

Crafting Political Society

The Role of Electoral Rules and Islamist Party Factions in
Tunisia's Democratic Transition

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The regimes of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have resisted democratization for so long that when the Arab Spring swept the region in 2010 and 2011, scholars, citizens, and political parties alike were caught completely off-guard. Authoritarians in the region, like Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, had long felt secure in their positions of power, bolstered by their key roles in the international “War on Terror” against Islamic fundamentalist groups.¹ Egypt in particular enjoyed a special relationship with the United States because of its shared border with Israel.² Despite years of growing civil unrest in both countries due to corruption and deplorable economic conditions, nothing in 2010 suggested that these countries would experience massive uprisings.³ Everything changed when 26-year old university graduate Tarek al-Tayeb Mohammed Bouazizi stood outside a municipal building in Tunisia and set himself on fire after the police confiscated his only means of earning an income—a produce cart.⁴ Bouazizi’s act of desperation on December 17, 2010, sparked Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution and unleashed a wave of protests across the region within a matter of weeks. By the middle of January, Tunisians had successfully ousted their president from office.⁵ Spurred by Tunisia’s success, Egypt’s January 25th Revolution quickly toppled Mubarak’s regime and for a moment there was renewed hope for democratization in MENA.⁶

Unfortunately, protests throughout the region were frequently crushed by brutal security forces, and by 2012, most of the uprisings had been put down by their respective authoritarian

¹ Wolf 2017, 92

² Mietzner 2014, 441-447

³ Rosefsky Wickham 2013; Wolf 2017

⁴ Wolf 2017, 129; “Tunisian President Says Job Riots 'Not Acceptable'” 2010

⁵ Wolf 2017

⁶ Rosefsky Wickham 2013

regimes. Tunisia and Egypt stood apart from countries like Libya, Syria, and Yemen, as the only ones to initiate democratic transitions.⁷ Then in July 2013, Egypt's democratically elected president and parliament were forcibly removed from office during a military coup.⁸ The Arab Spring was over, and Tunisia stood alone as the only democracy in MENA. For the past nine years, countless scholars have asked why Tunisia survived the transition and whether the results could be replicated in another state.

Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz (2013) argue that the divergent outcomes of revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt can partially be accounted for in the behavior of their respective Islamist parties as well as the presence of political society in one country but not the other. According to their earlier work on democratization, Linz and Stepan (1988) argue that a transition requires the “core institutions of a democratic political society—political parties, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, intraparty alliances, and legislatures—through which civil society can constitute itself politically to select and monitor democratic government” if there is any hope of the transition reaching the consolidation phase.⁹ Minimally functioning political parties are absolutely necessary if a transition is to be carried through to the consolidation period as parties serve the vital function of linking voters to their newly formed government.¹⁰ In the MENA region, secular parties are typically weak and dysfunctional while their Islamist counterparts are often exceptionally well-organized and have a high mobilization capacity.¹¹ Islamist parties, by virtue of their stability and popularity, are therefore the most important political actors during democratic transitions in this region, and their behavior can have significant consequences.

⁷ Stepan and Linz 2013

⁸ Stepan and Linz 2013

⁹ Linz and Stepan 1988, 4

¹⁰ Pridham 1990

¹¹ Haugbølle and Cavatorta 2011, 340

On October 23, 2011 Tunisia held its first democratic elections since gaining independence in 1956. The country's largest Islamist party *Ennahda*, returned from a twenty-year exile to win a plurality of the parliamentary seats. Their leader, Rachid Ghannouchi, immediately followed through on his pre-election pledge to not allow one party to rule Tunisia alone.¹² *Ennahda* immediately established a "troika" caretaker government consisting of two other major secular parties, Congress for the Republic (CPR) and *Ettakatol*, and began the process of drafting the country's new constitution.¹³ Stepan and Linz (2013) argue that this ability to forge important political alliances was one of the keys to Tunisia's successful transition. In addition, *Ennahda* embraced the concept of a civil state, in which religion has a consultative, but not controlling, role in politics, and committed itself to Tunisia's progressive Personal Status Code and the equitable treatment of women.¹⁴ While Tunisia's democratic transition was off to a smooth start, Egypt's own transition would fail within less than two years.

In Egypt, The Muslim Brotherhood and its political wing the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) not only failed to make political alliances, a necessary component of managing a democratic transition, but they refused to share power.¹⁵ Furthermore, they could not present a unified party platform. In at least one of their platforms leading into the 2011 elections, they continued to promote the implementation of *Shari'a* law and less than equal treatment for women and non-Muslims while simultaneously declaring support for pluralist democracy.¹⁶ Egypt's transition began with the first round of parliamentary elections held in November 2011—the first democratic elections since 1952 when the monarchy was overthrown. By the end

¹² Marks 2015.

¹³ Somer 2017, 1032

¹⁴ Linz and Stepan 2013.

¹⁵ Linz and Stepan 2013.

¹⁶ Linz and Stepan 2013; Pahwa 2017.

of the third round of elections in January 2012, Egypt had a new constituent assembly headed by the FJP. Unlike their Tunisian counterpart, however, the FJP made the decision to rule alone, excluding non-Islamist parties from the process of establishing the new Egyptian government.¹⁷ This authoritarian behavior unsettled many groups within Egypt, including the military and secular parties. By the time the second round of presidential elections were held in June 2012, the FJP and their candidate, Muhammad Mursi, were relying heavily on rhetoric which pandered to more radical voters. After the presidential election was over, Rachid Ghannouchi flew from Tunisia to Egypt to advise President Mursi and the FJP to rethink their decision to rule alone.¹⁸ The FJP ignored Ghannouchi's advice and began characterizing all "political enemies as religious enemies."¹⁹ On July 3, 2013, President Mursi was removed from office by the military, and both the FJP and the Muslim Brotherhood were banned.²⁰

The FJP's unwillingness to share power with non-Islamist parties severely curtailed its ability to oversee Egypt's democratic transition. Worse still, the FJP's behavior, resulting military coup in 2013, had a negative impact on Tunisian society where the population was simultaneously experiencing the rise of Salafi jihadism, terrorist attacks, and the assassination of two secular politicians within their own country.²¹ In January 2014, amid public panic about Islamism, *Ennahda* did what the FJP would not—they surrendered power to preserve the democratic transition.²² By surrendering political power, *Ennahda* preserved Tunisia's fragile transition and proved to the world that it was not a threat to democracy. Why *Ennahda* was able to embrace strategies like power-sharing, cross-ideological alliances, and social pluralism which

¹⁷ Pahwa 2017.

¹⁸ Marks 2015.

¹⁹ Pahwa 2017.

²⁰ Marks 2015.

²¹ Marks 2015.

²² Ounissi 2016.

allowed it to survive the democratic transition while the Muslim Brotherhood and FJP failed on all three accounts at the exact moment it mattered the most is one of the greatest puzzles of the Arab Spring.

Stepan and Linz (2013) attribute the behavior of *Ennahda* in Tunisia to three factors: 1) the presence of a strong political society that went beyond the mere presence of political parties and electoral rules to include political trust and interparty alliances between secularists and Islamists, 2) *Ennahda*'s early acceptance of democratic pluralism and the concept of a civil state, and 3) *Ennahda*'s alliances with secular political parties during its exile in the early 2000s. Egypt, on the other hand, appeared to lack both the political trust and interparty alliance components of political society that were necessary to facilitate a successful democratic transition. The goal of this thesis is to identify the mechanisms that explain *Ennahda*'s behavior and the presence of political society in Tunisia.

Literature Review

Scholarly analyses of the divergent cases of *Ennahda* and the Muslim Brotherhood have relied upon the inclusion moderation thesis because, as Cavatorta and Merone (2013) argue, “the success of processes of democratic change is often predicated on the moderation of anti-systemic and extremist parties.”²³ In other words, democratic change is dependent upon whether or not the extremist party in the system cooperates or acts as a spoiler. In MENA, Islamist parties are invariably considered to be the extremist party to watch, and inclusion moderation theoretically provides scholars with a way to predict when Islamist parties can essentially be tamed. There is a fear, at least in Western circles, that if an Islamist party is allowed to gain power through revolution or election, the result will be another Iran, Algeria, or Turkey.²⁴ As Jillian Schwedler

²³ Cavatorta and Merone 2013, 857

²⁴ Diamond 2010; Somer 2017

succinctly states, “Islamists are often added to the pantheon of historical bad guys about whom we have learned nothing if not to be skeptical about their expressed democratic commitments.”²⁵

However, this fear is not unique to either Islamists or MENA. In fact, the inclusion moderation thesis was born from the analysis of communist and pro-religious parties in post-World War II, and later post-Cold War, Europe.²⁶ The goal was to explain under what conditions parties with extreme, even violent and anti-democratic, views could be included in democratic systems without, in turn, undermining democracy and eroding core institutions.²⁷ The theory itself argues that if an extremist party is allowed to participate in the competitive democratic processes of elections, then eventually those processes would “tame even antidemocratic participants.”²⁸ Where inclusion results in moderation, the theory argues that the inverse is also true. When a radical party or movement is denied access to the political system and repressed by the regime, the likelihood that the party will embrace a more radical platform or even use violence against the regime increases dramatically.²⁹

Inclusion moderation is typically rooted in the notion that exposure to the political system and subsequent inclusion are the mechanisms that drive moderation.³⁰ However, there is another theory in inclusion moderation which proposes that it is not participation that drives moderation, but rather a desire to expand the party’s base of electoral support.³¹ Simply put, if political parties are given a chance to compete in elections and participate in policy making and political

²⁵ Schwedler 2011, 371

²⁶ Cavatorta and Merone 2013, 863; Tepe 2019

²⁷ Tepe 2019

²⁸ Tepe 2019

²⁹ Al-Anani 2019; Cavatorta and Merone 2013.

³⁰ Tepe 2019

³¹ Tepe 2019

bargaining, then even the most radical ones will begin to moderate their behavior and ideology in order to gain a larger share of the electoral vote.³²

The greater issue is what happens after a radical party does gain vote share. In the case of Turkey, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) was initially heralded as an inclusion moderation success story when the party abandoned its anti-democratic rhetoric and seemingly embraced democratic pluralism.³³ Unfortunately, as the AKP gained electoral and legislative dominance, it abandoned its democratic behavior and began exercising political authoritarianism.³⁴ Indeed, “analyses of countries like Indonesia, Poland, or Turkey suggest that the inclusion of religiously oriented parties results in the transformation of the states” rather than the transformation of the parties.³⁵ Meanwhile, *Ennahda* has maintained its moderate ideology in Tunisia’s subsequent elections in 2014 and 2019.³⁶ The Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood, by contrast, appeared to radicalize as soon as it won the elections in 2012.³⁷ In the grand scheme of democratization, the question of whether or not a radical party can truly moderate its ideology via participation and inclusion without later undermining democratic institutions ultimately drives the analysis of Islamist party behavior during and after the Arab Spring.

Inclusion moderation predicts both that repression will cause an extremist party to radicalize further and that inclusion will encourage an extremist party to moderate. The cases of *Ennahda* and the Muslim Brotherhood are considered notable to scholars because both unexpectedly eschewed violence against their respective authoritarian regimes despite being subjected to party bans, violence, extrajudicial arrests, and torture.³⁸ Furthermore, not only did

³² Schwedler 2013; Tepe 2019.

³³ Somer 2007; Tepe 2019

³⁴ Somer 2017; Tepe 2019

³⁵ Tepe 2019

³⁶ Meddeb 2019

³⁷ Stepan and Linz 2013

³⁸ Cavatorta and Merone 2013; Pahwa 2017.

both parties resist the temptation to radicalize, but evidence from their party platforms, internal documents, and behavior indicates that they were actually moderating despite repression.³⁹ In *Ennahda*'s case, Cavatorta and Merone (2013) and Stepan and Linz (2013) all speculate that some unique component of Tunisian society and their interpretation of Sunni Islam that deeply influenced the party's development. Cavatorta and Merone (2013) also note that leadership within *Ennahda* bargained and compromised with each other to shape the direction of the party.

The Muslim Brotherhood was arguably on its own path of moderation prior to the Arab Spring. Like *Ennahda*, the Muslim Brotherhood suffered violence, arrests, and party bans at the hands of Presidents Gamal Nasser, Hosni Mubarak, and (to a lesser extent) Anwar El Sadat.⁴⁰ However, starting in the 1980s under Mubarak, members of the Muslim Brotherhood were allowed to run in parliamentary elections as independent candidates, although the party itself was still banned. Because of high electoral thresholds, Muslim Brotherhood candidates had to form alliances with legal parties to gain entry to parliament, leading to the early formation of cross-ideological cooperation and the start of party moderation.⁴¹ Over the next decade, the Muslim Brotherhood would become a powerful enough political threat that, starting in the early 1990s, Mubarak would order "the heaviest crackdown by the state against the Brotherhood since the 1950s."⁴²

This period of renewed violence against the party did not derail their moderation, at least not initially. According to Al-Anani (2019), the party was including a discussion of "democracy, pluralism, and political reform as key objectives" in their platform by 2004 and they continued to

³⁹ Cavatorta and Merone 2013; Pahwa 2017.

⁴⁰ Al-Anani 2019.

⁴¹ A party needed to win over 8% to gain a seat starting in the 1980s (Al-Anani 2019); see also Shehata 2010 for further discussion of the Muslim Brotherhood's early electoral alliances.

⁴² Al-Anani 2019.

strengthen their alliances with non-Islamist political parties, possibly over the objections of factions within the leadership. Sumita Pahwa (2017) argues that the Muslim Brotherhood's responsiveness to "electoral incentives and overall political opportunity structures" demonstrates that the party's behavior can be examined using the inclusion-moderation framework. Despite being heavily repressed by the regime, their inclusion in elections as independent candidates was enough to encourage moderation. However, after impressive electoral wins in 2005, the Muslim Brotherhood was punished again by Mubarak who, this time, targeted the party's senior leadership.⁴³ According to Brown's and Hamzawy's (2008), the Muslim Brotherhood's 2007 draft party platform showed alarming signs that their ideological moderation was backsliding.⁴⁴ There is an open question as to why the Muslim Brotherhood appeared to be radicalizing in 2007 despite resisting that path for over twenty years.

Despite sharing similar responses to repression, *Ennahda* and the Muslim Brotherhood diverged in their responses to democratic inclusion. *Ennahda* not only followed the expected path of ideological moderation after 2011, but also continued on that path for two more election cycles. Thus far, there are no signs of *Ennahda* going the way of the AKP in Turkey. Cavatorta and Merone (2013) have stated that *Ennahda* deserves "to be treated as possibly the most moderate and pragmatic Islamist party in the Arab world" for its moderation and democratic behavior over the past forty years.⁴⁵ The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, continued to radicalize even after it no longer faced repression by the regime. Pahwa (2017) notes that "rather than pulling its base to the centre for electoral gain," leadership within Muslim Brotherhood resorted to "full-throated Islamist rhetoric in electoral campaigning."⁴⁶ Pahwa argues that this

⁴³ Al-Anani 2019.

⁴⁴ Brown and Hamzawy 2008.

⁴⁵ Cavatorta and Merone 2013, 865; Somer 2017

⁴⁶ Pahwa 2017, 1067, 1075

detrimental behavior can be explained by including an analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational structure and internal power struggles as well as by recognizing that the party faced competition from far-right Salafi parties during the election. In addition, Tepe (2019) points to the impact that the presence of radical factions within a party can have on the ability of the party to moderate itself, arguing that ultimately it is the party's ability to control those factions "that determines the trajectory of the transformation."

Multiple theories to explain the divergent behavior of *Ennahda* and Muslims have been offered up, including that *Ennahda* had more meaningful experience with political bargaining than the Muslim Brotherhood; that the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational structure was not well-suited for the rapid adaptations needed during a democratic transition while *Ennahda*'s structure was; that *Ennahda* was more successful at separating its political activities from its religious ones; and that the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership was too divided to put forth a coherent political strategy.⁴⁷ This constant search for alternative explanations reveal weaknesses in the inclusion moderation theory. Schwedler (2013) argues that a normative bias exists in the inclusion moderation analysis of MENA because "we want Islamists to become more moderate, and so we prioritize causal arguments about which mechanisms produce behavioral moderation, which ones produce ideological moderation, and in what sequences those mechanisms interact."⁴⁸ In short, our desire to see moderation in Islamist parties, rather than our desire to explain their behavior, drives our use of the framework. Instead of continuing to rely on inclusion moderation, this thesis will focus on two of the most promising mechanisms revealed in the literature—organizational structure and divisions in leadership.

⁴⁷ Al-Anani 2019; Linz and Stepan 2013; Lynch 2016; Marks 2015; Pahwa 2017

⁴⁸ Schwedler 2011, 371

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, this thesis will introduce Angelo Panebianco's historical-comparative approach for analyzing Islamist party behavior and use *Ennahda* as the case study. This framework is a process tracing method that focuses on the party's development, organizational structure, and relationships between its internal leadership factions. Given that multiple scholars in the literature review point to divisions in leadership and the presence of factions as factors influencing Islamist party behavior, an analysis which focuses on these endogenous factors may prove more fruitful than inclusion moderation, which treats the party as a single actor influenced only by exogenous factors. Because Panebianco's framework requires that the party be traced back its origins, this chapter will begin in 1964 with a brief background on the leaders of *Ennahda*. The analysis will then follow the party through its multiple incarnations in 1972, 1979, and 1989, paying close attention to the appearance of factions within the party and the balance of power between them. The analysis will end in 2010 just prior to *Ennahda*'s return to Tunisia from exile.

Chapter 3 will continue to use Panebianco's framework but will shift focus to the role of *Ennahda*'s leadership factions in influencing the party's behavior during the simultaneous events of Tunisia's democratization and *Ennahda*'s institutionalization as a party from 2011 until 2016. The analyses from Chapters 2 and 3 are meant to both challenge the inclusion moderation theory and provide an explanation for the behavior that Stepan and Linz (2013) observed. If *Ennahda*'s commitment to democratic pluralism and participation in interparty alliances is a function of their leadership or organizational structure, then it may be possible to look for their analog in other Islamist parties who could be reliable partners during democratic transitions in their own countries.

Chapter 4 will broaden its scope from Tunisia to a comparative case study of both Tunisia and Egypt in order to explore the third factor that Stepan and Linz (2013) identified in their analysis—political society. This chapter will explore the role that interim governments and electoral rules play in either encouraging or inhibiting the growth of political society during a democratic transition. The analysis will cover Tunisia from 2011 through 2014, when its second round of democratic elections were held, and Egypt from 2011 through 2013, when the democratic government was overthrown by the military.

The final chapter of this thesis will summarize the findings from the previous three chapters, discuss their implications, and explore their applicability to future research.

Chapter 2: *Ennahda* Origins (1964-2010)

Introduction

In 2011, *Ennahda* emerged from the shadows of exile and regime repression to become one of the most important political actors during Tunisia's democratic transition. After suffering religious repression for decades under both Habib Bourguiba and Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, many Tunisians welcomed *Ennahda's* return to the political scene.⁴⁹ Secular Tunisians, however, expressed concern that the party would implement an Iranian-style theocracy if given complete power over the government—a concern which has thus far been unsubstantiated.⁵⁰ *Ennahda* has been praised for its “pragmatism, flexibility, and ability to collaborate with other political forces,” characteristics which have been explicitly linked both to its survival during Tunisia's democratic transition and to its ability to act as a stable political partner within a unity coalition government.⁵¹ *Ennahda's* involvement in Tunisia's democratic transition has lead scholars to look for mechanisms that both explain the party's behavior and which could be applied to future democratic transitions. The primary explanation thus far has been a modified version of inclusion moderation theory which argues that *Ennahda* responded to decades of repression by gradually embracing democratic pluralism in the hopes of being included in Tunisian politics and society.⁵²

Inclusion moderation theory applied in the context of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) typically argues that inclusion of Islamist parties in the political system will encourage ideological moderation, while their exclusion or repression will encourage radicalization instead.⁵³ However, inclusion moderation often fails to predict the range of behavior that Islamist

⁴⁹ Heneghan 2011; Wolf 2017, 1, 79-84

⁵⁰ Heneghan 2011

⁵¹ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 5; Stepan and Linz 2013

⁵² Cavatorta and Merone 2013

⁵³ Cavatorta and Merone 2013; Pahwa 2017; Schwedler 2013; Tepe 2019

parties exhibit in their actual political environments. For example, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), and Islamist party in Turkey, downplayed its religious roots and adopted democratic platforms for the first few elections it participated in before gradually displaying authoritarian and fundamentalist behavior.⁵⁴ Similarly, the Muslim Brotherhood and its political wing the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in Egypt went through over a decade of moderation during which their party platforms embraced pluralism and minority rights only for them impose *Shari'a* law after winning Egypt's first democratic elections in 2012.⁵⁵ In the case of *Ennahda*, Cavatorta and Merone (2013) note that the party faced extreme repression at the hands of the regime for over twenty years, yet instead of radicalizing as inclusion moderation theory predicts, the party appeared to moderate in response. Furthermore, since becoming one of the dominant political parties in post-revolution Tunisia, *Ennahda* has resisted the trend towards authoritarian behavior that both the AKP in Turkey and FJP in Egypt followed. These divergent outcomes have left scholars wondering whether inclusion moderation theory is as useful in predicting Islamist party behavior as was initially believed.⁵⁶

This thesis uses the case of *Ennahda* to demonstrate that one of the primary shortcomings of inclusion moderation theory is its treatment of political parties as singular actors. Inclusion moderation theory assumes that parties moderate over time out of necessity, so it attributes moderation to exogenous environmental factors, i.e. inclusion in electoral politics, and fails to account for the impact of endogenous factors such as organizational structure and leadership factions. In addition, applications of the theory tend to look at larger, overall trends in party behavior while ignoring brief periods that do not align with expectations. This superficial

⁵⁴ Somer 2007; Somer 2017

⁵⁵ Pahwa 2017; Rosefsky Wickham 2013

⁵⁶ Cavatorta and Merone 2013; Schwedler 2013

analysis is a mistake. Case in point, inclusion moderation literature misses two important components of *Ennahda*'s forty-year journey. First, *Ennahda* experienced more than one period during which they radicalized under repression instead of moderating. These periods are not accounted for in the literature. Second, *Ennahda*'s decisions to adopt radical versus pragmatic political ideologies at different times are not entirely caused by their environment. Rather, these decisions reflect shifts in the balance of power between the radical and pragmatic leadership factions within the party itself. In fact, many of *Ennahda*'s "moderate" ideological statements have been espoused by the pragmatic faction since the party's inception in the 1970s, calling into question the very premise that the party "moderated" at all.

Instead of trying to explain *Ennahda*'s behavior from an external focus, this chapter will examine the development of the party's two dominant leadership factions and how they influenced the party's actions. Angelo Panebianco's seminal work, *Political Parties: Organization and Power*, will provide the framework for understanding *Ennahda*'s organizational structure, leadership factions, and internal power struggles that led to its pragmatic faction dominating the party during Tunisia's democratic transition. Using what Panebianco refers to as historical-comparative reconstruction, it is possible to trace a party's evolution from its origins, through institutionalization, and finally to maturity to better understand its behavior at key points in time, including under regime repression and during a democratic transition.

Framework

According to Panebianco, "Every organization bears the mark of its formation, of the crucial political-administrative decisions made by its founders, the decisions which 'molded' the

organization.”⁵⁷ The first step in analyzing a party with Panebianco’s model is to return to the party’s formative years and look for key developmental factors: (1) how the organization developed its territory, (2) by what means it gained legitimacy, and (3) who its leaders were, especially how they shaped the organization. The combination of these three factors can predict whether a party will be strongly or weakly institutionalized when it matures. These factors also provide information about the organizational structure of the party that can determine what type of leadership coalition will eventually dominate decision making and incentive distribution.⁵⁸

Territory, Legitimacy, and Leadership

The first relevant factor in a party’s origins is how it develops its territory. According to Panebianco, this can occur through “diffusion,” “penetration,” or a combination of the two.⁵⁹ In the case of territorial diffusion, the organization starts as a multitude of party associations at the local level each with their own elites. Later, these associations merge into one national organization. Parties which form in this manner tend to be “decentralized and semi-autonomous” with divided leadership coalitions in which there is a “constant struggle for party control.”⁶⁰ This divided coalition and decentralization can contribute to weak institutionalization of the party later.⁶¹ On the other hand, an organization which develops its territory through penetration, that is, an organization which starts as a “cohesive center...composed of a restricted group of national leaders” then expands into new territory from that center, is more likely to have a cohesive leadership coalition with strong institutionalization.⁶² The third type of territory development is a blend of both diffusion and penetration. However, Panebianco argues that there

⁵⁷ Panebianco 1988, 50

⁵⁸ Panebianco 1988, 16, 50-55

⁵⁹ Panebianco 1988, 50-51

⁶⁰ Panebianco 1988, 50-51

⁶¹ Panebianco 1988, 67

⁶² Panebianco 1988, 50-51, 67

is always a dominant modality which can and should be identified. In such a case, the dominant territorial development will have more bearing on institutionalization than the secondary one.

