "Islamist" governments as an unmitigated disaster. From the revolutions' earliest days, these individuals and entities cringed at the possibility that Islamist groups, such as the Brotherhood, would come to power in Arab countries rocked by upheaval. Indeed, even before

elections were held, the victory of these organizations was all but assured. Most Islamist groups outlawed by predecessor governments were untainted by the crimes and corruption of these regimes. Instead, years of political repression had given these organizations a veneer of credibility, which was further strengthened by their work in providing social services governments could not or would not provide.

In an environment of free and fair elections, Islamist groups were sure to skate to an easy victory, especially in the short term. Never mind that the Arab Spring had neither been started nor led by these organizations, some of which had initially hesitated to join the uprisings. Years of one-party rule in many Arab states had made these groups the only game in town. When elections in various Arab Spring countries brought Islamist organizations to power, those inherently inclined to see them in a negative light viewed these developments as a setback for the region.

Such prognostications were heard, in part, from Western voices upset by the loss of secular authoritarian allies in the Arab world. For these actors, Islamists were perceived to be more hostile to Western A Short History of the Arab World and the Arab Spring  interests, unwilling to continue the pro-Israel policies of predecessor regimes, less inclined to allow natural resources to be exploited by Western firms, and more likely to oppose any collaboration or alliance with Western, particularly U.S. and Israeli, militaries. Liberals, secularists, and various other groups in the region were also less than enthusiastic about the rise of political Islam. Many of these groups distrusted the willingness of Islamists to respect human rights and pluralism and feared they would disregard democratic principles upon coming to power. Whatever one may think about the accuracy of these particular apprehensions, there were other changes afoot transformations that were taking place on the individual and grassroots levels, which spoke to the Arab Spring's positive impact in many regional countries.

National dialogue, as defined by the United States Institute of Peace, is "a dynamic process of joint inquiry and listening to diverse views, where the intention is to discover, learn and transform relationships in order to address practical and structural problems in a society." Such forums aim to expand political, often post-confl ict, negotiations beyond political and military leadership with the aim of being more inclusive of society in general. Indeed, according to Katia Papagianni, national dialogues involve a cross-section of both victims and aggressors in an effort to "move away from elite-level deal making by allowing diverse interests to infl uence the transition negotiations."

While dialogues are meant to aid the process of healing and reconciling differences between formerly opposing sides, the process also grants non-elites the opportunity to infl uence government decisionmaking at the local and possibly national levels.Because national dialogues are meant to involve broad swaths of society, it is difficult to determine how best to select participants, as well as the appropriate numbers. Generally, a broad cross-section is preferable, yet direct voting on participants is often too time-consuming and labor intensive to be practical, particularly in a post-confl ict or transitional environment.

Participants in most dialogues are therefore chosen by caucus-type constituencies or appointed. As a consequence, national dialogues are not completely grassroots, yet may still faithfully represent society at large. At a minimum, as described by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a national dialogue "brings together a diverse set of voices to create a microcosm of the larger society."

Significantly, extremists often form a part of this microcosm, and therefore another question arises about how national.dialogues should include such fi gures. One popular solution is to begin the dialogue only with moderate parties, meaning those who are willing to work toward resolution without conditions, before adding in holders of more extreme views. In this way, moderates can work to strengthen public

support for the dialogue before those tending toward extremism join the process. Because national dialogues usually take place after confl icts, it is important for participants to be committed to the process of dialogue, rather than seeking retribution or victory. Certainly, "dialogue is the implementation of a deliberative method. It is important for the public to discuss and deliberate."

To accomplish this, it is helpful for the public to cultivate a feeling of ownership over the process and become invested in the dialogue. Suggests bringing together people who "have a common ground that is unrelated to the confl ict, such as a profession, gender, generation, societal role, etc." This can help create solidarity across lines of conflict, as well as enhance the feeling of working toward a common goal. Because dialogues are intended to alter thinking about others as enemies in the interest of moving forward peacefully, holding common goals is important.