The second relevant factor in understanding a party's origins is whether or not it derives its legitimacy from internal or external sources. Parties that are externally legitimated by a national or international institution also have external loyalties that compete against internal loyalty to the party's leadership coalition. Unsurprisingly, this divided loyalty structure produces tension with the organization which can shape how and to what degree it institutionalizes over time. Panebianco holds up labour parties as the quintessential example of a party which derives its legitimacy—its very existence—from an external, national source: labor unions. Some religious parties may also meet this definition depending on how much they rely on their dominant religious organization to provide support. This reliance on an external institution for legitimacy, resources, and directives results in a dependency that keeps the leading coalition weak and often prevents the party from moving past a minimal degree of institutionalization as it matures. Interestingly, in the case of an organization which is sponsored by an international, external institution (e.g. the numerous national Communist parties sponsored by the international Comintern before it dissolved in the 1940s) the leading coalition's ability to operate autonomously at a national level despite having external loyalties contributes to a very high degree of institutionalization over time. Finally, organizations that derive their legitimacy from internal sources, typically the result of having prestigious or charismatic leadership which draws activists into the organization, usually develop very strong coalitions which support a very high degree of institutionalization as the party reaches maturity.⁶³

⁶³ Panebianco 1988, 64-65

The final relevant factor of a party's origin pertains to whether or not there is a charismatic leader involved at its inception. Panebianco identifies this particular organizational characteristic as the one which is most likely to lead to a deviant outcome in institutionalization and coalition type. In a case of "pure" charisma, the party is "formed by one leader who imposed himself as the undisputed founder, conceiver, and interpreter of a set of political symbols," and as a result the party is inseparable from the leader.⁶⁴ Pure charismatic parties are exceedingly rare and tend to be short-lived since they develop through territorial diffusion and internal legitimation, the combination of which leads to weak or completely absent institutionalization. As a result, they tend to survive only as long as their first leader. However, there are two situations in which charismatic leaders do not lead their own party to demise. The first is when the organization is able to survive the "routinization of charisma" phase which is marked by the "transfer of authority from the leader to the party."⁶⁵ In the rare circumstance when this occurs, the new leadership coalition will be stable and cohesive owing to the initial leader's ideology. This arrangement leads to a high degree of institutionalization that overcomes its initial weak or absent level of institutionalization. The second situation in which a party survives its leader is when the charismatic leader is not the initial leader, but rather a late-comer to the party who rallies the activists and the rest of the leadership during a volatile period (e.g. Churchill and the Conservative Party during WWII). This "situational charisma," as Panebianco refers to it, enables the leader to make considerable changes to the organizational structure and direction of the party. However, this type of charismatic leader does not have the same control over the organization that a founding "pure" charismatic leader has. As a result, these temporary leaders

⁶⁴ Panebianco 1988, 52

⁶⁵ Panebianco 1988, 53

may shape the party for a while, but they do not usually affect the institutionalization path of the party.

Coalitions

In addition to predicting the degree of institutionalization, tracing a party's formative years also provides insight into the types of leadership coalitions that will form and how they will share power. Panebianco's model allows for leadership coalitions to be analyzed along three different dimensions: (1) internal cohesion, (2) stability, and (3) the organizational power map. Internal cohesion refers to the relationship between the elites within the party and the followers or activists and is somewhat determined by incentives. A cohesive coalition has control over how incentives are distributed throughout the organization as well as the ability to coopt dissenting voices from within when necessary. A divided coalition, on the other hand, is more prone to the rise of factions and strong opposition groups within the party that vie for control over incentives. Weak institutionalization in a party tends to lead to divided coalitions with factions while strong institutionalization more typically leads to a cohesive coalition.⁶⁶ The second dimension of coalitions is their stability, which is dependent on the relationships amongst elites in the organization's leadership. Stable coalitions are characterized by leaders who are consistently able to reach compromises regarding the direction of the organization. Unstable coalitions, on the other hand, are characterized by factions which are unable to work together.⁶⁷

The final dimension of coalition analysis is their organizational power map which consists of both internal and external relationships. The organizational power map of internal relationships refers to the different groups within the party including its internal leaders, its parliamentarians (e.g. politicians), the central bureaucracy (if it has one), and its local branches.

⁶⁶ Panebianco 1988, 60

⁶⁷ Panebianco 1988, 161-171

In highly institutionalized parties with cohesive-stable coalitions, the party will be dominated either by parliamentarians or by internal leaders, but not both, and there will be a clear diffusion of power from the top down. In weakly institutionalized parties with divided-stable coalitions, the parliamentarians and internal leaders share power, but the internal leaders control the local branches. In weakly institutionalized parties with divided-unstable coalitions, there are two possible arrangements. In the first there is not much internal leadership to speak of, so parliamentarians control the party and the local branches, using them as their own “personal fiefdoms.”⁶⁸ In the second arrangement, power is so fractured that no one group can fully control the party resulting in a certain degree of chaos at every level including amongst internal leaders and within local branches.⁶⁹

The rest of this chapter will apply Panebianco’s genetic model and trace *Ennahda*’s history from its inception in 1972 until its return to Tunisia from exile in 2011. The significance of this timeframe is that it provides an analysis of *Ennahda*’s three origin components—territory, legitimacy, and leadership—as well as the development of its leadership coalition, organizational structure, and early stages of institutionalization. This analysis will demonstrate that it was the shifting balance of power between *Ennahda*’s radical and pragmatic leadership factions that were behind its alternating periods of radicalization and moderation. The following chapter will pick up in 2011 to explore *Ennahda*’s period of institutionalization.

Analysis

Origins and Leaders (1964 – 1978)

Before *Ennahda* became one of Tunisia’s strongest political parties in 2011, it went through several incarnations under the leadership of Rachid Ghannouchi, Abdelfattah Mourou,

⁶⁸ Panebianco 1988, 176

⁶⁹ Panebianco 1988, 173-176

and Hmida Ennaifer. The first incarnation was *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* (1972-1979), then *Mouvement de la Tendence Islamique* (MTI) (1980-1988), then *Harakat Ennahda* (1989-2010), and finally *Ennahda* when it received its first party license in 2011. One of the explanations Cavatorta and Merone (2013) propose for why *Ennahda* moderated under repression is that its earliest incarnation, *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya*, expressed a conservative Salafist ideology that conflicted with Tunisian society which had a “natural limit to extremism.”⁷⁰ Cavatorta and Merone (2013) are not the only scholars to note that Tunisia has traditionally rejected various forms of Salafism and Islamic fundamentalism in favor of more reformist and tolerant interpretations of Sunni Islam.⁷¹ However, the assertion that *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* moderated in response to rejection from Tunisian society is incorrect as it does not take into account the fact that *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* had a moderate core from its inception because of Abdelfattah Mourou.

Abdelfattah Mourou was educated in Tunisia where he obtained a degree in law and Islamic studies at the University of Tunis.⁷² He was also a Madaniyya Sufist and a member of the Pakistani *Jama-at al-Tabligh*, “a nonpolitical missionary movement focused on religious education.”⁷³ In 1964, a young Rachid Ghannouchi traveled to Syria to study philosophy at the University of Damascus; it is also where he would meet fellow student Hmida Ennaifer.⁷⁴ Ennaifer was a self-proclaimed Arab nationalist who was initially uninterested in engaging in Ghannouchi’s discourse on the Muslim Brotherhood and political Islam.⁷⁵ In 1966, Ennaifer

⁷⁰ Cavatorta and Merone 2013, 866

⁷¹ See Ghannouchi (2016) and Wolf (2017) for further discussion on Islam in Tunisia; see also Cavatorta (2015) and Marks (2015) for further discussion about the rise of Salafism in Tunisia.

⁷² Wolf 2017, xix

⁷³ Wolf 2017, xix; Meddeb 2019, 3

⁷⁴ Wolf, xvii, 211, interview with Hmida Ennaifer

⁷⁵ Wolf 2017, 211, interview with Hmida Ennaifer

graduated from the university and travelled to Paris to study at Sorbonne.⁷⁶ His nationalist ideology was shaken in turn, first by the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 which crushed the Arab militaries, then by the international protests of 1968.⁷⁷ When Ennaifer met Ghannouchi again in 1968 in Paris, he was open to the discussion of political and religious change in Tunisia.⁷⁸ Ghannouchi returned home shortly after 1968 and met Abdelfattah Mourou for the first time at a mosque in Tunis.⁷⁹ In 1970, Ennaifer returned to Tunisia and re-united with Ghannouchi.⁸⁰ Over the next two years, the three men attempted to reconcile their very different religious backgrounds with a vast array of Islamic scholarship from Egypt, Syria, Algeria, and Tunisia.⁸¹ The Muslim Brotherhood, especially the writings of Hassan al-Banna, was certainly influential regarding political organization, but so too were the teachings of Tahar Haddad, who championed progressive views on unions, women, and social welfare; Sheik Tahar Ben Achour, whose rationalist approach to Islamic law earned him expulsion from the Zaytouna University in 1960; and the Algerian scholar Malik Bennabi, who advocated for “a positive image of democracy, and argued that respecting plurality in society was fundamental to Islam.”⁸²

In 1972, Ennaifer, Mourou, and Ghannouchi took the next step and established the first branch of *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* at a mosque in Sidi Youssef.⁸³ *Al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* was the product of three very different intellectual leaders—a Sufist, a Salafist, and an Arab Nationalist—and the blending together of Islamic scholarship from the Maghreb and the Middle East. While predating the official *Ennahda* by over a decade, these early years of ideological and

⁷⁶ Wolf 2017, 2

⁷⁷ Wolf 2017, 211, interview with Hmida Ennaifer

⁷⁸ Wolf 2017, 212, interview with Hmida Ennaifer

⁷⁹ Wolf 2017, 35

⁸⁰ Wolf 2017, 212, interview with Hmida Ennaifer

⁸¹ Ghannouchi 2016, 60; Wolf 2017, 212, interview with Hmida Ennaifer

⁸² Ghannouchi 2016, 60; Ounissi 2016; Wolf 2017, 40

⁸³ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 8; Wolf 2017, 36

religious discourse established a kind of pragmatism and flexibility that would still characterize the leadership of the party at maturity. From the moment that the three leaders began holding secret meetings at the mosque in Sidi Youssef, *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya*, and its later incarnations, MTI and *Ennahda*, was a classic case of a party developed through territorial penetration.

On account of President Habib Bourguiba's deemphasis of religion in Tunisia and his crackdown on religious education, *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya*'s membership expanded quickly because people identified with its Islamist alternative to Bourguiba's staunch secularism. Mourou, Ghannouchi, and Ennaifer, and the Sidi Youssef branch, were the strong, central authority from which *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* expanded into other mosques and cities. From Sidi Youssef, members travelled all over the country and built a grassroots campaign targeting both the youth and people who hailed from rural and semi-rural areas that were disillusioned by Bourguiba's secularized urban centers.⁸⁴ As membership expanded, *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* adopted the Muslim's Brotherhood's recruitment structure which included a vetting process before initiation and membership dues based on income.⁸⁵ As the organization grew in size, ideological trends emerged at different levels. The three leaders at the top continued to discuss a variety of Islamic scholarship and interpretations, but the grassroots activists adopted a greater interest in the Muslim Brotherhood's literature, including the more radical writings of Sayyid Qutb which advocated for more direct conflict with regime. Interestingly, *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* non-activist base was influenced by Sufism, which, in general, encouraged a higher degree of spirituality and non-participation in politics.⁸⁶ These early vertical divergences would force the leadership to make difficult decisions only a few years later in order to maintain the cohesion of

⁸⁴ Wolf 2017, 36

⁸⁵ Wolf 2017, 37

⁸⁶ Wolf 2017, 40-41

the organization. These divergences are also important because they represent the first time that the leadership had to think about what incentives, beyond a collective Islamist identity, that *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* was offering to its members.

By 1975, many of the initial youth members had entered universities where they continued to actively organize and recruit for *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* at their respective campuses.⁸⁷ They also came in contact with other student organizations including members of the Destourian Socialist Party (PSD), Bourguiba's political party, and members of leftist and trade union groups.⁸⁸ Because of significant ideological differences, these interactions were far from cordial, and within a short period of time regular and sometimes violent clashes between the students became commonplace.⁸⁹ In 1977, the student activists of *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* began pushing for the organization to engage in political activism, a demand which was initially met with resistance from leadership.⁹⁰ The ideological rift that had earlier manifested itself between the top and the bottom of the organization began to spread through the leadership circle as well. Ennaifer, especially, was unhappy with the demands of the student activists and with the growing influence that the Muslim Brotherhood literature seemed to have on them.⁹¹ As Ennaifer, Ghannouchi, and Mourou debated how to advance the organization's social and cultural aims while including the political demands of the activists, the students grew impatient and declared that they were splitting from *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* and creating their own organization, the *Mouvement de la Tendence Islamique (MTI)*.⁹²

⁸⁷ Wolf 2017, 42

⁸⁸ Meddeb 2019, 4; Wolf 2017, 42

⁸⁹ Wolf 2017, 43

⁹⁰ Wolf 2017, 44-45

⁹¹ Wolf 2017, 46-47

⁹² Meddeb 2019, 4; Wolf 2017, 43, 46-47

The growing discord within *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* cannot be considered in isolation. While student activists and senior leadership debated the direction of the organization, Habib Bourguiba conducted a violent crackdown on the civil and political liberties of all Tunisians who dared speak out against growing social inequality, economic malaise, and widespread corruption.⁹³ Between 1976 and 1978, strikes and protests were occurring sporadically across the country, but on January 26, 1978, the executive committee of the Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT), the country's most powerful labor union, called a strike.⁹⁴ Students and workers alike joined the strike, and Bourguiba responded by calling in the military to crush the unrest.⁹⁵ Black Thursday, as the day is now referred to by Tunisians, resulted in dozens of protestor deaths as well as hundreds of wounded and thousands of arrests.⁹⁶ The regime's violent authoritarian behavior only strengthened the resolve of student activists to pursue a political and confrontational strategy, and it became apparent to *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya*'s leadership that keeping the organization intact meant incorporating the demands of the activists.⁹⁷ Unhappy with the new direction of *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya*, Ennaifer left the organization.⁹⁸

The First Party Congress: Structure, Legitimacy, and Leadership (1979)

In July of 1979, *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* held its first party congress—a monumental occasion for two reasons. First, instead of allowing the student movement to permanently sever ties with *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya*, Ghannouchi and Mourou co-opted the students back into the organization and formally adopted the name *Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique* (MTI).⁹⁹

These vertical negotiations between the leadership and the activists were successful because for

⁹³ Ghannouchi 2016, 60

⁹⁴ Ghannouchi 2016, 60; Wolf 2017, 44

⁹⁵ Ghannouchi 2016, 60; Ghafar and Hess 2018, 9; Wolf 2017, 44

⁹⁶ Ghannouchi 2016, 60; Wolf 2017, 44

⁹⁷ Wolf 2017, 46-47

⁹⁸ Wolf 2017, 47

⁹⁹ Meddeb 2019, 4; Wolf 2017, 50

the first time, the leaders leadership were forced to consider collective incentives beyond ideology to maintain organizational stability. In this case, the incentive offered was the adoption of a politically oriented strategy instead of just socio-cultural talk. The second reason the congress was important is that MTI established an organizational structure and formal set of rules, signaling the early stages of party institutionalization. The structure adopted was based on a similar one used by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and included a General Congress, Shura Council, and Executive Bureau.¹⁰⁰ The General Congress, as the supreme authority of the organization, would meet every three years to elect the Shura Council and the President of the Executive Bureau. In between party congresses, the Shura Council would meet every three months to make decisions regarding the organization's "key political and strategic matters" while the Executive Bureau was responsible for enacting the policies of the Shura Council.¹⁰¹ At the local level, branch representatives were also responsible for enacting organization-wide policies which created a uniform hierarchal structure throughout the party. As MTI's first elected president, Rachid Ghannouchi appointed Salah Karker, a "fierce defender of the Brotherhood," as his first deputy, a decision which would give the radical faction real power for the first time.¹⁰²

The first party congress also provides a good point at which to examine the other two components of an organization's origins, legitimacy and leadership, with the former being one of the more complicated issues in *Ennahda's* history. *Ennahda's* ties to the Muslim Brotherhood have been continually called into question, especially by critics of the party within Tunisia in more recent years.¹⁰³ Muslim Brotherhood scholar Tariq Ramadan has argued that *Ennahda*,

¹⁰⁰ Wolf 2017, 50

¹⁰¹ Wolf 2017, 50

¹⁰² Wolf 2017, 51

¹⁰³ Ghanmi 2019; Ounissi 2016

during its MTI years, was organizationally attached to the Brotherhood in Egypt.¹⁰⁴ In addition, senior members like Salah Karker were vocally supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood and some members interviewed by scholar Anne Wolf stated that they had formally sworn allegiance to the Brotherhood while they were part of MTI.¹⁰⁵ Ghannouchi, Mourou, and Ennaifer were all familiar with the Brotherhood's literature, and, as was already noted, many of the students and grassroots activists were heavily influenced by the Brotherhood's political aspirations in Egypt in the late 1970s. Finally, there was the adoption of the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational structure at the 1979 congress.

Despite numerous threads that appear to tie MTI to the Brotherhood, there is also considerable evidence that the organizations were entirely independent from each other. Even Ramadan has acknowledged that in the case of most Brotherhood branches, their organizational strategies "were devised at the level of the international Muslim Brotherhood," and not at the national branch level.¹⁰⁶ In the case of MTI, Ramadan admits that the organization and its leaders were intellectually autonomous from the Muslim Brotherhood. Rachid Ghannouchi spent time in Egypt in the 1960s and is well-versed in the literature of the Brotherhood, but he does not acknowledge a formal connection between his organization and the Brotherhood beyond stating that he was influenced by work of Hassan al-Banna and Mustafa al-Sibai.¹⁰⁷ Mourou has also denied that MTI was ever part of the Muslim Brotherhood, and younger members of *Ennahda* today publicly state that the organization was ever connected to the Brotherhood.¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, while the Muslim Brotherhood's early scholars inspired *Ennahda's* founders, it was *al Jama'a*

¹⁰⁴ Wolf 2017, 50

¹⁰⁵ Wolf 2017, 50

¹⁰⁶ Ramada qtd. in Wolf 2017, 50

¹⁰⁷ Ghannouchi 2016, 60

¹⁰⁸ Ounissi 2016; Wolf 2017, 50

al-Islamiyya that inspired a similar youth movement in Egypt to adopt the Tunisian group's name.¹⁰⁹ Wolf (2017) notes that one possible explanation for the inconsistent statements from MTI members is that some of them had dual membership in both MTI and the Muslim Brotherhood.¹¹⁰

More importantly, the point of external legitimization in the genetic model is that the parent organization vouches for the new organization and provides it with institutional, and sometimes financial, support. There does not appear to be evidence that the Muslim Brotherhood vouched for MTI, its earlier incarnation *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya*, or its offspring, *Ennahda*. Furthermore, there is nothing to indicate that the two organizations were linked financially. The evidence that is available suggests that while *Ennahda* may have drawn ideological and structural inspiration from Muslim Brotherhood, as an organization, it was internally legitimized. This is relevant because, like the territorial penetration component, internal legitimacy also predisposes an organization towards a high degree of institutionalization as it matures.¹¹¹ MTI, and later *Ennahda*, has never had to contend with a competing authority structure that might challenge the given leadership coalition at any given time.

The final component of an organization's origins concerns leadership, and more specifically, whether or not the organization was formed around a charismatic leader. If there is one individual who could potentially be identified as the charismatic leader, it would be Rachid Ghannouchi. However, while his influence over the organization has always been significant, it has not always been assured. In the first few years of *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya's* existence, there is no indication that Ghannouchi was any more powerful or influential than Mourou or Ennaifer in

¹⁰⁹ Wolf 2017, 49

¹¹⁰ Wolf 2017, 50

¹¹¹ Panebianco 1988, 52-64

shaping the organization's trajectory. In fact, it would be Mourou's moderate and reformist thought that would resurface in the organization's platforms and internal debates over and over again throughout the decades. Still, at the first party congress, it was not Mourou or Ennaifer who were elected to positions of power within the newly formed MTI, it was Ghannouchi. A party with a charismatic leader is, in the simplest terms, a tool for that leader's agenda. More to the point, the leader has complete control over the party, its factions, and its ideology.¹¹² Over the next decade of MTI's existence, it is possible to see Ghannouchi's growing role as a mediator between the two dominant factions within the party—the one most closely aligned with Mourou and the one which would come to be aligned with Karker. The power to mediate between factions and successfully maintain the integrity of the organization is one of the hallmarks of a charismatic leader, but it is a necessary, not a sufficient, trait.

As MTI prepared to enter a new decade in Tunisia, it did so with all of the origin components that should have led to strong institutionalization and cohesive-stable leadership coalition. The organization was internally legitimized, its development and recruitment strategy involved territorial penetration, and it did not bear the burden of supporting the whims of a charismatic leader. Furthermore, the early adoption of a democratic organizational structure and set of rules made it nearly impossible for any one individual to dominate the party. Nonetheless, MTI was unable to fully institutionalize during the next decade, primarily because of increasing repression by the regime, but also because of disagreements between the two dominant factions over the direction and identity of the party.

Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique to Harakat Ennahda (1980 – 1989)

¹¹² Panebianco 1988, 52

The 1980s represent a particularly volatile period in both Tunisia's history and in *Ennahda's* evolution. During this timeframe, the party would be faced with severe repression by Bourguiba's regime as well as the unexpected opportunity to be included in the country's 1981 parliamentary elections. From the outside, it appeared that MTI was "moderating" itself in response to the possibility of being included in the 1981 parliamentary elections. From the inside, however, it is clear that MTI leadership was simply balancing the demands of the radical and pragmatic factions. Sometime in early 1980 the police became aware of MTI and began monitoring the movements of suspected members.¹¹³ On December 5, 1980, Salah Karker and Ben Issa Demni were arrested, held, and tortured by the police.¹¹⁴ In response, MTI leadership immediately dissolved the organizational structure including the Shura Council and Executive Bureau and called for a party congress in April 1981 in Sousse to discuss their strategy going forward.¹¹⁵ Around that same time, Bourguiba announced that multi-party parliamentary elections would be held later in 1981 and that any party which garnered at least 5 percent of the vote would be recognized.¹¹⁶ With the support of Mourou, Ghannouchi "proposed a dramatic solution, namely to announce the movement's existence and apply for a party licence to continue its activities within a legal framework."¹¹⁷ The purpose of this was to bring MTI out of the shadows and directly confront the regime as an opposition party. Karker, having just been released from police detention, strongly disagreed with the strategy and viewed entry into party politics as tacit legitimization of Bourguiba's regime.¹¹⁸ With the majority of the student activists supporting Karker, and therefore a significant portion of MTI's rank and file, Mourou and

¹¹³ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 9

¹¹⁴ Wolf 2017, 54

¹¹⁵ Wolf 2017, 55

¹¹⁶ Wolf 2017, 55-56

¹¹⁷ Wolf 2017, 55

¹¹⁸ Wolf 2017, 55

Ghannouchi presented an alternative strategy in which they would go public and request a party license while also reestablishing the organization's structure to enable activists to continue working underground.¹¹⁹ It was a shaky compromise between the pragmatic and radical wings, but the Ghannouchi and Mourou moved forward and publicly announced their bid for a party license in June of 1981.¹²⁰ Female activists within in the party were asked to publicly vouch for it in order to assuage public fears that MTI did not support female participation in politics.¹²¹ Ghannouchi describes the 1981 party platform as one which was “committed to democracy, political pluralism, the peaceful sharing and alternation of power, free and fair elections as the sole source of political legitimacy, the protection of moderate religious scholarship, and the promotion of a form of modernization that would be in harmony with Tunisia's values and cultural heritage.”¹²²

The six-month period between Karker's arrest and the second party congress, illustrates why a discussion of inclusion moderation theory must include a more in-depth analysis of the party's factions. The political liberalization in 1981 offered an opportunity for MTI to be included in the political sphere, however the radical and pragmatic factions responded to this differently despite both experiencing repression from the regime. Inclusion moderation predicts that repression should increase the tendency of organization to radicalize further, and it does explain Karker's rejection of political participation and the radical wing's desire to confront the regime outside of the electoral system. However, it does not explain why the pragmatic faction under Ghannouchi and Mourou responded to repression by seizing the first opportunity to participate in elections and presenting a democratic political platform. It would appear that to

¹¹⁹ Wolf 2017, 55

¹²⁰ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 9; Wolf 2017, 55

¹²¹ Wolf 2017, 55

¹²² Ghannouchi 2016, 61

some extent, repression can both radicalize and moderate depending on the proclivities of the group being analyzed. The pragmatic faction responded to repression by trying to find a way to be included in the political system, while the radical faction responded to the same repression by wanting to operate outside of the political system. This divided, but stable, leadership coalition would continue to be mediated by Ghannouchi over the next few years as the organization grappled with the incentives question and what it was promising to its activists and members. This issue may have muddled its political goals, but it did allow MTI to maintain a relative heterogenous following motivated by the simple goal of bringing Islamism to Tunisian society.

Unfortunately, the regime's response to MTI's request was swift and brutal. Their party license was denied and within only a couple of months, the police had arrested some 500 members and most of the senior leadership including Ghannouchi, Mourou, and Karker.¹²³ According to interviews by Wolf (2017), the three leaders even shared the same prison cell which resulted in heated debates regarding whose fault it was that Bourguiba unleashed a crackdown on MTI. Karker allegedly blamed Ghannouchi's and Mourou's attempt to go public and negotiate with the regime, while they both blamed Karker's confrontational approach.¹²⁴ It also became increasingly apparent that divergent views on Islamism were driving a deeper wedge between the leaders. Mourou wanted to push for multi-party politics, support for women's rights, and cooperation with secular actors, including labor unions.¹²⁵ Karker, on the other hand, took a narrow scripturalist approach and viewed Mourou's propositions as being unreconcilable with Islam.¹²⁶ In addition, he also wanted to repeal the Tunisian Personal Status Code, which guaranteed certain rights to women in Tunisia, and he did not support full democracy as a

¹²³ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 9; Ghannouchi 2016, 61; Wolf 2017, 58

¹²⁴ Wolf 2017, 58

¹²⁵ Wolf 2017, 53

¹²⁶ Wolf 2017, 53

government system.¹²⁷ Ghannouchi, the pragmatic mediator, pushed for something in between the two views, supporting some of Karker's views on women but also supporting Mourou's argument for expanding MTI's cooperation with secular groups and pursuing pluralist democracy.¹²⁸

Upon their release three years later in 1984, the leaders attended the November party congress in Soliman and continued the debate regarding MTI's strategy and identity.¹²⁹ During the congress, proposals from Mourou and Karker were put to a vote in the Shura Council in order to decide the party's direction for the next three years. The Council voted in support of Karker and his rejection of political participation.¹³⁰ In addition, Karker was also elected by the General Assembly to head the Shura Council. While Ghannouchi was re-elected as president of the party, the Shura Council's decision to adopt Karker's radical ideology was a sign that the balance of power was shifting further way from the pragmatic faction. Despite this, Ghannouchi still encouraged MTI members to join the UGTT in order to expand the party's voice in Tunisian society.¹³¹ Within only a few years approximately twenty percent of the UGTT membership was Islamist.¹³² In addition, senior members of MTI were actively pursuing public sector careers and successfully infiltrated the Ministry of Agriculture and the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company.¹³³ They also actively engaged in dialogue with secular opposition and civil society groups such as the Tunisian League for Human Rights.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ Wolf 2017, 59

¹²⁸ Wolf 2017, 59

¹²⁹ Wolf 2017, 61

¹³⁰ Wolf 2017, 61

¹³¹ Wolf 2017, 59

¹³² Wolf 2017, 59

¹³³ Meddeb 2019, 5; Wolf 2017, 59

¹³⁴ Meddeb 2019, 5; Wolf 2017, 59

MTI's influence was beginning to spread through more than just the Islamist networks, and in 1985 the organization would have its first meeting with a member of Bourguiba's regime since the denial of their party license in 1981. In November, Prime Minister Mohammed Mzali met with Ghannouchi and Mourou to discuss improving relations between the party and the regime.¹³⁵ Publicly, Prime Minister Mzali implied that rapprochement was possible as long as MTI did not try to "pretend to have the monopoly over Islamic" in the country or request that the Personal Status Code be changed or repealed.¹³⁶ However, MTI found that its activities and movements continued to be heavily restricted by the regime. Wolf (2017) notes that "Ghannouchi and Mourou could not preach sermons at mosques and former detainees were not allowed to work in the public sector or to resume their studies."¹³⁷ Relations between the regime and MTI were tepid at best, but they spiraled out of control again when the regime began to destabilize under Habib Bourguiba's constant reshuffling of his cabinet. In July 1986, Bourguiba fired Prime Minister Mzali and replaced him with Rachid Sfar, then promptly fired Sfar within a year and replaced him with Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali.¹³⁸

The quick turnover inside the regime meant that MTI no longer had allies within the regime, a reality that left some members of MTI wanting to take matters into their own hands. In February 1987, Rachid Ghannouchi was arrested for a second time for lecturing at a mosque, effectively leaving Salah Karker in charge of MTI.¹³⁹ According to Wolf (2017), several senior members of MTI stated that Karker had machinations of overthrowing Bourguiba in a coup and was beginning to coordinate with members of a secret "security" wing within MTI as well as

¹³⁵ Wolf 2017, 62

¹³⁶ Wolf 2017, 62

¹³⁷ Wolf 2017, 62

¹³⁸ Wolf 2017, 62-63

¹³⁹ Wolf 2017, 64

with a former member of the Tunisian military.¹⁴⁰ If Karker did have a plan, he never had the opportunity to implement it. Instead, in August of 1987, a group calling itself *Islamic Jihad* executed a series of hotel bombings in Tunisia that wounded over a dozen civilians and tourists.¹⁴¹ Bourguiba ordered the indiscriminate arrest of MTI and *Islamic Jihad* members alike, sentencing the actual hotel bombers to death along with the MTI members who had nothing to do with the bombings—including Ghannouchi.¹⁴² Karker escaped to Europe, but a death sentence was issued in his absence in the event that he could be captured and extradited.¹⁴³ Before Bourguiba was able to follow through on any of the executions though, Prime Minister Ben Ali overthrew him in a coup on November 7, 1987, stating that Bourguiba was no longer physically or mentally capable of managing the affairs of state.¹⁴⁴ While the executions were stayed, Ben Ali did not stop arresting members of MTI. In the weeks just after the coup, Ben Ali ordered the arrest and torture of an additional 157 members of MTI.¹⁴⁵

While the brief political opening in 1981 led to even more violent repression of MTI by the regime, the respective responses of each faction to that repression followed the same pattern as before. The radical faction, especially under Karker’s leadership, came to dominate the party and pushed an even more dogmatic ideology as well as violent confrontation with the regime. Furthermore, Ghannouchi’s arrest in 1987, which left Karker in charge of MTI, may have been the tipping point that shifted even more power to the radical faction. The entire plot to overthrow the regime, while never coming to fruition, demonstrates just how much of an impact this period of repression had on the faction’s degree of radicalization. Again, this behavior

¹⁴⁰ Wolf 2017, 64-65

¹⁴¹ Tachau 1994, 537; Wolf 2017, 64

¹⁴² Wolf 2017, 64

¹⁴³ Wolf 2017, 64

¹⁴⁴ Wolf 2017, 66

¹⁴⁵ Wolf 2017, 66

confirms the expectation of inclusion moderation in the case of the radical faction but fails to explain the pragmatic faction's completely opposite behavior. Mourou's response to being imprisoned by the regime was to push for an even more inclusive and democratic platform for the party, and the pragmatic faction continued to support him even as Karker became increasingly popular within the party. Evidence for this can be seen in the pragmatic faction's continued push for reconciliation with Prime Minister Mzali and early engagement with secular opposition groups. Cavatorta's and Merone's (2013) argument for exclusion-moderation as an explanation for the party's moderation in response to repression accounts nicely for the pragmatic faction's behavior but fails to capture the radical faction in the same time period.

From a leadership coalition perspective, MTI was suffering under the weight of two increasingly divided factions. Where Ghannouchi had previously been able to mediate the two and help maintain organization stability—a factor which was helped by the adoption of the democratic internal structure—his arrest made this an impossibility. In addition, because the two factions began to envision drastically different goals for MTI, that is, regime overthrow under Karker and political participation and democratization under Ghannouchi and Mourou, it was difficult for the organization to present clear rewards to the activists and membership base. The divergences which had existed since the early days of *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* were finally becoming a threat to its stability. Two possible explanations for how MTI continued to survive despite this difference are that MTI was the only Islamist option available to Tunisians who were unhappy with the regime but who did not identify with secular parties and that the strong central authority and legitimacy established by Ghannouchi and Mourou (and Ennaifer) continued to attract and hold the loyalty of religious Tunisians.

Throughout 1988, President Ben Ali crafted the façade of reform. First, he stripped the Socialist Destourian Party of its reference to the Bourguiba era and renamed it the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD).¹⁴⁶ Then, between November 1988 and April 1989, he ordered the release of every MTI member from prison and allowed those who had been living in exile to return to the country.¹⁴⁷ Ben Ali’s “reforms” did not stop there, though. He also revived Tunisian culture and the practice of Islam within the country, reopened three Islamic studies colleges, broadcast a call for prayer on national television, and appointed Abdelfattah Mourou to the newly created Supreme Islamic Council.¹⁴⁸ In addition, the regime passed the Political Parties Law of 1988, which allowed a limited number of political parties to request a license as long as their platforms were not based on “religious, racial, ethnic, and territorial/geographic grounds,” then announced that parliamentary elections would be held in the fall of 1989.¹⁴⁹ Ben Ali also coordinated the signing of the National Pact of 1989, which included a member of MTI, and pledged the signatories to support for “human rights and the Personal Status Code,” as well as “freedom of opinion and association.”¹⁵⁰ At the same time, the regime also passed a law which criminalized activities and meetings that were held in mosques unless the events were sanctioned by the new Ministry of Religious Affairs.¹⁵¹ These openings in civil and political society, especially co-opting the religious spheres of influence, were undoubtedly attempts by Ben Ali to legitimize his new regime. Ghannouchi (2016) himself referred to the period as “a mirage,” but at the time most of Tunisia ignored the warning signs.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ Wolf 2017, 67

¹⁴⁷ Wolf 2017, 67

¹⁴⁸ Wolf 2017, 67-68

¹⁴⁹ Meddeb 2019, 5; Wolf 2017, 69

¹⁵⁰ Wolf 2017, 67

¹⁵¹ Wolf 2017, 69

¹⁵² Ghannouchi 2016, 61

In October 1988, MTI held its fourth party congress and the most pressing matter it faced was whether or not to risk entering the political fray once again. Sadok Chourou, a member from the radical faction, was elected president of the organization during the congress and promptly pushed for full participation in the 1989 election.¹⁵³ Ghannouchi reportedly objected to full participation, arguing that doing so might create further issues with the regime.¹⁵⁴ Ghannouchi's concerns were brushed aside by Chourou, and the Shura Council voted for full participation.¹⁵⁵ However, the pragmatic faction was not left out of the discussion entirely. According to Wolf (2017), the party programme adopted by MTI was reflective of the pragmatic wing's ideology, but it also went a step further and "deleted all negative references to the West, and instead stressed the need to engage in a balanced foreign policy."¹⁵⁶ In addition to adopting the pragmatic faction's platform again, MTI also shed its formal reference to Islam by changing its name to *Harakat Ennahda* ("Renaissance Movement") to both comply with the Political Parties Law restriction on religious parties and to acknowledge the nineteenth century renaissance thinkers of Tunisia who were popular amongst Tunisia's elite in the 1980s.¹⁵⁷

In early 1989, the new *Harakat Ennahda* formally submitted their request for a party license to Ben Ali's regime. The election was held in April, before the regime issued a decision regarding the party license, so Chourou and the Shura Council ran candidates from the party as independents instead.¹⁵⁸ According to multiple sources, including members of *Ennahda* and the Inter-Parliamentary Union archives, *Ennahda* captured around 13 to 15 percent of the national

¹⁵³ Wolf 2017, 69

¹⁵⁴ Wolf 2017, 70

¹⁵⁵ Wolf 2017, 71

¹⁵⁶ Wolf 2017, 69

¹⁵⁷ Wolf 2017, 69

¹⁵⁸ Wolf 2017, 70

vote for parliamentary seats, and upwards of 30 percent in some urban areas.¹⁵⁹ The regime promptly declared that the ruling party, despite only winning around 80 percent of the national vote, was going to be awarded 100 percent of the seats under a simple majority rule.¹⁶⁰ In addition, Ben Ali went a step further and officially denied *Harakat Ennahda*'s party license after the election on the grounds that the party's leaders had been imprisoned in the past for more than three months and therefore were disqualified from participating in politics.¹⁶¹ Ghannouchi (2016) recalls that as soon as the elections were over, the regime reverted back to Bourguiba's method of repression:

After the 1989 national elections...the regime moved to crush the party. Tens of thousands of members were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, blacklisted from employment and educational opportunities, and subjected to police harassment. Many others, including me, were forced into exile.¹⁶²

Ben Ali used torture as a way to eradicate the Islamist movement, and the regime's long list of human rights abuses for the next two decades included beatings, electrocution, rape, food and sleep deprivation, unsanitary conditions, long term solitary confinement, preventing contact between prisoners and their family members, extortion, blackmail, and a requirement that some prisoner's family members report to police stations five times per day in order to prevent them from obtaining employment.¹⁶³

For the second time, MTI found itself tempted with the possibility of political participation, and for a second time it was punished by the regime. It is interesting, however, that the pragmatic faction's response to the political opening in 1989 was not to charge into the

¹⁵⁹ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 9; Meddeb 2019, 5; "Tunisia Parliamentary Chamber: Majlis Al-Nuwab" 1989; Wolf 2017, 71

¹⁶⁰ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 9; Wolf 2017, 71

¹⁶¹ Wolf 2017, 71

¹⁶² Ghannouchi 2016, 61

¹⁶³ Wolf 2017, 79-84

electoral arena, but rather to exercise extreme caution and advocate for limited participation. The radical faction, on the other hand, abandoned its anti-system approach to the regime and wanted to engage in direct electoral confrontation with it instead. It is difficult to describe the behavior of either faction in terms of moderation or radicalization at this particular moment in its history. From a completely external perspective, MTI appeared to be moderating in response to the promise of inclusion, especially its strategic rebranding as a non-Islamic party. Internally, however, the factions viewed electoral participation very differently in light of past experiences. The push for full political participation on a moderate platform was something that the pragmatic faction had wanted since the late 1970s, yet it was the radical faction that pursued it over Ghannouchi's objections in 1989. *Harakat Ennahda* never got the chance to participate in parliamentary elections, so unfortunately it is impossible to know how the two factions would have balanced power while participating in government.

***Harakat Ennahda* and Exile (1990 – 2000)**

The violent repression of *Harakat Ennahda* and Islamists in Tunisia following the 1989 elections did not lead to a period of moderation as Cavatorta and Merone (2013) argue. In fact, even Ghannouchi radicalized in response to the regime's behavior. From exile in London, Ghannouchi publicly called upon Tunisians "to rise up against Ben Ali" and to demand "a stricter application of Islamic law and the veiling of women."¹⁶⁴ Shortly after Ghannouchi's arrival, members who had already been living in exile joined with him to establish a London branch of the party's Executive Branch to operate in parallel with the Executive Branch in Tunisia, which was still headed by Sadok Chourou.¹⁶⁵ In 1990, confrontations between members of *Ennahda* who had not already been arrested and the regime intensified. In September, a

¹⁶⁴ Wolf 2017, 72

¹⁶⁵ Wolf 2017, 87

student member of *Ennahda* was shot by security forces during a university protest.¹⁶⁶ Activists with ties to *Ennahda* retaliated against the regime by burning down the RCD party office in Bab Souika in February 1991, resulting in the death of a security guard.¹⁶⁷ According to Mourou, some members of *Ennahda* also devised a plot to overthrow the regime by smuggling in a missile from Afghanistan and using it to shoot down Ben Ali's plane.¹⁶⁸ It is notable that Ghannouchi did not publicly condemn any of the violence attributed to *Ennahda* during this time period. Instead, he voiced his support for the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria and called for Tunisians to launch an intifada against the regime as the Algerians had done in 1988.¹⁶⁹ Ghannouchi also began to voice support for Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, a move which many within *Ennahda* condemned because of Hussein's own laundry list of human rights abuses against the Iraqi people.¹⁷⁰ In light of the radicalization of the party, Abdelfattah Mourou, along with other prominent members of the pragmatic wing, formally left the organization in March 1991 on the grounds that they would not support the party's use of violence against the state.¹⁷¹ In the same year, Ben Ali arrested many of the remaining senior *Ennahda* leaders who had not fled Tunisia, including Sadok Chourou.¹⁷² The loss of Chourou critically impaired *Ennahda's* operations in Tunisia, but the loss of Mourou had a devastating impact on the leaders and senior members who had escaped to Europe, with some viewing it as a betrayal.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ Wolf 2017, 73

¹⁶⁷ There is some disagreement in the literature as to whether or not the activists were members of *Ennahda* or acting independently, and *Ennahda* denies that it was ever involved in the attack (Wolf 2017, 73).

¹⁶⁸ Wolf 2017, 75

¹⁶⁹ Wolf 2017, 72-74

¹⁷⁰ Wolf 2017, 95-96

¹⁷¹ Wolf 2017, 76

¹⁷² Wolf 2017, 87

¹⁷³ Wolf 2017, 76

Ghannouchi, as a single political actor and probably the most influential of *Ennahda*'s founders, is an interesting case study in the impact of repression on behavior. Ghannouchi started as a Salafist who in his youth embraced the idea of an Islamic state based on *Shari'a* in Tunisia. He then became a moderate and an adept moderator between the dogmatic and pragmatic wings within *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* and its progeny, MTI. Despite multiple periods of repression by the regime, he helped push for pragmatic and non-violent strategies. At least until the last confrontation with Ben Ali in 1989. Ghannouchi's sharpened rhetoric and support for the use of violence in the two years after he fled Tunisia seemingly represent a breaking point—or at least a break in his political strategy up until that point. Three other events transpired in 1991 which likely impacted Ghannouchi and his period of radicalization. First, Algeria's elections were aborted after the Islamic Salvation Front won the popular vote in 1991, plunging the country into a brutal civil war.¹⁷⁴ Second, Hussein was forced out of Kuwait and heavily sanctioned by the international community.¹⁷⁵ Finally, Tunisia's former prime minister under Bourguiba, Mohammed Mzali, who had been living in exile in France for years, publicly spoke out to declare his support for *Ennahda* and their political cause.¹⁷⁶ Together with *Ennahda*, Mzali and some Tunisian opposition members published a document in May 1991 which denounced Ben Ali and the regime's use of violence and called "for a national alliance against Ben Ali."¹⁷⁷

Given the outcry from within his own party over his support for Hussein, the very real need for support from Europe in order keep *Ennahda* members safe in exile, and the loss of Mourou—his original co-founder of *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya*—Ghannouchi re-examined the

¹⁷⁴ Wolf 2017, 95-96

¹⁷⁵ Smiles 2008, 273

¹⁷⁶ Wolf 2017, 100

¹⁷⁷ Wolf 2017, 100

radical rhetoric he had adopted since 1989.¹⁷⁸ Eventually, he recognized the need to fully embrace political realism, multi-party politics, and the democratic system which “guaranteed that the exile movement would continue enjoy the support of its European hosts.”¹⁷⁹ During the next several years, Ghannouchi and the exiled senior leaders from the pragmatic wing made a concerted effort to bring *Ennahda*’s more radical wing to heel. Wolf (2017) notes that whatever his changing personal views of the role of political Islam may have been, Rachid Ghannouchi is “first and foremost, a political strategist.”¹⁸⁰

In 1992, *Ennahda* held a party congress in Germany in order to establish the party’s structure in Europe and to elect a new Shura Council.¹⁸¹ Ghannouchi was elected as the president of the Executive Bureau in absentia as he was not allowed to travel outside of London at the time.¹⁸² The congress had two goals: establish a program for providing support to the families of *Ennahda* members who were trapped in Tunisia and create a commission to reframe the party’s political strategy in the context of human rights and democratization.¹⁸³ However, *Ennahda* faced several challenges now that it was operating in Europe. Perhaps the most daunting was that the *Ennahda* exiles, which numbered in the thousands, were spread out across more than 70 countries around the world.¹⁸⁴ Logistically, this made it difficult for members to meet frequently, not just because of the financial hardship that travel entailed, but also because many members in Europe faced intimidation and surveillance by Tunisian intelligence agents who were stationed there.¹⁸⁵ As a result, *Ennahda* experienced decentralization throughout the 1990s as country-

¹⁷⁸ In addition to Mourou, there were several other senior members who resigned from *Ennahda* in protest over Ghannouchi’s support for violence (Wolf 2017, 96).

¹⁷⁹ Wolf 2017, 98

¹⁸⁰ Wolf 2017, 95

¹⁸¹ Wolf 2017, 87

¹⁸² Wolf 2017, 88

¹⁸³ Wolf 2017, 89

¹⁸⁴ Wolf 2017, 88

¹⁸⁵ Wolf 2017, 88

level branches began to operate semi-autonomously from the Executive Bureau and Shura Council in the U.K.¹⁸⁶

The institutionalization that *Ennahda* had undergone while in Tunisia began to gradually deteriorate, especially at the fringes of the party. Ironically, this led to a greater degree of cohesion within the U.K. branch where Ghannouchi was located. This also shifted the balance of power away from the radical faction towards the pragmatic faction even more. Salah Karker, who had been living in exile since he fled Tunisia in 1987, acted as the defacto head of the French branch of *Ennahda* in the early 1990s.¹⁸⁷ However, unlike Ghannouchi who had quickly abandoned his radical discourse by 1992, Karker had only become more dogmatic and radical.¹⁸⁸ In 1995, the Paris Metro was bombed by the Armed Islamic Group, an armed group associated with the Algerian civil war.¹⁸⁹ Karker, who had developed ties with militant groups in both Algeria and Afghanistan since living in France, was arrested by French police and questioned about the bombing.¹⁹⁰ Although there is no indication that Karker was actually involved in the Paris bombing, *Ennahda's* Executive Bureau viewed Karker's illicit connections to militant groups and radical rhetoric as unnecessary liabilities.¹⁹¹ According to senior members interviewed by Wolf (2017), Ghannouchi and the Executive Bureau in London gave Karker an ultimatum "to either renounce his discourse condoning religious violence in countries such as Algeria and Afghanistan, or leave the movement."¹⁹² Karker refused and was placed on "leave" until he was formally excluded from the party by the Shura Council at the Switzerland party

¹⁸⁶ Wolf 2017, 88

¹⁸⁷ Wolf 2017, 93

¹⁸⁸ Wolf 2017, 93

¹⁸⁹ Wolf 2017, 93

¹⁹⁰ Wolf 2017, 93

¹⁹¹ Wolf 2017, 93-94

¹⁹² Wolf 2017, 94

Congress later in 1995.¹⁹³ After some difficult internal debate according, the party formally embraced a policy of non-violence and gradualism at the congress at the behest of Ghannouchi.¹⁹⁴

Throughout the 1990s, *Ennahda* members worked to raise awareness about the human rights abuses occurring in Tunisia under Ben Ali's regime. This included organizing protests outside of Tunisian embassies in Europe, publishing literature in various countries, and even paying to broadcast a television channel back home in Tunisia to continue to promote their political project.¹⁹⁵ In November 1995, *Ennahda* published another joint document with Mohammed Mzali and other exiled opposition members in which they called "for democracy in Tunisia...freedom of expression, a freely elected president, and an independent judiciary."¹⁹⁶ President Ben Ali, however, was not interested in democracy and won a rigged election by a landslide in 1999, securing his authoritarian presidency once again.¹⁹⁷ With the possibility of returning to a democratic Tunisia getting smaller each year, many of the less idealistic *Ennahda* members began to drift away from the party in order to focus on establishing their lives in exile.¹⁹⁸ This left the Executive Bureau in London, and Ghannouchi, with a very dedicated cadre of pragmatic members.

The War on Terror and Tunisian Opposition (2001-2010)

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 changed the Muslim world irrevocably, giving authoritarian leaders throughout the MENA region justification to strengthen their grip on power. Ben Ali's decade of violent repression of Islamists in Tunisia gained international

¹⁹³ Wolf 2017, 94

¹⁹⁴ Wolf 2017, 94-95

¹⁹⁵ Wolf 2017, 89-92

¹⁹⁶ Wolf 2017, 100

¹⁹⁷ Wolf 2017, 99

¹⁹⁸ Wolf 2017, 88

acceptance in the name of supporting of the United States’ “War on Terror” and efforts to root out violent Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East.¹⁹⁹ Sadly, *Ennahda*’s campaign against the regime’s human rights abuses and use of violence against Islamists in Tunisia lost its significance in the face of the new geopolitical reality.²⁰⁰ According to Wolf (2017), “European officials reinforced their political ties to the Tunisian authorities,” and even the mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, expressed public support for the Tunisian regime in the name of anti-terrorism efforts.²⁰¹ No longer afraid of European reproach for his actions, Ben Ali order his the RCD to eliminate presidential term limits and grant him lifetime immunity for all potential crimes or abuses of power that might occur “during or after his presidency.”²⁰² In addition, the regime successfully infiltrated the UGTT, which had been one of the strongest civil society opposition forces to the government for decades, by forcing the union to place loyal members of Ben Ali’s coalition in leadership positions.²⁰³

Besides emboldening authoritarian leaders around the world, the September 11th attacks also acted as a catalyst for secularist and Islamist cooperation among Tunisian exiles. Ben Ali’s increasingly blatant authoritarian actions and violence prompted Moncef Marzouki, a Tunisian human rights activist and founder of the Congress for the Republic (CPR) party who had been living in exile in France since 1994, to reach out to *Ennahda*.²⁰⁴ Marzouki argued that Tunisians should “forget about the divide between secularists and Islamists and instead focus on the divide between democrats and non-democrats.”²⁰⁵ In November 2001, *Ennahda* invited the CPR and

¹⁹⁹ Wolf 2017, 92

²⁰⁰ Rachid Ghannouchi and *Ennahda* also publicly condemned the terrorist attacks in a joint statement published on September 12, 2001, along with over forty Muslim scholars (“A Clear Criterion” 2001; Wolf 2017, 93).

²⁰¹ Wolf 2017, 92-93

²⁰² Wolf 2017, 99

²⁰³ Wolf 2017, 99

²⁰⁴ Wolf 2017, 100

²⁰⁵ Wolf 2017, 100

other Tunisian exiles to break the Ramadan fast together and discuss a strategy for dealing with Ben Ali.²⁰⁶ For the next two years, *Ennahda* worked together with various opposition groups, including CPR, *Ettakatol*, and the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), to draft the Call of Tunis Agreement, which was released in June 2003.²⁰⁷ The agreement called for democracy in Tunisia as well as the liberation of the thousands of political prisoners, but more importantly the agreement represented the first round of compromises between the secularists and Islamists.²⁰⁸ The secularists committed to “a guarantee for freedom of belief and the political neutrality of places of worship,” while *Ennahda* agreed to “a constitutional democracy based on the rule of law, as opposed to *shari’a*,” and equality between men and women.²⁰⁹ Call of Tunis, while having no impact on conditions in Tunisia, was an early attempt to bridge the trust gap between the Islamists and secularists.