The timing of national dialogues is also critical. Indeed, participants cannot be expected to focus on common goals and reorient their thinking toward one another while violence rages on. The UNDP argues, "Dialogue requires that basic conditions be present first. When violence, hate,and mistrust remain stronger than the will to forge a consensus, or if there is a significant imbalance of power or a lack of political will among theparticipants, then the situation might not be ripe for dialogue. Moreover, participants must feel free to speak their minds without fear of retribution, or rejection." There is rarely a specific moment when timing is optimal for national dialogue, but if the above conditions are met, it is likely that a productive dialogue can be launched. In addition, dialogue processes must be governed by specific rules and values.

The identify joint ownership, learning, humanity, inclusiveness, and long-term perspective as important organizing principles, and describe transparency, authenticity, patience, equality, and fl exibility as additional essential features. Likewise, though national dialogues necessarily involve free-form discussions, they are not disorganized

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processes. Instead, post-confl ict dialogues must be taken seriously, as they are "highly structured" processes that require "expert facilitation by dialogue practitioners familiar with the context of the confl ict.". Further aiding in the organization and promotion of the success of national dialogues is the clear definition of its mandate.

Organizers must be specific about the exact goals of the dialogue to ensure that participants can work effectively toward such ends. Certainly, dialogue is more than a process; it is meant to effect change. "People participate in dialogue, not only because they like it, but because they want results. If people participate in a dialogue that subsequently produces no results, then dialogue will begin to abuse its limits as a method, and people will become disillusioned, with the consequent risk not only to the dialogue process itself but to the system as a whole." To maintain faith in the dialogue process, tangible goals must be sought and suggestions implemented. Many goals of dialogues, which often include changing how people think and the ways they resolve confl ict, are intangible and diffi cult to measure. Although no party "wins" in a national dialogue, new ways of handling conflict and seeing adversaries can emerge it, "In some cases, the dialogue processes may not reach their formal goals but may still manage to avert confl ict and to convince political actors to continue engaging with the political process.

In other cases, national dialogue may reach all their formal goals but essentially fail because they have not included the major political forces of the country and to maintain a level of support for the political process among the public." In this respect, national dialogues require patience and often involve a long-term commitment, as such processes can last "anywhere from ten minutes to ten years." Perhaps the most diffi cult question regarding national dialogues is how to link the progress they make to institutional reforms that will perpetuate peace. Indeed, part of the challenge is transferring what is learned in such forums and applying it to constructive action on the ground. In order to contribute to peace and

achieve the goal of conflict transformation, dialogue projects need to be complemented by advocacy and active promotion of structural change.

Such projects are built on a dialogue foundation and yet evoke critical thinking in broader society, and promote a change in institutions and norms." Certainly, confl icts begin most often due to structural problems and therefore can only be fully resolved when these are considered and amended. Ultimately, in the UNDP's words, "dialogue is not a one-size-fi ts-all strategy, it is not a panacea for resolving all the world's crises. Rather it represents just one tool in policymakers' toolbox. One that is especially useful when the parties to a conflict are not ready yet for formal negotiations." Dialogue therefore should be used in conjunction with other methods of confl ict resolution to ensure successful change and the perpetuation of peace and stability.

The Tunisian revolution, occurring in a country that historically, politically, and intellectually has a reformist and modernist tradition, has allowed a genuine civil society to emerge that is organically independent of any political authority. This civil society, driven by the enthusiasm and determination of youth and by an educated elite, has created an important historic opportunityfor exhorting specific democratic and constitutional reforms.

The intensity and dynamism of the civil society has allowed the citizens to reinvent their own democracy of opinion. Street protests, political debates, polemics, sit- ins, strikes, diversity of the press and the media, the creation of more meeting places, and declarations in social media are now the everyday fare of Tunisian democracy. In the absence of any new political authority, it is also these elements that contribute to the country's institutional transformation.

Ultimately, we note that all political actors want to show that they respect the democratic rules of the game, even the Islamists, who are in the process of modifying their language to fit with the rules of the majority and of parliamentary democracy. Indeed, the Islamists were proud of the final

adoption of the Tunisian Constitution on January 27, 2014, the product of a consensus between the Islamists and the Laicists, the discussions of which were difficult.

Moreover, they are proud to demonstrate to the Tunisian and international public that they are democrats after all, having withdrawn peacefully from the government after the adoption of the constitution. They stepped down in favor of a neutral government of technocrats, appointed by mutual agreement between all representative parties, as consented in the roadmap issued by the National Dialogue (M'rad 2016).