In 2005, Nejjib Chebbi, the leader of the PDP, and Hama Hammami, leader of the far-left Tunisian Communist Workers’ Party (POCT), coordinated a hunger strike in Tunisia with six other opposition leaders as well as journalists and lawyers against Ben Ali’s regime.²¹⁰ The object of the strike was to bring attention to the regime’s human rights abuses in the month leading up to the UN World Summit on the Information Society, an event that was being hosted in Tunisia during a time when Tunisians were being denied basic freedoms.²¹¹ The 18 October Movement, as the strike came to be called, garnered international media attention and prompted the Tunisian exiles living in Europe to launch the 18 October Forum and 18 October Collectif to support the strike.²¹² The Collectif brought *Ennahda* together again with the *Ettakatol* Party and

²⁰⁶ Wolf 2017, 101

²⁰⁷ Durac 2015, 253; Wolf 2017, 101

²⁰⁸ Wolf 2017, 101

²⁰⁹ Wolf 2017, 101

²¹⁰ Wolf 2017, 101

²¹¹ Wolf 2017, 101

²¹² Wolf 2017, 101-102

the PDP in the drafting of joint declarations on democracy, women's rights, and gender equality in Tunisia.²¹³ However, it is important to note that while the Collectif was in some ways a continuation of the inter-party cooperation started by the Call of Tunis, some secularists still expressed reservations about working with *Ennahda* on any long-term political projects.²¹⁴ Nejjib Chebbi of the PDP was one of the few who stated interest in continuing to work with *Ennahda* in the future, especially if democratic elections became a reality in Tunisia.²¹⁵

There was one political party noticeably absent from the Collectif and Forum despite playing a crucial role in the Call of Tunis. Marzouki and the CPR argued that there was no point to issuing further declarations about the regime because the only way reforms would occur was through regime change and democratization.²¹⁶ This sense of hopelessness surrounding reform of Ben Ali's regime was not isolated to Marzouki and the CPR, many of the remaining *Ennahda* members living in exile felt the same way.²¹⁷ It also generated a new source of friction between Ghannouchi and the remaining senior members of *Ennahda*. After living in exile and being separated from their families for upwards of twenty years, many *Ennahda* members wanted to give up the fight against Ben Ali and request approval to return to Tunisia.²¹⁸ Ghannouchi was staunchly opposed to another rapprochement with the regime, which is unsurprising given the events of 1981 and 1989.²¹⁹ However, some *Ennahda* members, along with other Tunisian exiles, ignored Ghannouchi's objections and launched the "Right of Return" initiative to request that Ben Ali allow them to return home.²²⁰ At the party congress held in May 2007, a

²¹³ Wolf 2017, 102

²¹⁴ Wolf 2017, 102

²¹⁵ Wolf 2017, 102

²¹⁶ Wolf 2017, 102

²¹⁷ Wolf 2017, 102-104

²¹⁸ Wolf 2017, 104

²¹⁹ Wolf 2017, 103

²²⁰ Wolf 2017, 103

compromise was seemingly reached between the two sides when *Ennahda* published a formal request asking to be allowed to return to Tunisia and to be allowed to operate as a “constructive” opposition party to the regime.²²¹ The hope was that those *Ennahda* members who wanted to return to their families could do so without being arrested by the regime, while the members who wanted to continue *Ennahda*’s political project would have that opportunity. This public declaration and request for reconciliation with the regime was viewed as a betrayal by the secular opposition parties *Ennahda* had worked with, especially CPR and its leader Moncef Marzouki.

Ennahda’s decision to pursue reconciliation in 2007 may have also been the result of events inside of Tunisia as well. By the end of 2007, several senior leaders of *Ennahda* who had been imprisoned in Tunisia, including Hamadi Jebali, Ali Larayedh, and Abdelhamid Jlassi, were released from prison. Jebali secretly re-established an Executive Bureau in Sousse and began coordinating meetings with Larayedh between Sousse and Tunis on a monthly basis. Together with Jlassi, the three leaders contacted the Executive Bureau in London and the decision was made to operate the two Bureaus in parallel.²²² The Sousse Bureau was tasked with handling public relations inside of Tunisia and re-establishing networks in communities and universities.²²³ Constant police surveillance within Tunisia made it difficult for *Ennahda* to expand its membership there, but they were able to mobilize some of the university students and religious youth.²²⁴

Still, for the next three years, *Ennahda* found itself at an impasse. The new student activists were divided between those who wanted to pursue social activism only and those who

²²¹ Wolf 2017, 105

²²² Wolf 2017, 114-116

²²³ Wolf 2017, 115-116

²²⁴ Wolf 2017, 118-119

wanted to push for political reforms in the regime.²²⁵ Likewise, many of the rank and file members, especially those who had spent the last twenty years living under severe repression in Tunisia, were looking to *Ennahda* for social, cultural, and economic support, not a political revolution.²²⁶ The senior leadership, however, was still intent on pursuing a political project.²²⁷ The divisions were strikingly similar to the ones experienced by *Ennahda* during its *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* and MTI days. Ben Ali was still unwilling to grant *Ennahda* opposition party status, although he did allow individual members to return if they were approved by the regime.²²⁸ Some took advantage of the offer, once again over the objections of Ghannouchi and the London Executive Bureau.²²⁹ By 2009, *Ennahda* was “no more than a phantom of itself, bloodless after twenty years of fierce repression and weakened by the numerous defections of some of its historical leaders and activists,” according to Vincent Geisser and Eric Gobe.²³⁰ Despite these heavy losses, *Ennahda's* most dedicated leaders, including Ghannouchi, Larayedh, Jebali, and Jlassi, were able to mobilize the party immediately after the start of the Jasmine Revolution in December 2010. After more than 30 years of fighting for its survival, the resurrected “phantom” would finally institutionalize and become the most powerful political party in Tunisia during the democratic transition.

Conclusion

After Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution successfully overthrew President Ben Ali's regime in 2011, the Islamist party *Ennahda* proved to be one of the most important political actors during the country's subsequent democratic transition. While *Ennahda* embraced democratic pluralism,

²²⁵ Wolf 2017, 121

²²⁶ Wolf 2017, 121

²²⁷ Wolf 2017, 118

²²⁸ Wolf 2017, 104-105

²²⁹ Wolf 2017, 104-105

²³⁰ Geisser and Gobe qtd in Wolf 2017, 104-105

interparty alliances, and the implementation of a secular constitution not based on *Shari'a* law, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt isolated itself from secular parties and passed a new constitution based on *Shari'a* law before being removed from office by the Egyptian military.²³¹ These divergent outcomes prompted scholars to search for what characteristic or mechanism made *Ennahda* so exceptional. The default framework for analyzing Islamist party behavior is inclusion moderation theory, but its predictive ability has been called into question by multiple aberrant cases, including *Ennahda* in Tunisia, the FJP in Egypt, and the AKP in Turkey.

The problem is that inclusion moderation treats political parties as single actors and fails to capture the impact that internal power struggles can have on a party's behavior. Using Angelo Panebianco's historical-comparative approach for analyzing the origin and evolution of a political party, it is possible to uncover the real reason that *Ennahda* defied the inclusion moderation theory—the presence of two strong leadership factions vying for control of the party. Since its inception, *Ennahda* has included both pragmatic and radical leadership. The early adoption of a democratic organizational structure made it possible for power to pass from one faction to the other via internal party congress elections. During the 1980s especially, the activists within the party preferred the ideology and political strategies of the radical faction led by Salah Karker. However, once most of the senior leaders and members were forced into exile in the 1990s, the positions of power within the party were increasingly dominated by the pragmatic faction. By the early 2000s, the party had purged most of the more radical members and had fully embraced the moderate ideology that its co-founder, Abdelfattah Mourou, had advocated for since the 1970s. The *Ennahda* that emerged during the Tunisian Revolution was

²³¹ Rosefsky Wickham 2013; Wolf 2017

not the product of moderation under repression as Cavatorta and Merone (2013) argue. Rather, it was the product of a fortuitous concentration of power in the hands of the pragmatic faction during exile.

It is noteworthy that Pahwa's (2017) inclusion moderation analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt highlights disputes between factions within the Muslim Brotherhood and its rigid organizational structure as alternative explanations for the party's behavior during the Egyptian democratic transition in 2011 and 2012. A more in-depth analysis using Panebianco's historical-comparative tracing may reveal that the Brotherhood was suffering from a struggle between factions that, unlike *Ennahda*, it was unable to resolve before participating in the democratic transition. Likewise, exploring the origin and internal power structure of the AKP in Turkey could illuminate endogenous factors responsible for the party's authoritarian shift in recent years. Treating political parties as single actors responding to electoral inclusion, at least in the context of Islamist parties, has proven to be inadequate for explaining their behavior. Expanding the analysis to include the leaders and factions within those same parties may reveal much more about the actors who are considered absolutely vital to democratization in MENA.²³²

²³² Schwedler 2013

Chapter 3: *Ennahda* Institutionalization (2011-2016)

Introduction

Ennahda's ability to not just survive but also thrive during the democratic transition was primarily the result of two significant factors, the first being their origins and the second being their extensive time in exile. The former predisposed them to strong institutionalization and a cohesive-stable leadership coalition, neither of which fully manifested until their return to Tunisia in 2011. The latter, however, enabled the leadership to transition from a divided-stable coalition to a cohesive-stable one before returning to Tunisia in 2011. With a cohesive-stable coalition, the leadership was able to rapidly expand *Ennahda*'s membership and make room for a spectrum of Islamist voices without suffering from the same factional divisions that plagued *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* and MTI. The result was an outwardly unified party that was able to sacrifice its ideological goals in the name of its own survival and, more importantly, the survival of democracy in Tunisia.

The previous chapter exposed the shortcomings of inclusion moderation theory in explaining why *Ennahda* emerged from exile in 2011 as the embodiment of Islamist party moderation. *Ennahda* did not experience a gradual shift from a radical ideology to moderate one as was argued in the literature.²³³ This notion is dispelled by the fact that radical and moderate ideologies were both represented in the party from its inception in 1972, and the "moderate" platforms adopted at various times were based on positions that the co-founder Abdelfattah Mourou held from the beginning. Instead, what *Ennahda* experienced can more appropriately be described as punctuated shifts from radical to moderate based on which faction controlled the party at a given point in time. However, the analysis of *Ennahda*'s origins, factions, and internal

²³³ Cavatorta and Merone 2013

power struggles only explains how *Ennahda*'s pragmatic faction came to control the party prior to 2011, not why the party continues embrace pragmatic and centrist policies. This chapter will continue the application of Panebianco's framework to examine *Ennahda*'s institutionalization over the five-year period between the start of Tunisia's democratic transition in 2011 and *Ennahda*'s tenth party congress in 2016. While *Ennahda* entered the Tunisian political landscape under the control of the pragmatic faction, it has since remained in the hands of the pragmatic faction because it institutionalized during a democratic transition under conditions that favored pragmatic leadership.

Framework

According to Panebianco, when a party has fully institutionalized it will exhibit two primary characteristics: "(1) the development of interests related to the organization's preservation (those of the leaders at the different levels of organizational pyramid); and (2) the development of diffuse loyalties."²³⁴ The former refers to a change in the party's strategy as its highest priority becomes, first and foremost, organizational survival even if it means sacrificing the pursuit of an ideological goal.²³⁵ The organization's identity, while still embedded in its core, becomes secondary. The latter refers to the cultivation and distribution of incentives which draws activists and careerists into the party, thereby reinforcing the party's survival.²³⁶ The transitional period just before institutionalization is marked by a shift from the party being a tool for accomplishing the leaders' goals to being "valuable in and of itself."²³⁷ In *Ennahda*'s case, this shift is observable in the party's abandonment of a highly prized goal in 2014 for the sake of stability in the electoral arena.

²³⁴ Panebianco 1988, 54

²³⁵ Panebianco 1988, 53

²³⁶ Panebianco 1988, 53

²³⁷ Panebianco 1988, 53

As parties institutionalize and mature, they also tend to exhibit certain characteristics.²³⁸ One of primary characteristics is the presence of a strong, centralized bureaucracy within the organization which is able to maintain control over activity and associations at all levels. A second characteristic is the perpetuation of a consistent organization structure at every level, from the national headquarters to the local branches. Highly institutionalized parties also have power structures which are based on rules and statutory norms. In weakly institutionalized parties, rules may exist but the power structures—who gets chosen for key positions and how they are chosen—may not reflect those rules. A fourth characteristic of highly institutionalized parties is the diversification of revenue sources. It should be noted that the number of revenue sources a party has access to may not always correlate to its degree of institutionalization since there are external factors (e.g. campaign finance rules) which may limit those sources. However, when diversification is considered along with the other characteristics of the party, institutional weaknesses can be revealed. The fifth characteristic of an organization with a high degree of institutionalization is that it is able to dominant external organizations such as labor unions and pressure groups (in such situations where relations exist). Panebianco provides the British Labour Party's reliance on trade unions for resources and members at times throughout its history as an example of a party which was not able to dominate an external organization. The final characteristic which indicates a high degree of institutionalization in a party is that careerists are a significant portion of the politicians.

As noted in the previous chapter, parties that expanded through territorial penetration, that were internally legitimized, and that did not suffer under the weight of a charismatic leader will tend towards a high degree of institutionalization with a cohesive stable leadership coalition

²³⁸ Panebianco 1988, 53-61

as they mature. *Ennahda* was already exhibiting the early signs of strong institutionalization via the organizational structure and central bureaucracy that it adopted at the first party congress in 1979. Unfortunately, clashes with the Tunisian regime as well as disagreements over the identity of *Ennahda* in the 1980s made it impossible for the party to complete the institutionalization process. For *Ennahda*, the transition period leading to full institutionalization began with their reintroduction to Tunisia society in 2011 and ended with the formal separation of the religious and political factions in the party in 2016. The analysis in this chapter follows the behavior of the pragmatic and radical factions as well as the central bureaucracy to explain how the democratic transition was used as a catalyst for institutionalization by the pragmatic faction.

Analysis

The Return of the Renaissance Party

On December 17, 2010, Tarek al-Tayeb Mohammed Bouazizi, a 26-year old university graduate who had resorted to selling produce to make ends meet, stood outside the Sidi Bouzid municipal building, doused himself in petrol, and set himself on fire.²³⁹ Just days before the incident, Sidi Bouzid police had stopped Bouazizi for selling his produce without a permit and confiscated his entire stock, leaving him with no way to earn money.²⁴⁰ Although unrest over economic conditions in Tunisia had been growing steadily since 2008, it took Bouazizi's self-immolation to finally push the country over a revolutionary cliff.²⁴¹ Within less than a month, amid curfews, police violence, and sniper attacks, protestors and union members overthrew the government and forced President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali to flee to Saudi Arabi on January 14, 2011.²⁴² The Jasmine Revolution caught *Ennahda* leaders, both those inside of Tunisia and those

²³⁹ Wolf 2017, 129; "Tunisian President Says Job Riots 'Not Acceptable'." December 28, 2010

²⁴⁰ "Tunisian President Says Job Riots 'Not Acceptable'." December 28, 2010

²⁴¹ Wolf 2017, 116

²⁴² "Dozens Killed' in Tunisia Protests." January 11, 2011; Wolf 2017, 129

living in exile, completely off-guard—a fact which makes their rapid institutionalization and political success even more impressive.²⁴³ On January 30, 2011, after over twenty years in exile, *Ennahda* and Rachid Ghannouchi officially returned to Tunisia and were greeted by nearly 10,000 Tunisians at the airport.²⁴⁴

The work that Hamadi Jebali, Ali Larayedh, and Abdelhamid Jlassi had done in the previous four years to re-establish *Ennahda*'s grassroots networks in communities throughout Tunisia turned out to be fortuitous.²⁴⁵ Jlassi was charged with opening *Ennahda* branch offices throughout the country to prepare for the upcoming National Constituent Assembly (NCA) elections. Armed with *Ennahda*'s well-established organizational structure and recruitment procedures, Jlassi was able to open 2,064 branch offices and 24 bureaus, one for each of Tunisia's governates, just in time for the party to receive its first official licence in March 2011.²⁴⁶ In addition, the groundwork laid by the Tunisia-based senior leaders with youth and university groups made political mobilization during the election easier.²⁴⁷ Once campaigning started in earnest for the NCA elections, *Ennahda* deployed a highly sophisticated electoral strategy that, according to Wolf (2017), gave them a significant advantage over the secular parties they were competing against.²⁴⁸ *Ennahda* not only had a broad national campaign that emphasized a commitment to democracy and political inclusion, but they also tailored their district campaigns to "specific local characteristics and demographics."²⁴⁹ In practice, this meant campaign events hosted in urban and coastal cities often featured live music and unveiled female

²⁴³ Wolf 2017, 130

²⁴⁴ "Tunisian Islamist Leader Rachid Ghannouchi Returns Home." January 30, 2011

²⁴⁵ CITE

²⁴⁶ Meddeb 2019, 6; Wolf 2017, 132

²⁴⁷ Wolf 2017, 115-122

²⁴⁸ Wolf 2017, 133

²⁴⁹ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15; Ounissi 2016; Wolf 2017, 133

academics giving speeches about gender issues, while events in rural areas focused on issues that were more acceptable to conservative demographics such as local healthcare access.²⁵⁰

While *Ennahda* was running a highly successful external campaign, a more important mobilization was occurring behind the scenes. With the return of the senior leadership from exile, *Ennahda* faced the daunting task of what Meddeb (2019) calls “reconnecting the exiled or imprisoned ‘head’ with the persecuted and besieged ‘body’.”²⁵¹ Under Ben Ali’s regime, hundreds of *Ennahda* activists and members had been imprisoned and tortured, and many had only just been released in February 2011 by the interim prime minister, Beji Caid Essebsi.²⁵² Additionally, the family members of those who had been imprisoned also suffered a great deal at the hands of Ben Ali’s security forces.²⁵³ One of the first priorities for returning leaders, including Rachid Ghannouchi, was to mend the old wounds of those who had been left behind during the violence of the 1990s and to bring them back into the fold of the party.²⁵⁴ This was no easy task, however, because of disagreements over how to deal with former regime members. Shortly after the revolution, some of Ben Ali’s worst associates in the state’s former security apparatus were living freely in Tunisia much to dismay of their victims.²⁵⁵ Many former political prisoners and their families wanted justice, and understandably so. One primary school teacher who had been imprisoned under Ben Ali recounted in an interview with Wolf (2017) that it “was very difficult not to pursue acts of vengeance,” especially when he himself “regularly saw his former torturer in the streets of Sousse.”²⁵⁶ However, *Ennahda*’s senior leadership had long ago

²⁵⁰ Wolf 2017, 133

²⁵¹ Meddeb 2019, 6

²⁵² Wolf 2017, 79-84, 129

²⁵³ Wolf 2017, 79-84

²⁵⁴ Meddeb 2019, 6

²⁵⁵ Wolf 2017, 132

²⁵⁶ Wolf 2017, 132

committed the party to non-violence, and activists were ordered not to take matters into their own hands or to commit any acts of revenge against former regime members.²⁵⁷

The order of non-violence, and the full compliance with that order by *Ennahda* members, is one of the key demonstrations of the leadership's power upon returning to Tunisia. In *Ennahda*'s early years, disagreements between the pragmatic and radical factions of the organization may not have always manifested themselves publicly, but there was never any doubt that some leaders and activists, such as Salah Karker, were not above committing or inciting violence for political ends. Because *Ennahda* was able to consolidate organizational power within the pragmatic faction during exile, they were able to exercise that power upon returning to Tunisia and demand internal party discipline in a way they never had before.

The months leading up to the country's first democratic elections were crucial for *Ennahda*, and the senior leadership was determined to present a unified front to the world. Just before Ghannouchi returned to Tunisia at the end of January, he granted an interview to the BBC in which he argued for a coalition government in Tunisia and for coordination amongst the opposition parties who had participated in the 18 October Movement in 2005 in order to build consensus.²⁵⁸ In that same interview, Ghannouchi also flatly rejected comparisons that were made between himself and the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran.²⁵⁹ His rejection which was most likely meant to counter not only the fears of Western states, but also the fears of many secular Tunisians who had publicly expressed concern that *Ennahda* would try to turn the country into an Iranian-style theocracy.²⁶⁰ Ghafar and Hess (2018) note that "[f]rom Ghannouchi on down, *Ennahda* members emphasized how important it was for Tunisia's transition to be carried out in

²⁵⁷ Wolf 2017, 132

²⁵⁸ "Tunisian Islamist Leader Rachid Ghannouchi Returns Home." January 30, 2011.

²⁵⁹ "Tunisian Islamist Leader Rachid Ghannouchi Returns Home." January 30, 2011.

²⁶⁰ Heneghan 2011

a consensual manner.”²⁶¹ While this may have been a way for the party to inoculate itself against accusations that it wanted to implement an Islamic state, the party still genuinely pushed for coalition politics.²⁶²

On October 23, 2011, in Tunisia’s first democratic elections in history, *Ennahda* captured 37 percent of the national vote.²⁶³ In second place was Moncef Marzouki’s Congress for the Republic Party (CPR), which captured a mere 8.7 percent of the vote.²⁶⁴ While *Ennahda* lacked a majority of seats in the NCA, it still had a significant plurality. However, the party remained true to their word about consensual governing and pushed for secular and leftist parties to join a coalition government to draft the new constitution. Unfortunately, many parties refused to enter into a coalition with Islamists.²⁶⁵ Even Nejjib Chebbi and the Democratic Progressive Party (PDP), a party which had previously partnered with *Ennahda* during the 18 October Collectif, adopted an anti-Islamic stance and refused to join *Ennahda*’s.²⁶⁶ In the end, only CPR and *Ettakatol* joined *Ennahda* in establishing a troika caretaker government.²⁶⁷ With the elections over, *Ennahda* now had to manage both a coalition government and the next stage of its own institutionalization as a party.

Balance of Power and Institutionalization

One of the first matters *Ennahda* had to deal with internally was inconsistency in messaging from some of its members. While members complied with the party directive to not advocate for violence or retaliation against the regime, not everyone followed the party’s moderate interpretation of Islam in their rhetoric. In the months leading up to the 2011 election,

²⁶¹ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 19

²⁶² Ghafar and Hess 2018, 19

²⁶³ Wolf 2017, 133-134

²⁶⁴ Wolf 2017, 133-134

²⁶⁵ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 19; Wolf 2017, 133-134

²⁶⁶ Wolf 2017, 133

²⁶⁷ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 19; Wolf 2017, 133-134

one member, Samir Dilou, publicly stated that polygamy should be legal in Tunisia and that *Ennahda* would pursue its inclusion in the new constitution.²⁶⁸ *Ennahda* denied this, and Dilou had to distance himself from the statement shortly after making it.²⁶⁹ After the election, another *Ennahda* member, this time a member of parliament (MP) named Souad Abed-el-Rahim, argued for the elimination of family laws which provided protections to single mothers.²⁷⁰ *Ennahda*'s Executive Bureau stepped in and denied that the party had any intention of making changes to Tunisia's Personal Status Code or family laws.²⁷¹ Some of the more radical leaders, like Habib Ellouze, began calling for the implementation of *Shari'a* law, prompting Ghannouchi and *Ennahda* to issue a public statement in March 2012 stating that *Shari'a* would not be included in the Tunisian constitution.²⁷² This last rebuke of the radical faction by *Ennahda*'s leadership resulted in public protests from Habib Ellouze and Sadok Chourou, and cost the party around 10 percent of its youth membership.²⁷³ However, *Ennahda*'s central leadership had no intention of caving on an issue that was viewed as detrimental to the larger goal. According to interviews of *Ennahda* MPs by Ghafar and Hess (2018), the party's "chief goal" during the 2011 to 2014 period was "establishing, consolidating, [and] sustaining democracy and Tunisia's democratic transition."²⁷⁴ Achieving that end meant maintaining a "politics of pragmatism...that placed participation and long-term survival ahead of potentially fleeting victories," and which required the party to emphasize "its commitment to democracy over its Islamist roots."²⁷⁵

²⁶⁸ Abdo-Katsipis 2017, 3

²⁶⁹ Abdo-Katsipis 2017, 3

²⁷⁰ Abdo-Katsipis 2017, 3

²⁷¹ Abdo-Katsipis 2017, 3

²⁷² Wolf 2017, 139

²⁷³ Wolf 2017, 139

²⁷⁴ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15

²⁷⁵ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15

The aforementioned goals of party survival and sustaining democracy in Tunisia were at the center of *Ennahda*'s July 2012 party congress in Tunis where pragmatism reigned supreme in the party's internal elections. The General Congress elected a new Shura Council to manage the party's ongoing political strategy and re-elected Ghannouchi as president of the Executive Bureau.²⁷⁶ Sadok Chourou, one of the more radical senior leaders who had headed *Ennahda* more than once in its long history, ran against Fathi al-Ayadi, a pragmatic former exile, in the party elections to head the Shura Council.²⁷⁷ Fathi al-Ayadi won, an outcome which was unpopular with the radical contingent in the party.²⁷⁸ The party congress featured another monumental event for *Ennahda*—the return Abdelfattah Mourou, the original pragmatic co-founder, as the party's vice president.²⁷⁹

With the pragmatic faction's power secured, the rest of the party congress was tasked with expanding *Ennahda*'s support base within Tunisian society. Ghannouchi also pushed the “dogmatic rank and file” to accept the party's stance on Shari's law and the Personal Status Code.²⁸⁰ It was not the first, or the last, time that the radical members would be directed to fall in line. The consolidation of power with pragmatic leaders and the ability to now offer the ultimate reward to political careerists, i.e. seats in the Tunisian Assembly, meant that *Ennahda* could now control member behavior through the distribution of incentives and cooptation of its internal opposition. This power did not go unnoticed, and many of the more radical members noted in interviews with Wolf (2017) that “it [was] almost impossible to climb up the movement's ranks

²⁷⁶ Wolf 2017, 136-137

²⁷⁷ Wolf 2017, 136-137

²⁷⁸ Wolf 2017, 136-137

²⁷⁹ Wolf 2017, xix

²⁸⁰ Wolf 2017, 141

independently, without patronage and cooptation.”²⁸¹ Pragmatism and moderate ideology were rewarded, while radicalism was increasingly marginalized.²⁸²

Despite its dedication to pragmatic and reformist Islam, *Ennahda* did run afoul of Tunisian civil society organizations and its secular coalition partners in 2012 and 2013, when it attempted to push a few conservative ideas on society.²⁸³ Wolf (2017) notes that this strategy was most likely an attempt to avoid losing any more of its conservative or Salafi voter base, especially since it had already sustained losses when it rejected the implementation of *Shari'a* law.²⁸⁴ Indeed, Merone (2019) notes that Arab Barometer survey data from 2011, 2013, and later 2016, all show that *Ennahda* was losing public support among its conservative base, and Grewal (2017) highlights the loss of support among Tunisians who wanted to see *Shari'a* law implemented in the country.²⁸⁵ *Ennahda's* leadership was not oblivious to these issues. Habib Ellouze laments that because *Ennahda* chose to focus on democracy and economic issues instead of Islamic issues, the party “lost one third of its electoral capital.”²⁸⁶

In 2012, *Ennahda* attempted to make some concessions to its voter base and its rank and file by taking a controversial stance on a freedom of speech issue. The debate arose after two incidents in the summer. The first was the prosecution of Nail Karoui, the head of Nessma TV, for airing a French film in Tunisia which was critical of Islamism and made prohibited references to Allah. The second was an art exhibition in La Marsa which featured at least one painting that referenced Allah in a way that was deemed blasphemous by conservatives.

Thousands of protestors responded to the exhibit by demanding that it be removed, marching in

²⁸¹ Wolf 2017, 136

²⁸² Wolf 2017, 136

²⁸³ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15; Merone 2019; Wolf 2017, 143

²⁸⁴ Wolf 2017, 143

²⁸⁵ Grewal 2017, 2; Merone 2019

²⁸⁶ Ellouze 2017, 04:40-06:09

the streets, and throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at police stations.²⁸⁷ *Ennahda* condemned the violence, but began advocating for including the criminalization of some speech and art as blasphemy in the new constitution.²⁸⁸ They were quickly condemned by NGOs and civil society actors for the proposal and “after extensive consultations with external legal and constitutional experts, *Ennahda* withdrew the pivotal language.”²⁸⁹

An even more controversial issue for *Ennahda*’s members arose in 2013 with the lustration debate. In 2012, Beji Caid Essebsi²⁹⁰ created the Nidaa Tounes Party, which became a catch-all home for every politician from trade unionists and independents to former members of Ben Ali’s RCD and Bourguiba’s Neo-Destourian party.²⁹¹ Many *Ennahda* members and leaders who had been trapped in Tunisia and violently repressed under Ben Ali had no desire to see former regime members resuming their positions within the new Tunisian government.²⁹² As a result, there was huge pressure on *Ennahda* leadership from inside the party to push for a law that would ban former regime members from participating in elections.²⁹³ In fact, most *Ennahda* MPs and members of the Shura Council supported an electoral exclusion law.²⁹⁴ However, the matter was set aside as the political situation in Tunisia in 2013 started to devolve.

When Essebsi released all of the Ben Ali’s political prisoners in 2011, he inadvertently released jihadists who had fought with militant groups in Afghanistan.²⁹⁵ These individuals went on to form the *Ansar al-Shari’a* movement as well as other Salafist jihadi groups which “rejected

²⁸⁷ Wolf 2017, 142-143

²⁸⁸ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15; Meddeb 2019, 7

²⁸⁹ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15

²⁹⁰ Essebsi was a lifelong bureaucrat and politician who served under both Bourguiba and Ben Ali, and, while popular among many Tunisians, was still viewed as a relic of two corrupt regimes (“Beji Caid Essebsi: Veteran Who Ushered in Democracy in Tunisia.” July 25, 2019).

²⁹¹ Wolf 2017, 153

²⁹² Wolf 2017, 132

²⁹³ Ounissi 2016

²⁹⁴ Marks 2015, 10

²⁹⁵ Wolf 2017, 143-147

multi-party politics,” sharply criticized Islamist alliances with secular political parties, and demanded the immediate implementation of *Shari’a* law and an Islamic caliphate.²⁹⁶ While many members were non-violent, there were still militant individuals within the group who decided to confront the new democratic regime with violence. In 2012, Salafi jihadists attacked the U.S. Embassy and the American International School in Tunis, wounding more than thirty people and killing four Tunisian citizens.²⁹⁷ The jihadists escalated their violence in 2013 with the assassinations of Chokri Belaid, a leftist politician who had been critical of Islamists and the blasphemy law controversy, and Mohammed Brahmi, a nationalist politician who was part of the coalition drafting the new constitution, as well as engagement in multiple clashes with Tunisian security forces.²⁹⁸ *Ennahda*’s initial stance on the Salafist groups was to avoid radicalizing them further and to attempt to bring the youth back into the political fold.²⁹⁹ However, increasing violence and public fear of Islamism forced *Ennahda* leader Ali Larayedh, the acting Prime Minister at the time, to declare *Ansar al-Shari’a* a terrorist organization and ban them from organizing anymore public events.³⁰⁰

On top of the Salafi-led violence in Tunisia, average citizens were also growing increasingly discontent with the transition government that still had not finished drafting the constitution. In addition, “[b]y mid-2013 unemployment rates remained stubbornly high, few visible infrastructure employments could be found, corruption and police impunity continued, and terrorism seemed on the rise.”³⁰¹ Then, on July 3, 2013, the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood and President Muhammad Mursi, were removed from the Egyptian government by

²⁹⁶ Cavatorta 2015, 776; Wolf 2017, 143-147

²⁹⁷ Marks 2015, 7; Wolf 2017, 149

²⁹⁸ Cavatorta 2015, 780; “Tunisian Politician Mohamed Brahmi Assassinated” July 25, 2013; Peralta 2013; Wolf 2017, 152

²⁹⁹ Marks 2015, 7; Wolf 2017, 151

³⁰⁰ Cavatorta 2015, 780; Marks 2015, 4, 7; Wolf 2017, 152

³⁰¹ Marks 2015, 8

a military coup as the Western world stood by and watched.³⁰² *Ennahda* was reminded of the fragility of Tunisia's transition, and its own isolation as the sole Islamist party in the government. On July 26, 2013, *Ennahda*'s coalition partner *Ettakatol*, along with Essebsi's Nidaa Tounes and multiple civil society organizations, including the UGTT, demanded that transition government be dissolved.³⁰³ Nearly twenty-five percent of the NCA members also resigned to protest the transition government.³⁰⁴ In effort to preserve the party and the democratic transition, *Ennahda* entered into negotiations with the secular parties and the *Quartet*, which consisted of the UGTT, the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade, and Handcrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Order of Lawyers, and the Tunisian Human Rights League.³⁰⁵ An agreement was reached to resolve the remaining issues surrounding the constitution, and on January 27, 2014, with a finalized constitution in hand, the *Ennahda*-led government surrendered power to independent technocrats.³⁰⁶

This surrender of political power was considered by *Ennahda* leadership as the ultimate demonstration of their commitment to democracy.³⁰⁷ Ghannouchi (2016) states with regards to *Ennahda*'s agreement to step down that “[o]ur priority was not to remain in control but to ensure that the National Constituent Assembly, the supreme representative body, could complete the work of drafting a constitution that would establish the political foundations of a democratic Tunisia.”³⁰⁸ A few months later, *Ennahda*'s commitment to transitional stability and party survival was tested again, when the remaining *Ennahda* members of the Tunisian Assembly were faced with the electoral exclusion question one more time. Ghannouchi lobbied the party's MPs

³⁰² Marks 2015, 8; Wolf 2017

³⁰³ Wolf 2017, 154-156

³⁰⁴ Wolf 2017, 155

³⁰⁵ Meddeb 2019, 7; Wolf 2017, 155

³⁰⁶ Meddeb 2019, 7; Wolf 2017, 156

³⁰⁷ Meddeb 2019, 8

³⁰⁸ Ghannouchi 2016, 63

to vote against the law on the grounds that passing it might put Tunisia's democratic consolidation at risk by alienating the remaining opposition parties in the government.³⁰⁹ On the day the law was put to a final vote, nearly all of the *Ennahda* MPs who were present voted in favor of the electoral exclusion law. The debate over lustration ended dramatically when the law "failed to pass by just a single vote after an *Ennahda* MP switched his vote of support to an abstention."³¹⁰

The importance of the period between January and April of 2014 cannot be overstated. Institutionalization, the transition from political tool to professional party with intrinsic value, does not happen in a moment. However, if there is a period in *Ennahda*'s almost 50-year history that embodies the transition from political tool to an organization with a survival instinct, then it would be the period between surrendering political power on January 27, 2014 and voting against lustration on April 30, 2014. With both actions, *Ennahda* put its survival as a party, and the continued functioning of the coalition government, above not only the wants of its thousands of members and votes, but also above the demands of its political careerists and MPs.

Another important institutionalization milestone that *Ennahda* completed in 2014 was the incorporation of the organization's original goals into the party as an identity rather than actual pursuits. This transition from having an ideology that was a driving force to having one that is "latent," or vaguely woven into the party's identity, is yet another example of institutionalization.³¹¹ As the next round of assembly and presidential elections loomed at the end of 2014, there was a rapid internal movement to "professionalize" the party. *Ennahda* dramatically distanced itself from Islamism, with several scholars noticing the *Ennahda* was the

³⁰⁹ Marks 2015, 10

³¹⁰ Marks 2015, 10-11

³¹¹ Panebianco 1988, 19, 58

only party to *not* mention religion in its campaign platforms that year.³¹² Instead, *Ennahda* focused on “solutions to corruption, economic development, social issues, and human rights.”³¹³ According to Merone (2019), with the adoption of Articles 1 and 6 of the Tunisian Constitution, which refer to Islam as the state religion and the state as the protector of religion, respectively, the party leaders “no longer saw a reason to pursue an explicitly Islamist platform.”³¹⁴ This sentiment is echoed by both Ghannouchi, who stated that with the completion of the constitution *Ennahda* now seeks “to create solutions to the day-to-day problems that Tunisians face rather than preach about the hereafter,” and *Ennahda* MP Sayida Ounissi, who declared that the party’s long time goal of bringing Islam back to Tunisia is considered a settled matter.³¹⁵ In addition to *Ennahda*’s shift in identity, the party also started presenting their political candidates as polished and clean-shaven technocrats.³¹⁶ There was concerted effort to distance *Ennahda* from other Islamist parties in the MENA region, especially the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt because of their perceived failure to embrace a coalition-style government, but also the AKP in Turkey for its increasingly authoritarian policies.³¹⁷

This transition was not easy for the more radical wing within the party. According to Meddeb (2019), “*Ennahda*’s leadership had to organize workshops and meetings with the party’s more militant members to convince them that their doctrinal demands were untenable in the existing national and regional context.”³¹⁸ In a sense, the leadership was able to control more radical members of the party by leveraging the constraints of Tunisia’s political sphere “into a

³¹² Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15; Wolf 2017, 156

³¹³ Ounissi 2016

³¹⁴ Merone 2019

³¹⁵ Ghannouchi 2016, 64; Ounissi 2016

³¹⁶ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 16

³¹⁷ Marks 2015, 4; Wolf 2017, 154

³¹⁸ Meddeb 2019, 8

driver of change for the party's ideology and identity.”³¹⁹ Despite this professionalization of the party, *Ennahda* was not able to attract a majority of the vote during the October 2014 parliamentary elections. Instead, Essebsi's Nidaa Tounes won a plurality with 86 seats out of 217, while *Ennahda* came in second with 69 seats, leading to the formation of a new coalition government shortly after the elections.³²⁰

Party Congress 2016

Although *Ennahda* institutionalized during the early part of 2014, their tenth party congress made it official. Ghannouchi (2016) describes the purpose of that congress as the formalization of *Ennahda*'s “decision to focus exclusively on politics and to leave behind social, educational, cultural, and religious activities.”³²¹ The official separation of *Ennahda*, the political party, and *Ennahda*, the religious and cultural movement, was viewed as the necessary final step in consolidating the party's new identity as “Muslim Democrats”—in other words, inspired by Islam but not driven by it.³²² The separation was formalized using an internal party vote, and afterwards, party members were forbidden from preaching in mosques or assuming leadership positions in religious organizations.³²³ As Merone (2019) succinctly states, “*Ennahda* would advance a political agenda, while militants who wanted to continue engaging in religious proselytism were invited to leave the party.” Party membership requirements were changed considerably too. The word “morals” was removed from the list of candidate qualifications and the prerequisites that new members receive endorsements from at least two existing members and complete a two-year probationary period before receiving full membership were both lifted

³¹⁹ Meddeb 2019, 9

³²⁰ Wolf 2017, 157-158

³²¹ Ghannouchi 2016, 63

³²² Merone 2019; Ounissi 2016; Wolf 2017, 160

³²³ Ghannouchi 2016, 63

in order to attract less religious and independent candidates to the party.³²⁴ The party congress ended with the adoption of a political platform focused on Tunisia's democratic consolidation, economic and state institution reforms, terrorism, and civil society development rather than any religious endeavors.³²⁵ Such changes most likely reflect a strategy to attract a new voter base more hospitable to political activism than the deeply conservative base the party has already lost.³²⁶

Conclusion

Over twenty years of living scattered around the world slowly stripped away all but the most dedicated members of the party, and it was not a coincidence that the remaining leaders were concentrated in Europe around Ghannouchi—the last of the founding members still active in the party. Under Ghannouchi and the rest of the pragmatic faction, *Ennahda* expelled the more radical members and ideas that had sometimes dominated the party before fully embracing the moderate reformist ideology that Abdelfattah Mourou had always advocated for. While *Ennahda* had always been a strong organization owing to its origins and the vital components of its development,³²⁷ especially the early adoption of an organizational structure and internal democracy, it suffered from disagreements between two equally powerful factions. This power struggle played out internally for nearly two decades, in part because the leadership could not agree on a single identity for the organization, but also because *Ennahda* and its earlier incarnations, *al Jama'a al-Islamiyya* and MTI, existed within a hostile and rapidly changing political environment under both Bourguiba and Ben Ali. Exile in Europe served as a catalyst,

³²⁴ Meddeb 2019, 16; Ounissi 2016; Wolf 2017,

³²⁵ Ghannouchi 2016, 64-67

³²⁶ Ellouze 2017; Meddeb 2019, 10

³²⁷ See Chapter 2 for discussion of its territorial development, internal legitimization, and freedom from charismatic rule.

both unfortunate—for the radical faction—and fortuitous, for it allowed the pragmatic faction to consolidate power and insulate itself against radical strains of thought.

When the exiled leaders of *Ennahda* returned to Tunisia in 2011, they brought with them a cohesive leadership coalition and the necessary components for strong institutionalization. With the balance of power shifted in favor of the pragmatic faction, *Ennahda* was able to co-opt dissenting voices, like Habib Ellouze and jaded grassroots members who had been imprisoned or unable to escape Ben Ali's regime, by offering them a commitment to democracy and a chance to have religious freedom in Tunisia. Members obeyed the mandates against seeking revenge against former regime members or inciting violence; and they gave up the demand of electoral exclusion in the name party loyalty. As one *Ennahda* member begrudgingly stated with regards to the party's sacrifice of the lustration law in 2014, "[i]t is not right, and we (my husband and I) know it, but it is smart... So we will be smart."³²⁸ While the party lost around one-third of its electoral base and 10 percent of its youth membership, those sacrifices helped to ensure that the party would institutionalize. The surrendering of power in January of 2014 and the sacrificial vote against the electoral exclusion law in April of 2014 to preserve Tunisia's transition and the party's long-term survival in a coalition governing system marked *Ennahda*'s institutionalization. With those actions, the party made survival its highest priority. The changes to membership qualifications in 2016 to attract political activists over religious ones, cemented the final component of institutionalization: the cultivation of diffuse loyalties. With its centralized bureaucracy, careerists being groomed for electoral lists, unified party platform, highly organized internal power structure and democratic institutions, and party discipline, *Ennahda* quickly became the dominant political party—and certainly the most stable—in

³²⁸ Marks 2015, 11

Tunisia.³²⁹ After more than forty years, *Ennahda*'s journey from secret organization in a Sidi Bouzid mosque to professional political party was finally complete.

Inclusion moderation theory would predict that *Ennahda* would remain moderate, or even become more centrist, after being included in the political system in order to widen their base of support.³³⁰ Broadly speaking, this matches *Ennahda*'s behavior as a whole during both the democratic transition and consolidation periods in Tunisia. However, by analyzing *Ennahda* externally instead of internally, the theory gets the mechanism wrong. The driving factors behind *Ennahda*'s behavior were the domination of the pragmatic faction (which needed no convincing to adopt democratic pluralism or consensual governance) and the precariousness of the democratic transition in general, which gave *Ennahda* leadership an excuse to marginalize the party's radical elements in the name of sustaining democracy. Likewise, the pivot in 2016 to attract a less religious base reflects the desire of *Ennahda*'s pragmatic leadership to capture a voter base that is more in line with their ideology, rather than a desire to simply expand their electoral share.

The significance of these finding is that what may appear to be moderation in response to electoral inclusion may actually be the outward manifestation of the party's internal balance of power. In the case of *Ennahda*, the balance of power clearly shifted to the pragmatic faction in the 1990s and has been held by that faction ever since. This is reflected in *Ennahda*'s consistent ideology throughout the 1990s, 2000s, and now. It also explains why the party appeared to moderate during exile; not because it was repressed, but because the radical faction lost power. Extending these findings to other Islamist parties in the MENA region could be helpful in

³²⁹ Nidaa Tounes, the largest party aside from *Ennahda*, crumbled towards the end of 2015 as members defected because of a lack of consensus and no unifying identity (Wolf 2017, 160).

³³⁰ Tepe 2019

explaining behavioral divergences from the inclusion moderation framework. An analysis of the leadership factions and internal power structure of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt might reveal why the party drifted towards authoritarian behavior and a more radical ideology after it was included in democratic elections rather than continuing to embrace democratic pluralism. Similarly, literature on the AKP in Turkey notes that “[i]n-fighting within [its] Islamist coalition” enabled the party’s leadership to sideline rivals and crackdown on opposition, but the analysis does not delve any deeper into the role that this in-fighting might have played in driving the party into authoritarian territory.³³¹ The analysis of Islamist parties, whether they diverge from or follow the path that inclusion moderation theory sets out for them, would benefit from a stronger focus on the endogenous mechanisms that drive their behavioral change.

³³¹ Somer 2017, 1036-1037

Chapter 4: Interim Governments and Electoral Rules

One party should not govern alone. A party alone cannot face these challenges.

–Rachid Ghannouchi³³²

Introduction

Ennahda's origin and evolution, and more specifically the shifting balance of power between its two dominant leadership factions, explain the phenomenon of “moderation” that Cavatorta and Merone (2013) observed during the party's repression and exile. Additionally, the party's origins and later transition from a divided-stable leadership coalition to a cohesive-stable coalition explain why the party was able to institutionalize so quickly during Tunisia's democratic transition period. The consolidation of power within the pragmatic faction also helps to explain why *Ennahda* continued to embrace moderate policies instead of caving to demands from its conservative base once it was included in a democratic political system. However, regardless of how instrumental pragmatic leadership has been in shaping the party's commitment to democracy, *Ennahda* as a single political actor does not explain why Tunisia's transition was successful.

In their analysis of the Arab Spring outcomes in Egypt and Tunisia, Stepan and Linz (2013) argue that *Ennahda*'s early acceptance of democracy, the political alliances they formed in Europe, and a nascent “political society” in Tunisia were key to the country's success, once other factors such as military defection were considered.³³³ The first two factors were explored in Chapters 2 and 3. Both *Ennahda*'s democratic leanings and their political alliances can be explained by the dominance of the pragmatic faction during exile. It is the third factor which is the focus of this chapter. According to Linz and Stepan (1996), political society encompasses

³³² Interview with Rachid Ghannouchi, leader of *Ennahda*, in Marks 2015, 3.

³³³ Stepan and Linz 2013, 23

“political parties, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, interparty alliances, and legislatures,” and is a fundamental component of democratic transition and consolidation.³³⁴ Their Arab Spring analysis argues that while Tunisia had organized groups of political activists who were willing and able to confront the regime and to “overcome their mutual fear” of each other in order to establish a new democracy, Egypt’s primary political actors, the Muslim Brotherhood and secular political parties, refused to work together or form alliances during the transition.³³⁵ Stepan (2012) argues that Tunisia’s “cultural roots of tolerance and openness,” which date back to medieval times, as well as the meetings between secular and Islamist parties living in exile in Europe both help account for the differences in political society between Tunisia and Egypt.³³⁶ However, Stepan (2012) also acknowledges that only a few months after the Jasmine Revolution, many journalists and secular opposition leaders were terrified of the possibility that Islamists might rule the country.³³⁷ This palpable fear suggests that there were other mechanisms responsible for strengthening Tunisia’s political society during the transition than just cultural roots and secular-Islamist meetings.

First, it is unfair to say that political society was entirely lacking in Egypt, and therefore declaring its absence does not explain the divergent outcomes. Both Tunisia and Egypt had all of the basic, albeit anemic, elements of political society, including political parties, elections, and legislatures, under their respective authoritarian governments. In addition, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was not only an older party than Tunisia’s *Ennahda*, but it also had more than two decades of experience participating in elections and building electoral alliances with its

³³⁴ Linz and Stepan 1996, 8

³³⁵ Stepan and Linz 2013, 23

³³⁶ Stepan 2012, 97

³³⁷ Stepan 2012, 97

secular counterparts.³³⁸ Furthermore, even though *Ennahda* did have experience building political trust with some secular parties during the *Call of Tunis* and *Collectif* meetings in Europe, these experiences did not have a significant impact on the transition. As Haugbølle and Cavatorta (2011) note, the parties involved in the *Collectif* found “themselves increasingly at odds over how to best ensure a smooth transition in Tunisia.”³³⁹ In fact, some participants in the *Collectif*, like Nejjib Chebbi of the PDP, reneged on their former alliances and began using anti-Islamic rhetoric in their 2011 political campaigns.³⁴⁰ What ultimately forced political parties in Tunisia to work together during the transition was not that they trusted each other, but rather the choice of electoral rules which, by design, diminished the likelihood of one political party winning the majority of legislative seats and encouraged the formation of coalition governments. Stepan and Linz (2013) identified cross-ideological alliances and trust between political parties as being key to Tunisia’s success, but the mechanism behind those factors may have been the country’s electoral rules, rather than any deeper experience among political actors there. If this is true, then it is conceivable that electoral rules chosen in Egypt may have also been responsible for the lack of political alliances noted by Stepan and Linz (2013).

Why Elections Matter During Democratic Transitions

Democratic transitions are precarious. Once initiated, they can just as easily lead to democratic consolidation as they can to the entrenchment of authoritarianism, as demonstrated by Tunisia and Egypt, respectively, during the Arab Spring. What is most of interest is why paths diverge once a transition has started. There are many answers to that question ranging from the role of the military during the uprising to the presence of civil society within the transitioning

³³⁸ Shehata 2010

³³⁹ Haugbølle and Cavatorta 2011, 340

³⁴⁰ Haugbølle and Cavatorta 2011, 340; Wolf 2017, 133

country, but one answer which is often underestimated in MENA is the role of electoral rules in the process.³⁴¹ Linz and Stepan (1996) note that transitions which are “initiated by an uprising of civil society,” as in Egypt and Tunisia, “tend toward situations in which the instruments of rule will be assumed by an interim or provisional government.”³⁴² This is a crucial factor as the decisions made by the interim government “can lead to diametrically opposite outcomes depending on which groups are most powerful,” especially since it is *this* political body that will decide whether, and how, to hold new elections.³⁴³ Birch (2005) argues that “the outcome of founding and early elections [are] pivotal in shaping the institutional structure of a new democracy, and indeed in determining the fate of democratization.”³⁴⁴ In sum, the group that controls the interim government establishes the rules for electing those who will ultimately write the country’s new constitution and consolidate the new democracy. The importance of controlling the composition of the interim government, and therefore the rules of the first election, cannot be overstated since the legitimacy of the new regime depends upon the outcome being both free and fair and reflecting the will of the people.

In cases where former regime members can still participate in government, electoral rules can be a particularly effective tool for reducing the risk that one party win a majority and attempt to capture government control or constitution-writing responsibilities for itself. While electoral rules alone do not usually determine the fate of democratic transition, when combined with additional factors such as a crisis of confidence in the new system or lack of cooperation, inappropriate electoral rules can lead to a breakdown.³⁴⁵ Rein Taagepera (1998) argues that,

³⁴¹ Albrecht, Croissant, and Lawson 2016; Bellin 2013; Carey and Reynolds 2011

³⁴² Linz and Stepan 1996, 71

³⁴³ Linz and Stepan 1996, 71

³⁴⁴ Birch 2005, 282

³⁴⁵ Taagepera 1998, 69

broadly speaking, the goal of electoral rules should be to inject “fairness and stability” into the new electoral institutions.³⁴⁶ Fairness can be achieved through the representation of minority voices within the government as well as the “proportionality between vote shares and seat shares.”³⁴⁷ Stability is a little more difficult to achieve within an electoral system, but the extremes of one-party rule as well as highly fractured coalition governments should be avoided if possible.³⁴⁸ The system itself, whether a proportional representation, single-member districts, mixed, or parallel, is important, but the most crucial details are district magnitude, legal threshold, and seat allocation formula, all of which can significantly alter the composition of the caretaker government during a democratic transition.³⁴⁹ As Taagepera notes, scholars can make “average recommendations for the average country,” but the “devil is in the detail,” and one must be careful about how electoral rules and systems will interact when placed into the context of a specific country’s political culture.³⁵⁰

One of the great difficulties that transitioning countries face during the initial elections is the maladaptation of political parties that existed under repressive, authoritarian conditions to the realities of forming and running a new government. In general, political parties “that emerge at the time of democratization are often...poorly organized, poorly resourced, inexperienced in mass mobilization and have weak links with distinct sectors of the mass electorate.”³⁵¹ In many instances, the political party with the greatest organizational stability and capacity is the former ruling party, giving it an unfair advantage in new elections if it, or its former members, are not excluded.³⁵² This is accurate throughout the MENA region, where much of the population has

³⁴⁶ Taagepera 1998, 71-72

³⁴⁷ Taagepera 1998, 71-72

³⁴⁸ Taagepera 1998, 71-72

³⁴⁹ Taagepera 1998, 73

³⁵⁰ Taagepera 1998, 86-87

³⁵¹ Birch 2005, 286

³⁵² Birch 2005, 286

come to view the opposition parties that formed under prior regimes as just as “inefficient and corrupt as the ruling elite.”³⁵³ When people do not like their political representation, it becomes even more difficult to establish those crucial linkages between voters and political parties that create a connection between the people and their government.³⁵⁴

One exception to this common phenomenon of weak and inefficient political parties in MENA is the Islamist parties. Owing to their social and religious involvement within their respective communities, Islamist parties have strong ties to their political base—and they are very capable of mobilizing that base to vote at crucial moments.³⁵⁵ Islamist parties can also promote the vital linkage between the people and their new government during the early stages of democratization. In addition, many Islamist parties have a highly elaborate internal organizational structure, which can either help or hinder their capacity depending on how deeply fractured their internal leadership factions are.³⁵⁶ During Tunisia’s transition period, *Ennahda* was by far one of the most stable and most democratic political parties.³⁵⁷ Likewise, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was extremely popular and had both the organizational capacity and community ties to mobilize massive swaths of the population during the elections. However, the disproportionate strength of these Islamists parties compared to their secular counterparts is yet another reason why mistrust exists between them. Secular parties, especially in the Egyptian case, were deeply concerned about the effect that an Islamist electoral majority might have on the future of the country.³⁵⁸

Islamists and Secularists

³⁵³ Haugbølle and Cavatorta 2011, 340

³⁵⁴ Pridham 1990, 104

³⁵⁵ Hamid 2011, 74-75

³⁵⁶ See Chapter 3 for further discussion regarding party factions and structure.

³⁵⁷ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15

³⁵⁸ Masoud 2011, 27

Building political trust between secular, liberal, and Islamist political parties in MENA is absolutely vital to the prospects of democratic transition and consolidation in the region.³⁵⁹ The capacity of parties to build trust and cross-ideological alliances is quite literally at the core of establishing the type of political society that Stepan and Linz(2013) identified as the reason for Tunisia’s success. Islamist parties, especially larger ones like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and *Ennahda* in Tunisia, have the necessary organizational capacity and socio-religious ties to generate true voter-party linkages in the early phase of democratic transition and consolidation.³⁶⁰ They also have the potential to be the most stable political partners during volatile periods, which can provide weaker and newer parties time to orient themselves to their new political environment and develop coherent strategies and voter bases. As the linkages between secular and Islamist parties, between parties and voters, and between parties and other civil society and state actors (e.g. other branches of government, the military, and unions) flourish, so does the likelihood that a transition will lead to democratic consolidation.³⁶¹

Unfortunately, building political trust between Islamist and non-Islamist parties has been an insurmountable endeavor in the MENA region owing to a history of violence and betrayal. The 1979 Iranian Revolution is now infamous for how the alliance between secularists and Islamists to overthrow an authoritarian regime ultimately led to the installation of a repressive theocratic state instead. There is also the Algerian experience of the 1990s, when the military and secular groups realized that an Islamist party, *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS), was going to win a majority in parliament.³⁶² Panic over the thought that an Islamist party elected during the country’s first democratic elections might not only win but could also implement *Shari’a* law,

³⁵⁹ Hamid 2011, 68

³⁶⁰ Hamid 2011, 74-75

³⁶¹ Pridham 1990, 103-106; Somer 2007, 1280

³⁶² Hamid 2011, 69

prompted a military coup leading to the decade-long Algerian civil war.³⁶³ These events, combined with sharp rhetoric from Islamist parties throughout MENA calling for *Shari'a* and a return to fundamentalist values in the 1980s and 1990s, made secular actors deeply suspicious of any Islamist claims of supporting democracy, even decades later. For Islamists, the mistrust is mutual, especially after being shut out of elections over and over again by secular actors in places like Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt.

The challenge, then, is taking the basic components of political society—the electoral rules and systems, political parties, leaders, and legislatures—and crafting a deeper form of political society which fosters interparty trust and alliances. Stepan and Linz (2013) argue that the deeper form of political society already existed in Tunisia prior to the start of the transition in 2011. As was already noted, however, even some of *Ennahda's* former political allies from Europe turned against them during the transitional period and questioned *Ennahda's* commitment to democracy.³⁶⁴ It is far more likely that the political society exemplified by Tunisia actually developed during the transition itself, the result of a well-chosen electoral system and carefully crafted electoral rules designed to foster coalition governance. Of even greater importance is the matter of who controlled the interim government and designed the electoral system and rules. In the Tunisian case, the interim government was controlled by a committee that had a vested interest in democratization; in Egypt, the interim government was controlled by the military which had a vested interest in the status quo. The role of each country's interim government, electoral system, and electoral rules on their respective transitions will be explored in the rest of this chapter.

³⁶³ Hamid 2011, 69; Ryan 2010

³⁶⁴ Wolf 2017, 133

Tunisia Analysis

Civilian Interim Government (2011)

Despite several years of civil unrest that preceded the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, the swift toppling of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's regime by January 14, 2011, was unexpected and led to a scramble amongst various actors to seize control of the government.³⁶⁵ Ben Ali attempted to pacify protestors on January 13, 2011 by offering a concession speech and promising democratic elections in the future.³⁶⁶ When it became apparent to Ben Ali that the protestors were not going to accept his offer, and that the military would not come to his aid, he fled to Saudi Arabia.³⁶⁷ On January 14, 2011, Ben Ali's party, the *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique* (RCD), the Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi, and the head of parliament, Foued Mebazaa, usurped control of the interim government under Article 57 of the Tunisian Constitution.³⁶⁸ Prime Minister Ghannouchi created the Political Reform Commission in January and promised that elections for a new president would be held within two months in accordance with the Tunisian Constitution.³⁶⁹

As Tunisian protestors continued to rally against the RCD's control of the interim government, political parties and opposition leaders began to organize against the interim government as well, calling it a "masquerade."³⁷⁰ On January 30, 2011, the leader of *Ennahda*, Rachid Ghannouchi, returned to Tunisia for the first time in over twenty years and called for all members of the RCD to step down from the transition government and for a coalition government to be created in its stead.³⁷¹ Clashes between civilians and police increased, and on

³⁶⁵ Wolf 2017, 116, 129-130

³⁶⁶ "National Constituent" 2012, 14

³⁶⁷ Bellin 2013, 2; "Tunisia's Interim Government Holds First Meeting" 2011

³⁶⁸ "National Constituent" 2012, 14; "Tunisia's Interim Government Holds First Meeting" 2011

³⁶⁹ "National Constituent" 2012, 14; "Tunisia's Interim Government Holds First Meeting" 2011

³⁷⁰ Bellin 2013, 4; "Tunisia Leaders Resign" 2011

³⁷¹ "Tunisian Islamist Leader" 2011

February 11, 2011, twenty-eight organizations, including oppositions political parties and unions, created the Council for the Protection of the Revolution (CSR) to demand that the old regime and its institutions be dissolved completely.³⁷² The RCD attempted to reshuffle the Ben Achour Commission and interim government several times as a way to hold onto power, but when the CSR organized a second protest on February 21, 2011 with more than 100,000 protestors, and the military still refused to protect the regime, the RCD finally accepted defeat.³⁷³

The battle for control of the interim government ended on February 27, 2011, with the resignation all members of Ben Ali's ruling party and the installation of retired politician Beji Caid Essebsi as the interim prime minister.³⁷⁴ Shortly after the new interim government took over, the constitution was suspended and the CSR took control of the Political Reform Commission that had been established under former Prime Minister Ghannouchi and renamed it "The High Authority for the Realization of the Objectives of the Revolution."³⁷⁵ The "High Authority," which would later come to be called the "Ben Achour Commission" after its chairman, attorney Yadh Ben Achour, was tasked with the role of preparing the new electoral system and rules for the election of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA)—the legislative body that would draft Tunisia's new constitution.³⁷⁶ The Ben Achour Commission was composed of 155 representatives, including youth and regional representatives, a dozen legal scholars, and three members from each of Tunisia's political parties.³⁷⁷ In order to insulate the NCA from tampering by former regime members, the Ben Achour Commission made former

³⁷² "National Constituent" 2012, 14

³⁷³ "National Constituent" 2012, 15

³⁷⁴ "National Constituent" 2012, 15

³⁷⁵ "National Constituent" 2012, 15-16

³⁷⁶ "National Constituent" 2012, 16; Stepan 2012, 92

³⁷⁷ "National Constituent" 2012, 16; Pickard 2014, 260

members of the RCD and government officials under Ben Ali ineligible to compete in the NCA elections.³⁷⁸

The Electoral Rules and Results

Aside from keeping potential spoilers out of the interim government and establishing an independent organization to oversee the upcoming elections, the Ben Achour Commission's top priority was to draft electoral rules that would help correct the representation inequalities that had occurred under Ben Ali's regime.³⁷⁹ In order to prevent any one political party from capturing a majority, and to encourage the formation of governing coalitions, the Ben Achour Commission chose a closed-list proportional representation system.³⁸⁰ Stepan (2012) notes that under a "first-past-the-post" single-member district electoral system, *Ennahda* most likely would have won 90 percent of the available seats.³⁸¹ To increase youth and female representation in politics, the new electoral rules also required that at least one candidate on each party's list be under the age of 30 and implemented a "zipper" system for alternating male and female candidates.³⁸² In addition, because Tunisia's more rural governorates were underrepresented by the current district size, the Ben Achour Commission made the decision to increase the district magnitude so that each governorate would have no fewer than 4 representatives.³⁸³ The largest governorates were also subdivided to ensure that no district had more than 10 representatives.³⁸⁴ One of the most important decisions made by the Ben Achour Commission was what type of seat allocation formula to use for the elections. There would be no national threshold set, instead, seats would be divvied up using the Hare Quota system in conjunction with the Largest

³⁷⁸ "National Constituent" 2012, 18

³⁷⁹ "National Constituent" 2012, 16, 22

³⁸⁰ Stepan 2012, 93

³⁸¹ Stepan 2012, 93

³⁸² "National Constituent" 2012, 20; Szmolka 2015, 84

³⁸³ Carey and Reynolds 2011, 40

³⁸⁴ "National Constituent" 2012, 22

Remainder to allocate any leftover seats.³⁸⁵ The fortuitousness of this decision would not be fully realized until after the October 2011 elections were over.

Multiple scholars, including Bellin (2013), Carey (2013), and Pickard (2014), have wondered whether the decision to use the Hare Quota and Largest Remainder was deliberate based on the potential impact of other formulas, or whether it was simply a lucky choice. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be a clear answer. Even Stepan (2012), who interviewed Chairman Ben Achour in November 2011, was silent on how the decision about seat allocation was reached. Given that the rest of the electoral system was “the product of clever institutional engineering,” it is not outside the realm of possibility that the allocation formula was clever engineering too.³⁸⁶ The system was designed to discourage one party from winning a majority, and since *Ennahda* enjoyed wider popularity than its secular and liberal counterparts did, it seems even more likely that the Hare Quota was chosen intentionally to prevent an Islamist majority.³⁸⁷ Regardless of whether Hare was selected by choice or chance, the impact was significant. Carey (2013) and Pickard (2014) both discuss how different the October 2011 election could have been under alternative allocation formulas. Under the Hare Quota *Ennahda* won 41 percent of the vote and 89 of the 217 seats, Congress for the Republic (CPR) was a distant second with 13.4 percent of the vote and 29 seats, Popular Petition was third with 12 percent of the vote and 26 seats, and *Ettakatol* was fourth with 9.2 percent of the vote and 20 seats.³⁸⁸ Had the d’Hondt Divisor method been used instead, *Ennahda* would have been awarded 150 of the 217 seats.³⁸⁹ Even

³⁸⁵ Carey 2013, 1; Pickard 2014, 262

³⁸⁶ Bellin 2013, 4

³⁸⁷ Stepan (2012) notes that journalists and secular leaders in Tunisia were “extremely frightened” by the idea that free-elections might bring Islamists to power (95). In addition, the Carter Center noted during the elections in 2011 that *Ennahda* was by far the most visible and organized party, with easily accessible campaign offices throughout Tunisia and frequent public meetings (“National Constituent” 2012, 36-37).

³⁸⁸ “National Constituent” 2012, 54

³⁸⁹ Carey 2013, 14; Pickard 2014, 262

under the Droop Quota and St. Lague Divisor formulas, *Ennahda* would have captured 97 and 119 seats, respectively, while the parties that came in second, third, and fourth would have seen minimal changes to their seat allocation.³⁹⁰ Designing an electoral system that prevented *Ennahda*, the party that secular and liberal actors feared the most, from being able to obtain a majority of NCA seats except in the most extraordinary of circumstances, was a crucial factor in deepening political society in Tunisia. Whether or not such a safeguard was necessary given *Ennahda*'s promise to rule with a coalition even if it won a majority is impossible to know, but the electoral rules manufactured an environment in which cooperation was necessary even if political trust was weak.

With the first elections a success and power transferred peacefully from the interim government to the National Constituent Assembly, the transition was over, and the consolidation process had begun. According to Linz and Stepan (1996), a democratic transition can be considered complete when four issues have been resolved:

[W]hen sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government *de facto* has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies *de jure*.³⁹¹

Applying the above framework to Tunisia, Stepan (2012) declared that the democratic transition was successfully completed on December 23, 2011, with the swearing in of the new National Constituent Assembly members.³⁹² We may never know what action the interim government would have taken had it been left in the hands of the RCD and former regime members, but it is unlikely that the result would have been free and fair elections and a real democratic transition.

³⁹⁰ Carey 2013, 14

³⁹¹ Linz and Stepan 1996, 71

³⁹² Stepan 2012, 90

Tunisian civil society and opposition parties successfully seized the opportunity to change the composition of the interim government in their favor. The electoral rules prepared by that Ben Achour Commission ensured that the incoming members of the National Constituent Assembly would represent the full spectrum of Tunisian interests and propel the country towards democratic consolidation.

Tunisia: Caretaker Government (2011-2013)

The next matter of consequence is determining exactly when Tunisia's political society expanded beyond the basic components into the realm of deepened political trust. Stepan (2012) argues that Tunisia was already on this path prior to the transition because opposition leaders had reached agreements about the interim government and NCA elections.³⁹³ However, based on Stepan's prediction that the NCA would draft a new constitution and hold new elections within only twelve to fifteen months, it seems he overestimated the capacity of political society at that point in time.³⁹⁴ Instead of twelve to fifteen months, it took the NCA just over twenty-four extremely contentious and volatile months to finalize the constitution, and another thirty-six months to hold new elections.³⁹⁵ While the transition was successful, it was far from harmonious, and it was not until after the new elections were held in 2014 that political trust truly began to emerge. What looked like autonomous political society was actually an artifact of the carefully designed electoral system, and the political elite's commitment to seeing democracy thrive in Tunisia even though they did not trust each other.

When *Ennahda* took its place as the plurality party within the NCA, it had no choice but to find coalition partners in order to build a majority. However, with 89 seats out of the 109

³⁹³ Stepan 2012, 94

³⁹⁴ Stepan 2012, 94

³⁹⁵ Wolf 2017, 156-158

needed for a simple parliamentary majority, *Ennahda* realistically only needed to forge an alliance with one of the other major parties. Instead, *Ennahda* expanded its coalition to include both CPR and *Ettakatol*, creating a “troika” unity government that controlled 64 percent of parliament.³⁹⁶ No doubt this strategic decision was informed by both *Ennahda*’s commitment to rule in a coalition and by its desire to protect itself from the secular suspicion of Islamists.³⁹⁷ It should also be noted that *Ennahda* extended the invitation to join the coalition to all parties in the NCA, but CPR and *Ettakatol* were the only ones willing to work with the Islamists—every other party refused.³⁹⁸ Shortly after the troika was formed, it appointed Moncef Marzouki, the leader of CPR, to be President of the Republic and Hamadi Jebali, the general secretary of *Ennahda*, to be Prime Minister.³⁹⁹ On the surface, this secular-Islamist troika seemed to demonstrate political trust. In reality, relations were far from amicable and *Ennahda* was accused of acting as if “the other troika members would just be decorations...without considering them as partners.”⁴⁰⁰ While *Ennahda* did not adopt any blatantly authoritarian behavior, tensions between the prime minister, president, and parliament escalated against a backdrop of two political assassinations, terrorist attacks, and rising unemployment in Tunisia making political negotiations significantly more protracted.⁴⁰¹ The result was a two-year process to draft the constitution and a near collapse of the caretaker government in late 2013.

Although the troika was far from perfect, it did serve two very important functions. First, it ensured that secular-Islamist cooperation did not breakdown entirely during the debate over the constitution, especially when religious matters were on the table. Second, the troika provided

³⁹⁶ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 4

³⁹⁷ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 19; Heneghan 2011

³⁹⁸ Ghafar and Hess, 2018, 19; Wolf 2017, 134

³⁹⁹ Szmolka 2015, 81

⁴⁰⁰ Ghafar and Hess 2018, 19-20

⁴⁰¹ Marks 2015, 8; Wolf 2017, 149-153

Ennahda with a way to push back against more radical requests from its members. Both of these functions served to simulate political trust during a time when the political actors were still unsure of each other's goals. One of the biggest fears secular Tunisians had after the revolution was that *Ennahda* would attempt to recreate the Iranian theocracy and implement sharia's law.⁴⁰² Although Rachid Ghannouchi and *Ennahda* had already pledged not to pursue *Shari'a* law or to repeal Tunisia's progressive personal status code back in 2003, a pledge that Ghannouchi reiterated in 2011 and 2012, the fear was still justified.⁴⁰³ While Ghannouchi and the rest of *Ennahda*'s pragmatic faction were dedicated to keeping *Shari'a* out of the constitution, others within the party, like Habib Ellouze, as well as a portion of Tunisian society wanted *Shari'a* included.⁴⁰⁴ This disagreement within both *Ennahda* and Tunisian society as whole resulted in a revival of the *Shari'a* debate during the constitution drafting process.⁴⁰⁵ Had *Ennahda* held a majority position in parliament, the party may have had a more difficult time mollifying the demands for *Shari'a* from its conservative members and voter base. Instead, the need for *Ennahda* to operate within a coalition government meant that the party's pragmatic leadership could temporarily indulge the demands for *Shari'a* from its conservative faction knowing that such a demand would never be agreed to by its secular counterparts in the troika. The debate was settled in April 2012 when the troika members agreed to include Islam in the constitution as the country's official religion while leaving out any reference to it as the basis for legislation or political institutions.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰² Heneghan 2011

⁴⁰³ Stepan 2012, 95

⁴⁰⁴ Ellouze 2017; Grewal 2019, 1

⁴⁰⁵ Bellin 2013, 5

⁴⁰⁶ Bellin 2013, 5; Szmolka 2015, 87

Unfortunately, secular-Islamist tensions were stoked again later in 2012 when a museum in La Marsa exhibited artwork that many Salafis in Tunisia argued was blasphemous, with a few religious leaders even arguing the artists should be killed as punishment.⁴⁰⁷ Within the troika this sparked a debate over whether or not a blasphemy law could reasonably be included in the constitution to appease conservative demands for one. The secular parties were staunchly against the proposition, as were secular Tunisian citizens, and after a period of entertaining its conservative base, *Ennahda* eventually removed all language referring to blasphemy from the draft of the constitution.⁴⁰⁸ Once again, *Ennahda*'s position within the coalition government gave it an excuse to turn down requests for religious laws that its more pragmatic leaders like Hamadi Jebali and Rachid Ghannouchi knew were not appropriate in a democracy.⁴⁰⁹

Religious laws aside, the most important constitutional matter that the troika decided was what type of government to bestow upon Tunisia. From the beginning, *Ennahda* advocated for a parliamentary system only, arguing that it would continue to promote coalition governments and consensual politics.⁴¹⁰ Of course, given *Ennahda*'s popularity and wide voter base, a parliamentary system would also give it a political advantage in future elections.⁴¹¹ The secular parties, even those outside of the troika, preferred a presidential system because they believed a direct-election would yield a secular president instead of an Islamist one.⁴¹² That the parties were debating systems they believed would disadvantage their opponents is further evidence that they did not really trust one another yet. Fortunately, being in a coalition forced them to reach a compromise anyway. After nearly a year of debate, the troika produced a mixed system of

⁴⁰⁷ Wolf 2017, 142-143

⁴⁰⁸ Bellin 2013, 5; Ghafar and Hess 2018, 15

⁴⁰⁹ For a more in-depth discussion of *Ennahda*'s strategy for handling its more radical members and how the pragmatic faction was able to dominate the radical wing during the 2011-2014 period, please see Chapter 3.

⁴¹⁰ Pickard 2014, 261; Szmolka 2015, 87

⁴¹¹ Bellin 2013, 5

⁴¹² Bellin 2013, 5; Pickard 2014, 261

government which included a directly elected president as well as a parliament and prime minister.⁴¹³ Under the compromise, the president was given foreign policy and national security powers as well as the ability to challenge or reject laws passed by parliament.⁴¹⁴ However, in order to prevent power from being fully vested in the executive branch, an option that was understandably distasteful to those subjected to Ben Ali's authoritarian rule, the unicameral "Assembly of the Representatives of the People" was given the authority to compel the president to testify, to override a presidential veto, and to exercise oversight of the budget.⁴¹⁵ Another interesting feature was also adopted in the constitution. The leadership position for the Assembly finance committee was reserved for members of an opposition party only.⁴¹⁶ While none of the parties got exactly what they wanted in the new government system, they did design a system with two important features: it prevents "single-party domination of the political sphere" and "an unconstrained executive."⁴¹⁷

There were arguably two conditions that gave the troika legitimacy: it was part of a democratically elected parliament and it included a secular counterbalance to Islamist power. By the middle of 2013, neither condition mattered. During the months of grueling negotiations over the constitution's language, the state security issue had been devolving rapidly in the background leading to a political trust crisis. In September 2012, a group of one thousand armed Salafis occupied the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, prompting sharp criticism of *Ennahda*'s soft handling of Salafis.⁴¹⁸ It was true that senior leadership within *Ennahda*, especially Ghannouchi, had tried to court the Salafi groups in an attempt to give them a political voice and prevent them from

⁴¹³ Bellin 2013, 5

⁴¹⁴ Pickard 2014, 261

⁴¹⁵ Pickard 2014, 261

⁴¹⁶ Pickard 2014, 261

⁴¹⁷ Pickard 2014, 261

⁴¹⁸ Stepan and Linz 2013, 25

radicalizing.⁴¹⁹ Unfortunately, the Salafis were not interested in being included in a political system they felt was incompatible with their interpretation of Islam which called for an Islamic caliphate.⁴²⁰ Capitalizing on the disorder, Beji Caid Essebsi and his new Nidaa Tounes party demanded that the troika government resign for failing to produce a finished constitution within the agreed upon timeframe of twelve months.⁴²¹ The troika ignored this request and continued working. However, on February 6, 2013, the assassination of Chokri Belaid, an opposition member of the NCA, led Prime Minister Jebali of *Ennahda* to call for the troika to resign voluntarily and hand the government over to independent technocrats to finish the constitution.⁴²² Jebali's fellow party members refused to step down, so Jebali resigned and was promptly replaced with another senior leader from *Ennahda*, Ali Larayedh.⁴²³ Prime Minister Larayedh immediately designated *Ansar al-Shari'a*, the political group believed to be behind the assassination, a terrorist organization and *Ennahda* members resigned from the Defense, Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Interior cabinet posts shortly after to ease secular suspicions that they were protecting the Salafis.⁴²⁴ However, *Ennahda*'s failure to handle the Salafi problem sooner led to severe polarization against Islamists.⁴²⁵ While secularists had never fully trusted *Ennahda*, the events of late 2012 and early 2013 served to reinforce their suspicions of the party.

In July 2013, Tunisians watched as President Mursi and the Muslim Brotherhood were overthrown by a military coup in Egypt. The coup amplified calls from Tunisian protestors for the troika government to step down. Then, on July 25, 2013, a second member of the NCA was

⁴¹⁹ Marks 2015, 6

⁴²⁰ Wolf 2017, 143-147

⁴²¹ Stepan and Linz 2013, 25

⁴²² Marks 2015, 8; Wolf 2017, 152

⁴²³ Wolf 2017, 152

⁴²⁴ Stepan and Linz 2013, 25-26

⁴²⁵ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 5

assassinated outside of his home.⁴²⁶ The next day, *Ennahda*'s troika partner *Ettakatol*, along with civil society organizations and the UGTT, demanded that the NCA be dissolved immediately, triggering the resignation of 25 percent of the NCA members who no longer supported its legitimacy.⁴²⁷ *Ennahda*'s Ghannouchi realized that in order to preserve democracy in Tunisia, drastic measures would have to be taken to generate some minimum level of political trust.⁴²⁸ In September 2013, a year after the first political assassination shook Tunisian society, *Ennahda* entered into negotiations with secular opposition parties, civil society organizations, and trade unions to discuss the future of the constitution and the NCA.⁴²⁹ With civil society organizations supervising the negotiations, as they had done during the transfer of power from the RCD to the Ben Achour Commission in first months of the revolution, secularists and Islamists were forced to put aside their feelings about each other and work within an even larger non-governmental coalition. This coalition produced the final draft of the constitution and a new NCA cabinet which would govern parliament and create an independent election commission to draft the rules for the new parliament and presidential elections in 2014.⁴³⁰ In exchange, Prime Minister Larayedh, *Ennahda*, and the rest of the troika agreed to step down from the government as soon as the constitution was signed into law.⁴³¹ On January 26, 2014, the NCA overwhelmingly approved "the Constitution of the Second Republic," and on the following day, *Ennahda* surrendered the government in order to save Tunisian democracy.⁴³²

Tunisia Conclusion

⁴²⁶ "Tunisian Politician Mohamed Brahmi Assassinated" 2013

⁴²⁷ Wolf 2017, 154-156

⁴²⁸ Ghannouchi 2016, 63

⁴²⁹ Pickard 2014, 260

⁴³⁰ Meddeb 2019, 7-8

⁴³¹ Meddeb 2019, 7-8

⁴³² Meddeb 2019, 7; Szmolka 2015, 87

Stepan and Linz (2013) credit political society, specifically the political leaders' ability to "overcome their mutual fear and craft the 'rules of the game,' for Tunisia's success.⁴³³ However, the intense secular-Islamist polarization in 2012 and 2013, as well as the breakdown of the troika at the end of 2013, demonstrate that the groups never really overcame their fear of each other. It was not political trust which propelled Tunisia's transition and early consolidation forward. Rather, it was the understanding of Tunisia's political elite, including crucial leaders like Rachid Ghannouchi, Moncef Marzouki, and Beji Caid Essebsi, that if they could not trust each other, then an institutional framework needed to be in place that would compel them to work together. The electoral rules for the NCA created the initial framework for a coalition government, which *Ennahda* expanded into a unity government to bolster its legitimacy. When conditions caused a breakdown of the troika in the middle of 2013, the political elite, with the help of civil society, created another framework to re-establish coalition governance. This dedication to compel political cooperation further demonstrates just how important it is that the actors who control the interim government be invested in the country's democratic future. Political society did not lead Tunisia's political elite to overcome their fear and craft new rules together. Quite the opposite. The initial rules crafted by the elite were meant to simulate political society, specifically secular-Islamist alliances, until real political trust could be established.

Secular-Islamist polarization still characterized Tunisian society in 2014, demonstrating a need for the continued use of electoral rules that would promote coalition governance. After the troika stepped down, the independent government adopted electoral rules for the 2014 parliamentary elections that were very similar to those used in 2011, including closed-list proportional representation, no minimum threshold, and a seat allocation formula based on the

⁴³³ Stepan 2012, 23

largest remainder method⁴³⁴.⁴³⁵ During the 2014 election campaign season, Beji Caid Essebsi and his Nidaa Tounes party ran a “staunchly anti-*Ennahda* platform” that emphasized state secularism.⁴³⁶ Essebsi became the first democratically elected president of Tunisia and his party captured 86 seats in the Assembly.⁴³⁷ *Ennahda* won 69 seats and was followed distantly by the Free Patriotic Union with 16 seats, the Popular Front with 15 seats, and Afek Tounes with 8 seats.⁴³⁸ Nidaa Tounes proceeded to form a new coalition government with its secular allies Afek Tounes and the Free Patriotic Union, giving the coalition a 110-seat simple majority.⁴³⁹ Then, Essebsi shocked the country by requiring that his party add *Ennahda* to the coalition to form a new unity government.⁴⁴⁰ Both Essebsi and Ghannouchi, as core members of Tunisia’s political elite, understood that until the secular-Islamist trust gap was eliminated, democracy would continue to be on fragile ground.⁴⁴¹ The secular-Islamist partnership between Beji Caid Essebsi and Rachid Ghannouchi would continue until Essebsi’s death in 2019.

Since 2019, Tunisia has held its second round of post-transition parliamentary and presidential elections. However, its political society has not quite yet reached the point of being fully “autonomous, democratic, and effective” as there still exists some mistrust between Islamist and secularists—although, arguably not nearly as much mistrust as at the height of the crisis in 2013.⁴⁴² Grewal and Hamid (2020) note in their recent analysis of coalition politics in Tunisia that parties seem to be clinging to the consensus model now out of fear that opposition parties

⁴³⁴ The new law was silent on whether a quota would also be used with the LR method.

⁴³⁵ “Legislative and Presidential Elections” 2014, 24-25

⁴³⁶ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 5

⁴³⁷ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 5

⁴³⁸ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 6

⁴³⁹ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 5

⁴⁴⁰ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 5

⁴⁴¹ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 6

⁴⁴² Stepan 2012, 94

will be left out decision-making entirely.⁴⁴³ The problem with continuing to use consensus for all decisions is that the parties have been unable to reach agreements on desperately needed economic and security sector reforms.⁴⁴⁴ According to Grewal and Hamid (2020), fixing this issue will require Tunisia's political parties to stop leaning on consensus as a political crutch and start embracing democratic competition.⁴⁴⁵ The electoral rules used in 2011 and enshrined in the 2014 constitution as well as the dedication to secular-Islamist coalitions were meant to simulate political trust while Tunisia completed its transition and consolidation. However, as Tunisia enters its ninth year as a democracy, it may be time for the parties to take a leap a faith and finally embrace real political trust.

Egypt Analysis

Military Interim Government

The conditions in Egypt leading up to the protests in early 2011 were not much different than the ones which set off the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia. Egyptians had spent decades living under authoritarian rule during which time they were subjected human rights abuses, poor economic conditions, crumbling infrastructure, rigged elections, and rampant corruption at all levels of society.⁴⁴⁶ However, the conditions under which the interim government took control after President Hosni Mubarak stepped down created a domino effect that precipitated the failure of Egypt's democratic transition. The events discussed here further highlight the important roles that the interim government and the initial electoral rules play in securing or aborting a transition.

⁴⁴³ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 2

⁴⁴⁴ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 2

⁴⁴⁵ Grewal and Hamid 2020, 2

⁴⁴⁶ Masoud 2011, 20; Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 158-159; "Final Report of the Carter Center Mission to Witness the 2011–2012 Parliamentary Elections in Egypt" 2012, 6-8

Since the early 2000s, an aging President Hosni Mubarak started to distance himself from the Egyptian military while vesting additional power in the ruling party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), as a way to secure a transfer of power to his son Gamal Mubarak.⁴⁴⁷ This was not only unpopular within the military, but also with the Egyptian population at large.⁴⁴⁸ It is easy to understand why Egyptians were unhappy with the prospect of yet another Mubarak dictator taking control of their country. However, for the military, the prospect of the executive branch passing to a civilian banker rather than another military official was an unacceptable threat to their economic interests⁴⁴⁹ and survival.⁴⁵⁰ There is some irony in the fact that Mubarak's defensive posturing, meant to secure his familial power and legacy, actually contributed to his downfall during the Arab Spring.

When protests erupted on January 25, 2011, Mubarak ordered his security forces to crackdown on the protestors, but instead of quashing the unrest, Mubarak's order only inflamed it.⁴⁵¹ Within three days the security forces were overwhelmed, and Mubarak was forced to request support from the military which saw a unique opportunity to rid itself of both Hosni and Gamal.⁴⁵² The military arrived in Cairo and made the strategic decision to not fire on protestors, instead confining itself to "maintaining the public order" and ingratiating itself with the Egyptian protestors.⁴⁵³ As Mietzner (2014) notes, "[i]n the eyes of many ordinary Egyptians...the military's heroic image was ultimately confirmed by the fact that it did not participate in the

⁴⁴⁷ Masoud 2011, 20-24; Shehata 2011, 29

⁴⁴⁸ Masoud 2011, 20-24; Shehata 2011, 29

⁴⁴⁹ The Egyptian military's "economic portfolio" includes land holdings, service-sector enterprises, and manufacturing facilities which produce everything "from foodstuffs to petrochemicals to kitchen supplies" (Masoud 2011, 25). Although their exact net worth is impossible to determine, some estimates place the military's share of the Egyptian economy at up to 40 percent (Masoud 2011, 25). In addition, the military's budget is considered to be a "state secret" that is not subject to oversight by the legislative branch (Masoud 2011, 25).

⁴⁵⁰ Masoud 2011, 20-24

⁴⁵¹ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 163

⁴⁵² "Final Report" 2012, 7; Masoud 2011, 20-24; Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 164

⁴⁵³ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 164

crackdowns on Tahrir Square in early 2011.”⁴⁵⁴ Incensed by the military’s refusal to crush the uprising, Mubarak allegedly called a meeting with the commanders of the Egyptian armed forces and demanded that they “respond with force.”⁴⁵⁵ Mubarak’s order was denied, and on January 31, 2011, a spokesperson for the Egyptian military publicly declared “that the army supported the ‘legitimate demands’ of the people and would not use force against them.”⁴⁵⁶ In the following days, Mubarak’s regime, including the security forces and the NDP, swiftly collapsed as it no longer possessed any means of coercion.⁴⁵⁷ On February 10, 2011, Mubarak gave his last address as ruler before resigning the next day.⁴⁵⁸

It took protestors just over two weeks to topple Mubarak’s regime. Unfortunately, it took the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) only three days to seize control of the interim government. With Mubarak gone, crucial leaders of the protest movements “demanded the creation of transitional presidential council made up of four civilians and only one member of the military,” to head the interim government and prepare the country for either new elections or a new constitution.⁴⁵⁹ The military refused to comply with the demand. On February 13, 2011, SCAF suspended the Egyptian constitution, dissolved the legislature, and seized full control of the country’s democratic transition.⁴⁶⁰ The suspension of the constitution was seen as a necessary measure to prevent the Speaker of the People’s Assembly (an NDP member) from assuming control of the executive branch.⁴⁶¹ However, the suspension also allowed the military to assume control of the government, an action that was not permitted under the existing constitution.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁴ Mietzner 2014, 439

⁴⁵⁵ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 164

⁴⁵⁶ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 164

⁴⁵⁷ Masoud 2011, 23

⁴⁵⁸ Rosefsky 2013, 16

⁴⁵⁹ Mietzner 2014, 440

⁴⁶⁰ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 166

⁴⁶¹ Masoud 2011, 27

⁴⁶² Masoud 2011, 27

Just like its actions in Cairo, the military once again capitalized on what seemed like benign actions in support of the protestors when in reality it was positioning itself to shape the outcome of the transitional period. Unlike their Tunisian counterparts who continued to demand that all former members of the regime step down until the interim government was composed of individuals who could be trusted with preparing elections, the Egyptian people accepted the SCAF's interim rule. This acquiescence to military rule was partially informed by the fact that many civil society actors and secular politicians trusted the military more than they trusted the Islamists, including the Muslim Brother.⁴⁶³ Unfortunately, it was a decision that severely impaired the rest of the transition.

SCAF: February – October 2011

Whether or not SCAF intended to sow mistrust and discontent among political actors, especially between secular and Islamist parties, is unclear, but it was mostly certain a consequence of their actions while heading the interim government. With its position relatively secure, SCAF's next priority was to allay fears that they intended to rule indefinitely. On February 15, 2011, SCAF created a committee to amend the existing constitution and selected the appointees itself.⁴⁶⁴ While all eight members of the committee were constitutional law scholars, at least three of them had explicit ties to the Muslim Brotherhood—a fact which did not go unnoticed by every other political party that had been left out of the process.⁴⁶⁵ In addition to appointing Muslim Brotherhood members to the constitutional committee, SCAF also selected a Muslim Brotherhood leader to head the transitional government, giving the Brotherhood a powerful public position even before elections were held.⁴⁶⁶ This was unnerving for many

⁴⁶³ Masoud 2011, 27; Mietzner 2014, 441

⁴⁶⁴ Masoud 2011, 27

⁴⁶⁵ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 170

⁴⁶⁶ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 170

secular liberals in Egypt who had supported SCAF as the safer alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood, whom they viewed as “fundamentally undemocratic,” only to find SCAF inexplicably favoring the Islamists.⁴⁶⁷

The tensions between secularists and Islamists were heightened even more when the constitutional amendments were revealed a few weeks later. Most of the amendments were uncontested, but one in particular was vehemently opposed by secular and liberal groups in the country.⁴⁶⁸ The contested amendment required parliamentary elections to be held within the next six months and gave that legislative body the power to select a 100-member commission to draft the country’s new constitution.⁴⁶⁹ The Muslim Brotherhood and members of the former ruling party spoke out in support of the amendment ahead of the referendum, while most secular and liberal groups were opposed to it.⁴⁷⁰ It is unsurprising that Egypt’s most powerful and well-organized political actors, the Muslim Brotherhood and the NDP, supported an amendment that would give the winning parties control of the country’s constitution. Likewise, many of Egypt’s secular and liberal parties were relatively small and disorganized, as is typical in authoritarian regimes, leading to concerns that they could potentially be shut out of the legislature.⁴⁷¹ In addition, the six month timeframe for holding parliamentary elections left many smaller parties worried that they would not be able to prepare campaigns and establish political support in tie.⁴⁷² Nonetheless, the amendments were passed by referendum on March 19, 2011.⁴⁷³

Had the referendum results been the end of SCAF’s meddling with the transition, perhaps the political parties could have busied themselves with their campaigns and started working through

⁴⁶⁷ Stepan and Linz 2013, 21; Masoud 2011, 27; Mietzner 2014, 441

⁴⁶⁸ Masoud 2011, 27

⁴⁶⁹ Masoud 2011, 27; Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 171

⁴⁷⁰ Masoud 2011, 27; Szmolka 2015, 85

⁴⁷¹ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 171

⁴⁷² Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 171

⁴⁷³ “Final Report” 2012, 117

their trust issues. Unfortunately, the results of the referendum alone were not enough to ensure that SCAF would continue to enjoy political and economic autonomy—for that, they needed to have more control over the outcome of the elections. After the referendum, the constitution was supposed to be re-instated along with the approved amendments.⁴⁷⁴ Instead, SCAF published a “Constitutional Declaration” which included the amendments from the referendum as well as 55 additional articles that had never been put to a vote.⁴⁷⁵ SCAF then went on to release their revised election laws in May which eliminated the 64 seats which had been reserved for women, maintained the worker-farmer quota that had been established in the 1950s, and cut some of the two-member district seats so that one-third of the total parliamentary seats could be contested under a proportional representation (PR) system.⁴⁷⁶ Surprisingly, when SCAF’s draft laws were strongly criticized, they entered into several rounds of negotiations with political parties and some civil society groups to develop a new mixed electoral system for both the People’s Assembly and the Shura Council^{477, 478} However, the electoral rules that SCAF produced for the new parliamentary elections were considered to be among some of the most complicated on record.⁴⁷⁹ According to Mietzner (2014), “[e]ven before the ballots, observers speculated that SCAF had created this highly complex system to make it vulnerable to subsequent legal challenges.”⁴⁸⁰ Without even having to blatantly rig the elections or engage in fraud, SCAF ensured that Egypt’s first democratic elections would be permanently tainted.

Electoral Rules

⁴⁷⁴ Masoud 2011, 27

⁴⁷⁵ Masoud 2011, 28; Szmolka 2015, 85

⁴⁷⁶ Carey and Reynolds 2011, 38

⁴⁷⁷ The People’s Assembly is the lower chamber of Egyptian parliament, while the Shura Council is the upper chamber.

⁴⁷⁸ Carey and Reynolds 2011, 38; “Final Report” 2012, 24-25

⁴⁷⁹ Mietzner 2014, 441

⁴⁸⁰ Mietzner 2014, 441

On November 28, 2011, the first round of SCAF’s extremely complicated parliamentary elections was held. Under the new electoral system, the number of seats in the People’s Assembly was reduced from 518 to 508, and the 64 seats for women were eliminated while the 10 seats reserved for presidential appointments⁴⁸¹ were retained.⁴⁸² Of the 498 remaining seats to be contested in the Assembly, 332 of the seats were divided amongst forty-six proportional representation districts with variable magnitude and the other 166 seats were allocated equally to eighty-three majoritarian districts.⁴⁸³ The PR seats had a 0.5 percent national threshold, used a closed-list system, and were required to abide by the 50 percent farmer-worker quota for their list candidates.⁴⁸⁴ Making things more complicated was the fact that the law was silent on which electoral formula would be used for the allocation of seats, although it did “assert that seats would be allocated on a proportional basis, and that vacant seats would be distributed by the ‘highest remainder’ method.”⁴⁸⁵ The 166 two-member district seats used the absolute majority system, required that at least one of the winners be a worker or farmer, and required voters to cast two votes.⁴⁸⁶ Initially, only independent candidates were allowed to run for the majoritarian seats as parties were represented in the PR seats. However, SCAF made the decision to repeal that portion of the law in October 2011 and instead allowed both independents and party affiliated candidates to run for the seats.⁴⁸⁷ In nearly every one of the 83 majoritarian districts, runoff elections were necessary, which increased the burden on voters.⁴⁸⁸ On top of two separate

⁴⁸¹ Under the previous system, Mubarak typically appointed Coptic Christians to the 10 “presidential appointment” seats. However, SCAF granted itself the right to make its own appointments to those 10 seats once the elections were completed (Carey and Reynolds 2011, 37; “Final Report” 2012, 117).

⁴⁸² Carey and Reynolds 2011, 37; “Final Report” 2012, 24

⁴⁸³ “Final Report” 2012, 24

⁴⁸⁴ “Final Report” 2012, 120

⁴⁸⁵ “Final Report” 2012, 120

⁴⁸⁶ “Final Report” 2012, 120

⁴⁸⁷ “Final Report” 2012, 120

⁴⁸⁸ “Final Report” 2012, 120

election days for the People's Assembly, the seats for the Shura Council were contested in a similar fashion and required two rounds of voting on days that did not overlap with the Assembly elections. For most Egyptians, the⁴⁸⁹ parliamentary elections required a minimum of four separate trips to the voting booth between November 2011 and February 2012.

Like the Assembly, the Shura Council was a mix of majoritarian, PR, and presidential appointment seats. The Council had 60 seats allocated for two-member districts, 120 seats allocated for PR districts with 4 seats in each district, and 90 seats reserved for appointments by the executive branch.⁴⁹⁰ The Shura Council also required that both the majoritarian and PR seats use the 50 percent farmer-worker quota.⁴⁹¹ Run-off elections were required for most of the majoritarian seats, just like they were for the Assembly. In addition, voters were not informed about exactly what role the Shura Council would be playing in the new government, especially with regards to the drafting of the new constitution, making decisions about candidates more uncertain.⁴⁹² The Carter Center, which acted as an observer for Egypt's elections, noted that two of the biggest issues with the parliamentary elections was how complicated the ballots were and how little effort was put into educating voters on how to properly fill out the ballots.⁴⁹³ Another matter was that no coherent system for counting ballots or submitting them for intake at counting centers was put into place prior to the elections, which led to presiding judges making decisions for their respective districts and an overall atmosphere of chaos.⁴⁹⁴ The Carter Center cautiously ruled that "the results of the parliamentary elections appeared to broadly represent the will of Egypt's voters."⁴⁹⁵ While none of the individual pieces of the parliamentary election puzzle was

⁴⁸⁹ "Final Report" 2012, 5

⁴⁹⁰ "Final Report" 2012, 24, 117

⁴⁹¹ "Final Report" 2012, 24-25

⁴⁹² "Final Draft" 2012, 2

⁴⁹³ "Final Report" 2012, 124

⁴⁹⁴ "Final Report" 2012, 122-123

⁴⁹⁵ "Final Report" 2012, 2

problematic on its own, when taken all together the picture was intentionally opaque, chaotic, and suspicious, creating the perfect grounds for dissolving parliament later.

Election Results

After all rounds of the People's Assembly and Shura Council elections were over and the unspecified seat allocation formula has been applied to both the farmer-worker quotas and PR seats in both chambers, the results placed control of parliament solidly in the hands of Islamist parties. The Muslim Brotherhood's political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), won a total of 47 percent of the seats in the People's Assembly and 59 percent of the contested seats⁴⁹⁶ in the Shura Council.⁴⁹⁷ Another 24 percent of the People's Assembly seats, and 25 percent of the contested Shura Council seats, went to the FJP's even more conservative counterpart, the Salafist *Al-Nour* party.⁴⁹⁸ The remaining 29 percent of the People's Assembly seats were spread out among a dozen or so liberal and secular political parties who had essentially no parliamentary weight to counter the Islamist parties.⁴⁹⁹ The FJP and *Al-Nour* dominated the parliamentary committee posts and the selection of the 100-member Constituent Assembly that was to draft the country's new constitution, prompting secular and liberal members to repeatedly boycott proceedings for not being representative of all sectors of Egyptian society.⁵⁰⁰ The Islamists, including the FJP, argued that the Constituent Assembly should reflect the distribution of seats in parliament and not be held "hostage to the dictatorship of the minority," while the secular and liberal parties argued that the Assembly, which was responsible for drafting the constitution for all Egyptians, should reflect "the full range of views and opinions in Egyptian

⁴⁹⁶ Only the 180 contested seats are being considered here as an additional 90 seats were left vacant at the time pending the presidential elections later in 2012. Once a president was elected, they would have the authority to personally appoint individuals to the remaining seats.

⁴⁹⁷ "2012 Egyptian Parliamentary Elections" 2015; "Egypt Majlis Ash-Shura (Shoura Assembly)"

⁴⁹⁸ "2012 Egyptian Parliamentary Elections" 2015; "Egypt Majlis Ash-Shura (Shoura Assembly)"

⁴⁹⁹ "Egypt Majlis Al-Chaab (People's Assembly)"

⁵⁰⁰ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 252-253

society.”⁵⁰¹ This fundamental disagreement along ideological lines resulted in a group of attorneys and political activists filing a lawsuit alleging that the Constituent Assembly should be dissolved immediately for being unrepresentative of the Egyptian people.⁵⁰²

The complete lack of political trust among parties and the absence of cross-ideological coalitions within parliament, two conditions both fostered by SCAF, foreshadowed the transition’s failure. On April 10, 2012, less than a month after the Constituent Assembly was formed, the High Administrative Tribunal invalidated the Assembly on the grounds that Islamists were over-represented among its appointees.⁵⁰³ After negotiations within parliament, a new Constituent Assembly was elected on June 12, 2012, and the number of Then, on June 14, 2012, the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) ruled that the changes made to the electoral laws by SCAF, specifically those allowing party affiliated candidates to run for majoritarian seats, were unconstitutional.⁵⁰⁴ While it is unclear whether SCAF and SCC were actively working together at this point, there is no doubt that both had a vested interest in swaying the outcome of the democratic transition. The SCC was dominated by judges who had been appointed during Mubarak’s reign, and many were unhappy with amendments and proposals that were being discussed in parliament to reform the judiciary.⁵⁰⁵ SCAF, of course, wanted to ensure its economic and political autonomy, and the many last-minute changes and opaque electoral rules that it devised right before the parliamentary elections made it easy for the SCC to invalidate *something* when the new parliament appeared to be overstepping its bounds. Once SCC made its ruling, SCAF assumed control of the government yet again, granting itself full legislative

⁵⁰¹ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 253

⁵⁰² Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 254

⁵⁰³ Szmolka 2015, 85

⁵⁰⁴ “Final Report” 2012, 2

⁵⁰⁵ “2012 Egyptian Parliamentary Elections” 2015; Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 261

authority after locking the doors to the parliamentary building.⁵⁰⁶ Three days later, SCAF issued another Constitutional Declaration and “granted itself a veto over the constitutional process and powers in military affairs” on the grounds that it wanted to protect the constitution drafting process from being hijacked by the Islamist parties.⁵⁰⁷ These events rapidly took place amidst the three rounds of the country’s presidential elections creating panic among many secular politicians who warned that electing a president “in the absence of a constitution and a parliament is the election of a president with powers that not even the most entrenched dictatorships have known’.”⁵⁰⁸

Aftermath and Coup

When popularly elected Muslim Brotherhood member Muhammad Mursi took over the office of president in July after beating SCAF’s candidate, his first order was to override the SCC ruling and SCAF and reinstate the dissolved parliament so that drafting of the constitution could be resumed.⁵⁰⁹ This triggered a series of battles between Mursi and SCAF that would ultimately lead to the military coup in July 2013. On July 9, 2011, the SCC demanded that Mursi annul his decree which led to Mursi convening a “rogue” parliament the very next day.⁵¹⁰ Mursi was forced to back down and instead call for new elections when the SCC threatened him with criminal charges.⁵¹¹ Moving forward, Mursi, perhaps in an attempt to insulate himself, the Shura Council,⁵¹² and what was left of the Constituent Assembly from further legal issues, “developed a mixed strategy of military control, consisting of both sanctioning...and appeasement,” keeping

⁵⁰⁶ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 261

⁵⁰⁷ Rosefsky Wickham 213, 265; Szmolka 2015, 85

⁵⁰⁸ Mohamed ElBaradei qtd. in Hearst and Hussein 2012

⁵⁰⁹ Hearst and Hussein 2012; Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 266-267

⁵¹⁰ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 267

⁵¹¹ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 267

⁵¹² The SCC and SCAF dissolved the People’s Assembly but left the Shura Council untouched (Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 289)

SCAF close, but not too close.⁵¹³ On one hand, Mursi personally fired several senior military commanders, the minister of defense, the army chief of staff, and the field marshal, and reclaimed full executive authority by cancelling SCAF's June 17th declaration in which they granted themselves constitutional veto power.⁵¹⁴ On the other hand, Mursi appointed many military officials to "influential economic posts...from which they [could] work to secure the armed forces' already huge influence over the Egyptian economy," and used the remaining Constituent Assembly and Shura Council to finish the constitution which made several major concessions to SCAF.⁵¹⁵ Some of those concessions including allowing the military to try civilians in military courts for crimes against military members, requiring the defense minister to be a military officer rather than a civilian, and giving the military eight of the fifteen seats on the council in charge of setting the military's budget.⁵¹⁶ According to Rosefsky Wickham (2013), the lack of outrage from SCAF over the firings and annulment of its July Constitutional Declaration suggests Mursi's actions were approved by SCAF in advance. In other words, Mursi's appeasement strategy to protect himself from assault by SCAF appeared to be working. However, Mursi also included *Shari'a* law as the main source of legislation in the country, a detail which lost the FJP any secular or liberal support they might have had left. On December 22, 2012, the new constitution was approved by a referendum in which only 32 percent of voters participated.⁵¹⁷

Mursi and the FJP had successfully kept SCAF at bay, at least temporarily, by giving them what they wanted most—economic clout and autonomy from the legislative and executive

⁵¹³ Mietzner 2014, 441

⁵¹⁴ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 269

⁵¹⁵ Stepan and Linz 2013, 22

⁵¹⁶ Stepan and Linz 2013, 22; Szmolka 2015, 86

⁵¹⁷ Szmolka 2015, 86

branches. However, appeasing SCAF and pushing through *Shari'a* law was deeply unpopular among non-Islamists in the country. The FJP entered a phase at the end of 2012 that can only be described as a death spiral as they desperately attempted to maintain power. Mursi oversaw the passage of laws which restricted nongovernmental associations and free press.⁵¹⁸ His administration also turned a blind eye to increasing violence against women, Coptic Christians, and Shi'a Muslims living in Egypt. The FJP also adopted the stance that since it had the majority position in parliament, it could wield its power without having to make further concessions to minority groups beyond basic protections.⁵¹⁹ As Mursi and the FJP adopted increasingly authoritarian behavior to defend their position, Egyptians took to the streets demanding that Mursi step down from government.⁵²⁰ The FJP had become a wildcard, so the military capitalized on the conflict to bring down the party that it had in some ways helped bring to power. On June 30, 2013, amid protests on Egyptian streets calling for Mursi's resignation, the military gave the president 48-hours to comply with people's request.⁵²¹ Three days later, on July 3, 2013, the military forcibly removed Mursi from office while acting as "an enforcer of the people's will." Like déjà vu, SCAF had rid itself of an executive that was too troublesome to manage and positioned itself to control the interim government once again, all in the name of protecting the Egyptian people.

Egypt Conclusion

It is unlikely that SCAF intended for the democratic transition to fail entirely, as Masoud (2011) notes, the military was less interested in ruling the country than it was in securing its

⁵¹⁸ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 294

⁵¹⁹ Mietzner 2014, 445

⁵²⁰ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 297

⁵²¹ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 289

economic interests and autonomy from all other branches of government.⁵²² However, the steps it took to secure those interests prevented political society from ever forming. Political trust and alliances among Islamists, secularists, and liberals were absolutely crucial if the transition had any chance at succeeding, and SCAF's actions ensured that those relationships never materialized.⁵²³ Early on, SCAF ingratiated itself with Egyptian protestors by siding with them against Mubarak—a selfish act meant to hasten the removal of Hosni Mubarak and his son, Gamal.⁵²⁴ It then quickly established itself as the sole manager of the interim government, over protests of many secular politicians who wanted to see an independent commission elected instead.⁵²⁵ SCAF turned to the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's largest and best organized opposition party, for support by granting their members a more prominent role on the constitutional committee.⁵²⁶ Whether intentionally or unwittingly, the Muslim Brotherhood continued to support SCAF when it issued its first Constitutional Declaration without a referendum. A move which undermined the Brotherhood's commitment to democracy in the eyes of non-Islamist parties.⁵²⁷ Although the new electoral system was the result of negotiations among many actors in Egypt, the electoral rules, election day chaos, and unspecified seat allocation formula and quota system were all designed by SCAF and meant to make the election process so convoluted that it would be easy to legally challenge the results later. After the FJP and *Al-Nour* won a majority of seats in both chambers of parliament, they proceeded to overrepresent themselves in the constitution-drafting Constituent Assembly. Had SCAF not fostered so much mistrust among the Islamist and non-Islamists, two groups who already

⁵²² Masoud 2011, 26

⁵²³ Stepan and Linz 2013, 23; Shehata 2011, 32

⁵²⁴ Masoud 2011, 20

⁵²⁵ Mietzner 2014, 440

⁵²⁶ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 170

⁵²⁷ Masoud 2011, 27-28

disliked each other, perhaps the Islamists would have been more receptive to including a broader range of voices in the Constituent Assembly instead of fearful about the impact of consensus—now we will never know. However, once it became apparent that the Islamists were trying wrest some power away from SCAF and the judiciary, it became all too easy for SCAF to appeal to the secularists' fear of *Shari'a* law and Islamism as justification for seizing power yet again. The result was the end of Egypt's democratic transition and a deep plunge back into dictatorship.

As Stepan and Linz (2013) argue, Egypt was lacking the level of political society necessary to carry a democratic transition to completion, and given the involvement of SCAF, it is possible now to see why. The Egyptian people wanted an end to police brutality, corruption, and decades of authoritarian rule, and their January 25th Revolution successfully ousted Mubarak and triggered a democratic transition. What Egypt needed during this vital period was an interim government that was invested in ruling the country transparently and consensually. What the country got was an interim government dominated by a military primarily concerned with securing its economic interests and autonomy from whoever might control the new regime. SCAF's handling of the interim government may not be the only reason that Egypt's transition failed, but it exacerbated mistrust among political parties and civil society actors instead of creating an environment conducive to building trust. The electoral rules that SCAF put into place were not inherently bad since a mixed system promote stability through both coalition formation between parties and linkages between representatives and voters.⁵²⁸ However, Carey and Reynolds (2011) point out that the rules in Egypt simply had “too many moving parts” which increased the potential “for fraud, mismanagement, and a catastrophically botched electoral process.”⁵²⁹ Egypt's political parties went into the country's first elections with the attitude that

⁵²⁸ Birch 2005; Carey and Reynolds 2011; “Final Report” 2012, 120

⁵²⁹ Carey and Reynolds 2011, 39

the results were a zero-sum game, and as predicted the opaque rules and quotas, multiple rounds of voting, and overly complicated ballots undermined the results in the eyes of some political actors. The political parties in Tunisia arguably did not compete in the country's first elections with absolute trust in each other, but the process was transparent enough that the results were accepted and the commitment to consensual governing was honored. Egypt's political parties could not even offer each other the benefit of the doubt owing to SCAF's manipulation and back-door deals with various actors. Without political trust, or at least an electoral system which acts as a mechanism to build political trust, then there is not enough "political society" to support a democratic transition. Had the interim government in Egypt been composed of actors more interested in democracy than in their own preservation, it is possible that the elections may have been governed by simpler, more transparent rules, and in turn, a more stable caretaker government conducive to political alliances and trust.

How a better outcome could have been achieved is a somewhat difficult policy question. As Szmolka (2015) points out, the U.S. and Europe, as a matter of preferring "gradual democratization, rather than a revolutionary path to democracy," were mostly silent during the initial uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia.⁵³⁰ The Egyptian people were first and foremost the caretakers of their democratic transition, and outside interference may not have been well-received. However, if there had been an ideal moment for the international community to intervene, it would have been when SCAF suspended the constitution and took over the entire government. The United States especially, with its direct financial and geopolitical ties to the Egyptian military, could have used its relationship with SCAF to encourage more transparency within the interim government and in the drafting of the new electoral rules.⁵³¹ Of course, given

⁵³⁰ Szmolka 2015, 80

⁵³¹ Masoud 2011, 26

the popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood and its Freedom and Justice Party, it is likely that the election outcomes would have been similar even under different rules. For the United States and Europe, this would have meant giving up a certain level of control in Egypt that could jeopardize “economic and security interests in the region.”⁵³² In other words, Egypt’s relationship with Israel would most likely have changed in a way not favored by the U.S. or Europe.

Instead of carefully evaluating who was in charge of the interim government during Egypt’s democratic transition, the U.S. continued to send military aid, an annual sum of around \$1.3 billion, to Egypt throughout 2011, 2012, and most of 2013.⁵³³ That aid continued despite the fact that in 2011 alone, SCAF tried nearly 12,000 civilians in military courts, which was more than the entire number tried during Mubarak’s 30-year reign.⁵³⁴ The aid continued even when SCAF, the people’s hero against Mubarak, was responsible for killing dozens of people in November 2011 who were protesting military rule.⁵³⁵ And the aid continued even when it became clear that SCAF was mismanaging the interim government in order create a democratic transition that was favorable to its economic interests. It was only when additional protestors were killed in August 2013 that the U.S. finally suspended military aid in October that same year.⁵³⁶ The aid payments resumed two months after the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry publicly declared that the military had intervened on behalf of the Egyptian people after the Muslim Brotherhood had stolen the revolution from them.⁵³⁷ Egypt was deemed simply too vital a security asset to lose the cooperation of the military. Democratization in MENA comes with a

⁵³² Szmolka 2015, 80

⁵³³ Mietzner 2014, 447

⁵³⁴ Mietzner 2014, 441

⁵³⁵ Mietzner 2014, 441

⁵³⁶ Mietzner 2014, 447

⁵³⁷ Mietzner 2014, 447

foreign policy cost to Western nations, and whether or not that cost is worth it is a normative argument beyond the scope of this thesis.

Conclusion

The cases of Egypt and Tunisia provide two lessons for democratic transitions. The first is that the interim government is perhaps one of the most important factors in shaping the outcome of a transition. If the government is captured by actors from the old regime, especially those who wish to secure for themselves some piece of economic or political autonomy, then the transition has already been harmed—perhaps irreparably. In Tunisia, the former ruling party tried to control the interim government but was quickly ousted by civil society and opposition parties which made way for an independent government that was dedicated to the transition. It helped that the Tunisian military was not on good terms with the regime and refused to involve itself in the transition.⁵³⁸ In Egypt, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), relying on the misplaced trust of the Egyptian people, quickly took control of the government and crafted an opaque political atmosphere in which it could stoke secular-Islamist mistrust and manipulate the “rules of the game.” The international community refrained from interfering in either country’s transition, a decision which, in hindsight, may have been detrimental in the case of Egypt.⁵³⁹ The outcome of the elections designed by the Ben Achour Commission in Tunisia led to completion of the country’s transition. The outcome of the elections designed by SCAF in Egypt precluded the crafting of interparty alliances parliament and led to a crisis that enabled SCAF to seize control again.

The second lesson for democratic transitions comes solely from the Tunisian case. Stepan and Linz (2013) argue that political society, in the form of political trust and cross-ideological

⁵³⁸ Bellin 2013, 2

⁵³⁹ Szmolka 2015, 81

alliances, was one of the drivers behind Tunisia's successful transition. What the Tunisian case reveals is that this form of political society was not present prior to or during the transition period. Instead, a pseudo-political society was crafted by the interim government through the use of carefully designed electoral rules that ensured the legislative body drafting the new constitution would be insulated from the dangers of majority rule. In a region where secular-Islamist fear runs deep and where Islamist parties enjoy a significant electoral advantage, an electoral system which prevents majority rule is vital first step towards reducing mistrust between these groups. Case in point, the National Constituent Assembly elections in Tunisia forced the Islamist heavyweight *Ennahda* into coalitions with other secular actors. *Ennahda*'s pre-election commitment not to rule alone never had to be tested, and secular parties could feel secure in the fact that *Ennahda* would not be able to pass any constitutional laws on its own. The parties in the coalition did not have to trust each, they just had to work together. The political trust component of political society would certainly make democratic transitions easier, but it is evidently not necessary for their success as long as the electoral system compels political cooperation. The interparty alliances that Stepan and Linz (2013) praised were an artifact of electoral engineering, not political society. In the context of democratization in the MENA region, this is welcome news. If political cooperation can be crafted, then tensions between secular and Islamist actors can be temporarily set aside until their own political society is advanced to enough to support real political trust.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Findings and Discussion

When the Arab Spring uprisings subsided, Tunisia and Egypt stood out as the only two countries to hold democratic elections and begin the transition process at the end of 2011. In both cases, Islamist parties outperformed their secular counterparts at the polls by significant margins, leading to an Islamist plurality in Tunisia's parliament and an Islamist majority in Egypt's parliament. In Tunisia, Islamist party *Ennahda* swept thirty-seven percent of the national vote and won 89 out of 217 seats in parliament—21 seats shy of a majority.⁵⁴⁰ Upon entering parliament, *Ennahda* called for its secular and liberal opposition to join it in a unity government coalition that would draft the country's new constitution.⁵⁴¹ A process that was supposed to take twelve to fifteen months dragged on for just over two years amid deteriorating economic and security situations in the country.⁵⁴² Despite a process fraught with secular-Islamist tensions from the very beginning, a democratic constitution was signed into law in January 2014.⁵⁴³ Tunisia has since held two more successful presidential and parliamentary elections.

While Tunisia survived both the transition and consolidation periods on the way to becoming a full democracy, Egypt failed to even complete the democratic transition phase. After several rounds of parliamentary elections between November 2011 and February 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) won 47 percent of the seats in the lower chamber of parliament and 59 percent of the seats in the upper chamber.⁵⁴⁴ Instead of creating a diverse coalition with secular and liberal parties, the FJP formed a coalition with the Salafi *Al-*

⁵⁴⁰ Wolf 2017

⁵⁴¹ Meddeb 2019

⁵⁴² Wolf 2017

⁵⁴³ Pickard 2014

⁵⁴⁴ "2012 Egyptian Parliamentary Elections" 2015; "Egypt Majlis Ash-Shura (Shoura Assembly)" n.d.

Nour party and dominated the process of drafting Egypt's new constitution.⁵⁴⁵ As secular-Islamist tensions increased both inside of parliament and throughout Egyptian society, the FJP adopted increasingly authoritarian behavior in response.⁵⁴⁶ The situation deteriorated further once the FJP produced a constitution that included Shari'a law, driving an even deeper wedge between the FJP and every other non-Islamist party in Egypt.⁵⁴⁷ On July 3, 2013, amid protests in Cairo demanding the FJP step down, the military seized power and removed the FJP from office by force.⁵⁴⁸

Stepan and Linz (2013) argue that, apart from the outsized role of the military in Egyptian politics, the main differences between the two cases were the presence of a stronger political society in Tunisia than in Egypt and the behavior of Tunisia's *Ennahda* during the transition, which was more conducive to interparty alliances. The evidence that Stepan and Linz (2013) provide for these claims is that *Ennahda* had a history of meeting with opposition parties during its exile in Europe, that it adopted a moderate ideology long before the Jasmine Revolution, and that the cross-ideological coalition that was created after the October 2011 elections demonstrated the political parties' trust in one another. Stepan and Linz (2013) provide observations of, but not mechanisms for, why the differences between Tunisia and Egypt, and their respective Islamist parties, exist. Cavatorta and Merone (2013) try to explain the behavioral component by arguing that *Ennahda* had moderated under repression by the regime and rejection from Tunisian society, but their analysis glosses over important periods during which the party radicalized in response to repression.

⁵⁴⁵ Rosefsky Wickham 2013

⁵⁴⁶ Masoud 2011

⁵⁴⁷ Rosefsky Wickham 2013

⁵⁴⁸ Szmolka 2015

The goal of this thesis was to identify mechanisms that would explain *Ennahda's* behavior and account for Tunisia's more robust political society—and that goal was accomplished. The historical-comparative tracing of *Ennahda's* origins and development revealed that the party harbored both pragmatic and radical ideologies from its inception. These different ideologies eventually grew into dominant factions, splitting the party not just horizontally among leadership, but vertically as well, with base members being less radical than the youth and grassroots activists. As the party evolved and adopted an organizational structure which promoted internal democracy, the balance of power began to alternate between the pragmatic and radical factions. One of the most interesting findings from this analysis is that inclusion moderation would have accurately predicted the behavior of the radical faction but not the pragmatic one. Each time *Ennahda* faced repression in the 1980s and 1990s, the radical faction responded by either confronting the regime directly or adopting violence—as demonstrated by the Stinger missile plot. Under repression, the radical faction radicalized even further. However, the pragmatic faction's response to repression was to adopt a conciliatory approach to the regime and further emphasize moderation in their ideology. Because each faction responds differently to the same exogenous pressure, whichever faction had control of the party's central bureaucracy would influence the outward manifestation of the party's ideology for that timeframe. Periods of radicalization can be tied to domination of the radical faction, while periods of moderation can be tied to the domination of the pragmatic faction.

The mechanism for moderation in the case of *Ennahda* was not inclusion or repression; the mechanism was the balance of power between its leadership factions. *Ennahda's* collaboration during exile with secular and liberal parties, which was praised by Stepan and Linz (2013) and Cavatorta and Merone (2013), was direct effect of exile on the party's balance of

power. The pragmatic faction, which had embraced democratic pluralism and gender equality since the 1970s, dominated the party throughout exile and continued to do so even after *Ennahda* returned to Tunisia in 2011. Once the party was participating in the democratic transition, it became much easier for the pragmatic faction to consolidate power, institutionalize the party, and further marginalize the radical faction. Since 2014, *Ennahda*'s leadership, members of parliament, and central bureaucracy have all been controlled by the pragmatic faction. This explains why the party has not reverted to authoritarian behavior like its Turkish counterpart, the AKP. Understanding the power relations between factions within Islamist parties would provide a better way to predict their behavior in the future, especially during volatile events like democratic transitions.

The second important finding in this thesis is that political society, specifically interparty alliances, can be engineered through the use of electoral systems and rules. As the strongest and most popular political actors in the MENA region, Islamist parties must be included in the democratization process because they provide a crucial link between the population and the new government until their weaker non-Islamist counterparts can develop. However, mistrust between secularist and Islamist parties has been one of the biggest hurdles to generating interparty alliances and collaboration, i.e. political society, in the region. Stepan and Linz (2013) argue that Tunisia had a stronger political society than Egypt, specifically in the areas of political trust and interparty alliances, but do not explain why. The comparative analysis of both cases revealed that political trust was actually weak in both countries and that the interparty alliances in Tunisia were a function of the chosen electoral system rules rather than trust. These findings are significant and suggest that the conditions in Tunisia that were conducive to a successful democratic transition can be replicated elsewhere.

One of the key factors in replicating Tunisia's results is the role of the interim government in choosing the electoral rules during a democratic transition. In Egypt, the military immediately captured the interim government after the revolution and proceeded to meddle so extensively that the political environment, and electoral rules, was never conducive to simulating political society. Instead political suspicion flourished, interparty alliances never formed, and the transition eventually failed. The interim government in Tunisia was the polar opposite of Egypt. After a brief period during which the former ruling party controlled the interim government, Tunisian opposition was able to seize control and prepare elections designed to encourage coalition governance and interparty alliances. In addition, the individuals who dominated the interim government embraced a policy of transparency and inclusion to facilitate trust and legitimacy in the new political system. While Tunisia's political parties had their fair share of disagreements with each other, and with civil society actors, the transition was ultimately successful because they were forced to work together in a coalition government and to reach consensus on issues whether they trusted each other or not. The lesson here is that strong political society is not necessary before a democratic transition begins, so long as the interim government selects an electoral system and electoral rules that simulate political society during the transition.

Limitations

Tunisia and *Ennahda* did have some advantages over Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood that do need to be addressed here. First, Bellin (2013) notes that from a democratization perspective, Tunisia had certain structural advantages because it "has a large middle class, its population is relatively well educated, its society is ethnically homogenous, and the country is

closely linked economically to Europe.”⁵⁴⁹ However, she cautions against putting too much weight on these factors since countries without these advantages have successfully democratized.⁵⁵⁰ The fact that Egypt is less ethnically and religiously homogenous than Tunisia is unlikely to be responsible for its failure to survive the transition. Second, while neither the U.S. nor Europe actively meddled in the transitions of Tunisia and Egypt, the relationships between the various state actors was not equal.⁵⁵¹ Egypt, especially its military, is considered a strategic security partner in the United States’ involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and those financial and security ties absolutely played a role in why the U.S. virtually ignored SCAF’s behavior in 2011 and 2012 and its coup against President Mursi in 2013.⁵⁵² The Egyptian military had a vital interest in controlling the outcome of the democratic transition, whereas Tunisia’s military was not an international security partner, was not vested in Tunisia’s economy, and had no reason to interfere in the transition.⁵⁵³ Third, Tunisia has a long cultural history of rethinking Islam, its application to society, and its role in politics.⁵⁵⁴ For centuries, Tunisians have embraced various modern and reformist interpretations of Sunni Islam, and *Ennahda*’s leaders incorporated this tradition into the party from the beginning.⁵⁵⁵ While the Muslim Brotherhood has its own version of pragmatic and reformist scholars, it does not share *Ennahda*’s same cultural and religious roots.⁵⁵⁶ It is possible that the different interpretations of Islam may account for varying degrees of moderation and radicalization in each party. Finally, both *Ennahda* and the Muslim Brotherhood experienced periods of exile in their history. While

⁵⁴⁹ Bellin 2013, 1

⁵⁵⁰ Bellin 2013, 1-2

⁵⁵¹ Szmolka 2015

⁵⁵² Mietzner 2014

⁵⁵³ Bellin 2013; Masoud 2011

⁵⁵⁴ Stepan 2012

⁵⁵⁵ Stepan 2012; World 2017

⁵⁵⁶ Zahid 2010

most of *Ennahda*'s senior leadership fled to Europe, where they were exposed to parliamentary political systems, democratic pluralism, and Western culture, many of the Muslim Brotherhood's senior leaders spent their exile in the Gulf region.⁵⁵⁷ Some of these differences may have been sufficient to sway the outcomes of transitions in Tunisia and Egypt, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to say.

Concluding Remarks

When Muhammad Mursi and the FJP were challenged over their decision to dominate the Constituent Assembly and exclude a broader range of Egyptian parties, they argued that they would not be held "hostage to the dictatorship of the minority."⁵⁵⁸ On June 4, 2013, only a month before Mursi and the FJP were overthrown in a military coup, Rachid Ghannouchi flew to Cairo and warned Egyptians, and the Muslim Brotherhood, that one political party should not dominate in a democracy.⁵⁵⁹ "A balance of power should be maintained," Ghannouchi argued, because every "society is diverse, and so we have to accept this diversity or else face falling into conflict and chaos."⁵⁶⁰ Egypt never escaped conflict and chaos. Strong political society—based on trust and political alliances—cannot be crafted in conditions that breed fear and mistrust. Egypt's transition failed because the interim government, dominated by a military with economic and political interests, intentionally stoked secular-Islamist tensions and operated in a secretive and authoritarian manner. The political parties in Tunisia, however, did not trust each other much more than the political parties in Egypt did. The real difference was that Tunisia's transition process was transparent and consensual from the moment the civilian interim government wrested power from the RCD. In addition, Tunisia's interim government carefully engineered an

⁵⁵⁷ Shehata 2010, 53; Wolf 2017

⁵⁵⁸ Rosefsky Wickham 2013, 253

⁵⁵⁹ Shaker 2013

⁵⁶⁰ Shaker 2013

electoral system and a set of rules that would prevent one party from winning a majority. By crafting political society through a coalition governance system, political parties were forced to work together even in the absence of genuine political trust. Tunisia does not have to remain the only democracy in the MENA region. Their electoral system and rules can serve as a model for the next country that rises up against tyranny and breaks the shackles of authoritarian rule.

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